PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Well FASFAA, we have made it through another semester. I trust it has been a successful one for you and your students. I would like to thank all of you for the work you do making college a reality for your students and families. The better we are at our job, the better off our students will be.

This fall semester has been full of FASFAA training opportunities. A special thanks to Maureen Anderson (VP of Training) for our New Aid Workshop that was held back in October in Vero Beach with approximately 25 attendees. Also, thank you to Lorrie Allen (Clock-Hour Chair) for a successful Clock-Hour Workshop in Orlando this past October with over 100 participants. Remember in 2012-13 FASFAA was awarded the NASFAA Gold Star for our Clock-Hour Training and each year we have participants from other states take advantage of that training.

We also enjoyed the FASFAA regional workshops this fall in all five regions. Be on the lookout for information for upcoming spring regional workshops. Just a reminder that if you are a 2015-16 FASFAA member, the regional workshops are free so I would encourage everyone to take advantage of them. These workshops are always good ways for you to meet new people and reconnect with your long lost friends.

Just a reminder that the SASFAA Annual Conference will be in Greensboro, NC this February. Information for that conference can be found on SASFAA’s website.

And finally, mark your calendars for FASFAA’s Annual Conference which will take place May 24-27, 2016 in beautiful Bonita Springs.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all!

Ryan McNamara, FASFAA President

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The FASFAA annual conference will be held at the beautiful Coconut Point Hyatt in Bonita Springs the week prior to Memorial Day. Our theme is Pursue Excellence – Chase Success, which builds on the President’s theme, Pursue Excellence.

The goal of our committee is to create both an informative and exciting conference that will benefit all in attendance. We will have representatives from the Department of Education as well as a NASFAA representative joining us. Training will begin on Tuesday morning with pre-conference sessions (still to be determined) followed by the main FASFAA Conference beginning Tuesday afternoon. The conference will conclude on Friday morning and breakfast will be provided. We’ve already begun to plan educational sessions with the intent to meet the needs of all levels of financial aid.

Look for more information on the FASFAA website and listserv, including hotel and registration information.
I am so excited to be serving on the FASFAA Executive Board and assisting the membership in selecting sites and coordinating events during the 2015/16 fiscal year. I want to thank Tracy Misner for her guidance as I took on this responsibility. I know the FASFAA Executive Board will greatly miss her in this supporting role. This year we have already coordinated the Clock Hour Workshop at Caribe Royale in Orlando, Florida and the New Aid Officer Workshop at Historic Dodgertown in Vero Beach, Florida. Both events were successful and the locations were very conducive to the learning process.

I am currently working with the Conference co-chairs to coordinate the FASFAA Annual Conference at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Bonita Springs, Florida. Please mark your calendars (May 24-27, 2016) as you will not want to miss this informative training opportunity. This is a family friendly resort, so you may want to consider bringing the family along!

We are also gearing up for the FAFSAA Annual Conference at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress in Orlando, Florida. You will also want to mark your calendars (May 30-June 2, 2017) as you will want to join us as we celebrate FASFAA’s 50th Anniversary!

For additional information about upcoming events, please visit www.fasfaa.org.

The Region III Fall Workshop was Friday, November 6th at the Technical Education Center Osceola (TECO). The workshop was a great success and everyone enjoyed the presentations. We had the Valencia College Financial Aid Ambassadors give a presentation on Financial Literacy. They encouraged the group to participate by throwing a beach ball and having one of the members catch the ball and answer a question. The whole group had lots of laughs.

We also had Troy Miller from Florida College Access Network come and present on the FAFSA Completion rate. He was able to provide a lot of good information on how much money students leave on the table by not completing a FAFSA application. Region III looks forward to having a Spring Workshop sometime at the beginning of April.
HELP STUDENTS MAKE WISE BORROWING CHOICES AT KEY DECISION POINTS

BY SHANNON CROSS, USA FUNDS ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

Communicating with your student loan borrowers at key decision points is among the best ways to improve your cohort default rate. Here are some tips for helping students make wise choices about borrowing at four key decision-making points during the life cycle of a student:

Application and first 90 days
The start of students’ time at your institution is a critical time to begin sending messages about borrowing and managing student loan debt.

In activities such as new-student orientation and loan counseling, encourage minimal reliance on borrowing. This message will help students keep their overall debt levels low — and their monthly payments manageable in the future. Share information about average debt levels and repayment terms, so students make informed decisions about whether and how much they’ll borrow.

Rather than overwhelming new students with everything at once, provide targeted bits of education loan information at the specific times they’ll need those details at application and in the first 90 days.

In-school period
For some students, applying for federal education loans is their first experience with borrowing money. Financial education at this stage reinforces your earlier messages and helps students become educated consumers.

When counseling borrowers about their student loans, provide tips for minimizing debt and making wise financial decisions, and help them estimate future income and gauge their ability to repay their loans. Share information about student loan repayment options and how students can track what they owe.

More than 70 percent of students who default on federal education loans left school without earning a degree. So make it a campuswide priority to keep students in school to complete their degree work. Work with other academic and student services offices on campus to identify students with enrollment or loan repayment concerns — and address those issues.

Final year and program completion
Students nearing the end of their academic programs are at a point in which your influence sets the stage for successful repayment.

Federal regulations require schools to ensure that all students borrowing federal education loans receive exit counseling as they cease half-time enrollment. Counsel your borrowers regarding their student loan repayment options, so they can choose the plan that best fits their situation.

