

CASFAA NEWS

California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

June 2015 • Volume XXXII No. 2

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Summer

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

- John Quincy Adams -

President's Update



Sunshine Garcia
CASFAA President
Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships
California State University
Channel Islands

Happy Summer!

Where does the time go? We are already in June heading into July closing out one aid year and already processing for a new aid year. Hopefully, you will be able to take some time off during this busy time of year and enjoy the beautiful sunny weather. Nothing like soaking in the rays of sunlight and clearing the mind for the new year ahead!

As we head into the end of the year, it is that time again for CASFAA Nominations. CASFAA is looking for dedicated financial aid professionals like you to serve on the 2016 Executive Council. Whether you are new or a seasoned professional, CASFAA welcomes Nominations for the following positions:

Nominate yourself or someone who is looking for a challenge, professional development and a chance to make a difference in California.

President-Elect
Vice President-Federal Issues
Vice President-State Issues
Secretary
Treasurer-Elect

California State University Representative
Community College Representative
Independent Segmental Representative
Proprietary Segmental Representative
University of California Representative

Access & Diversity Member at Large
Graduate Professional Member at Large

Please be sure to read the article on page seven of this newsletter for more details regarding the CASFAA elections.

I look forward to seeing all of you very soon at the conference in November which is right around the corner!

Come Celebrate Portraits of Success
November 1-3, 2015
Hyatt Regency, Sacramento

Think. Explore. Know.

Keep up on the latest CASFAA goings-on by following us



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Just click on the logo to get started!

SOCIAL MEDIA

2015 CASFAA Executive Council

- President** **Sunshine Garcia**
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- UC Seg Rep** **Annie Osborne**
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- Grad/Prof Member at Large** **Mary Hoang**
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- Access & Diversity Member at Large** **Robert Weinert, Jr.**
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susan.allison@csuci.edu.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily of the Association or of the institutions represented by the authors.

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Anafe Robinson, Federal Issues Rep.

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www.casfaa.org

What's the Scoop?

Denise Donn accepted the position of Interim Associate Dean at Santiago Canyon College.

Ken Lara accepted the position of Interim Associate Dean at Irvine Valley College.

Vincent Ngo accepted the position of Interim Director of Financial Aid at Pasadena City College.

Adrienne Burton accepted the position of Director of Financial Aid at Golden West College.

Charlene Ho was promoted to Accounting/Fiscal Specialist at the Coast Community College District.

Natalie Timpson accepted the position of Student Financial Aid Coordinator at Golden West College.

Angela Varner accepted the position of Student Financial Aid Assistant at Orange Coast College.

Ly Le accepted the position of Student Financial Aid Specialist at Orange Coast College.

Kathie Tran accepted the position of Student Financial Aid Coordinator at Coastline Community College.

★ Portraits of Success



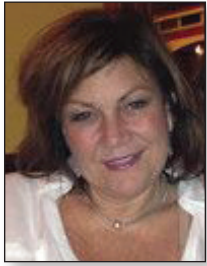
What is your Story?

Submit your pictures and stories
to Susan Allison,

CASFAA Newsletter Editor

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Committee Updates



CCC Segmental Update

Robin Darcangelo
CCC Segmental Representative

New regulations begin Fall 2016: BOG Fee Waiver Changes and the California Community Colleges are ready to begin this new journey. All Community Colleges in the state are required to inform students of the new regulations, and how to maximize their BOG Fee Waiver eligibility, and maintain priority enrollment status.

The Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver is available for eligible students at the California community colleges throughout the state. It will be the responsibility for every community college in the state to effectively communicate the academic and progress standards to enrolled students in order to avoid the possibility of losing the fee waiver. Students must be sent the communication within 30 days from the end of Spring 2015 term because how they perform academically NOW will affect their FUTURE fee waiver eligibility whereas it was not considered under the old regulations.

Because... BOG Matters!

Enrollment Priorities... It's kinda of a BIG DEAL!

Beginning Fall 2016, under the new regulations, students will lose eligibility for the Board of Governors Fee Waiver (BOG) FW if: (blue chart below)

Community Colleges are making efforts to streamline the workflow and processes to ensure students are notified and have an opportunity to go through the appeals process for extenuating circumstances. Students that are determined ineligible are also able to regain eligibility or be reinstated by meeting one of the standards: (beige chart below)

California Community Colleges are making every effort to keep students on track for achievement, and increasing completion and transfer rates under the Student Success Act of 2012.

