



# NYSFAAA *Connection*



New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association | [www.nysfaaa.org](http://www.nysfaaa.org)  
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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Region VII Update
- 3 NYSFAAA 43 Announcement
- 4 Novice Training 2011
- 5 A Pitch for Exit Counseling
- 6 The Impact of Student Loans on Borrower Credit
- 7 Considerations for Implementing a Financial Literacy Program
- 8 Members on the Move ...

## President's Message

**Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, Working together is success.**

*By Daniel M. Tramuta, Associate VP for Enrollment Services, SUNY Fredonia*

The first year into my NYSFAAA Presidency continues to be both exciting and rewarding. I feel so fortunate to be able to work with our officers, regional council members, regional chairs, committee chairs, past-president's and officers, along with all of the volunteers who are so dedicated to the spirit and mission that NYSFAAA represents. During my remarks at NYSFAAA 42 in Buffalo, I promised that I would visit all eight regions at least once prior to our next statewide conference at the Turning Stone. Since that time, I have done a fair amount of traveling (I've been to every region except one) to regional meetings, Tri-Regional, conferences, training events, NOVICE, etc., and your dedication, enthusiasm, hard work and spirit is truly amazing and inspiring.

Please see *President's Message* on page 2

## Technology & Innovation Committee

*By Timothy O'Donnell, Regional Sales Executive  
 CMD Outsourcing Solutions, Inc.*

No higher education institution has been spared in these challenging times. Budgets have been cut, resources have shrunk and enrollments have increased. Financial Aid Administrators are being asked to do more with fewer resources and still expected to stay focused on the mission at hand. Things are no different within the NYSFAAA organization and we are all looking for ways to do more with less.

The Technology and Innovation Committee has been working hard to overcome the challenge our membership faces finding not only time, but also the fiscal means to get out of the office to meet and share news and ideas. Whether it is a veteran Director or someone new to the financial aid world, we can all benefit from this

Please see *Technology & Innovation Committee* on page 3

**President's Message** from page 1

The on-going initiatives that our volunteers work so diligently on (e.g. Gear-UP, College Goal Sunday, regional and statewide training, technology and innovation, membership drives, Conference 43 planning, federal and state government relations, NOVICE Training, school counselor outreach, etc.) are flourishing and show first-hand why NYSFAAA leads the way when it comes to providing access to higher education and financial literacy for families along with professional development and training for our members.

Having just concluded a three-day meeting with your Executive-Council in Albany in early June, there are many good news items to report on. We're closing the door very quickly on two prior year audits and the 2011-12 budget is balanced, membership is up over 6% from the prior year, Conference 43 planning is progressing very nicely and both regional and statewide training events along with attendance has increased. I am particularly pleased that at the grassroots regional level, the frequency of meetings and overall head count continues to be on the upswing. We are in the early stages of developing a new proposal for the next NYS Gear-Up cohort (2011-17) and we'll unveil a new initiative soon that will be delivered in 2011-12 tied to the "Technology and Innovation" and "Statewide Training" committees.

With that there is still much to do! While recent national polls have indicated that Education is the very last budget line item that our taxpayers want to see cut, Education took the largest hit (16%) in the most recent budget agreement. And, although the threatened Pell cuts during the FY 2011 process appeared to be somewhat symbolic, with a projected \$20 billion Pell shortfall for 2012-13, it has now become the blueprint for future budget discussions. NYSFAAA will pursue an aggressive "advocacy" campaign over the next year and with that both the Federal and State Government Relations Committee will begin building their strategies over the next few months. While I know the new "Program Integrity" regulations and additional workload have many of us tied to our desks, there may never be a more crucial time than now for you as a NYSFAAA member, to step up and advocate for both our current and future students.

In closing, I had the opportunity in early June to visit the NOVICE Training workshop on two separate days. I can't tell you how reassuring it was for me to see the spirit and dedication of these new professionals. Whether you are a new or veteran NYSFAAA member, I urge you to attend a meeting and/or volunteer for a committee. If you're not yet a member, I ask you to please consider joining NYSFAAA so that we can come together and achieve even greater success.

