



WVASFAA NEWS

SUMMER 2007

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Brian Weingart,
President

Letter from the President

How Do You View Change?

A common theme among many of us in financial aid is change. Many campuses are dealing with changes in leadership, changes in staff, changes in structure, or changes in technology. The one thing we can count on is change! And our motto continues to be, "Do more with less!"

When I started in financial aid, the discussion in our profession was the upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act; however, no one outside of our profession was interested in talking about access or affordability. The Pell Grant award stayed at \$4,050 for what seemed an eternity, campus-based programs were level-funded, and, to top it off, we have had to fight to keep the Perkins Loan from being eliminated. Last February, Congress gave us a gift called the Deficit Reduction Act, which seems like it was written by people with little financial aid experience. In the last several months we have watched the reputation of our entire profession drug through the mud by politicians and the media. In

all of this there is a silver lining in this cloud that has overshadowed us.

It seems that the media firestorm has not had any effect on most students and families in West Virginia. I've not seen any erosion of the trust that students and families have in us.

We can also thank our state leaders for recognizing the importance of need-based aid and increasing funding for the state grant by \$8 million for this coming year. There is also an effort with other stakeholders to better coordinate our early awareness efforts within West Virginia.

While the current reauthorization bills being considered in Congress seem to make the system even more complicated, we can applaud their intention to increase grants to the neediest students and begin to address the level of student loan debt that our students are graduating with. The issues of access and affordability are now part of the national dialogue.

The attention that we have received from the media and politicians needs to be viewed as an

opportunity that we can take advantage of instead of being viewed as a negative. We can share our story, our passion. It's about students! We watch the transformation of our students, to see them grow, graduate, and then go out into the world and make a difference and to know that we had a small part.

The atmosphere is ripe for a shift in paradigm. To change (there's that word again) the system. We have an opportunity to join the dialogue that we are at the center of and change the conversation from, "what is wrong," to "what can be improved"-to simplify the system, provide the resources, and communicate effectively to students and families that an education is not only possible but affordable.

When we remember why we are in financial aid, and the difference we make in the lives of students, what seems like insurmountable obstacles become little speed bumps in our calling to serve students, in our quest for change.

Brian Weingart

Is Graduate-Level Education Receiving Enough Attention?

Washington, D.C. (April 2007) – The U.S. education system is made up of more than just undergraduate schools, yet lawmakers, business leaders, and college presidents are speaking out about the dwindling emphasis, funding, and access to graduate-level education.



Graduate education is the backbone of American competitiveness and innovation. That was the message – and the title – of a legislative forum held recently in Washington, D.C. by the Council of Graduate Schools. Several lawmakers turned out for the event, along with university presidents and business leaders, to discuss what is seen as a stagnant U.S. graduate-level education system, at least in comparison to other developed nations.

While the number of scientific papers published by Americans has remained fairly constant over the last decade, the number of scientific papers published outside of the United States has risen by more than 30 percent. More and more developing nations are investing substantial amounts of money in their graduate schools, illustrated by the fact that South Korea produces about the same number of doctorates as the United States, but with a population that is only about the size of California, Oregon, and Washington combined.

“There’s a lack of understanding of the absolutely essential role of graduate education,” said Ohio State University President Karen Holbrook.

Undergraduate schools, community colleges, and trade-schools should remain an integral part of this discussion, as lawmakers emphasized that everyone involved in primary, secondary, and postsecondary education has a responsibility to give more credence to access and participation in graduate education.

Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness, stated that the push to get more students into graduate-level education was a “kindergarten to college” effort.

“People need to be told that they have the ability to go to college,” said Hinojosa.

Hinojosa also emphasized the need for more funding from the federal government at all levels of higher education, calling it “shameful” that the budgets at public primary and secondary schools are made up of only 7-8 percent of federal dollars.

Hinojosa restated his commitment to begin and finish reauthorization of the Higher Education Act this year to increase college access through additional federal dollars. Congressman Rush Holt, Chairman of the House Appropriations Select Intelligence Oversight Panel also stressed loan forgiveness and increased scholarships to ensure that students could financially “make it” to graduate and doctorate levels.

