



Officer Nominations

*Submitted By: Judi Miladin, NYSFAAA President Elect
Cayuga Community College*

Now is the time for YOU to think about running for office in the greatest organizations with which I have ever had the privilege to be associated. NYSFAAA is an organization for training, education, professional development, scholarships, advocacy and outreach - and in addition to all of that it's about friends, fun and mutual support. Now may be the perfect time for YOU to think about taking on a more active role in this amazing organization.

NYSFAAA is currently accepting nominations for the positions of 1st Vice-President for Membership, 2nd Vice President for Professional Development, Secretary and Treasurer. This is a particularly significant time to be a part of the leadership

of this extraordinary organization. With reauthorization pending on the federal level, and New York being in the position of having one Senator on the Education Committee and three representatives on the House

Education Committee, we are in a position to have a major impact on the future of federal financial aid. But we need committed leaders to seize the opportunity.

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Message From the President

*Submitted by: Ann Barton, NYSFAAA President
Hobart & William Smith Colleges*

It is hard to believe that they call this the "Spring" semester! Hopefully, the weather will be spring-like before the semester ends!

I just wanted to take this opportunity to let you know what has been happening in NYSFAAA over the past few months. Of course, our CAAN Committee has been busy with high school nights and staffing the "Ask the Expert" email campaign. Our High School Counselor Committee completed training of our high school counselors across the state in late fall.

The Government Relations Committee has been busy. This year they arranged for Executive Council members to meet with 35 legislators in Albany. This has been an annual event for several years and I must say it was uplifting this year to have them know who we were when we made our visits. The meetings went beyond the "usual" discussion of the state budget and its impact on higher education. I am in the process of obtaining some statistics that one of the legislators wanted. They finally realize NYSFAAA is there to be of assistance to them!

The first annual legislative training session took place in Albany on January 26. This year's training was a basic introduction to the financial aid process. We provided a packet of materials designed to assist them when responding to calls from constituents. Each year we hope to focus on some aspect of the process in order for them to gain a better understanding of the whole picture of "financial aid". We had about 30 attendees. While we would have liked a better turn-out, we were happy to see those who did attend.

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Officer Nominations (con't)

With the governor's repeated attempts to undermine the essential philosophy of the TAP program and with support for that proposal losing more and more credibility in the legislature each year that it is presented, and then restored by the legislature, time may be ripe for an essential over-haul of TAP. But we need committed leaders to seize the opportunity.

With financial aid scams proliferating at an unprecedented rate as families endeavor to find easier ways to meet the rising costs of education, the need to educate students and families on the financial aid process is greater than ever. We need committed leaders to provide members of our organization with opportunities to educate the public on the best ways to access the available financial aid funds.

In short, the opportunities for NYSFAAA to significantly impact the future of financial aid on the federal, state, and personal level are here -- they are NOW. But we need committed leadership to insure that the future is the one we would like to see. Please consider joining me as we make certain that our dreams for the future of financial aid become reality. We cannot allow those dreams to become nightmares!

If you have ever thought of running for an office in NYSFAAA - or if you have NEVER thought of running for an office, now is the time to consider what YOU have to offer this premier organization. You don't have to wait for someone to nominate you - you can also volunteer and nominate yourself!

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You're Not Running For Congress

Submitted by: Dan Brent, Citibank

In January I listened to President Bush's State of the Union Address. Well, that's not entirely true. I actually listened to about five minutes of the address. I turned it off, annoyed with the partisanship of the remarks. I perceived it as an "Us and Them" speech. It wasn't really George W. that annoyed me. It was the partisanship of the whole political system that we have. I was just as annoyed at Ted Kennedy sitting on his hands suffering through the event. "Us and Them".

I've heard the English adversarial system that we've adopted for our courts described as a terrible system – but the best that anyone has ever come up with. Maybe the same can be said for our adversarial political system – terrible but the best we can do. There are those who have power and then there is the "loyal opposition". _____

But it still seems sad to me. I remember trying to get to sleep that night and being kept awake by formulating my own version of the "State of the Union" speech.