On your Marks, Get Ready,

- ✓ They are on probation for not maintaining a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive primary terms.
- ✓ They have not successfully completed 50% or more of the units attempted from two consecutive primary terms.
- ✓ Foster Youth are exempt from the policy.

GO!!!....

- ✓ Improve GPA or Course Completion measures to meet the academic and progress standards.
- ✓ Successful appeal regarding extenuating circumstances.
- ✓ Not attending your school district for two consecutive primary terms.

Committee Updates



Independent Segmental Update

Gary Nicholes
Independent Segmental Representative

Hello colleagues and fellow CASFAA members. My name is Gary Nicholes, I am your new Independent Segmental Representative. I have had the opportunity to work in Financial Aid for over 20 years, most of my experience has been at the community college sector. I have been in the Independent sector now since October 2013 at Fresno Pacific University as the Financial Aid Director.

This year, I would like to represent the Independent institutions on the CASFAA board as well as inform the

Independent's on what is going on through CASFAA. In order for this to happen I am asking for any volunteers that would like to serve on a committee to help facilitate communications on issues and what is going on with the Independent segment.

Please contact me if you would like to serve on the committee. My email address is gary.nicholes@fresno.edu or my phone number is 559.453.7137. I look forward to working with you.

Save the Date

July 12-13: CASFAA Executive Council Meeting, Camarillo, CA

July 16-18: PowerFAIDS User Conference, New Orleans, LA

July 19-22: NASFAA National Conference, New Orleans, LA

July 26-29: Western Association of Veterans Education Specialists Annual Conference, Anaheim, CA

November 1-3: CASFAA's Annual Conference, Sacramento, CA

November 16-17: WASFAA's Jerry R. Simms Management & Leadership Institute, Phoenix, AZ

December 1-4: FSA Conference, Las Vegas, NV



Committee Update



Federal Issues Committee Update

Anafe Robinson
Financial Aid Director
Pierce College

First of all I would like to introduce the members of the Federal Issues Team:

- ♦ Anafe Robinson, Financial Aid Director, Pierce College – Chair
- ♦ Annie Osborne, Financial Analyst, University of CA, San Francisco
- ♦ Scott Cline, Financial Aid Director, CA College of Arts
- ♦ Robin Darcangelo, Associate Dean of Students, Solano Community College
- ♦ Patricia Hurley, Associate Dean of Financial Aid, Glendale Community College
- ♦ Peggy Loewy-Wellisch, Financial Aid Director, Los Angeles Harbor College
- ♦ Emily Valdovinos, Financial Aid Director, Institute of Technology
- ♦ Melissa Moser, Financial Aid Director, Coast Community College District
- ♦ Vicki Shipley, Senior Advisor, NCHER
- ♦ Malina Chang, Associate Director, CalTech
- ♦ Anna Marie Moncada, Processing Specialist, University of Redlands
- ♦ Louise Jones, Financial Aid Director, CSU San Bernardino
- ♦ Angelina Arzate, Palomar College
- ♦ David Allen, CFO, MTI College

This early spring 2015, Scott Cline has been nominated to represent CASFAA to the Negotiated Rulemaking on loan issues. He has already participated in three rounds of NegReg meetings in Washington, D.C. Refer to Scott's article in this newsletter for updates on Loans NegReg.

In regards to other federal issues, here are highlights of what has been happening:

- ♦ Reauthorization is on the back burner at this time. The priority is to reauthorize the No-Child-Left-Behind. We

anticipate movement on HEA during the summer. You may want to check out NASFAA's chart comparing the proposals from both the House and Senate at www.nasfaa.org/reauth

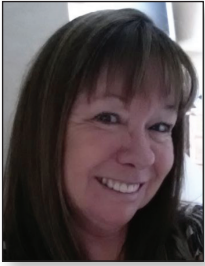
- ♦ In March 2015, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) released three white papers on topics related to Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The topics are: accreditation, risk sharing, data collection and consumer information. You may view these white papers at: <http://1.usa.gov/19MZ63o>

