

Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
Executive Council Meeting, March 18, 2016
Lasell College

In attendance: **Meredith Stover***, Christina Coviello, **Kathy Anderson***, **Jim Slattery***, **Katie Kelsall***, **Stephanie Wells***, Shannon Eagan, Wenimo Poweigha, Jill Marr, **Michele Kosboth***, **Susan Sullivan***, Kristi Pierce, Greg Chick, Brooke Barbieri, Ebony Carter

Absent: Anthony Crowe, Mike Albano, Alcira Zadroga, Josh DeMaio, Brendan Furey, **Jamie Dergay***, **Sabina Yesmin***, Ben Parsons, Bill Buescher, Kevin DeRuosi, Jolene Coakley, **Shawn Morrissey***, **Diana Beaudoin***, **Alex Gonzalez***, Emir Morais, Bonnie Quinn, Monica Blondin, Kristin Hmielski, Keith Dimilanta

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 February meeting. No additional updates. Motion was put forward by Michele and seconded by Susan to approve minutes – all voting members in attendance approved.

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

Will have some expenses related to upcoming support staff workshop but otherwise, no recent updates. Reminder to submit receipts if you need reimbursement for any expenses.

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

- Historically, we have skipped the month of April to meet – is March just as bad? Consensus was that is difficult to get out of the office in March but April is worse – many schools have visitor days on Fridays so it would be hard to have enough members in attendance for an April meeting. Keep schedule as is moving forward.
- Focus for the past month has been on the website and the conference location. Needs to work on strategic plan piece.
- Will reach out to Bill about newsletter – would be a good opportunity to promote upcoming website changes.

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

- Has been working with Greg on website – see Technology Committee updates.
- Presenting to NASFAA in Washington, DC next week on consumer information for graduate students.

President-Elect's Report: **Jim Slattery*** on behalf of **Shawn Morrissey***

Shawn could not attend today's meeting but has been working with Shannon on conference locations – see Conference Committee updates.

Committee Updates

Technology: Greg Chick

- Initial call with implementation team and Digital Cheetah for start of website transition – has been difficult getting them to move forward on a quicker timeline.
- Design possibilities for front page as well as other pages – the format they want to use and what we are used to is very manageable in terms of set-up. Will start to pull in committee chairs as needed – for example, FAFSA Day.

- Requesting feedback – the template for membership can include a lot more information than what we currently have available – resumes, awards, conference attendance, etc. Do we want to include? Format is menu style so you can add what items you wish to include.
- MASFAA ballot is prepared with statements and photos of candidates. Should be able to share with membership within the next week.

Comments:

- Michele: the NASFAA membership format works well – asks for years of experience, types of financial aid programs administered, other languages, etc. – would be helpful to have this knowledge to tap into for possible committee recruitment and workshop presenters.
- Christina: mentioned listing NASFAA credentials – they are requiring presenters using their materials to have credentials in that area – this will be important for Just the Facts.
- Brooke: can people opt in or out if they do not want to share? We can assume “yes” for most but give everyone the option to opt out.
- Jim: maybe use the NASFAA format as a starting point
- Meredith: can we update/change easily at a later point? Yes – it would be an easy update to add items.
- Kathy: will be a great way to retain membership history
- Katie: will website be ready for year-end event? Would be great to promote at that time – will hopefully attract more members and revenue.
- Jim: can try to have that as a goal – may not be fully operational but at least enough to share.
- Katie: treat like a start-up, make it a big event!
- Brooke: will members need training? Kathy suggested a webinar – good way to promote the new options.
- Jim: Digital Cheetah may already have something – they definitely have lots of tools for implementation process but will find out if they have something more basic once we are up and running.

Professional Development and Training: Christina Coviello

- Working on location for year-end event (Wellesley College) with Karensa DiFonzo.
- May 12th for support staff workshop and final leadership academy?
- Topics for support staff workshop include working with difficult people, being empathetic, and managing work-study programs. Other ideas for topics?

Comments:

- Jim: Suggested that we keep support staff workshop on May 12th and have final leadership academy and year-end event on June 16th? Christina will confirm location availability at Wellesley College. Would we want to all 3 at once?
- Christina: support staff workshop is all day, leadership is a half-day so it would be hard to do all 3 in one day.
- Michele: Diana Beaudoin asked her to inquire about pushing out year-end event to June as well, need more time to plan. More follow-up with Michele, Susan, Stephanie and Alex.
- Christina and Katie: do support staff workshop attendees need to be MASFAA members? Per Kathy, historically that has not been required for this workshop – would be a hardship for some schools and in keeping with our mission, want to be sure we are not preventing participation.
- Michele: suggested diversity issues as another topic for support staff workshop – recently heard presentation from Kendra Thomas of Pearson on similar topics.
- Katie: suggestion for effective communication as a topic
- Stephanie: suggested speech improvement, Kristen Curran-Faller is a speech coach in the Boston area used by many schools as well as MEFA.