"My colleagues in the Congress. Each of you has been sent here by your constituents to create for this nation the best that our resources can provide. The same is true of me. And, even though this is an election year, it is incumbent on us – you and me together – to dream our best dreams for this country and concoct the best plans and programs that we can create together. And it doesn't matter who gets credit. What matters is that we look after our less fortunate brothers and sisters, educate our children, provide for the safety of our citizens, and find ways to be a good neighbor to the world community. To do that we must work together. The energy we spend fighting each other is lost to the real common cause on which we are elected to deliver. When we – or our predecessors – have accomplished anything in the past, it has been by compromise. But even that is settling for half. That's no longer enough. We need to develop a mind-set of consensus. That means we listen to each other, debate until we understand the pro's and con's, and then commit to the best we think we can do. Together. "So ask not how we can thwart each other's plans. Ask rather how we can pool our wisdom and enthusiasm to create our best America together." Naive. I know. Politics will never be that way. I know.

But what about your office? Congress isn't the only place where options are argued out, plans are made, and winners and losers are created. The effectiveness of your collective service to your students is dependent on your collective ability to buy into a common vision and work together to pursue it.

I do a training session that puts people into small groups and requires them to reach some group decisions. I listen in to the discussions. Almost invariably, each group will afterwards proclaim that its decisions were reached by consensus. Having listened in, I know better. Most often the truth is that the decisions were reached by majority rule, or by what I call the "tyranny of the vocal", or by manager's edict. Consensus happens when everyone's thinking is heard out for its merits and then each individual agrees to support the ultimate decision. Getting to that point takes time and finesse. Rarely do groups have the patience and skills to achieve it. But how worth it the effort is! At your place the stakes aren't as high as they are for Congress. But – until you get elected to Congress or the Presidency – it's the world you can influence. Together.
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MEMBERS ON THE MOVE . . .

Steve Conger formerly of the College of St Rose joins the staff at North Country Community College as the Associate Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid Services

Betsey Penrose current Chairperson of NYSFAAA Region 8 and Director of Financial Aid at Jefferson Community College has been elected President of SUNYFAP. Congratulations!

Steve Dobbs (Bryant & Stratton-Rochester & Greece) is now a Student Accounts Representative at Rochester Business Institute.

Leigh Fiorenza formerly of Hilbert College has recently joined the M&T Educational Lending Team as Assistant Vice President-Operations Manager.

Jennifer Dwire of Key Educational Resources was recently promoted to Assistant Vice President. Way to go Jen!

The University at Buffalo has several new Financial Aid Advisors: Amanda Wirth (Daemen College), Brent McEnroe (Buffalo State), Yvonne Nagel (Buffalo State) and Roseann Johnson (UB Student Response Center)

Beverly Chudy has been promoted to Director of Financial Aid at Hilbert College. Congrats!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGIONAL MEETINGS

REGION 1 & 2 - MARCH 18 @ GENESEE CC
REGION 3 - MARCH 19 @ COLGATE UNIVERSITY
REGION 4 - APRIL 15 LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED
REGION 5 - APRIL 2 OR 16 @ DUTCHESS CC
REGION 6 - MARCH 19 @ COLLEGE BOARD IN NYC
REGION 7 - MARCH 26 @ NYCOM
REGION 8 - MAY 26 @ SUNY PLATTSBURG, VALCOUR CTR.

NYSFAAA CONFERENCE

"ROLLING ON THE RIVER"
 ROCHESTER HYATT REGENCY HOTEL
 October 26 - 29, 2004

NYSFAAA NOVICE TRAINING 2004

MANHATTANVILLE COLLEGE
 JUNE 5 - 11, 2004
New location - Same great program!

Message From the President (con't)

One of the staff actually commented on this training when I visited their office a few weeks later.

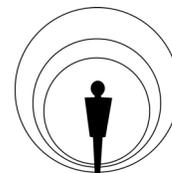
I attended the Legislative Forum in early February. This event is sponsored by a consortium of groups (including NYSFAAA) that are involved in various areas of education. It was an informative program, with valuable information on lobbying legislators. We ended the program with visits to legislators.

