

VASF_{AA} VOICE



Winter Issue

In This Issue....

President's Message

Committee Updates

VASF_{AA} Fall Workshop Summary

"Financial Knowledge is an Integral Part of a Student's Education"

"Managing Student Loan Debt: The Overlooked Option"

"Learning New Tricks: Teaching Students the Ins and Outs of Financial Aid"

NASF_{AA} & SASF_{AA} Updates

Calendar Snapshot - Upcoming Events

VASF^{AA} VOICE

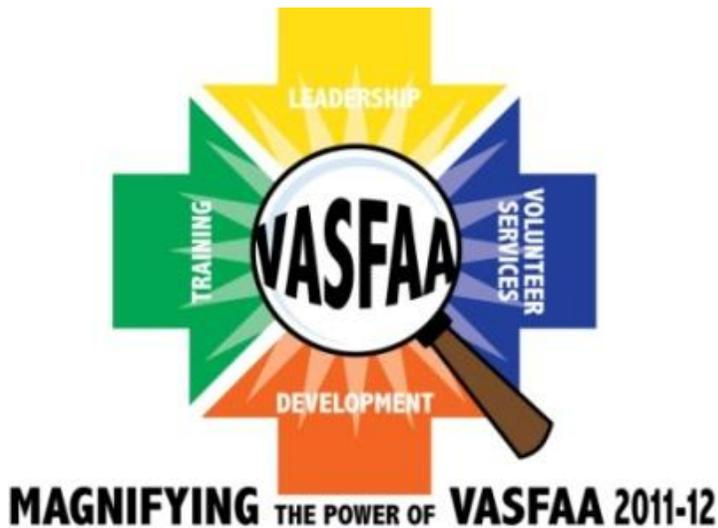
President's Message

Melissa J. Barnes, VASF^{AA} President

Happy Holidays!

As we embark upon the holiday seasons, let us be mindful of our many contributions to our institutions, to our professional Association, and to the students and families that we serve. Over the years, the members of our Association have played a vital role in ensuring that financial aid is administered in a timely and professional manner.

We should be proud that we are members of an association that promotes leadership development and training opportunities.



Kudos to Biz Daniel (Non-Conference Chair), Zita Barree, Ashley Reich, and Michael Poma for providing a successful Fall Non-Conference Training opportunity at Liberty University on October 6, 2010! A heartfelt thank-you goes to Liberty University's President and their Financial Aid Staff for hosting VASF^{AA} and providing the opportunity to conduct the workshop at its campus. The Fall Workshop included a session on Federal Updates by Greg Martin, U.S. Department of Education; SCHEV Updates by Lee Andes of SCHEV; and a final session on Verification by Shari Arehart of JMU.

On October 19, 2011, as VASF^{AA} President, I had the pleasure of serving as one of five panel members during the EASF^{AA}, ASF^{AA} and SASF^{AA} Legislative Briefing on Capitol Hill. The panel topics, presenters, and their institutions were:

Federal Methodology	Linda Anderson	Carnegie Mellon
Pell Grant	Pam Chisholm	Community College of Vermont
Student & Parent Loans	Melissa Barnes	Norfolk State University
Gainful Employment	Jane Hickey	The University of Maryland
Fraud & Abuse	Gary Spoales	ASPU
Gainful Employment Follow-up		

The selected topics were chosen in an effort to bring awareness to the importance of existing regulations and legislation that is being negotiated for implementation to the students and families that we serve. There were 42 financial aid professionals and 15 legislative aides in attendance.

VASFAA VOICE

During the months of November and December, High School Guidance Counselor Workshops were held at 12 locations throughout the state of Virginia. Many thanks to Dr. Pamela Rambo, Secondary Relations Chair, for her hard work and effort to ensure that our High School Counselors stay current with all the many changes in financial aid!!

As we move forward, we have secured 61 host sites for Super Saturday which will be held January 28, February 4, and February 11, 2012. Special thanks to Linda Woodley, Awareness Chair, her committee, and all of the sites for continuing VASFAA's tradition of providing financial awareness opportunities throughout the Commonwealth.

I am confident next year will offer many changes and challenges in financial aid; however, I am equally confident that as financial aid professionals, we will continue to provide quality services to our students and their families and to serve as advocates for student financial aid and access to postsecondary education.

May Each of You Have A Blessed & Safe Holiday!

Melissa J. Barnes
2011-12 VASFAA President



Secondary School Relations Committee

The Secondary School Relations Committee sent invitations to school guidance offices throughout Virginia in October announcing 12 regional VASFAA workshops for high school guidance counselors this fall. The workshops take place between November and January and focus on the 2012 FAFSA and related topics.

