

**English as a Second Language/Linguistics
ESL Students Applying for Financial Aid**

Spring 2008

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Introduction

As part of its program review process, the English as a Second Language/ Linguistics department of Harper College was interested in investigating how many ESL students apply for and receive financial aid.

Harper's Regent system was used to identify students who applied for financial aid from fiscal year 2004 to the present. Harper College's A1 files (annual enrollment files submitted to the Illinois Community College Board) were used to identify ESL students since fiscal year 2004.¹ There were a total of 9,228 ESL students between FY04 and FY07. A total of 12,831 students (both ESL and non-ESL) applied for financial aid since FY04 (including FY08 applicants).

This report is organized into an Introduction, a Results and Discussion section that presents the results in tabular form, and a Summary section that highlights key findings.

Results and Discussion

As noted above, 9,228 ESL students were enrolled at Harper since FY04. A total of 403 ESL students (4.4%) applied for financial aid (unduplicated headcount). The ESL students form a very small proportion of financial aid applicants (3.1% of the 12,831 financial aid applicants). Of the ESL students applying for financial aid, the great majority (91%, or 367 students) were awarded aid. The average amount of the financial aid awarded to an ESL student in a semester was \$1,096.

Table 1 shows the number of ESL students applying for and receiving aid for FY04 through FY07. The proportion of ESL students applying for financial aid peaked in FY05 (6.1%). The proportion of ESL applicants who were awarded financial aid peaked in FY04 (89%) but has been stable from FY06 to FY07 (81% each year). In contrast, the proportion of non-ESL students applying for financial aid ranged from 17 to 19 percent annually, and the proportion of non-ESL applicants receiving aid ranged from 78 to 82 percent.

Table 1: ESL Students Applying for and Receiving Financial Aid, FY04 to FY07

Fiscal	Total ESL	Applied for Fin. Aid		Received Fin. Aid	
		N	% of Total	N	% of Applied
FY04	3,649	178	4.9%	159	89.3%
FY05	3,121	190	6.1%	143	75.3%
FY06	3,110	154	5.0%	125	81.2%
FY07 ^a	3,214	187	5.8%	152	81.3%

^a FY07 is the last year for which annual enrollment figures are available.

¹ The latest A1 file is for fiscal year 2007.

Chart 1 shows the number of ESL students applying for and receiving financial aid from FY04 to the present (note: FY08 is still in process and the numbers should not be taken as final counts).

