

THE NYSFAAA CONNECTION

A newsletter for financial aid professionals in New York!

Winter 2001 - Volume 3/Issue 1

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**A Message from Cathy Bellomo of Wells College
President of NYSFAAA**

I have spent the last week reading Governor's Pataki's 2001 Budget Address and our newly elected, President George W. Bush's Inaugural Address. Both men speak of the importance of education on our future growth as a nation. Their intentions are honorable. The question, as in all years is, "Will the funding be behind the words?" My first impression in this early January is that there will be increased funding for the 2001-2002 academic year. Governor Pataki in his budget has asked for funding of stage two of our TAP increase and we will have an increased maximum Pell Grant of \$3,750. Growth in our largest two grant programs has been a goal of NYSFAAA for many years now and I am pleased to see that the efforts of those members who have written and visited our lawmakers finally can see the fruit of their efforts. Americans today list education as a major concern in their lives. It is truly an opportunity for educational associations across our nation to spread their message.

Your executive council and statewide committees have been busy doing just that. At our last executive council meeting, regional chairs were asked to join executive council in a discussion concerning the needs of our membership. At this meeting, our 2001-2002 New York State TAP Proposals were outlined. The Government Relations Committee will be setting up meetings between executive council representatives and our state's education committees for its meeting in Albany in February. We will have the opportunity to present our budgetary proposals and review the reforms needed in all our state grant programs. Many legislative changes will be discussed besides the budgetary needs i.e. allowing financial aid professionals to view the income used by HESC in the calculation of TAP awards.

CAAN will "kick-off" this month with its toll-free hotline and numerous forms workshops throughout the state. I would like to personally thank those colleagues who volunteer for these efforts each year. This is our largest outreach program to families and we know its success depends on the volunteerism of members in each region.

The letter to Peter Keitel, President of the New York State Education Services Corporation, has been mailed to him and a copy of this letter has been sent to each region. The executive council voted to outline the frustrations and concerns we have had with TAP processing and other state agency functions. Anybody, who did not view this letter and would like a copy, please contact me. I am very hopeful that this is a "giant step" to the road to modernization that will better serve our students.

Mike Pede, VP for Training presented his objectives and goals for statewide training. Delivery of training opportunities will be offered through a variety of venues. Some programs tend to be more successful with one on one contact; others can be just as successful through the variety of technology options available to us today. Training will be offered at one site and other times throughout the states in locations central to various regions. Mike is forming a statewide training committee with representatives from each region. This is a great opportunity for members to get involve on a statewide level.

I am looking forward to a great year and would like to wish you all a Happy New Year!

**NYSFAAA PROPOSES THE FOLLOWING 2001-2002
FUNDING/LEGISLATIVE CHANGES FOR OUR NYS STUDENT FINANCIAL
AID PROGRAMS**

1. Support the Governor's Proposed Budget that funds the second year phase-in of the enhanced TAP program for new students in 2001-2002 and which eliminates the tuition cap placed on TAP awards for students attending public institutions.
2. Increase the number of students eligible for maximum TAP by increasing the State NTB income threshold from \$7,000 to \$11,000.
3. Support legislative action to change the NYS TAP definition of emancipation to be consistent with the Federal definition. Independent students without a spouse or dependents should be given equal funding as that of dependent students.
4. Increase the amount of funding designated for Graduate School TAP by increasing the maximum award amount to \$3,000.
5. Increase the maximum undergraduate dependent non-degree TAP from \$800 to \$2,200 that was the level of funding in 1990-91.
6. Provide payments for accelerated (summer) awards during the semester they are incurred.
7. Provide Financial Aid Administrators the same professional judgement to adjust TAP awards based on family special circumstances as they presently have for federal aid programs.
8. Allow Financial Aid Administrators to view through the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation web-based system the income used to determine a student's TAP award and to make necessary corrections as they presently have for federal programs.
9. Increase the funding in the APTS (Aid For Part-Time Study) program which has not received a cost of living increase in the past two years. NYSFAAA also supports the part-time TAP pilot program currently underway at CUNY.
10. Restore funding to the STAP program. This program should be revisited and re-evaluated to reflect the needs of today's remedial population.
11. Increase funding to our disadvantaged students enrolled in HEOP programs across the State. The current funding level is 75% of what it was in 1995.
12. Allow New York State students who are attending New York State schools who qualify for the federal student aid programs to be able to receive state financial aid funds. For example: BOCES LPN programs, certain non-degree granting trade or technical schools, etc.

