

FASFAA

Newsletter

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

Winter
2009

Letter From the Editor

Happy New Year to all of you. This first FASFAA newsletter of 2009 is filled with very important information pertaining to the FASFAA upcoming elections, letters and reports from board members, and a variety of interesting articles.

My sincere thanks to all that submitted articles and information for this newsletter, and I encourage more of you to do the same. Deadlines and submission parameters are always published on the first page of the newsletter.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our annual conference in May.

Respectfully,

Martie Adler
FASFAA Newsletter Editor

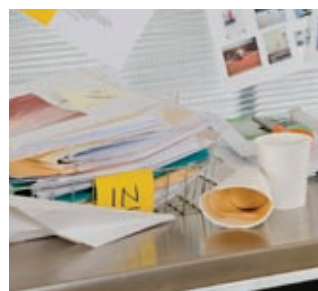
FASFAA Newsletter Publication Schedule

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Articles and advertisements are to be delivered to the Newsletter Editor no later than December 20th (for winter edition) and July 2nd (for summer edition).

Information should be sent as a Word attachment, Tahoma, 10 Pitch, to Martie Adler at madler@amsa.com. You may contact Martie Adler at: 407-865-5767, if additional information is needed.

The FASFAA Newsletter is published for its members. Articles submitted by any person, company, or organization to the editor prior to the publication of the newsletter will be considered. The newsletter committee reserves the right to reject, edit for content, or edit for length any article or information submitted for the newsletter. Articles must be intended for the benefit of FASFAA members and not for company marketing or promotional purposes.



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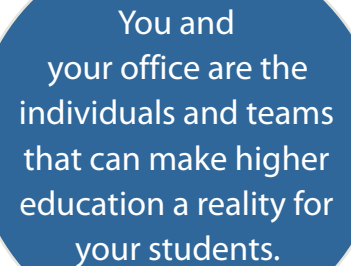
Letter From the FASFAA President

Dear FASFAA members,

On behalf of the FASFAA Executive Board we extend to you warm greetings and our sincere wish that 2009 will be a good year for all of you and for your institutions.

As many of you are aware in the fall of 2008, we did not have a fall conference. However, we did have Regional Workshops in regions three and five. Our thanks and appreciation is extended to Diane Reitz and to Travis Brown who coordinated these events. The association was also fortunate to have had an excellent Clock Hour Workshop which was coordinated by Tracy Misner. All of these events were well attended.

In December Trayce Smith (Rollins College), Ryan McNamara (Clearwater Christian College) and Diane Reitz attended the SASFAA Leadership Symposium in Asheville, NC. It was a great experience for all who attended. Our thanks to Brenda Brown who coordinated this event for SASFAA and to Anh Do who is intricately involved with the SASFAA Annual conference. Please note that Bill Spiers will be running for President Elect of SASFAA this year. Bill has faithfully served both SASFAA and FASFAA and certainly deserves our grateful support.



You and your office are the individuals and teams that can make higher education a reality for your students.

For the spring FASFAA will be having Regional Workshops on February 13 in Region one and February 18 for Region four. The date for the Region two is to be determined. Also, please note that the SASFAA Annual Conference is scheduled for February 8-11 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina and our FASFAA Annual Conference is scheduled for May 26-29 at the Sawgrass Marriott in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL which is in the greater Jacksonville area. Please plan now to attend. Conference Chair Nathan Basford and his team are working diligently to make the FASFAA Annual Conference a very enjoyable and fun filled time of learning and relaxation. The profession has challenges ahead and we need as an association to band together and take advantage of all training and learning opportunities. We also need the support of colleagues who can be encouraging and helpful to us as institutions and as individual professionals.

Please remember in what may be challenging times ahead for schools and financial aid offices, that 2009 may also be a challenging time for our families. You and your office are the individuals and teams that can make higher education a reality for your students. Hang in there, and we will all be better as 2009 comes to a close.

Thank you for all that you do on daily basis-things that are rarely seen, but critically important.

Sincerely,

Bill Healy
FASFAA President

FASFAA President-Elect Letter to the Association

Dear FASFAA members,

On behalf of the FASFAA Executive Board and the Nominations Committee, I would like to extend to you wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year.

2009 will be an exciting year for our organization, and I am looking forward to my role this year as President Elect. I am pleased to announce that the Executive Board has approved an excellent slate of candidates for the upcoming elections. In addition to the letters of candidacy we had listed in this newsletter, you may also view the slate of candidates on the FASFAA website by moving to the Membership Services tab (<http://www.fasfaa.org/mc/page.do>).

In 2009, we will be voting for President Elect, Vice President for Training, Region I Representative, Region III Representative, Region V Representative, and Secretary. For each of these positions we have talented school employees running for the office.

At this time, I would also like to encourage each of you to exercise your right as a member of our organization and vote. We all need to be mindful that our organization is dependent on the active participation of your members.

Please take a few minutes to review the Slate of Candidates in preparation for the FASFAA election, which will be held in March. I will be sending out an announcement to everyone as soon as the polls open.

Thank you again for your support of the FASFAA and thank you for all that you do to make higher education achievable for students in Florida.

Take care,

Rebecca Lydick
FASFAA President Elect



We
all need to
be mindful that
our organization is
dependent on the
active participation of
your members.

FASFAA 2009 Election Information – Slate of Candidates

Nominees:

President Elect:

Nathan Basford- FSU

*“Excellence can be obtained if you:
...care more than others think is wise;
...risk more than others think is safe;
...dream more than others think is practical;
...expect more than others think is possible.”*

Anonymous from the World Wide Web

I am seeking your vote to represent you as FASFAA
President-elect.

FASFAA has as its mandate, the responsibility of providing valuable training to all financial aid professionals within our association. In the nineteen years that I've been a member of FASFAA, I have served as your region representative, conference chair, vice-president of training, president-elect, and also president. I've worked along side fellow FASFAA representatives to respond to and represent the needs of our association. I value every opportunity, and I cherish every relationship that I have been given by serving our association. I am incredibly proud of FASFAA, and all members, and it is my desire to continue to apply the experience, leadership, and insight I've achieved over the years to continue to serve FASFAA and all members.

Central to the causes FASFAA has championed during the past years, I will continue to support and encourage current, as well as new members to share the responsibility in providing training to our professionals in order to ensure that students achieve their educational goals.

Our commitment of FASFAA is to expect more than others think is possible; to take more risk than others may think is safe; to dream more for the future, and to work with fellow professionals, faculty, students, and staff who care more than perhaps some think is wise.

I would appreciate your vote to continue this cause.

Nathan, President-elect nominee

Anne Hart- Ave Maria University

This letter serves to introduce myself for candidacy as President of FASFAA. I support the mission and have been a member of this fine organization for nearly 10 years. I served as a Region Representative in 2005-06 and Local Arrangements Chair in 2007, and volunteer for activities such as College Goal Sunday. My background, experience, and concern for the student body we serve are the qualities that I will utilize during my tenure to be a worthy President.

Anne Hart (continued)

My career in Financial Aid began in an entry level position and, throughout the years, I have had the opportunity to work in various positions learning the many different aspects of the financial aid process. My greatest enjoyment was the challenge of automating processes, which ensured students had the opportunity to access their award and account information electronically at any time.

I have experience in both public and private university systems, both as a student and employee. (BA from USF and MA from FGCU) This has helped me in my approach in adding new procedures as well as implementing policies under both institutional and regulatory directive. As president, with the assistance of the Executive Board, I will continue to seek member input as to the topics of interest and provide the Conference, workshops, and information to assist members in professional development and compliance issues.

The FASFAA conferences, workshops, and networking opportunities have been invaluable to me. I would like to have the opportunity to serve the members and support the goals and mission of FASFAA which is ultimately to serve the students.

Anne Hart, Financial Aid Director, Ave Maria University

VP of Training:

Travis Brown- American InterContinental University

Travis received a Bachelors of Science degree in Criminal Justice and Master's degree in Education with a concentration in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University, in Nashville, Tn.

Travis joined the family of Career Education Corporation (CEC) in July of 2003 with over 12 years of Financial Aid Administration experience from the community college, public university and proprietary school sectors. He currently serves as the Director of Student Financial Services at American InterContinental University South Florida located in Weston, Florida.

Prior to joining AIU South Florida, Travis held a position as a Director of Work Programs for Miami-Dade College (formerly Miami-Dade Community College) where he managed and implemented its initial college wide federal work-study placement process integrating the offices of Career Services and Financial Aid. Prior to serving in that position, he served an assistant Director of Financial aid at Miami-Dade's North Campus serving just over 33, 000 students. He has also worked briefly with Florida International University as Coordinator.