Chart 1: ESL Students Applying for and Receiving Financial Aid, FY04 to Present

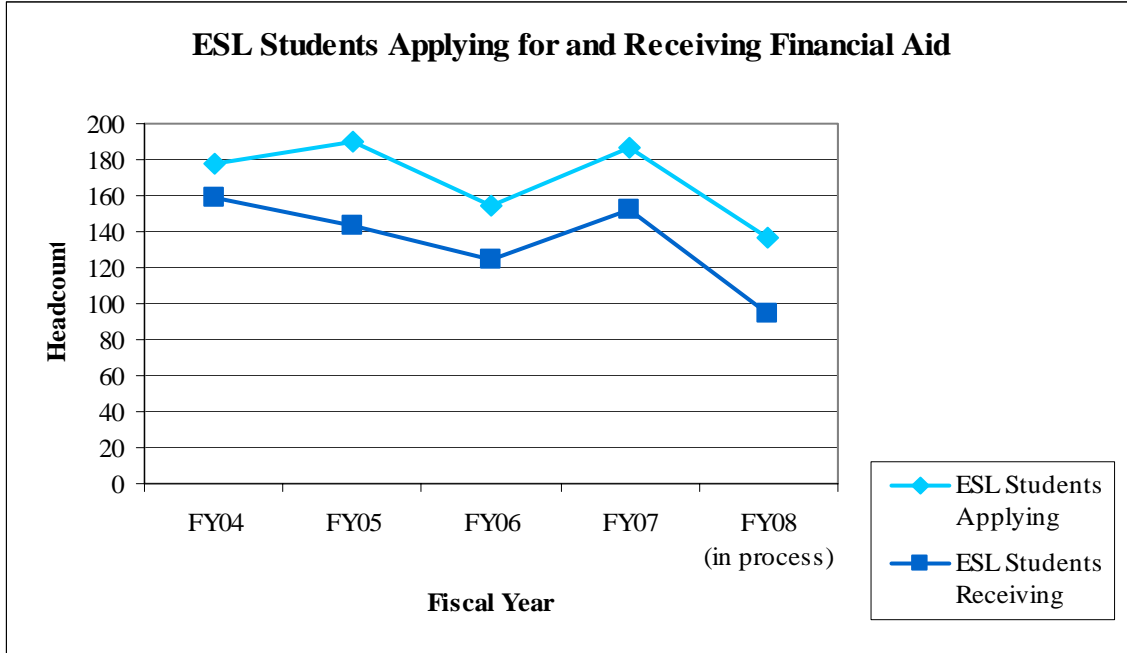


Chart 2: Number of Financial Aid Applications and Awards for ESL Students, FY04 to Present

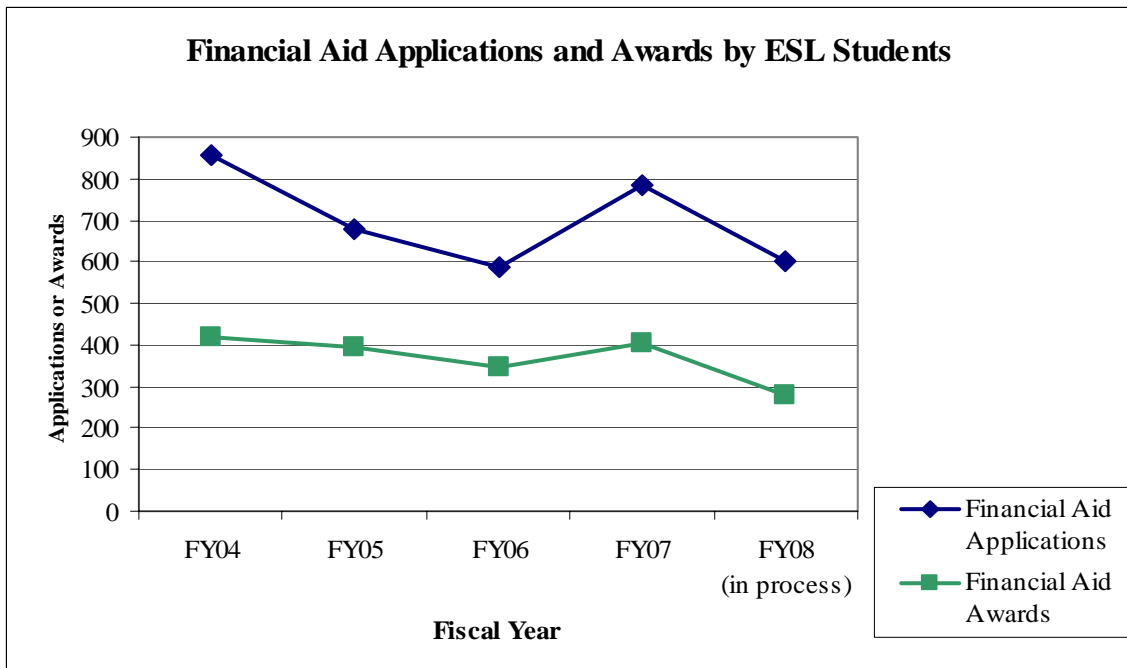


Chart 2 shows the number of financial aid applications submitted by ESL students, as well as the number of awards received by ESL students. Note that students may apply for more than one type of aid and may receive more than one type of award (e.g., a student may receive both a Pell grant and a student loan). As noted above, FY08 is still in process and the figures shown should not be taken as final counts.

We next compare ESL students to non-ESL students in terms of the number of applications and awards per year (see Table 2). ESL students and non-ESL students tended to submit a similar number of applications per student. However, the non-ESL students tended to receive more awards of aid. This may be driven by the fact that there are types of aid for which ESL students are not eligible.² When we compare the total number of applications and awards from FY04 to the present (i.e., unduplicated counts), ESL students tended to submit a greater number of applications but the number of awards granted were similar between the two groups. The greater number of applications by ESL students may be due to the fact that ESL students tended to be enrolled at Harper longer than non-ESL students (2.1 years compared to 1.8 years; $t=6.95$, $df=12,829$, $p<.01$).

