



GSL-Online

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The Official Newsletter of the
Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program
A Division of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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Director's Den

Having just spent a week in Washington DC,

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that all of the confusion regarding what's happening with student loans.....is still as murky as ever! We think student loans will be first up in January when Congress resumes, but likely not before the President's State of the Union Address. In some respects, the lack of capital is driving the FFELP/Direct issue more so than any legislation.

Regardless of what happens with student loans, MGSLP is here for the long haul. We view our role as that of an access provider - meaning we will do whatever it takes to help students obtain a postsecondary education in Montana. It also means we are here to help schools make the transition to Direct. Please give us a call if there's anything we can do to make the switch more palatable.

The holiday season is a good time to take stock of what we have: family, friends, our health, a home to live in, even food on the table. Many in this world don't have these basic pleasures. I would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a very happy holiday season and my best wishes for a prosperous and gratifying New Year.

FSA Conference In Review

The 2009 Federal Student Aid's Conference was held in Music City USA - Nashville, Tennessee, December 1-4, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center. The keynote speaker, Secretary Arne Duncan, presented an overview of the Administration's reform agenda for early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary education. He closed by stressing that we have to educate our way to a better economy.

This year's conference focused on the significant changes that could impact the Title IV Programs over the next year. These include the anticipated increase in schools transitioning to the Direct Loan Program, FAFSA Simplification, the proposed new Perkins Loan Program, and Year Round Pell. A primary objective of this year's conference was to ensure all schools are trained and prepared to participate in the Direct Loan Program should they want or need to do so.

Under Secretary Martha Kanter kicked off the Town Hall, which offered conference attendees an opportunity to ask questions of Bill Taggart, FSA's Chief Operating Officer, and Bob Shireman, Deputy Undersecretary, along with their senior staff on issues related to the federal student aid programs.

Events Calendar

College Goal Sunday
January 31 & February 3, 2010

MASFAA Annual Conference
Apr 14- Apr 16, 2010

Billings, MT

Summer Institute
May 30 - June 4, 2010

Would you like your event posted here? Submit your events to Andrea
e-mail: aopitz@mgslp.state.mt.us



NASFAA State and Regional Leadership Award



The NASFAA State and Regional Leadership Awards are presented to one individual in each region who exhibits high integrity and character, who has shown creative leadership and has inspired and encouraged others to actively participate in professional development, who has made outstanding contributions at the regional and state levels over a sustained period of time, and who supports the goals and objectives of NASFAA. Barry Simmons, NASFAA's National Chair, presented the award to Mick Hanson, Director of Financial Aid at The University of Montana, for his long and dedicated history of state, regional and national involvement with both the organizations and the people behind them.

RNASFAA Conference In Review



Going the extra mile...

Helping students travel the educational highway to reach the academic finish line was this year's RNASFAA Conference theme. The conference was held in Overland Park, Kansas at the Sheraton Overland Park Hotel and Convention Center. Going the Extra Mile was the theme for the Pre-Conference event, which was a 5K race/walk. Proceeds from the race went towards purchasing wagons for kids at Children's Mercy Hospital. RNASFAA's Philanthropic Project goal to purchase 10 wagons to transport children to and from surgery was reached.

The opening session guest speaker was Joan Crissman, NASFAA's Interim President and CEO. She discussed all of the current trends in the Student Aid arena including: accountability, completion, and Perkins. In addition, she suggested drafting a Direct Loan Transition plan.

Financial Aid administrators have seen a whirlwind of recent federal financial aid legislation, beginning with

HERA, followed by CCRAA, ECASLA, HEOA, and now the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act. Sessions to help successfully navigate all of these new legislative changes included: Year Round Pell; FFELP to DL Transition; Simplifying the Financial Aid Application Process; Proposed Perkins Loan Update; Professional Judgments; Disclosure Responsibilities of Institutions; and last but not least.....Managing Your Stress.

Evening entertainment included comedy hypnotist, Lorri Michals, who was able to put on a show with RNASFAA personalities that attendees will never forget. She was dynamic, playful, and very, very funny! Those under hypnosis were required to be contestants on American Idol; get autographs from their favorite celebrity; get out of a speeding ticket; and kept the audience howling for over an hour. If you have not witnessed anyone under hypnosis before, I would highly recommend you do so.

