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MASFAA Moments is published quarterly with the purpose of providing a forum for communicating with members about issues affecting our profession as well as to inform members of the ongoing activity of MASFAA committees and the Executive Council.

Articles may be submitted by any person, committee, state association or organization. All submissions are subject to final acceptance and review by the editorial board prior to the publication of the newsletter. Submissions may be rejected, edited for content or edited for length. Articles must be intended for the benefit of MASFAA members and not for company marketing or promotional purposes.

Please send articles, photos and comments to:

Mary Jo Smith
Newsletter Committee Chair
maryjo.smith@usbank.com

President's Message:

WELCOME FROM JIM BROOKS



Jim Brooks, University of Missouri Columbia
 MASFAA President

Welcome to the Fall 2009 MASFAA Moments newsletter. In this edition of the newsletter you will read articles on our recently completed annual conference, and find information on what is happening on the state level. I know that you will find it to be an entertaining and informative read.

It's hard to believe that we're almost through 2009 and into a new year. We've had a busy year in financial aid, and MASFAA has been working hard to support our membership. We culminated our "Time to Refocus" at the annual conference which was held in Minneapolis in October. President Rick Shipman and the 2009 Local Arrangements and Program committees put together a great conference for the 512 MASFAA members who joined us in Minneapolis. To those of you who were able to attend, we thank you for joining us at the conference. For those of you who were unable to attend for one reason or another, you missed an informative and fun conference.

Mr. Daniel Price, retired New York City firefighter, kicked off the conference recounting the terrorist attacks of 2001, and his experiences as a firefighter in the city around that time. It was a stirring talk, and conference attendees were moved by his comments. We were also entertained by The Limestones, an acapella group from St. Olaf College who amazed us all with their repertoire of music. During general sessions, conference attendees heard from Joan Crisman, Interim NASFAA President and CEO, and Dr. Barry Simmons, NASFAA National Chair who provided updates from the national scene. Dr. Amy Tolbert talked to us about "Reversing the Ostrich Approach to Diversity," and Brett Lief, President of NCHelp, talked to us about issues with regard to student loans. Jeff Baker wrapped up our conference with a federal update. In between the general sessions, attendees sat in on sessions on federal aid programs, dealing with change, moving from FFELP to DL, student loan debt management, negotiated rulemaking, training, cohort default rate changes, and many other informative sessions. If you were not able to attend the conference, session handouts are available on the conference website.

The 2009 – 10 MASFAA Board is complete. My thanks to the individuals who have volunteered their time to serve our membership either through elected office, or by chairing a committee. MASFAA has been blessed by an abundance of individuals who are willing to serve. Several of the board members are new to serving at the board level, so all the board members who were able to attend, met in St. Louis early in September. This retreat was an opportunity to give board members an opportunity to meet each other, and to learn more about MASFAA leadership. We talked about the organization, its strengths, weaknesses, and the challenges that face us as we move forward. We are so pleased that over 1,200 individuals are active members of the organization, and I encourage our membership to reach out to the leadership with questions or suggestions for the leadership. You can find the board members under the Leadership link of the MASFAA website. We hope you will consider serving the organization by volunteering as a committee member on one of the committees that work for the organizational good.

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President's Message — continued

As we look toward this next year, we anticipate many changes in financial aid. There are changes to the current federal aid programs that will assist our students, but may cause us some angst as we implement them. Negotiated rulemaking is underway, and I encourage you to get involved, and to contact the negotiators so they have the best information as they go into their sessions. As Dr. Simmons said during his comments at the conference, we are implementers, and need to remember that everything we do is to serve our students. I encourage you to keep that at the forefront as we move forward this year. We know that change is coming, and we need to "Soar on the Wings of Change."

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2010 conference in Chicago. The Local Arrangements Committee chaired by Paula Luff of DePaul University, and the Program Committee chaired by Mo Amos of Northeastern Illinois University, are already hard at work planning for the conference. We were introduced to the "Blues Sisters" at the conference in Minneapolis, as Paula and Maureen gave a teaser on the 2010 conference. Stay tuned for more information.

Have a great year.



2009 MASFAA CONFERENCE – MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Over 500 people attended the 2009 MASFAA Conference held in beautiful Minneapolis, Minnesota! This was an exciting opportunity for MASFAA members to branch out and learn from financial aid professionals from across the Midwest. The variety of topics and expert presenters provided valuable training that was vital for us all to remain current on financial aid issues and work effectively to help students finance their education.