Work with your institution’s career placement office to ensure that borrowers identify and pursue jobs that are a good fit for their training — and that will help them repay their student loans.

Post-graduation
Communication and support shouldn’t end when a student no longer is enrolled. Actually, it’s when the student has left school that this support is most important.

Now is the time when the relationship you’ve built with students through the previous decision points pays off. Borrowers may not recognize communications from lenders, servicers and guarantors, but they’re more likely to notice and respond to letters, emails and phone calls from the school they attended.

Reach out to borrowers early and follow up frequently about tools and resources — including many available online — to assist as they repay their loans.

For additional resources for counseling borrowers throughout the student lifecycle, visit www.usafunds.org.
Mid Florida Tech hosted the Region III Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (FASFAA) Spring Workshop several weeks ago. This workshop is designed to provide training in the financial aid arena from verification to state aid updates, etc. Region III consists of Brevard, Indian River, Lake, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, St. Lucie, Sumter and Volusia counties. As you can see in the pictures, the 60 financial aid personnel attendees (including our OCPS Tech Centers Financial Aid Assistants) were engaged in each session with much collaboration. A big THANK YOU to Mid Florida Tech for hosting such an important workshop. CTE is a beautiful thing!
YOUR SERVICE IS NEEDED –
NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTED POSITIONS

BY JOAN D. BAILEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

What does it mean to serve FASFAA and its members? Are you ready to serve? Do you have the support it takes? Are you asking yourself these questions? If you are, that’s a good thing; it means you are on the right track to volunteering to serve in an elected position.

What does it mean to serve FASFAA and its members?
Serving FASFAA and its members means you are willing to give of your time, skills and knowledge. Do you possess these qualities and skills; leadership; task driven; ability to stick to deadlines and honor commitments; event planning; willingness to ask for help when needed? If you are able to answer yes to these questions, then you have what it takes to serve FASFAA as an elected officer.

Are you ready to serve?
Are you willing to dedicate your resources with the members of FASFAA for a term of 1 – 2 years? Do you like working with a group of like-minded individuals who enjoy giving back as much as you do? Are you a team player? If you are, then you are ready to serve.

Do you have the support it takes?
Now that you know what it means to serve and you have discovered you are ready to serve, it is important that you have the support you will need. Is your supervisor or your administration supportive of your involvement? Is your family supportive? You will need to have the commitment of support from both. You may need to have a day or two away from the office occasionally to attend in-person meetings. You may also need to participate in workshops and conference calls.

Seeking Nominations
Nominate yourself or a peer to serve FASFAA on the 2016-2017 Executive board. Send all nominations to the chair of the nominations committee Joan Bailey at joanbailey@health.usf.edu.

The following positions are available:

- **President Elect**: This position requires a three year commitment, first as the president elect, then the president and after that will serve as the immediate past president.
- **Vice President of Training**: Responsible for coordination and oversight of all training activities of the association. This person also serves as the Conference Program Chair. This position serves a two year term.
- **Region Representative**: Responsible for coordinating the events of their regions, including planning training workshops, financial aid awareness week activities and representing the interest of members of their region on the executive board. Region 2 and 4 positions will be vacant. This position serves a two year term.

The elections and nominations committee will be presenting the slate of candidates for approval to the current executive board in early spring. The approved slate of candidates will be presented to membership at least 25 days prior to the Annual Conference. Election closes during the conference and the results are announced on the final day of the conference. The nominations deadline is 2/12/2016.
5 CONCEPTS TO ENHANCE YOUR
FINANCIAL AID WEBSITE

BY PAUL BURKE, VICE PRESIDENT OF FATV

Want to spiff up your financial aid website? There are some great ways to improve your content organization and make information clear and concise. Consider these ideas to boost your webpages:

1. **Keep it concise.** Remember students’ attention span may be limited so use easy-to-understand words and phrases. Avoid long paragraphs or sentences with dependent clauses. Focus on the essence and cut out unnecessary information.
   - Front-load keywords.
   - Use numbers instead of spelling them out.

2. **Use subheadings and bullets to break up content.** Website usability expert Gerry McGovern concluded that website visitors use “block reading” — that is review webpages in blocks and sections. Plus ClickTale’s eye-tracking study indicated that users fixate longer on bulleted lists and text formatting. To help readers on financial aid websites be able to effectively skim the content, use subheadings to break up content.
   - Create an outline of content to determine subheading.
   - Use keywords.
   - Consider breaking up a paragraph into bulleted points.

3. **Whitespace can help.** Spacing between characters, words, lines and paragraphs is important. Manipulate margins and spacing can increase reading comprehension for students on your financial aid website.
   - Consider increasing paragraph spacing beyond single line spacing.
   - Pad tables to increase margins.

4. **Strategically insert visuals.** Tables, graphs, infographics, designed banners, and photos engage visitors. Visuals can reinforce content and enrich usability.
   - Present content in form of a table.
   - Find open-source graphics or stock images to break up content.

5. **Include videos.** Videos can strengthen your content message and engage multiple senses. Plus studies show that people who see visuals and hear content are far more likely to retain the information days after exposure.
   - Embed financial aid videos near related text.
   - Consider using different video sizes based on the amount of text on the webpage.

Paul Burke, Vice President of FATV
UPDATE FROM THE
OFFICE OF STUDENT
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (OSFA)

BY LEVIS HUGHES, CHIEF OF OSFA

This new fiscal year has gotten off to a great start and continues to go strong. OSFA thanks all participating institutions for timely submission of required reports and for working with us to provide postsecondary access to Florida’s students.

