

# THE CCCSFAAA REPORT

Summer 2010



A publication of the  
California Community  
Colleges Student  
Financial Aid  
Administrators  
Association

## Greetings from the Far North!

By Jacque Bradley, 2010 CCCSFAAA President

OK, It is true there are colleges farther north, but I have been on the road a lot lately and I am way above LA. I just sent an email to one of my colleagues and said that I felt like something they had dug up on the TV show *Bones*—I am fried and buried. I am sure many of you can relate.

My office is busy preparing for the Direct Lending Transition and we are working on our policy for Year-Round Pell. We just

realized that as we move from Formula 3 for 2009–10 to Formula 1 for 2010–11, we can actually have students in the same summer who have different FT unit requirements. I was sure this couldn't be true, but I verified it with our federal trainer. The good news is that we have so many different ways to pay students for this summer, that almost everyone will get money one way or the other.

What about those petitions! It is early May and I am still

getting Satisfactory Academic Progress petitions. I have started meeting with each of these late students to stress the need to do everything earlier so they have the financial support to be more successful. Then I escort them to the bank of computers to do their 2010–2011 FAFSA—or at least start it. When I tell them how many financial aid applications we have received from students already they realize they are late. We are up 38%...  
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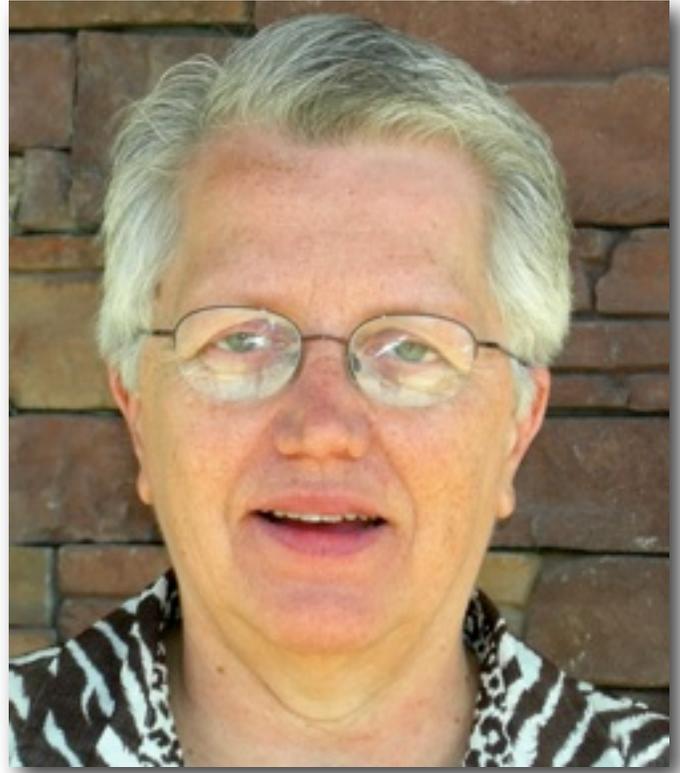
## Greetings from the Far North... ...continued

...in ISIRs YTD over 2009–10. It is a phenomenon that doesn't seem to end. I have installed more green lights than ever in our office. We have four different flyers up around campus announcing BIG CHANGES in the financial aid process for 2010–11.

As you read this, please take a moment for yourself. Slow down a minute. Take a deep breath. Think about all you and your staff have accomplished this year. Think about how many students you have helped. Take another deep breath (gasping doesn't count). We have accomplished an incredible amount of work during an extremely dire budget year. The economic news continues to be bad (unless there is a new report saying it is improving). We see first-hand how the economy is doing. We are processing more Special Circumstances and income overrides than ever before. I have never seen such a high percentage of desperate financial aid students with compelling stories.

Every Pell we have awarded is another student who was helped. CalWORKs and EOPS are struggling with 39% cuts to allocations, but we had an awards ceremony on our campus last week and the students who were honored for academic achievement all talked about the support of counseling and financial aid. They are accomplishing great things against daunting challenges. We need to take a few minutes to celebrate our successes. I know it is difficult to remember the successful students when we are now seeing the stragglers and the petition students, but they are greatly outnumbered by students who completed the process and completed their coursework and are progressing toward a degree.

