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President's Perspective

WELCOME to the first issue of the new *Bits and Bytes*. After considerable discussion about the possible discontinuation of the publication, it was decided to make one more attempt to revive *Bit and Bytes*. I hope you find the changes in focus, style and tone to be more interesting and informational.

As part of this change, I

have created a review committee with a member from the public sector, the private sector, and the proprietary sector. Their charge is to review each issue to make sure that articles submitted contain content of interest to the ISFAA membership without endorsing specific products. This step is in response to numerous complaints from readers of *Bits*

and *Bytes*. If an article crosses the line from news to advertising, the committee can choose to withhold the article from publication.

Our goal is to make *Bits and Bytes* more interesting, informative and perhaps entertaining. With that said, I hope you will read on and enjoy this issue of *Bits and Bytes*.

Vote in November!

Looking Back on His Term

Jeff Pethick speaks about his presidency

For the 2004-2005 school year, each edition of *Bits and Bytes* will have an interview with someone important to the ISFAA membership. Our first interview choice was easy. We selected the Past President of ISFAA, Jeff Pethick. We thank Jeff for giving of his time for the interview.

Q. Jeff, your term as President started a little sooner than you expected. Talk about that.

A. Vikki Goeke was the 2002/2003 ISFAA President and she decided to leave the financial aid profession in November 2002. As the ISFAA President-Elect, I assumed the responsibilities of President for the remainder of the 2002/2003 year. ISFAA is fortunate to have



Vikki back in the financial aid profession. Vikki served as the 2003/2004 Past President and the 2004/2005 Governmental Relations Commissioner.

Q. Did the extra time as President help you once your regular term began?

A. Surprisingly, this made the regular term more challenging. I was a member of the ISFAA Executive Committee for four years prior to assuming the role of President-Elect, so I was very familiar with the association. Serving as President, however, is a different experi-

LOOKING BACK ON HIS TERM

ence and different set of challenges. The President-Elect year is often for the purpose of observing the association from a new perspective in preparation for the year as President and planning for the upcoming year.

During my scheduled President-Elect year, I was the President of my Notre Dame Alumni Association. I did not expect to be the President of two associations at the same time, but it was manageable. I regret missing the reflection and planning associated with the President-Elect year.

Q. What are you proudest about when you think back to your time as President?

A. I am proud of the fact that I ended the term as President with all of my hair and that it did not turn grey! Seriously, I am proud of the quality of services that we provided to the membership. We continued to provide affordable, quality conferences. I am thrilled at our success with College Goal Sunday. This is a flagship program in the nation. Many associations have observed this program and have implemented similar programs in their areas.

As ISFAA President, you realize that we have a talented and dedicated membership. The success of ISFAA is truly a reflection of the amazing sup-

port from the entire membership.

Q. What are your thoughts on the state of financial aid here in Indiana?

These economically disadvantaged students often do not have anyone lobbying for their best interests.

A. In Indiana, we are very fortunate to have significant grant support from the state of Indiana. The state grant program and Twenty-First Century Scholars program has made a significant impact on the affordability of a college education in Indiana.

During this difficult financial time the State of Indiana has demonstrated serious efforts to support the state grant program at a time when many states have significantly reduced their state grant programs.

We need to serve as advocates for financial aid with our institutions, the state and federal government. With reauthorization hopefully on the horizon, it is critical that we share our thoughts with our members in Congress. Financial aid professionals are best positioned to understand and relay recommendation to increase the effectiveness of financial aid resources.

Q. Tell us one hope you have for financial aid as a whole, over the next ten years.

A. I hope that financial aid returns to a core principle of need-based financial aid (i.e. providing access for all students, regardless of their economic background, to receive a college education). In recent years, a significant philosophical and financial shift has occurred in the financial aid profession. Substantial scholarship resources have been redirected to non-need-based, merit only scholarships.

I often speak of the importance for all of us to serve as an advocate for the most needy students. These economically disadvantaged students often do not have anyone lobbying for their best interests.

I recently had a conversation with a graduate, Dustin. Dustin came to Notre Dame from a low income family in Los Angeles. He received a financial aid package that included loans, work and scholarships. Dustin was overwhelmed that donors would provide him with scholarship assistance. He indicated that he must try to payback the scholarship as soon as possible by helping others in need. He said that he would work diligently in the summer and would donate \$500 a year to a scholarship fund to help another student in need. I thought Dustin was crazy! He was borrowing educational loans and donating a scholarship to help others?!! Dustin said that once he graduates, his top priority will be to endow a scholarship.