We have been concentrating on legislative activities earlier than usual this year, due to the January 12 start date for the 2016 Florida legislative session. The legislature will be in session from January 12 through March 11, 2016. Some bills to follow (by no means all inclusive):

- HB 15 and SB 290 – STEM Teacher Loan Forgiveness
- HB 123 and SB 146 – Licensure restrictions for institutions with cohort default rates exceeding 30%
- HB 291 and SB 142 – Student Loan Assistance Programs for attorneys in the public sector
- HB 887 and SB 468 – Computer coding courses counted as a foreign language
- HB 793, SB 520 and SB 990 – Bright Futures expansion of the reinstatement period for specified students, removal of test score requirements for home educated students, revision of service hours and expansion of the Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award
- HB 693 and SB 898 – Expansion of Florida Academic Scholars initial eligibility to include Advanced Placement Capstone diploma

In an effort to continue to protect student data, OSFA recently implemented a new security user login module for access to the State Student Financial Aid Database. More stringent passwords are required and accounts that are inactive for at least 150 days will be deactivated.

This past summer, OSFA sent over 137,000 reminders to students to update their postsecondary institution choice so that the students will appear on the appropriate institution’s Master Eligibility List (MEL) for terms 2 and 3 of the academic year.

Be aware that more initially eligible Bright Futures students will be added to the Master Eligibility List (MEL) as we progress through this academic year. We are working with students who took the June 6, 2015 SAT (which had errors) on a case-by-case basis and will re-evaluate these students based only on the October 2015 SAT. Please watch the MEL for additional initial students, and if they are eligible, you may back-fund them for term 1.

Site Registration and Volunteer Registration is now open for participation in CGS!Florida (College Goal Sunday). Everything you need to set up a site is, or will soon be, available on the website at www.navigatingyourfinancialfuture.org/CGS!Florida/SiteCoordinators.asp. Family sign-in sheets, flyers, talking points, posters, marketing materials and videos can all be found on this site. Visit the site to learn about this wonderful Opportunity for your institution or organization to help your students and your community.
CGS! Florida is well underway! For the third year, OSFA is serving as state coordinator for College Goal events in Florida. At the time of this writing, more than 40 host sites are planning, training, and beginning the marketing phase of their event. More than half of the host sites are postsecondary institutions! Thank you for hosting an event and opening the doors to your campus for families who need assistance with financial aid applications.

If your school is not hosting a CGS!Florida event or FAFSA completion event, consider helping a host site near you. Many sites are hosting for the first time in their community and need you to serve as FAFSA experts. Volunteering at a CGS!Florida site can show families that your office cares enough to take time out of its busy schedule to help students complete important financial aid forms. Volunteering also shows support to the host site staff and that we are working toward a common goal of helping students pursue higher education. Together we are better!

To see where College Goal events will be held in 2016, visit the CGS!Florida website.
The 2014-15 Annual Report to the Commissioner, provided by the Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), is now available online. The Annual Report provides statistical information about state scholarship and grant programs funded by the Florida Legislature and federal programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education. OSFA administers state and federally-funded programs that provide Florida’s students access to postsecondary education. These programs provide funds to students who may not otherwise be able to afford a college education and the opportunity to pursue a career in technical and academic fields of their choice.

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA) CHANGES

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will have important changes beginning with the fall semester of 2016.

1) FAFSA will open October 2016 instead of January 1, 2017.
2) FAFSA will also allow use of prior-prior year tax returns.

One of the largest roadblocks for students completing the FAFSA is that parents haven’t filed their tax return yet. With prior-prior year return information allowed, that will no longer be an issue. Previously, students completing the 2016 FAFSA will need to report information from the 2015 tax return. With the new change, students completing the 2017 FAFSA can report the 2015 tax return information.
10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS DETECT AND AVOID IDENTITY THEFT

BY BECKY DAVIS, SR. MARKETING ASSOCIATE
GREAT LAKES EDUCATIONAL LOAN SERVICES, INC.

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America, and young people between the ages of 18-24 are the most likely to be affected. We’ve compiled a list of tips for you to share with your students to help them protect their personal information, assets, and credit. You can also direct your students to the Federal Trade Commission’s identity theft and data security resources.

1. Protect personal information such as your full name, birth date, Social Security Number, and financial and medical account numbers.

2. Be on alert for phone, online, or email scams that ask for any of your personal information. Securely dispose of (e.g., shred) printed materials that contain this type of information.

3. Take a few moments to open and read the correspondence you receive so that you can proactively identify invoices or notices for accounts you may not have authorized.

4. Review your monthly statements and immediately contact the financial institution, merchant, or health care provider about possible fraudulent charges or discrepancies.

5. Use secure Wi-Fi when accessing sensitive information online. Before entering personal information, look for https:// in the site’s URL. This helps protect the privacy and integrity of data exchanged online.

6. Create strong passwords, use two-step account verification when available, and avoid using the same password on multiple sites.

7. Be aware some identity protection services may use deceptive marketing practices to solicit customers. Generally, you can protect your accounts and check your credit statements and reports on your own.

8. If you think your Social Security Number may have been compromised, putting a security freeze on your credit reports denies new creditors access to your file if anyone (including you) attempts to open new accounts in your name. Keep in mind that freezing/unfreezing your reports may incur a small fee.

