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Letter from the Past President

By Heather McDonnell, NYSFAAAA Past President

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Past President's Message
- 1** Bah Humbug!
- 2** Defining Purpose
- 3** College Goal Sunday
- 4** New Sallie Mae/Gallup Study
- 5** SUNY increasing outreach during economic crisis
- 7** Back to school financial fitness
- 9** Members on the Move

SLATE, You and Me

As I prepare to hand the gavel to Curt Gaume on October 23rd, around 8:09 p.m. (but who's counting?), my mind drifts back to the events of the last year. While the activities of our organization make up most of these memories, it's your faces and voices that are crystal clear in these reminiscences. I met so many wonderful people over the last 17 months; some new and many old friends. As I approach my 29th year in this business, it's the friendships and acquaintances that mean the most. I thank you for your support, good counsel, and great hospitality both Curt and me. I know now more than I ever did, when we come together on behalf of our work with New York state students, there's no greater force to be reckoned with at any level or on any issue.

Please see *President's Letter . . .* on page 2

Bah Humbug! Holiday Preparation At Its Worst

By Sharon Cabeen, VP of Financial Literacy, National Student Loan Program

Getting ready for the holidays is not an easy task. But if you're the type who usually puts things off until the last minute, why not break from tradition and start planning now? Planning ahead is not only soothing to the nerves, but it also teaches children who may be observing your behaviors some valuable lessons.

Here are five tips for your holiday adventures:

1. **Begin to save** - Budget some money from each paycheck from now until the holidays begin to cover as much of the expense as you can with cash. Also, try to stock up throughout the year on items that are useful or would make good gifts. This will help you to establish a mind set that is akin to pre-planning and once you are in that mode, it becomes a natural response.

Please see *Bah Humbug!* on page 3

Past President's Letter . . . from page 1

As I travel the state, I come away from each meeting a little more concerned about SLATE and us. I remind us that SLATE is a law and is on the books until repealed by the state legislature. We've contacted a few sympathetic legislators to consider the repeal but unanimously say it's too early and too much of a political "hot potato". We know that the regulations haven't been accepted by the Board of Regents yet but that doesn't relieve us of the law's intent. Rumor has it that the Board of Regents may accept the regulations at its October 20th meeting. Stay tuned.

So what should we be doing? I suggest that you embrace the draft regulations as a guideline to your institutional policies and procedures. It doesn't matter whether the State Education Department has the money to enforce the regulations. What matters is our adherence to New York State law in all its imperfections. I'd like to believe that SLATE will fall away and find itself snuggled right next to a law passed many years ago called SPRE[E] but at this point, compliance is next to godliness. I've had a few reports of Attorney General's local staff showing up in the financial aid offices and taking samples of public literature. While innocent on the surface, it just might be a fishing expedition for the next New York Times front page expose - "NYS College XYZ ignores the law". No one needs such exposure in the media.

I know that I am turning the leadership role to a great person, a thoughtful leader, and a tireless advocate. I've known Curt for all 29 years of my career and know you will have no better voice on your behalf at this time in our profession. So again, thank you for a great term and lifelong memories

How Does Defining Purpose Help You Develop a High Performance Operation?

By Leonard Gude, Vice President, Financial Aid Solutions, Regent

What distinguishes a high performance operation from others? What are the reasons for its consistent excellence in performance? This is the first in a series of six articles which will outline actions that you can take to move your operation forward and increase your stature within your organization.

Purpose. The first step in developing a high performing operation is to understand why the operation even exists in your organization. What purpose does it currently serve? What purpose should it serve? How does it influence and how is it influenced by other parts of the organization? What would be the consequences to the organization and its clients if your operation ceased to exist?

As the leader, you need to be able to thoughtfully and honestly answer these questions and to clearly articulate the responses to them to the leadership, the staff and the clients of your operation. You should think in the future tense, so as to define what you see as the purpose of your operation for the years that lie ahead instead of simply looking at the current state.

Example: The purpose of the office of financial aid is to assist students and prospective students in obtaining the financial resources necessary to enroll in the institution so that they can complete their educational program and enter the workforce.

Once you have articulated purpose, you then need to seek common understanding and agreement about your operation's purpose from the leadership of your institution. This provides the organization with the information necessary for making strategic decisions related to your operation and for the allocation of resources to your operation.

Your operation's mission statement should clearly articulate purpose. All operational goals must be based upon both the mission and purpose of the operation. The goals of the operation must be clear and well defined and they should be updated and refined frequently. The goal statements should each include a quantifiable definition of success.