Beyond his experiences at the school level, Travis has been very involved in National, Regional, and State Financial Aid Associations. Travis currently serves with pride as Region V Representative in FASFAA where he has been a member since 2000. Since joining FASFAA, Travis has been a member of the Graduate Professionals Committee, served on panel discussions at our conferences, and also presented on various topics within our Region Workshops. Travis recently completed his 1st year as instructor at SASFAA's New Aid Officer's Workshop (NAOW), a weeklong training for new financial aid administrators, which was held in Louisville, Ky.

Travis Brown (continued)

Message from the Candidate: “As Region V Representative, I’ve enjoyed the opportunity provided meeting with the members to hear their concerns and to reflect on the opportunities that FASFAA has. My experience as an instructor at SASFAA’s (NAOW), along with my role as Region V Rep for FASFAA, have driven me to continue to extend my passion for training to all members within our Association. As your VP of Training, my mission is simple, to give you, the members, what you want. Training opportunities that reflect the changes within our profession... Host events that will reflect our diverse and ever changing populations...provide tools and resources to aid you in the development of your teams....

As your Vice President of Training, I will work closely with our Region Reps to provide them with the necessary resources that will aid in their coordination and development of workshops and other professional networking opportunities that will increase the exchange of best practices amongst our membership. Additionally, I will seek to collaborate with our external customers (our Lender partners, Guarantee Agencies, and State OSFA Office) to ensure that we compliment our training calendars. The goal will be to provide our members with a centralized resource to review all professional development events held in our various regions.

We are a very dynamic association that has some very talented members within its boundaries. I seek to utilize those resources to continue to strengthen our Association. I want to continue to point our Association upward, with your vote and support, FASFAA will continue to flourish as it has done over the years.”

Travis L. Brown, M.ED., Director of Student Financial Services, American InterContinental University

Tracyce Smith- Rollins College

I am truly honored to have been nominated by my colleagues to run for the position of FASFAA Vice President for Training. I have accumulated 15 years of Higher Education Administration experience while working on the campus of Rollins College in Winter Park, FL. I have had the great pleasure of working within the Financial Aid Office for the last 8 years, working initially as a Counselor and currently as the Financial Aid Systems & Loan Coordinator. I have been active member within FASFAA for the past 3 years and am currently appointed as the Electronic Services Member-At-Large. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve our association, one that has had such a significant impact over the years on my professional and personal development through the training and networking opportunities it provides. If it were not for the continuous support received through the association and the friends I’ve made as part of FASFAA, I would not be fully equipped to handle the challenges and important issues we all face day to day. I am running for the position of Vice President for Training because I understand the significance of ongoing, relevant training & development within our field. If elected to this position, I promise to do my best to provide pertinent training issues to the membership, for not only the new aid officers but also seasoned financial aid professionals, and to arm all of our members with the knowledge to support their individual institutions and the students they serve with confidence.

EMPLOYMENT:

2002 – Present Financial Aid Systems & Loan Coordinator, Rollins College
2000 – 2002 Financial Aid Counselor, Rollins College
1993 - 2000 Senior Accounting Assistant, Accounting Assistant, Rollins College

EDUCATION: B.A. – Organizational Communication, Business minor, Rollins College

Tracyce Smith (continued)

SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

FASFAA

2006 – Present	2008-2009 Electronic Services Member-At-Large
2008-2009	Spring Conference Committee Member
2007-2008	Electronic Services Chair
2007-2008	Fall & Spring Conference Committee Member
2006-2007	Electronic Services Committee Member
2006-2007	Fall & Spring Conference Committee Member

SASFAA

2008	Leadership Symposium participant
	• Lyman High School, 2006 – Present, Guest financial aid speaker at the annual College Financial Aid Night for students and their families
	• Rollins College: Upward Bound, 2007 Guest financial aid speaker and onsite FASFA application assistance
	• Rollins College: Intersession Course, 2007 Guest financial aid speaker
	• Rollins College, 2005 Leadership Academy participant

Thank you for your consideration in my nomination for the position of FASFAA Vice president for Training.

Tracyce Smith, Financial Aid Systems & Loan Coordinator, Rollins College

Region I

Marcie Davis-FSU

Hi, I'm Marcie Davis and I'm running for Region I Representative for FAFSAA and I would appreciate your vote. I've been in financial aid for nearly 11 years, all of which have been dedicated to Florida State University-Panama City Campus. I became a member of FAFSAA, after the first year of working in financial aid and I immediately started attending the conferences. I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing and gaining knowledge at the FAFSAA Conferences and the Regional meetings. Not only do you learn so much at these conferences but the people you meet become friends that you can call on when you have a situation that you just need help with. I've assisted for several years helping the Region I Representative(s) plan regional meetings on our campus by the Bay. I've assisted at the annual FAFSAA Conferences, volunteering with local arrangements and other duties as requested. I know what it takes to be your representative and will do the best job I can and would appreciate your support. I feel training is a vital part of being able to administer financial aid and I will do my best to ensure that our Region is trained and ready to meet any students needs. The financial aid arena is changing rapidly and we must continue to be updated on new rules and regulations to be able to administer aid to the best of our ability. With regional trainings we have an opportunity to talk between ourselves to see what works and what doesn't. We must continue to strive for our best, especially in these hard economic times. I feel that we are not only administrators of financial aid but we are also life counselors. Students tend to tell us their stories, how they got here and how they plan to finish and become successfully employed. We must be prepared to help with any type situation no matter what the situation is.

Please consider me when you vote, Marcie Davis for Region I Representative. Thank you!

Kymerly Lang-NorthWest Florida State College

Thank you for the opportunity to run for the position of Region I FASFAA representative. I've lived in the western panhandle of Florida since 2003 and began my tenure in the wonderful world of Financial Aid working part-time at Okaloosa-Walton College from 2004 through 2005 when I assumed the duties of the financial aid specialist. I have been active in Region I workshops during my entire time in financial aid. I enjoy all aspects of financial aid from working with the students through the ever changing interpretation of regulations. The training and workshops that FASFAA supports and offers throughout the state are valuable tools that I attend and support. Both of these aspects will continue as the Region I representative for FASFAA.

It is indeed my honor to be able to possibly serve my friends in this endeavor.

Kymerly Lang, Financial Aid Technician, Northwest Florida State College

Region III

Jay Lally, Florida Institute Of Technology

I am very interested in serving as the Region III Representative for FASFAA. I believe that FASFAA and especially Region III can help shape the programs and services that we offer our students.

I have been directing financial aid for almost thirty years mostly for two private universities and a brief career as a marketing director for Sallie Mae. I have served on several advisory boards including the Florida Student Advisory Council. I am currently your Legislative Liaison on the FASFAA Executive Board. I am an active participant in the ICUF financial aid directors meetings.

I believe Region III is perfectly located to help FASFAA promote financial aid programs for students and families and training programs and workshops for financial aid administrators of all levels. With only one FASFAA conference a year, the FASFAA Regions must provide social interactive opportunities for professionals to gather and discuss the ever constant challenges and changes to our industry. I would like to continue to work with the executive board to help promote financial aid programs and professional development meetings within Region III.

Thank you for considering me for this position.

Jay Lally, Director, Financial Aid, Florida Institute of Technology

Bradley Honious- Valencia Comm. College

I am honored to be considered for the position of Region III Representative for the Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (FASFAA). Previously I have held positions as financial aid director at GateWay Community College in Phoenix and program coordinator for financial aid at Arizona State University. I have a combined 12 plus years experience in financial aid and over 7 years as director.

I have a true passion for training and development especially within the financial aid profession. I have served the following positions in the Arizona Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (AASFAA) and the Western Association of

Bradley Honious (continued)

Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA):

- President-Elect, President, and Past-president (2 times) for AASFAA
- Conference Chair for AASFAA
- Training Chair for AASFAA
- Legislative Affairs Chair for AASFAA
- AZ Representative for WASFAA Executive Board
- Conference Facility Chair for WASFAA
- Summer Institute Faculty (5 years) for WASFAA
- Management & Leadership Institute Faculty for WASFAA

I also have made training and professional presentation on financial aid, enrollment management, and retention for various organizations through our the United States including, California, Arizona, Nevada, Alaska, Oregon, Washington, Florida, Maine, Louisiana and Indiana. Next year I will be serving as a faculty member of the SASFAA New Aid Officers Workshop and am very excited about meeting new people in the region.

