



MASFAP MONITOR

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2006 SPRING MASFAP CONFERENCE

**By Lori Hartman,
Program Committee Chair**

Over 270 of you successfully navigated your way to the Lodge for our spring conference. Speakers made their way here from as far away as Great Bend, KS and Madison, WI. Here's hoping everyone safely navigated their way back home!

But in between navigating here and there, hopefully you found the conference to be well worth your time! From sessions for techies to sessions for experts to sessions for beginners, seemed like there was a road for any and all to follow. Thank you to all our presenters and moderators for making it a very informative three

days.

And many thanks to those of you that participated in Thursday night's Live Auction. We raised over \$8200 for our scholarship program! So, whether you donated your talent, your item, or your wallet, thank you! This has to be one for the record books. And I know that we are all looking forward to the resulting main event at the Fall Conference...it will knock your socks off...or your hair off, whichever side of the chair you may end up sitting on!

For those of you that weren't able to join us and so don't know what I am talking about, we will be having a barbershop quartet, so to

speak. The hair of Jon Gruett, Dan Peterson, Larry Doggett and Leo Hertling was put up for auction with a minimum bid requirement of \$4000, and thanks to the donations of Bank of America, MO-HELA, US Bank and Wachovia, these gentlemen will be having their heads shaved at the Fall Conference! So, come join us, won't you?

And now that we all have the most up to date information out of Washington after hearing Jeff Baker's presentation, let's get to it. In the words of Bill Cordes, YOGOWYPI, so let's put in some hard work and get out a great year!

"BARBERSHOP
QUARTET" AT
FALL MASFAP
2006—DON'T
MISS IT!!

Do you like your new
Monitor?

Think we should keep
looking for design ideas?

Give us your feedback!

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COLLEGE STICKER PRICES

A report by NCES examines college sticker price versus the net price; "Changes in Patterns of Prices and Financial Aid" concludes that:

From 1999-2002, both the median price of attendance and median value of total aid increased at a faster rate

than inflation.

As a result of financial aid, however, net prices in all cases (all institution types) did not rise as rapidly as the price of attendance.

In the public two-year sector, net prices increased at a slower rate than inflation or

even decreased.

In the other sectors, the three-year increase in net price exceeded inflation by: 4.4% at four-year private institutions, 3.2% at for-profit colleges, and 2.8% at four-year public institutions.

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MAPPING YOUR FUTURE LAUNCHES NEW SPANISH SITE

Mapping Your Future (MYF) launched a new web site to serve Spanish-speaking students, parents, and families who seek information on careers, college, and financial aid. The Spanish site is located at <http://mapping-your-future.org/espanol/> and linked from the top navigation menu on the English site.

Mapping Your Future has offered a Spanish version of its site for several years, but this new site includes much more information, an enhanced translation, and a new design.

The following guided tours can be found on the new Spanish site:

Middle and high school students – information about planning for the future

Undergraduate students – ten

steps to planning the future

Graduate students – for individuals who are preparing for graduate school or those already attending

Adult students – for students who are 24 years and older, who may be attending college for their first time, re-enrolling at the same or different college or university, returning to school for a graduate degree or to further their studies in their field, or pursuing a career change

Student loan borrowers – advice on managing student loan debt.

Parents – information about planning their child's education

The new site also includes the following features:

Planning a career – provides guidance on how to choose a

career and reach career goals

Selecting a school – information on the characteristics to look for when choosing a college or training program and how to find the best school

Paying for school – the steps individuals need to consider or complete when planning on how to pay for their education

Financial aid – provides an overview of financial aid, the four different types, and the steps individuals need to take to receive it

Online Student Loan Counseling – allows individuals to fulfill entrance and exit loan counseling requirements anytime, anywhere – all from the convenience of a computer, while helping students understand their rights and responsibilities as a student loan borrower

TIDBITS:

- **Laci Engelbrecht of Cox College** welcomed Katie Nicole into the world on February 16.
- **Alicia Murphy of Missouri Valley College** had her little girl, Brooke, on February 20.

The MASFAP Monitor is brought to you by:

The Technology and Communications Committee

Paul Schwartz, Chair

Jan Brandow, Keith Broadus, Jennifer Hendrickson, Pam King, Michael Passer, Samantha Ruffini

The Monitor is co-edited by Pam King and Jenny Hendrickson

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT-ANGIE COMSTOCK

It is evident that spring is making itself known. There are already flowers beginning to peek through the soil on the quest for life. It is also making itself known with the storms and tornadoes that have hit not only our state but others. It is events such as these that help to put things into perspective. It should make us all take time to realize what is really important as those who suffered losses are putting the piece back together. The spring

conference gave us the opportunity to learn and re-connect with one another. It is always refreshing to be surrounded by your colleagues. It was great to see all the familiar faces at the conference in addition to all of the new ones. Bill started us off by making us laugh and also think. The auction proved to be one of the most successful in MASFAP history. Thanks to all of those who graciously donated items and those who made great bids for them. A

great big thank you goes out to those who volunteered their hair for a fantastic cause. Just remember is it for the scholarship fund.