About a month ago, I learned that Dustin had a wonderful meeting with his donor in late 2003. During my recent conversation with Dustin, he never mentioned his meeting with the donor. At the end of our conversation I told him I had learned of the meeting between himself and his donor.

I thought Dustin was crazy! He was borrowing educational loans and donating a scholarship.

Dustin shared some additional details with me. He had sent the donor a letter of appreciation. The donor's wife wrote Dustin a note indicating how uplifting the letter had been to the donor. The donor was terminally ill, and it was a really miracle that the donor was still alive.

Dustin called the family and made ar-



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rangements to visit the donor in Florida. He spent time with the donor and his family and shared many stories about his college experience. Within two weeks following the visit the donor passed away.

This story gave me chills. Dustin had excelled academically at Notre Dame; however, the quality of his admission application was near the bottom of

those admitted into the Class of 2004. Without need-based scholarship assistance, this amazing story would not have occurred.

Working in the financial aid profession, we have an amazing opportunity to create access and opportunities for students to overcome financial obstacles to their receiving an education. Whether we realize it or not, we make a difference

in the lives of students everyday. That's why I come to work everyday.

Q. In conclusion, is there any way we can pry a Joe Russo story out of you for the membership?

A. I am amazed by Joe Russo. In the financial aid and Notre Dame communities, he is known for his expertise. He is always speaking or participat-

ing in events on campus and throughout the country. I am most impressed with Joe Russo, the person. Joe is a *father* to the 23 members in the Notre Dame Office of Financial Aid. At 8:00 every morning Joe walks around the office. He shares a personal greeting with every staff member and always mentions their names. When Joe is in the office he is always available for questions and advice. Although he is busy with many projects, he makes staff members feel like their problem is the most important issue for him. He always passes accolades to his staff members and is genuinely proud of their accomplishments.

I have some other stories, but I can't tell you them until after my performance review!

Thank you, Jeff, for your time! Bits and Bytes will be back in touch AFTER your review!



Carol Wirthman
Assistant Vice President
U.S. Bank

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Think Spring!

Clarksville is Site for Spring Meetings

Plans are underway for the Spring meetings to be held **April 10-12** at the Holiday Inn Lakeview, 505 Marriott Drive, Clarksville, Indiana 47129. You should be receiving an e-note in the near future for your input regarding interest sessions for this meeting. It is the hope of the program committee that all individuals and institutions will find something of interest in these meetings.

The relaxed theme of our spring meetings will be maintained, with ample learning opportunities. Please feel free to send your input and suggestions to either co-chair Kathy Borders (kborders@ismloans.org), or Jerry Lewis (glewis@pnc.edu).

Remember, ISFAA is your organization, and your input is critical in terms of program substance.

Newsletter Staff Doubles

Bits and Bytes is happy to announce that the team producing the publication has grown from one member to two! Also, the "new addition" to the team will handle what is arguably the most popular part of the newsletter.

Debi Zoumis, the Director of Financial Aid at Calumet College of St. Joseph has been added as part of the ISFAA Newsletter staff. We ask that anyone with any information about someone coming or going from the ISFAA family contact Debi with that news. Debi's email is dzoumis@ccsj.edu.

Indiana is a big state, and ISFAA is a big family. With your help Debi will be informed of as many changes in the family as possible. We look forward to catching up on any changes that have taken place since the last newsletter and keep pace with any going forward. Email Debi when you know of some news, and then you too will really increase the size of the team working on the newsletter!



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College Goal Sunday to Reach Students in 35 States

New Video to Improve College Goal Sunday Efforts in Indiana

Janet Trimble

One of the funders for College Goal Sunday Indiana, Lumina Foundation for Education, recently partnered with NASFAA to expand College Goal Sunday to 15 more states for a total of 35 states and the District of Columbia by the end of 2007.

The \$3.5 million investment will provide grants to bring on the 15 new states and support a national partnership to manage the daily operations of the program so that it can be effectively expanded at a more rapid pace. College Goal Sunday is currently offered in the following states:

Alaska, Arizona, California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachu-

setts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia.

College Goal Sunday Indiana is currently working toward a change that will increase reach within the state. Each year, kick-off assemblies have been offered at high schools in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and the northwestern corner of Indiana.