9. Set up text and/or email alerts for your accounts to automatically inform you when unusual or unauthorized activity may be occurring. You can often set alerts based on the amount charged or a specific number of charges in a 24 hour period.

10. The three major credit bureaus—Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion—are required to provide consumers with a free copy of their credit report once per year. For more information, including identity theft and fraud protection tips, go to http://www.annualcreditreport.com.

Becky is a Senior Marketing Associate with Great Lakes, serving schools in Florida, Mississippi, and Missouri. You can reach Becky at 877-215-7693, or by email at r.davis@glhec.org. Additional information about Great Lakes can be found online at schools.mygreatlakes.org.
NEW! NET PRICE CALCULATOR FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

BY JAN SMITH, MANAGER OF OUTREACH SERVICES
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (OSFA)

Students from low-income families often do not believe they are able to attend college because of the cost of attendance. They are surprised to find out that many schools offer financial aid such as the Pell Grant to help offset the cost. To help students research and compare schools BEFORE applying, a new tool is available to make the process easier and provide options for low-income families to consider. Based on students’ answers to questions about demographics such as parental marital status, number of people in household and free/reduced lunch participation, the calculator generates the sticker price, total aid and net price of college attendance.

Where can you find this wonderful FREE resource? [http://pell.collegeabacus.org](http://pell.collegeabacus.org)
LORI AUXIER NAMED TO MAPPING YOUR FUTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BY CATHY MUELLER, MAPPING YOUR FUTURE

Lori Auxier with the Florida Department of Education has been named vice-chair of the Mapping Your Future Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee provides Mapping Your Future with guidance on a number of issues including school, student, and sponsor perspective of various issues, input on various national and regional industry issues, and advice on operational issues.

Lori Auxier, Director of Outreach Services for the Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance, has been a volunteer for Mapping Your Future for several years. She currently leads the Marketing & Promotions Team for Mapping Your Future and also served as a presenter and subject-matter expert for Mapping Your Future’s webinars. She has worked in the financial aid profession for 21 years and brings considerable regulatory and administrative experience to her role. In addition to her role with OSFA (a guarantor), Lori also served as a Marketing Manager for a student loan provider and as a financial aid administrator at a state college. Lori received a Bachelor of Arts (Business Administration-Management) and Masters of Business Administration (Marketing) from Saint Leo University.

Mapping Your Future is also seeking new members to the Committee from its sponsors and supporters, as well as representatives from the education field. For more information or if you would like to be nominated or want to nominate someone else to serve on the Advisory Committee, contact the Mapping Your Future staff at feedback@mappingyourfuture.org or (800) 374-4072.
6 Things You Should Know About Scholarships
And how to get started finding free money for college

1. There are scholarships for everyone, not just jocks and geniuses
Don’t sell yourself short — millions of scholarships are out there for almost every talent and interest. Are you a vegetarian? Roller skater? Star Trek fan? Yup, there’s a scholarship for that.

2. Even a few hundred dollars can make a big difference
Some scholarships offer big money, some not so much. Apply anyway. Even if you only get a few hundred dollars, that can help pay for textbooks or other expenses. Bottom line: scholarships are money in your pocket that you won’t have to pay back.

3. It’s really worth the time and effort
Sure, you might have to write a few essays but it’s worth it. Scholarships are free money! Be sure to follow guidelines and be mindful of deadlines. A late submission can eliminate you from consideration.

4. Watch out for scholarship scams
Don’t pay for scholarships. Period. There are many reputable and free scholarship search sites. Get recommendations from your school about good sources.

5. You can apply even if you’re already in college
Did you know that 50% of scholarships are available for students already enrolled in college? You can apply for scholarships every year you’re in school.

6. Finding scholarships is easy (and free)
Start at SallieMae.com/ScholarshipSearch, your all-access pass to finding scholarships. It’s free and it’s home to more than 5 million, worth over $24 billion. It matches you to available scholarships and alerts you when new ones pop up.
TAKE ACTION NOW TO PREPARE FOR NEXT VERIFICATION SEASON

BY CATHY MUELLER, MAPPING YOUR FUTURE

Learn how MappingXpress can make verification easier, more secure.

Fall is a good time to starting thinking about streamlining the verification process for next year. An easy and secure way to exchange documents is with Mapping Your Future's MappingXpress service. Since its inception, over 140,000 documents have been uploaded and retrieved through this document transfer service.

Because the Florida Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance is a sponsor of Mapping Your Future, MappingXpress is a free service for Florida postsecondary schools.

MappingXpress enables students and parents to quickly respond to the school's documentation requests by uploading an electronic file of the requested documents. Schools retrieve the uploaded documents securely from their Access Area on Mapping Your Future, allowing them to efficiently process, organize, and retain the documents to complete the students' files in a timely manner.

Schools have some limited customization options and can transfer up to 4,000 documents annually. Schools with document needs of greater than 4,000 can contact Mapping Your Future for more information.

More MappingXpress information is available online at mappingyourfuture.org/services/aboutMappingXpress.cfm.

Contact us with questions about MappingXpress or to schedule a private demonstration at services@mappingyourfuture.org or (800) 374-4072.
THE VALUABLE DEFAULT PREVENTION RESOURCE YOU MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN

BY SHANNON CROSS, USA FUNDS ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

If you’re following the best practice of involving many areas of the campus in your default prevention efforts, did you remember to include students in that mix?

If you’re not enlisting the help of your students, you’re missing a valuable resource for driving home messages about debt management, financial literacy and student success.