As we go forth with our daily activities, please remember what is important. We must take care of ourselves so that we will be able to take care of others. And that is what we do not only in our personal life but also in our profession. This is not a dress rehearsal, it is the real deal. It cannot be

said any better than the words of Maya Angelou:

“Each of us has the right and responsibility to assess the roads which lie ahead and those over which we have traveled, and if the future road looms ominous or unpromising and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction.”

GRAD PLUS LOAN: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

By Lisa Mitchell, Sallie Mae

What is the Graduate PLUS Loan program?

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (S. 1932) was signed by the President on February 8, 2006 and became Public Law No: 109-171. One of the measures in the bill expands the PLUS loan program for parents of dependent undergraduates to include graduate and professional students. This Graduate PLUS Loan program allows a graduate/professional school student to borrow on his own behalf up to the cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books and even travel.

When does the Graduate PLUS program take effect?

On March 10, 2006, the Department of Education issued guidance via DCL GEN-06-02, Enactment of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 Loan Issues. This DCL indicates that PLUS loans for graduate and professional students in the FFEL program will be in effect for loans certified on or after July 1, 2006 and for the Direct Loan program, loans originated on or after July 1, 2006.

Will the PLUS loan interest rate change after passage of the Deficit Reduction Act?

Yes. Under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, the interest rate for all Graduate PLUS and Parent PLUS Loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2006 will be fixed at 8.5 percent.

What about loan limits? Are they different for the Graduate PLUS Loan than for the Parent PLUS?

As in the Parent PLUS program, there are no annual or aggregate loan limits for the Graduate PLUS Loan. Graduate and professional students may borrow the cost of attendance minus any financial aid received, as certified by the school. There is not an aggregate maximum PLUS loan amount.

Is credit considered a factor in qualifying for a Graduate PLUS loan?

Yes. A credit check is required to be eligible for a Graduate PLUS Loan. Borrowers with adverse credit can either clean up their credit or secure an endorser. The same credit criteria that are applicable to Parent PLUS loans will be applicable to Graduate PLUS loans.

Can we use the existing Master Promissory Note when making Graduate PLUS loans?

The Department of Education will issue guidance on the Application/MPN that will be used by a PLUS graduate/professional student to apply. We expect the Department to announce an extension of the current PLUS Application/MPN and provide for it to be used with an Addendum during an interim period (12-18 months) until the PLUS Application/MPN can be revised to accommodate the changes in the law.

Currently, parents applying for a Parent PLUS Loan need not fill out a FAFSA—what about graduate students applying for a Graduate PLUS Loan?

DCL GEN 06-02 indicates that Graduate PLUS Loan applicants are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and before receiving a Graduate PLUS Loan, students must have applied for the annual loan maximum eligibility under the Federal Stafford Loan program (subsidized and unsubsidized).

I thought that "PLUS" stood for Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students—how can such a loan now be made directly to graduate/professional students?

PLUS no longer stands for "Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students." The acronym was stripped of this meaning a while ago and now the official program name is just "Federal PLUS."

HURRICANE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Central Christian College of the Bible awarded their MASFAP Scholarship to Jake. Jake is a quiet boy from the Biloxi, Mississippi area. Rhonda Dunham, FA Director, made his acquaintance because he didn't have the financial aid in place to come to school. His eyes were dark and his face was white as he told her he still hadn't heard from his parent's since he had come up here to go to school and there was no way he could finish the financial aid process or even get in touch with his parents to get the needed documents. Jake's

Drury University awarded their MASFAP Scholarship to Melissa. Melissa and her mother arrived in Springfield in mid-September shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit their hometown region of Brooklyn, Mississippi. Melissa's family is a moderate-income family that had struggled to make a life in the region, and an exceptionally shy Melissa had just moved into campus housing at nearby