Please see *Success* on page 7

Bah Humbug! from page 1

2. **Set your calendar** - If you haven't already, make a list of all the special events that you will host or attend. It will be a relief to get your holiday celebrations organized as well as give you and yours some special times to anticipate!
3. **Involve your kids** - Determine to teach your children how to manage money now by including them in the holiday shopping process. Ask them to help you make a list of everyone you'll buy a gift for and assign a spending limit to each one. When you are ready to go shopping, place your money and shopping list in an envelope and give it to your child and let him/her be in charge of tracking your shopping and payments. This will teach your child how to plan, shop for sales and bargains, subtract and add, and understand the concept of discretion in spending.
4. **Ask for help** - Be realistic about your time and how much stress you want to take on, and ask others to participate. Team projects are always more fun and bring about more creativity than when you opt to go it alone. So when it comes time to decorate, bake or entertain, let others help you. Guests will feel honored when you brag about their creation at the dinner table and you will have saved yourself tons of time and energy by sharing the limelight.
5. **Enjoy yourself!** - Always remember that, above all, holidays and special times are just days. What is important, of course, are the people with whom you share those days. Pick people who are positive, encouraging, and want to make their own lives and the lives of others richer in some way. They will do your heart good when the rest of your body is exhausted from all the holiday activities.

College Goal Sunday – Region 1

By Ambrose Price, Citizens Bank

Dear Region 1 Members,

Greetings and salutations. I hope all are in good health and spirit. Planning for the 2009 College Goal Sunday event is already underway and I wanted to provide a brief update and solicit your support. The College Goal Sunday steering committee met over the summer to discuss the future of our program. Efforts are underway to seek out funding sources as this is the last year of our Lumina Foundation grant. Our partnership with NYSFAAA offers opportunities to pool our resources and network in the community. The website is being revised with updated information.

College Goal Sunday offers free assistance with completing the FAFSA and TAP applications. This will be the third year that New York has hosted this event. In Region I, our Jamestown event will be co-chaired by Debbie Mauro (debbiemauro@mail.sunyjcc.edu) and Liz Yager. I am honored to once again serve as the Buffalo site coordinator (ambrose.m.price@citizensbank.com). In Buffalo, City Honors School that graciously hosted the 2008 event is currently closed undergoing renovations.

We've identified a new location and are taking steps to make finalize arrangements. We are also grateful for the continued support and assistance from the Buffalo Public School System.

We need your help and ask that you please consider volunteering your time and talents to help with the continued success of the program. We need greeters, registration assistants, presenters, general helpers, and financial aid professionals. For Jamestown, please contact Debbie or contact me if you are interested in the Buffalo location.

The 2009 event will be held on Sunday, February 8, 2009. With your support we look forward to an exciting and successful event.

Sincerely,
Ambrose
CGS Buffalo Site Coordinator

New Study Shows that College Education Viewed as Critical but Many Families Do Not Consider Cost When Deciding How to Pay

By Dr. Bill Diggins, strategic consultant and lead researcher, Gallup; Sarah Ducich, vice president of public policy, Sallie Mae

American families view a higher education as a critical investment in the future, but when it comes to planning and paying for that future, many do not consider tuition and associated costs when selecting a college. Many students and parents also fail to consider post-graduation income when deciding whether or how much to borrow to pay for college, according to a new national study of college-going families recently released by Gallup and Sallie Mae.

The study of more than 1,400 college students and parents, “How America Pays for College” provides the first mathematically representative composite picture of how American families paid for college last academic year. Parents, on average, footed the largest portion of the college tuition bill, through current income and savings (32 percent of the total amount paid) and borrowing (16 percent), while the average student covered 33 percent of the cost, through borrowing (23 percent) and their own income and savings (10 percent). Scholarships and grants covered another 15 percent of the higher education price tag, with the remaining 3 percent contributed by relatives and friends.

Many families, however, are missing out on the tax-advantaged benefits of college savings funds, such as a 529 college savings plan. Only 9 percent of families took advantage of these plans, while the most often used source was parents’ current income, with 38 percent of all families spending an average of \$5,815 last school year.

How America pays for college also varies across income levels. Higher-income families paid much more from savings and income, and generally paid substantially more for college. Lower-income families received the most “gift aid,” such as scholarships and grants, while middle-income families borrowed the most, both in real dollars and as a percentage of their total college costs. The study suggests that middle income families tend to borrow more to afford a higher-cost postsecondary institution.

