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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

Greetings everyone!! As you read this edition of MASFAA Moments, we're into the month of March, and we've all started gearing up for the 2010 – 11 aid year, either having packaged or getting ready to package first time college freshmen, preparing for summer and trying to get our processes hammered out for two scheduled Federal Pell Grant disbursements in a year (aka year-round-Pell), We're also waiting to see what happens with SAFRA. With healthcare stalled, and Washington, DC digging out from what has been dubbed a "snowmageddon," we (im)patiently wait for things to unfold.

We all continue to deal with the effects of the economy. If you've read the recent CBO figures, Federal Pell Grant projections have climbed higher than anyone in the federal government expected. We were already seeing signs of this on our campuses, as we watched our Pell expenditures for the 2009 – 10 award year increase substantially over the previous years.

We've looked, in consternation, at our campus based program tentative funding levels for the 2010 – 11 award year, noting the decrease in some allocations, and wondering how we're going to be able to make up the gaps that will be created as our award packages decrease. Normally we'd look to our campus general aid funds, but those are also being either cut or flat-lined as our institutions try to keep operating costs down, and so keep tuition increases to a minimum. We are also still under travel limitations and our professional organizations are seeing the effects of these cuts both in conference attendance, and in membership renewals.

The good news is that economic indicators appear to show that things are improving. We've seen it as our investment quarterly reports show fewer minus signs in the earnings/losses column. We're also seeing attempts by the federal government to help move things along. Some of those initiatives will be great for our students, especially if additional funds are infused into the Federal Work Study program.

The MASFAA board met in sunny, cold Minneapolis the last weekend of January. We have had changes to the board as individuals have either moved out of the profession, or out of the MASFAA region. I'm always amazed and thankful at how willing we are, as financial aid professionals, to take on additional responsibility, and to serve each other while continuing to serve our students and institutions.

President's Message — continued

Be assured that your MASFAA leadership is continuing to do all that we can to support you. The Local Arrangements and Conference Program committees have been hard at work planning for our conference in Chicago this fall. Our Summer Institute committee has reached out to aid officers to gauge the feasibility of a summer institute this year. They are also thinking about other training options should summer institute fall victim to the struggling economy and institutional budget limitations.

During the next administrative year, it will be time to review the association's long range plan. Please help us as we plan for the future. We need your feedback to ensure that we're heading in the right direction. The Research Committee is putting together an instrument that will be used to gather information from you. I know that it will seem like one more thing taking up some of your time, but we hope you will respond. As an executive board, we really need your input in mapping out the future of the organization, so I encourage you to take a few moments and respond to the survey.

Thanks for everything you do for your state associations, MASFAA, and for our nation's college going population. Remember that we make a difference in the lives of many people every day, so in spite of the frustrations we occasionally face, the results of what we do go way beyond what we see every day.

Regards,
Jim



MASFAA IS COMING TO CHICAGO!

For those of you who missed the "Blues Sisters" Chicago conference preview in Minneapolis, you missed a great show. While we can't promise they will be performing again during the 2010 conference in Chicago, we can promise the conference will give you a chance to learn, network with your colleagues and have an opportunity to relax.

The Local Arrangements and Program Committees are working hard to present a great conference. Chicago is a great city for a MASFAA Conference—we'll have informative sessions by day, and you'll be able to shop, see a play, take in a game, listen to some blues, or just relax by night.

Reserve your room now at <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/MASFAA2010!>

Watch your email for more conference information—including the opening of registration—and join us October 17th – 20th in the Windy City for the MASFAA Annual Conference, Soaring on the Winds of Change!



MASFAA MEMBERSHIP

Kaye Caplinger Widney, West Virginia University
MASFAA Membership Services Chair



We are already into our second month of 2010 MASFAA Membership! Although office budgets may be tight, it is great to know that you value the benefits of MASFAA membership and have chosen to be involved throughout this entire membership year.

As a current member, encourage those who are not to get involved with MASFAA. Let's keep our numbers strong even with the budget constraints that many of us face!