When working to communicate with students about the importance of completing their education and repaying their student loans, it’s important to call on current and former students to provide input and help spread the word. After all, students relate to their fellow students — and often their insight and assistance is more impactful than anything a faculty or staff member can do or say.

Here are a few ways to include students in your default prevention efforts:

**Peer mentoring**
I’m a big believer in peer mentoring, which has been successful at a number of schools. Your students most likely are going to discuss money matters with their peers on campus anyway, so why not make sure they’re hearing from peers through a formal mentoring program that offers guidance based on accurate, relevant information?

**Entrance and exit counseling**
Student testimonials make a strong statement, so include in loan counseling current and recent students who can speak to the lessons they learned about borrowing for college. These current and former students can provide valuable information about how to successfully manage debt, based on their own money management successes and failures.

**Financial literacy presentations**
Train a group of students to be financial literacy presenters. Whether in classes or at special events, these students can follow a prescribed set of lessons that provide helpful information about financial literacy and succeeding in higher education.

**Financial literacy presentations**
Train a group of students to be financial literacy presenters. Whether in classes or at special events, these students can follow a prescribed set of lessons that provide helpful information about financial literacy and succeeding in higher education.

**Planning and communicating**
Include students on an advisory board for financial aid activities, to gather input about the most effective ways to assist students in paying for their education and repaying their loans. Students also should play a major role in efforts to get out the word about your default prevention activities and events.

**Where to begin**
If you need help finding current and former students to help with your default prevention activities, student government, professors, student-employees and alumni relations staff at your institution are all great resources.

If you’re looking for information and assistance with your default prevention planning, www.usafunds.org offers a variety of tools and solutions.
FINANCIAL LITERACY ON CAMPUS: IT CAN BE DONE!

BY DAMEION LOVETT
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

The University of South Florida’s Financial Education Program was one of eight schools chosen to be featured in a joint Texas Guarantee (TG) and NASFAA research report called Above and Beyond: What Eight Colleges Are Doing to Improve Student Loan Counseling. The USF program which we call Bull2Bull is a peer to peer financial literacy program. We are a comprehensive student success program that’s designed to help undergraduate students become fiscally responsible. The office staff consists of an associate director, assistant director, team manager, administrative assistant and seven peer educators. Housed under University Scholarships & Financial Aid Services, the financial education program has separate office space to maintain an element of confidentiality for the students we serve.

Financial Education@USF “Bull2Bull” opened in mid-2013, providing graduating students with the opportunity to attend in-person exit counseling sessions. The initial goals of the program centered on the following concepts for students.

- Becoming accustomed to paying their own bills
- Understanding financial aid awards
- Responsible loan borrowing and repayment
- Successful identification of career goals and healthy budgeting skills

In addition, the ability to provide a safe and confidential environment for students to discuss highly personal details of their lives became important in helping achieve these goals. Over the course of the remainder of the year, we learned a few things about our students. We hoped they would just “show up” since we were providing good information. We learned that we would need a “carrot” to help get them in the door.

As a result, we began using scholarship drawings as incentives for attendance at our programming events as well as small giveaways which were a hit! To help with participation in exit counseling, we have a drawing in which one student will have $500 of their student loan repaid by the program. Since opening, we have expanded our services and provide one on one appointments in loan counseling for students at every undergraduate grade level, counseling to the families of out of state/Pell eligible students, and basic budgeting, understanding credit and credit scores.

The Bull2Bull peer educators provide many of these services as well as presentations to all first year and transfer students. Peers also work one on one with students in the TRIO program by helping them prepare their personal budgets and understand their financial aid packages. The TRIO students also meet with the peer educators twice a year in person or by phone to discuss how their spending their aid funds and managing their savings.

Our program is marketed in a number of different ways to get students’ attention. We set up a booth at our weekly Bull Market and provide flyers to highlight the program. Our Twitter page (@Bull2BullUSF) currently has nearly 1,600 followers. We tweet helpful, handy tips on budgeting, credit and money management and local specials on food, clothes, etc. We also use this platform to announce our scholarship and loan repayment winners. The peer educators use chalking in different areas of campus to help advertise upcoming events.

We administer the mandatory Financial Literacy 101 online course module which is designed to teach new, first year students how to budget, the importance of credit and financial aid. Once the students are in their third year at USF, a survey is sent to each student in the cohort to measure the acquisition and retention of knowledge from the initial course. Over the past year, Financial Education@USF has served nearly 8,000 students, up from just over 7,000 in our first year. Each year, students who have received services from the program are surveyed with the results used to help improve and enhance our efforts.

Visit our website for more information about our program www.usf.edu/fin-ed
The U.S. Department of Education released Cohort Default Rates (CDRs) a few weeks back, and the news is surprisingly gratifying. Nationwide, loan cohort default rates have declined to 11.8 percent for students who entered repayment between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012. That’s nearly a two percentage point improvement (or almost 14 percent decrease) from FY 2011, when rates across all sectors of higher education (public, private and for-profit institutions) were at 13.7 percent. Clearly, default prevention strategies on U.S. campuses are making a positive impact.

So why should default prevention remain a top priority for schools, even though the national default rate is dropping?

