

Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Executive Council Meeting, January 15, 2016
Northeastern University

In attendance: Brooke Barbieri, ***Meredith Stover****, Christina Coviello, Ebony Carter, ***Kathy Anderson****, ***Jim Slattery****, ***Katie Kelsall****, ***Shawn Morrissey****, Jill Marr, ***Diana Beaudoin****, ***Stephanie Wells****, ***Alex Gonzalez****, Ben Parsons, Emir Morais, Bill Buescher, Kevin DeRuosi, Jolene Coakley

Absent: ***Susan Sullivan****, Anthony Crowe, Mike Albano, Kristi Pierce, Alcira Zadroga, Josh DeMaio, Brendan Furey, Bonnie Quinn, Wenimo Poweigha, ***Michele Kosboth****, Shannon Eagan, ***Jamie Dergay****, Keith Dimilanta, ***Sabina Yesmin****, Greg Chick

Bold italics* = voting member

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

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

- Working on slate of candidates for 16-17, that is her primary role as Past President. Need one more candidate for president and one more treasurer candidate. Difficult roles to fill since both are 3-year commitments. Let her know if you have any suggestions.
- Working on proposal from vendor for website (Digital Cheetah). Noetic has been great in offering to continue supporting our current website.
- Jim and Kathy provided a demo of the new proposed vendor site and the various applications including calendar functions, wait lists, social media feeds, mobile functionality, break out groups for committee work – very customizable and great for sharing information.

Comments:

- Jim: has been in touch with other state associations, also have a hard time with transition to new website vendors. Just need contract to sign. Has reviewed timelines with Technology Committee co-chairs; looks to be a 90-day process. Previous concerns about having website for FAFSA Day support but that is all set.
- Emir: for payment, is it an initial deposit? Per Kathy, payment is over a 3-year period. \$22,500 cost. Monthly maintenance cost is not much higher than what we currently pay.
- Jim: will implement new site, get comfortable with features and then share with membership.
- Emir: will we have the ability to interact with other committee members? Yes, shared group space is built in as well as document sharing. Can create mailing lists vs. membership lists – this will allow us to reach out to former members, retired members, etc. Junior League of Boston is an example of a website currently supported by Digital Cheetah.
- Shawn: can target members via interests for listserv communications.
- Brooke: will new vendor transfer over current website pages? Per Kathy and Jim, assuming some data will transfer over and some pages will need to be built – not entirely sure since not at the technical stage yet.
- Jim: lots of reporting tools and no limit on storage – vendor is used to dealing with large and small clients.
- Alex: what does cost cover? Only up-front costs including purchase of produce and set-up. Monthly maintenance payments of \$560 vs. current payment of \$330 per month.
- Kathy: other options might be less expensive but if we want features beyond a basic website, need to work with a larger, established entity – need to think of it as a long-term investment.
- Emir: referred to a past meeting at UMass/Lowell regarding the website transition – do we have notes from that meeting? Yes, per Kathy and we are using them as part of the transition.
- Jim: in terms of timeline, once we have contract, we can pay right away. Digital Cheetah will assign a project manager – assuming there will be weekly calls and check-ins. Working group in charge of transition will be Jim,

Shawn, Kathy and Technology Committee. Announcement to membership, will need to have training. Will want to leverage product to increase membership.

➤ Diana: contract length? It is open-ended. Year to year most likely after initial 3-year commitment.

- Secretary's Report: **Meredith Stover***
- Will provide minutes regarding Financial Literacy Committee conversation from November meeting to co-chairs Monica Blondin and Kristin Hmieleski.
- Review of minutes from the November meeting. No additional updates. Motion was put forward by Katie and seconded by Diana to approve minutes – all voting members in attendance approved.

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

- Conference registration revenue down by about \$10K from last year. However, we are under budget in terms of costs.
- Membership dues are on par with last year and still coming in due to tax workshop.
- Update on most recent tax filing – US Post Office lost the original mailing but then found it. Has not heard more from IRS.
- Can't use new computer – having difficulties transferring data to new software. Jim offered to take a look at it.