Currently, Indiana has the highest number of members in MASFAA, followed by Illinois. There are 52 new members who were not involved last year and I hope that they will be able to experience our wonderful annual conference in Chicago this October.

What are some of the other benefits? They include:

- ▶ Exchange of ideas/networking with your colleagues
- ▶ A strong, well-respected voice with the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- ▶ Web access and inclusion in the MASFAA directory at www.masfaaweb.org
- ▶ Professional and personal growth
- ▶ Involvement and training opportunities
- ▶ MASFAA Newsletter which is posted quarterly on the web
- ▶ Ability to post job vacancies on the MASFAA listserv

Take advantage of what MASFAA can do for you...ask your questions on our listserv... raise issues or concerns and get feedback from other members... support the nomination and election of our officers for the next cycle.

As always, if you have any questions regarding the membership process, please contact me at kaye.widney@mail.wvu.edu.

Enjoy these cold winter days! Spring will be here eventually.....

Value Added, Value Added, Value Added

Does it seem like every request you make these days must be justified with this criteria? If you have new staff, or current staff who are moving into program administration responsibilities, then MASFAA has the **value added program** for you!

MASFAA Summer Institute Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, OH

Why should you attend MASFAA Summer Institute?

- ▶ Stellar instructors will present training based upon NASFAA CORE materials and their own vast knowledge (Hint: Pam Fowler, Ginny Biada, Debra McKinney, Candi Fraizer, Michiale Schneider...)
- ▶ Dorm life reminds you of your college days and creates a tight knit group that will remain in contact years later
- ▶ Training opportunity that leaves you well prepared to take on any program administrative role necessary
- ▶ Where else can you get all of this, inclusive of room and board, for \$475 in a double occupancy room

Now that's value added!

How do you register?

Registration will be available in two weeks with a registration deadline of **April 15th**.

(Please be aware that there is a minimum number of participants required to offer the program, so we highly suggest that you do not make travel arrangements until you receive final notification after April 15th.)

We Hope to See You There!

What it Takes to be an FAO

by Rick Shipman, Michigan State University

Sometimes the serious becomes the hilarious. We have seen this from time to time in the federal student aid regulations. I think we are seeing it also in the evolving set of responsibilities that accrue to the financial aid administrator. There was a time when the job descriptions for financial aid administrators went something like this:

1. Baccalaureate degree or equivalent combination of education and experience
2. Ability to work with federal, state and institutional aid programs
3. Understanding of financial aid laws, policies and procedures
4. Good communication skills
5. Team oriented and goal driven
6. Occasional night and evening work required
7. Pay commensurate with education and experience

That was about it. **Today's job description looks more like this:**

1. College degree required, advanced degree desired
2. Must possess excellent leadership skills
3. Demonstrated money management finesse
4. Organizational savvy
5. Good political sense
6. Outstanding writing and speaking abilities
7. Advanced media training helpful
8. Ability to read and interpret laws and translate them into office policies and procedures
9. Willingness to travel and work nights and weekends, in addition to 8 to 5 office hours
10. Comfortable dealing with young people with mental health issues
11. Generally safe work environment but occasionally may fear for life and limb
12. A working knowledge of state education financing procedures
13. Experience with technology and computer applications required
14. Computer programming certification desired
15. Ability to work through physical and mental pain, colds and flu required
16. Knack for doing more with less, year after year after year
17. Low pay and uncertain benefits
18. Ability to be all things to all people
19. Spouse with good paying job and benefits helpful
20. Good driving record and economical transportation suggested
21. Experience making stone soup a definite plus

So maybe I got the specifics wrong on the job description but I'm sure you understand my point. Our jobs have become overwhelmingly complex. The skills required to balance the external and internal demands are unique and largely have to be learned on the job. Who would have thought that a position viewed as behind the scenes and technical would emerge as being critical to institutional achievement of enrollment goals?