The CCCSFAAA Conference is in San Diego this December. Mary SanAgustin and the Directors in Region X are working hard to ensure it is packed with useful information. We know that many of you have travel restrictions, but we hope you can advocate for the importance of training and the information you receive at CCCSFAAA Conferences. It is a lot closer than the FSA Conference in Orlando, Florida. Remember, this is a volunteer organization. If you are asked to present, facilitate, work registration, put together packets or help in some way—please say yes. Be part of the organization that supports you as a financial aid professional.



## Spring Training Wrap-Up



By Brad Hardison, 2010 CCCSFAAA Past-President

CCCSFAAA's annual set of spring trainings were held on March 29<sup>th</sup> at Solano Community College, on March 30<sup>th</sup> at Los Angeles Pierce College, and on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Mt. San Jacinto College. This series of trainings throughout the state reached nearly 300 individuals. 177 new members joined.

Each one-day drive-in workshop included a CCCSFAAA and Chancellor's Office update, an update on Two Pell's in an Award Year by a DOE trainer, and smaller break-out sessions on various topics including Cal Grant and Webgrants Overview, Successful Debt Management: Strategy and Partnerships, Disclosure Requirements, Data Driven Advocacy and Decision Making: How to Use Data from the Annual SFA Programs Legislative Report to support your programs locally, FFELP to Direct Loan Transition; Good, Better and Best Practices: Scaling and Integrating Student Services in this Difficult Budget Climates; Need Analysis - Hand Calculations, and Professional Judgment.

The PDF handouts from the break out sessions are posted on the CCCSFAAA website under the Training Link for those that attended and those that were unable to. It is great information you will want to refer to often.

Thank you to each of our presenters; the workshop series would not have been possible without your participation: Tim Bonnel (CCC Chancellor's Office) Rhonda Mohr (CCC Chancellor's Office), Jacque Bradley (Mendocino College), Sherrie Padilla (Antelope Valley College), Bryan Dickason (CSAC), Karen Dowdall-Gumin (Great Lakes), Pat Hurley (Glendale College), Susan Jones (Mt. San Antonio College), Nina Martinez (EdFund), Heather Garcia (Great Lakes), Nancy Davis (San Bernadino Valley College), Sun Ow (Great Lakes), Margie Carrington (Cañada College), Maureen Mason-Muyco (Solano College), Ruby Nieto (EdFund), Rita Grogan (Mission College) Bruce Horner (DOE), Robert Vallas (DOE) and Virginia Hagins (DOE).

And, a BIG thank you to our site coordinators and their college colleagues, for opening their campuses to us: Maureen Mason-Muyco and Art Lopez (Solano College), Anafe Robinson (Pierce College) and Lesia Navarro (Mt. San Jacinto College). Training and education was not all that happened those days. \$1,509 was raised for our CCCSFAAA Scholarship Fund. Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets and supported our student scholarships!

## Day at the Capitol



By Sherrie Padilla, 2010 CCCSFAAA President-Elect

CCCSFAAA and CASFAA participated in a joint Day at the Capitol event on May 11, 2010. It was a beautiful sunny day in Sacramento, a great day for advocacy! CCCSFAAA's day started with a welcome from President Jacque Bradley followed by a Chancellor's Office update given by Marlene Garcia, Vice Chancellor for Government Relations. Marlene provided an overview of state legislation of interest to the Chancellor's Office including important legislation related to transfer reform and bills related to modifying community college funding. AB 1997 (Portantino), the bill that requires students to complete a FAFSA in order to receive a BOG Fee Waiver except for on a case-by-case basis was also discussed. Marlene gave us some great tips on having an effective meeting with legislators.

We were then joined by CASFAA members for a panel presentation that included several important panelists that represent diverse areas related to California legislation. Lori Nezhura, State Legislative Liaison, Government Affairs from CSAC was the moderator for the panel that included Judy Heiman, Legislative Analyst Office (LAO); Seija Virtanen, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review; Sara Bachez, Consultant for Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance; Danny Alvarez, Principal Consultant for Senate Education Committee; and Amy Rutschow, Assembly Republican Consultant. Lori and I had developed some questions for the panel and had given the questions to the panelists before the presentation. The questions sparked some lively conversation about the state budget and the panelists thoughts about reductions in higher education funding as well as changes to higher education if more funding were available. The overriding thoughts were that higher education is high on the priority list, yet with the state of the current economic situation, nothing is sacred. Cuts could come by way of modifying eligibility for some programs.

