

VASF^{AA}: What you should know about the organization

BY SHARON CLOUGH

The Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee is pleased that so many VASF^{AA} members have volunteered, or are considering volunteering, their time in support of VASF^{AA} activities for the coming 2002-03 year.

We would like to quickly remind you of a few things about our organization, which may assist you in setting goals and objectives for your personal involvement with VASF^{AA}, and/or as you develop them for a VASF^{AA} committee.

Mission

To maintain an organization that promotes the professional growth and collaboration of its members to ethically, competently and adequately serve the needs of students, families and institutions in matters related to financial and informational resources that support students' postsecondary education goals.

Vision statement

VASF^{AA} members will be prepared to handle the responsibilities of their positions, with excellence, in a professional and ethical manner, participate actively in the accomplishment of the association mission and goals, and promote opportunities for equity in funding, access to, and success in postsecondary education pursuits.

Core values

VASF^{AA}'s core values include: education, students, access, integrity, and professionalism.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW continues on page 8

VASF^{AA} Spring Conference



VASF^{AA} members hit the blackjack tables at the Spring Conference, from left to right: Janet Johnston, Buddy Johnston, Virginia Stevens, Bob Crawford and Marvin Ragland.

a word from the PRESIDENT



BY BARRY W. SIMMONS, SR.

Congratulations to our newly elected officials for the 2002-03 year. I look forward to working with them and the entire membership to further the causes of VASFAA through “Embracing Change.”

We need everyone’s input. Take a moment to complete the volunteer form and return it to me so we can assure full participation in our committee structure.

It is an honor to serve VASFAA. During the 2002-03 year, we will seek to further implement the principles of diversity more pervasively in our behavior, and not just hold these principles in our knowledge base. Further emphasis on early awareness across our various constituencies can only work to provide the drive and hope necessary to assure students and their families that there is help in financing a post high school education. Likewise, to garner the public and governmental support needed to ensure our success in aiding students, we must have significant interaction with policy-makers at various levels of government.

These topics will be my three major areas of concentration during 2002-03. You may notice changes to the way VASFAA has traditionally operated in a variety of fields ... we will be “Embracing Change.” Come join us! Fill out a volunteer form today.

Barry Simmons, president, is director of financial aid at Virginia Tech.

neweditor!

The new VASFAA VOICE editor is Gary Spoales from Bank of America. Watch for an e-mail from Gary with this year’s newsletter deadlines. Gary’s contact information is below. Gary’s e-mail has changed so make sure you change it in your address book.

FROM THE EDITOR

The VASFAA VOICE is published four times per year (fall, winter, spring and summer) online. If you are interested in writing an article or have something to submit, contact Gary Spoales at:

Tel: 301.879.8008

Fax: 301.879.8009

gary.a.spoales@bankofamerica.com

Include your contact information on all submissions.

The VASFAA VOICE staff cannot guarantee that everything submitted will be included and reserves the right to edit all materials.

CONTENTS

VASFAA Board uses membership feedback	3
SASFAA Conference wants your input.....	3
Grapevine News.....	3
Allfirst ad.....	3
Early awareness programs.....	4
Nellie Mae ad.....	4
Guarantor updates.....	5
Spring Conference photos.....	6
Lender update.....	7
Suntrust ad.....	7
Wells Fargo ad.....	8
SASFAA topic suggestion form	

VASFAA Board uses membership feedback to identify 2002-03 goals and objectives

BY BRAD BARNETT

In an e-mail to the VASFAA Listserv on June 26, Barry Simmons, VASFAA president, forwarded a "task" list to the membership. This list contained 16 tasks that were identified as ways we can address the issues identified via the VASFAA "Understanding our Organization" survey and subsequent 2002 Spring Conference general and breakout sessions. The "task" list was created at the VASFAA Board Transition Retreat held this summer.

The 2002-03 VASFAA Executive Board and committee chairs used this information as a basis for developing

goals and objectives. We have appreciated the membership's patience through the transition and want everyone to know how much value is placed on the feedback you provided. The feedback we received from you in spring 2002 was critical in the transition retreat discussions, and development of VASFAA's 2002-03 goals and objectives. This year's goals and objectives will be posted on the VASFAA Web site soon.

Together, we can make "Embracing Change" a year of success.

