



Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators  
news FOR and ABOUT the SWASFAA membership

# THE SCAN

Winter 2011 Issue



President's Message

## President's Message

by Laura Coponiti, SWASFAA President

Greetings SWASFAA Members,

I hope this letter finds each of you happy and healthy. It was great seeing many of you in New Orleans at our conference. It was an exciting time of learning and networking, I look forward to more in the upcoming year. I would like to thank Lee Carrillo, his board, and committee chairs for the outstanding job they did in 2010. I would also like to say thank you for this wonderful opportunity to serve as your President. It is truly an honor and a privilege.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Board Members and Committee Chairs who have graciously agreed to serve SWASFAA for the 2011 year. We are working hard and are in the process of setting goals and filling our committees with volunteers from each state. If you have not already done so please consider filling out a volunteer form and become an active part of this great association. I have met many of wonderful people by getting involved and have truly enjoyed my experiences so I highly recommend it!

You do need to be a member to volunteer. If you have not already done so, is time to renew your SWASFAA membership. If you are not a member of SWASFAA I would ask you to consider becoming one. Your regional association is not about me or the board. It is about all of us who share in this mission of providing students with access to higher education. By joining our association you will have access to training and updates that are vital to our profession.

Please mark your calendar for November 14th-18th, 2011 for a week of training at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Boot Camp will be the 14th-16th and SWASFAA's Annual Conference will be the 16th-18th. We will have trainers from SWASFAA, NASFAA, the Department of Education, and Jeff Baker will be giving the Federal Update. You won't want to miss it!

I look forward to serving you this year and meeting as many of you as possible as I travel to your state conferences. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any suggestions, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Laura Coponiti

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## Arkansas Report

by Bronwyn Sneed, Arkansas State President

College Goal Sunday will be held in Arkansas on Sunday, February 20, 2011. We currently have 38 sites, around 700 volunteers and the website has been updated.

Governor Mike Beebe has proclaimed February as Financial Aid Awareness month in Arkansas. AASFAA's Awareness Committee will be meeting at the Capitol with the Governor as he signs this Proclamation and will also be hosting a television call-in to answer questions about financial aid.

Plans are underway for the spring AASFAA Conference which will be held April 14 at Harding University in Searcy, AR. Kattie Wing, AASFAA President-Elect and Conference Chair and her committee have started planning the program and will soon have an agenda.

Fall Conference will be held October 20 - 21, 2011 at beautiful Lake Degray outside of Arkadelphia, AR. Shelia McManus will serve as fall conference chair.

## New Mexico State Report

by Amanda Hammer, New Mexico State President

NMASFAA had a very successful fall training and business meeting in conjunction with Decentralized Training. We had the Cost of Attendance session, a Year Round Pell session with Trevor Summers from ED, and an update from the New Mexico Higher Education Department. Also at this meeting, Regina Madrid, Director of Luna Community College, was named the Philo Brasher Emerging Leader Award for NMASFAA!

Our election of officers was held in December. Our new board is:

President - Amanda Hammer, Mesalands Community College

President-Elect - Gladys Chairez, New Mexico State University, Dona Ana Community College

Past President - Betty Dever, Eastern New Mexico University

Treasurer - Regina Madrid, Luna Community College

Treasurer-Elect - Diana Campos, New Mexico State University, Carlsbad

Secretary - Michelle Cisneros, New Mexico State University, Dona Ana Community College

Parliamentarian - Jerry McKeen, San Juan College

Delegate at Large - Janell Valdez, University of New Mexico, School of Medicine.

We will be having our transitional board meeting in February for both the old and new board members.

We are anxiously awaiting our annual conference, "Rocking Through the Ages," to be held March 29 - 31, 2011 at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Albuquerque. We will have sessions with DOE, DL Servicers, and industry leaders. You can register for the entire conference or for just one day!

SCAN is produced by the Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. SWASFAA is a professional organization with a diverse membership and SCAN works toward providing a forum for communicating to the membership news and issues affecting the student aid profession in the Southwest region. The ideas and opinions expressed in this forum do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of SWASFAA, its board of directors, or its members.

### Article Submission

Submit your articles, staff updates, photos or other items of interest for the SCAN to **Sara Elliott at [selliott15@cnm.edu](mailto:selliott15@cnm.edu)**. Questions can also be sent to the same address.

### DEADLINES

Deadline for articles to be received for inclusion in the Summer 2011 edition of SCAN will be May 15, 2011.