Temple University President Ann Weaver Hart reminded participants that the federal government is the largest single provider of higher education funding and that those monies must be targeted towards US public policy goals, specifically to ensure that the United States is providing enough access to graduate-level education.

Participants focused on several target populations, including minority and first-generation college students, as a potential “goldmine” of future graduate students.

“Most Americans have little idea about the potential of minority students,” said Hinojosa. He went on to explain how his region in southern Texas had gone unnoticed by employers, schools, and legislators for several years. But now, after more than a decade of work, his congressional district has become a large contributor to both the Texas and U.S. economy.

These target populations require proactive solutions according to the University of Houston System Chancellor G. Jay Gugue.

“We’re seeing that first-generation college students are ‘debt averse,’” said Gugue, arguing that we must find increased funding sources to tap into U.S. populations that have historically been underrepresented.

Despite many of the troubling statistics about the lagging education system and apparent lack of competitiveness in the world, the forum illustrated that there's still hope. The United States has the largest economy in the world and many agree that our higher education system remains the envy of developed nations. The United States is still the home of the largest global corporations, many of which spawned out of graduate school research projects, such as Google and Genentech.

As policymakers, business leaders, and higher education officials and stakeholders – including financial aid administrators – unite to advocate for increased funding, access and participation in graduate-level education, we will remain at the forefront of global innovation and competitiveness according to Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Schools.

By Justin Draeger, Assistant Director for Communications, NASFAA. Justin may be contacted at DraegerJ@NASFAA.org.



WVASFAA Member News

We have a new addition to our family:

Bonnie Edwards began working as a Financial Aid Assistant at Glenville State College on July 1. Bonnie is a recent Glenville graduate with a Business Administration degree.

Welcome to Financial Aid!



Fall 2007 Conference

Fall conference will be held at Snowshoe on October 23-26, 2007.

Please watch for further information concerning registration and hotel reservations through email and the WVASFAA website.

Transition Meeting

Our annual Transition Meeting was held Friday, June 15 at the Alderson-Broaddus Campus where the gavel for president was passed from Lake Tackett to Brian Weingart and the chairs took over their respective committees.

The Chairs of each committee are as follows:

Awareness	Nina Morton/Judy Kee-Smith
School Counselor Training	James Buchanan
Newsletter	Patricia King
Website	Susan George/McRae Heck
Promotion of WVASFAA	Buck Eagle
Nominations	Lake Tackett
Membership	Susan Bly/Sandra Oerly-Bennett
Professional Development	Margaret Legge
Awards	Carla Strawn
Associate Member	Pat Moore
Policies and Procedures/Constitution	Candi Frazier
Finance	Sandra Richmond
Long Range Planning	Vicki Saunders
Archives	Kaye Widney
NASFAA Training	Tresa Weimer
Government Issues	Kathie Anderson
Fall Program	JoAnn Ross/Buck Eagle
Fall Site	Susanne Duranti/Lake Tackett

Please feel free to contact these committee chairs with any questions or comments that you may have.

If you would like to volunteer in the future as a committee chair, committee member or in any other aspect of the WVASFAA Association, please go to: http://www.wvasfaa.org/docs/toc_forms.html.



WVU School of Medicine Receives Debt Management Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 12, 2007

Contact Robert P. Murray, Vice President, Corporate Communications, (317) 806-1283, bmurray@usafunds.org

Awards recognize campus innovations to help students minimize, manage education debt

USAFunds recognizes three schools for debt-management excellence

INDIANAPOLIS — USA Funds®, the nation's leading education-loan guarantor, announces the recipients of USA Funds 2007 Excellence in Debt Management awards. The fourth-annual awards recognize postsecondary institutions that have successfully developed and implemented effective and creative debt-management programs for their students.

The award recipients are as follows:

BestDebt-Management Program— International Academy of Design and Technology, Tampa, Fla.

First Runner-Up—

West Virginia University School of Medicine, Morgantown, W.Va.

Second Runner-Up — Indiana Business College, Indianapolis.

