

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID

Newsletter

MARCH EDITION



MARCH 2026

Email us at: finaid@pson.edu

Welcome to the first Office of Financial Aid Newsletter!

We are pleased to introduce the inaugural Phillips School of Nursing Office of Financial Aid Newsletter. This publication is designed to enhance communication and strengthen engagement between the Office of Financial Aid and our nursing student community.

Through this newsletter, we aim to provide a centralized, reliable resource to support you in making informed financial decisions throughout your academic journey. You can expect timely updates on federal and private loan programs, important financial aid changes, and practical financial literacy topics – all curated to help you stay focused on what matters most: your success as a future nursing professional.

Meet Your Office of Financial Aid Staff



Guerdlie Lucien, Financial Aid Coordinator

Guerdlie holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Higher Education. She has over 10 years of experience supporting student success in higher education. Her experience includes serving as a Readmission Coordinator, where she provided academic advising, guided students through re-enrollment, and collaborated with faculty and staff to improve retention. She served as a Student Services Coordinator, where she interviewed prospective students to determine program eligibility, facilitated monthly information sessions, consulted with nursing graduates, and coordinated and scheduled interviews with Mount Sinai Hospital in collaboration with Talent Acquisition.

She is currently the Financial Aid Coordinator with nearly two years of experience assisting students and families with FAFSA eligibility review, verification, and aid packaging while ensuring regulatory compliance and reducing financial barriers to enrollment and persistence.

Meet Your Office of Financial Aid Staff



Director of Financial Aid Dr. Melissa Vargas

With more than 15 years of experience in higher education, Dr. Vargas is committed to supporting students and families as they navigate the financial aspects of pursuing a college education. She brings a student-centered approach to her work, helping individuals identify and secure the financial resources needed to achieve their academic goals.

Dr. Vargas is an active member of state, regional, and national financial aid associations. She is a strong advocate for equity and access in higher education. Currently serving on the Executive Council of NYSFAAA, Dr. Vargas plays a key role in advancing professional development initiatives across the region.

Her dedication to the profession has been recognized with the NYSFAAA General Service Award in 2024 and the Ajana D. Wilkinson Service Award in 2025, honoring her ongoing commitment to student success and professional excellence.

Financial Aid Vocabulary

SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS – free money that does not have to be repaid

Federal Student Loans – It is money that you will have to pay back.

Subsidized Loan – up to \$5,500 based on eligibility. The government pays the interest on this loan while you are in school

Unsubsidized Loan – up to \$2,000 for dependent students and up to \$7,000 for independent students based on eligibility. Interest begins to accrue on this loan while you are in school

Award Letter – a notice that you will receive that will show your federal student loan amount eligibility

Cost of Attendance – the amount that it will cost you to go to school. It will include direct and indirect costs. IT IS NOT YOUR TUITION BILL

Direct costs – charges you are responsible for paying directly to the school such as tuition and applicable fees

Indirect costs – things that you will have to pay out of pocket for such as books and supplies, room and board, transportation, meals,

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FINANCIAL AID BASICS:

Federal vs. Private

FEDERAL STUDENT LOANS:

- Offered by the US. Dept of Education
- Fixed Interest Rates
- Flexible Repayment Options
- May qualify for forgiveness or income-based repayment

PRIVATE STUDENT LOANS:

- Offered by banks, credit unions, or private lenders
- Credit-based eligibility
- Interest rates vary based on credit worthiness
- Limited or no forgiveness options

FINANCIAL AID STEPS

1. Create an FSA ID

<https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>

2. Complete the FAFSA. Our School code is 006438

<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/afsa>

3. For those **ACCEPTING** the federal student loans, complete:

Entrance Counseling for Undergraduate

Students: <https://studentaid.gov/entrance-counseling/>

Master Promissory Note for Undergraduate

Students: <https://studentaid.gov/mpn/>

4. NY State Residents, Complete NY TAP (School Code is 6445) application at the end of the FAFSA or

<https://www.tap.hesc.ny.gov/totw/>

6. Private Alternative Educational Loans: Students can search Mount Sinai Phillips School of Nursing on the ELM Select

website: <https://www.elmselect.com/v4/>

***Institutional Scholarship application will be emailed to all admitted students**