The theme for the conference was 'Time to Refocus', and that is just what we had in mind when we listened to speakers such as Dr. Barry W. Simmons, Sr., NASFAA National Chair; Brett Lief, President, NCHelp; and Jeff Baker, Director of Policy Liaison & Implementation, Federal Student Aid, among others.

For entertainment, we listened to a wonderful A Capella group, the Limestones, from St. Olaf College. There was also time to relax and mingle with our colleagues during Tuesday evenings rock 'n' roll band, the Johnny Holm Band. We look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago for the 2010 MASFAA Conference!

MASFAA MEMBERSHIP

Kaye Caplinger Widney, West Virginia University
MASFAA Membership Services Chair

“Over 1000 current members will have memberships expiring on December 31, 2009. Please renew your membership prior to that time.”



I am very excited to be involved with the MASFAA Membership Services and see this as a wonderful opportunity to inform others about this very active association and the benefits and services which we bring to members throughout the year. Volunteers from each of the nine states will assist me with disseminating information to members and encouraging non-members to consider joining and I appreciate their willingness to help.

It is important to remember that MASFAA has changed the membership period and it now runs concurrently with the calendar year. Over 1000 current members will have memberships expiring on December 31, 2009. Please renew your membership prior to that time in order to maintain uninterrupted access to MASFAA services. You can submit your membership application online and the dues for the year are \$65.00.

Currently, 203 individuals have joined or renewed for 2010. Obviously, those numbers will be increasing throughout the year and I hope that you make the move to maximize your membership by renewing now.

If you have any questions regarding that process or regarding activities that MASFAA members will be engaged in during the upcoming year, please contact me at kaye.widney@mail.wvu.edu. I look forward to working with you over the next year.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season!

CALL FOR INTEREST SESSION PROPOSALS FOR THE 2010 MASFAA CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO

Maureen 'mo' Amos, Northeastern Illinois University

Get involved! Interest Session Proposal Form is now available. We encourage proposals to be submitted using the MASFAA website as early as possible and no later than February 1, 2010. The Conference Program Committee will review the proposals at their meetings in January and April. Please contact Maureen 'mo' Amos at M-Amos@neiu.edu if you have any questions.

2010 MASFAA Conference Program Committee

Maureen 'mo' Amos, Chair, Northeastern Illinois University
David Bowman, Great Lakes Higher Education
Charles 'Chuck' R. Carothers, PhD, MacMurray College
Michelle Hermes, Ripon College
Amy Kienitz, Corporate Financial Services
Shellee Kilbride, Missouri Department of Higher Education
Del Morley, Northwest Missouri State University
Cynthia Van Pelt, Eastern Michigan University
Tresa Weimer, West Virginia University
Betsi Werling, Ohio Northern University
Arnold A. Woods, Grinnell College

Interested in being a
MASFAA volunteer?

Well now is the time! New committees are forming and many of our colleagues have volunteered to serve you, through MASFAA, during 2009-10! If you were hesitating, do so no longer! Being a part of MASFAA is both rewarding and a wonderful professional experience! If you are interested, **please visit <http://www.masfaaweb.org/docs/forms/memVolunteer.html>** and complete the

volunteer form. Each volunteer will be notified when their information is routed to a committee for consideration. Go ahead, take that step now!



Getting Involved

by Rick Shipman, Michigan State University

I recall a conversation I had several years ago with Karen McKnight Casey, the Director of our Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement. She was talking about how difficult it was to find enough resources to train and supervise all of the student volunteers that were signing up to help the many organizations that needed assistance. I thought this was a little ironic since a perennial discussion in our state financial aid associations and MASFAA is how to get more people to volunteer. Karen and I began talking about what motivates people to volunteer and I quickly realized I was being schooled by an expert. A conversation that began about students wound up as a primer on the motivations of financial aid professionals to get involved in things beyond work.

Karen explained that she sorted volunteerism into several categories:

- resume building,
- skill development,
- altruism,
- personal growth, and
- networking.

I think these categories serve equally well to describe the motivations of college students and financial aid professionals. As we begin the new MASFAA cycle, I thought it a good time to ask you to think about how getting involved in our Association can be both personally and professionally rewarding—or, using a word coined by a former colleague, how it can be a “growthful” experience.