What to Expect from the 2001-2002 FAFSA and FAFSA on the Web

By Kathleen Gibbons, Nellie Mae

Following a major redesign of the FAFSA in 1999-2000, the 2001-2002 form provides few significant changes outside of overall refinement. According to representatives from the Department of Education, the changes are based on feedback from students, parents and financial aid administrators, including seven rounds of testing with students and parents.

Layout and Design

One of the first changes noticeable on the 01-02 paper FAFSA is the masthead redesign. Borrowed directly from the web-based version of the form (FAFSA on the Web), the revised masthead sports a new typeface along with a row of small circles that frame the word, "FAFSA." Other design-related changes pertain to the layout on the first page, where numbers (in circles) have been added to the instructional paragraphs on the left-hand side to encourage sequential reading; and the state aid deadlines are now boxed off in a column on the right. The overall effect of these changes is a cleaner, more "peppy" look. The FAFSA colors for 01-02 are green for the student section and purple for the parent section.

Several minor changes have been made to the layout of the form itself. For example, on page 3, additional space is provided for the applicant's first name and street address, and preparer's information is now contained in a separate box on page 6.

One major layout change is the creation of an additional worksheet. For 01-02, Worksheet A collects information about selected untaxed income and benefits, including Earned Income Credit (EIC). Based on results of the Department's testing, EIC was moved to Worksheet A to create more space due to the low volume of respondents who complete the EIC question. Nonetheless, some schools that enroll large numbers of students from low-income families have expressed concern that families will miss the question, which was the reason for moving it previously to a more prominent position on the form.

Worksheet B on the 01-02 FAFSA collects information about remaining untaxed income and benefits; and Worksheet C collects income exclusions (including Hope and Lifetime Learning tax credits).

Content Clarification

Several other changes to the 01-02 FAFSA have been made to clarify wording on the form. For example, in Step Three, question 53 has been revised to read: "Will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD or Ph.D.) during the school year 2001-2002?" This wording was changed because participants in the testing group were often confused by the terms, "graduate" and "professional" programs that were used previously. The revised wording yielded the greatest number of correct responses from testers.

Other content-related changes include questions 36 and 70 on tax filing status, which now ask respondents to identify whether they have "completed" (01-02) rather than have "filed" (00-01) an IRS income tax return.

Question 35 (formerly question 28 on the 00-01 FAFSA) about conviction for drug offenses also has been reworded. The question now collects a "yes" or "no" response and cautions students not to leave the question blank. A blank response will automatically trigger the FAFSA processor to send a worksheet to the student, with instructions to help the student accurately complete the question. (The worksheet is for the student's use and will not be returned to the processor.)

The 01-02 paper FAFSAs have been available for bulk ordering by schools since October 2000 at

FAFSA on the Web

In its ongoing effort to promote electronic filing, the Department has cited several processing advantages of FAFSA on the Web, including a less than 1 percent reject rate in 00-01 compared to 7.6 percent for paper FAFSAs. The Department has developed a promotional tool kit for schools to help spread the good word about FAFSA on the Web that includes brochures, posters, tip sheets and instructions for linking a banner ad from a school's web page.

In addition to current features such as instant submission, electronic signature options and a one-week processing time frame (compared to four weeks for the paper FAFSA), the 01-02 FAFSA on the Web includes several improvements. Most notably, the electronic form has been reduced from two versions to one form-based version, since testing revealed that most web applicants complete a paper FAFSA first before entering data electronically. A Spanish version of FAFSA on the Web also has been added for the upcoming year.

The new web application features a revised screen design with tabs for easier navigation and a progress bar illustrating how far along the applicant is in the process. Enhanced status checking allows applicants to view all applicant data and comments. And, if applicants provide an e-mail address, they'll automatically receive an electronic confirmation when their FAFSA record is processed.

Also new for 01-02, a "shopping cart" approach has been developed for processing electronic corrections. After entering a PIN, the student's FAFSA record will be displayed and the student will mark the fields for correction. The selected fields will then be presented, helping to streamline the corrections process by reducing the amount of click-throughs.

