Dear Current and Prospective UCLA Students:

We understand that recent changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) have caused significant stress and uncertainty for many current and prospective students and their families, particularly those “mixed status” students with undocumented parents. We want to acknowledge the challenges students are facing and provide assurances that we are actively monitoring the situation and advocating for solutions.

The 2024-2025 FAFSA rollout has faced delays and technical issues. Currently, parents without Social Security numbers will encounter system errors when attempting to start or contribute to their student’s FAFSA application. We recognize that this situation adds yet another layer of stress and anxiety to an already challenging process.

We want to emphasize that students who are U.S. citizens or other eligible non-citizens are eligible for federal, state, and/or institutional aid by completing the FAFSA, regardless of their family member’s immigration status. Please know that you are not alone in facing these difficulties. We are committed to supporting students through this process.

At this time, we do not have a definitive timeline for when these issues will be resolved, but the Department of Education has announced a fix should be in place by mid-March. Mixed status students should wait to file the FAFSA until a fix is in place; that said, there are still actions that students can take now to prepare for FAFSA filing:

1. Start the online 2024-2025 FAFSA Application: Despite the current challenges, we encourage you to begin the online application at www.fafsa.gov. We do not recommend submitting a paper application at this time.

2. Gather required documents: Due to changes, a Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID will be required for all contributors who provide information on the online FAFSA. Family members without a Social Security number will be able to obtain an FSA ID if they submit government-issued identity verification documents.

3. Sign up: California residents should register for the California Student Aid Commission Non-SSN Contributor Email List to receive email notifications with the most up-to-date information on when FAFSA issues are resolved and updates on how to apply.

We want to acknowledge that students and families may be concerned about providing information and documents for the FSA ID verification process, especially if they are undocumented. However, we want to elevate information about the data and privacy protections for information provided in the FAFSA application:

1. The FAFSA does not ask questions about parents’ immigration status. This means that if your parent or spouse is undocumented, they will not be asked to disclose that information as part of the FAFSA.

2. Federal law prohibits the use of data collected through the FAFSA for anything other than calculating federal and state financial aid.
3. The US Department of Education will not share FAFSA information with anyone except the schools the student indicates they want to attend (so they can use the information to offer financial aid) and a few federal and state government agencies (so they can check to be sure the information is accurate or determine financial aid eligibility).

4. Entities with access to this data are also required to protect the data against security threats or unauthorized uses.

On behalf of the entire UCLA Financial Aid & Scholarships team, we understand the importance of financial aid, and we are committed to helping current and future Bruins navigate these challenges.

Sincerely,

Marvin Smith
Executive Director
UCLA Financial Aid & Scholarships