Have a great summer everyone,

Dan

**Greetings from Region VII!**

As for everyone in our industry, it has been an interesting year on Long Island. Our members have met and shared thoughts, insights, solutions, grumbles and gripes, and in the process have helped one another to navigate the choppy waters of the Financial Aid Ocean.

As our current regional officers end their terms in office, I would like to thank I would like to thank Ray Villalona for representing Region VII on exec council. I would also like to thank Nancy Brewer, my co-chairperson, support and inspiration for all she has done for Region VII these last two years. And our special thanks to Diane Beltrani for being an excellent treasurer and steward of our funds.

It has been a wonderful experience for me to work with all the great people in Region VII. Thank you to everyone for this wonderful opportunity.

Debbie Evans

**Technology & Innovation Committee** from page 1

organization and its networks. This committee is researching cost efficient, innovative avenues that will allow us to have similar benefit to our regular regional meetings while maximizing participation at a time that not everyone can get out of the office.

We know how busy everyone can be and there is seemingly no break throughout the year, but taking the time to fill out our surveys will help NYSFAAA remain strong during these difficult times. We are looking to you for guidance and support to make this work and allow NYSFAAA to carry out its mission. Thank you.

The Technology and Innovation Committee is also here to help out where we can with any special technology projects or needs within the regions. Please let us know how we can help! We are currently investigating alternate means of communication such as Google online meetings, Audioboo, podcasts, blogs, online minutes, etc. If you have any favorite new technology, please share it with us as well!

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!



## Save the Date!

Don't take a chance on missing out on NYSFAAA 43!  
Place your chips on October 18-20 2011 and plan to roll on over  
to Turning Stone Resort & Casino in Verona, NY!



Information on registration,  
room rates and reservations will  
be coming shortly...be sure to  
slot yourself in!

## Novice Training Workshop 2011

*By Dan Hunter, Emeritus, Buffalo State College*

From June 4 through June 10<sup>th</sup>, the NYSFAAA Novice Training Workshop was held in Brockport, New York for 91 novices. It began with a welcome by Dan Tramuta, NYSFAAA President. The staff included Lisa Simpson, HESC and Lisa Papke, Genesee Community College as co-chairs. Large group presentations were done by seasoned financial aid professionals: J. Scott Atkinson, SUNY Brockport; Heather McDonnell, Sarah Lawrence; Samantha Veeder, Nazareth College; Kerrie Cooper, SUNY Canton; Jim Hanley, HESC and Joe Bailey, Genesee Community College. This year's Olympic and athletic events were lead by Mike Williams, Emeritus - HESC. The small groups were lead by a very competent group of NYSFAAA volunteers, who were Dan Hunter, Emeritus-Buffalo State College; Curt Gaume, Canisius College; LaSonya Griggs, SUNY Upstate Medical University; Pat Johnson, Hobart and William Smith College, Mark Stephens, Pace University; Theresa Weimer, Wagner College; Tanya Patterson-Stanley, New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, and Perry Brown, College of Westchester. The staff shared wonderful camaraderie and a week of sharing a special experience.

This year we were blessed with exceptional weather with a little rain that did not interfere much with our activities. It was a little warm on Wednesday and Thursday due to an unexpected warm front which brought us a quick transition from a wet spring into summer. The entire staff and novices stayed in two residence halls on the SUNY Brockport campus. The meals were provided by the dining hall staff.

Some of the topics studied during the week included: Developing a Cost of Attendance, Financial Aid packaging; New York State Grant and Scholarship Programs; Title IV general provisions; Title IV campus based programs; and an introduction to the Federal Methodology and the calculation of the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The participants became very proficient in that process. There were many

pleased participants after they successfully complete an EFC calculation. Additional topics included a review of the Pell Grants; student loans, current verification process, professional judgment and some hints regarding counseling of students and their families.