I have received and AA degree from Triton College in Illinois, and BA from Northeastern State University in Oklahoma, a Master in Education and Graduate Certificate in Institutional Research from Arizona State University and a Graduate Certificate in enrollment Management for the University of Florida. I also have completed coursework toward a Doctor of Education degree at ASU and hope to complete my dissertation within the next few years.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve FASFAA and more importantly the school staff members in Region III with exciting training opportunities. I also look forward to the opportunity to represent the region with a strong voice as the organization moves forward.

Sincerely, Brad Honious, Director of Financial Aid, Valencia Community College

Region V

Allison Beaver- Keiser University

I am seeking your vote to represent you as FASFAA Region V Representative.

For the eleven years that I have been an active member of FASFAA, I have made a valiant effort to remain involved with the association to show my support while expanding my financial aid knowledge. Over the years that I've been a member of FASFAA, I have served as vendor/sponsor relations chair, local arrangements co-chair, conference chair, registration chair and currently am the 2009 FASFAA Spring Conference Program Co-Chair.

I have thoroughly enjoyed every position that I have held within the association and I am excited at the opportunity to serve as Region V Representative. If elected, I guarantee that valuable training opportunities will be provided to the entire region. It is my goal to be the voice of this region, and to bring forth to the Executive Board any questions, comments, concerns and issues that our Region V may have. I would like for us all to work together as a team, and really bring each and every member of Region V together for the good of the association. I know that there are many years of financial aid experience within this

Allison Beaver (continued)

region, and I will continue to support the current members, as well as encourage new members to join. It isn't just one person that makes a difference in FASFAA; it is each and every one of us. I know that by working together, Region V could really make an impact!!!

I thank you for the opportunity to run for this position and I do look forward to the possibility of making an even a bigger difference within FASFAA. I appreciate your support and your vote to help me achieve my goals for the association.

Allison Beaver, Director of Student Financial Services, Keiser University

Secretary

Ryan McNamara- Clearwater Christian

My name is Ryan McNamara, Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Clearwater Christian College and I would like to thank you for allowing me to serve as Secretary of FASFAA for the past two years. I would be thrilled to be given the opportunity to serve in the Association again continuing as your Secretary. I joined FASFAA in 2004 and began working with the Bonnie Pirkle Scholarship Committee. Working on that committee allowed me to network with other financial aid professionals. Because of that networking and volunteering I was eventually nominated as Secretary. I will continue to work hard for you and FASFAA. Thank you for your support in advance.

CFO Report to the FASFA Membership

Submitted by: Marty Carney,
FASFA CFO

At our December Board Meeting, the Board asked me to develop a committee to review investment firms that the association can choose to manage its assets (Bonnie Pirkle Scholarship funds, short term reserve funds and operating reserve funds). The Association currently uses UBS to manage its portfolio. The Committee will evaluate and choose other companies to research and review such as TIAA-CREF, Fidelity, Vanguard and others. At the conclusion of the Committee's review, I will make a recommendation to the board to continue with our current provider-- UBS or change to a new company.

FASFAA Region III Report

Submitted by: Diane Reitz, FASFAA Region III Representative

The FASFAA 2008-2009 Executive Board Meeting was held on November 12, 2008 at the Renaissance Sea World Marriott in Orlando, Florida. Here is a summary of the FASFAA Region III Report given at that meeting.

Our FASFAA Region III consists of the following Florida counties of Sumter, Lake, Volusia, Seminole, Orange, Brevard, Osceola, Indian River, Okeechobee and St. Lucie. .

We sent out our latest monthly issue of the November/December FASFAA 2008 "Region III Review", to let members know what is happening and to solicit advice, ideas, and concerns. The October 2008 issue primary content was upcoming changes on the 2009-2010 FAFSA and the signing of HERA. I appreciate the help of Jackie Ortiz-Baerga (CIBER Solutions) and Sue Seymour from UCF for their editorial contributions.

We are over 108 FASFAA members in Region III at last check. The membership is down a bit because we are transitioning from last year to this year and memberships are in the process of being updated. Without a fall conference, this is to be expected. We should look at this situation however, because it affects any fall events we plan.

We held our Fall 2008 Region III Workshop on October 23rd, 2008 at the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management. We emphasized professional development for our members by celebrating a "Day of Diversity" with two sessions by Barbara Thompson of the UCF Office of Diversity Initiatives. We thank this great speaker and appreciate the UCF Office of Diversity Initiatives for their financial and overall support. We had close to 40 attendees and we want to thank FASFAA for our lunch. We also enjoyed the "FASFAA Celebrates Diversity" cake prepared by the Rosen staff.

We are happy to report that the art drawing raised \$120.00 dollars for the Bonnie Pirkle Scholarship fund.

We want to thank Alia Asi and Wonkiasha Washington of UCF for their contributions to our regional workshop.

With clock hour training this fall 2008 in our region and new aid officer training attached to the FASFAA Spring 2009 Conference in Jacksonville, we are fairly well covered on the training front. I sure do miss the old experienced aid officer's workshop though – it was my favorite.

I am not sure about planning something else for our region in spring 2009. We may want to concentrate on the FASFAA Spring conference. The FASFAA Executive Board and the membership will need to let us know what is needed.

There was a time in the past when being a member of the state association was almost expected. This was similar to a plumber (let's call him Joe) joining the plumber's union. In those days, we got together to figure out how to manage change. Today, with information at our finger tips, we must reinvent ourselves to see how best to serve our members today. This is a challenge for leadership now and in the future.

Today, with information at our finger tips, we must reinvent ourselves to see how best to serve our members today. This is a challenge for leadership now and in the future.

My promise is to try and do a good job in representing the FASFAA Region III members. In turn, I will ask for their help and involvement. I am, as always, proud to serve on this 2008-2009 FASFAA Executive Board.

*Diane Reitz – University of Central Florida
FASFAA Region III Representative 2007-2008 / 2008/2009*



Happy New Year Region IV!

Submitted by: Sheri Ogorek, Region IV Representative

Here we are at the beginning of the New Year. 2009....my how time flies! (My age must be showing!)

I hope all of you are doing well and that you had a wonderful holiday. Hopefully you had a chance to catch your breath after the fall peak – even if it was a short, small breath. Yes, it is exciting being in financial aid! It can also be exhausting...please be good to yourself!

Our spring classes start next week here at St. Petersburg College, so we are in our “busy mode”. I imagine the hustle/bustle is a similar sight for many of you. There are a lot of students looking to enter school this spring and of course, they all want to know “Where is my financial aid!” (There’s a good workshop topic...”How can we force students to be more pro-active with getting their FAFSA completed and verification documentation submitted?”)



There are a lot of students looking to enter school this spring and of course, they all want to know “Where is my financial aid!”

Speaking of our workshop, the Region IV workshop will be held on February 18, 2009 at the EPI Center of St. Petersburg College. Directions to the EPI Center can be found at the following link: http://www.spcollege.edu/webcentral/campus/to_epi.htm. This is a different location than where meetings have been in the past. I hope it will be easy for you to find! We will have some professional development, a State update, a review of all of the FAFSA changes and roundtable discussions including such topics as “the pros & cons of accepting another schools Dependency Override”, “What did we forget in our software upgrade?”, “These phone numbers will really help”, and “We created great documents for ___?___”. If you have additional topics that you would like covered, please do not hesitate to let me know. The registration form for the Region IV workshop is currently online

Nathan Basford, our FAFSA Conference chairman, and his committee are planning a fabulous conference for this spring. As you recall, FAFSAA will be hosting only one conference this year. It will be held May 26-28 at the Sawgrass Marriott, Jacksonville FL. Start making plans NOW!

An outstanding slate of officers for the 2009-2010 FASFAA year is being finalized. Keep an eye out for details. Voting will be difficult this year – all of the candidates are NUMBER ONE choices. You will need to be a FASFAA member in order to cast your vote. Please update your membership today!

I look forward to seeing you on February 18!

Senator Claiborne Pell

Submitted by: Martie Adler, Professional Services Consultant, American Student Assistance

The financial aid industry has had a number of supporters throughout its history, but one man—Senator Claiborne Pell—will be remembered well as he fought long and hard for student aid programs and students. I had the honor of sitting with him in the early 1990's for a 30 minute "chat" about student financial aid. He was a wise man and I learned a great deal from him. Here is a more formal comment about both his life and his death.

Kennedy, Clinton Eulogize Sen. Claiborne Pell (Associated Press)

“The late Sen. Claiborne Pell was remembered during his funeral service Monday as a patrician statesman of enormous personal wealth who devoted his career to serving the less fortunate and enabled millions of American students to attend college,” the Associated Press reports. “The Rhode Island Democrat died Thursday at the age of 90. He had suffered for years from Parkinson’s disease. During his 36 years in the Senate, the multimillionaire descendant of early New York landowners championed the arts, the environment and affordable education.”

