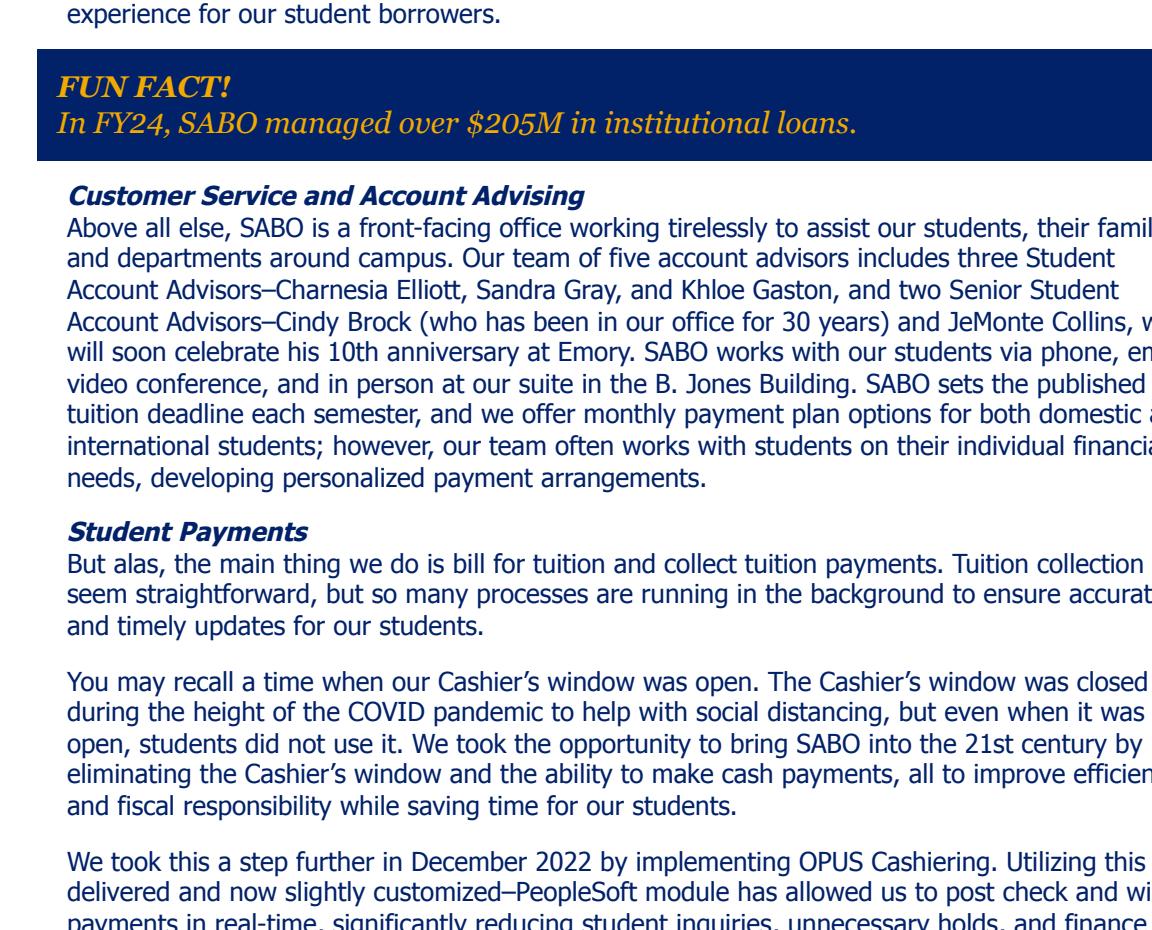




A Message from Stephanie Lester



We have a saying in the Student Accounts and Billing Office (SABO): “Financial Aid speaks, and we take notes.” At least, that’s how we are often portrayed as just a collection agency. However, our office-rebranded Student Financial Services in 2022, does so much more than collect tuition payments.

Tuition and Fee Assessment: The SABO Systems Team, led by SABO Director, Jacki Marples, works tirelessly to update tuition rates, apply all relevant waivers and scholarship accounts. Among many other things, they manage incoming departmental files, which assess parking permits and fines, library fines, student health charges, etc., monitor transactions flowing to the University’s general ledger, and generate the 1098-T tax forms.

In addition to setting up all tuition rates and fees, the SABO Systems Team generates all email notifications related to charges, payments, and refunds to our students.

FACT: In FY24, SABO processed over \$1B in tuition and fees on the student accounts.

