

2/17/2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for contacting the U.S. Department of Education's office of Federal Student Aid. We have reviewed your complaint 00991693 against Darton State College. Our office oversees the administration and compliance of Title IV Federal Student Aid programs.

[REDACTED], Associate Director of Financial Aid at Albany State University, was contacted on your behalf and provided a clarification on your concerns:

"Student complaint: *First, during summer semester, the financial aid department failed to retain the amount needed to cover summer semester from my student loans and I was forced to take out an additional loan/come out of pocket to cover the expense of the semester.*

School response: *We expect that students take responsibility to arrange a plan that outlines paying for their tuition prior to entering each semester. We are available to assist them with planning. Our practice is to award students for the academic year, which includes Fall and Spring semesters, unless otherwise instructed by the student. Most students do not attend in the Summer term so this practice allows our students to get their funding when it is most needed. student's charges for Summer term were \$1693.09. Once she notified us of her intention to attend in the Summer term we increased her Cost of Attendance (COA) and was able to offer her an additional \$1500.00 in loans for Summer semester. The out of pocket paid by the student was \$209.09.*

Student complaint: *Then this semester, our final semester, they have failed to prorate our loans correctly and now, less than twenty days prior to graduation, I have received a bill for 1470 dollars.*

School response: *She is correct; we had to prorate her loans in the Fall term because it came to our attention that she was graduating. We originally awarded her financial aid for the entire academic year based on the knowledge that we had at the time of awarding. After awarding her we were informed that she was graduating. While it is not ideal to have to adjust a loan after disbursement, federal regulations require us to prorate loans for students who are not completing the full academic year.*

Student complaint: *Unless my bill is paid, they will not release my transcripts, and for someone who had planned to start working on my Bachelor's degree in January, this is a devastating blow.*

School response: *In response to the loan proration adjustment being made after initial disbursement, the school set up arrangements with each student to extend the amount of time they had to repay the balance. In addition, the school offered to give each student one official transcript, despite having an outstanding balance on the account, so that they could continue on to another school or test for state certifications, etc. The school understands and acknowledges that some students experienced hardship because of the adjustments made, but we made good faith efforts to allow the students the necessary time to rectify the overpayment issue and receive transcripts in the meantime so that they could continue on their educational path."*

The school's policy governing the release of your academic transcript is an institutional matter that does not fall under the Department's purview. Therefore, the Department cannot assist in obtaining your academic transcript. However, based on [REDACTED] response, it appears that Albany State University has provided an option for students to receive one official transcript despite the outstanding balance caused by the timing of the proration of your loans. Federal regulation states that a student who is enrolled in a remaining period of study shorter than an academic year must have loans that are prorated. Albany State University was correct in modifying your loans once the financial aid office became aware that you would be graduating in December.

FSA reviewed the school's response and has determined that the school has awarded your funds in accordance with federal law.

The school has been copied on this e-mail as a courtesy.

Thank you for providing feedback to the U.S. Department of Education's office of FSA. At this time your case is closed.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

audrey.brooks@ed.gov

Federal Student Aid/Program Compliance

School Eligibility Service Group

Customer Engagement and Information Management

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