

Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Annual Retreat, August 11 – 12, 2015

Cape Cod Resort and Conference Center, Hyannis MA

**Day One**

In attendance: **Jim Slattery\***, **Shawn Morrissey\***, Brendan Furey, **Kathy Anderson\***, Keith Dimilanta, **Sabina Yesmin\***, **Katie Kelsall\***, Ben Parsons, Ebony Carter, Anthony Crowe, Christina Coviello, Emir Morais, **Alex Gonzalez\***, **Meredith Stover\***, Brooke Barbieri, Shannon Eagan, Jolene Coakley, Mike Albano, **Susan Sullivan\***, **Stephanie Wells\***, Jill Marr, Wenimo Poweigha

Absent: **Diana Beaudoin\***, **Michele Kosboth\***, Kristi Pierce, Alcira Zadroga, Josh DeMaio, Kevin Deruosi, Bonnie Quinn, Jessica Knox, **Jamie Dergay\***

**Bold italics\*** = voting member

Meeting started: 10:00 AM

President's Report: **Jim Slattery\***

- Jim welcomed everyone to the retreat, reviewed the two-day agenda.
- Introductions and ice breaker led by Shawn.
- Jim thanked those who have stepped forward to fill vacant positions for Executive Council and various committees:
  - Sabina Yesmin, Michele Kosboth, and Jamie Dergay for taking over for executive council members who have transitioned to other positions and will not be completing their terms.
  - Christina Coviello who will continue on for an additional year in the co-chair role for Professional Development and Training. Moving forward, will try to have all committees with at least one person overlapping from year to year.
  - Ben Parsons and Jolene Coakley - new Membership chairs for 15-16
  - Michael Albano who will chair Technology Committee
- Will try to use Robert's Rules of Order to keep meetings on track. If you want to comment during the meeting, raise your name tag. Shawn and Kathy will assist Jim in keeping track of who is next to speak.
- General focus for 15-16 will be on MASFAA strategic goals - time to revisit. Please read through the MASFAA handbook so that everyone is familiar with their role and expectations.
- Current host for website, Noetic, is retiring. Need to find a new host, must be in line with our goals. Now under a time limit.
- Meetings will be very informal – most of association and committee work will be outside of our monthly meetings to allow us to use this time for check-in and feedback. Access to website for updates and monthly reports will be provided – one person from each committee should be at each meeting.
- Where will meetings be held? Will review dates on Wednesday. Rotate location. Anthony recommended that we consider meetings in western MA to accommodate everyone. Emir suggested an Outlook invite for all meetings is helpful. Jim will build in travel time to the invite.
- Christina – monthly reports, could most recent minutes be at top? There is a template. Oldest is currently first. Anthony – web transition could inform our decision on how minutes, etc. are posted.

**VOTE:** Susan motioned to change the order of the template, Kathy seconded motion. All voting members in attendance approved.

President-Elect's Report: **Shawn Morrissey\***

- Will coordinate MASFAA awards, Executive Council votes, assist Jim in keeping monthly meetings on track. Lots of experience with previous Executive Council roles.

- Will be looking at conference locations/contracts – 2 year contracts are ideal but difficult to enter into if we want rotation among various locations – Boston, central or western MA. Destination location has value added.

**Comments:**

- Alex: scrambling with times to commit to site in the past, need to look further forward, with 2 year cycle, could start looking for 3<sup>rd</sup> year site. Could we be limiting ourselves? Turnout could be impacted.
- Anthony: EASFAA/NASFAA have their locations in advance – already in conference materials, location “swag”.
- Stephanie: Need a larger, more robust vendor area
- Jim: need to look at pros and cons, need to book well in advance to get everything we want. Alex: could invite more vendors at Lowell with more space
- Kathy: bottom line was healthy last year even with some of the issues.

