

Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

March 14, 2014 at 10:00 am

Bentley University

Waltham, MA

In attendance: Donna Kendall*, Kathy Anderson*, Meredith Barnhart, Aaron Clark-Melcher*, Christina Coviello, Joanne Dashiell*, Vy Doan Callahan, Jennifer English*, Beth Feinberg Keenan, Ryan Forsythe, Iris Godes*, Alex Gonzalez*, Katie Kelsall, Carla Minchello, Cathy Nelson*, Kathy Osmond, Christine Padgett, Bonnie Quinn*, Kate Rajbhandari, Stephanie Wells

Absent: Michael Albano, Diana Beaudoin, Jeff Bentley, William Buescher, Karen DiFonzo, Alexis Fishbone, Migdalia Gomez, Jeremy Greenhouse*, Meaghan Hardy-Smith*, Christopher Hart, Jennifer Keenan-Jolie, Kelly Morrissey, Lynne Myers*, Amy Proietti, Lori Seuch, Amy Stewart, Darnell Stowers, Susan Sullivan, Lisa Talbot, Janet Turner

*Voting Members

Meeting Started: 10:10 am

Secretary's Report: Cathy Nelson*

- Minutes from February meeting were emailed previously.
- Meredith emailed corrections to FAFSA Day report and Diana emailed corrections to GPCC's report. Donna and Katie provided corrections at the meeting.
- Alex motioned to approve the February meeting minutes with corrections, seconded by Jennifer, eight in favor, one abstained.

Treasurer's Report: Jennifer English*

- Income and Expenses report were mistakenly 12-13 but the YTD is correct and up to date as of this past Monday, March 10, 2014.
- This week's expenses/income has not been recorded.
- Donna asked committees who are done with their budget to notify Jennifer so that she knows whether they anticipate spending remaining budget.

President-Elect's Report: Kathy Anderson*

- Returned from NASFAA Leadership Conference and Symposium in Washington, DC. Agenda covered working with a board and the press. Clantha McCurdy was there presenting how to conduct a meeting and work with legislators. Went to Senator Warren's office and spoke with her staff. At Senator Markey's office she met with senior staffer. Provided them with information about MASFAA and NASFAA and invited them to our conference. NASFAA prepped them well before meeting with legislators. Next year, NASFAA Leadership Conference and Symposium will have multiple tracks, i.e. Presidents, Treasurers, etc.
- Donna reminded that President-Elect coordinates volunteer of the year award and should email for nominations.

President's Report: Donna Kendall*

- Donna announced that our next meeting is May 9 will be at the College Board Office in Waltham.
- Provided update on Congressman Cummings investigation regarding colleges that do not clearly indicate that a student only needs to file a FAFSA for federal financial aid. Justin Draegar

emailed that NASFAA met with Cummings' staff. His staff seemed satisfied with colleges' quick response and may highlight the commitment and changes made by the colleges. The Chronicle did a follow-up article regarding the changes made by the schools. The Department of Education did request further changes from a few schools but they will not be taking official action.

- Congratulated Iris in person for her award from College Board. Iris received the College Board's Community College Recognition Award for her work to advance and support community colleges.
- MASFAA experienced an email etiquette breach this week. A new member emailed MASFAA listserv regarding his services. Donna responded and notified him directly that product promotion is an inappropriate use of the listserv. Invited him to vend at conference or submit conference session proposal. Provided him with link to listserv etiquette/guidelines.
- Donna only received one email from a concerned associate member and responded to that member that the issue had been addressed. Ryan indicated that he and Bill received three emails regarding the listserv post. . They responded that the MASFAA Council would meet and that he thought we would discuss at the meeting. Donna asked Ryan to forward those emails to her, since she only received one email in response. They also received requests that we send guidelines out to listserv. Kathy A. said other listserves periodically send reminders regarding listserv guidelines. She does not think we need filters if we provide periodic reminders. Iris has thought of both sides and a new member would not always get the reminder when they first sign-up. Iris wondered if since we have never really had this issue, if it makes sense to just deal with it on an individual basis. Joanne asked if we could include guidelines with membership sign-up confirmation and then email Associate Members periodically. Aaron confirmed with Debbie that we do not have a filter and if their email is on the listserv, they can send an email. Bonnie thinks we should let it go and see if it continues before changing procedure. Alex thinks we should respond so that it does not snowball. He thinks that even if we have not received responses, people are talking about it, so it may make sense to send our response to members. Ryan suggested prominent post on website and reminder in Newsletter coming out soon. Kathy A. agrees that we should not call member out publically but to send a subtle email response letting people know that it has been addressed. Stephanie agreed with Kathy A. that we should send a reminder to members and Joanne can send a more detailed email to Associate Members. Beth is concerned that people are talking about it but they do not know who to contact to express their concerns that people are soliciting for their business through the listserv. Joanne said that she could include that she is the contact for Associate Members in case they have any issues. Bonnie agreed that it gives us an opportunity to highlight that the Reps are the people concerned members should contact. Debbie confirmed that the only emails she has to police are when a member's email address does not match or a non-member tries to email listserv. Donna will send an email reminder of guidelines. Alex asked if we are also going to provide reminder when signing up. Aaron said the Technology Committee will look at including guidelines in member confirmation email. Aaron will touch base with Debbie for write up on how listserv works and will provide it to Donna.
- Reported on OSFA Advisory Committee.
 - Received spreadsheet of Governors' budget. Big ticket item, MASSGrant, had a slight increase in amount for which he requested. House Ways and Means Committee get budget in April and begin discussing budget.
 - PHENOM had their successful State House Advocacy Day (Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts). Clantha McCurdy was very positive about working with FAFSADay and Senator Warren and hopes it will continue in the future.