Among other findings, the “How America Pays for College” study revealed:

- While nearly nine out of 10 families (89 percent) with annual income below \$35,000 filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), this number drops off considerably to only 76 percent for families with annual incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000, and continues to fall as

income rises. Overall one in four families did not complete a FAFSA.

- While credit card use for college expenses is relatively low in total (3 percent of students and 3 percent of parents charged part of their expenses) those who used credit cards to pay for college cited emergency cash flow problems as the No. 1 reason.
- Three percent of all families reported tapping home equity to contribute nearly \$11,000 toward their child’s college education last year. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of these parents plan to borrow against home equity again to fund their child’s education for the coming school year.
- Slightly less than half (47 percent) of all families borrowed money to pay for college, and federal student loans were the top source for both students and parents.

In addition, while more than nine in 10 parents (94%) and students (96%) agreed that college is an investment in the future, parents of college students were worried about the cost of college and how the economy will affect their ability to pay for college. According to the study, the top concern, shared by 60 percent of parents, is that institutions will raise tuition, followed by 51 percent of parents expressing concern that loan rates will increase.

While 58 percent of families reported ruling out institutions because of cost at some point during the application process, another 42 percent of families did not limit their search based on cost—even after reviewing financial aid packages. Even more surprising, 70 percent of students and parents said a student’s expected post-graduation income either was not considered or did not make a difference on their borrowing decisions. The study also revealed that 49 percent of families limit their school options even before applying for admission and receiving a financial aid package.

Gallup and Sallie Mae conducted this study to help families make more informed decisions about how to pay for college. We have found that too few parents and students are focusing on the total cost of college, too many are ruling out college choices either too early or too late in the application process, not enough are using available college savings tools, and too many are borrowing without considering how they will pay. It is also troubling that one in four

Please see *New Study* on page 6

SUNY increasing outreach during economic crisis

BY *Julieta Schiffino, SUNY*

September is the onset of the school year, an optimistic time full of hope and new beginnings. This September was a historical month in America's economy but instead of being bullish it was marked by the prospect of an economic catastrophe. Bank of America bought Meryl Lynch, one of the largest investment banks in America, at a bargain price. Lehman Brother's, the fourth largest investment bank, filed for bankruptcy. AIG, the world's largest insurance firm, was just saved by an 85 billion dollar government loan. Now, the government is devising a plan to spend billions of taxpayer's dollars to buy mortgage-backed securities that no one else wants to buy. Even with this bail out it is projected that the economy will continue to decline. Other signs of a troubled economy are: the growing number of lost jobs (experienced by many of our friends), foreclosures, and the rising prices of oil and food. Most Americans, including students and their families, will feel the repercussions of this economic crisis for years to come.

One likely outcome will be a growing number of students and families requesting financial aid. Campuses must be prepared to provide more programs that help families complete the FAFSA, learn about the financial aid process and saving for college, along with essential financial literacy concepts. SUNY will be responding to this need with the SUNY Financial Aid Day 2009 and through a series of financial aid workshops that will be held in NYC at the Center for Student Recruitment.

SUNY Financial Aid Day first started in 2003 as an outreach program to help students and families understand the financial aid process. SUNY campuses put in a lot of effort to make SUNY FA Day a success. Some campuses' financial aid offices work in conjunction with the office of admissions and use this opportunity to showcase their campus. Others use creative promotions such as themes. One campus used a "green" theme to encourage applying online while saving a tree and gave each family a baby spruce tree seeding for completing the FAFSA online. Campuses choose to participate on a volunteer basis. Last year, SUNY FA Day had over 1700 attendees and close to 400 families completed the FAFSA online. This year over half of SUNY's 64 campuses are participating. There are two dates: Saturday, January 17 or February 21, 2009. Some campuses will have web access allowing the students to complete the FAFSA on site. To register students can go to www.suny.edu/student in December.