The assemblies not only inform students about College Goal Sunday, but increase awareness about the benefits of college and receiving financial aid.

In place of kick-off assemblies for College Goal Sunday Indiana 2005, an informational video will be sent to high schools located in counties with a Col-

lege Goal Sunday site. The benefits include allowing counselors to show the video multiple times and at their convenience, eliminating travel and weather cancellation issues, and expanding reach to more high schools.

College Goal Sunday 2005 will mark Michele Maskell's fifth year as co-chair and Janet Trimble's fourth. Each are planning to take on new assignments within ISFAA for the 2005-2006 year. One ISFAA member has already volunteered to be a co-chair.

Therefore, ISFAA will be searching for another member to co-chair College Goal Sunday 2006. If you are interested, please contact Richard Nash at 317-738-8075.

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TEAM ASA

USA Funds Awards \$601,500 in Scholarships to Indiana Residents

Kevin McKeown, USA Funds Services

USA Funds® has awarded 415 new and renewal scholarships totaling \$601,500 to deserving college-bound students in Indiana. USA Funds Access to Education Scholarships® assist students in financial need—particularly students who are members of ethnic-minority groups or are physically disabled—as they finance their higher education.

Because USA Funds serves as the designated guarantor of federal education loans for Indiana, residents of

the state receive priority consideration for the scholarships.

The awards include 190 new scholarships totaling \$276,750 and 225 renewal scholarships totaling \$324,750 to Indiana residents.

The scholarships provide each full-time undergraduate and graduate student with \$1,500; each half-time undergraduate receives \$750. Students who maintain grade-point averages of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale may receive renewal scholarships annually until

the students receive their final degrees or certificates, or until the total award to a student reaches \$6,000.

Scholarship Management Services, a program of Scholarship America, the nation's largest private-sector scholarship and educational-support organization, administers the program.

Information about USA Funds' 2005 scholarship program will be posted on the USA Funds Web site — www.usafunds.org — beginning October 1.

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February 13 is College Goal Sunday Indiana 2005

Janet Trimble

College Goal Sunday Indiana 2005 will be held on Sunday, February 13, at 2:00 p.m. As ISFAA enters the sixteenth year co-sponsoring College Goal Sunday, I would like to thank the membership for its continued support of this worthwhile event.

The financial aid process is sometimes perceived as complicated and overwhelming to families of college-bound students. Through College Goal Sunday, we can help families complete the most important piece of the process, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, accurately and on-time. By volunteering at one of 34 sites across the state of Indiana, your financial aid expertise will help hundreds of Indiana families qualify for necessary funding for college.

The past support from ISFAA's membership has made College Goal Sunday a huge success. Over the years, we have assisted more than 63,000 Indiana residents through the College Goal Sunday event.

Our success is evident by the fact that the Lumina Foundation for Higher Education is working with NASFAA to implement College Goal Sunday events in numerous states.

The Indianapolis Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators recognized College Goal Sunday Indiana for its awareness campaign with an Award of Merit at their 2004 Awards. The ISFAA membership has been instrumental in the success of College Goal Sunday Indiana.

We need qualified financial aid experts and friendly helpers. Volunteers are needed from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. to staff registration tables, supervise seating, answer financial aid questions, and organize the day's events.

Please consider volunteering. The online volunteer form is currently being updated. A message will be sent

to the ISFAA listserv when the volunteer form is available for submission.

College Goal Sunday Indiana 2005 is a joint effort of:

Indiana Student Financial Aid Association (ISFAA)

Learn More Indiana (formerly Indiana Career and Postsecondary Advancement Center)

State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI)

Office of Twenty-first Century Scholars

College Goal Sunday Indiana is funded by:

Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lumina Foundation For Higher Education

USA Funds

College Goal Sunday Indiana is administered by Michele Neff, Ivy Tech State College – Central, Co-chair; Janet Trimble, Ball State University, Co-chair; and Jacki Switzer, Edamerica.

The past support from ISFAA's membership has made College Goal Sunday a huge success.



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NASFAA's New LearnStudentAid.org is Accepting Students for October 1 and Beyond

On-line classes off to a great start

Washington, D.C. (September 24, 2004) – LearnStudentAid.org, NASFAA's new learning community on the Web, is now accepting on-line enrollment from individuals at NASFAA Member institutions for classes that will begin October 1, 2004 and beyond.