Many thanks to our hosts this year: Norfolk State University, Virginia Tech, Southwest Virginia Community College, Virginia Highlands Community College, Longwood University, National College in Danville, Shenandoah University, South University in Glenn Allen, Rambo Research and Consulting in Cooperation with Alumni Affairs at the College of William and Mary, Liberty University, George Mason University and Mary Baldwin University. Our hosts coordinate registrations for their location, donate refreshments for attendees and coordinate programs that include presenters from schools in their region. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and highly skilled professionals in our organization.

Conference Committee

Greetings from the Conference Committee! The committee would like to send a call to the membership for interest sessions both for the Conference and for the New Aid Officer's Workshop. If you have a session that you would like to present or one that you would like to attend please email Kerrie Roth at kroth@odu.edu. The New Aid Officer's Workshop will be held Sunday, May 20, 2012. The Conference will be held Monday - Wednesday, May 21st - May 23rd at the Norfolk Waterside Sheraton. We look forward to hearing from you!

A special thank you to the President's Council Committee from last year's nominee:

Setting Sail on the New Aid Officers Summer Workshop in June 2011 was the beginning of an exciting week of learning, sharing and networking. I would like to thank the VASFAA President's Council for the generous scholarship that allowed me to participate in this extraordinary training opportunity.

The training team brought a wealth of financial aid knowledge they were willing to share and worked hard to make each session exciting and worthwhile. Choosing Interest Sessions was difficult because they all sounded interesting. My session decisions were made based on a review of the sessions being offered with my director and selecting the ones that would add to my financial aid knowledge. The foundation for sound financial aid knowledge was well laid out with fundamental classes that built a solid base. Hearing other participants speak of their policies and procedures was helpful with our discussions being lively and informative.

Social activities helped build team spirit and encouraged networking. The 'Set Sail Morning Walk' was a perfect way to start the day; many thanks to Laura Keown and Dana Kelly. The week came quickly to an end with the Banquet and Dance on Thursday evening providing a relaxing night of fellowship and fun.

Clemson University and its staff were wonderful hosts. Thanks to all who made this workshop an enriching experience and to the President's Council for making my attendance possible.

Recipe for Christmas All Year Long

By Joanna Fuchs

Take a heap of child-like wonder
That opens up our eyes
To the unexpected gifts in life—
Each day a sweet surprise.

Mix in fond appreciation
For the people whom we know;
Like festive Christmas candles,
Each one has a special glow.

Add some giggles and some laughter,
A dash of Christmas food,
(Amazing how a piece of pie
Improves our attitude!)

Stir it all with human kindness;
Wrap it up in love and peace,
Decorate with optimism, and
Our joy will never cease.

If we use this healthy recipe,
We know we will remember
To be in the Christmas spirit,
Even when it's not December.

VASF^{AA} VOICE

Events Around VASF^{AA}

VASF^{AA} Fall Workshop



VASF^{AA}'s fall workshop was a great success this year. Held at Liberty University, the workshop had a great turnout. Financial aid representatives from around Virginia came to learn more about what to expect for next year and to network with colleagues.

Sessions included the federal update from Greg Martin of the Department of Education, verification changes, presented by Shari Arehart of James Madison University, and the SCHEV update, presented by Lee Andes. Presentations were informative and gave our audience a great opportunity to come together to discuss the new regulations.



A big thank you to all who helped make this training workshop possible. The powerpoint presentations have been uploaded to the VASF^{AA} website for those who were unable to attend. We look forward to seeing you at another successful workshop next year!



Financial Knowledge is an Integral Part of a Student's—and Institution's— Education

By Kate Trombitas

Money makes the world go round. Those words have never been truer for today's college students who are banking, literally, on the assumption that they'll get a good-paying job after graduation—one that will help them pay off their ever-growing student loan bills:

- The average starting salary for 2011 graduates is \$36,866; down from \$46,500 in 2009.²
- Most students graduating from a four-year college or university will have an average of **\$23,200 in student loans**.³
- 84 percent of college students are in credit card debt—to the tune of over \$3,100, on average.⁴

Forget homework and term papers. One of the biggest causes of stress for college students right now is money related. Financial problems are a leading reason why students drop out.⁵

It's a trend that has the attention of Kate Trombitas, NSLP vice president of financial education. She saw the effects of financial burdens—and a lack of familiarity about the topic—in her role as associate director of student wellness at Ohio State University.