- ♦ Final rules on Gainful Employment were released with an effective date of 7/1/2015. Changes to the regulations include the data that colleges are required to report by July 31, 2015. The regulations also made changes to the information that colleges are required to disclose to students by January 31, 2016. For more information about Gainful Employment regulations, go to <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/GainfulEmploymentInfo/indexV2.html>

- ♦ Direct Loan interest rates – as projected the interest rates decreased for 2015-2016. NASFAA anticipates that interest rates on students loans for 2015-2016 academic year would be 4.29% for Federal Direct Stafford Loan (subsidized and unsubsidized) for undergraduate students, while 5.84% for Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan for graduate or professional students, and 6.84% for Federal Direct PLUS Loan for parents and graduate or professional students. By the time this newsletter is published, the final rates will have been announced by the Department of Education.

- ♦ On May 15, 2015, the Department of Education released the Negotiated of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) relating to cash management, clock-to-credit-hour conversion, and repeat coursework. The cash management regulations address the distribution of Title IV to students through campus debit cards and bank accounts. To view the full NPRM, go to <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/05/18/2015-11917/program-integrity-and-improvement>

CASFAA Elections Are Coming!!



Melissa Moser
Past President
Coast Community College District

Elections are coming!!

CASFAA is a volunteer organization that has over 1300 members representing all of California's higher education segments. Nominations will be opened in July; and, the ballot will be opened for voting in August. Newly elected officers will begin their term of office at the close of the annual business meeting at the conference in Sacramento, CA. The positions open for this election are:

- President – Elect** (three year commitment)
- Vice President, Federal Issues** (one year commitment)
- Vice President, State Issues** (one year commitment)
- Treasurer – Elect** (two year commitment)
- Secretary** (one year commitment)
- CC Segmental Representative** (one year commitment)
- CSU Segmental Representative** (one year commitment)
- UC Segmental Representative** (one year commitment)
- Independent Representative** (one year commitment)
- Proprietary Representative** (one year commitment)
- Member- at - Large – Access and Diversity** (one year commitment)
- Member- at - Large – Graduate and Professional** (one year commitment)

Please use this timeline in preparing your nomination.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| June 1 | Nominations will open for all positions |
| June 30 | Nominations will close |
| July 12-13 | 2015 executive council will solidify the election ballot |
| August 1 | Nomination slate will be opened for elections |
| August 30 | Elections will close |
| September 1 | Executive Council for 2016 will be announced to the CASFAA membership |
| November 5 | 2016 Executive Council will take office |
| November 15-16 | Executive Council transition meeting |

If you have questions, please contact anyone on the 2015 Executive Council which can be found here - <http://www.casfaa.org/executive-council>

The Treasurer's Treasure



Daniel Reed
2015 CASFAA Treasurer
San Diego Christian College

Hello all! I doubt I'm alone in saying that the Spring term was a blur, and somehow the Summer term is here. Doesn't it make you laugh when students, friends, or family ask what you are going to be doing over the Summer break? And the quizzical look when you say, "working." Sorry, you are thinking of (some) faculty; us staff folk work all year round – even weekends and holidays at times! We all know that Summers are, in fact, often busier than other terms due to preparation for the next year and large projects to tackle. Work in CASFAA is no exception, as the Summer months contain the wrap up of 1040 Workshops, finalizing of Conference planning, and continuing to provide training resources to HS Counselors and our growing membership. As will likely be noted elsewhere in this issue, the 1040 workshops were again a huge success, and brought CASFAA out of the red for this year:

This was expected, as noted in my article in the last issue, and helps keep our plans on track. We continue to hover around \$100,000 in our CASFAA Checking account, and

as contractual deposits come due for the next few conference sites, this will be hit hard. The Executive Council is currently looking into what options we have to move some long term investments into a more liquid form as a safety measure before our big Conference bills start coming in.

Thanks for reading, and as always, if you have any questions about CASFAA's finances, please feel free to contact me at dreed@casfaa.org. Keep up the good work, and thank you for continuing to help make our students' educational dreams a reality.



Negotiated Rulemaking Update



Scott Cline
CASFAA President-Elect
California College of the Arts

The third, and final round of negotiated rulemaking with the Department of Education (ED) was held in Washington DC from April 28th to the 30th. The session concluded with the nonfederal and federal negotiators coming to consensus on the full regulatory package.