Who would have thought that we would be asked to lobby congress, advise our school's legal counsel, become spokespeople for the tuition increase decisions of our boards, become media resources on anything related to student financial aid or costs or debt, and all of those other things on my list? And what specific training did any of us get to do these things? Oh well, I'm reminded that there should be no whining in student financial aid, at least by those of us on the keyboard side of the desk. We are the miracle workers who often go unnoticed and generally go unappreciated.

Thankfully, we have one another.



MASFAA Awards Committee

by Michelle Curtis, Chairperson Awards Committee 2009-10

There is good news and bad news to report from the awards committee. The bad news is that as a result of the current tight financial situation the budget for awards is half of what it was in the previous year. At both the president-elect's fall retreat and the January 2010 Executive Board meeting there was shared understanding that changes will need to be made to reduce the costs of administering the various awards for MASFAA.

The good news is that there are plenty of dedicated and caring professionals in our region to be recognized and the awards committee, with your help, is ready to honor our colleagues. Please take a moment to show your appreciation and nominate someone you feel is deserving of recognition for all they do.

In order for the awards committee to accomplish this challenge we are able to draw from a prior committee's work of an existing, fairly recent "MASFAA Awards Committee Survey" that garnered 115 total respondents. The number of respondents was small compared to the total membership. But the results of the survey, which are available on the MASFAA website, should be able to assist us in making some tough choices about the format and style (currently engraved wooden/metallic plaques) the 2009-2010 awards will take given budgetary limitations. We welcome any suggestions and opinions on how to achieve the goal of honoring and recognizing those individuals who have provided service or made significant contributions to our profession in the region.

To that end please take this opportunity to nominate one or more colleagues for the various awards that MASFAA recognizes at its annual fall conference. Specific nominations are sought for the following awards:

- ▶ Allan Purdy Distinguished Service Award
- ▶ Meritorious Service
- ▶ Award of Appreciation
- ▶ Outstanding New Professional
- ▶ MASFAA Leadership (each state)
- ▶ Student Success Story (must be from the 2010 conference host state of Illinois)

Award descriptions are located on the MASFAA website under Association Information and the 2010 awards nomination form is available under Online Forms. Our deadline to receive nominations is June 30, 2010.

STATE OF IOWA REPORT

Chad Olson, Iowa State University



The IASFAA Legislative Day & Director's Drive-In Workshop were held on January 25, 2010. A group of 25 financial aid professionals braved blizzard conditions to make it to the event. Two state representatives met with the

group to discuss state appropriations from financial aid. The Director's group discussed TILA disclosures, net price calculator, year round pell, and veteran's benefits, among other topics.

College Goal Sunday sessions were scheduled for 13 locations around the state on February 20.

Planning continues for the 2010 IASFAA Spring Conference, to be held April 6-7 in Des Moines. Session topics include year round Pell Grants, private loan disclosures, COD and EDEXpress training. IASFAA is excited to have MASFAA President Jim Brooks in attendance for the conference!



Over the past 40 years, we've worked together to help millions of people build better lives through higher education. Now more than ever, the right partner makes all the difference. In these changing times, we remain steadfast in our commitment to provide the highest level of support for professionals and students. Working together, we will ensure that future generations can pay for college and fulfill their dreams. To learn more, call 866-464-7855 or visit mygreatlakes.org.



MINNESOTA STATE REPORT

Jayne Dinse, South Central Technical College



The Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators recently held a two day session on FA 101 for those new to the profession or those wanting a refresher. Over twenty individuals attended. MAFAA also promoted for the membership one hour webinars on Cash Management and Regulations, Cohort Default Rates, Federal Reporting, and Policies and Procedures. These webinars were provided by USA Funds.

Minnesota is preparing for our spring and this year our only conference. MAFAA Spring Conference will be held May 5, 6, and 7 at Madden's Report in Brainerd. The conference will begin with "WHAT'S YOUR CODE? LESSONS ON ETHICS & ACCOUNTABILITY FROM THE SPORTS WORLD TO THE BUSINESS WORLD." Ross Bernstein is a best-selling author and has appeared on thousands of television and radio programs over his career, including CNN and ESPN, as well as in the pages of the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and USA Today. We will receive information on the generational gaps in the workplace to gain a better understanding how we accept this generational diversity.