The 2009 RNASFAA keynote was given by Gracia Burnham, the widow of Martin Burnham. For 17 years she and Martin served with New Tribes Mission in the Philippines where Martin was a jungle pilot delivering mail, supplies, encouragement to other missionaries, as well as transporting sick and injured patients to medical facilities. The Burnham's were kidnapped and held in captivity for 376 days. Gracia exposed her story and revealed what it was like to face near-starvation, constant exhaustion, frequent gun battles, cold-hearted murder, and intense soul searching.

***To see all RNASFAA Conference pictures click [here](#).

Terri Passes Down the Gavel.....

Thank you Terri for your hard work, dedication, and inspiration. You are a gift to all of us!



Mapping Your Future's Stafford and Grad PLUS counseling sessions meet Direct Loan regulations

Mapping Your Future's Stafford and Grad PLUS entrance and exit counseling sessions meet requirements under both the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program (FDLP). Schools can continue to utilize the Stafford and Grad PLUS counseling sessions to service both FFELP and Direct Loan borrowers.

In this time of change, it is understandable to be concerned about the future of Mapping Your Future and the availability of the many tools and services they have come to provide the financial aid community. Mapping Your Future's Executive Director, Cathy Mueller, explained:

"As an independent nonprofit, we aren't reliant on a federal program but we do know that this could directly impact our sponsors and supporters. We are currently working with our Sponsors to ensure that we can continue the services we provide regardless of what happens at the federal level. Although this is a period of dramatic changes, we are optimistic that we can continue to serve the thousands of schools and millions of students and families."

MGSLP continues to support Mapping Your Future and all of the services they provide. We recognize the value of Online Student Loan Counseling, and remain committed to providing a quality product for both you and your students. MGSLP encourages the continued use of all Mapping Your Future counseling sessions as well as the many other tools and resources they provide.

As a reminder, for both the FFELP and FDLP programs there are a few school-specific steps that must be taken to fully meet regulations. For example, as part of the Higher Education Opportunities Act, schools must provide Direct Loan borrowers with information on how to contact the party servicing the FDLP loans. For both programs, schools must provide the definition of half-time at their institution during regular terms and summer school.

More information about school-specific requirements is included in the Online Student Loan Counseling (OSLC) User's Guide at mappingyourfuture.org/oslc/ugregulations.htm. All additional requirements can be achieved through the creation of a Mapping Your Future customized counseling start page and other customizable features provided by Mapping Your Future. Schools can complete a sample counseling session to review the content provided. To test the products from the student perspective, start a counseling session at mappingyourfuture.org/oslc/, choose Texas as the state and MYF Demo School as the school.

Mapping Your Future and MGSLP will continue to communicate with you on the availability of Stafford and Grad PLUS counseling sessions for both FFELP and FDLP borrowers. Please watch for more articles in upcoming Mapping Your Future Higher Ed News releases and MGSLP weekly News Briefs.

Happy New Year

Saying "Happy New Year!" Around the World



Language	Happy New Year!	Language	Happy New Year!
Afrikaans	Voorspoedige nuwe jaar	Greek	Eutychemenos o kainourgios chronos
Arabic	Kul 'am wa antum bikhair	Hawaiian	Hauoli Makahiki hou
Basque	Urte Berri on	Hebrew	Shana Tova
Bengali	Shuvo noboborsho	Hungarian	Boldog uj evet
Chinese (Cantonese)	Sun nien fai lok	Indonesian (Bahasa)	Selamat Tahun Baru
Chinese (Mandarin)	Xin nian yu kuai	Italian	Felice Anno Nuovo or Buon anno
Czech	Stastny Novy Rok	Japanese	Akemashite Omedetou Gozaimasu
Danish	Godt Nytt År	Korean	Sehe Bokmanee Bateuseyo
Dutch	Gelukkig nieuwjaar	Laotian (Hmong)	Nyob Zoo Xyoo Tshiab
Esperanto	Bonan Novjaron	Latin	Felix sit annus novus
Finnish	Onnellista uutta vuotta	Nigerian	(Hausa) Barka da sabuwar shekara
French	Bonne année	Norwegian	Godt Nytt År
German	Ein glückliches neues Jahr	Philippines (Tagalog)	Manigong Bagong Taon
		Polish	Szczesliwego Nowego Roku