There was a pre-test, a mid term evaluation and a final evaluation which assessed the participant's progress and to highlight any area needing additional review.

Each evening we had Olympic competition with events such as: spam toss, egg toss, Frisbee golf, basketball foul shooting and volleyball. This year some new events were included such as ping-tac-toe, double throw, Wii bowling and concluding with an all-time favorite of the novice training, Pictionary. At the closing ceremony each person on the team was presented an appropriate color medal. They were worn proudly that evening. The evenings during the week are times to build friendships, network and enjoy each other's company.

A special banquet and skits by the combined groups concluded the week's activities. The creativity of the groups is amazing. Graduation was a bitter-sweet activity, as it was a time to part after many wonderful days together. The participants have made many life long friends whom they will cherish for many years.

As a small group leader for a number of years, when you can make time, I find this to be an extraordinary experience, and a chance to share your expertise. You will go home with a glow in your heart and a reality that the future of our profession is in the good hands of these novice professionals. See you next year.

## A Pitch for Loan Exit Counseling

BY Sean A. Hudson, Assistant Director, Canisius College

Financial Aid offices across the country have faced major cut-backs and often this means that services we once performed face-to-face are being transferred to electronic means. I am all for embracing and utilizing technology (it's a must with the millennial generation) but I believe that in-person loan exit counseling still has its place. I am fortunate to be at private four year school with a relatively low cohort default rate, but many schools are bracing for the cohort increase and looking for ways to manage the impact. Engaging students face-to-face, even in a large group format, is one possible piece of the solution.

Typically each year we run between eight and eleven group exit sessions over the span of about three weeks. Sessions usually last about forty-five minutes to an hour. This year I drastically changed my philosophy on what to present during the sessions. In past years I focused primarily on repayment options, but this year I spent most of the time on NSLDS. I wanted students to know who their lenders and servicers were. I went as far as printing NSLDS reports for each student. Most students that graduated this year had FFELP, PUT, and DL loans - only increasing their confusion! To make up for the time not spent on the repayment plans, we required students to complete on-line loan exit counseling in addition to attending a session. This filled in the gaps of what I missed and made us compliant with all federal regulations.

A lot of time and effort was put into preparing and running the sessions, but I believe without question that it will pay off in the long run with lower default rates. The initial responses I received from students to the sessions were overwhelmingly positive. Students continue to contact me with questions, reinforcing the fact that they are taking their loan debt serious and that my sessions had impact. It maybe time for your school to re-evaluate the in-person exit session as part of your default management.

### 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 on or about
Winter	January 15	February 1
Spring/Summer	June 1	July 1
Fall	September 15	October 1

## The Impact of Student Loans on Borrower Credit

By Leigh Bove, Senior Marketing Associate with Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc

Credit history is an important factor in having a successful financial life. How can borrowers ensure that student loans help them build a positive credit history?

Here are some tips you can share with borrowers:

- **Make every payment on time, until the loan is paid in full.** Even one missed payment can lower your credit score by as much as 125 points, damaging your ability to obtain credit in the future.
- **If you're having trouble making your student loan payments, contact your lender/servicer right away.** Deferment and forbearance options can postpone your payment without hurting your credit.
- **Limit the number of private loan applications you submit with multiple lenders at the same time.** While the FICO 08 credit scoring model treats multiple private loan inquiries within a 30-day window as one inquiry, many other scoring models do not. Having multiple inquiries on your credit record has the potential to lower your credit score. However, Federal Stafford loans have no impact on your credit history at the time of application, because no credit check is required.
- **Know when and how the loan will appear on your credit report.** Federal loans are reported to all major credit bureaus within 90 days, and private loans within 30, and will be listed as educational loans.
- **Maintain a healthy mix of credit types.** When combined with other types of credit, such as an auto loan, student loan debt can improve your credit score. However, having more debt than you can comfortably repay will hurt your credit.

Encourage student loan borrowers to stay on top of their credit by accessing a free credit report once per year at [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) and to make repayment easy on themselves by contacting their lender/servicer to choose an affordable payment plan and set up automatic payments.