Treasurer’s Report: **Katie Kelsall\***

- Working with approved budget for this year and last year. \$40,000 increase in budget overall, very healthy reserves, should we spend? Budgets are a guideline, have some discretionary funds, technology budget might have to increase. Strong position, good reserves.
- Move some of reserves to cash (savings, not investments). Underspent last year. Committees have more room to spend but still conservative. Membership dues – a little under right now – more updates to follow from Membership Committee. Have increased some committee budgets.
- Purchase new equipment – laptops for Treasurer and Secretary need to be replaced.
- Increased scholarship budget – more conference scholarships.
- FAFSA Day level funded moving forward.
- Tax exempt and reimbursement request forms are available from Katie if making MASFAA purchases.

**Comments:**

- Emir: website redesign – where will it fall? Technology.
- Mike: reality with Noetic was that it was less expensive, new vendor could be five times the estimated budget.
- Anthony: MASFAA funds tied up in investments? Not aggressive - more risk tolerant, high yield options. Need to define objectives.
- Jim: several layers of discussion needed, will revisit. Define goals and then decide on investment strategy.
- Stephanie: goals for vendors, on the high end of projections, Joanne set last year. Could be room for 30 plus vendors. 2 different vendor rates, majority went with early option, some logo/branding opportunities (lanyard/bag), conference program. MASFAA is a little higher than others.

Secretary’s Report: **Meredith Stover\***

Will distribute minutes prepared by Cathy Nelson from the May 2015 meeting via email – voting members should review and we will vote online.

Past President’s Report: **Kathy Anderson\***

- Past president’s primary role is to fill elected roles, serve as chair of the nominating committee. Some pressures, long process last year. Feel free to start the nomination process. Shared that one issue with nominations for President is standing up in front of peers to introduce themselves at conference is difficult – go back to providing a statement? Is it a roadblock? There is added value with the current process – people get to know you without having to read online.
- MassGrant letters – met with OSFA advisory board, receptive to changing annual scholarship letters sent to MA residents. Mostly changing wording, still send out form.
- State Treasurer’s office has pulled together an advisory board on financial literacy (k-12, college, adults). Sabina asked if this was connected at all with UAspire? Not a partner but will definitely have overlap in their efforts.

### Comments:

- Stephanie: What positions are open? 4 year private member at large, treasurer, graduate/ professional member at large, career tech member at large, president elect.
- Katie: should we consider handling the Treasurer position similar to how the President transition is handled – Treasurer elect vs. past Treasurer (more of an advisory role)? Would have to go to membership to change.
- Alex: Maybe consider a prerecording option with candidates for President? We are electing someone to represent association so some level of presentation skills is needed.
- Stephanie: could include candidate statements in bags at MASFAA, introduce candidates at lunch. Anthony added that including the information with conference materials gets the information out to a lot of members.
- Brendan: Maybe provide more structured, narrow focus, answer to a question? Takes pressure off.
- Ebony: could have others make statements about candidates, candidate could narrate.

### MASFAA Value Exercise: *Jim Slattery\**

- Referred to the book Road to Relevance by Harrison Coerver and Mary Byers. Good information for association work - not all applicable to MASFAA – no income drivers, etc. but still lessons. One key point - need to think regularly about our strengths – will help to guide our work.
- How do we define our key strengths: healthy reserves, resourceful and strong network, large number of members, training, lots of schools/diverse, geographic proximity, shared passion/closely aligned, national profile/expertise, good governance, transparent ----- people centric, sharing expertise, training, focus on students and advocacy.
- Reviewed information from last year’s board work (Kathy). Effective planning, programs and services, public standing, financial resources were key outcomes.
- Looking forward, areas to focus on are: online training, soft skill training, more member communication, use of outside consultants, membership/revenue (expanding – additional conference). Jim asked us to rank from 1 to 5 (least important to most important). Everyone voted – Jim will follow up with tabulation. Online training and soft skills are 2 top choices, followed by membership communication, outside consultants, membership revenue. Helps to inform our work including how we want to direct reserves. Need to maintain connection to membership.
- Who are our competitors:
  - **NASFAA** - online and in-person training, many schools have limited resources for national conference, full-time employees, large membership, infrastructure, closer “ear” to federal government, more dedicated resources, communications, geographic aspect works against them, membership costs are higher, less personal, not state focused.
  - **EASFAA**: online and in-person training, regional conference, no employees, regional so more geographic, larger so can call on more resources/volunteers, less personal.
  - **College Board**: does not impact everyone, broader training.
  - **Access Group**: less lending focus, more on schools, many similar advocacy groups – all similar?
- Can’t be everything to everyone – need to be careful about “mission creep”. Good ideas may not cost much ---- but is it always a good idea?? Most valuable resource, people, is also limited. Hard to get volunteers for co-chair roles, elected positions. For example, FAFSA Day – should we continue our partnership? To be reviewed in the coming year.

