



News Release

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WESTERN'S FINANCIAL AID OFFICE ISSUES CAUTION

St. Joseph, Mo. —Dec. 23, 2004—This may be the season of goodwill, but Angela Beam, Missouri Western State College's financial aid director, said this is also the season for financial aid scams. She advised both high school and college students and their parents to be on guard for scams that occur more often between January and March, the season to be thinking about financial aid.

“We live in an era when students and families have to be very careful about their financial information,” Beam said. “Identity theft is becoming more common, and financial aid information provides a thief with just what they want.” She cautions students to not leave the information laying around for someone to find and take.

One scam is where people will call students and say they are an official from the US Department of Education. The callers tell students the department can replace their loans with grants, but it needs the students' personal bank information. Beam said the Department of Education will not call and request personal banking information over the phone.

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Another scam that often occurs is where “consultants” invite high school students to a local presentation on financial aid. In the presentation, they will guarantee financial aid for a fee. Beam cautioned that there should never be a cost associated with applying for grants or loans, and usually, the financial aid guaranteed by the “consultant” is a loan.

She said Western’s financial aid office is happy to consult with students and parents, offering advice and helping them apply for financial aid. The office staff have been talking to a lot of high school counselors so they can pass the scam information on to their students.

If anyone has any questions or concerns about financial aid scams, they can call Western’s financial aid office at 816-271-4361.

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Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.