No matter in what career stage you find yourself, getting involved with MASFAA and/or your state financial aid association can be immensely rewarding. Of primary importance, there is the somewhat old fashioned good feeling you get from sharing your time and talents with others. If you like to organize, there are opportunities to do so as a regular committee member throughout the year or just during the conference check in process. Let your time constraints and the level of support from those who sign your paycheck guide your thinking in this regard.

If you fancy yourself an author, you can write for the newsletter, position papers for the state or federal issues committee, or help put together the conference program material. You can just as easily volunteer in an area in which you don't have much expertise with the idea of gaining experience in a safe environment—after all, if you fall short of your goals as a volunteer it's much less stressful than doing so at your paid job. If you think your institution does something particularly well, you could volunteer to present on it at a conference. Not comfortable being on stage in that fashion? Invite others to present and serve as the moderator or ask them to join you as part of a panel. You can really face and conquer public speaking fears by talking about an issue you know well to an audience of people you also know well.

And did I mention the opportunities to develop your leadership potential? There are countless ways in which you can practice and improve your leadership skills in a financial aid professional association. Chairing or co-chairing a committee is certainly one way but, even if you don't want to be in such a clear lead role, you can take charge of a subcommittee area. There is always a need for people to serve as “agents in charge” of specific aspects of the organization or event. You can even run for elective office if you really want to put yourself out there. I've yet to talk with anyone who served in an elected position who didn't say it was the best personal and professional experience of their life. Getting feedback on your leadership performance is not a problem either since the folks with whom you work—namely, other volunteers—are unafraid to let you know when they think you have room for improvement and when they think they'd like you to be their boss at the paid job!

Networking is part and parcel of the financial aid professional association. You cannot avoid it. When you work closely with people on an issue of common concern, you by definition have something in common. Sharing your ideas and evaluating those of others in this context goes beyond the meeting room and conference call and quickly makes you fast friends with your colleagues. Friendships that begin in this collaborative setting easily develop into contacts when you have questions in the future or even referrals for employment if you decide you want to make a job change at some point. This is exactly the idea behind the very popular LinkedIn social networking application.

So whether you are looking to build your resume or just your skills, meet new friends, stretch your current knowledge base, or just assist others because you believe it is right thing to do, getting involved in a financial aid professional association is the ticket. And there is a final added bonus: It is so very nice to work with people who actually do say thank you on a regular basis! So please consider volunteering your time and talent with your colleagues. You'll never regret it.

MASFAA Award Recipients for 2009

Award

Allen Purdy Distinguished Service Award

Committees of the Year

New Professional Award

Meritorious Service Award

Awards of Appreciation

Haywood Scholarship

NASFAA Regional Leadership Award

MASFAA State Leadership Award

President's Award

Student Success Story

Recipient

Dan Mann, University of Illinois

Conference Program Committee,
Cappy Breuer, Normandale Community College (MN), chair
Conference Local Arrangements Committee,
Nichole Lien, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine (MN), chair

Tracy Stokes-Hernandez, South Central College (MN)

2008-09 Executive Council Delegates
• Jayne Dinse, South Central College (MN)
• Candi Frazier, West Virginia University
• Keith Williams, Michigan State University
• Steve Schuetz, Ripon College (WI)

Arnold Woods, Grinnell College (IA)
Dick Battig, Student Loan Finance Corporation (MN)

Marcela Rubio (U of Michigan)

John Parker, Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corp.

Illinois - William Bushaw, Western Illinois University
Indiana - Bob Zellers, Ball State University
Iowa - Aaron Steffens, Luther College
Michigan - Diane Lambert Fleming, Central Michigan University
Minnesota - Jayne Dinse, South Central College
Missouri - Jon Gruett, Webster University
Ohio - Karen Kopp, Cuyahoga Community College
West Virginia - Patricia King, West Virginia State University
Wisconsin - Sue Minzlaff, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Jason Crowe, Barnes Jewish College (MO)

Joal Reeves, graduate of the College of St Benedict (MN)



