

Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
Executive Council Meeting, February 12, 2016  
Boston University Medical School

In attendance: **Meredith Stover\***, Christina Coviello, **Kathy Anderson\***, **Jim Slattery\***, **Katie Kelsall\***, **Shawn Morrissey\***, **Diana Beaudoin\***, **Stephanie Wells\***, **Alex Gonzalez\***, Emir Morais, Bonnie Quinn, Shannon Eagan, Wenimo Poweigha, **Michele Kosboth\***, Monica Blondin, Kristin Hmielski, Keith Dimilanta

Absent: **Susan Sullivan\***, Anthony Crowe, Mike Albano, Kristi Pierce, Alcira Zadroga, Josh DeMaio, Brendan Furey, **Jamie Dergay\***, **Sabina Yesmin\***, Greg Chick, Brooke Barbieri, Ebony Carter, Jill Marr, Ben Parsons, Bill Buescher, Kevin DeRuosi, Jolene Coakley

**Bold italics\*** = voting member

Meeting started: 10:00 AM. Welcome to everyone from President Jim Slattery.

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

- Review of minutes from the January meeting. No additional updates. Motion was put forward by Michele and seconded by Jim to approve minutes – all voting members in attendance approved.

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

- Provided update on financials – received more membership revenue due to tax workshops. Underspent so far in terms of expenses.
- Sending out reimbursement requests – let her know if you have anything outstanding.
- Met with Edward Jones representative, volatility in markets but still in good position. Investments are low risk.
- Transitioning bank account at Eastern Bank to new board members.
- Processed first payment for new website vendor. Over budget for technology but still within overall budget parameters for the year.

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

- Challenge to find slate of candidates this year. 2 candidates for treasurer, need 1 more for President elect, lost proprietary candidates. How long to let this go before holding election? Will work with Jim and Shawn to decide on a date for voting – we may have some candidates unopposed. Not ideal but hopeful to have more candidates for March 1st. Let her know if you have any ideas for candidates.
- Proprietary sector is challenging – unlike for profit institutions, less likely to let staff out of the office for meetings, etc. Not always support for professional development. May need to consider have non-sector representatives represent proprietary schools.

**Comments:**

- Jim: Nothing in by-laws to prevent unopposed candidates – not much we can do. Spoke with EASFAA, they have done this in the past. Tony Erwin sent message at the time about why? Talked about the need for volunteerism.
- Jim: New website does not have voting capabilities, not a problem but do not want to invest in something too quickly. Need to move forward with date for election to take advantage of current website voting capabilities.
- Katie: is it a timing issue with candidates?
- Kathy: No, for the most part, many are not in a place to do it right now. Has approached 12 candidates so far.
- Emir: need to let potential candidates appreciate the value of working with MASFAA, maybe they do not appreciate the value they will get out of involvement

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

- Working on conference – see Conference Committee updates
- Has not heard back from anyone about co-chair possibilities for next year – let him know as soon as possible if you are willing to continue or if you have suggestions for possible candidates.

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

- Website vendor Digital Cheetah is confirmed, contract has been signed and first payment submitted. We could have paid up front but they gave us a 3-year option. Next step is implementation process.

#### **Comments:**

- Alex: What is the timeframe to have the site up and running? May is a possibility.
- Katie: that timeframe works well with our plan for combining the year-end event with a launch party.
- Keith: how will FAFSA Day website be impacted? New site has more functionality that will allow us to spin off different sites. We own MASFAA.org, com, and net – currently only using MASFAA.org.
- Meredith: For the implementation, will we need outside help/consultant?
- Kathy: initial effort will take time but after that, estimated time is one hour per week. Membership data can be exported. We will be provided with a project manager and consultant who will manage decision points along the way. Greg Chick has been part of the implementation conversations and is comfortable with the expectations. Regular check-ins with vendor and will pull in help as needed.

### **Committee Updates**

#### Conference: Shannon Eagan

- Cape Cod Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, the location for last year's conference, is not available for the dates we wanted in November 2016. They could accommodate us in late October or early December but neither of those options seem viable for membership. FSA conference is the first week in December.
- Cape Codder, also in Hyannis, has the dates but not sure they have the capacity – need to have a conversation.
- Other possible options include a conference center in Southbridge, MA and the Best Western in Marlboro, MA.

#### **Comments:**

- Alex: do we need to consider booking a 2-year commitment in the future?
- Jim: Cape Cod Conference Center was an unknown to us so hard to commit up front. Some locations won't tie up their facility that far in advance.
- Bonnie: is the issue with late October PPY? Shannon – the issue is more timing related to the conference committee having enough time to prepare for event.
- Katie: membership might appreciate new locations.
- Shawn: maybe we should consider Springfield location? Kristin mentioned that there is a lot of construction in the area for the next year – lots of detours and delays.
- Jim: suggested the Sheraton 4 Points in Norwood – College Board used them for the institute.
- Shawn: need to move forward quickly, will try to have a 2-year window.
- Jim: maybe we commit to 2017 in Hyannis now and work on another location for 2016?
- Michele: what is the number we need to accommodate? 450 approximately, having a ballroom location is key to accommodate everyone for meals, key speaker, and business meeting.
- Kathy: suggested the Sheraton Framingham, a previous location that was well received. Might be too expensive for us but Shannon will confirm.
- Jim: agreed with Shawn, need to move quickly. Lost Hyannis location in less than a month, may not be able to wait until next meeting. Shawn and Shannon will discuss next steps.

- Emir: are there discounts if we book in advance? Shawn thinks there might be if there is a 2-year commitment.
- Jim: there may not be a discount but they may commit to the same pricing for 2 years.