### SWASFAA CALENDAR

Check the calendar on the SWASFAA website for events happening in your state and region. If you have events you'd like to add to the SWASFAA calendar, please notify **Sara Elliott at [selliott15@cnm.edu](mailto:selliott15@cnm.edu)**.

## OASFAA News

by David Baron, Oklahoma State President

OASFAA has had a productive 4th quarter for the 2010 year. Over one hundred members participated in the Decentralized training session held November 11th at the Moore Norman Technology Center. Matt Orem presented on Net Price Calculators and Lynell Armstrong presented on Cost of Attendance. Our Oklahoma membership appreciated the free training in a time of tight budgets and thought the material was very worthwhile.

The Oklahoma presence was felt at the SWASFAA conference in the grand city of New Orleans. Oklahoma had the largest number of participants at boot camp this year. Several members indicated that the training was very helpful and they gained a lot of useful knowledge from the sessions. Oklahoma's own Sherry Hudson was honored at SWASFAA with the NASFAA Regional Leadership award for her many contributions and years to our financial aid community. The conference ended with Laura Coponiti, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, taking the reigns as President of SWASFAA for the 2011 year.

OASFAA is looking forward to an exciting 2011, as we prepare of our annual conference. We will be "Rockin' Through Financial Aid" April 13th through 15th at the Hard Rock Hotel in Tulsa, OK.

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## Boot Camp - An Academy Award Winning Experience

by Rita Toland and Shannon Guillory

The 2010 SWASFAA Boot Camp, held at the Sheraton, New Orleans, was an award winning experience. Approximately 67 people walked the red carpet to attend this event. The "Financial Aid Film Fest" began on Monday afternoon with a welcome from the Academy president, SWASFAA President Lee Carillo. The group members became acquainted with one another with a rousing icebreaker that required them to match a famous movie phrase to either the movie or the person who said it. This was after John Jefferson dazzled the group with a monologue of famous movie quotes such as, "Do ya feel lucky? Well, do ya?."

Boot Camp trainers for this year were John Jefferson from Arkansas, Denise Welch from Texas, Taina Savoit from Louisiana, Sara Elliott from New Mexico, and Shannon Guillory from Louisiana, co-chair, and Rita Toland from Arkansas, Chair of Boot Camp. We also had Trevor Summers from the Dallas Regional Office of the U. S. Department of Education who trained on TEACH Grant on Wednesday morning.

One new addition to Boot Camp was the Wednesday morning breakfast in which all state presidents were invited. The state presidents had breakfast with participants from their states where they could visit, provide information about their state associations, and emphasize the valuable contributions that these new aid officers could make to their states. This session was well received by the Boot Camp attendees.

Boot Campers were treated to sessions on Federal Methodology, Application and Student Eligibility, Campus-Based Aid, Verification, Return of Title IV, TEACH, Customer Service, and loans. The last session of the conference was a rousing version of Jeopardy, featuring questions and answers from material presented throughout the conference. One thing is very apparent. Financial aid personnel do not like to lose!!! The Boot Camp conference ended at noon on Wednesday.



## Are You Looking For A New Year's Resolution That You Can Keep?

by Scott DeBoard, Committee Chair

Annual membership officially expired December 31, 2010. However, 2010 Membership has been extended until February 28, 2011, to allow access to renew your membership. Because membership is institutional, only one individual from each school needs to complete the Renewal Application at <http://www.swasfaa.org/docs/forms/memApp.html>.

Renew your SWASFAA Membership today.

Membership Committee Update  
January 2011

SWASFAA membership renewal for 2011 is currently available. Our total number of members as of the end of 2010 was 1270:

Institutional	979
Associate	280
Not Specified	11

Please assist us by making certain that your membership information is accurate and complete. Individual members may update their own information at [http://www.swasfaa.org/docs/toc\\_memberservices.html](http://www.swasfaa.org/docs/toc_memberservices.html) by selecting "Update Your Member Profile."

Additionally, Institution Primary Contacts may edit, add, or delete members under Administrative Services by selecting "Primary Contacts: Add or Delete Members from your Institution/Agency" at [http://www.swasfaa.org/docs/toc\\_memberservices.html](http://www.swasfaa.org/docs/toc_memberservices.html).

If you need assistance with your membership, please contact Scott DeBoard at [sdeboard@uco.edu](mailto:sdeboard@uco.edu) or (405) 974-2382.

Thank you for renewing your membership and please encourage your colleagues to do so as well.