- Paul Combe (ASA) provided an update and a discussion on student debt. In particular, Paul mentioned that a lot of schools have low default rates but they still have delinquency issues. The students do not make the default rate but they are still delinquent. The Committee discussed undocumented students and how many of them do not understand that they do not qualify for Title IV aid. Donna hopes that someone will propose a session on assisting undocumented students for the conference. Iris said they do qualify for in-state tuition now but not for federal aid even though they have a SSN for work purposes. Stephanie and Meredith said this topic comes up a lot in their Admission Presentations. Meredith indicated that there a lot of tip sheets for undocumented students but Massachusetts is never included in the tip sheets. Stephanie will send around the tip sheet and thinks that it indicates the states that have legislation and Massachusetts does not actually have legislation as Governor Patrick just declared the in-state tuition. Iris clarified that DACA status (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) doesn't entitle undocumented students to federal aid.
- OSFA had additional MASSGrant funds and were emailing schools about additional students receiving MASSGrant. Clantha indicated that they are ahead of schedule and may be sending MASSGrant ineligible letters earlier than last year.
- Alison Connelly discussed No Interest Loan (NIL) program and exit interviews and trying to move up deadline to July 15 for exit interviews so they can begin allocating funds earlier. NIL schools should let OSFA know if the July 15 date is a problem.
- Iris asked if Clantha made note of increases to any other programs. Donna said they combined a few programs. Rapid Response Grant is being folded in to Community College Work Force Grant. Most funds look to be level funded.

EASFAA's Report: Kathy Osmond

- Kathy O. announced that registration for EASFAA Conference is open and she brought copies of the schedule and agenda for attendees to review. She highlighted that they have five different tracks that are listed on the website and are based on types of aid.
- Stephanie asked if Kathy O. had a list of which people from Massachusetts are attending. Kathy O. said she did not have one but will ask. EASFAA had their on the hill day and visited legislators to lobby for financial aid. EASFAA partnered with Midwest and Southwest.

Government Relations' Report: Stephanie Wells

- Stephanie announced that the State House Day held in collaboration with AICUM was successful. They will write an article and provide photo album for the next newsletter. They had a lower attendance because it was on a Monday but still had a great turnout and a strong representation from throughout the state.
- Senator Sal DiDomenico (D-Everett) told his powerful story as a first generation college student. House Speaker Robert DeLeo also spoke to the group. They had iPads available so students could look up their legislators. The Speaker stayed and engaged with students. A lot of students met with their actual reps and were able to take pictures for their school newsletters. Great event and will post pictures.
- Christina asked why we do not have it on a Friday. Stephanie said that legislators are not in the house on Fridays as they are in their districts. Donna spoke to Rich Doherty from AICUM that afternoon and he was really pleased with the turnout and entire event. Donna suggested that next year, MASFAA should have a banner there (AICUM has their banner up behind the speaker's podium). She also noted that the press release on the AICUM web site did not mention MASFAA as a co-sponsor. Kathy O. wondered if we could partner with state schools and

AICUM to do the two events; the one with AICUM and the one with state schools. Stephanie said they will work on both ideas (higher visibility and state school day) for next year.

- Newest member, Anthony Crowe from BC, created a guide to College Financial Aid Resources in Massachusetts. Executive summary booklet for legislators and other officials of pertinent data regarding financial aid in Massachusetts. Eileen O'Leary is nominating booklet for NASFAA Gold Star Award if it is done in time for the nomination deadline. They also created bookmark providing quick pertinent information and contact information.
- Discussed financial aid training for legislators. They will team with AICUM. They plan to have a panel of aid professionals for legislators and their staff. Last year's event was packed. They hope to hold another panel in the fall, but will check with legislators to see what timing works best.