### Web transition: *Kathy Anderson\* and Jim Slattery\**

- The owner of our current website vendor, Noetic, plans to retire by the end of the year. Need to identify vendor, hire vendor, gather and determine information transfer, have the new site designed and up and running by end of December. Need to move quickly. Task force – Kathy will co-chair, Shawn also has experience. Ideally a small group

### Comments:

- Kathy: Need to develop a technology master plan, list of web vendors, also a better method for archiving. Timetable has ramped up. Went to Noetic – not interested due to retiring. Most states use 2 vendors. Kathy has quotes ranging from \$4K - \$25K. Cost for monthly hosting is typically in the \$200 range. Need capability for

voting, membership sectoring, listserv capabilities – what else would we like? Probably won't be fancy. 16 weeks to bring up new website – leaves us 4 weeks. What do we want to see?

- Anthony: can find a host temporarily if needed? Do they own content? We own, they manage. Mailing list, membership directory, committee pages, email addresses for committees. User interface option – more expensive, similar to a shared drive or FTP option.
- Susan: password protected section of website, training materials – Just the Facts, tax workshops – need to be able to post and download large files.
- Emir: Highlight membership and recruitment options (join now, learn more). Possibility of shared drive or drop box for each committee?
- Jim: if doing yourself, can do a better job but we may not have the time
- Alex: accessibility to website for committees, adding updates – don't need to rely on others. Need to be able to more easily advertise upcoming events, etc. More user friendly. Options for more private sections of membership directory.
- Brendan: transfer due to turnover, succession issues
- Stephanie: better home page more accessible to non-members, better guidance, audience specific
- Katie: menu on top, a log-in at top, calendar, blog, social media, ads (revenue). Why not use vendor(s) other associations are using – need to look at all options.
- Brooke: consolidation of things, members vs. non-members
- Mike: mobile friendly options. Also, need some levels of control with user based options, need to determine what our real-time needs are.
- Keith: develop app to use in conjunction with website?
- Ebony: 3.0 wish – discussion and chat area?

#### Strategic Plan: *Jim Slattery*\*

- Jim suggests we off-load, use a consultant. Alternative could be to make it part of each meeting or tap into former leaders and past presidents.
- Guiding document, may not have everything complete but time for revision. Outside consultant did this current version, more of a directional statement.
- Direction vs. measurable activity? Need ways to evaluate work but we have not done that

#### **Comments:**

- Shawn: tap into past knowledge but also need to pull in new members. Document is a snapshot in time, will need different versions every few years.
- Katie: could have a strategic topic of the month at each Executive Council meeting. Evaluate governance structure, other associations have different executive board roles.
- Christina: someone not around table recently might have a hard time? True – would need to have recent representation.
- Susan: current leadership academy – could have them be part of a focus group for input?
- Emir: how to determine metrics needed to measure?
- Ebony: Where are “holes” in membership representation? How to gain more participation.
- Jim: more of a follow up depending on strategy.
- Stephanie: short term goals vs. long term, more specificity. Individual committee objectives should roll up under MASFAA goals. Need to be sure committee goals are in line with MASFAA goals.
- Anthony: value proposition of MASFAA, why are not all schools members? Attending conference? Legislators should know what MASFAA – are we being effective as we should be.
- Brooke: Look at outreach outside aid community, including admission --- who are our customers?
- Stephanie: Individual committee objectives should roll up under MASFAA goals. Need to be sure committee goals are in line with MASFAA goals.

- Sabina: define each council member roles --- most are in the handbook.

Communications: *Jim Slattery\** for Josh DeMaio

Following up on conversations about combining Communication and Technology committees. Do we think this is a good idea? Lots of overlap. Who is our audience and how do we best connect with them.