Executive Council hosted members of Higher Education Services Corporation at our meeting February 8-10 in Albany. We had an open forum discussion on the services HESC provides to New York State students as well as financial aid offices across the state. It was an opportunity for Council members to meet the new President of HESC, Michael Wilton.

I will be attending the next EASFAA Council meeting on Sunday, February 22 in Wilmington, Delaware. I will send a summary report of that meeting out on the listserv upon my return.

We are getting close to unveiling the new NYSFAAA website. ATAC has been hard at work getting everything ready. We had planned to unveil the site the first week in February, however, we ran into some issues surrounding our membership database. ATAC will be doing some new programming for NYSFAAA in order to meet our needs that are a little different than any of the other financial aid organizations they have worked with. We felt it was better to hold off on introducing the site to ensure that it meets all our needs rather than compromise our needs to meet an earlier deadline. Our goal is to "do it right the first time". I will be notifying everyone when the site is ready. Hopefully, each region has designated their website person who will be responsible for maintenance of their regional section of the new website.

I guess that is all for now. Have a wonderful semester, and try to stay warm!



Reconsolidation: A Major Issue for the Higher Education Act Reauthorization

Submitted By: Mark Brenner, Senior Vice President, College Loan Corporation

As the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act approaches, a number of important issues are being debated. Key items include whether to increase loan limits and by what amount and whether the government can afford to eliminate origination fees. Also likely to become a topic of great interest is the Consolidation Loan Program. This program has helped more than 2 million students reduce their monthly payments over the last several years, and continues to help borrowers meet the burdens of repaying their student loans while providing significant revenue to the Federal government.

An item that has drawn particular attention is whether student loan borrowers should be allowed to re-consolidate or refinance their existing consolidation loans, many of which carry fixed interest rates higher than those applicable to borrowers consolidating today. Currently, under the Higher Education Act, if borrowers have previously consolidated their loans, they are not guaranteed a right to re-consolidate within the Federal Family Education Loan Program. While they are allowed to reconsolidate under the William D. Ford Direct Student Loan Program, there is no reason to do so because the interest rate on the new loan must equal the rate on the existing loan. This has denied hundreds of thousands of borrowers the opportunity to take advantage of historically low interest rates. That is not to say that borrowers cannot repay their higher interest loans early. Borrowers do have the right to prepay without penalty.

A number of approaches to this issue have been advocated on Capitol Hill, and as of yet, there appears to be no consensus. Indeed, there are four bills that have recently been introduced by members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Certain bills would allow borrowers to re-consolidate to a variable rate (H.R. 3180, 2504, 2711), while others would allow borrowers to obtain a lower fixed rate (H.R. 2505),

Similarly, there are two bills in the Senate that address the issue of re-consolidation. One allows borrowers to refinance only in the Direct Loan Program at the "prevailing fixed rate as determined by the Secretary" (S. 1793), while another eliminates the fixed rate for consolidation loans (S. 1742).

With six bills addressing this issue in various ways, it is clear that Congress is trying to find a way to help young Americans achieve the best available financing for repaying their college debt.

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Forward Funding TAP – Long Overdue

*Submitted by: William C. Cheetham
Le Moyne College*

Each year students are asked to up their mind as to what college they will attend by May 1. Will it be in NYS, or possibly in a state other than NY? Can they afford to attend a college in NYS? How can they know for sure since they will not receive their official TAP awards until May, June, or even July?

During this same period of time the NYS legislators are usually responding to the Governor's proposed budget, which in more years than not has included a proposed reduction in the funding for the TAP program. The legislators seemingly have no time limit as to when they need to decide on a budget, and subsequently, the final funding level of the TAP program.

What do these two decision-making processes have in common (what school to attend vs. what the funding level of TAP will be)? NY families are trying to determine what their coming year budget will be based on cost and financial aid available and ultimately what college their student can attend. Legislators are trying to determine what budget NYS taxpayers can afford for the coming year.