Enrollment for the September 1 classes was very encouraging with over 50 learners and 10 experienced aid administrators serving as mentors. "We are very pleased with the response to LearnStudentAid so far," said Ellen Blackmun, the program's director. "There is a real need for more training options in the financial aid community and we believe Learn StudentAid is going to help fill that void."

The four initial course offerings, which together constitute the "Financial Aid Fundamentals" series, include:

- FA 101: Overview of the Student Financial Aid Programs
- FA 102: Application Processing
- FA 103: Cost of Attendance
- FA 104: Need Analysis

These courses are designed for new aid administrators and support staff members who need to understand the basics of student financial aid administration, but may also appeal to those with more experience who need a refresher.

"This is a great opportunity for new aid administrators to become part of the NASFAA community and feel connected to others in the profession,"

says Blackmun. "When you first start out in financial aid, you don't always know where to go for help or answers to questions. We believe Learn StudentAid is going to make a big difference in how new aid professionals tackle the first years on the job."

About The Program

- Courses begin once a month, on or about the first of the month.
- Each individual who enrolls will be assigned to a small group of learners with whom he or she completes lessons and participates in Web-based discussion forums. Individuals also take quizzes on the content in those lessons and monitor their own progress through the courses.



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- Learners will be supported by NASFAA staff and by volunteer mentors from NASFAA Member institutions who will share their experience and expertise with those in training.
- Learners will be given NASFAA Web IDs and passwords, if they don't already have them. Also, learners will have access to the NASFAA Encyclopedia on the Web while enrolled.

Pricing

- The introductory price for the package of four courses (FA 101, 102, 103, and 104) is \$240.00. To qualify for the package price, the individual must enroll in all four courses at the same time, pay for them at the same time, and take each class in the recommended order.

Designed for new aid administrators and support staff

- Enrollment in individual courses and/or in a customized schedule will be at the rate of \$65 per course. Enrollment on a customized schedule is limited to 2 courses per month.

How to Enroll

- Complete the on-line registration form found under "How to Enroll" at LearnStudentAid.org.
- Print and submit (by fax or postal mail) the Payment Form. Include a check or credit card information (Visa or MasterCard only).
- Individuals will be assigned to specific courses once payment or

an institutional purchase order is received and processed.

- Enrollment in courses will be confirmed via e-mail to the individual enrolling in the courses.
- Access to courses is granted on the date the first course begins.

Additional details about the program are available at LearnStudentAid.org. If you have questions, please email LearnStudentAid@nasfaa.org or call 202-785-0453 ext. 161.

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization that represents more than 10,000 financial aid professionals at nearly 3,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. Each year, members help more than 8 million students receive funding for postsecondary education.

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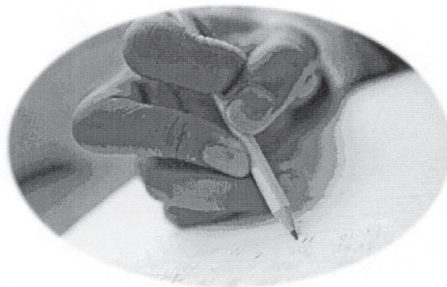
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...and Finally...

In all the FA offices across Indiana, we are well aware of the long days and heavy workload. There are, however, those wonderful moments that you will remember for a long, long time. One of those moments happened recently at Indiana State University.

Her name is Patty Yamashita. She traditionally sings "Happy Birthday" to each staff member on their special day. But who could sing to her became a pressing question. As you all can see, none other than Thomas Ratliff (Director of Financial Aid at ISU) stepped up and sang for Patty!

We have been told by an unidentified source that Patty said she was speechless for the first time in five years! Mr. Ratliff has not confirmed or denied that claim. Also, no staff mem-

ber has sent in a "review" of the singing by Mr. Ratliff, but it is a story we hope to have a follow up on in December! (Thank you to Thomas Ratliff, Patty Yamashita, and Janis Coopridner for being such good sports and giving us all a good chuckle.)



Input Welcome and Encouraged!

It is well known that if ten people are put in a room, you will probably find eleven (or more) opinions on a given topic in that room. For *Bits and Bytes*, that's a good thing!

The next edition of the newsletter will be sent out in the beginning of December. Please do not hesitate to send any thoughts or story ideas to wwozniak@ismloans.org. There is no promise that every story can be done, but every idea will be read and considered!

Negative and positive input is greatly appreciated. It is hoped, with your comments and story ideas, we can produce a newsletter that all can be proud of!



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