**Comments:**

- Mike: if members can post information/communications to the website, won't need as much tech support. Even currently, not super high-tech in terms of knowledge needed to post information.
- Susan: utilize more tech for training – would they be able to support?
- Sabina: some marketing involved with communications piece so we don't want to lose sight of that need
- Emir: purpose statements on website are vastly different
- Brooke: change in website may bring more privileges making it easier to share communications
- Anthony: in favor of making operations leaner, merger would be good
- Christina: is name scary (IT)? In some ways, Communication is harder to recruit for. Suggested having liaison to each committee. Julie Wickstrom is an example.
- Ebony: at what point do you evaluate? How would that happen? Vote. Provide clear examples of what you do for each committee.
- Stephanie: more social media (Twitter) – should we move in that direction? Concerns are keeping it current, not just retweeting. Social media can be personal, may not represent us as an organization. Suggested a survey at the conference for preferred communication.
- Emir: do we have to do everything? Blog, twitter, etc. Limited resources – can't do everything. Focus on strengths.
- Shawn: what is best tool to get out the information we need to share?

**Meeting adjourned: 5:00 PM**

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**Day Two**

In attendance: **Jim Slattery\***, **Shawn Morrissey\***, **Kathy Anderson\***, Keith Dimilanta, **Sabina Yesmin\***, **Katie Kelsall\***, Ben Parsons, Ebony Carter, Anthony Crowe, Christina Coviello, Emir Morais, **Alex Gonzalez\***, **Meredith Stover\***, Brooke Barbieri, Shannon Eagan, Jolene Coakley, Mike Albano, **Susan Sullivan\***, **Stephanie Wells\***, Jill Marr, Wenimo Poweigha, Kevin Deruosi

Absent: **Diana Beaudoin\***, **Michele Kosboth\***, Kristi Pierce, Alcira Zadroga, Josh DeMaio, Bonnie Quinn, Jessica Knox, **Jamie Dergay\***, Brendan Furey

**Bold italics\*** = voting member

Meeting started: 9:30 AM

**Committee Updates**

Professional Development and Training: Christina Coviello and Jessica Knox

- For 14-15, 34 attendees for Just the Facts. Approximately 10 participants for Leadership Academy (4 sessions) in first year of program.
- For 15-16, Just the Facts again at Wellesley College starting late September. Someone at each session needs to be credentialed through NASFAA.
- Leadership Academy nominations will be sent out shortly – will have year 1 participants as well as year 2. 4 sessions again, including a book review with presentations. Open up soft skills sessions to greater membership? Smaller groups work best for this program. Other topics include career development and goal setting, professional writing, conflict management/team building, and diversity in managing across differences. This will be track B.
- Tax workshop in February '15 – paid Jim Briggs but weather prevented session. Already paid but we will reschedule in Boston or Worcester for this winter. Robert Weinerman from Iron Bridge – will use him for another session.
- Support staff workshop – every other year. May date? Open to non-MASFAA members.
- Christina: component of Leadership Academy is to join committee – let her know if anyone needs committee members – she can organize with attendees.

Conference: Kevin Deruosi and Shannon Eagan

- Sent out survey to membership, will send out reminder. 50 of 60 respondents planning to attend. Cape Cod Children's Center will be charity (Hyannis). Sessions are full – proposal acceptances have gone out. A few on reserve. Good mix of soft skills and financial aid. Thin on graduate proposals. Usually have 5-6 for graduate. 28 sessions, 34 proposals. Gainful employment – might consider panel? Popular topic.
- May need to bump people if we do get more session proposals. Jeff Baker – won't know until October if he is coming. DOE will be presented. Registration will open up in the second week of September. Will have full use of property. Lounge and bar is closed off-season. Hire piano player. Will do something on Monday PM. Need to provide substance for Monday night attendees. May need to rely on council members to jump in to moderate birds of feather groups.
- Tuesday evening President's reception. Entertainment – carnival, games, wine/beer tasting. Theatre style – project movie. Will be prizes. May charge \$1 for beer/wine – MASFAA picks up rest, \$1 will go to charity. Vendors should be happy.