Allen Purdy Distinguished Service Award: Dan Mann



Conference Local Arrangements Committee

MASFAA Award Recipients for 2009



**Award of Appreciation:
Dick Battig**



**Award of Appreciation:
Arnold Woods**



**Student Success Story:
Joal Reeves**



**NASFAA Leadership Award: John Parker
(with Barry Simmons, NASFAA National Chair)**



**Meritorious Service Award:
Steve Schuetz, Jayne Dinse, Keith Williams, Candi Frazier**



**Outstanding New Professional:
Tracy Stokes-Hernandez**



**State Leadership Award:
Jayne Dinse (MN), Karen Kopp (OH),
Rick Shipman (President)
Aaron Steffens (IA), Diane Fleming
(MI), Sue Minzlaff (WI)**

“THE REALITY STORE”: A TRUE REALITY CHECK

Hayley Guevara

MASFAA Leadership symposium member

A common goal between parents and teachers alike is to eliminate the notion among America's youth that “money grows on trees.” MASFAA Family Educational Concerns Committee is doing their best to help educate today's youth by conducting “The Reality Store,” an interactive financial literacy program designed to provide students with real life experiences on financial choices. At Anwatin Middle School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, students entered their Humanities class as typical eighth graders, excited that it was Friday and looking forward to a beautiful fall weekend. After the bell rang and the students found their seats, they assumed the identity of a 28 year old adult, about to face some important financial decisions. This transformation occurred when the students participated in “The Reality Store.”

At the beginning of the program, each student was assigned an education, occupation, income, and by luck of the draw, were able to determine their marital and family status. The students were required to proceed through 18 stations before stopping by the checkout station to see if they had spent their monthly income wisely. Volunteers from MASFAA Family Educational Concerns Committee and MAFAA Leadership Program were on hand to assist the students in making their financial aid choices at the various stations.

The stations included:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Family Status | 11. Transportation |
| 2. Pay your taxes | 12. Household Needs |
| 3. Open Checking Account | 13. Childcare |
| 4. Savings Account | 14. Clothing |
| 5. Housing | 15. Wheel of Fortune |
| 6. Utilities | 16. Household Extras |
| 7. Student Loans | 17. Entertainment |
| 8. Groceries | 18. Donations/Charity |
| 9. Personal Necessities | 19. Check Out |
| 10. Health Insurance | 20. Career Information |

As the students visited each station, they were asked to consider family salary and make either a frugal, moderate, or elaborate spending decision. For example, at the housing station, a frugal home could be in a state of disrepair, and may be located in an unsafe neighborhood. An elaborate home could be new, fashionably decorated, and located in an upscale neighborhood. “A few students learned that they didn't need to own the elaborate house right away; they could start with a frugal house and upgrade to a more expensive home if they had money left at the end,” observed Hannah Chan, Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corp.

As the 8th graders continued through the various stations, the students became more engaged, and began forming discussion groups with their fellow classmates, teachers, and



volunteers. They evaluated the money that remained in their budget, and became selective about the next station they wanted to visit. “They were really serious about how they spent their money and they wanted to make good choices. It was fun to see them spend really big at first and then realize that they would not have money left over for nice clothes or movies,” remarked Sarah Prom, College of St Scholastica.

Many of the participants, with a lower income, began to experience financial woes as they noticed their monthly earnings disappear early in the exercise. “They found out very quickly that they can't just pocket the money and go have fun. Instead, they had many responsibilities they had to apportion their money to before they could use their income for recreation,” remarked Mike Waters, Minnesota School of Business Rochester. At the health insurance station, Ben Flikeid, Globe Education Network, commented, “A few students were out of money by the time they reached me. Some went back and chose different living arrangements to go with their income and some pushed through to see if things would slow down after the transportation stand. Some even mentioned that they were not going to ask their mom for anything, ever again!”

After the students checked out and were counseled about their spending decisions, their eyes remained transfixed on their budget sheets as they drifted into the hallway. It was exciting for all the volunteers to see the students fully engaged in the exercise even after “The Reality Store” had come to a close. Judy McMillan, Normandale Community College, noted, “I overheard a couple of the kids in the hallway trying to find out who had the most money left over after paying their monthly bills.” The true to life monthly budget simulation had given the students a snapshot of what their future will look like with or without an education or children. They realized how valuable a college education is to reaching their financial goals, and how they need to budget their money wisely so they can afford the things that matter most to them.

Note: All quotations are taken from members of the MAFAA Leadership Program.