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

- Wants to start process now for co-chairs for next year. Current co-chairs should let him know if you plan to continue and if not, let him know who might be willing to step in. Will reach out to candidates based on openings. Priority is with PD&T.
- Also need to make decision about conference site for later this year. Numbers down this year in terms of attendees. 60 responses to survey – approximately 25%. (*see conference committee updates for more conversation*)

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

- In addition to website, working on strategic plan. Reaching out to former MASFAA presidents who would be willing to participate and do an independent review of current plan. Perhaps a survey to current membership in addition – current document is still pertinent and useful but we should revisit every few years to confirm we are reaching all sectors of MASFAA membership. Let Jim know if you are interested in participating.
- Jim and Shawn would also participate as well as current council members who are interested. In terms of a time commitment, should not be more than a couple of meetings and then a presentation to Executive Council for approval.
- Financial Literacy Committee presentation at November meeting. Monica and Kristen will be co-chairs. Conference call coming up to discuss their plan for committee and recruiting members. Already have good documentation.

Comments:

➤ Emir: make sure membership recruitment is part of strategic plan. With new website, more opportunities for recruitment.

Committee Updates

Professional Development and Training: Christina Coviello

- Robert Weinerman from Iron Bridge will be doing both tax workshops this year. Jim Briggs is working with Iron Bridge to transfer some of his client work in the area. This will not cost us more as he owed us for one workshop from last year's weather cancellation.

- Both locations have capacity for over 100 and neither location is full at this point in time.
- Christina has documents for workshop – should we share it with membership or just attendees? Can't post on web site and hard to mail it to everyone. Seems like the best way is to email attendees and let them know they can share with MASFAA members in their offices.
- Lunch is on your own but should we offer to pay for Robert's lunch? Jim – yes, we'll cover his lunch.
- Kristin Johnson from Sallie Mae, PD & T committee member, can help with registration at Wellesley. Alex and Jim offered to help with Worcester location registration.
- Would still like to do support staff workshop in the spring. Leadership Academy is ongoing.

Comments:

- Bill: should get final clarification from Robert that he is OK with sharing tax workshop documents beyond attendees.

Graduate and Professional Concerns: Emir Morais and Brooke Barbieri

- Symposium coming up on 2/5/16. Good speakers and agenda. Refinancing panel – Stephanie is participating.
- 40 registrants so far. 60-70 in past years so definitely on par.
- Bill is updating social media platforms – what about out of state opportunities? Heather Ward did that in prior years.

Comments:

- Jim: What about EASFAA? Kelly Morrissey would be willing to send out message to membership. He will do President's Welcome at event.
- Stephanie: may want to make clear the policy on holding the event in case of inclement weather. MEFA had issues last year. Harvard is not typically closed for bad weather but there should be a policy or plan. Christina will update confirmation message to include this information.

FAFSA Day: Keith Dimilanta, Kristi Pierce, and Alcira Zadroga

- Jim providing update on behalf of committee. Today's meeting conflicts with site coordinator meeting at Fitchburg to handle logistics and material distribution.
- Reached out to Governor Baker's office – he can't make it but we may be able to get a proclamation for the day, maybe the month? Would help with publicity in addition to College Success initiatives, Twitter chats on NBC, and Reach Higher.
- Still need volunteers.

Conference: Kevin DeRuosi and Shannon Eagan

- Review of surveys – mostly satisfied except for one! Website wish list on survey so good feedback.
- Overall, conference went well. Attendees happy with speaker Carrie Stack. People always complain about food, temperature, and rooms. Hotel was great, very responsive to any issues.
- Best comment received – conference felt like how MASFAA "used to be"
- \$99 hotel room rate was very reasonable and probably helped in attracting more members to stay overnight and participate in both days of conference.

Comments:

- Ebony: noise issues with rooms on the first floor but that was the venue and they were responsive. Commute is a concern. Game night was great.
- Jim: good cross registration – NU bursar attended and felt included with enough sessions to attend.
- Stephanie: think about Western MA location if attendees will be staying overnight anyway.