Brad Barnett, representative at large, is senior associate director at James Madison University.

SASFAA Conference

The SASFAA Conference Committee wants your input about what topics to offer during the interest sessions at the 2003 SASFAA Conference. Follow this link to a form you can fill out and submit.

GRAPEVINE NEWS

DEATHS

Viola Barden, mother of Joe Barden, died Saturday, April 13. Joe is director of student services at Virginia Community College System.

John D. Buck died April 15. John served as VASFAA counsel for a number of years following his work on incorporating VASFAA in the 1980s.

Rod Moore's father died. Rod is director of admissions and financial aid at Southwest Virginia Community College.

Carl Bradsher's mother, Tressa Bradsher, died. Carl is the financial aid director at Averett University.



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Early awareness programs help students reach college

The best time to have a positive impact on children is when they are young. That's why the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and The Education Resources Institute have launched a new Web site to assist counselors, community leaders, and financial aid and admissions professionals with an interest in helping youth and their parents understand the benefits of going to college. "The ABCs of Early Awareness: A Resource Guide and Toolkit for Helping Students Achieve a Higher Education" is available to the public at <http://www.nasfaa.org/ABCs.asp>.

Early awareness programs can impact and change the lives of students who may not otherwise consider college. When college is not part of young students' mindsets, they arrive at their junior or senior year of high school only to find that they have not met college admissions requirements. Also, they may feel unable to afford an education beyond high school, not knowing that financial assistance is available.

Fortunately, there has been an awakening to these issues in recent years, and an increasing number of schools and organizations have initiated activities to promote early

awareness. "The ABCs of Early Awareness," located on the NASFAA Web site, provides step-by-step instructions to help program organizers to:

- identify the right program for the target age group,
- plan activities,
- address budget constraints,
- implement the program, and
- evaluate the program's success.

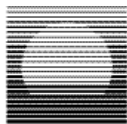
The site also includes information and links to the following.

- NASFAA's "Financial Aid Night" Web page, a complete slide presentation and script for presenting financial aid programs and application procedures
- TERI's College Access Resources, including the Higher Education Access Resources database with more than 175 programs that promote college attendance among first generation and low-income students

EARLY AWARENESS continues on page 8



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ECMC

BY MIKE HAWKES

ECMC launches e-signature

ECMC's e-sign process was designed around the requirements of the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act. It does not require the student to obtain either a password or personal identification number. Instead, the borrower's intent to sign a promissory note electronically is captured at several stages of the process.

For questions regarding ECMC's e-sign process, call Mike Hawkes at 888.775.3262, ext. 7101.

Education Connection adds new classes

ECMC has added new classes to Education Connection, its online training program

Education Connection was created to give financial aid professionals an opportunity to receive training without leaving the office and at their own pace. Education Connection includes classes on Stafford basics, PLUS basics, disbursement, delivery, and Stafford repayment.

ECMC plans to add additional Education Connection classes throughout 2002.

New financial aid programs book available

ECMC and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia once again have collaborated to produce a book describing financial aid programs for Virginia students and their families.

"Opportunities: 2002-03 Virginia Financial Aid Programs" contains a significant amount of new content. New and enhanced sections include:

- recommended courses for college-bound students,
- an expanded checklist of activities for juniors and seniors,
- information about the SAT and a list of testing dates,
- helpful hints and commonly asked questions about the FAFSA, and
- a worksheet to compare financial aid awards.

Mike Hawkes is director, policy and communications, at ECMC.

USA Funds

USA Funds extends zero guarantee fee for federal education loans

USA Funds® announces the extension of a practice that has saved student and parent loan borrowers more than \$186 million over the last three years. The guarantor will continue to waive the one percent guarantee fee to parents and students borrowing under the Federal Family Education Loan Program.

During the next year, the zero guarantee fee is projected to save USA Funds' borrowers nearly \$74 million.

The zero guarantee fee applies to all Federal Stafford and Federal PLUS loans guaranteed by USA Funds® on or after May 1, 1999, for students or parents of undergraduates who attend any academic institution that participates in the FFELP.

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Because USA Funds® will not deduct a guarantee fee from a borrower's loan amount, parent and student loan borrowers will have more money to pay education expenses.

USA Funds® will offer this benefit to borrowers as long as favorable conditions exist, and it is financially feasible.