In case you missed the last update, Negotiated Rulemaking (or “NegReg” for short) requires that the ED engage with its constituents (i.e. financial aid administrators, students groups, schools, etc.) in a negotiating process when any new legislation is passed or when current regulations need to be updated.

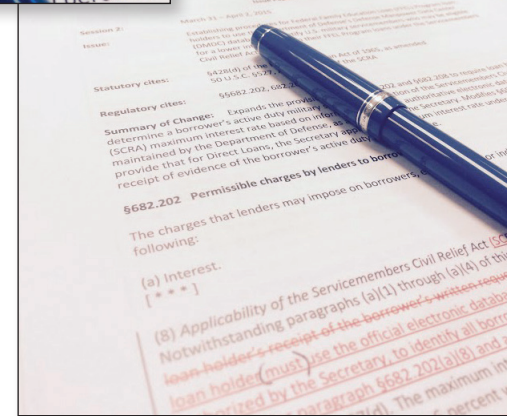
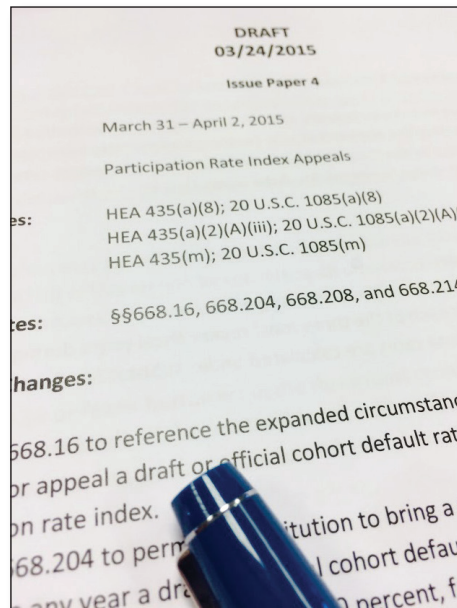
Ideally, the hope is that the constituents and the ED will be able to come to consensus on regulations that will better serve everyone’s needs.

The full regulatory package for this NegReg included:

1. Pay As You Earn (PAYE)
2. Servicemembers’ Civil Relief Act (SCRA)
3. Easing the Transition of Borrowers from Rehabilitation to Servicing
4. Participation Rate Index Appeal
5. Technical Correction for FFEL Rehabilitated Loans
6. Application of Department of Defense Lump Sum Payments for Public Service Loan Forgiveness

The major work of the negotiated sessions was the design of a new incomebased repayment program that extends the current Pay As You Earn (PAYE) program to all direct loan borrowers. The Revised PAYE (or REPAYE) program highlights includes the following provisions:

1. Does not require partial financial hardship in order to enter the repayment program
2. Payment is based on 10% of annual discretionary income divided by 12 months with no 10year standard payment cap
3. Loan is forgiven after 20 years of qualifying repayment when students only borrow undergraduate loans and after 25 years if they borrow any graduate/professional loans.



4. Joint AGI used for married couples (unless they are separated or not reasonably able to access their spouse’s income information)
5. Interest is not charged on Subsidized loans for the first three years if the payment does not cover the interest amount same as Income-based repayment. After the first three years and in the case of Unsubsidized or Grad PLUS loans 50% of the interest is charged.

Negotiated Rulemaking Update (continued)

Loan forgiveness was a major sticking point between the ED and the nonfederal negotiators up until the 11th hour. The ED's proposal used a tiered system of \$57,500 of the outstanding balance when a borrower entered repayment to determine if 20 or 25 years would be used. Many of the nonfederal negotiators felt this cliff would cause many students to fall into those extra years of repayment unknowingly and it would make it very difficult to counsel students on.

A few proposals and counterproposals were made and right before lunch on the third day, Helen Faith, Director of Financial Aid at Lane Community College in Oregon (and WASFAA member), suggested a compromise to base forgiveness on the type of loans borrowed that all of the negotiators could come to consensus on.

In addition to the new REPAYE program, the Participation Rate Index Appeal regulations will allow many schools with a low number of student loan borrowers compared to their overall student population to appeal a high default rate at any

time, rather than having to wait to appeal once they are subject to Title IV eligibility loss. A great deal of thanks goes to Pat Hurley, Associate Dean at Glendale Community College (and CASFAA lifetime member), for championing this cause.