STATE OF IOWA REPORT

Chad Olson, Iowa State University



IASFAA held its Fall Conference on November 4-6 in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The conference kicked off with a federal update conducted by David Bartlett, Region VII Department of Education Training Officer. This was followed with state update given by Iowa College Student Aid Commission representatives Brenda Easter, Heather Doe, and Todd Brown.

During the conference, interest sessions were given on topics such as Two Pell's in a Year, Policy and Procedure Development, VA Benefits, and Enrollment Reporting. A popular interest session introducing IASFAA members to Social Networking was followed up with a general session panel discussion on the same subject. New and innovative ways of communicating with our student populations were covered.

Federal agents from the Inspector General's Office conducted a general session concerning financial aid fraud. We were informed what suspicious activities to look out for, and given examples of previous fraud cases, some of which took place in Iowa. Although we hope that all of our students are honest, we must remain diligent to preserve the integrity of the federal financial aid program. Plans are already being made for our spring activities, including the Director's Workshop and Legislative Day. In order to improve attendance, these activities are being combined into a single day. The Spring IASFAA Conference will be April 6-7 in Des Moines, where we will be welcoming MASFAA President Jim Brooks as a guest.



WISCONSIN STATE REPORT

Steven M. Schuetz, Ripon College

The 2009-10 WASFAA year is well underway! WASFAA conducted 12 on-site and 2 online financial aid workshops throughout the state for high school guidance counselors. The workshops included an update on the 2010-11 FAFSA, financial aid programs and need analysis.

We recently held a graduation ceremony for the participants in our newly restructured Leadership Development Program. Current WASFAA members were nominated to participate based in a 2 day retreat on their leadership potential. Our hope is that these individuals will serve as the next generation of WASFAA leaders.

We also just came off a highly successful and informative Fall Conference in the Wisconsin Dells. Over 200 members from throughout Wisconsin came to hear important federal and state updates, share best practices and to network. We also raised nearly \$2,700 for our conference charity, The Food Shelf Pantries of Central Wisconsin.

While overall membership is down slightly, we remain a vibrant and diverse organization with 368 members (314 Regular Members, 51 Associate Members, and 3 Retirees).

Thanks to strong leadership throughout the years, we have overcome many challenges. However our profession will continue to be challenged. Whether it's the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), the Higher Education Reconciliation Act (HERA), the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act (ECASLA), or the President's recent budget proposals, these are truly transformative times in student aid.

ILLINOIS STATE REPORT

Sue Swisher, Saint Xavier University

The Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators held two fall workshops with one located in the northern part of the state and the other one in central Illinois in early October. The association made the decision to move away from one two day workshop to a one day drive in offering the same information in order to be more cost effective for our membership. The workshops were an overwhelming success with nearly 200 attendees. Sessions offered ranged from a federal and state update to those on professional development, transitioning to direct lending and year round Pell to name a few. Thanks to the hard work of the Training and Professional Development Committee, we were able to provide the workshops with minimal cost to the association.

Other committees have been busy as well. The Member Support Committee recently launched a Facebook page for the association and is busy working on a mentor program for our members. The Diversity Committee is coordinating an event for our membership to participate in Chicago Cares Service Day on January 16, 2010. The conference committees have been busy planning our annual conference which will be held in late March in Springfield, IL. The theme for our conference is Making Connections, U R ILASFAA.

Submit your state report for the next MASFAA newsletter to:

Mary Jo Smith

maryjo.smith@usbank.com

OHIO STATE REPORT

Ann Marie Gruber, Lakeland Community College



The OASFAA annual Winter Conference will be held December 14-16 at the Columbus Renaissance with the theme "It's A Balancing Act". We are very pleased that with the support of MASFAA we are able to offer NASFAA CORE training to our membership at this conference. The partnering of these three associations to offer this invaluable training to those new to financial aid in Ohio speaks volumes for our profession. MASFAA President Jim Brooks will be attending the OASFAA conference and will provide a MASFAA update and presentation of the State Leadership Award to Karen Kopp from Cleveland Institute of Art. Conference attendees will be asked to support the conference charity event which will provide clothing and toys for children in the Appalachian region of Ohio. OASFAA conference attendees have a strong history of generously assisting those in need around the state through our charity drives.