Other presenters include Jamie Malone, Department of Education on Year Round Pell, and Maria Marella, Federal Student Aid on the Direct Loan Program. We will also receive a state update from our Office of Higher Education. Other sessions include FA 101 topics, outreach, and personal interest. A live and silent auction will be held with proceeds benefiting Second Harvest Heartland will be held following our annual awards banquet.



2010 NASFAA NATIONAL CONFERENCE
DENVER, COLORADO ▲ JULY 18-21, 2010

**Don't be on the outside looking in!
Three great reasons to be an insider this year:**

- 1.** The NASFAA Conference offers the best of both worlds: sessions led by your own colleagues, as well as by Department of Education staff.
- 2.** The opportunity to learn and network with your peers from across the country.
- 3.** Something for every interest. Check out the online scheduler, which includes about half of the final sessions. More sessions are being added so check back often. You can also view a separate list of potential Department of Education sessions.

Go to <http://www.nasfaa.org/Subhomes/AnnualConference2010/index.html> for more information and to register for the conference.



ILLINOIS STATE REPORT

Sue Swisher, Saint Xavier University

Last November, elections were held for the 2010 – 2011 Executive Board. I am pleased to announce the results of the election.

President

Michelle Trame, University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign

President Elect

Jana Albrecht, Illinois State University

Past President

Sue Swisher, Saint Xavier University

Executive Vice President

Joanna Dye, Black Hawk College

Treasurer

Mark Holysz, College of DuPage

Secretary

Jo Branson, Spoon River College

Vice President Community Colleges

Paula Carpenter, Lakeland Community College

Vice President Health Professions

Nathan Ernst – Midwestern University

Vice President Private College

Karen LeVeque, DePaul University

Vice President Senior Public

Mary Brown, University of Illinois, Springfield

Vice President Proprietary

Jackie Richardson, Career College Corporation

Chicago Regional Coordinator

Walter O'Neill, Roosevelt University

Northern Regional Coordinator

Mary Shaw, University of St. Francis

Southern Regional Coordinator

Pam Lytel, Parkland College

The committees have been busy with coordinating FAFSA workshops, participating in community service events, identifying award recipients, developing and implementing the mentoring program and planning for the Leadership Retreat in June.

Our annual conference is in Springfield, IL on March 24 – 26 and our conference planning committees have been busy with preparation. This year's conference is a full agenda with an emphasis on networking opportunities for the membership which follows our theme, Making Connections U R ILASFAA. Sessions available will range from the regulatory information presented by the Department of Education and ISAC to best practices within our profession. Specific interest sessions include regulatory updates from the Department of Education, Year Round Pell Grant and TEACH Grant administration, Federal Work Study, Direct Lending conversion, Private Student Loan administration, Needs Analysis changes, Veterans administration, Financial Literacy, Software User's Groups, and general financial aid best practices.

OHIO STATE REPORT

Ann Marie Gruber, Lakeland Community College



The beautiful Columbus Renaissance was the site of the annual Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) Winter Conference

December 14-16. Two hundred and eighty five members were in attendance. Keeping with the theme of the conference "It's a Balancing Act," a variety of sessions were offered including federal and state updates, need analysis training, general financial aid for mid level and seasoned administrators and professional development. In addition, NASFAA CORE Training was available through MASFAA sponsorship to those with 2 years or less experience in financial aid. OASFAA is very grateful to MASFAA for this support in being able to offer this valuable training to our members. Kathy Purvis, MASFAA President-Elect attended the conference and provided a MASFAA update. Ted Hallenbeck from PNC Bank was honored with The Alex Murdoch Award given annually to an OASFAA member who has given outstanding service to the association.

OASFAA hosted two Support Professional Workshops and eleven Guidance Counselor Workshops in November and December. In addition, the association once again supported College Goal Sunday held February 14 at 41 sites across the state, with 613 OASFAA members volunteering their Sunday afternoon to assist 1757 students and their families begin the financial aid process.