Since the NegReg session came to consensus, ED will prepare the consensus regulatory language for publication as a notice of proposed rulemaking to be published and opened to public comment in the month of July.

There is generally a 60 day public comment period. The Department of Education then reviews all of the comments and publishes final regulations. The Department of Education's plan is to be able to implement REPAYE by December of this year.

Again, I want to thank the support of CASFAA for nominating me to represent financial aid administrators at the negotiating table. It has been a great honor and a privilege to serve. If you have any questions, please send me an email (scline@cca.edu).

Stressed Out Students Hear Less



Dianne Fulmer
Director, School Partnerships
Financial Aid TV (FATV)

Did you know that when people are stressed and have a lot of mental noise their ability to process information can be reduced up to 80%? This means that who are students stressed out about things like a parent losing a job, Satisfactory Academic Progress notification, or a scholarship that has not been disbursed may not be able to take in all the information when you speak to them in your office.

In fact, studies by Dr. Vincent Covello, a behavioral, neuro and visual scientist who has studied stress extensively, indicate that people who are stressed:

- tend to remember most what they hear first and last
- understand information at 4 grade levels below their educational level
- actively look for visual/graphic information to support verbal messages
- Need 3-4 positives to overcome 1 negative

His research, as well as others, points out that typically people who are stressed have difficulty hearing, understanding and remembering information.

What can you do? Use effective communication techniques. You can communicate negative or difficult messages to be heard without creating additional conflict.

What does it take? Active listening, paying attention to both your and your student's nonverbal communication, and managing your own stress (especially when your student exaggerates or makes false accusations).

Click to watch  Financial Aid TV



Portraits of Success

CASFAA Having Fun with Taxes Workshops



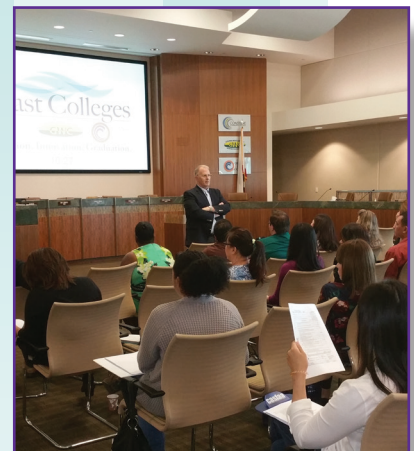
Kim Thomas
Relations Manager
First Marblehead

When you think of spring time, you think Spring cleaning, I've got to get that garage cleaned out or maybe you are thinking about all the things you need to get accomplished before the academic year runs out and embark upon the 16/17 awards. But then you know its spring time because there's the tax training workshops! This year CASFAA hosted another successful year of 9 In person workshops as well as a one-day only tax webinar featuring our very own Jim Briggs. We had over 370 FAA's across the state participate to see the Tax Detective do what he does best, "Make Taxes Fun!" Michaela Matsumoto, FA Specialist from Otis College who attended the Pepperdine Graziado School of Business workshop in Los Angeles describes her experience. "Jim makes the daunting topic of taxes, exciting and engaging! He knows what FAA's are looking for and provides us with insight, details and laughter." Michaela also shared that not only was the workshop an excellent experience, she even met other FAA's over lunch and had a great time swapping notes and sharing thoughts about the workshop. Another FAA who attended the workshop was Maria Freeberg, Associate Director at Pacifica Graduate Inst which by the way is one of our school site hosts for the Santa Barbara location said Jim's presentation style is very enjoyable in how he uses humor and engaging the audience in participation.

Both ladies also commented that though Jim covers everything and the handouts and workbook are a very helpful reference, you're never too experienced to learn something new like how tax filing requirements are different for self employed business income & how there are a plethora of additional resources found on the IRS website beyond Publication 17.

With clashed budgets, travel challenges and busy financial aid offices, this year we were able to offer two online webinars presented by Jim Briggs. These sessions were modified versions, but FAA's were able to learn the latest and hottest topics, filing status, verifications and much more!