- Keynote: hiring speaker this year. Carrie Stack, “Say Yes” Institute – life coach, customer service – will customize to our theme. Susan Wornick is another option but might be traveling. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Chuck Jones – in touch with wife, will enhance presentation this year. Also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Higher Education Act.
- Will work on WiFi issues at hotel. May need to consider mobile hotspot options.

#### **Comments:**

- Susan: Could moderate birds of a feather session for 2 year sector, will need to prepare
- Emir: submitted grad proposals – too late? Kevin and Shannon will go back and follow up.
- Jim: Need to map out space for Monday and Tuesday evening events. Pub or break out rooms? Inceptia provided password for internet access at NASFAA – created a lot of buzz with vendors. 50<sup>th</sup> EASFAA this year, NASFAA coming up – mention. Megan will be coming from NASFAA.
- Brooke: Photo booth? Yes – maybe a psychic as well. Renting games.
- Shawn: Let’s reach out to prior recipients of Chuck Jones awards. List is in the handbook. Might they be able to attend?
- Stephanie: Checking on sponsorship guidelines. Can we do early bird promotion? Yes. 18 vendors last year, only 7 did not do early bird. Keep vendor costs the same as last year. Table sponsors? Email to vendors this week. Hoping for 27 – 30 vendors. Can we have exhibit only time in agenda at conference? Timing is an issue. Could have language to indicate that vendor area is open to highlight.
- Kathy: many attendees will be coming Monday night due to longer travel – should plan on more attendees for any type of informal gathering.
- Anthony: less popular sponsorship options – lanyard for example – should we consider a bundled option? Maybe tie in with early bird option. What are folks willing to spend?
- Katie: Maybe give vendors better space this year if they had bad space last year?
- Alex: Priority to returners from last year – if you sign up this year, we’ll be aware.

#### Membership: Jolene Coakley and Ben Parsons

- 105 active renewed members.
- 85 people renewed members renewed with credit card, processed in error as refunds not payments. Called Paypal, can’t be reversed. Email out to impacted members, will need to reprocess their payment.

#### **Comments:**

- Jim: a little bit behind timeline for membership campaign but once conference registration and training announcements come out, should be on track.
- Kathy: Reach out to other New England states – do their members want to come to conference? Tiered memberships have been suggested in the past – easier to keep at \$50 for small differential.
- Shawn: Work with EASFAA reps to advertise conference.
- Jim: Bonnie Quinn will be our EASFAA representative
- Katie: campaign for membership would be worthwhile for revenue
- Susan: Typically get a few of out of state registrations for Just the Facts.
- Alex: Could do 2-day session for Just the Facts? Maybe it would attract more attendees. Issue is the need for hotels, food, increases the costs for attendance. Currently, we use a site for no dollars so our cost is minimal.

#### Early Awareness: Wenimo Poweigha and Jill Marr

Carnival of Learning (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade). Bring in professionals to learn about careers and financial literacy. Approximately 80 attendees per carnival. Working with Gear Up to determine fall location. Volunteers from different schools and colleges serve as presenters. Looking for donations for backpacks we donate – pens, t-shirts, etc. Donate

your extra stuff. Reach Higher initiative, First lady, - more students completing post-secondary work. Will have someone there.

**Comments:**

- Anthony: Tentative dates – not yet. Hoping for new school.
- Stephanie: Suggested Police officer with dog, vet position, snake – kids love animals. Tufts Vet school could be an option.

Graduate and Professional Concerns: Emir Morais and Brooke Barbieri

- Brooke is new co-chair. 9/23 is first meeting.
- Preparing symposium for February 2016. Few different presenters instead of one main speaker. Bureau of Labor stats – lots of data to present on career data. Consumer Protection division – identity protection. Other topics include a student panel. Trying to cover grad interests/concerns. Still need keynote speaker. Zack Goodwin presented at EASFAA: “COD working for you”. Great presenter, may approach him.