INDIANA STATE REPORT

Jon Riestler, Hanover College

It has been a busy beginning to 2010 for the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association. Dozens of our members from across the state have completed hundreds of financial aid nights. We are preparing for our 21st College Goal Sunday on February 21, and anxiously awaiting the results of a new election. In the midst of all this activity an important committee is quietly working on plans for the 2010 Winter Conference.

This committee is not responsible for site arrangements or the program. It is a special task force that has been formed to plan the celebration of ISFAA's 75th anniversary. The members of this group include several former ISFAA presidents, current association members, and retirees. Each is hard at work coordinating the special events that will highlight this significant milestone.

This event will be a great opportunity to reconnect with old ISFAA friends that have left the state in recent years. Additional details on the celebration will be provided later this year at www.isfaa.org.

MICHIGAN STATE REPORT

Rob Wirt, Ferris State University

MSFAA just concluded its 2010 Winter Training, January 31 – February 3, in Lansing. Although I haven't seen the evaluations yet, word of mouth has indicated this was an excellent training, as we had a variety of timely and important sessions, as well as some notable speakers/presenters. These were highlighted by NASFAA National Chair, Barry Simmons; the one and only Jamie Malone (who made it despite an accident that required her to be on crutches—she's such a wonderful and dependable resource!), and the Treasurer for the State of Michigan, Robert Kleine. Attendance was very good, with 288 total attendees. This is an increase of over 40 from last year, which in this economy, I think is a great testament to the value this training offered. I think this also reinforces the results we received when we recently surveyed the membership to see if there was a strong push to move to one training per year or shorten our current training structure/schedule to fewer days. The one exception to this will be in 2011-12: the Board recently voted to replace the normal 2012 winter training with a drive-in conference of some type. This action is being taken in the hopes of encouraging our membership to attend the 2011 MASFAA Conference in Grand Rapids.

The Silent Auction held at winter training was once again successful, as we were able to raise \$3,396 for this year's charity, Hope Network of West Michigan. A special thanks to all the generous donors and buyers who went above and beyond the call of duty to make this happen!

The 2010 Board approved a budget that included over \$40,000 in savings to the association over last year's budget. As in past years, we are continuing our efforts to achieve a balanced budget. The Board has done an excellent job of maintaining high quality in our trainings and other activities, while facing greatly reduced donations.

Across the state, financial aid offices are still coping with the elimination of several state financial aid programs that were eliminated in this year's budget. This year's elections will be historic, as we will be electing a new governor, as well as a large number of senators and representatives. With a huge state deficit looming, and the apparent resistance to raising taxes, it is hard to be optimistic for the future of higher education funding and state financial aid funding in the state of Michigan. But we are hanging in there—as we are the masters of doing more with less!

Who is MSFAA? The Michigan Student Financial Aid Association (MSFAA), founded in 1967, is a state organization that brings together postsecondary schools and other public and private organizations involved with providing financial aid for students. The Executive Board, which consists of seven members and five sector representatives, govern the organization within the guidelines set forth in the bylaws. Working together, committees carry out the tasks mandated by the Executive Board during the course of the year.

MSFAA's Mission: The mission of the Association is to enhance student financial aid awareness, to promote student access to postsecondary education and to provide professional development opportunities for its members.



USA Funds Life Skills — Financial literacy and time management for college students.

USA Funds® Life Skills® gives you the tools to teach your students how to manage their finances and time while they pursue their degrees and after graduation. Our online curriculum addresses the following topics:

- ◆ Financial aid and paying for college.
- ◆ School and personal life management.
- ◆ Credit management.
- ◆ Preparing for life after college.
- ◆ Personal finance for graduate, medical and married students.

Visit www.usafunds.org to learn more about USA Funds Life Skills and see how it can help make a difference on your campus.