I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the school sites who hosted us this year and the people who worked behind the scenes to make all of the workshops a huge success. They are University of the Pacific McGeorge Law School, DeAnza College, Golden Gate University, Pacifica Grad Institute, Pepperdine University Graziado School of Business, Pitzer College, Pierce College, CSU San Bernardino and Orange Coast Community College District Offices. We really couldn't do it without you! If your school is interested in being a host in 2016, please reach out to me.



Dealing with Difficult People and Situations: _____



Sun Ow
Senior Marketing Associate
Great Lakes Educational Loan
Services, Inc.

9 Tips to Put in the Mix

Working in a financial aid office means occasionally encountering conflict and difficult situations, and even the best communicators and most experienced professionals may appreciate a refresher on how to survive these types of challenges.

Difficult situations in the financial aid office often arise because they start with an emotional topic: money.

Now add the fact that your job entails helping students, while still complying with guidelines and rules. Throw in the additional complication that students, parents, and other external and internal customers are often challenged by complicated policies, procedures, and paperwork. There may be misinformation and misguided expectations? They're in the mix, too. It's no wonder that this recipe often leads to an interesting combination of ingredients.

While the following tips won't completely solve all your dilemmas, they may help make the next tough situation more palatable.

1. Advocate and adhere. Remember that the individual's problem is unique and critical to *them*. Convey sincerity to help your customer, but remember—and clearly state as needed—that you also need to adhere to policy.

2. Use the secret of Socrates. Ask questions that the other person has to agree to (i.e., "So it sounds like our first priority is to get this resolved so that Jake can register for his classes, right?") so that you can establish some common ground. Beginning your discussion from a place of agreement can lead to finding solutions to more troublesome issues later. Saying yes gets the other person moving forward.

3. Choose responses over reactions. Automatic reactions may be triggered by emotion, but deliberate responses require reigning in your emotions and using thought, too. Take the time and perspective needed to gain important information and see the larger picture.

4. Connect. While difficult situations ultimately require a solution, if you start out by connecting with the other person, they are more likely to feel heard and understood—and more willing to work with you on a solution that works for both of you.

5. Ask questions to clarify. While you need to listen carefully to key information you hear your customer or colleague provide, make sure you also tune into the emotions behind their words, and what they say they expect or want from the situation. If they aren't clear about their expectations, don't assume; ask what they hope the end result can be.

6. Reflect your understanding. Confirm the information that's been provided to you, address and acknowledge emotions you've heard expressed, and summarize what you heard the other person say they hope to achieve.

7. Engage in problem solving to move the situation forward. Emphasize that you're in this together by asking your customer or colleague to help find solutions, and to prioritize what's most important to them. Give pause to allow them time to process information and respond.

8. Summarize the solution. Clearly state what you will do, and what you need the other person to do, to resolve the situation. Ask for their confirmation that the plan sounds like a good one, and ask what else you can do to help.

9. Call for backup if needed. If you can't move on to the problem-solving phase, refer to your office's escalation policy. Continue to acknowledge your customer's or colleague's emotion, but try to remember that the other person's frustration is most likely caused by the situation, and generally is not intended to be a personal attack on you.

There are many great resources available on this and other topics to help you survive busy and sometimes stressful days in the financial aid office, and instead make going to work a treat. Like other servicers and organizations who understand the challenges you face, Great Lakes offers on-line training to help you work better and smarter. Find time to use them, when needed.

Great Advice for Grads 2015 has been released! _____



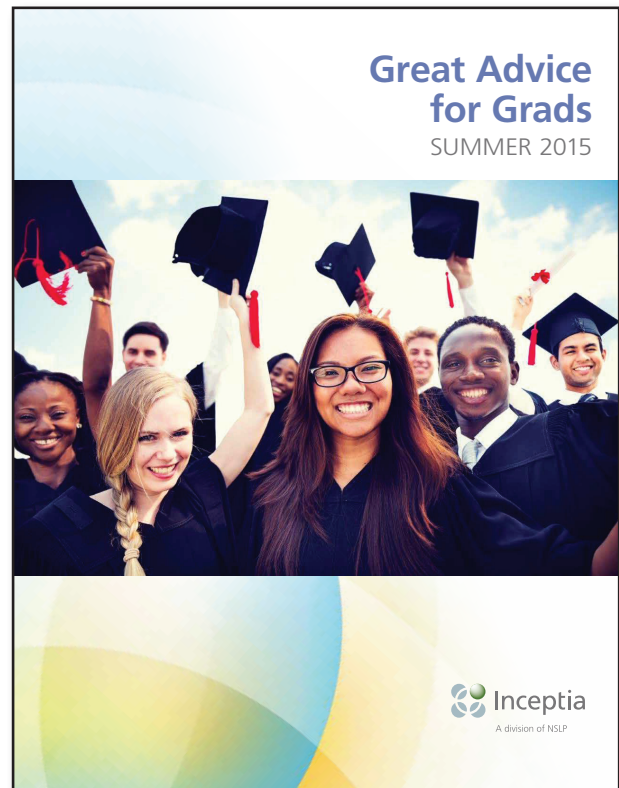
Ron Lee
Strategic Business Director
Inceptia