Communications' Report: Ryan Forsythe

- Ryan indicated that they recently met to discuss summer Newsletter. June 20 will be summer newsletter so that Year End Event is included. Articles due May 30. Requested articles from all committees even if it is three paragraphs indicating what is going on with the committee. Email article to Ryan or Bill. Watch for the call for articles, which will be going out in April.
- Stephanie asked if committees can provide photos and asked if they can put up photo albums before newsletter. Ryan asked her to reach out to the Technology Committee and said that they could email listserve to announce that photo album in on website. Aaron asked Stephanie to email Debbie with photos.

PD&T's Report: Christina Coviello

- Christina updated that they have potential dates of early May, 7th, 8th, or 9th for Novice Workshop probably at Wellesley College.
- Working on event for at-risk students targeting Community Colleges and have three speakers combine with support staff workshop. Iris indicated that May is not a good time if they are hoping to get the Community College folks. Iris said February/March would be better. Christina said it was initially for March but they could not find space.
- Directors' roundtable postponed to late summer/fall.
- They had 135 people attend the Tax Workshop in Worcester. They had 31 on waitlist and 25 were no-shows but some were last minute cancellations where they could not notify someone from the waitlist. Committee is asking if we can charge last minute no-shows because we paid for their food and had people on waitlist.
- Looking for books for leadership academy. Please notify Christina if you have literature to recommend.
- Discussed status of budget and if additional funds were required. If they can get Wellesley, they can do support workshop for free and for next year, if they can get someone else for tax workshop, they should have enough funding.
- Target for Leadership Academy is to have proposal for August retreat and then once final, email call for nominations in fall. They have been working on timeline for program and sessions. Programming would be heavy in the fall; October/November and then last session in May.

FAFSADay's Report: Meredith Barnhart

- Meredith announced that they successfully held 32 FAFSA Day events. They had to cancel Roxbury Community College last minute because they could not get in contact with anyone from the school. They emailed attendees and volunteers. They helped 1,539 students who attended. Some sites had fewer attendees than last year but still felt they had a great event.

- Iris said that the Community College Directors discussed FAFSA Day and all of the Community College events had a lower turnout than expected. They felt that the PR push is geared for January and that it was less for February. Recommended that the heavy promotion continue through the February events. The energy needs to continue through all the events. They received positive feedback on the targeted students attending and felt that they held great events. She thinks that the FAFSA is easier now so a lot of families do not need to attend.
- Kathy O. asked if a video exists that helps people complete the FAFSA and if FAFSA Day can post one for students filing at later dates. Stephanie indicated that one of her colleagues went to a February site and some attendees missed their college deadlines. Joanne said that we cannot track overall impact of FAFSA Day because we cannot tell if the outreach for FAFSA Day is increasing the number and timing of the FAFSAs filed. Katie suggested that the needs of families are changing as the FAFSA becomes easier to file online. Alex was at two events; at Middlesex Community College he thought they had a lower turnout than he expected and the same thing happened at Northern Essex in February, which he thought would have a higher turnout because it was the Community College folks. He found some of the attendees were filing renewal FAFSAs or coming from outside the Lawrence area which he found interesting. Iris wondered if we could look at the number of registrations and compare them to who attended because the people who register get emails/correspondence and have an increased awareness. They could be filing their FAFSAs even if they do not attend. February date is still early for Community College students as the early date for Community College is April 1 and Massachusetts is May 1. Christina said that BU is going in to different high schools and is there a way for FAFSA Day to track when colleges do FAFSA programming directly with schools in the area.
- FAFSA Day will have a new chair. Alcira Zadroga from Fitchburg State University will be the new chair with Meredith and Kelly. Planning thank you lunch for site coordinators. Selected raffle winners from sites and will soon be sending out site contracts for next year.

Early Awareness' Report: Beth Feinberg Keenan and Katie Kelsall

- Spring Carnival of Learning will be held at Chestnut Middle School Friday, April 4; same school as fall of last year. They are having a difficult time finding colleges to have booths. Asking colleges for school groups to have booths. Amherst, Springfield Technical Community College and Westfield State will have booths. Katie thinks the date may be an issue and they are reaching out to additional schools and offering stipend for travelling to location. They have five stations for students but are hoping to have additional colleges participate.
- Discussed schools offering specific programs like culinary skills. Bay Path has forensics and Quinnsigamond Community College has hospitality and recreation.
- Rest of planning is set but they would like to secure a couple more schools.
- Alex asked if a program can provide our link on their website in a list of resources. Donna asked for more information on how they plan to use our link and the purpose. Iris said that we are not really a resource for students to find financial aid but for aid professionals so it would not really be appropriate. Joanne indicated that FAFSADay would get similar requests and they would direct them to public information websites. She will look for old emails to send to Katie to use as a template.