A lunch panel with representatives from several segments of higher education was next on the agenda. Yvonne Gutierrez-Sandoval, CASFAA President was the moderator for the panelists that included Jonathon Brown, AICCU; Karen French, UCOP; Amy Costa, CSU; Robert Johnson, CAPPs; and Marlene Garcia, CCCCO. Each segment representative shared their thoughts on the effect of state legislation and budget issues on their segment.

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# Day at the Capitol... ...continued

It was then off to our scheduled meetings with state legislators and/or their staff. Each of us had at least two meetings to attend. CCCSFAAA had prepared some talking points for board members to leave behind for legislators. The talking points covered 4 major areas. First, we urged legislatures to support Gov. Schwarzenegger's commitment to restore funding for California's public colleges and universities. Second, we urged legislatures to support fully funding the Cal Grant Program. Third, we conveyed our support for an enrollment fee increase policy that is formulized and predictable. Fourth, we communicated that we support efforts to increase the number of eligible students who receive Pell grants and other federal aid. However, we are concerned that legislation such as AB 1997

(Portantino) as written may have the unintended consequence of limiting immediate access to higher education by reducing the use of the Board of Governor's Fee Waiver Form to only special cases. The feedback was that most of the meetings went really well and legislative staff were attentive and listened to our concerns.

I want to thank Lori Nezhura from CSAC and Maureen Mason-Muyco, CASFAA V.P. State Issues, for all their work and collaboration that made CCCSFAAA's Day at the Capitol a success. Lori was instrumental in getting key panelists for the morning session and setting up legislative visits. Maureen worked with me to make a great joint CCCSFAAA/CASFAA advocacy day. You both rock!



# State Issues Report



By Sherrie Padilla, 2010 CCCSFAAA President-Elect

## Budget Issues

On April 27<sup>th</sup> the systems heads of UC, CSU, and CCC's joined together in an intersegmental advocacy day at the Capitol. Governor Schwarzenegger met with segment leaders and committed to restoring funding for California's public colleges and universities. He pledged that he would not sign a state budget unless it included the financial support he proposed for UC, CSU, and CCC's in his January budget plan for 2010-11. The "May revise" was scheduled to come out May 14, 2010.

## CSAC Commission Meeting

I attended the Commission meeting on April 15, 2010. Bryan Dickason reported on the status of AB187 (Cal Grant Decentralization). He expressed that there are challenges trying to meet the parameters and constraints of the bill. They are trying to work out issues related to business practices with pilot schools and non-pilot schools. However, they are confident that running both programs simultaneously is the way to go because it will meet students' needs and keep costs down. The advisory task force is looking at draft regulations developed by CSAC.

Representatives from the National Guard attended the meeting to thank the Commission for implementing the National Guard Education Assistance Award Program. An Ops Memo was released by CSAC to inform schools about the new program.

Michele Siqueiros, Executive Director of The Campaign for College Opportunity spoke about higher education policy priorities affecting student success. They are supporting AB 2542, a pilot measure on funding based on completion rather than the third week of enrollment and SB 1440, regarding a clear pathway to transfer from CCC to CSU or UC.

Lauren Asher, President of The Institute for College Access and Success (TICAS) spoke about FAFSA simplification and urged the Commission to stay in line with ED related to the need for asset information for Cal Grant purposes. She asked the Commission to keep in mind that the purpose of FAFSA simplification was not to make things simple on the front end but more difficult on the back end. She also spoke about a new pilot program at ED that will give high schools access to find out which students have completed a FAFSA.

## AB 1997 (Portantino)

AB 1997 would require students to fill out a FAFSA rather than a BOG Fee Waiver form in order to receive a BOG Fee Waiver except on a case-by-case basis. Kim Miles and Dr. Patricia Hurley met with Anthony Portantino on April 30, 2010 to discuss AB 1997. Portantino understood the concerns about the bill but is committed to moving forward with the legislation. CCCSFAAA is currently working with Portantino's office to explore solutions to getting more students to receive Pell grants.

