

CUSTOMER SERVICE



JAMIE PENDERGRASS

Financial Aid,
North Carolina State University

As associate director of scholarships and financial aid at North Carolina State University (NCSU), James “Jamie” Pendergrass plays a critical role in ensuring thousands of students can access the financial support to pursue their education. He oversees the administration of the Federal Pell Grant program and loan processing, manages system testing and compliance, trains and supervises staff, and serves as a key technical and policy advisor to leadership.

Even in the best of circumstances, that would be a full plate. Yet Pendergrass’s dedication to NCSU students was put to the ultimate test in late 2023, when the rollout of the FAFSA Simplification Act brought sweeping, unprecedented changes to the federal financial aid process. The change introduced massive disruptions to systems, regulations, and students’ timelines for receiving aid offers. With unclear federal guidance, major technical delays, and constant updates, institutions across the country struggled to keep up.

Amid the chaos, Pendergrass acted as a calm and decisive leader. He devoted countless hours, working through complex system issues, interpreting shifting rules, implementing new processes, and serving as a key translator between federal guidance, institutional systems, and on-the-ground implementation. Not only did Pendergrass lead NCSU’s response, but he also served as a resource to aid professionals across the country, fielding questions and sharing expertise through national forums at a time when many were overwhelmed.

Thanks to his tireless efforts, NCSU was among the first universities in the country to award aid to its incoming class. The university was able to disburse financial aid before the start of the fall semester, ensuring students were supported without disruption.

Jamie Pendergrass’s efforts during this tumultuous time for financial aid offices and students nationwide exemplify exceptional customer service. The State of North Carolina proudly recognizes him for his unwavering dedication to the students of NCSU and beyond.

