

MEMBERS:

Co-Chair: Alex Gonzalez, Northeastern University

Co-Chair: Kendra Lider-Johnson, MEFA

Members:

Renato Aguilar

Jill D'Amico

Reginald Carter

Denice Carryl

Krista Cosco

Robert Dais

Francine Davis

Carla DeLucia

Doreen DelMonaco

Courtney Hatch Blauvelt

Shelley Honeycutt

Carole Hunter

Katie Kelsall

Erin Mell-Taylor

Patricia Motyka

Tanya Tanaro

Sarah Yoffee

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Early Awareness and Outreach Committee is to be engaged with financial aid administrators in the state to promote early college planning initiatives at the middle school and high school levels with the knowledge that the cost of college is the greatest challenge for underrepresented and low-income populations. We also act as a resource for MASFAA members in the areas of early awareness and financial aid presentations so that they may remain educated, engaged and effective as professionals.

2011-2012 OBJECTIVES:

1. To create new and strengthen current MASFAA partnerships with community leaders, officials and citizens which serve the communities of Massachusetts.
2. To continue and improve our efforts at collaborating with Gear Up, MASCA, ASA, and the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Aid to promote early awareness of financial aid and college access.
3. To increase the presence of MASFAA and the EA&O Committee across all of Massachusetts.
4. To continue to develop, improve and implement two annual Carnival of Learning events serving an approximate total of 120 -140 Middle School students in different communities around the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by offering high quality early awareness programs.

5. To extend financial literacy and financial aid awareness to the parents and middle school students that participates in the Carnival of Learning event by the introduction of the financial literacy booth and by creating a complementary financial literacy workshop for parents.
6. To participate in the National Training for Counselors and Mentors (NT4CM), an annual training program designed to provide counselors and mentors with professional resources that will help them more effectively advise high school students and families about how to prepare financially for college.
7. To encourage MASFAA members to volunteer at the Carnival of Learning Events without active commitment to the committee.

2011-2012 MASFAA GOALS:

- Advance the Art and Science of our Profession
 - with students, families, on and off-campus colleagues, faculty and administration, elected and governmental officials
- Increase engagement of members
- Continued commitment to high quality, cost effective training and professional development
- Update the Association's Strategic Plan

MONTHLY REPORT: MAY 2012

- ◆ The Spring 2012 Carnival of Learning happened on Thursday, April 12, at the Pyne Arts Magnet School in Lowell, MA. The program included approximately 65 7th graders. A strong presence of GEAR UP advisors from Lowell and Lawrence helped the day go smoothly.
- ◆ The school asked us to condense the event into 2 hours and 10 minutes, which was about an hour shorter than usual. We accomplished this by eliminating the snack table (students arrived directly after lunch), reducing the number of college tables, and moving the alumni Q&A session to the beginning of the program and keeping it in the gym with the rest of the activities.
- ◆ College booths: Merrimack College (electronics/robotics); Boston University (nursing); Middlesex Community College (environmental science)
- ◆ MASFAA booths: Financial Literacy trivia game; graduation/art; GEAR UP information (2 booths)
- ◆ President Pekala represented MASFAA's Executive Council by helping to run the popular graduation/art activity table.
- ◆ Photographs from the program will be hosted on the GEAR UP Massachusetts website, since they have collected photo waivers from students.
- ◆ NT4CM: 8 Modules were offered to MA counselors over 4 webinars in March & April. The program was coordinated and moderated by Joanne Dashiell at ASA. Presenters were: Alex Gonzalez (FAFSA & Application Process), Jill D'Amico (EFC Overview), Kendra Lider-Johnson (Federal, State & Institutional Aid), and Renato Aguilar (Scholarships & Additional Funding)
- ◆ Next steps: the committee will have a meeting in late-May/early-June to discuss how the Spring COL went, begin planning for the Fall 2012 COL (New Bedford in November), and brainstorm other committee initiatives like the High School Outreach pilot program.