"We knew on our campus that money was the second-leading cause of stress, and that it was creating a barrier to academic success," says Trombitas. "We wanted to look at it as a wellness issue as important to campus administrators as alcohol abuse prevention, nutrition and sex education."

To give students a resource they could put to work in their day-to-day lives, Trombitas created a peer-to-peer financial guidance program at OSU. Student volunteers (many of whom were interested in careers in financial planning or counseling) were matched with peers who wanted to be savvier about money topics. The program, which can be administered for a low cost, has proven to be an effective way to introduce the topic not only to students, but also to administrators.

"It's a win-win," Trombitas says. "Students are more comfortable talking to their peers, and administrators are happy to have an inexpensive staff of motivated students who truly understand the issues facing their student body."

More schools are seeing the value in providing financial education to their students, says Todd Woodlee, NSLP vice president for business development. "Schools are starting to realize that this isn't just a financial aid issue—or an enrollment issue, or an academic issue. It's an institution issue, and it's about overall student success. It's an issue

More than two-thirds of college students surveyed admit they have inadequate knowledge about basic financial matters—credit cards, credit scores, saving for retirement, compound interest, credit bureaus, and investing. Only 21 percent of these students are using and maintaining a budget, and more than half of the students surveyed say they lack basic knowledge about student loans.¹

VASFAA VOICE

Often, that means not only educating students but the people they look to for their education. NSLP and East Carolina University have worked together to present a personal financial certification program course designed especially for faculty and staff on campus. The program was piloted in the summer of 2011 and will have 60-plus graduates by the end of the calendar year. ECU has a long history of providing personal financial education to its students, faculty and staff through the ECU Financial Wellness Institute.

“This is a cultural issue,” says Woodlee. “ECU is one of the growing number of schools to address it as such. We are pleased to be working with them on such a significant program.”

The key, Woodlee says, is collaboration. And that requires a shift in thinking to bring together departments across the offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs that may not typically work together in this manner. “Whether it starts with one area or the other, this is about the commitment to make time and put together the resources necessary to launch meaningful financial education programs,” Woodlee adds.

However it comes together, it’s a welcome addition to the curriculum. According to Sallie Mae’s national study of student credit card usage rates and trends, 84 percent of undergraduates admitted they need more financial management education. Furthermore, young adults believe that making better choices about managing money is the single most important issue facing individual Americans today.⁶

“In study after study we’re seeing the same thing—students want to increase their financial capability,” Trombitas says. “It is time for campuses to work creatively and collaboratively to respond to this need.”

Schools already have a captive audience. It’s a crucial time to give students the tools and resources they need to make wise choices when it comes to their money and their futures.

References

¹Bowling Green State University. “Findings from the 2009 Student Financial Literacy Survey.” www.bgsu.edu/downloads/enrollment/file66299.doc. Bowling Green State University, 23 Apr. 2009. Web. 16 Sept. 2011.

²Michigan State University. “Recruiting Trends 2010-2011.” <http://www.ceri.msu.edu/recruiting-trends-2010-2011/>. Michigan State University, 2010. Web. 20 Sept. 2011.

³The Institute for College Access and Success. “Student Debt and the Class of 2009.” *The Institute for College Access and Success*, Oct. 2010. Web. 16 Sept. 2011.

⁴Sallie Mae (2009). How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards. Retrieved from <http://www.salliemae.com/NR/rdonlyres/OBD600F1-9377-46EA-AB1F-6061FC763246/10744/SLMCreditCardUsageStudy41309FINAL2.pdf>.

⁵Shim, S. (2010). Arizona Pathways to Life Success for University Students. University of Arizona. Retrieved from http://aplus.arizona.edu/wave1_5_report.pdf.

⁶Sallie Mae (2009). How Undergraduate Students Use Credit Cards. Retrieved from <http://www.salliemae.com/NR/rdonlyres/OBD600F1-9377-46EA-AB1F-6061FC763246/10744/SLMCreditCardUsageStudy41309FINAL2.pdf>.

We look out
for our schools,
so that together
we can look out
for students.



With a range of tools that teach students how to live within their means and to take on the responsibility of a loan, we can set your students and school up for success. Let’s talk further at VASFAA.

Managing Student Loan Debt: The Overlooked Option

by Daniel McClanahan

In society today, the college degree has become the new high school diploma. High school students are no longer encouraged to obtain their high school diploma so that they can obtain a job. This current trend has become more of a means to an end for a potential career in the student's desired field. According to Murray (2008), college has not only become a gateway to a successful job, it has also become a desirable way for students to make the transition into adulthood.

