



WVASFAA NEWS

FALL 2006

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Letter from the President

Dear Financial Aid Friends and Colleagues,

Trick or treat!

As I was sitting here trying to come up with something profound to say, I realized that it has pretty much all been said. So I decided to go for cheap humor instead – yes, that really is me in my Village People biker outfit from a couple of years ago.

But seriously folks, the one platitude that we all have heard over and over, and that we still need to remember is that we are all in this together.

Whether we work in an aid office, a government office, a bank, or a guaranty agency, our ultimate goal is the same; to ensure that all students in West Virginia have access and op-

portunity to higher education and ultimately a better quality of life.

And we do accomplish that goal. I am not saying we can't do better, but it is important to remember that we help a lot of people.

If you never go to graduation at your school, you need to. The laughter and the tears never fail to move me and remind me that we don't just help our students get through school, we help them and their families, get through life.

I am very excited to be the President of WVASFAA this year and hope to get you all excited to participate in upcoming WVASFAA activities and events. Our training events, Early Awareness activities, and yes, even our social events



are so much more worthwhile and enjoyable when we have participation across the board.

Hope to see you at the Fall Conference in Chester!!

Lake

WVASFAA Fall Conference Update

The Fall Conference will be held at Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Center in Chester, WV from October 25-27, 2006. The theme for the conference will be "Keeping on Track in Financial Aid". The program and site

committees have worked very hard to make this an informative and enjoyable conference for all who attend. Special guests will include Dr. Brian Noland, Chancellor of WV HEPC, and Vickie Crupper, President-Elect of

MASFAA. Also, Kathie Makowski, US Department of Education will be presenting sessions on ACG and SMART Grants, R2T4 and the Federal Update. Visit www.wvasfaa.org for more information.



Eight Steps for Telling your Office's Story

Eight Steps for Telling Your Office's Story

Submitted by: Michiale Schneider, Account Executive USA Funds Services



At some postsecondary institutions, the financial-aid office suffers from a negative image.

Across campus there may be a misunderstanding of federal regulations and the many roles of the financial-aid office. Compliance requirements sometimes put financial-aid-office practices at odds with a school's customer-service ideals, and complaints from students and their families can end up in the hands of the school's administration.

Additionally, school officials may not have a clear understanding of the important role that financial aid has in enrollment and retention, two areas that affect a school's bottom line.

One way to help smooth relations between your office and others on campus is to spread the word about the positive impact that financial-aid staff have on the school — and the community. USA Funds University suggests the following eight steps to tell the financial-aid office's story:

Reach the school administration. Provide regular reports about your office to school administrators. Share with them how the goals of the institution affect financial-aid operations, and the roles your office plays in achieving the goals. Invite administrators to meet with financial-aid staff.

Develop relationships with your peers. Meet regularly with representatives of other campus offices to discuss shared concerns, challenges and strategies for working with students. Schedule "Financial Aid 101" sessions for staff from other offices.

Attend academic-department meetings. Invite yourself to these meetings to discuss issues such as satisfactory-academic-progress requirements.

Get coverage in the school newspaper. Establish a working relationship with the editor. Offer to write a regular column focusing on financial-aid issues. Suggest topics for articles at appropriate times in the financial-aid cycle.

Seek feedback from students. Develop your own student survey, delivered through whatever means your students prefer to communicate, and respond to suggestions or inquiries.

Distribute a financial-aid newsletter. Target students and their families with this publication, which should include timely information.

Provide information on a financial-aid Web site. The Internet is an ideal place to share news about upcoming financial-aid events, and up-to-date statistics about your office's operations and successes.

Become visible on campus and in the community. Volunteer for school committees and in community activities such as high-school nights. Conduct a Financial-Aid-Awareness Week prior to the deadline for filing financial-aid applications.

To learn about USA Funds University training opportunities, visit USA Funds' Web site, www.usafunds.org, and select "Training" from the Express Links dropdown box.



WVASFAA Members News

Glenville State College Financial Aid Director, Karen Lay, has been elected secretary for the Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. She was selected in June and will serve her 2006-2007 term beginning in October.

Howard Thomas, the former president of MASFAA, nominated Lay for the secretary position. Lay said she was surprised about her election, but she is honored.

“This will help bring some recognition to GSC and some to the state,” said Lay. “West Virginia has not had an elected officer in MASFAA for years.”