#### Professional Development and Training: Christina Coviello

- For tax workshops, 54 registered for Clark and 85 for Wellesley. Some no shows and some did not stay for the full day.
- Overall, very good feedback. Sent out survey – good materials, content. Level of knowledge was excellent. Robert has a lot of experience with IM and private schools. Wished they had more time, especially with business returns.
- Most would recommend to others.
- Would your school host? 52% said no. Having 2 locations allows offices to send all staff members.
- Trying to coordinate a committee meeting.
- Hoping to have support staff workshop – may try to coordinate with year-end event.

#### **Comments:**

- Katie: reminder that MASFAA purchased Survey Monkey so committees have this software available to them for surveys.
- Jim: consistent feedback on Robert as presenter, content was also great. Jim Briggs reached out to Jim to confirm it went well. Let Christina or Jim know if you want access to handouts as MASFAA members.
- Emir: Robert went out of his way to follow up with attendees via email on specific questions.
- Kathy: is there a MASFAA drop box to share handouts/info? Katie mentioned that new website should have this capability – should be less challenging to share information moving forward.
- Kudos to Christina from Exec Council on a great job!

#### Graduate and Professional Concerns: Emir Morais

- Symposium went well! 67 registered, 55 attended. Weather was an issue, many had difficulty getting there.
- Only issue was last minute cancellations from speakers/presenters, including the keynote speaker. Fortunately, other speakers were able to extend their presentations and speak for a longer period of time.

#### **Comments:**

- Katie: always a potential issue with volunteers. Maybe consider offering a stipend? Different date might be better.
- Emir: proposed the different date option to the committed during the planning stages. Event used to be held in December and the turnout was not good. But we should consider the date issue for next year.
- Diana: other dates conflict with office constraints for speakers and attendees. Emir thanked Diana for stepping to sit on one of the panels at the last minute.
- Kathy: members of her staff attended and said it was a great event. Not much warning with the weather that day – unforeseen circumstances. Need to roll with it sometimes and be creative but it's definitely hard, especially with a keynote speaker. But attendees enjoyed it so good job to committee members for being able to jump in with many workarounds.
- Jim: solid program, committee made adjustments and most attendees were not aware of the issues.
- Emir: will build in more backup for next year. Did offer gift cards to speakers – will cover travel expenses as needed. Should they consider stipends for speakers?
- Stephanie: Most would not take a stipend, especially in the non-profit sector.
- Kathy: another option would be to fill in any gaps with networking opportunities.
- Emir: expressed his thanks to committee members for all their efforts in the planning process and at the event.

## FAFSA Day: Keith Dimilanta

- Thanks to all who helped with FAFSA Day! 21 events so far, 2,039 attendees, 967 students. 93% indicated they accomplished what they came for. No weather cancellations so far.
- Twitter chats with NBC News
- Anticipating PPY and how that will impact future events. Asked schools if they would be willing to host on an earlier date, perhaps November? Most sites seem OK with that.
- Governor's proclamation – College Goal Sunday month for February. Will post on website. Governor Baker could not attend the event.
- Trying to cut down on costs with USA Funds no longer sponsoring – pushing for media presence. NBC twitter chats, Instagram through Facebook.
- Potential new chairs in mind, currently using tri-chairs, could they have 4 chairs? Per Jim, no problem – good planning.

### **Comments:**

- Katie: way under budget for spending, will have money for future years. Will need to reprint materials without USA Funds logo.
- Stephanie: no plan yet for PPY? Targeting November, October might be early, December is too hard for most financial aid officers.
- Katie: November will conflict with football
- Jim: Kudos on a great job, especially with proclamation which took a lot of effort and networking. Substantial reserves for now but definitely need to explore new sponsors. MASFAA used to support but with other sponsors on board, our contribution was not necessary. Could recommit in future years but it's a big hit on an annual basis.

## Government Relations: Stephanie Wells

- State House Day no longer happening. Reached out to AICUM in January – that is how we found out. AICUM had communicated to members that it would not take place in the same format. Although many liked the format, schools from Worcester area and western MA had a hard time getting students to Boston. It also conflicted often with the schedules of legislators, lessening the impact of the event.
- AICUM is trying a series of regional forums instead. Focus will be on college affordability and need-based financial aid with elected officials and students. There will be a briefing at each event followed by open discussion opportunities and panels.
- Does MASFAA still want to participate? Yes – trying to determine how best to participate. AICUM is setting up events with area legislators depending on the location. Need to learn more about what AICUM wants to get out of each event – definitely need more public college representation. Will follow up once we have confirmed dates.

### **Comments:**

- Monica: WPI participated in past years. 2 students attending event today (2/12) at Holy Cross – AICUM called looking for more students.
- Michele: reached out to AICUM – why the change? Connect students to legislators, more networking. Disappointed to see the connection with the State House – great way for students to see the overall legislative process in action.
- Jim: reached out to AICUM as well. MASFAA does not own this event so we can't direct. AICUM is a lobbying group so that is their main goal for the event. If we feel the engagement is important, we could consider doing our own event in the future.
- Stephanie: Public colleges have not participated for the most part in recent years but they have put together their own efforts as needed.

- Bonnie: Regis will host one of the events, state representative from the Weston/Wellesley/Wayland district will be present.
- Katie: would there be hard feelings if we had our own event?
- Monica: maybe wait and see how this year plays out – may not be successful.

### **Miscellaneous**

#### New business:

None

#### Old business:

- Christina will check in with Karensa DiFonzo at Wellesley College on a date for the year-end event. Hoping to coordinate last day of Leadership Academy on the same day. June 16<sup>th</sup> is a possibility.
- Could re-use spaceman logo for “launch” theme re: website if we want to promote that as well at this event.
- The conference raffle prize gift was a hover board –Northeastern University employee was the recipient – huge hit!

Stephanie motioned to adjourn, Alex seconded. All in favor to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 PM.