You can read the complete January 5, 2009 Associated Press article on-line.

News from NASFAA

First Signs of an Approaching Storm—Looking Into the Future

Submitted by: Haley Chitty, Associate Director for Communications, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA).

Washington, D.C. (January 2009) – NASFAA’s 2008-09 National Chair and University of Wyoming Financial Aid Director Dave Gruen sparked an interesting online conversation when he predicted in a blog posting (<http://nasfaachair.org/blog/?p=61>) that the recent economic turmoil had sparked a tsunami that would soon crash on financial aid office shores.

In the Oct. 27, 2008 blog entry, Gruen pointed to some indicators he was witnessing on his campus that suggested an oncoming wave of students and families who would need financial assistance to compensate for lost wages, dwindling college savings, and lost or reduced home equity.

Financial aid administrators posted responses to the blog entry reporting a variety of experiences. Some corroborated Gruen’s fears with stories of increasing need and aid eligibility among students and families while others reported no indications that the economy was affecting those they served.

Looking back, it seems that Gruen’s somewhat dire predictions were well founded. As the economic downturn spreads it is having a negative impact on every sector of the U.S. economy, including families’ ability to pay for college and institutions’ and states’ ability to provide financial aid.

Documenting Troubling Trends

A recent report by the Chronicle of Higher Education’s new research service illustrates the challenges these trends are creating for students, families, and higher education institutions. The report, “Financial Uncertainty and the Admissions Class of Fall 2008,” (http://research.chronicle.com/reports.html?utm_source=at&utm_medium=en) found that nearly 80 percent of institutions had more applicants in 2008, but 46 percent of institutions had fewer students actually attend after being accepted. Among the 46 percent, three-quarters said they did not expect any decrease in matriculation.

As the economic downturn spreads it is having a negative impact on every sector of the U.S. economy, including families’ ability to pay for college and institutions’ and states’ ability to provide financial aid.



“After being overwhelmed by piles of applications, many colleges had to dig deep into their waiting lists to fill their classes,” the report states.

The college admissions officers surveyed for the report cited the following factors for the reduced matriculation rate:

- 76 percent said that changes in the financial situations of parents and/or students was a factor
- 64 percent said that more students attending community colleges was a factor
- 58 percent said that a decline in home values was a factor
- Half said that the availability of student loans was a factor
- 76 percent said that more aggressive financial-aid offers from key competitors was a factor
- 60 percent said that “summer melt,” or students who put down deposits but did not matriculate was a factor

Four of the six reasons cited can be attributed directly to the floundering economy. The report details other impacts that the economy is having on students and families, including:

- Students increasingly reluctant to travel far from home to attend college
- Families less likely to want to take on student-loan debt
- Students applying to more colleges, hoping to leverage them against one another to get larger offers of financial aid
- Students trading down - looking more seriously at public universities instead of pricey private colleges.

These trends strain lower-cost colleges like state universities and community colleges, which are experiencing an enrollment boom. Enrollment in community colleges is up 8 percent this year by some estimates. The increased enrollment in lower-cost institutions is stretching their budgets at the same time that state budget cuts are hitting public universities and community colleges hard. This limits their ability to accommodate all applicants, and is creating fears that lower-income and minority students will be pushed out of the system as it is flooded with more qualified applicants and/or applicants with a greater ability to pay for tuition and fees. At the same time, students are looking for more financial help. About 56 percent of the admissions officials surveyed said more students than usual have come to financial-aid offices this fall to work out new payment arrangements.

Unfortunately, institutions are having a tough time finding the money to help these students. Among the colleges that reported more financial aid requests, only 61 percent said they could meet students’ needs. More than 50 percent of those surveyed planned to raise funds for additional scholarships, 12 percent planned to use more funds from endowments for financial aid, and 9 percent planned to create new loan programs to make more credit available to families.

As Gruen predicted in his blog entry, survey respondents expected things to get worse before they get better.

A Silver Lining?

If the past is any indication, the U.S. traditionally responds positively to crisis and challenges. It tends to bring the best out of people and gives the nation an opportunity to rethink fundamental assumptions and practices that have led to the current crisis.

“Perhaps this will turn out to be a good thing in the end,” wrote one colleague in response to Gruen’s blog post. “College tuition was rising at an unreasonable rate and students continued to attend schools they could not afford and continued to borrow money they could not pay back. Much like the housing market, we all will be forced to make better decisions and find another way to pay for college besides borrowing out of control.”



Much like the housing market, we all will be forced to make better decisions and find another way to pay for college besides borrowing out of control.

Beyond the short-term challenges facing higher education and financial aid, the U.S. faces larger challenges of educating the future workforce

and leaders. Demographics dictate that tomorrow’s leaders will come from low-income and minority backgrounds, the very population that is currently underserved by higher education. The current crisis offers an opportunity to retool the system to better meet these long-term goals.

NASFAA’s National Conversation Initiative will provide important insight into how the financial aid system can be redesigned to meet America’s future needs. NASFAA encourages you to get involved to ensure that we make the most of the current crisis/opportunity and that the initiative has a positive and long-lasting impact on the future direction of the financial aid programs.

Resources

- *National Conversation Initiative Web site:* <http://nasfaa.org/redesign/nci/ncicenter.html>
- *NASFAA National Chair Blog:* <http://nasfaachair.org/blog/>
- *Chronicle Report:* http://research.chronicle.com/reports.html?utm_source=at&utm_medium=en

College Goal Sunday 2009

The following link will provide you with very detailed information regarding the confirmed sites for College Goal Sunday throughout Florida. Locations, addresses, site coordinator contact information—everything you could possibly want to know!!

[Click here to get the information and get involved.....](#)

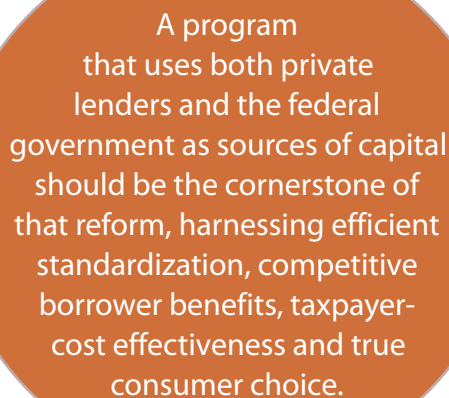
Breaking the Deadlock: Unifying Our Federal Student Loan Programs

Submitted by: Paul Combe, American Student Assistance president and CEO, and Steve Biklen, former president and CEO of Citibank's Student Loan Corporation

The recent credit crunch that destabilized the mortgage market and leaked to student loans, along with a heightened public awareness of the impacts of student debt, has brought to light the very real need for student loan reform. As we watched the events of the past few months unfold, the higher education community has been forced to face the fact that the dislocation in the credit markets could pose a real threat to the delivery of student aid. While Congress, the Department of Education and the student loan industry have worked together to ensure the continued availability of federal student loans in the immediate future, we must examine ways to improve our student loan system in the future for students and taxpayers alike.

The drumbeat for student loan reform has been building slowly, but steadily, for several years now. Starting in 2006, the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education called for the simplification of the entire federal aid process. In 2007, regulators and policymakers questioned relationships between student loan lenders and the college financial aid professionals who recommend them to students. Then in 2008, more than 100 lenders stopped or curtailed making federal student loans due to slashed subsidies and market conditions that resulted in shrinking profit margins. Finally, newspaper headlines across the country are now reflecting the warning signs that students' capacity for managing debt is reaching a breaking point.

With a growing appetite for change among the public, policymakers and aid administrators alike, now is the time to examine a new proposal for a single, robust, neutral student loan program. A program that uses both private lenders and the federal government as sources of capital should be the cornerstone of that reform, harnessing efficient standardization, competitive borrower benefits, taxpayer-cost effectiveness and true consumer choice.



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To understand where our federal student loan program is headed, we must first understand where it's been. For over 15 years, the Congress, college financial aid officers, and the higher education financing industry have been locked in a polarizing struggle between two competing federal student loan programs: the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and the Direct Loan Program (DL). The major focus of the debate is which program scores less in the federal budget. Unfortunately, for both sides, FFELP vs. DL is a death match where only one can survive. Rhetoric has smothered rationality and real dialogue on how to make the two programs actually work together has been impossible.