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If you would like to contribute to the NYSFAAA Connection Web Letter, contact

Laura Worley, Web Letter Editor

Laura.m.Worley@citigroup.com

NYSFAAA and New York State: Working Together for Students and Their Families

William J. Cavin, Co-Chair of NYSFAAA's Government Relations Committee, HSBC Bank

New York State must reaffirm its dedication to the basic principles that underline student financial aid. These principles hold that the young men and women of every generation deserve an opportunity to fulfill their innate talents regardless of economic status, that education without universal opportunity is elitist and inequitable, and that financial assistance is the greatest investment the State can make in its own future." - From the Report of the Commission on New York State Student, Financial Aid, December 1999

The New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association (NYSFAAA) in its continuing efforts to serve the students of New York State and their families, is working hard to promote positive interaction with State governmental representatives, agencies, and organizations who serve the financial aid needs of their constituents. NYSFAAA represents all types of institutions of higher education in New York State and its membership has some of the most respected and knowledgeable student financial aid experts recognized not just state-wide, but also on a national level.

In addition to annual programs that NYSFAAA is a major participant in, such as the NYS Legislative Forum and NYS Higher Education Day at the NYS Fair, last year NYSFAAA President Anne Barton charged members of NYSFAAA's Government Relations Committee and Executive Council with the task of creating a student financial aid workshop for the NYS Legislature and its staff. This workshop would enable members of the NYS legislature and their staff to become more informed on State and federal student financial aid programs to better serve New York State students and their families.

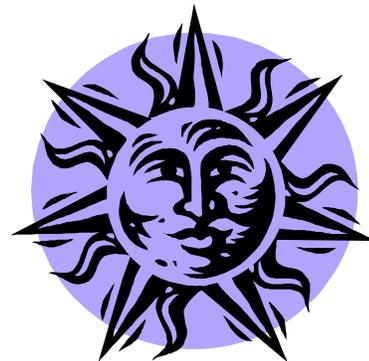
NYSFAAA is very pleased to announce that in coordination with and with great thanks to the offices of Senator Kenneth P. LaValle and Assemblyman Ronald Canestrari the inaugural session of this workshop took place last month. NYSFAAA presented the workshop "Introduction to Student Financial Aid" on Monday, January 26, 2004. The workshop was held from 9:30 am to 12:00pm in the Legislative Office Building (LOB) Roosevelt Room. During the interactive workshop, NYSFAAA financial aid professionals from around the state reviewed the federal and NYS financial aid process through a series of discussions and examples. NYSFAAA presenters also addressed the most commonly asked financial aid questions, in an effort to assist legislators and their staff in responding to their constituents. Financial aid resource materials were distributed during the session.

When NYSFAAA members make visits to NYS Legislators' offices this week, they will be discussing their position on the NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and NYS Opportunity Programs. The current TAP program assists students who need financial help to attend college, underlining the commitment to higher education access in this state.

NYSFAAA feels that it is critical to maintain the current levels of TAP grant funding for higher education. Otherwise the alternative is increased loan indebtedness, a poor substitute for grant funding, especially for our neediest students in NYS. NYSFAAA believes that any shift from need-based grant funding will discourage poor students from enrollment at institutions of higher education.

The New York State Opportunity Programs (HEOP, EOP and CD) serve students who are economically disadvantaged and academically under-prepared. Reductions in New York State Opportunity Programs funding hinder access to higher education. Rather than encouraging these students to graduate, students are encouraged never to start. As New York State institutions of higher education celebrate record full-time undergraduate, underrepresented and minority student enrollments, we cannot turn our backs on the students who need the most assistance. College graduates have lower rates of crime, unemployment, welfare; in other words, they use fewer public resources. Instead they contribute to the economy and to society through their employment, civic activity, and payment of taxes.

NYSFAAA is looks forward to its growing relationship with State governmental representatives, agencies, and organizations by offering its resources and services so together we can all work to better serve all students and their families in New York State.



***Spring is just around
the corner!***

Borrowing to Learn

By Kent Wolfe, National Student Loan Program, Research Unit

Many throughout the student aid community have wondered how much student loan debt the average student accumulates prior to graduating from a postsecondary institution. Many studies have tried to answer this question, but due to limited data sources (e.g., a study may be based on a single servicer's portfolio), a broadly representative estimate has been difficult to pinpoint.