Ahhhh, Spring. It's that time of year again, and the air is abuzz with newfound energy, dreams of summer, and – for seniors – a mixture of excitement and anxiety about graduation and the transition into “what's next?”

With this transition, we at Inceptia are proud to offer up the second edition of our “Great Advice for Grads” eGuide. Featuring sage advice and clever tips from financial bloggers, money gurus, and general life pros from across the web, we think it's a great default prevention and money management tool that all students should be exposed to.

Our hope is you will add the contents of this free guide to your Financial Aid Office toolkit, and share with the students at your college or university. Or your kids, or your teenaged neighbors, or your aunt who proudly just completed her bachelor's degree. Because even though those soon-to-be-grads are likely getting their fair share of tips right now, smart financial advice is truly a gift that has a lifelong benefit.

As you bid adieu to your current students and prepare to welcome the next crop onto campus, we wish you all the best, and thank you for your daily efforts in the battle against student loan delinquency and default. We're here alongside you, guiding students toward financially successful futures.



Getting Bored on the Job? Get on the Job Board!

If you haven't checked out CASFAA's Job Board, you are missing out. It is quick and easy to log in, keep your resume info up to date and set up your own personalized job alerts. If you are looking for that next step up, feeling like you need a change, or even just keeping an eye out for a friend, be sure to check out casfaa.org/jobslink

Let employers find you

A Financial Aid Night to Remember...



Or, How to Avoid Blank Stares and Nodding Heads

Abril Hunt
Senior Financial Literacy Trainer
ECMC

You've heard it before: First impressions are powerful. Believe it. The first 2-3 minutes of the presentation are the most important. The audience wants to like you and they will give you a few minutes at the beginning to engage them — don't miss this opportunity. Presenters can easily fail here by rambling on too long by giving unnecessary background information, or their personal or professional history, etc.

Visuals that surprise people, touch them, delight them, and support your story are best because they affect people in an emotional way. If you know your subject matter, you only need key words or phrases to keep you moving along.

People are more likely to remember your content in the form of stories and examples, and they are also more likely to remember your content if your visuals are unique, powerful and of the highest quality.

PREPARE

The more you are on top of your material the less nervous you will be. Why? We fear what we do not know. If you know your material well and have rehearsed the flow, know what slide is next in the deck, and have anticipated questions, then you have eliminated most (but not all) of the unknown. When you remove the unknown and reduce anxiety and nervousness, then confidence is something that will naturally take the place of your anxiety.

Know your audience as well as possible

Before you can formulate the content of your presentation, you need to ask yourself a lot of basic questions. The goal is to be the best possible presenter for that particular audience. At the very least, you need to answer the basic "W questions."

- **Who** is the audience? What are their backgrounds? How much familiarity with your topic can you assume they bring to the presentation?
- **What** is the purpose of the presentation? Is it to inspire? Are they looking for concrete practical information? Do they want more concepts and theory rather than advice?
- **Where** is it? Find out everything you can about the location and logistics of the venue.

- **Why** were you asked to speak? What are their expectations of you?

- **When is it?** Do you have enough time to prepare? What time of the day? If there are other presenters, what is the order (always volunteer to go first or last, by the way). What day of the week? All of this matters.

DEVELOP A PRESENTATION PERSONA

Whether you realize it or not, this is a performance as much as a presentation.

Good presentations include stories.

The best presenters illustrate their points with the use of stories, often personal ones. The easiest way to explain complicated ideas is through examples or by sharing a story that underscores the point. Stories are easy for your audience to remember.