Finally, the start-up schedule for 01-02 electronic application processing has been accelerated, allowing students to complete FAFSA on the Web, Renewal FAFSA, and Corrections on the Web as of January 1, 2001. The Central Processing System will begin processing on January 2, 2001.

FAFSA Express, another electronic filing option, will not be available after the 01-02 processing year due to low user volume.

Related 01-02 Processing Changes

Some related changes have been made to the SAR, ISIR and EExpress for 01-02 as well. For example, page 1 of the SAR has been redesigned to more clearly identify where students are in the application process. This page also indicates steps taken by the Department and by the school in processing the student's application. In addition, several comments that are designed for school use only have been eliminated from the SAR, but are retained on the ISIR; and NSLDS history has been condensed.

The 01-02 ISIR contains a few new data elements (such as an additional unsubsidized loan flag for applicants whose parents have been denied a PLUS Loan and for health professions students) and matches (such as a prisoner match with the Social Security Administration). EExpress software has several enhancements, including the ability to carry forward setups from the previous year (except fund amounts) and other features related to Pell Grant processing.

A series of Action Letters by the Department (some yet to be published at the time of this writing) provide further guidance for schools on all of the 01-02 application processing changes.

Kathleen Gibbons is an editor for Nellie Mae, a national student loan provider based in Braintree, MA. She worked previously as a financial aid officer at Harvard Medical School and as writer/editor for NASFAA.

DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS

By Ann White

Under the auspices of Citizens Scholarship Foundation of America (CSFA), dollars for Scholars (DFS) chapters form a national network of community-based, volunteer-operated scholarship foundations. Throughout the United States, more than 30,000 CSFA volunteers work together to assist students in achieving their educational goals. As stated by Dr. William C. Nelsen, CSFA's President, "CSFA programs help connect young people with their communities, they challenge and motivate students to achieve academically, and they provide a critical investment in the future – through education." In fiscal year 2000, 860 chapters throughout the nation raised over \$31 million and awarded over \$14.7 million, benefiting more than 22,600 students, a 7.3 percent increase from the previous year.

For the second consecutive year, the *Wall Street Journal's SMART MONEY* magazine has named CSFA as one of the top ten most efficient non-profits and also ranked CSFA as #1 in the category of education. *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* lists CSFA as #1 in their educational ranking (not including colleges and universities). CSFA is the nation's largest private sector scholarship and educational support organization. Because it is run primarily by volunteers, 94% of the funds go directly to students.

In New York State, there are currently 100 chapters. Since the State has 740 school districts, there is much room for growth. Being affiliated with CSFA offers many benefits, including the following:

- Tax-exempt status (501-(C)(3) non-profit organization) assures that contributions are tax deductible;
- Access to Dollars for Scholars' **Collegiate Partner** Program – more than 425 colleges, universities and post-secondary schools around the United States demonstrate their commitment to the development of private sector student aid by supporting the mission of CSFA in the following ways: (a) by promising that CSFA-related scholarships will be used to fill any unmet student need remaining after the institution's financial aid package has been calculated. CSFA and Dollars for Scholars defer to the institution's formula for determining student need; (b) CSFA-related and DSF scholarships up to \$1,000 will be used to adjust the self-help portion of a student's financial aid package when need has been fully met.
- **Matching Partners** are Collegiate Partners that make further commitments to undergraduate students by agreeing to match Dollars for Scholars scholarship awards coming to their campus. Colleges set their own policies in requiring the student to demonstrate financial need or meet other qualifications to be eligible; they also set the amount of the match per award and the total dollars budgeted each year.
- **Partner Plus** institutions agree to reduce the self-help portion of the student's financial aid package (loans and work-study) beyond the contractual limit of \$1,000 for all Collegiate Partners.
- Proven tools and materials to guide successful formation, development and operations, including the Master Manager, a comprehensive chapter resource manual;

- Volunteers receive training and support by attending area chapter gatherings, regional workshops and the biannual national conference.
- A toll-free chapter support telephone number;
- Use of Dollars for Scholars' name and registered logo, recognized by colleges, universities and other post-secondary institutions responsible for distribution of Dollars for Scholars awards;
- Additional scholarship opportunities such as Community Volunteer Service Awards and, in some locations, incentive challenge grants.

With many college advisors telling students that private scholarships merely replace College funds and it is a waste of time to apply for them, Dollars for Scholars support is a positive and proactive way to encourage private sources of funding.