Not only has a college degree become necessary for students today, it has also become an important piece of the puzzle for employers when reviewing applications and resumes for future employees. Employers today require that applicants have a bachelor's degree not only for purposes of qualification, but because this provides a no-cost screening device for academic ability and perseverance (Murray, 2008). The specific content learned while pursuing a degree is not as important in today's job market to the employer as obtaining the degree itself.

The need for a college degree to obtain a desirable job is no secret to financial aid professionals. The number of students attending college is steadily increasing and this is leading to more and more students acquiring student loans to finance their education. Although many suggestions have been made to colleges on how to combat increasing loan debt and default rates, there are additional steps students can take to get ahead on decreasing their loan debt while they are



What's new for your students in 2011?

Several new features are available on Wells Fargo private student loans this year:

- Reduced interest rate for Wells Fargo customers¹
- Fixed rate option
- E-sign self-certification forms
- Loan forgiveness in the event of death or disability²



Together we'll go far



¹ Wells Fargo reserves the right to discontinue or modify our rewards for future disbursement at any time without notice.
² Loan forgiveness does not apply to the Wells Fargo Private Consolidator™ Loan.
©2011 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved.

One suggestion that is often overlooked when students are inquiring on how to decrease student loan amounts is working while attending school. Although this is not possible for all students, it is something that today's college student needs to consider. Based on the criteria covered earlier, it is very apparent that a college degree is not only necessary to be considered for a job, it is the standard that employers use in today's society for interview purposes. If students were to work part-time during their four years of college, they will not only be able to manage their loan debt more effectively, but they will also gain valuable experience that cannot be obtained in the classroom.

Studies have shown that about 57% of college students are working while obtaining a college degree (Miller, Danner, & Staten, 2008). This means that students who work during school can list experience on their resume that 43% of other graduates are unable to claim. In the past, when colleges were only offering residential programs, it may have been more difficult for a student to consider having a job while in college. As of today, many colleges offer residential and online programs that enable students to adapt a hybrid-like enrollment plan that will allow students to work flexible hours while obtaining a degree.

In conclusion, students will be able to gain valuable experience if they are able to secure a job while in school. Furthermore, it will allow students to gain responsibility by managing their student loan debt more effectively for the future. Although there will be students who are unable to work due to certain variables, the overall goal is that students who have secured employment will be able to pay down their loan debt faster, which makes for an easier transition into today's world after graduation.

References:

Murray, C. 2008. Are too many people going to college? *The American*. Retrieved from <http://www.american.com/archive/2008/september-october-magazine/are-too-many-people-going-to-college>

Miller, K., Danner, F., Staten, R. (2008). Relationship of work hours with selected health behaviors and academic progress among a college

Learning New Tricks: Teaching students the ins and outs of Financial Aid

by Kylie Kennedy

New students flood into universities and other higher education institutions every year. Acceptance letter in hand, they register for classes, and prepare to dive head first into college life. All the while they are ignoring the big question: "How am I going to pay for this?" Financial aid professionals are there to come to the rescue. We have the unique opportunity to help students fund their dreams. To effectively do so, we must teach our students the ins and outs of financial aid in a way that leads students to finding alternatives to loans when possible and to borrow smart for the rest.

This one doesn't have a price tag...

One way to lead students in the right direction is to be upfront about charges. Your students will appreciate your openness. Be sure to mention more economical packages. Many schools offer block rates, so encourage students to take advantage of them to get more for their money. Another option may be to enroll in online classes as opposed to residential. The reduced cost for tuition may be the optimal choice for some. Although many times we in financial aid do not see this as our duty, because we do not directly handle charges, we still have an obligation to our students. Our goal should be to get students through with as little debt as possible, which naturally includes discussing charges.

The early bird gets the worm

Students often times are not fully aware of the importance of meeting deadlines and being proactive in their pursuit of financial aid. Submitting their FAFSA early for instance can lead to institutional scholarships (as incentives from the school) and other aid such as FSEOG. end. The Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant, as another example, has a priority deadline of July 31st. This concept applies for outside scholarships as well. Most scholarships have specific deadlines to meet in order for the candidate to even be considered.



Helping You
Helping Students

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.



GREAT LAKES
FOR THE BETTER

Timeliness not only affects the amount of aid; it also prevents delays in aid. Students do not foresee issues when they fill out their FAFSA, yet delays such as verification, rejects, and C code can take time to correct. Being on time or early can save the student a lot of hassle in the

Open and Honest

In an era of technological wonders, our institutions can gain great benefits by keeping our webpages up to date on what aid we offer and what we cannot accept. Most students do not understand that all aid does not apply to every school. One example for Virginia schools is the Virginia Commonwealth Award, which is only available to Virginia's public institutions. A private school cannot accept that funding even if the student qualifies for the award.