Table 2: Financial Aid Applications and Awards for ESL Students and Non-ESL Students, FY04 to Present

Financial Aid Applications/Awards	ESL		Non-ESL	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Comparison by Year (duplicated)	(N=847)		(N=22,010)	
Number of Financial Aid Applications	4.15	3.16	4.33	3.24
Number of Financial Aid Awards ^a	2.18	1.91	2.71	2.53
Award Ratio (Awards/Applications) ^b	0.53	0.37	0.59	0.37
Total, FY04 to Present (unduplicated)	(N=403)		(N=12,428)	
Number of Financial Aid Applications ^c	8.71	7.88	7.66	7.08
Number of Financial Aid Awards	4.57	4.89	4.80	5.36
Award Ratio (Awards/Applications) ^d	0.55	0.29	0.58	0.32

^a Means were significantly different for ESL and non-ESL students ($t=6.09$, $df=22,855$, $p<.01$).

^b Means were significantly different for ESL and non-ESL students ($t=4.02$, $df=22,855$, $p<.01$).

^c Means were significantly different for ESL and non-ESL students ($t=2.93$, $df=12,829$, $p<.01$).

^d Means were significantly different for ESL and non-ESL students ($t=2.38$, $df=12,829$, $p<.05$).

Although non-ESL students appeared to receive a greater proportion of the awards for which they applied, the ESL students were more likely to have received financial aid from Harper in the time period under investigation (see Table 3). ESL students are eligible for fewer kinds of financial aid, but were more likely to have received some kind of aid over the course of their enrollment at Harper. When evaluating the proportion of applicants who receive aid each year (i.e., duplicated counts), the difference between ESL students and non-ESL students was not significantly different. Again, this difference may be driven by the tendency for ESL students to be enrolled for a longer period of time.

² ESL students are only eligible for Pell grants, and then only if they are pursuing a degree. However, once they begin taking non-ESL credit courses, they become eligible for the normal range of financial aid.

Table 3: Proportion of Financial Aid Applicants Receiving An Award

Award Status	ESL Students		Non-ESL Students	
	N	%	N	%
Comparison by Year (duplicated)				
Recipient	674	79.6%	17,500	79.5%
Non-Recipient	173	20.4%	4,510	20.5%
Total, FY04 to present (unduplicated)^a				
Recipient	367	91.1%	10,714	86.2%
Non-Recipient	36	8.9%	1,714	13.8%

^a ESL students were significantly more likely to be award recipients at some point during their enrollment ($\chi^2=7.82$, $df=1$, $p<.01$).

Summary

From FY04 through FY07, a total of 9,228 ESL students have been enrolled at Harper College. Only a small proportion of these students (403, or 4.4%) applied for financial aid. In a given year, the proportion of ESL students applying for financial aid ranged between five and six percent. The ESL applicants comprised three percent of the total number of students applying for financial aid over the period.

Although only a small proportion of ESL students applied for financial aid, the great majority (91%) of the applicants were awarded aid at least once (students can apply for multiple types of financial aid and can apply in multiple years). The proportion of ESL financial aid applicants who received an award in a specific year ranged from 75 to 89 percent. The average award for an ESL student in a semester was \$1,096.

Comparing ESL students and non-ESL students, the non-ESL students received more financial aid awards than ESL students (perhaps due to the fact that ESL students are limited in the types of aid for which they are eligible). However, over the period, ESL students submitted more applications in total. This can be attributed to the fact that ESL students tended to remain enrolled for longer than the non-ESL students. Although the non-ESL students appeared slightly more likely to receive the awards for which they applied, the ESL students were more likely to have received at least one financial aid award during their tenure at Harper (as noted above, 91% of ESL students received at least one award; the corresponding percentage for non-ESL students was 86%).

In summary, a small proportion of ESL students (5 to 6% annually) have tended to apply for financial aid at Harper College. However, they tend to be successful in receiving the aid for which they apply: 75 to 89 percent of ESL applicants receive some aid. It may be worthwhile to work with the Office of Scholarships and Financial Assistance to determine if there is a need to encourage more ESL students to apply for financial aid.