May 3, 2013

*Denise Peña*

**Member Info:**

Access & Diversity currently has 28 members with the most recent member joining us in April.

**Meetings/Member communication:**

* We have had 1 conference call meeting so far this year. The next meeting is scheduled for June 2013.
* We communicate via Email when interesting articles/information is published

**Member Trainings:**

* Our first training is scheduled for: Friday, June 21st at 11am PST. Training link is already posted on the CASFAA training calendar but we will begin to do outreach and advertise to the membership at the end of May. Training will be put on by Jodi Miller from Nelnet.

Session Description:

*Communicating with Students Through Social Media*

Come learn about the communication preferences of today's college students. We will cover how schools use social media and the steps needed to create a successful social media program on your campus. We will take a closer look at Facebook and Twitter, with an eye toward how financial aid offices can use these forums to connect with and counsel students. We will also look at the latest social media platforms and trends. Join us and keep up the pace with your students!

* Would like to schedule a web training for December on changes to the 14-15 FAFSA (announcement attached).

**Outreach Projects:**

CASFAA Access & Diversity Sponsored Scholarship

* When planning how to handle the money for the scholarship, we have run in to a roadblock regarding the disbursement of the funds to the students
  + Meeting with Sallie Mae representatives to discuss UPromise
  + Is it possible to create a CASFAA Scholarship Fund and have the money controlled by our association until the student graduates from High School?

**Education Department Announces Changes to FAFSA Form to More Accurately and Fairly Assess Students' Need for Aid**

APRIL 29, 2013

**Contact:**

 Press Office, (202) 401-1576, [press@ed.gov](https://mail.vanguard.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2624300fbfd24dd99ef1c32c2d9f5d7a&URL=mailto%3apress%40ed.gov)

Today the U.S. Department of Education announced that beginning with the 2014-2015 federal student aid form, the Department will—for the first time—collect income and other information from a dependent student's legal parents regardless of the parents' marital status or gender, if those parents live together.

The 2014-2015 Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, will provide a new option for dependent applicants to describe their parents' marital status as "unmarried and both parents living together." Additionally, where appropriate, the new FAFSA form will also use terms like "Parent 1 (father/mother/stepparent)" and "Parent 2 (father/mother/stepparent)" instead of gender-specific terms like "mother" and "father."

"All students should be able to apply for federal student aid within a system that incorporates their unique family dynamics," said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. "These changes will allow us to more precisely calculate federal student aid eligibility based on what a student's whole family is able to contribute and ensure taxpayer dollars are better targeted toward those students who have the most need, as well as provide an inclusive form that reflects the diversity of American families."

The FAFSA has long been constructed to collect information about a student's parents only if the parents are married. As a result, the FAFSA has excluded income and other information from one of the student's legal parents (biological or adoptive) when the parents are unmarried, even if those parents are living together. Gender-specific terms also fail to capture income and other information from one parent when a student's parents are in a same-sex marriage under state law but not federally recognized under the Defense of Marriage Act.

The information provided on the FAFSA is used in the calculation of the student's expected family contribution (EFC), which determines a student's eligibility for federal need-based student aid as well as for many state, institutional and private aid programs. It is critical that both of a dependent student's parents help pay, to the extent they are able, for the educational expenses of their child. Collecting parental information from both of a dependent student's legal parents will result in fair treatment of all families by eliminating longstanding inequities based on parents' relationship with each other rather than on their relationship with their child.

The collection of information from both of a dependent student's parents is statutorily supported in the Higher Education Act (HEA), which generally includes the terms "parent" and "parents'" and not terms like "mother," "father," or "spouse." This change will not impact the longstanding and statutorily required provision that when a dependent student's parents are divorced, only information on the parent that the student resided with for the greater portion of the 12 months preceding the date of completing the FAFSA is to be reported.

The collection of FAFSA information for both of a dependent student's unmarried parents when both parents are living together will not impact the majority of federal student aid applicants, either because they are independent students, or because they are dependent students whose legal parents are married to each other or are unmarried and do not live with the other parent. While most students will be unaffected, the eligibility of some dependent students will change. In most of these instances, the amount of need-based Title IV federal student aid these students will receive will decrease because of the additional income and other resources used in the calculation of the student's EFC. In a small number of instances, the student would be eligible for more aid because the offset for an additional person in the parents' household, a factor in calculating the EFC, will exceed the income of the second parent.

The Department will publish these changes this week in the Federal Register for public comment as part of the draft 2014-2015 FAFSA. For more information about federal student aid, visit the Department's website:[studentaid.ed.gov](https://mail.vanguard.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=2624300fbfd24dd99ef1c32c2d9f5d7a&URL=http%3a%2f%2fstudentaid.ed.gov%2f).