- ◆ Kendra Lider-Johnson will be rolling off her post as committee co-chair. The anticipated new co-chair will be Katie Kelsall from Harvard Extension School, who has been a member of the committee for 3 years.

MONTHLY REPORT: MARCH 2012

- ◆ The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 7.
- ◆ The Spring Carnival of Learning has been moved from Normandin Middle School in New Bedford (originally planned for March 21) to the Pyne Arts Middle School in Lowell, MA on Thursday, April 12. The primary reasons for this move were the limited number of EA&O Committee members who would be available to participate in the New Bedford COL because of its timing (late afternoon/evening) and distance from Greater Boston.
- ◆ We already have 2 confirmed college booths (Fisher College – art & auto detailing; Boston College – nursing) and 2 likely booths (Merrimack College – computer engineering; UMass Lowell – TBD). We are also reaching out to Northern Essex Community College, to hopefully meet our goal of 5 college booths soon.
- ◆ One challenge presented by this particular site is that we have been allocated a slightly shorter block of time with the students than we usually have (2 hours 10 minutes instead of 2 hours 45 minutes). Since the students will be coming directly from lunch, we have decided to remove the snack booth. There is also the possibility of moving the Student Alumni Panel to the beginning of the program instead of the end, to help motivate the students and also to eliminate the time needed for transitioning into the auditorium after the booth activities.
- ◆ NT4CM continues to be a work in progress. ASA is prepared to coordinate the webinars, but because of the time of year, many committee members are busy with financial aid awarding and unable to commit to presenting the NT4CM modules. Looking ahead to next year, we will try to get back to offering this training for counselors in January/February, to capitalize on peak financial aid application season. There were some staffing changes at ASA which may have led to the late start this year.

MONTHLY REPORT: FEBRUARY 2012

- ◆ The next committee meeting is schedule for Wednesday, February 8. Our agenda will include plans for Spring COL – including the possibility of rescheduling it at a different school/date because of challenges in late March with MCAS testing – and the new High School Pilot Initiative.

MONTHLY REPORT: JANUARY 2012

- ◆ The Early Awareness Committee met on January 5, its first meeting since the COL on 11/10/11. We have gained 2 new members and lost 4 members (see roster at top).
- ◆ In reviewing the Fall COL at Peck Middle School in Holyoke, we discussed the challenges of coordinating COL events in new areas (where colleges are unfamiliar with the program) and in areas far from Greater Boston (where distance and unfamiliarity with the area makes it expensive to travel and difficult to tap into local resources). In future years, we will try to alternate one “local” site and one distant site.
- ◆ With the upcoming COL in New Bedford, this will mark a complete cycle of bringing COL to every middle school that participates in the statewide GEAR UP MA program.
- ◆ The Spring Carnival of Learning is scheduled for March 21, 2012 at Normandin Middle School in New Bedford. We decided to try an event in March because April is such a busy month for committee members who work in financial aid offices.

- ◆ The school would like to have the event in the late afternoon-early evening, which may pose a new set of logistical challenges for planning and participation. It also opens up the opportunity for us to engage more with parents. We will explore the possibility of inviting parents to attend the COL and stay for an evening session about financial literacy and early financial aid awareness.
- ◆ Regarding parent participation, at the Fall 2011 COL in Holyoke, we had one set of parents attend the event with their child. We believe this was the first time we've had any parents attend a Carnival. They were very engaged in the activities, and spoke individually with several committee members about college and financial aid opportunities.
- ◆ Within the next few weeks we will send a message to the MASFAA listserv requesting volunteers for the event and donations of school supplies to give to the students.
- ◆ NT4CM is off to a slow start this year because of staffing changes at ASA, MASFAA's lead partner with the NT4CM initiative. We will continue to offer our support to ASA for this program.
- ◆ A subcommittee will begin to explore ways to launch the High School pilot initiative to provide support and resources to high school communities.