MASFAA is dedicated to helping financial aid administrators in order to benefit students. This organization serves nine states including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Lay is currently serving on the professional development committee of MASFAA until the conclusion of the 2005-2006 term at the end of September. During the previous 2004-2005 term, Lay served as the president of West Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

Lay has deep roots in the community as a lifelong resident of Glenville and is an alum of Glenville State College. Lay graduated in 1979 with a Bachelor's Degree in social work and associate degrees in sociology and psychology. She has been a member of the GSC faculty and staff since 1988 and was named Director of Financial Aid in 1995. Lay also earned a Master of Arts degree in leadership studies from Marshall University in 2003.

Written by Annette Barnette, Public Relations and Marketing Director, Glenville State

- Sandra Oerly-Bennett is the new Director of Financial Aid at Shepherd University.
- Joyce Cabral is the new Associate Director of Financial Aid at Shepherd University.
- Angie Jones is the new Scholarship Coordinator at West Virginia University Institute of Technology.
- Susanne Duranti is the new Account Manager-WV at National Education. She is replacing Jason Vansickle who is the new VP Eastern Regional Sales Manager for PNC Bank.
- Kathryn Anderson is the new Financial Aid Director at Fairmont State University.
- George Yanchak is the new Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Fairmont State University.
- Libby Sturm is the new Financial Aid Administrator at Blue Ridge CTC.
- Doris Glenn is the new Financial Aid Assistant at Blue Ridge CTC.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO ALL!

DOE Training on HERA Act Provisions to be held at WVSU

We have a confirmed training date and site for the Department's one-day training on the provisions and implication of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act, including ACG and Smart Grants, loan limits, Graduate Plus and Return of Title IV.

The training will be held on November 17, 2006 on the campus of WV State University in Institute. Our trainers will be Greg Martin and Kathie Makowski. As always, there is no cost for these DOE training sessions.

You can get more detailed program information and register now at the FSA Schools Portal website.



Editorial: Summer Stress

As we all know, for the hard working financial aid professional, summer is the most stressful time we encounter. At WVSU, it seems that every summer gets just a little worse than the previous summer. After all, not only do most of us have to finish out the previous fall and spring semesters aid, we have to start the summer semester aid, while at the same time working on the next fall semester aid. Not to mention the various end of year reports that must be done and service all the students that have questions or problems.

In an effort to try to provide our office with some relief from the frustration of summer, we tried to find out what some other offices in WV were doing. We sent a survey out to some schools to ask the following questions:

- 1) Do you have reduced hours of operation during the summer months?
- 2) If so, what are your normal hours of operation:

- 3) What are you SUMMER hours of operation?
- 4) Are you closed to walk-in traffic and phone calls at anytime during the summer?
- 5) If so, please explain
- 6) If not, do you obtain extra help during the busy summer months and if you do, how is that help hired?

The conclusion of our little poll, was that it seems everyone we asked, was in the same situation that we at WVSU are in. All of our work seems to triple during the summer months and we must muddle through it without any additional assistance.

I think the Financial Aid offices of this world can say with a degree of certainty, that we are the office that brings in a major portion of revenue to the institutions. With that in mind, it is time that the institutions themselves try to help us come up with some solutions to the stress and "beatings"

that we take during the summer. Whether it be certain hours during the day that we close our doors and are not required to take phone calls, or getting us some extra help to relieve the stress of the constant ring of the phone.

We need to start a dialogue of ideas to help us through this stressful time. Please let us know what you think and if you have an idea that could help other offices.



2006-2007 WVASFAA Officers

The annual transition meeting was held at the University of Charleston on June 15, 2006. The incoming officers are:

President	Lake Tackett	Secretary	James Buchanan
President-Elect	Brian Weingart	Treasurer	Susanne Duranti
Past President	Janet Ruge		

Spring Conference a Success

The WVASFAA 2006 Spring Conference was held at the Radisson at Waterfront Place in Morgantown, WV April 5-7, 2006.

The conference was well attended and the interest sessions provided good information to take back to the office.

Robin Fisher of Luther College was our special guest as part of the MASFAA state exchange program. She is the President of the Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (IASFAA).



The Thursday evening activity was "Survivor Morgantown" and all who participated had a fun time.



WVASFAA President Jan Ruge presented the annual service awards. The President's Award is given to an individual that has provided service and leadership from within the association. This year's recipient was Vicki Saun-



ders-West Virginia State University.

The Meritorious Service Award is given to an individual that has provided service to the association and the larger community.



This year's recipient was Candi Frazier-West Virginia University. Congratulations!

Two WVASFAA members were recognized for their retirement. Elizabeth Sturm and Elaine Wells from Shepherd University were presented with a special gift from the association. Best of luck!



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Please contact us with any information you would like to see in future newsletters.