You can participate in **Dollars for Scholars** in any one of the following ways:

- Help us identify Directors willing to serve on our New York Regional Board-Elect;
- Assist in an advisory capacity, or recommend others who may be skilled in public relations, fund-raising, etc.;
- Get together a group of concerned community members and develop your own local chapter;
- If you are not a Collegiate Partner at this time, join CSFA and show your support of private scholarships. If you are a Collegiate Partner but currently do not match Dollars for Scholars awards, consider becoming a Matching Partner and/or a Partner Plus.
- If you already have a chapter in your area, support it!

Check out the national website: www.CSFA.org. and **contact Julie Scullard, Mid-Atlantic Area Director**, for additional information and materials: DFSJulie@aol.com or call her at **1-800-310-5950**. As a member of the New York State board-elect, and co-founder of our brand new Shenendehowa Dollars for Scholars chapter, I look forward to hearing from many of my friends in the financial aid profession and would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the program. You may reach me at adwhite@nycap.rr.com or call me at 518-371-9048.

Back to the Future

the enduring importance of....

The Nevele Grande

October 16-19-2001

The countdown has begun and Region V continues to work diligently to bring you a conference in the Catskills! Farmer's almanac says October will be full and brilliant foliage in the Catskill mountains.

The 33rd annual conference will be just a little different than other conferences you may attend. This is a closed conference. Anything you could possibly want to do or need during your stay will be available on site. The Nevele Grande is a resort facility; it is not a hotel. Therefore, we are planning every meal and every evening activity, so plan accordingly. There is no "room service" at this resort, although a small coffee shop is open during limited hours. Our facility committee is working with the hotel to ensure your dining needs and culinary pleasures are the first priority of the staff.

Did we mention that you will always have the choice of *several* appetizers, salads, entrees and dessert at each dinner? And you can have as many of each as you want!

The program committee has developed a wonderful agenda for your professional enjoyment. Each day will have a theme like *e-* financial aid or student development. Every concurrent period in the agenda will include a Novice Training workshop large group presentation. It is our hope to have this summer's presenters as the speaker in each of the Novice concurrent sessions.

Some trivia for you to consider....

Do you remember these songs? "Under the Boardwalk" "On Broadway" "There Goes My Baby" and "Fools Falling in Love". If you do, then be ready to enjoy our Wednesday evening entertainment. Contracts aren't signed yet but we're working on the "Please Stay" with us a little bit longer!

The entertainment committee has gone from the 50's through the 90's in their planning of your evening activities while at The Nevele Grande resort. And for those of you who only know the early days of rhythm and blues or rock and roll from one of those historical collections, we even have swing dance lessons available.

Region V invites you to the Nevele Grande as participants in NYSFAAA XXXIII and welcomes you Back to the Future!

Novice Training Update

By Lisa Simpson, Novice Training Chairperson

As we continue to make preparations for the Novice training workshop, I thought that this would be a good time to provide NYSFAAA members with an update on the Novice 2001 Workshop.

As you may recall, last fall we mailed site applications to all NYSFAAA members. We received 12 bids from schools throughout New York State. After a thorough review of all applications by the novice committee, which includes Dick Oboyski, Heather McDonnell and myself, we selected three schools that we felt could best accommodate our group. Upon visiting the schools, we recommended SUNY Oswego as the site for the 2001 workshop. The executive council has subsequently approved this recommendation. SUNY Oswego is located approximately 45 miles north of Syracuse on Lake Ontario.

The workshop will be held from Saturday, June 9 through Friday, June 15th. I am happy to report that we received a large variety of volunteers for faculty for 2001. There is a wonderful blend of volunteers with previous experience as well as new faces. I would like to thank all of you who have volunteered your valuable time to share your expertise and knowledge with this year's participants. We are now in the process of selecting group leaders. I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Ed Quirk, Tom David, and their training staff who have so willingly volunteered their time to ensure a successful Novice training workshop for the last several years.

Applications for the workshop will be mailed to all NYSFAAA members in the next few months. You can also check for updates on the NYSFAAA website. Watch for further details and mark your calendar now. It is truly a fun and rewarding learning experience for everyone!