Conference: Shannon Eagan

- Just about ready to sign contract with Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center in Southbridge, MA. Dates will be 11/17 and 11/18. Executive Council meeting will be on 11/16. 195 rooms, cost is \$109/night.
- Booked Cape Codder in Hyannis, MA for 2017 (11/14 and 11/15). Overall cost is slightly higher but not much. We can look at conference fee – do we need to adjust?
- Alexis Guay will be new co-chair of Conference Committee for 16-17.

Comments:

- Jim: we have not changed conference fee for years so if we have to increase it, should not be too big of an impact on membership.
- Jim: for meals, it will be more buffet/cafeteria style so it will be hard to have speakers at meal time. Also, we're a little bigger in terms of what they are used to but there should not be other big events going on while we are there.
- Stephanie: any vendor issues? If there is a charge for vendors for electrical and WiFi access, could be a sponsorship opportunity. Will start to look at possibilities for vendors – hopes to increase for next year.

FAFSA Day: Kristi Pierce

- All FAFSA Day events are complete for this part of 2016. Last event took place on March 5th – 33 events overall. Served 1,454 students. Overall attendance was slightly higher last year but we served more students this year. NE Metro Tech, Framingham, and Malden were biggest sites
- For PPY, trying to get a sense nationally of what other states are doing – perhaps November and January.
- Alcira transitions out of co-chair role this year, Ryan Forsythe will join from Worcester State. There is a 4th potential candidate interested but not confirmed yet. Would like to move forward with 2 seasoned co-chairs and 2 new co-chairs.

Comments:

- Stephanie: will try to have a MEFA volunteer for committee. They are also seeing requests from high schools wanting to move up their high school financial aid nights to earlier dates.
- Susan: wanted to reiterate that the community college population will still need the later dates for these events.

Financial Literacy: *Jim Slattery** on behalf of Monica Blondin and Kristin Hmieleski

Monica and Kristin could not attend today's meeting. They have received feedback from members interested in joining the committee so they will move forward. Tentative date for first meeting is April 14, 2016

Comments:

- Meredith: Since we had a good response to this request for new committee members, should we try something similar in the coming months for 16-17 committee membership? Could also try something in conjunction with new website.

Graduate and Professional Concerns: Brooke Barbieri

Rosemary Hilliard from Tufts Dental will be new co-chair for 16-17.

Miscellaneous

Old business:

As mentioned earlier with the new website capabilities, Christina raised the issue of NASFAA credentialing – seems like they are heading in the direction of requiring it if using NASFAA training materials. This is definitely true if attendees of training want to apply for credentialing – trainer must be credentialed. Are there members who want to be credentialed and be a presenter? Could help with training and possibly, the cost. There are areas for Just the Facts where there is a gap with credentials – Direct Loans is one in particular.

New business:

- Jim presented on the recent AICUM announcement regarding upcoming legislation before the MA senate that would require MA schools to provide a shopping sheet, similar to the federal version.
- Historically, MASFAA President has put forth a response/opinion to membership and solicited feedback. Not enough time in this case – going to the Senate next week. Opinions on how to best move forward?

Comments:

- Michele: need to respond, especially as an organization that represents all institutions in MA
- Katie: would not be helpful to her population
- Michele: hard for all schools to share this data without having the opportunity for context. Data such as cohort default rates and graduation rates may need additional explanation – this would force colleges to be very open with data but not have an opportunity to share it in the best format.
- Susan: one size does not fit all – similar issues with Net Price Calculator
- Stephanie: just to play devil's advocate, can be a useful tool for families when comparing costs. Need to communicate concerns to Senate, is there a way to further narrow down applicable populations?
- Jim: no matter what, even if we disagree with this legislation, need to be in support of transparency and clarity.
- Katie: agreed with Stephanie, many award letters from schools are not providing enough information – maybe we need to look at standardizing other types of communication.
- Michele: probably part of our response needs to be alternate options, things schools must provide – direct costs for example. In general, not a bad concept but need a better version than shopping sheet.
- Michele: Shopping sheet is not federally mandated
- Kathy: likes the idea of working with AICUM on an alternative
- Stephanie: maybe look at Net Price Calculator utilization rates – students do have access to this information via that tool.
- Jim: prior to shopping sheet, similar views but Congress still moved forward. Seems like we all feel that the MA senate should hold off on voting for this particular proposal – although we agree with the need for transparency in the financial aid process, need a better tool. Let's take the lead as an organization and be part of proposing an alternative rather than simply using a tool that already exists.

Susan motioned to adjourn, Michele seconded. All in favor to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 PM.