Objective observers all agree that the competition and interplay between the two programs have been beneficial to schools and borrowers, each program forcing the other to improve service, systems, and even pricing. The efficiency and standardization of DL's single delivery system, the consumer choice and service competition of the "market" of multiple lenders, and the debt management/default prevention activities of the guarantors in FFELP have all been major competitive drivers improving both programs. In spite of the obvious advantages and synergies of the two programs, and the advantages of the competition to the consumer and schools, the programs are still being operated by Congress and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as, at best, separate. Each program is now affiliated with a political party, further polarizing the issue.

To return the federal loan program to its primary mission, it is time to move from FFELP vs. DL to FFEL and DL. A much-needed reform program should focus on:

- The consumer and their rights and needs
- The delivery system
- The pricing for private capital

They are consumers: While the student loan debate has raged, education debt levels have more than doubled. Borrowers have an obligation, but society does as well, to help the borrower manage that debt over the life of the loan. Education loans create a 10 to 25-year relationship between the borrower, the lender/servicer, and the federal government. Unlike grant aid, the long term nature of the loans, and the obligations and relationships created by it over the life of the loan, make the education borrower, in every sense, a “consumer” rather than just a recipient. The borrowers’ consumer needs for access to information, timely and responsive advice and service, and mediation of issues are real and critical to the program’s success.

One of the basic rights of a consumer is choice. The education loan consumer should have the right to pick who they want to deal with over the next 10 to 25 years, whether it is the federal government, a guarantor, or a private lender. So far the dialogue has been just about federal cost. There needs to be a balance between taxpayer costs and consumer rights.

Thus, one of our goals should be to squeeze unnecessary costs, whether public or private sector costs, from the student loan programs, and use some of those savings to better assist borrowers in successfully completing their education financing by assuring that they have the information they need to manage and pay off their loans. Debt management and default prevention is something that should be measured and for which guarantors, as neutral third parties, should be held accountable.

Indeed, the role and financing of the “guarantor” community should be refocused away from the origination process to early awareness and information, debt management

and default prevention, and loan rehabilitation for all borrowers, including those with Direct Loans. Essentially, guarantors would no longer insure the lenders, but instead help guarantee the borrowers’ success. Since loans may be securitized or sold to any party, including ED, the guarantor provides the borrower a stable, neutral third-party relationship over the life of the loan. Guarantor fees and incentives should be focused on the relative success of the borrowers in their portfolio as measured by Loans in Good Standing and these results should be published and available to the consumer. The consumer should be allowed to select the guarantor that they believe would best provide those services over the life of the loan.

The borrowers’ consumer needs for access to information, timely and responsive advice and service, and mediation of issues are real and critical to the program’s success.

The System: In the late ‘80s, it was the inefficiency of the multiple loan delivery processes developed by individual lenders and guarantors, and the lack of standardization between those systems, that was a primary impetus for the creation of DL, a single, efficient delivery system solution for schools. As the competition between the programs grew and the private sector began improving their systems, standards were developed that excluded DL. Within FFELP vs. DL, and in FFEL itself, the delivery systems became a market tool that can be used to restrict the range of consumer choice.

The process of programmatic convergence should first focus on developing a single, robust, lender/capital neutral, origination platform. This system should be developed by ED, lenders, schools (FFELP and DL), guarantors and school financial aid management system (FAMS) providers. The system may be a federal system or a mutual benefit corporation and should accommodate and communicate data and disburse loans for multiple lenders, including ED,

and should be the required process for all federal loans. This development eliminates the loan distribution process as a possible point of market control.

Had there been a single, federal loan delivery system already in place, the recent dislocation in the credit markets would have posed very little threat to the delivery of loan funds to the students. Also, a single system would lower the cost of entry into the student loan markets, opening the market to more lenders and capital sources. With one delivery system, capital becomes fungible, allowing small lenders to compete, side by side, with large lenders. Also, with a single system in place, Congress should require all schools to place ED, with its Direct Loan brand, and at least two other lenders on their preferred lender list. Effectively, the consumer could pick any lender (including ED) on any campus and be assured that the funds would be delivered efficiently and on time. This is ultimate consumer choice.

Capital costs: The last priority is the setting of the interest rate provided to the private lenders/capital in the FFEL program. Congress sets the rate charged to the student, which is the same for both DL and FFEL. Historically, Congress has periodically set the subsidy rate (special allowance payment), but this has always politicized the process. If it is the private-public partnership that allowed the student loan program to develop into a viable student loan market, a mechanism has to be developed that provides a reasonable, risk-rated return. The question is how. The answer should be provided by the private sector. Auctions have been suggested but these would be operationally cumbersome and ignore completely consumer rights. Most recently, Ben Bernanke, the Federal Reserve Chairman, has suggested a mechanism that would track the spread between two relevant measures of the cost of funds to lenders and use those as a mechanism to determine the appropriate lender return. Ultimately, capital markets in conjunction with Congress, ED and loan providers should

It's time to break the deadlock and restore America's higher education finance system as the true support mechanism for college access.

develop a proposal that uses the cost of the DL program as a benchmark; satisfies the needs of the federal government and the consumer; is market based; and provides an appropriate role for private capital and market competition.

Building a Model for the Future: Getting to Unity

2008 has turned into a watershed year for the student loan industry. The recent threat of an unprecedented disruption to student loan access has brought forth not only a rapid response from lawmakers, the administration and the industry, but also a rallying cry for a broad and thorough review of the entire federal student aid system. The time is right to convene "Clean Slate" working groups to tackle reform.

Working Group activities should include:

- Creating a structure and laying the groundwork for regulation or legislation to unify our federal loan programs into one
- Integrating an R&D approach to setting student loan policy
- Researching and publishing position papers on key issues
- Providing a Web-based clearinghouse of information

In a bid to retain America's competitiveness in an increasingly global economy, it is imperative that our nation invest in the proper education, training and support for its citizens. We must develop a unified student loan program with an eye toward efficiency, affordability, accountability, and sustainability. It's time to break the deadlock and restore America's higher education finance system as the true support mechanism for college access.

What do you think of a single unified federal loan program?

Join the conversation on ASA's Policy Perspectives blog at http://www.amsa.com/blogs/policyperspectives/blog_detail.cfm?bid=8.

The Meteor Network

Submitted by: Tim Cameron, The Meteor Network Project

The Meteor Network, a valuable service of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs Inc. (NCHELP), assists students and schools by providing aggregated, timely and accurate financial aid information. The Meteor Network is a free tool that allows schools, students and other users to access financial aid award data from multiple sources in real time. The software that powers the network is the result of a collaborative effort of the Federal Family Education Loan Program community to provide financial aid professionals and borrowers with secure, online access to loan information.

Meteor continues to grow in importance as student aid volume increases and access to accurate and timely information becomes mandatory. As a result of recent regulatory, legislative and program changes, the percentage of students with multiple loan servicers is expected to increase.

Because the Meteor Network can aggregate data directly from the data source, schools have a real-time tool to complete the loan certification and counseling processes. Using the Meteor Network provides education loan borrowers with an excellent way to track and manage their debt from federal and private loan providers — in a single view.

Meteor is unique in its capability to deliver borrower information from multiple sources, which can then be used as a value-add to existing web services by customizing and incorporating that data with the data provided by the other web services.

At a time when many schools and student borrowers will likely need to manage debt with multiple lenders and/or servicers, the Meteor technology provides a way for them to gather their loan information in real-time from multiple providers.



At a time when many schools and student borrowers will likely need to manage debt with multiple lenders and/or servicers, the Meteor technology provides a way for them to gather their loan information in real-time from multiple providers. Meteor technology also powers several other tools that are currently offered to schools and students are powered by this technology:

Mapping Your Future.

- **Online Student Loan Counseling** — Students can access their federal and private loan information during their exit counseling sessions. This access provides students with much more meaningful exit counseling sessions.
- **School Access Provider** — Mapping Your Future schools can access data on the Meteor Network directly from Mapping Your Future's secure web site. They simply enter their user IDs and passwords. This process provides schools with a program- and participant-neutral site to access all data available to the Meteor Network.

The National Student Clearinghouse.

- **LoanLocator** — This tool provides colleges and students with access to 100 percent of outstanding FFELP loans and Federal Direct loans, in addition to billions of dollars in private student loans at no charge. LoanLocator with Meteor enables colleges and students to track and manage their federal and private student loan debt and to receive detailed information in real time.
- **Campus Based Authentication** — Institutions enrolled in the Clearinghouse's free online Student Self-Service program also can provide their students with access to Meteor data. The Clearinghouse uses campus-based authentication to provide access to Meteor and its other Student Self-Service offerings from a school's web site.
Campus-based authentication provides greater access to valuable debt management, default aversion and other tools and services by using a school's authentication process to gain access to the Meteor Network and Clearinghouse services.