HESC Update EXECUTIVE STAFF UPDATE

- HESC received a letter from NYSFAAA's Executive Council identifying certain issues of concern to the Executive Council and general NYSFAAA membership. Peter Keitel addressed these issues in a 1/29/01 letter sent to Cathy Bellomo and NYSFAAA Executive Council. Some of these issues are also highlighted below.
- There will be a meeting held in Albany with the TAP Modernization Group on 2/12/01. HESC will share the results of this meeting with NYSFAAA. A broad cross-section of financial aid administrators, registrars, bursars, and certifying officers have been invited to review HESC's TAP modernization plans, and new processing features that will be available for the coming academic year.
- Peter Keitel represented HESC at statewide news conferences to alert people to "scholarship scams." These events were held in Manhattan, Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.
- As requested by NYSFAAA President Cathy Bellomo, HESC provided NYSFAAA with costings associated with certain NYSFAAA '01 legislative proposals.

WEB HIGHLIGHTS

- Students can view online the status of their TAP and loan information. They may also make address and college code changes to their TAP records and request duplicate ETAs. Students, parents, and financial aid administrators can use the TAP Estimator on the Web to estimate awards.
- Progress is being made on enhancements to HESC's status screens (project called IBM Websphere). Phase I, the TAP Inquiry Screens (green screens), were recently delivered to HESC for testing. They will be demonstrated at the February 12 TAP Modernization Committee meeting and expect to be operational in March. The Loan Screens (Phase II) will be available in May.
- In support of CAAN's public education effort, HESC modified its home page in mid-January to make it easier for students to obtain financial aid application and program information. Another change is that HESC also added a link to CAAN information via nysfaaa.org home page, http://www.hesc.com/whats_new.html. These interim changes will remain in effect until the new hesc.com design becomes effective in late February.

E-TRAINING

- HESC is once again offering "E-Training at HESC" sessions at the Corporation in Albany. These training sessions for college administrators will be offered on five dates starting in February and ending in May. Participants will receive hands-on training on processing HESC grants, awards, and loans using our electronic products and programs. To register for "E-Training @ HESC," simply e-mail your name, Institution, e-mail address, telephone number and date you wish to attend to Robin Chase at rchase@hesc.com. You will receive confirmation and attendance instructions by return e-mail. The available dates are: February 15, March 7, March 28, April 25, May 9.

LOAN PROCESSING

- HESC is beginning plans for 2001-02 processing. As previously reported to Executive Council, the following is a summary of current year processing highlights as well as upcoming plans.
- MPN Serial feature is working well. Schools reporting satisfaction with speed to guarantee; currently 49% of loans coming in go directly to guarantee using serial process.
- HESC is automating the Consolidation Loan process. It currently takes approximately 2-3 weeks to complete the process. By April 1, HESC hopes to reduce it to less than 1 week.
- January 10 was second biggest disbursement date of the semester. All went well.
- The second annual Lender Conference will be held March 6. Lender operations staff have been invited to attend this workshop which is being held in Albany.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- The automatic renewal process for TAP resulted in 90,000 awards going directly to award certification without students having to file the ETA. This represents almost 30% of all students.
- As reported in Peter Keitel's 1/29/01 letter to Executive Council, HESC has started a School Reporting Project to make online TAP transactions available. Using the Internet, this new service will provide a fast track alternative to the current change form process. Additional information on TAP modernization issues can be found at hesc.com. First click on "Quick Links" and then "TAP Project Paper."
- HESC encourages schools to perform electronic transactions versus paper. Since schools and students received the ability to make changes electronically, the backlog in TAP changes have been greatly reduced. During the year, HESC will dedicate efforts to visit current large users of paper to encourage such schools to process transactions with HESC electronically.
- Another initiative to reduce paper is a phased approach using an IBM print product to download and print rosters, Remittance Advices, and Student Status Listings, rather than rely on the paper process.
- Grants and Scholarships is planning on publishing a processing schedule at www.hesc.com so schools will be aware of processing activities related to certifications, rosters, and Student Status Listings.
- HESC encourages schools to use EFT for Grants & Scholarships. Forms are available online through the NYS Comptroller's Web site under "Hot Topics." For more information, please contact Brian Matthews at (518) 473-3273.

TESTING

- HESC continues to encourage institutions to test with HESC for any changes in processing, including coming online for the first time, changing software providers, or upgrading to new versions. Please contact HESC's Solutions Team at 1-888-

NYSHESC, option 2-4-2 before you incorporate new processing methods.