GPCC's Report: Christine Padgett

- Held GPCC Symposium February 7 and met this week to review evaluations. They received thank you note from keynote speaker that he enjoyed the Symposium. Feedback from evaluations was very positive. They decided next year will be February 6, 2015 at the same Harvard location.

Old Business:

- Discussed membership fees last month. Decided to pass on to finance committee. We want to get final numbers from Committees so that we have an idea of how much we really need. We want to make sure we need to raise our dues and if so, how much it needs to be raised. Discussed that if we did this, we would need to justify the increase and we need to make sure that if we are using certain membership benefits like training, make sure that the benefits are available for all members (i.e. waitlist for trainings). Also looking at changes to conference as location has space for 20 vendors as opposed to 13 in past few years which can increase revenue. Kate explained that they would like to work with vendors in advance to see what the vendors would like to see at new venue. She would like to work with Joanne and Kathy A. to develop proposal.
- Discussed spring membership drive and preparing for next year to boost membership. Reviewed all institutions that have members in MASFAA and we have some schools with multiple members from multiple campuses/departments. We have 145 institutions (not including associate members) with members, but still have 55 schools in MA that are not represented; many of which are from technical/professional schools. Several larger schools are underrepresented. Donna thinks the pitch will be to the schools with no members and to larger schools who may only have one or very few members. She expects to send it out in June/July.
- Kathy A. said one state received push back from their schools that the membership fee does not come to the school in one bill. They circumvented the problem by wrapping membership fee and conference fee in to one fee. She wondered if having this model as an option would encourage membership. Iris said that we could have two options at the time of membership and have conference fee with additional membership fee. Donna explained that if you have not become a member when you register for the conference, you in fact end up paying for membership and conference at one time. Kathy A. and Iris clarified that by wrapping it in to conference fee, you are actually hiding the membership fee.
- Donna provided an update on the conference scholarship proposal. Received feedback from last month and distributed proposal for Council to read so that we can discuss. Christina asked if we want supervisor approval as part of the application process as sometimes there are reasons why not everyone in an office attends. Stephanie asked if a school can not afford conference fee if the membership fee is also too costly. Donna was thinking that applicants would already be members and that preference would be given to active members. Iris indicated that the timing (August) of nominations would be difficult for some schools (i.e. Community Colleges). Is the timing making it difficult for some populations to apply? Donna was thinking announcement could go out with first conference announcement but worried that it would be too late. Kate indicated that attendance announcements do not really go out in August so she is not sure that members would have the information they need to complete the application in August. Carla indicated that she heard from members that they wanted to attend but that their schools could not afford the fee. Carla also thought August was early as most members have not yet paid for membership. Carla was thinking that 60 days would be more realistic. Kathy A. thinks an early announcement with the conference save-the-date makes sense so that people will anticipate the scholarship opportunity and then follow-up with formal announcement call for applications. Kathy O. thinks that if we plan that the Exec Council will have special session to select recipient in fall (October) and because the application is fairly simple, we can announce it in the fall (September). Vy recommended that part of the requirement of receiving the scholarship would be that the member who receives it would have to do something for MASFAA which would also help us evaluate effectiveness of the scholarship. Donna will incorporate comments in proposal and provide to Council before May meeting so that we can vote. Alex asked if we can indicate that this opportunity if available as a membership benefit.

New Business:

None

Strategic Topic of the Month:

- Portal/Technology idea has not been discussed. Donna asked everyone to think in respect to increasing membership dues and how we want MASFAA to be run; is it time to reassess tech and is it time to pay for resources or securing technology that will help MASFAA? If so, we may need a proposal to increase the Technology Committee budget so that we can improve MASFAA. Kathy A. suggested a WebEx membership so that we can do webinars. Iris agreed with offering webinars/videos as a member benefit and it would be one of the justifications to increase membership fees. Kathy O. said that EASF AA does webinars and they have been very popular and increased membership due to the webinars.
- Alex said that we could invest funds in updated technology and then market the increased membership fee highlighting added benefits. Iris wondered if we would get push back if we invested in the technology before increasing fees as members may wonder why we now need to increase it when we already have the new technology.

Alex motioned to adjourn, Kathy A. seconded, unanimous vote to adjourn.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:30 pm