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IASFAA SUPPORTS THE ULTIMATE RECYCLING

Amy Gaffney, University of Dubuque

The Iowa Association of Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA) embraced the trend of going green during its most recent November conference. The conference theme was "IASFAA Goes Green: Harvesting Funds for Students." But the theme didn't stop with clever session names for this creative and charitable group. IASFAA's Associate Member Relations Committee (AMRC) organized IASFAA's charitable efforts and selected the Iowa Donor Network (IDN) as the recipient organization.

Chris Keahi, Public Affairs Coordinator for the Iowa Donor Network, is also a former IASFAA member and financial aid colleague. With such a great connection in Keahi, and knowing some of our very own IASFAA membership have benefited from organ donation, IASFAA saw this as a "perfect match" and were eager to see how IASFAA could help support the Iowa Donor Network (IDN).

Rather than hold a fund raiser, the AMRC wanted to help educate our membership on the realities of organ donation. As the Public Affairs Coordinator, Keahi was invited to speak about the myths and facts of organ donation (see "a few facts" below) and the IDN's work. The second speaker was a longstanding member of IASFAA who personally experienced the benefits of organ donation and shared his very touching story with the conference attendees. In addition to these speakers, the AMRC hosted a toy drive for children hospitalized due to the transplant process—either as a recipient or a donor.

Mr. Keahi was not only happy to see his IASFAA friends again, but was most excited to tell of a new project he was leading for the IDN. This new initiative of the IDN involves gaining a presence on the college campuses of Iowa. The IDN recognizes the value of the college student population and wants to educate students on how they may help improve the life of someone in need through organ donation. Keahi explained the variety of ways living donors may contribute and the powerful impact it has for recipients. Keahi was also careful to explain the importance of getting registered and the proper method of registering one's self as a donor. (HINT— the back of your driver's license does not do the trick!)

The IDN's college campaign is in its infancy but Keahi hopes it will take hold and hundreds of additional donors may be enrolled to help someone in need. The Iowa Donor Network is dedicated to Iowa, but the importance of organ donation knows no boundaries. You too may be able to support a similar organization in your state-- even on your campus! You can start with something small, like becoming a registered donor!

A few facts about organ donation

- ▶ From one donor, it is theoretically possible for about 50 recipients to benefit, if every organ and tissue that could be donated is actually donated, and if all of them are able to be transplanted. However, even if only one organ or tissue is able to be transplanted, a world of good may result.
- ▶ Over 28,000 people get transplants in the U.S. every year. They are a standard, successful treatment for many diseases and conditions. Over half of all organ transplants done in the U.S. are kidney transplants, about a quarter are liver transplants, with the other organs making up the remaining numbers.
- ▶ Transplants performed January - November 2009 total 26,095.

The statistics and resources provided in this article may be found online at the Iowa Donor Network's website www.iowadonorregistry.org. The Iowa Donor Network is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency certified by the United States Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. To fulfill our mission, IDN works with more than 100 hospitals across the state of Iowa. We integrate our work in organ/tissue recovery and organ distribution with a leading role in public education, hospital development and family support services. IDN also works closely with the Iowa Lions Eye Bank to promote eye donation.

Additional online resources on organ donation

www.transweb.org - To provide information about donation and transplantation to the general public in order to improve organ and tissue procurement efforts worldwide

www.donatelife.net - Donate Life is a national coalition of organizations who support and encourage organ, tissue and eye donation and where you may register to be a donor.

www.aopo.org - Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) represents and serves organ procurement organizations through advocacy, support, and development of activities that will maximize the availability of organs and tissues and enhance the quality, effectiveness, and integrity of the donation process.

FAFSA CHANGES MAKE IT EASIER AND FASTER FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO COMPLETE

Ben Dobner, School Trainer, Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation

Each year, more than 16 million students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In the past, the process was overwhelming and often took four times longer than the simplest tax return. But with recent regulations requiring FAFSA simplification, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has been busy making changes so that both the paper and online versions are easier and take less time for students and families to complete.