The OASFAA Leadership Committee is in the planning stages of the leadership program that will begin in 2009-10 and extend into 2010-11. This year's training will be conducted during the annual spring conference preparing the participants for the opportunity to take an active role in the association by serving on a committee(s) for 2010-11. The leadership program is open to any OASFAA member and grooms members of the class for leadership roles both in the association and in the workplace by offering mentorship from past leadership graduates, hands-on opportunities for involvement and a great program full of practical leadership training.

HOOSIER STUDENTS TO BENEFIT FROM ADVICE AND 40 SCHOLARSHIPS THIS COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY

Thomas Ratliff, Indiana Wesleyan University



College Goal Sunday – Indiana has some great news to announce. First, thanks to our partnership with LearnMore Indiana, College Goal Sunday – Indiana will be able to offer a \$1,000 scholarship at EACH of our 37 site locations for 2010! At each site, a lucky attendee will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to be used for any educational expense for the fall term 2010. These 37 scholarships are in addition to the annual three \$1,000 regional scholarships that the College Goal Sunday – Indiana committee already awards. This brings our scholarship dollar total to \$40,000 for 2010. WOW!!

Second, again in partnership with LearnMore Indiana and ISFAA, we will be offering two FAFSA Friday webcast events on February 12th and 19th. The webcast will be broadcast twice on each of the Fridays – an afternoon session and then an evening session. This webcast with live chat and toll-free phone number, will enable students and their families to preview the FAFSA form, have general questions answered and prepare them to attend College Goal Sunday with the necessary documents to complete and file their FAFSA online that day.

As College Goal Sunday in Indiana turns 21, and the help students receive is needed more than ever, the effort to prepare students for College Goal Sunday, and the benefit for attending grows as well. ISFAA and LearnMore Indiana are getting creative to help every possible student this upcoming February!

SUPPORTING SPANISH-SPEAKING FAMILIES AND FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS: CREATING A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE-GOING EXPERIENCE

Craig Berkley

TG Account Executive Team Manager

As the college-bound student population continues to diversify, producing information in languages other than English continues to be critical to the success of educational awareness, access, and persistence efforts. Demographic figures continue to reflect an increasingly diversifying college-bound population in terms of age, race and ethnicity, and language preference. Higher education professionals continue to adjust to the need of producing information in multiple languages.

Demographers and educators alike are focusing more and more on statistical information that provides insight into trends about language preferences within the U.S. population.

The primary language spoken at home by over 34 million people aged 5 or older is Spanish, according to the 2007 American Community Survey conducted by the United States Census Bureau. In addition, the U.S. is home to more than 45 million Hispanics who speak Spanish as a first or second language, as well as more than 6 million Spanish students.

This article explores the various facets of the college-going experience, and provide insight into how, as a financial aid administrator, you can support both first-generation students and their Spanish-speaking families in pursuing their educational dreams.

Investigations: Attending college fairs and presentations

The initial exposure some first-generation Spanish-speaking families and their students have to college representatives may be at their local college and career fair day, or at an institution's presentation from college recruiters or admissions representatives. Some of these students prepare for or explore their options earlier, but this milestone may be the first time both the adult family members and the student are focused on the college option at the same time.

When interacting with first-generation students and their families at these events, be prepared to discuss different topics with each group. Students may be further along in the exploration process, so their questions often relate to degree programs, campus life, and student activities. Some may want to know more about scholarships and "free" aid. Cost is often a factor, but if your institution is competitive, students may want to spend more time examining admissions requirements more closely.

Parents, on the other hand, are likely to want to focus on financing the education and the basics of the postsecondary education process. Parents of first-generation students don't have personal experience to draw from, of course, and perhaps only limited access to others with college-going experience, so their questions will focus more on the basics. This may include length of degree programs, terms of attendance, assessment methods, and college and career placement services after graduation. They will want to know "how things happen" at your institution, so this discussion may encompass multiple topics.

Parents may also have several questions related to college life from a parent's perspective. Parents likely will want to be assured that their student will be taken care of when away from home. They may ask about safety and security resources, availability of meals, and access to medical assistance if needed.

Preparing to assist Spanish-speaking families

If you are attending an event where you anticipate meeting first-generation students and Spanish-speaking families, it's best to be well prepared. If possible, try to have a Spanish-speaking representative available. If this is not possible, call ahead and see whether the host school is willing to identify a parent or responsible student to assist you. Often, this is a better solution, because the parent or student will be familiar to those in attendance. Another option is to identify a graduate, who can offer both language support and answer experiential questions that parents are eager to ask.