List of participating schools:

University at Albany	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Alfred State	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Adirondack Community College	Saturday, January 17, 2009 and February 21, 2009
Binghamton University	Saturday, January 17, 2009
SUNY Brockport	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Broome Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
University at Buffalo	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Buffalo State College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Canton (with Potsdam)	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Center for Student Recruitment	Saturday, January 17, 2009 and February 21, 2009
Columbia-Greene Community College	Saturday, January 17, 2009
Corning Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Cortland	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Columbia-Greene Community College	Saturday, January 17, 2009
SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Finger Lakes Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Fredonia	Saturday, January 17, 2009
Fulton Montgomery Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Genesee Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Herkimer County	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Hudson Valley Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNYIT	Saturday, January 17, 2009
Jefferson Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Nassau Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009

SUNY continued from page 5

Nassau Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Niagara County Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
North County Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Old Westbury	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Onondaga Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Oswego	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Potsdam (with Canton)	Saturday, February 21, 2009
SUNY Purchase	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Suffolk Community College	Saturday, February 21, 2009
Sullivan County Community College	Saturday, January 17, 2009 and February 21, 2009
Ulster Community College	Saturday, January 17, 2009 and February 21, 2009

Starting September 30th there will be a financial aid workshop held almost every Tuesday evening at the Center for Student Recruitment, 33 W 42nd Street, located across the street from Bryant Park. Students and families can learn about college costs, how and when to apply for financial aid and the different types of aid available. There will also be other workshops addressing what students should know about student loans. Some of the workshops will be held in Spanish and some will be available in other locations throughout the boroughs. To learn more and to have students pre-register for the workshops, go to ww.suny.edu/student. In the spring other workshops on different financial aid and financial literacy topics will be added such as educational tax credits, saving for college, and defining financial goals.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please write to Julieta Schiffino at: julieta.schiffino@suny.edu.

New Study continued from page 4

families do not complete the form, leaving grants, scholarships and low-cost loans on the table. We must help families be aware that decisions about college should not be made before understanding exactly how much financial aid is available.

Gallup and Sallie Mae plan to conduct the "How America Pays for College" study on an annual basis. The study will continue to help all stakeholders better understand how public policy, economic conditions and attitudes about the pursuit of a higher education evolve over time, and show how this evolution impacts the American family's ability to pay for college.

The complete "How America Pays for College" survey is available for free download at www.SallieMae.com/howAmericapays.

Success continued from page 2

Your operation's mission statement should clearly articulate purpose. All operational goals must be based upon both the mission and purpose of the operation. The goals of the operation must be clear and well defined and they should be updated and refined frequently. The goal statements should each include a quantifiable definition of success.

Purpose should drive all of the daily activities of your operation. All the members of your operation need to have a clear understanding of the operation's purpose and you need to obtain their personal commitment to it. Each individual's goals and performance should be measured and rewarded based upon how they contributed towards the operation's satisfaction of its purpose statement.

When you submit requests for additional resources, you should insure that they are consistent with the leadership's understanding of the purpose of your organization and you should articulate how these resources will assist the organization in achieving its goals and objectives.

By taking this action, you are actively and consciously creating the roadmap for the future of your operation rather than allowing others to define it for you.

Back to school financial fitness

By Donna Sotolongo, Psy. D., Director of StuFund Knowledge Center

For the new college student heading off to college for the first time, or the returning Sophomore, Junior, or Senior, getting their finances in order is sometimes harder than the courses they'll be taking. Perhaps the problem starts with a struggle to pay registration bills in time for the first day of classes. For some students, crunch time comes when they find themselves a couple of bucks short for the text books they need to buy.

Being a college student brings additional challenges. The day to day expenses associated with college life are usually funded by parental allowances, summer savings, or part time work. Full time college attendance makes it difficult to work more hours or expand savings to pay for expenses. At the same time, inflation in food costs, text books, transportation and other goods will continue to climb. Figuring out how to deal with finances while handling coursework can be particularly stressful. To help your students out, here are some tips you might share with them to keep them financially fit.

Arrange for Financial Aid Early

One of the first things that you should do is arrange all of your financial aid as early as possible. This starts with submitting the FAFSA online in January. Many state grant programs have early Spring deadlines. Applying late can keep you from qualifying for these monies. Submitting financial aid information late may prevent you from participating in your school's scholarships and grants, college work study and Perkins loans programs. If you need a loan, shop around and find the best rates. Always first take advantage of federally guaranteed loans. The Stafford loans offer low interest rates, allow deferment of payments while the student is in school and do not require a credit check. ***Everyone is eligible for Stafford unsubsidized loans regardless of income.*** PLUS loans are available for parents and eligibility is dependent on credit ratings. There are additional monies you can borrow in the form of a Stafford unsubsidized loan if your parents are turned down for a PLUS loan. Recently, the government increased the amount students can borrow for these loans. Speak with your Financial Aid Office early about this. In any case, apply early because it takes a couple of weeks to process the loan, obtain school certification, and sign the promissory note. Don't wait until Fall registration to do this or your chances are good that you will not have sufficient funding to attend school. For incoming freshman who will probably register in person, review the costs and be expected to pay for your classes after registering. While students already enrolled have probably completed registration online and been billed accordingly, late registration or in person registration has less preparation time, so be prepared to pay the bill.