If you want your audience to remember your content, then find a way to make it relevant and memorable to them.

Move out from behind the podium

- **Move around.** You need to engage and interact with your audience. Get closer to them by getting out from behind the podium. The goal of your presentation is to connect with the audience. The podium is a physical barrier between you. Removing it will help you build rapport and make a connection.

- **Modulate the tone, pitch, and speed of your speech.** Do not speak in a monotone. Vary your voice for emphasis and effect. This may seem a bit intimidating, but the good news is that this will happen naturally when you are passionate or excited about your subject matter.

- **Use gestures and facial expressions to help you explain, emphasize, and communicate the material. But don't overdo it.** Videotape yourself to find out if you are unconsciously doing anything that may be distracting to your audience.

Continued on next page

Or, How to Avoid Blank Stares and Nodding Heads continued

SHARE YOUR PASSION FOR THE TOPIC

Are you passionate about the subject?

Point out the fascinating aspects of what they are learning. If you are not interested in the subject, you can't expect your audience to be interested either. Don't overwhelm your slides with excessive text. Remember - a picture is worth a thousand words!

Yes, you need great content. Yes, you need professional, well designed visuals. But it is all pointless if you do not have a heartfelt belief in your topic. The biggest item that separates mediocre presenters from world class ones is the ability to connect with an audience in an honest and exciting way. Don't hold back. Be confident. And let your passion for your topic come out for all to see.

THE QUICKEST WAY TO BE BORING: READING SLIDES

Don't read your notes or slides! What a perfect way to lower your energy level and make your audience feel less engaged. Also, a little trick I discovered: If you press the "B" key while your PowerPoint or Keynote slide is showing, the screen will go blank. This is useful if you need to digress or move off the topic presented on the slide. By having the slide blank, all the attention can now be placed back on you. When you are ready to move on, just press the "B" key again and the image reappears.

ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE

Make eye contact with the audience.

Try looking at their faces rather than scanning the group. If you are using a computer, you shouldn't really need to look at the screen behind you — just briefly glance down at the computer screen.

One sure fire way to lose an audience is to turn your back on them.

And while you're maintaining great eye contact, don't forget to SMILE. ...unless your topic is something morose, that would be weird. But overall, a smile can be a very powerful thing.

Build a rapport with the audience. Interact with them.

Make sure they are following you, and understanding what you are discussing. If they appear to be lost, ask them. Then, take time to explain your points and to answer questions.

ADD A LITTLE HUMOR, BUT...

At all times: be courteous, gracious, & professional. When audience members ask questions or give comments,

you should be gracious and thank them for their participation. Even if someone is being a putz, you need to take the higher ground and at all times be a gentleman or lady and courteously deal with them.

A true professional can always remain cool and in control. Remember, it's your reputation, so always remain gracious even with the most challenging of audiences.

If you don't handle the situation professionally, your credibility is gone, your school's reputation is damaged and you can bet your bottom dollar that as the story is told and retold, it will morph into something much worse than it actually was. I personally don't want to be that urban legend. Do you?

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TIME

We humans have short attention spans.

Passively sitting and listening to someone talk is just not our thing.

Your audience's attention is going to be the greatest at your opening and then again when you say something like "In conclusion...." This is just the human condition, especially so for today's busy (often tired) workers. But still, it's a fascinating little factoid that can prove useful.

So, if you notice your audience drifting away. Try jolting them back with a little "In closing..." No just kidding. What I mean I, if you have 30 minutes for your talk, try to finish in 25. It is better to have the audience wanting more of you than to feel that they have had more than enough. Professional entertainers know this very well. "Always leave them wanting more" is attributed to both Walt Disney and PT Barnum. Whoever said it, the quote speaks to the showman in both.

Also, keep the lights on.

If you are speaking in a meeting room or a classroom, the temptation is to turn the lights off so that the slides look better. But go for a compromise between a bright screen image and ambient room lighting.

Turning the lights off — besides inducing sleep — puts all the focus on the screen. The audience should be looking at you more than the screen. Today's projectors are bright enough to allow you to keep many of the lights on.

LET'S REVIEW....

Prepare, develop your presentation persona, know your material, move around from behind the podium, share your passion for the subject, engage the audience, make it fun, and watch the time.

Keep it simple, interesting, and fun!