Additionally, several Meteor participants have incorporated data from that network into other customized applications, to provide students and financial aid professionals with information about the location of their loans, detailed contact information for their providers, and aggregated details of outstanding debt — including interest rates detailed repayment information and more.

Meteor Network traffic continues to increase as more and more organizations provide access for students through standard Meteor implementations and through integrating customized applications into current online services. Already this year, Meteor usage has more than doubled as compared to the same time period last year. By early 2007, Meteor had realized a usage increase of more than 600 percent in the year since students first gained access to the service.

Currently 14 Web sites provide access to the Meteor Network — and that number continues to grow. Schools even have the option of installing the software on their systems to provide direct access to their students.

“Meteor continues to lead the way in provision of open access to a borrower's data for schools and borrowers. Especially now, at a time when many borrowers are obtaining federal and private loans with multiple lenders or servicers, Meteor provides a way to access all of that information within a single view. Through its unique abilities, Meteor has demonstrated its value as a default aversion tool, and is an excellent example of how the student loan industry has worked together for the benefit of schools and borrowers,” said Dick George, Chairman of the Meteor CEO Steering Committee.

Meteor is a prime example of a successful collaboration to implement a leading-edge solution for the benefit of schools, and for the benefit and protection of borrowers.

For more information about the Meteor Project, please visit www.MeteorNetwork.org.

Making College Affordable: What Roles Does the Financial Aid Office Play?

Submitted by: Dugues JeanLaurent, Financial Aid Coordinator, Palm Beach Community College

Is it worth our attention? Absolutely! For many young people, closing the achievement gap is not just another soundbite, but it is something of great significance. They understand attaining a college education these days require sacrificial efforts. In fact, students are beginning to take notice as the current economic downfall continues to intensify. As a result, they are wondering whether the opportunity to afford a college education is beginning to slip away. Others reject the notion of giving up on that dream and see a college education as the ultimate equalizer.

What has been the major shift? Certainly college does play a pivotal role, ensuring and increasing one's chances of higher earning. Young people are keenly aware of the significant earning potential that a college education brings. They also see college as a worthwhile investment, or an absolute must, however financing it poses serious and enormous challenges.

Though increasingly middle income earners continue to get hit the hardest while struggling to send their sons and daughters to college. Given the current economic challenges we're in, these concerns are likely to get worse. On the one hand, their earnings disqualify them from receiving need-based aid. On the other hand, they don't make enough that allows them to pay for their sons and daughters' college out of pocket.

To help meet certain financial needs, which include, to some degree, credit card debts just to name a few, students are increasingly incurring themselves with Federal student loans. As you might imagine, such excessive borrowing is a perfect recipe for future financial disaster.

In the plight of family's incomes which have seen more declines in recent years, what role, if any, can or should the financial aid office play? Better yet, can higher education administrators and lawmakers finally put together a sustainable plan that would help combat the rising cost of college? Your guess is as good as mine, whether that can be accomplished, it remains to be seen.



Though increasingly middle income earners continue to get hit the hardest while struggling to send their sons and daughters to college.

Start the New Year Right – Think About Volunteering!!

Submitted by: Stephanie Durdley, FASFA Volunteer Services

Greetings to the FASFAA Membership!

The year 2009 has many great things in store for our organization. On behalf of the Volunteer Services Committee, we would like to express our gratitude to those currently serving FASFAA and encourage all of the membership to get involved. FASFAA has a long history of being one of the strongest organizations in our industry and that is because of YOU.

We look forward to launching an updated FASFAA volunteer form on our Web site, so please stay tuned to www.fasfaa.org for additional information. If you are interested in volunteering, please feel free to E-mail your contact information to Stephanie.Durdley@fldoe.org.

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Using Communication to Develop a High Performance Operation

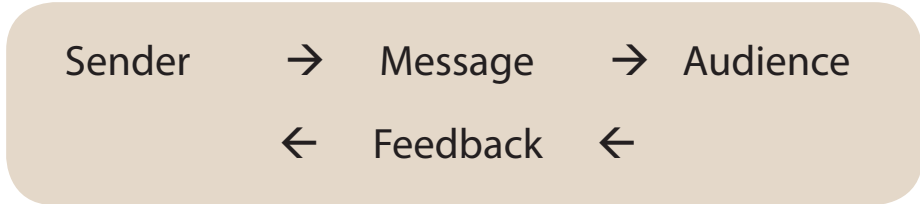
Submitted by: Leonard Gude, Vice President, Financial Aid Solutions, Regent

What distinguishes a high performance operation from others? What are the reasons for its consistent excellence in performance? This is the second in a series of six articles which will outline actions that you can take to move your operation forward and increase your stature within your organization. To read the first article in this series, "How Does Defining Purpose Help You Develop a High Performing Operation", click here http://www.regenteducation.com/files/6686Defining_Purpose.pdf

Communication. Once you have clearly identified your operation's purpose, you must effectively communicate that purpose to everyone involved so that it can be well understood and implemented as needed. As a leader, one of your most important tasks is to communicate effectively. It is important that you project a professional image as you communicate with others.

Sender. The audience's perception of your competence and credibility can be negatively affected by misspelled words, disjointed arguments, rambling sentences, and poor grammar, layout, structure and appearance.

Example: The purpose of the office of financial aid is to assist students and prospective students in obtaining the financial resources necessary to enroll in the institution so that they can complete their educational program and enter the workforce.



As a leader, one of your most important tasks is to communicate effectively. It is important that you project a professional image as you communicate with others.

Audience. Instead of attempting to communicate to all constituencies with a single message, customize and personalize the message to your audience. Why should they listen? How is it relevant to them? Customers, supervisors, coworkers and employees long to be treated as special and important individuals.

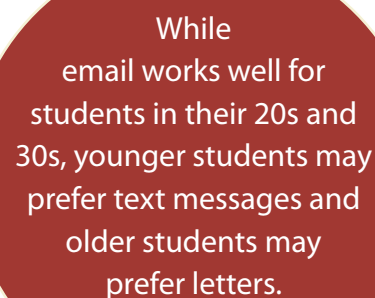
Message. In organizing your message, make sure that it is clear and concise. Don't attempt to address multiple issues. Focus on a single topic or issue and keep it short.

In the opening statement, you should answer the question as to “why it is important to me” (your audience)? If you don't catch their attention in the first statement, they are unlikely to continue reading or paying attention to what you have to say.

Next, you should summarize or concisely articulate the issue or problem that needs to be addressed. In doing so, avoid using acronyms and be careful to explain terminology or details that the audience may not understand.

Now that you have their interest, you should communicate what action should be taken. Be specific as to who, what, when, where, why and how. Also insure that they understand any consequences of not responding in a timely manner.

Finally, provide them with contact information. You should offer to provide additional details or include them as appendices, URLs, or attachments.



While email works well for students in their 20s and 30s, younger students may prefer text messages and older students may prefer letters.

Delivery. The vehicle that you use to convey the message to the audience is often as important as the message itself. Today, there are many options to utilize to deliver your message. Should it be verbal, letter, email, internet or text message, video or a combination of these mediums? Again, which of these vehicles is your audience most comfortable with using? While email works well for students in their 20s and 30s, younger students may prefer text messages and older students may prefer letters.

Feedback. This is the probably the most important step in the communication process. Without feedback, how do you know if the message was received, read and understood. Have others review and edit your work. Check the grammar and spelling. Read aloud what you have written. Do they understand the message that you are attempting to convey? How effective is your delivery vehicle? What percentage of the audience received your message? What percentage of them responded to it?