Be prepared with Spanish literature. Many guarantors (including TG) offer literature at no cost to distribute to families. Often these publications include content that can answer questions Spanish speakers usually ask about the college experience. Literature that describes the merits of your institution and program can assist as well, but Spanish-speaking parents are more apt to want answers to fundamental questions first.

[continued on page 11](#)

Supporting Spanish-Speaking Families — continued

Finally, offer Spanish-speaking family members the name of an admissions representative, a counselor, or another resource to call to ask their follow-up questions. Call centers can be helpful, but wary parents will appreciate the name of an individual they can reach out to as they explore their options. Collect names and phone numbers if there are unanswered questions; your Spanish support counselor or team can follow up to create a relationship and be available in the future.

Decision-making: The applications process

The focus for Spanish-speaking families and their students during admissions, enrollment, and through the first months of the college experience is on understanding how college works, and, in particular, how education is financed. During the admissions consideration period, first-generation students with Spanish-speaking family members are likely to need considerable support, as most families do. Taking college admissions tests, preparing applications, and filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are key steps in the process. This is the same time in which some families may be challenged to complete the steps necessary to access a postsecondary education.

Applying for admission and aid

Counseling resources may be limited at secondary schools, so support in building awareness about college admissions testing dates and fees is always helpful. In addition, most first-generation students with Spanish-speaking families can benefit from your help in preparing college applications. Many schools offer this support, but it never hurts to have college representatives available to answer basic questions about applying.

Obviously, the FAFSA is another critical step in the process. Although most families today understand that financial aid is a necessary part of pursuing a higher education, those unfamiliar with higher education in general may perceive financial aid as public assistance and shy away based on the stigma it represents. Therefore, it's important to emphasize to students and families that everyone should consider going through the process.

Several guarantors offer outreach programs in the mid to late winter that help families and students prepare the FAFSA. These efforts include events at high schools, malls, churches, and other institutions that support educational efforts. For Spanish speakers, these programs may include video programs and materials, as well as special events reaching specialized populations. Use these resources whenever possible.

Exploring futures: Campus visits and interviews

First-generation students and their Spanish-speaking families may also take advantage of on-campus interviews and tours. Arrange to have bilingual students available to provide campus tours and highlight support services. Be prepared for the full family to participate—exploring the future home of the student can be a family affair.

A visit to the financial aid office, especially if you have Spanish-speaking counselors available, can also be invaluable to the first-generation student and their Spanish-speaking family. Most families are wary of filling out forms that disclose personal information, and families unfamiliar with the education finance process will be no different. A counselor fluent in the language can allay any concerns and explain when and how the information will be used.

If student loans are a consideration, this is also a good time for a counselor to explain the process of borrowing for an education. Some Spanish-speaking cultures are wary of the concept of credit, so it is possible that some families will take a negative stance: "If we can't pay for it now, we can't afford it." Respecting decisions is important. However, first-generation families may benefit from exploring the costs as an investment in the students' future.

Creating relationships is key

And finally, in all of these interactions, relationships are important. Encourage your institution's student support offices to provide names and phone numbers to first-generation students and their Spanish-speaking families. These efforts may contribute to a student's eventual success in completing their education.

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THANKSGIVING FUN

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR?

by MASFAA Members

- My Friends.
- Everything.
- We still have our freedom.
- Recognizing how blessed my life is.
- Family and friends ... and my job!
- All of my family members are healthy
- The fact that during this economic time, I'm in a place and position to help those who are struggling.
- My staff.
- Good health and stable employment.
- Good health, my loving family and my caring friends. Without all that, life would be hard.

THANKSGIVING JOKES TO SHARE

How can you send a turkey through the post office?
Bird Class Mail

Why do turkeys always go, "gobble, gobble"?
Because they never learned good table manners

What happened when the turkey got into a fight?
He got the stuffing knocked out of him

Why was the turkey the drummer in the band?
Because he had the drumsticks

Why did the Pilgrims want to sail to America in the spring?
Because April showers bring Mayflowers

What kind of vegetable would you like tonight?
Beets me

Why did Johnny get such low grades after Thanksgiving?
Because everything is marked down after the holidays

Why did the turkey cross the road?
It was the chicken's day off