The Department of Education (ED), via the National Postsecondary Student Aid Surveys (NPSAS), has helped resolve this quandary by compiling and making available nationally representative data every few years. The most recent NPSAS surveyed part-and full-time undergraduate students who attended postsecondary institutions during 1999-2000.

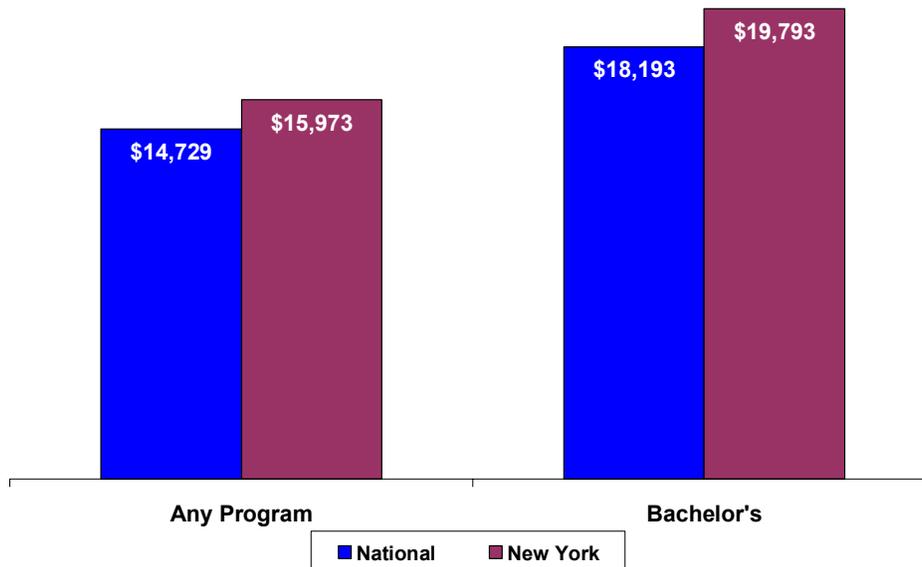
The survey found that 46% of all undergraduate students enrolled in 1999-2000 had accumulated student loans ranging from \$50 to \$80,000. Focusing on only those who borrowed prior to completing their undergraduate programs in 1999-2000, average student loan debt was

- \$14,729 for those who completed any program.
- \$18,193 for those who earned a Bachelor's degree.

On a state level, NPSAS shows that surveyed students who attended New York institutions in 1999-2000 accumulated average student debt totaling

- \$15,973 for those who completed any program.
- \$19,793 for those who earned a Bachelor's degree.

**Average Student Loan Debt
by Postsecondary Program Completed in 1999-2000**



ED is currently working on gathering updated data via the 2003-2004 NPSAS. When this is released in late calendar year 2004 or in 2005, it will be intriguing to see how the 1999-2000 indebtedness figures compare to those for the current year's graduates.

If interested in how NPSAS compiled this information, or if you are interested in any other student aid data from NPSAS, you can contact Kent Wolfe at NSLP (kentw@nslp.org or 800-735-8778 x6940).

NYSFAAA NOMINATION

Dear Member:

It is once again time to nominate your colleagues (or yourself!) to serve as officers of NYSFAAA. This is a wonderful opportunity to serve an outstanding organization!

Positions to be filled are:

1st Vice –President for Membership
2nd Vice-President for Professional Development
Secretary
Treasurer

Terms of office are two years and begin at our annual conference in October. Vice Presidents are limited to two terms. The duties of these positions can be found in the Bylaws of our Constitution, on the NYSFAAA web site at www.nysfaaa.org/nysfaaa/constitution.html.

The Constitution states that the officers of the organization must be classified as active members. To nominate a person for one of these positions you should be a member (active or associate) of NYSFAAA.

Please be sure to consult with the person you are nominating to ensure that they wish to run for the position. Please complete the nomination form below by March 25. Election ballots will be mailed by May.

Return this form by March 25 to: Judi Miladin
197 Franklin Street
Auburn, NY 13021
Miladin@cayuga-cc.edu
FAX 315-252-2185

Nominee Name's _____

Position _____

Nominee's Institution _____

Name & Signature of Nominator: _____
(Please print legibly)