EASFAA: Bonnie Quinn

- Jim presented notes from Bonnie. Kelly Morrissey is president of EASFAA, sibling of Shawn Morrissey, MASFAA President-Elect. Visit to DC in fall.
- EASFAA 50<sup>th</sup>, save the dates are (5/22-5/25 Atlantic City).
- Work more closely with all EASFAA states, collaboration. State rotation for conference, silly to continue in each state with low representation or no EASFAA rep? Send feedback to Bonnie. General consensus is that conference is too long - 4 days.

**Comments:**

- Emir: which states have low representation? Not sure which states. State representation vs. individual members.
- Shawn: seems like struggling states would want EASFAA membership?
- Anthony: challenge with competitors, angling for same customers/volunteers.

Technology: Mike Albano

- Usually update the website this time of year, committee members and chairs with photos, update liaison list. May need to call-in for September meeting.
- With transition period, continue to do business as usual. Probably will come to a transition period. Otherwise, should be business as usual. After conference might be good timing.

**Comments:**

- Keith: FAFSA Day timing could be an issue. Sending families to site for updates. Will current version hold us through? New site should include FAFSA Day as well.
- Emir: Symposium registration in early January usually, any interruptions? Could be – hard to know.
- Kathy: transition should be pretty functional, switching host mostly – should not be a huge interruption.
- Shawn: do we own other MASFAAs?? Mike – not sure.

Government relations: Anthony Crowe and Brendan Furey

- More new committee members. Brendan Furey is co-chair. Focus on making sure we are on track with new web presence, update committee page with resources/links, landing pages for legislators, bios on key legislators.
- Planning for State House Day, working with AICUM.

- Targeted hill visits (MA). Target 2 demographics, would be good to tap into strong supporters of higher education. Also, who is not supporting? Thank those that are supportive, focus on coaching those who are less supportive. Legislative training – talked about last year, still planning.
- Position papers – Anthony wants to revisit.
- Legislator training not every year, maybe this year in the fall?
- Team up with MEFA and AICUM, college savings plan state tax deductible? Tom Graf will give an update, how to get legislation pushed through.

**Comments:**

- Stephanie: mostly private support of State House Day. Trying to get more publics.
- Katie: how do we know about presentation opportunities? Maybe do a survey to get a sense of issues/concerns – need full membership survey. Hill visits – would people want to go along? Constituent and financial aid perspective.
- Emir: UG vs. grad issues? Proprietary and community colleges are also a concern.

Access, Inclusion, and Diversity: Ebony Carter

- Several new initiatives. Internship program in place, planning for sessions in October. Need speakers – mental health stigma is one topic. Other topics include LGBTQ issues, women in higher education, ethnic groups in higher education.
- Intern at NU – typical career path for many financial aid professionals.
- Working with Communications – write up for blog, faces in aid, promote ideals of access and inclusion.
- Looking for co-chair if anyone is interested or would recommend a colleague.

FAFSA Day: Keith Dimilanta, Kristi Pierce, Alcira Zadroga

- USA FUNDS to transition, 2016 is last year, hope to get funding of \$12K.
- Initial meeting with Clantha McCurdy from MA OSFA, where can they help?
- Have partnered with Senator Warren before, honorary chair?
- More web based literature. Social media, more twitter, Facebook presence.

**Comments:**

- Jim: money issues, stingy but still supporting – USA funds also still supporting. Depends on what they get – they have healthy reserves. One year decision. In past, printing is most expensive piece. Not phasing out printing entirely – business cards were useful.
- Sabina: what type of partnership for FAFSA Day exists with groups in Boston? More of an invite might be helpful. Targeted outreach.
- Brooke: webinar to help families who may not be able to attend FAFSA Day.

New Business:

- Jim reviewed calendar for 15-16 meeting times:
  - September: 9/18, October: 10/16, November: 11/16 (Monday at conference), January: 1/15, February: 2/12, March: 3/18, May: 5/13, June: year-end event TBD.
  - Bentley – September location, UMass Medical – October location.
  - Time is 10:00 – 2:00. Lunch is provided.

Old Business:

No updates to report.

Susan motioned to adjourn, Kathy, seconded. All in favor to adjourn at 1:45 PM.