MONTHLY REPORT: DECEMBER 2011

- ◆ The Fall Carnival of Learning happened on Thursday, November 10 at the Peck Middle School in Holyoke, MA. We accommodated the entire 7th grade class of 72 students.
- ◆ College-sponsored booths were: UMass Amherst (chemical engineering, making slime); Holyoke Community College (public health), Western New England University (robotics & computing), Fisher College (auto design), Mount Holyoke College (dance), Westfield State University (academic advising)
- ◆ MASFAA-sponsored booths were: financial literacy, graduation/art activity, and snack table.
- ◆ President Pekala represented MASFAA's Executive Council by helping to run the popular graduation/art activity table all day.
- ◆ After the booths, students heard from three college-student speakers who talked about the transition from high school to college and important strategies and resources for success in school.
- ◆ Members of the committee will be talking in December to discuss what worked well and where there is room for improvement with future Carnivals.
- ◆ Alex and Kendra will be reaching out to several committee members who did not participate in any of the planning or the Carnival itself, to see if they wish to become more involved going forward. Otherwise, they will be removed from the committee.
- ◆ In the months ahead, we will shift our attention to supporting NT4CM, piloting the High School Partnership initiative, and planning for a Spring Carnival of Learning.

MONTHLY REPORT: OCTOBER 2011

- ◆ The Early Awareness Committee had its first meeting of the year on September 15, hosted by Babson College. The second meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 12.
- ◆ The committee has been joined by five new members (see roster at top).
- ◆ At the time of this report, the date has not yet been finalized for the November 2011 Carnival of Learning at Peck Middle School in Holyoke, MA. Date options for the Carnival are: 11/10 or 11/17.
- ◆ The Committee has identified five priority colleges to contact as potential participants for the November Carnival of Learning: Western New England College, Mount Holyoke College, Westfield

State University, UMass Amherst, and Holyoke Community College. Other colleges may be contacted as needed.

- ◆ As soon as a date for the fall Carnival is confirmed, we will send a message to the MASFAA listserv requesting donations of college t-shirts, pens, notepads and other supplies that we can provide to the students in backpacks when the Carnival ends. We will also ask for volunteers to assist at the Carnival of Learning program. We also hope to have a table at the MASFAA Conference to solicit donations and volunteers.
- ◆ It may be difficult to get sufficient donations of food for the Carnivals this year. Typically, markets and vendors are more likely to donate for a *local* event; since we do not have any Committee members in the Holyoke or New Bedford areas, it will be challenging to reach out to potential donors in those locales. This means we may need to purchase most of the food supplies for the Carnivals. We expect to have adequate fund within our current budget, but we will keep the Executive Council informed.
- ◆ A new subcommittee has been created to focus on strengthening the financial literacy and financial aid awareness information that is shared with students at the Carnival. This booth, which was piloted in Spring 2011, will again be led by members of the Committee.
- ◆ Based on discussion at the Executive Council Leadership Retreat in August, the Committee has agreed to approve the following new objective: To provide financial literacy and awareness of the financial aid process to High School College Preparation counselor(s) in a first year pilot program that will assign committee members to high schools with high populations of first-generation college students.

MONTHLY REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2011

- ◆ The Early Awareness Committee will have its first meeting of the year on Thursday, September 15, hosted by Babson College.
- ◆ The 9/15 agenda will focus on arrangements for the November 2011 Carnival of Learning at Peck Middle School in Holyoke, MA. Date options for the Carnival are: 11/10, 11/16, and 11/17.
- ◆ The Committee will also be asked to consider piloting a new outreach activity in 2011-12, and to add the following new Committee Objective: To provide financial literacy and awareness of the financial aid process to High School College Preparation counselor(s) in a first year pilot program that will assign a committee members to a specific low income area high school.

MONTHLY REPORT: AUGUST 2011