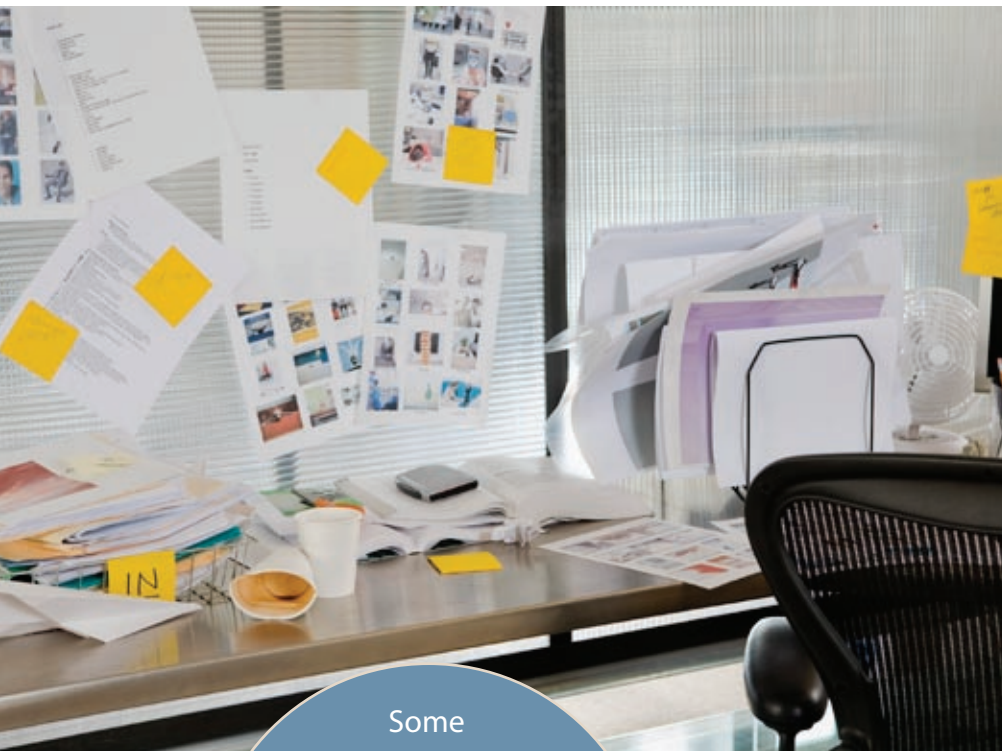
Summary. This may sound like a lot of work but the return is worth the investment. It is not often that you get a second change to persuade the audience, so it is critical that you get it right the first time when you contact them.

How to Bust the Paper Clutter for 2009

Written by: Sharon Cabeen, National Student Loan Program

If you ever click to HGTV, you will see that organization experts propose “de-cluttering” and setting up workable methods to maximize efficiency (and enjoyment) around your home. One of the most frustrating culprits in managing our money and tax responsibilities (whether paper or electronic) is the LACK of a system to deal with it effectively and efficiently. Those same experts tell us that any system of organizing is better than none...just consider some of the tips offered here or develop your own unique system that works for you and your household.

If you are one of those people who already has a great system established and working well, we'd love to hear your ideas. Consider these tips (the broad brush on page one, the specific ideas on page two) and start it now for a better 2009!



Some experts suggest keeping the more critical records in a fire-proof safe/file cabinet at home or in a safe deposit box at a bank.

The first step to getting organized is to determine what records you need or want to keep. This should include a list of critical documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, marriage and divorce records, wills, etc. Also list the routine records that you feel would be needed in the future and for how long you want/need to retain them. Write these things down and agree as a family on what will be kept and where. Some experts suggest keeping the more critical records in a fire-proof safe/file cabinet at home or in a safe deposit box at a bank.

Next, discuss research, devise and determine a system for routine kinds of paper or electronic files associated with your money.

And last of all, implement your system quickly so that you don't lose the desire or energy for the project. It doesn't all have to be done today, but if you schedule a manageable amount of the task to be completed at certain future points, you will have half the battle won!

Dreaming of a Simplified Financial Aid System

Submitted by: Jay Lally, Legislative Relations

I attended the first FSA Conference in Dallas this fall. In the opening General Session, the former Under Secretary of Education, Sara Martinez Tucker, did a wonderful job of explaining the department's vision for "A Rational Approach to Federal Student Aid". At the time, the audience did not have the benefit of the department's recommendations to Congress which were subsequently released in November. As such, the audience reaction appeared to be candid and unsullied.

The 2000+ administrators in Dallas initially applauded this new simplified approach to financial aid. However, their enthusiasm seemed to wane as they gained a greater understanding of the complete overhaul the department is recommending. During the session, it became clear the Department would not produce an expected family contribution (EFC) in the future, if this simplified approach is adopted by Congress. Taking EFC from a financial aid administrator is the equivalent of taking LIBOR from a banker or the Dow Jones index from a stock broker. The challenge will be to find a suitable replacement for the cornerstone of our need based system, the "Expected Family Contribution". This topic, by itself, could dominate conferences in the near future but should not derail the overall objective of simplifying the system.

The benefits for a simpler system are far reaching, including cost savings, potentially greater revenues, and much better customer service. The possibility of combining SMART, ACG, TEACH, PELL and others into one federal grant is enticing enough to consider relinquishing our treasured SEOG. We would still have Sub and Unsubsidized Stafford loans with PLUS loans. Work study would have to be reconciled but the FISAP could be completely eliminated. COD functions would be significantly reduced. If the recommendations are completely adopted, verification could be also be reduced or eliminated with a properly tested IRS match. Financial aid management systems would initially need to be redesigned but would be substantially simpler to reprogram each year. Coordination rules may still be needed, but the associated liability would be insignificant. Federal compliance audit costs should be lowered with fewer rules to review. We would have a basic federal assistance program from which to build a financial aid package.

This bold new approach to financial aid may sound like Columbus recruiting sailors, "You want to do WHAT?" But I commend the department for their candor and courage to recommend such a vastly needed overhaul to the financial aid system. We would be wise to review all of our related processes to better serve our customers and improve their understanding of what aid may be available to them. The simplest solution can often yield the best results if properly implemented.

I went to Dallas to get updated on the changes to the Act. I came back with a 2 inch stack of paper with four screens to a page and double sided printing. This has been added to my burgeoning bookcase of rules and regulations. We are an association dedicated to the proper training of financial aid professionals. I submit that if we do not simplify the system, we will be forever training and may never properly serve our customers.

The simplest solution can often yield the best results if properly implemented.

If you have not already done so, I highly recommend reading the Department's "A Rational Approach to Federal student Aid." <http://www.nasfaa.org/publications/2008/anedsimple111408.html> Together, I am hopeful that we can map out a new simplified financial aid system that better serves students and families while protecting all those who invest in higher education.

More information, better choice: Make your lender list work for you and your students

Submitted by: Doug Savage, TG

Students face a maze of decisions when they borrow for an education. How much should I ask for? Should I pay the interest on my unsub loans or let it capitalize? What job will help me meet my loan obligations? For many, the experience is a bit like traveling in another country where the language is foreign — an amalgam of financial and regulatory terms — and the customs are different — e.g., credit checks.

In cases like this, financial aid offices (FAOs) serve as an all-important “field guide,” answering questions on everything from disbursement to default. That role is becoming even more essential as the student loan market changes. Some lenders have dropped out of the federal loan program; others have reduced, or even eliminated, their borrower benefits. At the same time, a growing number of students — many the first in their families — arrive at college unprepared to understand the financial terms and obligations attached to student loans.

More than ever, students and parents need clear information to understand their loan options. To educate them, schools rely on a variety of tools, including recommended or suggested lender lists.



Empowering students and parents

Lender lists have come under scrutiny, but many FAOs continue to advocate for their use — in compliance with regulations and in the best interests of students. These FAOs see lender lists as a tool for consumer empowerment, offering a starting point for students and parents to compare lenders based on specific offerings.

Bill Spiers, director of financial aid for Tallahassee Community College, makes clear that lender lists were never meant to be the last word in choosing a lender. “We don’t make recommendations with these lists,” he says. “We offer them strictly as a resource to borrowers.”

Schools follow a number of different methods for compiling a list. Many, like

Tallahassee’s FAO, issue an open Request For Information (RFI), which functions like a survey, gathering data from lenders on loan terms, interest rates, and other benefits, such as origination fee reductions. “We follow a standardized evaluation process, and consider a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures,” Spiers says.

Given changes in regulations and market uncertainties, schools that offer a lender list are examining their process for creating one. They’re considering ways to better streamline procedures, and, at the same time, inject more objectivity into selection.

If you're looking for ways to add more confidence to your lender list process and potentially cut work time, consider the following suggestions.