- Kevin: biggest issue with finding a location is we are not big enough for some venues and too big for others.
- Katie: agreed with great keynote speaker, nice to have focus not be on financial aid
- Stephanie: vendors were happy, no negative feedback. Fewer vendors than she would have liked – will try to recruit at EASFAA.
- Shawn: should we stick with November timeframe and is it available at this site?
- Kevin: need to check competing dates with ACCESS and any College Board events. Could do later or earlier?
- Meredith: earlier dates on the Cape (or anywhere) in October could be a problem with fall foliage, weddings – we may not receive comparable pricing.
- Bill: October also conflicts with other financial aid meetings. From a vendor perspective, the hotel was great. End of week timeframe would give attendees an option to stay for the weekend, avoid traffic issues.
- Jim: in past years, we have done days later in the week – see if that might be an option. If we renew for the Cape for this year, we'll need to look for a different location the year after – need to rotate. We had a late start this year with website – folks make a mental decision about attendance at any early point in time – would be good to have location secured and begin to promote it earlier.
- Katie: Cape location does prevent attendance. Might help to survey those who did not attend conference?
- Kevin: if we do a survey, need to include some type of incentive for completion? Shawn suggested a free conference registration.
- Jim: one issue with survey – would responses be all over the place – hard to come to agreement?
- Kevin: would be helpful to hear from membership vs. council. Last year's survey chose the Cape as a location preference over western MA or Boston.
- Emir: we also need to focus on content for the conference – not just location. Guest speakers and more variety in presentations – many have heard the same presenters and topics.
- Kevin: agenda was heavy on soft skills this year. Politicians and Department of Education officials are hard to secure – most can't commit, if at all, until the last minute so it's hard to promote at an earlier timeframe.
- Stephanie: if we go with Western MA location, Marty Meehan, President of UMass/Amherst, could be a consideration.
- Katie: if we book now, no matter where the location is, we can start to work on agenda sooner. Also, would there be any discount for early commitment?
- Shawn: maybe go with Cape for this year and start exploring sites for 2017 now. Jim agreed – far more to gain with timing than location.
- Shawn: will follow up at February meeting with potential dates. ACCESS is 11/17 – 11/19, also need to avoid election dates.
- Kevin: first committee meeting is in March – when do we want to announce to membership?
- Jim: let's confirm dates at February meeting and then put together a plan for communication.

Communications: Bill Buescher and Josh DeMaio

- Trying to get next newsletter out as soon as possible. Josh has been busy with work so Bill is stepping back in after taking a year off from committee.
- Will include conference update, check-in from Jim. Moving forward, may be a good way to share website features and updates.
- Looking to update format to include social media, make it a more useful document. Purpose is to archive activities of membership – provide content on an ongoing basis and then archive in a newsletter.

Comments:

- Jim: thanks to Bill for rejoining! New website will definitely help with format and including social media. Lots of ideas but recognizes it's hard to collect articles. Other ideas include new Financial Literacy Committee and an update from Christina on tax workshops. Let us know how we can help.
- Diana: reinforced idea of “teasing” the new website – great way to promote
- Emir: Symposium is 2/5, any way to promote?

- Jim: depending on Bill's availability, he would have good insight with transition to new website.
- Katie: should we decide on one platform for social media? Linked In? Not a fan of Facebook for professional endeavors.
- Bill: new website would be best platform – could also use MASFAA blog.

Miscellaneous

New business:

Dates for upcoming meetings were previously selected but not locations:

February 12th – BU Medical

March 18th – Lasell College

April – no meeting

May 13th – Northeastern University

Old business:

- Diana asked about date and location for year-end event? We previously discussed tying it to the last meeting for the Leadership Academy.

Comments:

- Christina: Are we OK with June date for year-end event? Week of 6/13 is an option and location would be Wellesley College.
 - Jim: if the date is available, let's go with it. Confirm date and location at February meeting.
 - Christina: Leadership Academy will be held during the day in the Wang Center – would be nice to relocate to another location – Wellesley College Club?
- Stephanie asked about dates/timing for election? As soon as we have slate of candidates completed, will move forward with election timing. The new website vendor does not have voting options but not a problem – can easily use something else but if possible, would be good to hold the election before we switch over.

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