**Time Flies**

You may think to yourself: “Our rate isn’t so bad. It’s a little higher than I’d like to see it, but it’s not creating regulatory penalties.” Although your rate may look good at the moment, things can escalate surprisingly quickly. The lengthening of the monitoring period used to calculate CDRs has shed light on the fact that incidents of default increase dramatically in the third year after repayment begins. This means students entering repayment now may be in the danger zone in a few short years. Regardless of whether a default affects your cohort default rate, the default will still have the same negative impact on your students’ lives. Why wait to address the issue?

**Empowerment**

As financial aid professionals, you provide students with knowledge, career mentoring and the skillsets needed for success. But students need additional tools – like an understanding of personal finance – to help them achieve successful repayment. You’re empowering former students by giving them confidence to work with their loan servicers and find financial wellness in adulthood.

**The Greater Good**

Simply put, no matter what your CDR is, defaulted federal student loans are an additional weight each student must carry as the student tries to get a career off the ground. In addition, there is a financial cost to taxpayers, as well as our communities. Sanctions and benefits are persuasive motivators to schools to work with their borrowers to reduce default, but there is a larger, “we’re all in this together” incentive at hand as well - helping each student who attended your institution to be the best he or she can be.

No matter what your rate is for FY 2012, you owe it to your students to be proactively implementing an effective default prevention strategy to ensure your students have the financial tools required for successful student loan repayment. Crafting a comprehensive default prevention strategy on your campus demonstrates compassion that goes beyond the classroom.
Eight years ago, the students in USF’s chapter of Students In Free Enterprise came up with the idea of collecting donated suits and providing them to students who did not have professional attire. Shortly thereafter, the director of USF’s career center approached the team about partnering in the promotion the Career Center’s bi-annual career fair. The career fair brings prospective employers to campus to meet and interview students for jobs and internships. There was one small problem, the employers relayed their disappointment in the lack of professional attire for students who were seeking employment.

The students’ idea bloomed into a full-fledged opportunity to make an impact in the lives of students. Professional attire became mandatory for admission into the career fair. The students were tasked with providing the clothes to their peers, having a steady supply and keeping the clothes clean and ready for wear. An agreement was made with the campus bookstore to provide a small, 80 square foot space to keep the clothes and run the operations. Each year, between 150 and 200 students visited “Suit-A-Bull” to borrow professional clothes to attend the fair. This initiative has been featured in the local Tampa T.V. and printed media multiple times, resulting in my office having stacks of suits for months on end! Not my favorite thing, but anything for the students, right?

Fast forward to 2013. Our campus bookstore announces a major renovation that would result in the loss of the suit closet. My director, Billie Jo Hamilton gave me the name of one of our high level administrators and suggested I reach out and see if a new location could be secured to keep the suits. After a few meetings and seven months waiting, I was told that office space would be provided and all renovations would be paid by the University of South Florida! In July 2015, the Suit-A-Bull store was furnished. We had a soft opening and challenged the deans to see which area could donate the most items. This provided the students (organization now called Enactus) a viable supply of suits to open for business. Enactus and the USF Career Services office are partners in the operation of the Suit-A-Bull clothing store, 670 square feet of quality space that provides professional attire to any student who needs it. At the most recent career fair week in September, the store had 200 students come in for suits! We were very happy with the results. At one point, I even taught four students, assembly-line style how to tie a tie. They had never worn one before walking into the store.

Here’s how it works. The student comes into the store and is fitted for the clothes he needs. The student tries on the clothes in the dressing room. If it fits properly, the student checks out the items with his ID for a maximum of three days. When the student returns the items, his ID is returned. The Enactus students are currently tracking students who have borrowed suits to see how many of them have received job/internship offers as a result of being professionally dressed. The store is open Monday-Thursday from 10am-3pm.

For more information about Enactus, visit www.enactusunitedstates.org or Enactus at USF, visit https://enactususf.wordpress.com/
THE NEW AID OFFICER WORKSHOP

MAUREEN M. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID
COLLEGE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

The New Aid Officer Workshop (NAOW) was held at Dodgertown in Vero Beach, October 21–23, 2015. Topics covered in the workshop included: Basic eligibility and comment code resolution; Calculating an EFC (hand calculations!); FERPA and privacy issues; Verification; Introduction to state programs; How to handle difficult conversations; Cost of attendance and an overview of packaging; Overview of the 150% loan limitations; Loan repayment and default management; and Tools and resources in financial aid.

The intimate facility and the class size allowed for a great learning opportunity and developing relationships in the financial aid community. The participants enjoyed the presentations, the barbeque and pizza party, as well as the camaraderie. Within a couple of days we were already talking about a reunion!

I’d like to sincerely thank the following for presenting and providing workshop support, as well as contributing to the overall learning and fun of the participants: Lori Auxier, Office of Student Financial Assistance; Nathan Basford, Florida State University; Ron Anderson, University of Florida; and Geoff Stam, Keiser University.

Representatives from the following institutions attended the NAOW: Marion County Community Technical and Adult Education, Dorsey Technical College, Florida Gateway College, Florida International University, Florida Southern College, Hillsborough Community College, Indian River State College, Mcfatter Technical College, Pensacola State College, Santa Fe College, Seminole State College of Florida, South Dade Technical College, St. Johns River State College, University of North Florida, University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, and the University of Tampa.
Identity Theft on College Campuses

Irma Molinares, School Relations Director

It seems every day we hear reports of data breaches at our favorite retailers, healthcare providers and government agencies. Students can be especially vulnerable. According to a Javelin Strategy and Research study (2012), on average it takes a college student 132 days to discover they have become a victim of identity theft.

Criminals count on students’ nonchalant behavior and will go to great lengths to get their hands on personal information.