COLLEGE SAVINGS PROGRAM

- HESC released its first NY College Savings Program bulletin. Frequently Asked Questions are provided with answers regarding reporting of the tuition savings on the 2001-02 FAFSA and how the asset is treated in calculating the EFC under Federal Methodology.

NYSFAAA.ORG is Growing . . . Again!
by Vince Scalise, College Loan Corporation

First of all, I would like to recognize Jennifer Hales of Key Bank for her help in keeping the NYSFAAA Event Calendar current. It may seem to be a small task, however, it makes my job much easier. Thanks Jennifer!

In the coming weeks, you may notice a few changes, (or problems), with the NYSFAAA Web Site. These changes are actually a result of improvements that will be made to the site over the next few weeks.

Executive Council is responding to the Membership requests for an on-line membership directory. As the Web Master for NYSFAAA, I have been charged with making the 'virtual' directory a reality. This has been a major under-taking and a learning experience.

What to expect -

- The Web Site will have some 'down-time' and may not always be available. This is due to having to move the site from a Unix server to a Windows NT server.
- Updates to the various pages of the site will be delayed, and in some cases, halted.
- During 'up-times' for the Web Site, you may experience page errors or missing links & pages.
- All regional e-mail lists and committee e-mail lists will be out of service until further notice. We will be migrating to a new List Serve program that should be easier to use and have increased capacity for sending attachments and text. I will attempt to upload members to the new lists and avoid members having to re-subscribe. *The NYSFA-L will not be affected by this transition, as this list is hosted by HESC and not NYSFAAA.*

What will the results be? -

- The transition should take about two weeks and be completed by 3/16/2001.
- E-mail list serves should be up and running again at that same time.
- The new On-Line Membership Directory will be available at the time of completion. The Directory will be in a hidden and secure location on the Web Site. Only NYSFAAA Members will be given the address and are asked to "bookmark" that address in your browser. This is an easier way to manage security rather than having a password. We can move to a password in the future if we feel there has been a problem with that process. The address for the directory has already been mailed out to all Members along with the "NYSFAAA Nomination/Elections" letter from Past President, Bill Cheetham.
- The paper version of the Membership Directory is at the printer and should be mailed shortly.

Please be patient during this time of transition. If you have any comments or suggestions for the NYSFAAA Web Site, please send an e-mail to: nysfaaa@nysfaaa.org.

Your “Chicken Run” Options

by Dan Brent, Citibank, Professional Development Officer

Seen *Chicken Run*? It’s a year 2000 clay-animation movie release. I’m not that much of a movie buff so, when they discovered that I’d seen it three times, my daughters decided to buy the videotape for me.

There are two parts of the movie that I especially like. One comes in the middle when Ginger, the heroine hen in the chicken farm, explains her dream of freedom to Rocky, the warts-and-all rooster hero. “You know,” she says, “every night I come up here and look out to that hill and just imagine what it must be like on the other side. I’ve never actually felt grass beneath my feet.”

My other favorite part comes at the beginning while the titles are running. Ginger is working on an escape plan for the chickens. All are to slip through a trench under the fence of the chicken farm to freedom. Mr. Tweety, the chicken farmer, and his guard dogs catch them and Ginger is thrown into a coal-bin stockade as punishment. Later released, she makes another effort, blocking the gate open and attempting the escape with a feeding trough over the chickens for cover. That too failed; back to the stockade. Next she leads a new escape scheme with the chickens disguised as the chicken farmer’s wife. Stockade again. Then there is the effort to tunnel under the fence. Foiled again, this time by the guard dogs; stockade. All of this happens just during the titles.

When the movie proper begins, the chance arrival of Rocky, a “flying” rooster, introduces a new era in Ginger’s efforts to lead a mass escape. It is *Stalag 17* on a chicken farm. It is *Bridge On the River Kwai* with Fowler, the resident rooster, in Alec Guinness’s role. There is suspense, humor, romance, and conflict. I don’t want to suggest that this is a Shakespearean play in feathers, but I am impressed with Ginger’s unflagging preoccupation with her single goal – freedom for the chickens. No matter how many times she fails, no matter how formidable the obstacles, no matter how lonely the pursuit, Ginger never waivers. The chickens must know the green grass.