- **Automate collecting data:** Survey your lenders using an electronic or online tool. This cuts processing time and may add automation to various survey features, including score tabulation. By communicating and receiving responses through an automated survey, you may be able to make lender evaluation a more objective process also.
- **Establish a library of assessment questions:** Keep in mind regulatory requirements; including the non-affiliated lender rule (schools must have at least three non-affiliated lenders on any list they provide). Create a listing of questions that captures what your students and parents need to know in order to make an informed decision on a lender. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA) requires that schools offer comparative information on borrower benefits from any listed lenders, including information on loan terms, interest rates, and other data. What are the other areas you and your students may be concerned about? A lender's customer service availability? Default prevention activities? Comprehensive Web sites?
- **Build clarity into your process:** Schools that have a list need to show their evaluation process is standard for all lenders. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) issued a monograph in May 2005 on developing a lender list. The document summarized what was standard practice for some schools and offered a blueprint to follow for others. The monograph still serves as a useful guide for creating a lender list. Tallahassee's RFP surveys lenders on many areas recommended by NASFAA, including lender default rates and any default management programs. "Our process is partly about gauging accountability," Spiers says. "We review customer service for students, cohort default rates, and a lender's approach to default aversion."
- **Add objectivity:** A survey tool administered by a third party allows for a number of benefits. Sending surveys out this way can simulate blind test conditions. This can potentially cut bias in judging since evaluators won't know the name of the lender they're evaluating. A third-party survey provider may be able to compile and compute scores also automatically.

Choosing a lender is one of the more important decisions a student can make if he or she borrows for an education.

Find out more

Choosing a lender is one of the more important decisions a student can make if he or she borrows for an education. You can help your students make that decision with an informative lender list, one that helps borrowers compare lenders on issues like loan terms and customer service.

When it comes to creating a lender lists, schools have many options, including survey tools that gather and compile lender data electronically. Survey tools can be tailored to a school's RFI needs, or used out of the box. The best way to find one suitable for your school's process may be to search online or go to NASFAA's Web site. Just be sure that, in selecting a survey tool, you find a product that meets your school needs and that helps you gather the lender information borrowers need.

Doug Savage is a Senior Regional Account Executive with TG.

FASFAA
Newsletter

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

Winter
2009

College Goal Sunday Florida 2009 (Site Confirmation Worksheet)

GAINESVILLE (Shari Lupton)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Santa Fe College	Gainesville	3000 NW 83rd Street, N Building, Room 216	Gainesville	FL	32606	Maureen McFarlane	352-395-5932		maureen.mcfarleen@sfcc.edu	http://www.santafe.cc.fl.us	February 22nd	2pm-4pm
Gainesville High School	Gainesville	1900 NW 13th Street	Gainesville	FL	32609	Ken Mercer	352-955-6707, Ext. 243		mercerkd@gm.sbacc.edu		22-Feb	2pm-4pm
Eastside High School	Gainesville	1201 Southeast 43rd Street	Gainesville	FL	32641	Amanda Allen	352-955-6704		allenag@gm.sbacc.edu		22-Feb	2pm-4pm

MIAMI (Andrea Ramirez)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
ASPIRA of Florida, Inc	Dade	2902 NW 2 Avenue, Suite 200	Miami	FL	33127	Mrs. Andrea Ramirez	305-576-7705		aramirez@fl.aspira.org	http://fl.aspira.org	21-Feb	2pm-5pm
ASPIRA of Florida, Inc	West Palm Beach	5913 South Dixie Highway, Suite D	West Palm Beach	FL	33405	Mrs. Cathy Anaya-Wolf	561-366-9713		canaya@fl.aspira.org	http://fl.aspira.org	21-Feb	2pm-5pm
Urban League of Greater Miami, Inc.	Dade	8500 NW 25th Avenue, Financial Learning Center	Miami	FL	33147	Sharron L. Henley	305-696-4450 Ext. 213		henley10@aol.com	www.urbanleaguemiami.org	22-Feb	2pm-5pm
The Resource Room	Dade	19715 NW 37th Avenue	Miami	FL	33147	Ebony Jackson	305-621-1929	786-229-1701	t_room@bellsouth.net		22-Feb	2pm-5pm
Educate Tomorrow (Foster Youth)	Dade	1717 N. Bayshore Dr., Suite 203	Miami	FL	33132	Tami Reynolds, Erica French	305-374-3751	305-305-0540	jenkins@educatetomorrow.org	www.educatetomorrow.org	22-Feb	2pm-5pm
									french@educatetomorrow.org			

TAMPA (Braulio Colon)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Brooks De-Bartolo Collegiate High School	Hillsborough	11602 N. 15th Street	Tampa	FL	33612	Phildra J. Swagger, Ph.D.	813.971.5600	971-5332	pswagger@bdchs.org	www.bdchs.org	22-Feb	2pm-5pm
HOPE Center	Hillsborough	4902 North 22nd Street	Tampa	FL	33610	Charla Jenkins	813.234.3181		bministr@yahoo.com		21-Feb	1pm-5pm
Pierce Middle School	Hillsborough	5511 N Hesperides St	Tampa	FL	33614	Victor Fernandez	813.872.5340	813-240.3960	victor.fernandez@sdhc.k12.fl.us		22-Feb	2pm-5pm
University of South Florida	Hillsborough	4202 E. Fowler Avenue	Tampa	FL	33620	Dameion Lovett	813.974.5462		dlovett@admin.usf.edu			

JACKSONVILLE (Kevin Cotton)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Florida Community College at Jacksonville	Duval	401 W. State St.	Jacksonville	FL	32202	Kevin T. Cotton	904-633-8413		kcotton@fccj.edu	www.fccj.edu	22-Feb-09	TBD
Florida Community College at Jacksonville	Nassau	76346 William Burgess Blvd.	Yulee	FL	32097	Dohn Hughes	904-548-4481		dhughes@fccj.edu	www.fccj.edu	22-Feb-09	TBD

ORLANDO (Ford, Epps, Honius)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
University of Central Florida	Orlando	4000 Central Florida Blvd.	Orlando	FL	32816	Karemah Campbell	407-823-3168		kscampbe@mail.usf.edu		22-Feb	3pm-5pm
Valencia Community College	Orlando	1800 South Kirkman Road	Orlando	FL	32811	Brad Honious	407-582-1458		bhonious@valenciaccc.edu		22-Feb	2pm-5pm
New Covenant Baptist Church	Orlando	2210 S. Rio Grande Avenue	Orlando	FL	32805	Rev. Leroy Rose, III	407-425-3001 ext. 11		revrose@thecovenant.org		22-Feb	1pm-4pm
Macedonia Church	Eatonville	412 East Kennedy Blvd.	Eatonville	FL		Pastor Derrick McRae	407-647-0010 ext. 103		dmcrae@mdonia.org		22-Feb	1pm-4pm
Jones High School (Concert Location)	Orlando	801 South Rio Grande Avenue, Media Center	Orlando	FL	32805	Mina Ford	407-616-2676		minaford45@hotmail.com		21-Feb	10am-2pm
Oak Ridge High School	Orlando	6000 Winegard Road	Orlando	FL	32809	Mina Ford	407-616-2676		minaford45@hotmail.com		21-Feb	10am-2pm
Frontline Outreach	Orlando	3000 C R Smith Street	Orlando	FL	32805	Arto Woodley	407-293-3000 Ext. 111		arto.woodley@frontlineoutreach.org	www.fl-o.org	22-Feb	2pm-5pm
TECO	Osceola	501 Simpson Road	Kissimmee	FL	34744	Kelly O Gray, Ed.S.	407-891-3160 x300		grayk@osceola.k12.fl.us		22-Feb	1pm-4pm
Chisholm Center	Orlando	520 South Clara Avenue	Deland	FL	32720	Gwen Monroe	386-736-6000, ext. 11		gmonroe@vfymca.org		28-Feb	10am-2pm

FT. LAUDERDALE (Maggie Zalamea)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Broward College	Broward	3501 SW Davie Road	Ft. Lauderdale	FL	33314	Hillary Fox	954-201-7619		hfox@broward.edu		21-Feb	9am-1pm
American Intercontinental University	Broward	2250 N. Commerce Parkway	Westin	FL	33326	Travis Brown	(954) 446-6169		tbrown@aiufl.edu			

TALLAHASSEE (Bill Spiers)

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Washington County School District	Tallahassee	Chipley High School, 1545 Brickyard Road	Chipley	FL	32428	Gail Riley	850-638-6222		riley_g@firm.edu		22-Feb	1pm-4pm

FT. MYERS

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Immokalee High School	Ft. Myers	701 Immokalee Drive	Immokalee	FL	34142	Brigita Gahr	239-377-1862		gahrbr@collier.k12.fl.us		22-Feb	2pm-5pm

PENSACOLA

Confirmed Sites	Region	Physical Address	City	State	Zip Code	Contact Person	Phone1	Cell Phone	E-mail Address	Organization's Website	CGS Event Date	CGS Event Time
Pensacola Junior College	Escambia	1000 College Blvd.	Pensacola	FL	32504	Virginia Santone	850-484-1682		vsantoni@pjcc.edu		22-Feb	