Credit card solicitations. Most students do not take the proper precautions to properly dispose of the personal information those offers for new credit accounts contain. Shred these documents and consider opting out of these offers by going to optoutprescreen.com.

Social media downloads. College students may be tempted by an offer to download free music or games. Often times those free music and games sites are tainted keystroke logging malware that tracks what they are typing.

Poor password management. Students should use a different password for social media sites, financial accounts and email accounts. Use complex passwords that include uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters, such as an exclamation point.

Use of free Wi-Fi. It’s easy for identity thieves to set up Wi-Fi in a public place to steal personal information on their victims’ electronic devices.

With just a little bit of information, an identity thief can access and empty bank accounts, apply for credit cards and loans, commit crimes in their victim’s name, or file fraudulent tax returns.

The following are some of the steps students can take if they suspect they are victims of identity theft:

- File a police report, complete a fraud affidavit with the FTC, and call creditors and the Social Security Fraud Hotline if a Social Security number was stolen or used.
- Place a fraud alert on their credit report—this will help to reduce the possibility of someone using/opening credit in the their name.
- Request and review copies of credit reports and look for accounts that are not familiar.

Early detection is key. If identity theft is discovered within five months, the amount stolen is usually less than $5,000 (FTC, 2003). According to the FTC (2014), identity theft continues to top their list of consumer complaints and American consumers reported losing more than $1.6 billion to fraud overall in 2013. Of those new reports, the highest reported age group for identity theft is 20-29. When identity theft happens, it can be devastating for the victim. Aside from the monetary damage and damage to the victim’s reputation, a thief can inflict psychological damage that can have a profound effect as well. Read more about identity theft and preventative measures at www.ftc.gov.
LEADERSHIP MINUTE: PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP TOOLBOX

BY KAMIA “MIA” MWANGO, TECHNICAL COORDINATOR/ACTING DIRECTOR, SANTA FE COLLEGE

Integrity: http://www.nasfaa.org/Code_of_Conduct
Not “Program Integrity”… but somewhat related! If you are a leader or aspire to be one, most everyone agrees that Integrity is a required trait, quality, characteristic, and/or value for true leaders. When you have to make a decision, data, instincts and experience can give you information for sound day-to-day decision-making, but integrity helps you make those tough calls that every leader will be faced with at some point.

Knowledge Resources: https://www.ifap.ed.gov/ifap/
You won’t get far in most leadership positions without at least some knowledge of your subject matter, and this is especially true in the financial aid field! There are a number of websites, listservs and professional organizations that can broaden and enhance your knowledge if you subscribe and read the material. You’re reading this so you’ve already got this area mastered! Great job!

Inspiration / Public Speaking Example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPwXeg8ThWI
First, I highly recommend that everyone take a few minutes out of their day and watch John Maxwell’s 5 Levels of Leadership video. There are some great points to glean from his presentation, but his presentation style and techniques are a lesson in inspiration and public speaking as well. It’s worth 30 minutes!

We all know how busy financial aid offices are, but if you can carve out the time to meet with team members or to have a staff meeting, you may find that this builds rapport, orients everyone to the team’s mission/goals, and provides a forum for information-sharing and creative problem-solving. You don’t have to be a team’s formal manager to request meetings. If you’re working on a project that requires input from, say, verification employees, you may want to reach out to them and get input too.

One-on-One Meeting Template: https://www.manager-tools.com/system/files/documents/docs/Manager-Tools_One_on_One_Basics.pdf
For those leading a team (supervising) one-on-one meetings are recommended to build rapport, if you can take the time. But, you should never meet just for the sake of meeting. That meeting should have a goal, a purpose, and should follow some sort of structure to ensure that you achieve that goal.

(Free) Microsoft Office Tutorials: http://www.gcflearnfree.org/office
In some cases, your team may be able to provide the reports, presentations or data that is required but in many cases you may find yourself working on last minute projects that require a certain level of software proficiency. Whether the tutorials are for you or someone on your team, consider brushing up on those Microsoft skills so that instead of focusing on how to get something done, you can focus on how well it’s being done and take things to the next level.

There you have it! Those are just a few quick tips for aspirational and current leaders. Often these kinds of topics and themes are covered in region workshops, so be sure to attend those when you are able.
If you’ve been somewhat conservative or cautious about maintaining a Facebook page for your financial aid office because of a potential drain on staff resources, here are some quick tips on how to set up and handle Facebook notifications, responses, content curation, and postings... in only two hours per week.

Develop a Notification and Response Procedure

If you’re constantly interrupting your other work to check your Facebook page for new posts from students or their family members, you’ll end up wasting time. Instead, make sure the right people have access to respond, and are notified when something needs their attention.

- Review your page roles (Settings > Page Roles) to make sure the correct people have access to respond to posts. Staff members who only need to answer questions (and not post status updates) should have the moderator role. Learn more about Facebook page roles.

- Have every staff member with access to your page adjust their notification settings (Settings > Notifications). You can choose to get notifications on Facebook as they happen, or once every 12-24 hours. You can also choose to get an email every time there is activity on your page (but that will be sent to the address associated with your Facebook account). If neither of these options appeal to you, you can download the Facebook Pages app for your mobile device and enable notifications there. To maximize efficiency, have staff members responsible for responding to posts turn on the notification(s) of their choice, and have other staff members with admin privileges turn them off.