You can help your students by getting a better understanding all of the changes that have been made to help make the form less complicated and more manageable for students and families. Here's a quick recap of the changes:

- ▶ **fafsa.gov.** There's a new website address—students and families can now reach FAFSA on the Web by simply typing in fafsa.gov. By eliminating the “ed” in fafsa.ed.gov, ED hopes to reduce the likelihood that students wind up at a for-profit website that charges students a fee to complete the form—the FAFSA is free so students and families should never pay anyone to complete it for them.
- ▶ **Redesigned website.** The new website is more student focused. Improvements include:
 - Application steps across the top of the page to help students know where they are in the application
 - A help and hints box to guide students through each page
 - Status messages to guide students through their application, and student and parent indicators to let students and parents know what questions are for the student and what questions are for the parent
- ▶ **Confirmation page.** This comprehensive page arms the student with more information than ever to help them make their decision about where to go to college. It offers:
 - Complete information on student loan and grant eligibility
 - Details about specific colleges the student has chosen and links them to the College Navigator for more information, including retention, graduation, and transfer rates
 - The student the ability to email the page to their personal email address so they can reference it again
- ▶ **Enhanced skip logic.** Skip logic allows students and families applying online to skip questions based on their answers to earlier questions, allowing fewer questions and web screens for almost all students. This not only saves students time, but it also allows them to focus on the questions that matter to them.
- ▶ **Enhanced security.** A number of changes limit the display of a student's Social Security number on the FAFSA, including the addition of a virtual keyboard to hide keystrokes and other enhancements that mask a student's SSN.
- ▶ **Department of Defense match.** With new provisions added by HEOA to the Higher Education Act of 1965, an otherwise eligible student whose parent or guardian died as a result of U.S. military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, may receive increased amounts of Title IV student financial assistance. ED and the Department of Defense are working together to create a database match that will help schools and ED identify students who are eligible for the increased aid. A manual match will be in place in February 2010 and an automated match will be in place for the 2010–11 award year.
- ▶ **Easier revisions.** Error messages on the 2010–2011 FAFSA are now displayed as a list in a text box. Applicants must resolve each error before they are allowed to continue to the next screen.
- ▶ **IRS Data Retrieval.** IRS data will soon be able to be transferred and populated into an applicant's FAFSA. The IRS Data Retrieval tool allows FAFSA on the Web (FOTW) applicants to transfer their income tax data from the IRS to the FOTW. The tool shortens the application process and decreases the complexity of some of the financial questions for students and families.
- ▶ **Updated paper FAFSA.** Minor changes were made to the paper FAFSA to keep it consistent with the FOTW. The colors have been updated for consistency with the FOTW—blue for student information and purple for parent information. The same legislation changes also apply to the paper FAFSA:
 - The student marital status question, question 16, was expanded to four options
 - The questions regarding veterans education benefits are no longer required per HEOA and were deleted
 - Questions 45g and 93g were deleted because the value of military housing and military housing allowance has been excluded from consideration as untaxed income benefits in the need analysis formula
 - Any income earned from work under a cooperative education program at an institution of higher education (questions 44f and 92f) has been excluded

Understanding the changes will help you better help your students through the financial aid process. For more information on the changes, visit www.mygreatlakes.org/fafsa.

MASFAA BLAST FROM THE PAST

The following are excerpts from a MASFAA newsletter dated July 1970. The titles may have a familiar ring even 40 years later.



Can Financial Need Analysis Be Simplified?

Student financial need analysis systems were developed to enable college aid officers to award student aid on the basis of financial need. Typically, these systems analyze the family financial characteristics of applicants, particularly income and asset information, compare financial resources available to the applicant with the costs of attending college, and finally for each applicant compute the amount of aid needed to attend a given college.

The desire for a simplified need analysis system has existed throughout the brief history of financial need analysis. Financial aid officers desire a system that is simple to use and understand and one that can be easily explained to parents and students. Parents, on the other hand, have resented long forms that require extensive past financial records to complete. This latter problem becomes increasingly important as expanding numbers of low-income students apply for financial aid. A complex need analysis form can be especially confusing to the parents of low-income students and, as a consequence, can impose an artificial barrier to the aid process for these student.