By taking these steps, student loan borrowers can be encouraged to build a bright financial future.

## Considerations for Implementing a Financial Literacy Program

By Eileen Muhlig, USA Funds

Financial literacy is a growing national concern, and the ability to make good personal finance decisions is critical to student success. A campus-wide financial literacy program helps ensure that students are financially prepared for their futures. There are several approaches for building a financial literacy program and implementing resources that already are available. USA Funds® outlines some of the key questions to be considered before implementation:

- What is your main objective or goal for implementing a financial literacy initiative?
- When do you plan to have your program in place?
- Who are the key stakeholders who will be responsible for the program?
- What is your budget for implementing and supporting the program?
- How will you know that your goals have been accomplished?

After you determine your goal, target implementation date, key stakeholders and budget, you can begin working through the details. Questions related to delivery, audience, content, responsibility and measurement will help you refine your strategy.

### Delivery

- How will information be delivered to students?
  - Individually or in groups.
  - In person, paper materials, electronically, or a combination.
- How will information be promoted?
  - Through posters, the school website, as part of a class, or other events.
- Who will share the information?
  - Staff, faculty, peers, graduate students and alumni.
- When will information be presented?
  - One time only, once per term, ongoing program.
- Will participation in the program be mandatory?

### Audience

- Which groups of students do you want to include?
  - Entering freshmen, first-generation students, students on academic probation.
- Will you start with a small audience and expand from there?
- Will you incorporate the information into an existing program?

### Content

- How will you determine the information to present?
- What is most relevant for your students?
- Will you create your own materials, use resources already available or offer a combination of both?
- How will you capture the attention of your students?
- How much time is required to deliver the information?
- Where will you conduct your sessions?

*Financial Literacy continued from page 7*

### Responsibility

- Who is ultimately responsible for implementation?
- Which departments or faculty will be involved?
- What challenges or barriers do you need to overcome?

### Measurement

- How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your program?
- Do you intend to incorporate tests to measure learning?
- How will you survey students about their experience with the program?
- How will you measure behavioral changes or trends in borrowing, debt levels and savings?

## *Members on the Move . . .*

University of Buffalo welcomes **Rick Cole** (formerly at SUNY Geneseo) and **Christina Horner** (formerly at Villa Maria College) as Senior Financial Aid Advisors.

**Connie Cook** joins Buffalo State College as the new Director of Financial Aid.

**Laura Fitzgerald** has been promoted to Director of Financial Aid at Villa Maria College in Buffalo NY.

EASFAA recently held its annual election of regional officers, during which the association was seeking to fill the critical leadership roles of President-Elect and Treasurer. Please join EASFAA in congratulating **Cathy Patella**, Director of Financial Aid at Wells College (President-Elect) and **Samantha Veeder**, Director of Financial Aid at Nazareth College (Treasurer).

**Joseph Sciame**, Vice-President for Community Relations at St. John's University, continues to serve with some 49 years at STJ, and approaching his 30th year as a vice-president. Past President of NYSFAAA for the years 1980-82, and in subsequent years President of EASFAA, and then first Chairman of

NASFAA, Joe continues with speaking engagements at some fifteen high schools a year on the general topic of financial aid, and serves on seven scholarship committees for unions and schools. In order to keep himself from being too distracted, he is the community consensus builder in his area of University life now with 4000 student residents at its Queens campus and others at Staten Island. His latest activities also include completing a three year term as Chair of the Kupferberg Holocaust Archives & Research Center at CUNY'S Queensborough Community College, and Founder & Chair of the Bedford Stuyvesant New Beginnings Charter School in Brooklyn. His interest in Italian Americans affairs have not abated, for most recently he was elected Chair of the Conference of Major Italian American Organizations. A full life rooted with principles in the financial aid profession!

**Troy Martin**, formerly at Houghton College has accepted the position of Director of Financial Aid at St. Bonaventure University.