- To maximize your time, check your notifications and respond to messages just once or twice per day. By dedicating approximately 5 minutes per day, you should be able to manage responses in 30 minutes per week.

Automate Your Content Curation

One of the best things your office can do on Facebook is provide students with excellent online resources related to scholarships, personal finance, and student loans. Instead of checking popular websites whenever you have time to search for content, subscribe to each site’s RSS feed using a free service like Feedly. Some good sites to subscribe to are the U.S. Department of Education’s Homeroom Blog, The Scholarship Coach, and Two Cents. You can also create custom Google alerts for stories of particular interest to your students, and put the URL for the alert into Feedly. Once you’ve developed a list of website subscriptions, you should be able to quickly scan new content and choose what to post in less than 30 minutes per week.

Create Interest Lists to Find Shareable Content

Did you know that Facebook allows you to create a custom Newsfeed of posts from pages you’ve added to an interest list? Visit any Facebook page, click the arrow on the “Like” button, and choose “add to interest list.” If you already have a list, you can choose it from the drop down, or create a new list.

To access your lists, check the “Interests” menu on the left side of your Facebook Newsfeed (from a desktop computer, not a mobile device), and click the list you want to view. You’ll see all the recent posts from pages on that list. Create a list that includes other campus offices, and maybe another that includes Federal Student Aid and student loan servicers. Then, once per week, take 15 minutes to peruse the list for other great content to share from your page.
“MAINTAIN YOUR FINANCIAL AID FACEBOOK PAGE IN ONLY TWO HOURS PER WEEK” (CONTINUED)

Create and Schedule Your Posts

After curating content with Feedly and Facebook interest lists, add some original posts from your office and schedule at least a week’s worth of content in advance. You can schedule posts from your page by choosing the arrow next to “post” and setting a date/time in the future. When you have scheduled posts, you’ll see a reminder on the top of your page timeline that indicates the next scheduled post and a link to view/edit upcoming posts. You should be able to create and schedule a week’s worth of posts in less than 30 minutes.

Review Your Insights Data Regularly

Facebook provides a lot of data about the performance of your posts and the behavior of your fans within their Insights platform. You can access this data from the Insights menu at the top of any page you admin. If you’d like to delegate this work, you can add someone to your page with an analyst role. This person will only be able to access Insights—they won’t be able to post as your page or respond to comments. If you can only spend 15 minutes per week with Insights, click on the “Posts” tab to see two important pieces of information:

When Your Fans Are Online: This shows when the people who like your page have been online during the most recent one week period. By hovering over the graph, you can see how this varies based on the day of week and time of day. This can help you determine when to schedule your posts (you want to post when most of your fans are online).

Post Types: This shows you how different types of posts (status updates, links, videos, images, etc.) have performed on your page. You can use this information to determine which types of posts result in the most reach (people who see the post) or engagement (people who click on a link, view an image, or like/comment/share).

If you have a bit of extra time, you can review the reach and engagement data for each post from the last week to see if a certain topic was more popular with your audience.

Here’s what a well-planned week of Facebook page management can look like for your office:

- Receive and respond to notifications (30 minutes)
- Review curated content on Feedly (30 minutes)
- Review Facebook interest lists (15 minutes)
- Create and schedule next week’s content (30 minutes)
- Review Facebook Insights to assess post performance (15 minutes)

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NATIONAL STUDY SHOWS MOST PARENTS WILLING TO STRETCH FINANCIALLY TO SEND THEIR CHILDREN TO COLLEGE BUT SAVING CAN BE CHALLENGING

BY LAURA DICKERSON, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
SALLIE MAE

By Laura Dickerson, Director of Business Development
Sallie Mae

How America Saves for College 2015, the annual study by Sallie Mae and Ipsos, has just been published, and there is a lot of useful information that may affect how students will be paying for college in the future. Findings include:

• Nine in 10 parents believe college is an investment in their child’s future, yet fewer than half are saving for college.

• Parents who plan for college have saved, on average, 46% more than non-planners.

• Planners are also three times more confident that they’ll meet the costs of higher education.

Saving for college is of course about dollars and cents, and oftentimes the hardest part is getting started,” said Charlie Rocha, executive vice president, Sallie Mae. “Setting reasonable goals can help parents foster their own commitment to saving for college, whether it be working to accumulate an actual dollar amount, setting aside a certain amount of money at a specified frequency, or simply developing the habit of not dipping into college savings for other purposes. And those who do are far more successful.”

With the release of How America Saves for College 2015, Sallie Mae also introduced its new 1-2-3 approach to saving for college:

1. **Open a savings account.** Set up and designate a savings account as your college fund.

2. **Make regular contributions.** Set a goal, and create a routine of adding money. Even a little bit adds up over time, and automatic deposits make saving easy.

3. **Explore tax-advantaged options.** Put your money to work using dedicated college savings programs like Coverdell Education Savings Accounts, prepaid state college savings plans, and 529 college savings plans.

As the nation’s saving, planning, and paying for college company, Sallie Mae is committed to researching, analyzing, and reporting on how American families are preparing to meet the financial challenges of sending their children to college, and offering the tools to help them succeed.

Sallie Mae produced How America Saves for College 2015 in conjunction with Ipsos, a global independent market research company. This study reports the results of online interviews that Ipsos conducted in January 2015, at which time they surveyed nearly 2,000 parents with at least one child younger than age 18. Read the full report at SallieMae.com/HowAmericaSavesforCollege, and follow the conversation at #HowAmericaSaves.
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