Institutional Loan Portfolio: While the Office of Financial Aid is responsible for awarding loans to our students, SABO manages Emory’s institutional loan portfolio. We work with our billing service, ECIS, to request promissory notes, entrance counseling, and other required loan disclosures from our student borrowers. We collect on behalf of the Office of Financial Aid, and manage the loan repayment process, as well as collect payments and develop special payment arrangements. Many years ago, all of this required documentation was on paper, with students coming into our office to complete their loan requirements. Thankfully, all this documentation is now electronic, allowing for a seamless experience for our student borrowers.

FACT: In FY24, SABO managed over \$205M in institutional loans.

Customer Service and Account Advising: Above all else, SABO is a front-line office working tirelessly to assist our students, their families, and faculty. Our account advisor team includes three Student Account Advisors-Chimera Brock (who has been in our office for 30 years) and Jeonita Collins, who will soon celebrate her 10th anniversary at Emory. SABO works with our students via phone, email, video calls, and in-person meetings to assist them with tuition and payment due dates, tuition deadline each semester, and we offer monthly payment plan options for both domestic and international students; however, our team often works with students on their individual financial needs, developing personalized payment arrangements.

Student Payments: Another thing we do is bill for tuition and collect tuition payments. Tuition collection may seem straightforward, but so many processes are running in the background to ensure accurate and timely updates for our students.

You may recall the last time our Cashier’s window was open—the Cashier’s window was closed during the height of the pandemic to help with social distancing. When it was open, students did not use it, so took the opportunity to bring SABO into the 21st century by eliminating the Cashier’s window and the ability to make cash payments, all to improve efficiency and fiscal responsibility while saving time for our students.

We took this a step further in December 2022 by implementing OPUS Cashiering. Utilizing this new system, we now slightly customized PeopleSoft module has allowed us to post check and wire payments in real-time, significantly reducing student inquiries, unnecessary holds, and finance charges.

FACT: In FY24, SABO collected over \$453M in student payments.

Current/Upcoming Projects: In May 2024, SABO officially launched our new net-past-due payment plan with iRewards. Prior students can now make lower payment plans for outstanding tuition balances, allowing them to avoid extra finance charges and pay off debts at a pace that suits their financial needs. In addition to the established plans, we can customize plans for these students—providing even more flexibility and options for payment. Lastly, the new net-past-due payment plan gives our prior students the added option of paying via credit card.

In July 2024, SABO launched the iChatbot at our website, studentaccounts.emory.edu. With nearly 750 individual accounts, the Chatbot has proven to be an essential extra layer of customer service for our students.

Expanding our payment options has been a frequent request from many of our students. SABO is continuously reviewing new payment options to add to OPUS. We only offer payments via US checking or savings accounts directly in the OPUS student portal.

Many exciting things are happening in SABO. We were happy to share what we are doing to improve the student experience.

Unit Updates: Unit Updates

Office of Financial Aid: The FAFSA Simplification Act: What you Need to Know

ISRVived: What is FAFSA? Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Completing and submitting the FAFSA is a free and easy way to apply for federal aid for school. Students must apply for FAFSA and then file on time to have an opportunity to receive federal aid. States and colleges also use FAFSA information to award their own financial aid packages.

In 2024, Congress passed the FAFSA Simplification Act, which led the U.S. Department of Education to overhaul the FAFSA process by shortening the application and making other changes. These changes caused a delay in the applications' release, which created many issues, technical glitches, and delays for financial aid offices, students, and families nationwide.

Our financial office not only survived the previous year, but they overcame what was thrown their way and continued to support our students through the challenges and have financing aid packages released for the returning students in a timely fashion. It took a village.

While many schools across the country struggled during this time, every unit within our office, systems, advising, student services, and analytics came together to conquer the 2024 challenge that faced us.

ISRVived: became the slogan for the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). ISRVived stands for Institutional Student Information Record (the version of the FAFSA that the schools receive from the Department of Education).

ISRVived had the most significant issues because the FAFSA was the only application they had to complete for their financial aid packages. Even though the CSS Profile, as we do, had some processing issues with technology and systems, but luckily, we have a great systems and operations team that was able to make things work and keep us on schedule with funding our students.

Office of the University Registrar: We've Moved!

Unit Updates: The Office of the University Registrar has moved to the Administration Building. We are located on the 2nd floor, room 201. As part of this move, we offer an on-person appointment only.

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