*Financial Fitness continued from page 7****Create a College Loan Repayment Plan***

Don't wait until senior year to think about repaying college loans. Limit borrowing. Consider paying interest costs year to year rather than allowing them to "capitalize" within the loan. Research loan forgiveness programs, such as Teach America or Peace Corps. Find employers in the public and private sector that reimburse tuition or pay off loans.

Create a College Budget

Have a realistic budget before arriving on campus. Don't forget to factor in unforeseen expenses like car repairs, insurance, medical and dental emergencies. Don't forget telephone charges, text books and entertainment, and trips home. These expenses can get out of hand very quickly.

Reduce Spending: Avoid Budget Busters

Avoid impulse spending and purchasing big ticket items right away. Split costs with your roommate and keep your cash in the bank. Use a debit card for withdrawals and have a checking account to pay bills. Make sure your bank has a local ATM to avoid those withdrawal fees when you use banks outside of your network. Don't spend extra money paying for money orders. Take advantage of free checking and pass on the credit card.

Avoid Credit Cards

Every bank and credit card company will want to give you a card. If possible, try not to get sucked in. If you want to establish credit, do your research. What are the annual fees and what is the interest rate? Under what conditions does the rate change? If you have a card, make it a practice to pay more than the minimum. Make a plan to pay off your card early by budgeting your payments accordingly. Beware of "teaser" rates, balance transfers, payment holidays, or claims for no payment for some period of time. Anything advertised as free usually isn't. Request a copy of your credit rating to know where you stand and regularly monitor for identity theft. Keep good records and pay your bills on time.

Develop Healthy Spending Habits

Living on your own and controlling your own money can be exciting and scary. The spending habits you develop now will follow you throughout your adult life. Actually, this is the one time in your life that being broke is okay. Doing without, delaying gratification while you're in school can pay off later when it really matters.

Save, Save, Save

Get into the practice of saving. If you have some regular income coming in from employment, discipline yourself by putting away some portion and not touching it during the month. You are also saving when you can reduce your expenses and put that savings in the bank.

Look for Internships

Many companies look for summer analysts or interns to work in their junior year and come back after graduation. Network with students, professors and alumni. Find a mentor to help you make the transition from college life to the work world.

Keep your Eye on the Future

Remember what you're in school for. You have some long term goals you want to achieve so don't let short term decisions throw you off track. Always look at the bigger picture to help you plan and stay on track.

And Remember: Be SMART About Money

Save

Manage spending

Avoid credit cards

Reduce debt

Take care of your credit rating

Members on the Move . . .

Buffalo State College welcomes **Lea Nicholson** back to their office as a Senior Financial Aid Advisor. Ms. Nicholson started her financial aid career at Buffalo State as a graduate student. In her new role Lea will be responsible for administering the FFEL programs and alternative loans.

Mary Jo Brockel has left the Financial Aid Office at St. Bonaventure University and is now the Academic Coordinator and Research Associate in the School of Business at SBU. She would like her NYSFAAA friends to know that she will miss them but happy to pursue a new career at St. Bonaventure.

**Visit
www.NYSFAAA.org
and stay in touch
with your NYSFAAA
colleagues!**

Mark Your Calendars for the Upcoming NYSFAAA Conferences:
 Annual Conference **2009** at The Saratoga, October 27- 30
 Annual Conference **2010** at the Adams Mark, Buffalo October 19-22

To contribute to The NYSFAAA *Connection*, please contact

[Laura Worley](#), Editor or [Vince Scalise](#), Assistant Editor

Below is the schedule for the NYSFAAA Webletter. If you have an article to submit please do so by the deadline date indicated.

Edition	Articles due	Posted to site
Winter	January 25	February 1
Spring/Summer	May 25	June 1
Fall	September 25	October 1

Submissions for The NYSFAAA *Connection* can be in any of the following formats:

- Microsoft Word via e-mail attachment (preferred)
- e-mail text
- paper
- disk
- photographs can be e-mailed or sent as hard copy. Hard copy photos submitted will be returned.