Life SkillsSM course helps prepare students for life

USA Funds® announces Life SkillsSM – a flexible training program that helps postsecondary institutions teach their students to budget their time and money wisely during school and after graduation.

USA Funds® designed Life SkillsSM to meet the needs of financial aid professionals, college students and parents who agreed that information previously available did not prepare students for the money and time management responsibilities they face. There is no other program like Life SkillsSM currently offered to postsecondary institutions.

LIFE SKILLSSM COURSE continues on page 8

CONFERENCEPHOTOS



Clockwise from top left: Vern Fairchilds, Bridgewater College, accepts the Life Member Award from Past President Nancy Roberts. Tom Morehouse, Thomas Nelson Community College, performs the “YMCA” at the seventh inning stretch of the Tidewater Tides/Richmond Braves Game. Lee Andes, SCHEV, tries his luck with the dice at casino night.

lenderupdate

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW continued from front

SunTrust

SunTrust adds TERI loans to enhance education loan offerings

SunTrust Banks, Inc. now offers three new private student loan products through an alliance with The Education Resources Institute and First Marblehead Corporation.

The new loans, which will be available nationally through SunTrust Education Loans to two- and four-year schools, are the SunTrust TERI Alternative Loan for undergraduate students, the SunTrust TERI Graduate Alternative Loan for graduate and professional students, and the SunTrust TERI Continuing Education Loan for students attending school less than half-time.

According to Marke A. Thomas, senior vice president and SunTrust Education Loans Business Line manager, the SunTrust TERI loans will help fill an ever-increasing gap between federal student financing resources and the cost of higher education.

The SunTrust TERI loans allow the school to certify the amount of the loan, thus giving financial aid professionals more influence in helping students manage their overall debt.

In addition to the new TERI loans, SunTrust will continue to offer its non-certified eSeries private loan products. According to Thomas, "having both eSeries and TERI private loan options to complement our traditional federal loan programs further enhances our ability to tailor our offerings to meet the needs of both the school and the student."

Strategic plan

VASF AA has developed a strategic plan to ensure the viability of our association within a volatile and constantly changing environment. With the guidance of our mission, vision statement and core values, the plan helps prepare our organization for change and challenge.

The entire strategic plan is available at the VASF AA Web site. Refer to the site for guidance as you think about your 2002-03 activities. We look forward to a dynamic year for VASF AA, and to continued support by our executive leadership in sending a clear message to the membership about the priorities and purpose of our organization.

Sharon Clough, Strategic Planning and Assessment Committee chair, is director of financial aid and compliance at TESST College of Technology.



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Life SkillsSM teaches basic strategies for managing finances and for completing degree work in a timely manner. The course also supports efforts by financial aid professionals to be good stewards of their institution's education loan default rate.

Life SkillsSM is part of a multi-million dollar initiative launched by USA Funds[®] in 1999 to help postsecondary institutions achieve measurable reductions in their student loan default rates. USA Funds[®] offers the free program to USA Funds[®] customers, all Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and tribally-controlled schools.

The program features five independent, but interrelated, sessions. Financial aid professionals can present each session individually as a one-hour workshop, or deliver the entire series as a four-hour course with a one-hour refresher. Each Life SkillsSM module includes an instructor training manual, student skills book, presentation slides, video, and interactive CD-ROM with student skill-building activities.

The modules cover the following strategies and skills.

- Creating and living within a budget while in school and after graduation
- Obtaining financial aid and student loans to pay college costs

- Using credit cards wisely
- Developing good study habits to succeed in school and complete college in a timely manner
- Understanding loan repayment options, responsibilities and obligations
- Honing job-search tactics to gain employment following graduation

For more information about Life SkillsSM, contact your new USA Funds[®] debt management consultant, Richard Burt, at 866.497.USAF (866.497.8723), ext. 8658 or rburt@usafunds.org.

EARLY AWARENESS continued from page 4

- A guide to planning a "Carnival of Learning" event – a motivational activity for students in the elementary grades
- An extensive bibliography of Web- and print-based early awareness resources

NASFAA and TERI have collaborated on a number of early awareness activities since the late 1980s. Financial aid and admissions professionals, primary and secondary school administrators, and representatives from community-based organizations created "The ABCs."



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