Help define the parameters so that students will know what to look for. Giving students the qualifications for specific scholarships will help students in determining whether to apply. This will in turn reduce the amount of e-mail and in-office visits requesting review for aid the student doesn't qualify for.

The Communication Tightrope

The ability to inform students about financial aid does not always mean that the student will fully understand. Learning to balance information that the student needs with what may overwhelm them can be a difficult task. We cannot expect students to know what we, as professionals, do about financial aid. Give students the information they need to make wise decisions, but be cautious when giving large amounts of information at once. This may overwhelm students and lower their retention.

On the other end of the spectrum, be prepared to answer students in a coherent and concise manner when they have questions. Tell them what they need to know and prepare yourself to explain your reasons. "Because I told you so" is not an acceptable answer. One of the latest hot topics is "financial literacy". This term is best defined as "the ability to make informed judgments and to make effective decisions regarding the use and management of money" (Lamdin, 2012, p. 4). Financial literacy stems from the argument that students need to be informed borrowers and it is the institutions that are held accountable.

As Financial Aid administrators, our duty is to our students. Being open about costs, alerting students to opportunities for aid, and creating an environment of financial literacy is the best way we can help. As professionals, we have the skill and the competence to inform students of their options in hopes of finding the best solution to fund their education.

References

Lamdin, D. J. (2012). *Consumer Knowledge and Financial Decisions: Lifespan Perspectives*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media.

VASFAA VOICE

NASFAA Update:

Recent NASFAA news brought a summary of the changes to Federal Student Aid for fiscal year 2012 Budget Bill. Financial aid will be experiencing drastic changes with the new legislation. On a positive note, it appears that federal Pell Grant limits for 2012-2013 will be preserved, though some adjustments have been made to the provisions affecting Pell. Along with Pell regulation changes, auto-zero EFC's and the ability-to-benefit options have been revised.

With all the regulation changes for verification, satisfactory academic progress, and withdrawal calculations, NASFAA has been offering various training sessions and webinars. New in-depth resources are also available on their website. Workshops will continue through the new year, so be watching for dates and locations.



SASFAA Update:

The Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators conference is fast approaching. The conference will be held in Greensboro, North Carolina at the Sheraton Hotel. A variety of topics will be addressed including program reviews, gainful employment, managing default, consumer information, and more! For new aid workers, this conference provides a workshop February 26th. This year's theme is "Focusing on what's best for our students".

Calendar Snapshot

January 28th, February 4th & 11th ***Super Saturday***

VASF^{AA} will be hosting Super Saturday events around Virginia in the coming months. Super Saturday is designed to target incoming college students, returning students, and adult learners. The event will give students the opportunity to learn more about how financial aid works and help

January 31st ***Standard Academic Progress Training***

This training workshop will be hosted in Macon, Georgia. This workshop is a part of the SAP training produced by NASF^{AA} and presented at various locations throughout the months of November, December, January and February. The workshop will discuss the new requirements and regulations set forth by the Department of Education.

February 22nd ***Summer Aid (webinar)***

NASF^{AA} will present a live webinar discussing the treatment of summer aid. Registration will open shortly.

February 26th-28th ***SASF^{AA} Annual Conference***

SASF^{AA}'s annual conference will be held in Greensboro, North Carolina this year. Sessions will include the federal update, verification, direct loans and COD, along with an update from the Inspector General's Office on Fraud. This is a great opportunity to learn more about recent regulations and network with fellow financial aid colleagues.

March 21st ***Treatment of Academic Modules in R2T4 (Webinar)***

This webinar will be hosted by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The content is designed to give further guidance on how to determine when an academic program is offered in modules and how to conclude when a student has withdrawn from such a module. Registration will open shortly.

VASF AA VOICE

Thanks to our contributors!

Daniel McClanahan - Liberty University
Kate Trombitas - NSLP
Melissa Barnes - Norfolk State University
Kylie Kennedy - Liberty University

Editor's Contact Information

Kylie Kennedy
ktodak@liberty.edu
(434)592-3816
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Article Guidelines

The editorial staff will review all articles submitted for publication
All articles should be of professional interest to the association
and should not include marketing and/or advertising of products,
services, websites, or personnel.

Picture Guidelines

Pictures should be submitted in .jpeg, .jpg, or .gif format.



If a man empties his purse into his head, no one can take it from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the highest rate of return.

Benjamin Franklin