The University of Missouri - Columbia awarded their MASFAP scholarship to Sierra. Sierra started the fall semester by leaving her hometown in Missouri and attending Xavier University in New Orleans. For a week anyway. From the moment she and other Xavier students were notified to evacuate, her life has been chaotic. Just getting home was chaotic:

family lost their home, cars, and his mother lost her job due to Hurricane Katrina. In addition, Jake's brother also lost everything in the wake of the storm. It was more than a week before Jake spoke with his parents. One can only imagine what this young man must have been going through being in Missouri, going to class, eating in the cafeteria, hanging out with friends, and not being with his family as they were trying to sort out their lives. But all the while, Jake kept a smile on his face, and a positive attitude in his speech. His friends were a

Pearl River Community College to begin her college career. The hurricane did not destroy the family's home, but as it is a small rural part of the state, residents had been told that it would likely be a very long time before power would be returned to their community. They traveled to Springfield, MO with very little money and essentially no other resources or contacts, seeking refuge and ulti-

two days total via a bus to Atlanta followed by a flight to Houston and finally a flight to Missouri. But once home, she followed news of the storm and its aftermath. She was devastated. "It is very different from seeing it on television and actually being in the midst of all of it. I felt a deep sorrow for the residents of New Orleans and for those students that did not make it

constant source of encouragement and help during this time. Jake didn't go home for Christmas break. His family is in temporary housing until all of the insurance and government aid can be worked out. The scholarship that MASFAP sent was greatly appreciated. Since he didn't have other personal resources, and help from his parents was out of the question, that small \$500 scholarship gave him the additional funds needed to complete registration, and give him peace of mind as he began his New Year.

mately coming to Drury, where the university initially provided housing for both Melissa and her mother. Drury had a small home that had recently been acquired. The Drury community pulled together to renovate and furnish the home for the family. They are still here and plan to be until the end of the academic year.

out in time. Hurricane Katrina is a disaster that I lived to tell my kids about and how it affected the lives of so many people." Sierra enrolled at MU, and decided after the fall semester that it would be best to be closer to home, and so decided to stay at MU and not return to New Orleans.

Southeast Missouri State University selected Meridith as the recipient of their MASFAP Scholarship. Meridith lived in the Biloxi, Mississippi area for the last five years. At the time of the storm, she was trapped at her boyfriend's house, and for two days was unable to get back home. Upon arriving home she discovered that a tornado had hit the residences right behind her house. Everything was leveled. Her parents' house was still standing but had experienced significant damage from storm surge. Meridith's car, just paid off the week before, had floated away from the house and was ruined. They prepared food on outside grills until the Red Cross started bringing food. Meridith and her boyfriend came to Cape Girardeau to live with her sister who was already attending SEMO, so they could seek employment and send money back to her parents. Upon hearing that Southeast was accepting Hurricane "refugees", she inquired and was admitted and enrolled within a day. Meridith completed the fall semester and did very well academically. She has decided to continue her education at SEMO and is pursuing a degree in nursing. Meridith wrote, "All the money I can get to help me with school and supplies is greatly appreciated. I promise everyone who has helped me that I will make them proud."

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

Question:

Chelsey Gentry, Financial Aid Coordinator, Cox College: At our College, if a student earns a grade of 'D' for a course, it does not count as credit earned towards their program and the course has to be repeated. However, in financial aid, we look at total hours earned in which a D is passing in order to determine grade level. Is there any reason why the hours earned for a grade of D (3hrs) and subsequently when retaken for a higher grade (3hrs) both can't be counted towards total hours completed?

Answers:

1) By counting the course hours twice (for the D grade and for the subsequent passing grade) you could have a situation where you might have a different grade level in Financial Aid for the student than what the Registrar's Office would show. There may also be an issue with monitoring satisfactory academic progress.

2) At our college, we would count both of the classes in the attempted/completed ratio. However, the higher grade is taken in the GPA calculation for the first one is forgiven.

3) Dan Day, Senior Associate-Compliance, MDHE:

(From FSA handbook Volume 1 page 1-9 NOTE: reference Repeat /Delete provision in column)

If a school has a written policy that allows only the highest or most recent grade to be counted or both credits and grades from previous attempts to be deleted it may exclude a grade for a prior attempt when considering the qualitative SAP standard, but it must count the credits attempted when considering the quantitative SAP standard. So, the school must count the attempt and the retake hours towards total hours completed.



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MONITOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION POLICY:

Articles may be submitted by any person, company, or organization for consideration by the MASFAP Monitor staff and are subject to approval prior to printing the newsletter. The author's name should be included in the submission. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit the content of any article or information submitted. Articles will be edited for accuracy, quality and appropriate length.

Articles are intended to be informational and for the benefit of MASFAP members and not for company promotion or advertising. If the author is unavailable or a resolution cannot be reached, the editor will refer it to the Committee chairperson and President for a decision about publication.

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