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New financial aid office streamlines the process for students

Edmonton – MacEwan University has established a new centralized Student Financial Aid Office that streamlines the process for students applying for scholarships, bursaries and awards. The new office gives students a one-stop spot to get the help they need or the funds they’ve earned.

“If you applied for a scholarship or bursary before last summer, you might have found the process a little cumbersome,” said Frankie Billingsley, director, Financial Aid Office. “The old online application process wasn’t very user friendly, there were different applications for each award and students had to manually look at each one to see if they were eligible.”

The university implemented a new searchable system which automatically generates a list of award opportunities that students may be eligible for. “It’s just one application, so when students apply, they are actually submitting one application for dozens of scholarships, awards and bursaries,” says Billingsley.

“One of our priorities was to make the dispersal of money fair and equitable,” says Billingsley. “For example, the Louise McKinney Scholarship used to be given to the top two per cent of students across the university, but now it will be given to the top two per cent in each faculty.”

Another issue in qualifying for scholarships, is that typically, in addition to meeting a certain GPA standard, students have to be registered in 24 credits per academic year. “Students who are registered with our Services to Students with Disabilities (SSD) office were typically ineligible because they often don’t take 24 credits in a year,” added Billingsley. “We decided that students who are registered with SSD and accrue 24 credits, over a two-year period, are eligible to qualify.”

One of the biggest advantages of a centralized Student Financial Aid office is that there is no uncertainty about where to go for any money-related advice, whether students have questions about scholarships, student loans or other financial concerns.

It’s also easier for students with complex financial needs to get the help in one place. “We have a whole spectrum of students coming to us,” said Billingsley. “We have academically strong students who will typically qualify for scholarships, but they might also need a student loan. Or students who are accessing student loans, but are still in financial duress and would benefit from a bursary,” she says.

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.