I probably read too much into it. Is it really a metaphor for our own pursuit of our personal goals? Did Hollywood mean to invite us, through the film, to ask ourselves, “What is the green grass for us?” Don’t know.

I have a presentation I’ve done at several conferences. The title is “Career Development in the Financial Aid Office”. It’s about basic things that we all should be doing to advance our careers, whatever stage or age we are at. There’s nothing in it that’s threatening to the schools from which people come to attend. But I often get the sense that participants have an uneasy feeling. “If I get caught in here, will my boss think I’m unhappy and job hunting?” I’ve toyed with the idea of providing participants with brown paper bags with eyes cut out to put over their heads so no one would know they were there! One of my points in the presentation is “Have a dream!” What’s your dream? What would be your favorite job and how do you get to it from where you are at? It’s Ginger’s story, is it not!

We all work in settings where the power of an education is the given. Many of us are first-generation college-educated people. We have opportunities and choices that our parents would not have dreamed possible for themselves. Whether you have a degree or not, you are involved in an enterprise which continually opens doors for people. How foolish it would be for you to consider those doors closed to you personally!

So, Ginger, this is as good a time as any to dream about where the green grass is for you. And if you're discouraged because you gave it a try and ended up in the stockade, rent *Chicken Run* and watch the titles! Maybe then the chicken farmer can use about you this great line from the movie, spoken incredulously by Mr. Tweety: "The chickens is planning!"

Dan Brent is a member of Citibank's School Services unit in The Student Loan Corporation.

Professional Judgment Scenario
Author Unkown

The article will examine the complex professional judgment issues faced by Martian Financial Aid Administrators. The author will focus on the general philosophy underpinning financial aid on Mars, and will focus, in more depth, on the moral implications of the following professional judgment scenarios:

- Should an aid administrator award more grant assistance if the Martian applicant has experienced a loss of zecor activity in his vartberg?
- If a Martian wants to study abroad for 14 millennium in the Alpha Omega galaxy, should the aid administrator disburse the aid at the end of the 3rd or 4th millennium?
- Is the loss of a Remulack spousal unit justify increase in a Martians aid package?

THE FINANCIAL AID DILEMMA
"I live at home but my parents don't support me!"

By Rick Ross, M&T Bank Educational Lending
(former financial aid administrator)

As the cold weather embraces the Northeast, the Financial Aid community can breathe easier knowing that dependent students will have shelter during the wintry months that lie ahead.

These shelters are provided by P.A.R.E.N.T.S. (People's Association Realizing Every Need To Students) which has been serving dependent students for many, many years. The association has a history of being an advocate of student growth and well being.

P.A.R.E.N.T.S. have fostered student growth through many outreach programs. These programs are made available to every dependent, whether they have car payments or not. Also, those needy students who must travel to warmer climates during the Spring can use the P.A.R.E.N.T.S. hot-line free of charge!

The tireless efforts of P.A.R.E.N.T.S. to insure daily meals to the "hungry" students is the foundation of the organization. This strong building block has been complimented by the many clothing drives and transportation services funded by P.A.R.E.N.T.S. for dependent students.

So, as the new year begins, let's be thankful for the many active members of P.A.R.E.N.T.S. in our communities! Also, let us hope that P.A.R.E.N.T.S. continue to help all those dependent students who live at home but have no support!

Where are they now . . .?

Congratulations to Joe Kakaty & Vince Scalise on their new venture with "College Loan Corporation". Joe is the Vice President of Business Development and Vince is a Regional Director of Business Development.

Congratulations go out to Ken Clough of Maria College and his wife Maura who are the proud parents of a baby boy, Aidan James Clough born January 30th.

Congratulations to Brenda Smith of NYSHESC on receiving the Governor's Tribute to African American Leaders of Excellence in State Service. Way to go Brenda!

Bill Mack formerly of Rochester Institute of Technology has taken the position of Assistant Director-Program Management and Training at CUNY Central.

Joe Russo, current Director of Financial Aid at Notre Dame (formerly of SUNY Geneseo and Mohawk Valley Community College) was seen recently by Ann White (formerly of Siena College) at the CSFA Annual Conference in Tacoma Washington. Joe is on the advisory board for the Dollars for Scholars program and urges the support for the program from his former NYSFAAA colleagues.