“These schools have taken the initiative to develop creative programs of significant scope to help their students minimize debt while in school, manage that debt following graduation, and repay the loans that financed their education,” said Denise B. Feser, USA Funds vice president,

customer relations. “USA Funds is pleased to recognize these schools’ accomplishments and share their creative practices.”

International Academy of Design and Technology is a

private, four-year college with a dozen campuses in the U.S. and Canada.. Since mid-2006 staff members at the IADT campus in Tampa, Fla., have been responsible for the debt-management programs of all branch campuses. School staff members provide quarterly presentations for new students using USA Funds financial-literacy program, USA Funds Life Skills®. The school also makes use of USA Funds Life Skills components in exit interviews with graduating students and students who have withdrawn from school. IADT also uses USA Funds Debt Manager® to contact borrowers during their grace periods, at the end of deferment and forbearance periods, and when borrowers fall behind in their loan payments. These borrower-contact efforts using USA Funds Debt Manager resolve an average of 50 loan delinquencies every week and contribute to an ongoing decline in the school’s default rate.

West Virginia University School of Medicine serves approximately 425 medical students. Students receive an annual letter indicating their current educational debt and an estimate of their payments based on that debt level. As part of their orientation, all first-year students are required to participate in an hour-long personal-finance presentation, and graduating students participate in a three-hour session that focuses

on exit counseling, loan consolidation, and more details of money management. Future enhancements will include a session for second-year students to educate them about common money terms, budgeting, other personal-finance topics, and voiceover presentations to be housed on the student Web portal that will discuss a variety of money-management topics.

Indiana Business College, a 105-year-old private career school with 11 campuses and an online program, serves approximately 4,500 students. Indiana Business Colleges uses USA Funds Debt Manager® to contact student-loan borrowers and help them resolve past-due loans. If borrowers can’t resolve their payment problem through fax, e-mail or online, college staff members are willing to go the extra mile, for example, by providing home visits or visits to the borrower’s workplace. The college conducts financial-aid meetings with every student on more than one occasion, and loan counseling in addition to the required entrance interview is provided for each additional loan period. As a result of these efforts, the cohort-default rate for the main campus has been reduced to 4.8 percent, according to draft figures for the 2005 cohort, down from the final 2003 cohort-default rate of 7.3 percent.

Summaries of the award winning programs are available from the USA Funds website at: www.usafunds.org/Financial_aid/debt_management/index.html

MASFAA Leadership Development Retreat- Duluth, Minnesota

MASFAA held its inaugural Leadership Development Retreat in Duluth, Minnesota June 19 – June 21. Kaye Widney from West Virginia University, James Buchanan from West Virginia State University, and Brian Weingart from Alderson-Broaddus College attended from WVASFAA.

The opening speaker was Clark Wold, president of Education Assistance Corporation. He discussed the fundamentals of leadership. Throughout the rest of the retreat, the trainer was Terry Everson, senior vice president of Training and Sales at Student Loan Xpress. Topics discussed included everyday leadership skills, dealing with change, and the importance of effective communication.

Kaye commented on her experience, "It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with our colleagues from around the region. Since the number of participants was small, we had the opportunity to really share experiences and ideas with each other. The facilitator was top notch and I felt like I came back with ideas that could quickly be put into practice." James added, "It was an honor to be chosen for the inaugural MASFAA Leadership Retreat. The tools I learned from the speakers and my fellow attendees will only strengthen the foundation for how I will develop both personally and professionally in the future."

The retreat will be held every other year. Next year MASFAA plans on holding a symposium.

Submitted by Brian Weingart



MASFAA Seeking Names of Retirees

Every year MASFAA recognizes retirees from our profession. To prevent missing anyone, I would appreciate a heads up on anyone that has or will be retiring. You can send the names and school/organization along with years of service if known to me at kingpa@wvstateu.edu. I will make sure that the MASFAA Awards Committee receives the names during our next Awards Committee conference call.

Thank you for your assistance with this information.

Patricia King

Newsletter Editors:

James Buchanan buchanjr@wvstateu.edu

(304) 766-5715

Patricia King kingpa@wvstateu.edu

(304) 766-5716



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