Financial Aid for the Inner-City Student

In April, 1969, the Inner-City Student Financial Aid Advisory Council was formed in Chicago with the cooperation of the Regional U.S. Office of Education. For some time it had been felt that an organization was needed which would deal specifically with the financial problems of low-income minority group students attending commuting colleges in Chicago. The colleges joining the organizations all had significant numbers of such students enrolled and several are located in low-income areas of the city.

FIVE WAYS YOU CAN PUT SOCIAL MEDIA TO WORK FOR YOUR SCHOOL'S OUTREACH EFFORTS

Craig Berkley, TG Account Executive Team Manager

Social media: It's not just the latest Internet buzzword that's here today and then forgotten like yesterday's Twitter blast. Social media refers to any number of ways that people use the Web or related technology to meet, chat, entertain themselves, and even learn. Chances are you've jumped on the social media bandwagon without realizing it if, like a lot of people, you're a member of Facebook or a fan of YouTube, have shared photos or videos online, have a personal blog, or even just chat via an online message client like Instant Messenger.

The key distinction about social media is that the medium creates a dialogue among participants, unlike spam or newsfeeds, which are one-way communications. In this regard, social media can be a great vehicle for engaging high school students in college outreach. Many students are already veteran users of the online tools your campus could use. The tools themselves are dynamic in nature. Depending on the medium, you can post content, invite feedback and discussion, and even spur your readers to explore college admissions and planning for themselves.

If the tools are rich in possibilities, where to start in using them for college outreach may not be immediately clear. To help you begin that process, consider a few of the suggestions below. Each idea employs a particular social medium for a specific purpose or audience. In designing an outreach campaign, it's important to focus your message for the audience and emphasize the interactive aspect of the online experience.

- ▶ **First-year student blog:** Invite a first-generation student to blog about his or her first year on campus, and offer a link to the blog to high schools or students you're targeting for outreach. You may be able to collaborate with an instructor for a freshman course, and even offer extra credit to students who would be willing to blog about their experiences. For many future first-generation students in high school, that first year of college can be a source of anxiety. If these high school students can read about the lives of similar students negotiating the challenges of that first year, they may be more likely to enroll in college and continue their educational pursuits.

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- ▶ **College admissions process by social networking site:** Applying to college can seem intricate to someone just beginning that process. Enlist an admissions counselor to talk about the admissions process, and have the person document that effort through a social networking site such as Facebook or MySpace. Let photos, succinct captions, and embedded videos tell the story of what it's like to apply. You might also discuss ways that students can distinguish themselves from other candidates, provide essay-writing tips, or offer online campus tours.
- ▶ **Financial aid event live-cast:** Financial aid events are some of the best ways to reach prospective students and interested parents. You can podcast or live-cast your financial aid outreach event, capturing common questions from students, offering a virtual way of understanding the process for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and inviting further interaction through your college's Web site.
- ▶ **Parent outreach via webinar:** If you work with local high schools, you can invite parents of prospective students to listen in on a webinar on how to plan and prepare for college. The webinar could explore any number of college-related topics, but you might focus on areas that give parents initial anxiety about college, including the application process, financing, and the separation from their children.
- ▶ **Online video post for first-generation or at-risk students:** Similar to the first-year blog, this idea explores the first-year student's college experience through multimedia, in this case a video that you could post to your college's Web site. The video could be a testimonial from first-generation students or students who are at-risk for dropping out of school, including low-income students. These testimonials could be handled as Q&As with a counselor prompting students with questions about their classes, campus life, and adjusting to college.

For more help

You'll find a rich assortment of information about the way colleges are already using social media through various online publications, including University Business (www.universitybusiness.com) and Campus Technology (www.campustechnology.com). Type "social media" into the search engines for either of these Web journals and you'll discover a wealth of information as well as a variety of ideas on how to use social media for your outreach efforts.

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