## SCAN Information

by Sara Elliott, Committee Chair

The SCAN is published four times a year. Deadlines are May 15, 2011, August 15, 2011 and December 1, 2011. Submissions can be any of the following items:

- Movers and Shakers: announcements regarding new hires or promotions at your school/institution
- Helpful articles for student aid professionals like you and me (SWASFAA Members)
- Articles that would benefit SWASFAA members
- Pictures with descriptions (be sure to get your best side!)
- "The Lighter Side"- Send me your humorous stories, true confessions (mistakes you made that you can't tell your boss; don't worry, it will be anonymous!), or the crazy things students say. Remember, laughter is good for the soul!

To submit an article or photo, please email Sara Elliott at [selliott15@cnm.edu](mailto:selliott15@cnm.edu).

## Free Tools For Campus Recruiting

by Gentry McKeown, Oklahoma Guaranteed Student Loan Program

Finding the right college can be intimidating and challenging for many students. As a campus professional, you know the importance of helping high school students become familiar with the atmosphere at your institution, whether it's with a simple campus tour or a special recruitment event. Looking for new ideas or just new ways to strengthen your existing efforts? UCanGo2 can help!

UCanGo2 released the *Campus Events Planning Guide* to help you plan, promote and execute campus events that encourage participation, increase enrollment and eliminate barriers that keep students from going to college. This free

guide is designed to help you maximize your resources and minimize the time spent planning an effective event. The guide outlines a variety of resources, such as our *FAFSA FAQs* flyer and the *Picking a College Decision Tree*, that help you answer students' questions about planning, preparing and paying for college. These and other downloadable resources are available online at [www.UCanGo2.org/resources](http://www.UCanGo2.org/resources).

If you have questions or need additional help with your event, contact us at 800.247.0420 or [UCanGo2@ogslp.org](mailto:UCanGo2@ogslp.org).

## Student Loan Default Rates: What Every School Needs To Know

by Heather Kerrigan, NASFAA Web Reporter/Editor

The Department of Education plans to release unofficial three-year cohort default rates (CDRs) as it prepares to implement provisions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008. The change from a two-year to a three-year CDR is expected to dramatically increase CDRs anywhere from 30 to 50 percent for most schools when it is implemented in 2014, according to internal test calculations performed by the Department.

Once the three-year CDR is implemented, any school with a CDR equal to or greater than 30 percent must establish a default prevention plan in accordance with Department regulations. Moreover, the first year a school's CDR is 30 percent or more, the school must establish a Default Prevention Task Force. Noncompliance can lead to a loss of eligibility to participate in Pell, Title IV and Direct Loan programs.

Between now and 2014, the Department plans to publish unofficial three-year CDRs to help schools prepare for the stricter default standard. NASFAA and the Department are encouraging aid administrators to begin collaborating with the institution's administration and

colleagues today to ensure campuses dedicate sufficient resources to help borrowers avoid default to avoid the negative consequences of a high CDR. Failure to plan early could result in immediate Title IV sanctions or program participation limitations effective late September 2014.

There are significant internal challenges that institutions may face when trying to prevent default. While loan counseling is highly recommended, a record number of college students are applying for aid which dramatically increases a financial aid offices' workload and decreases the availability of one-on-one counseling. A smaller institutional budget leading to less staff and fewer resources also leaves less time for counseling students. Add to this new Congressional regulations and declines in default prevention partnerships, and many schools are facing a perfect storm.

There is no silver-bullet solution to keep the CDR low. Instead, financial aid offices must help campus leaders, lawmakers, policymakers and the public fully understand all the factors that contribute to default so comprehensive and coordinated strategies can be implemented to help struggling borrowers. Student loan default is not a financial aid office issue. It is a campus-wide student success issue on which early planning can have a direct, positive effect.

Some recommended default prevention steps include:

- **Remedial education** to help students who are not academically prepared for college success
- **Academic counseling** for students with low grade-point averages
- **Institutional grant aid** provided to needy students to reduce borrowing and debt levels

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**Student Loan Default Rates: What Every School Needs To Know... (continued from page 5)**

- **Financial aid counseling** to ensure that students only seek loans after exhausting all eligible grant aid and work-study options, and don't borrow a penny more than they need
- **Loan entrance counseling** that ensures borrowers understand all loan terms, repayment obligations and options, and the consequences of default
- **Loan exit counseling** to refresh borrowers as they get ready to leave school and enter repayment
- **Financial literacy education** to help borrowers understand budgeting, money management, and the basics of personal finance

The success of an institution is intrinsically tied to the success of its students, so financial aid administrators - and others at the school - must do everything they can to ensure borrowers have the tools they need to make prudent borrowing decisions and successfully repay their loans.

While an institution can put these prevention methods into place, there are factors out of a school's control that present challenges.

"Issues such as high unemployment rates and family income can't be controlled by colleges," said NASFAA President Justin Draeger. "However, colleges and universities should embrace the concept that they can have a positive impact on student loan repayment rates by helping struggling students succeed academically; helping them set realistic expectations in terms of salary and work goals; and by counseling them on smart borrowing, repayment options and avoiding default."

It is imperative that an institution develop and implement a plan to address loan default today in order to avoid Title IV sanctions and limitations with the onset of three-year CDRs. Remember that today's students will be borrowers in repayment when the Department switches to the three-year default rate. Additional efforts to inform and assist these students can have a positive impact on their ability to repay their loans in the coming years.

To help keep default rates low, NASFAA and the Department of Education offer various informational tools for schools and borrowers including:

- Department of Education CDR Resources for Schools: <http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html>
- NASFAA Issue Brief and Talking Points for Schools: [http://www.nasfaa.org/Advocacy/States/What\\_Borrowers\\_and\\_Families\\_Need\\_to\\_Know\\_to\\_Avoid\\_Student\\_Loan\\_Default.aspx](http://www.nasfaa.org/Advocacy/States/What_Borrowers_and_Families_Need_to_Know_to_Avoid_Student_Loan_Default.aspx)
- Student Loan Default Facts and Repayment Tips for Borrowers: [http://www.nasfaa.org/Advocacy/Students/Repay/Default\\_Facts\\_and\\_Tips\\_for\\_Struggling\\_Borrowers.aspx](http://www.nasfaa.org/Advocacy/Students/Repay/Default_Facts_and_Tips_for_Struggling_Borrowers.aspx)

**Final Program Integrity Rules - 10 Key Points to Note**

by Debbie Bradford, Consultant, USA Funds

The U.S. Department of Education has issued the final rules related to program integrity. The final rules cover general program integrity issues, as well as some gainful employment topics. Most of the rules are effective July 1, 2011.

Among the topics of the rules are definition of a high school diploma, definition of a credit hour, agreements between institutions, verification, satisfactory academic progress, return of Title IV funds, and new programs.

As you review the final program integrity regulations, USA Funds Ask PolicySM experts offer the following 10 key points to note:

1. Early implementation is not permitted for any of the provisions.
2. New verification provisions are not effective until July 1, 2012.
3. The final regulations permit a tolerance of less than \$25 for dollar items when conducting verification. The proposed regulations had called for completely eliminating the current tolerance for dollar items.



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## Final Program Integrity Rules - 10 Key Points to Note...*(continued from page 6)*

4. The final regulations do not require changes to a student's dependency status based on change in marital status during the award year. The proposed regulations included that requirement.
5. Proposed regulations would have required a school to consider a student enrolled in a program offered in modules to have withdrawn, if that student did not complete the scheduled hours or days in the payment period or period of enrollment. Final regulations, however, do not require a school to consider such a student to have withdrawn, if the student provides written notice that the student will attend a module later in the period.
6. The 2011-2012 Free Application for Federal Student Aid will include new questions to support the requirement for schools to verify the validity of high school diplomas for certain students. Final regulations clarify that, for 2011-2012, only first-year undergraduates using FAFSA on the Web must list their high school name and state on the FAFSA.
7. The final regulations include an explanation of how to calculate "on-time completion rate." Schools should divide the number of students who completed the program in the normal time during the most recently completed award year by the total number of program completers during that year. Then multiply that number by 100.
8. Also included in the final rules is a definition of what constitutes a "new program." A new or additional program is any program with a different Classification of Instructional Programs code from any other program the school offers; a program with the same CIP code as another program offered by the school, but leading to a different degree or certificate; or a program determined by the school's accrediting body to be an additional program.
9. Another provision clarifies that if a school does not seek Department approval for a new program for which such approval is required, the school may be required to repay all funds received by the school, or by or on behalf of the student for that program.
10. Proposed regulations had called for a school to provide a way for Federal Pell Grant-eligible students to purchase their books and supplies by the seventh day of the payment period if, 10 days before the payment period began, the school could disburse the student's Title IV funds and the disbursement would result in a credit balance on the student's account. Final regulations, however, clarify that the school need only count Title IV funds when determining if a credit balance exists. The final rules also clarify that this provision does not apply to a student who has an unresolved "C" Code or a student for whom the school has not completed verification by 10 days prior to the first day of the period.

Contact USA Funds Ask Policy at [askpolicy@usafunds.org](mailto:askpolicy@usafunds.org) with questions about the new regulations or other federal Title IV financial aid topics.