## Update from Region VIII

Region VIII is very busy with year round Pell and transitioning to Direct Loans along with end of year activities. Many Directors attended the CSSO Drive-In Conference held in April at Orange Coast College, where Student Services Officers invited other Directors in Student Service program areas to join their meeting.

After months of negotiations with contracts and VPN access to our systems, OCC has a go . . . they are launching in May their first attempt at outsourcing verification, awarding, and packaging. Stayed tuned for updates and wish them luck with this new endeavor!

OCC Program updates:

**Summer Pell** – we think we get it, but maybe we don't – depends upon the day and which training you've attended. The policy is in place, now we are awaiting the process from PowerFails.

**Direct Loans** – AHHHH, we've completed disbursements, entrance and exit orientations, financial literacy sessions and now the final year-end reconciliation is upon us. Looking back, it wasn't too terribly difficult, but not easy. Year two should be great.

### Personnel updates:

Vincent Ngo is working in an out-of-class assignment as the Student Financial Aid Operations Specialist. He will be OCC's financial aid "go-to" person regarding hardware and software and is on the OCC and District Continuous Improvement Teams for Banner.

Joe Velasquez has re-joined the student financial aid team after a reassignment to Admissions and Records. Welcome back Joe!

# Foster Youth at Citrus College: Success Stories

By Citrus College Financial Aid Office staff

Foster youth are left ill equipped and under skilled to enter the world as productive, self-sufficient citizens, due to a significant lack of support and services for teens making the difficult transition from foster care into adulthood.

Here at Citrus College we are connecting to our Foster youth through the Financial Aid office as self identified on the FAFSA. We have taken this information to a higher level, developing a club to help with social support during their college experience. The name of our newly based campus club is "Foster to Famous." It is our great hope that this venue will help raise awareness around the issues of foster care and roadblocks to higher education.

We have only been in existence since mid March of 2010, however, to date we have 68 students who have signed up to participate. Since that time we have had several fundraisers, one of them to raise funds to allocate for a food assistance program. This program will ensure that students get a hot meal on a day where they may not otherwise have had one.

These young adults have been through a lot, but are resilient and determined to build a better future for themselves. The experience with these students not only helps empower them, but furthermore, helps our staff become more aware of the issues and struggles they face.

## Testimony from foster youth, Mikisha Deason

I am married with two boys and am currently attending Citrus College in Glendora CA. I was in the Foster Youth program from ages 2 to 17. I moved from home to home and school to school over the years. My senior year of high school I attended three different schools due to moving around so much. At one point I was told by my social worker that I would never graduate with my senior class. Although it was difficult to hear, I continued to do the best I could and graduated with my class of 2002. I have been through many struggles but I have not allowed them to stop me. I am the first person in my family to actually graduate from high school, and furthermore to head on to college. I am a child development major striving to become a kindergarten teacher. I am looking forward to the chance to be involved with and make an impact on young children's lives.

Attending Citrus College has been a positive experience for me. I have been fortunate enough to come in contact with the "Foster to Famous" club on campus and, in fact, am currently club President. In this leading role, I hope to connect our members with their peers as we regain control over our lives through support, skill building and healing opportunities.

## Newspaper article that ran in the April 2010 edition of the school paper

*Once a foster youth reaches the age of 18, they no longer have a support system provided by the state. When on their own, it is ideal that they go on to lead successful lives. But this is not always the case. Too often, emancipated foster youth end up dealing with unemployment, lack of stability and homelessness. More than 19,000 foster youth will age out of the foster care system each year and approximately 1,200 of them will be homeless, according to Children's Law Center of Los Angeles. That is thousands of young adults who are at risk and many without a complete education.*

*Foster to Famous, a new campus club, has just been launched this spring. The club was the brainchild of Katrina Hewitt, the campus foster youth liaison, and Citrus College student Mikisha Deason, who is a former foster care child herself. Hewitt expressed gratitude to Lilia Medina, Director of Financial Aid, for being "supportive and encouraging in allowing me to be the adviser of the Foster to Famous club, and make this dream a possibility."*

*This is where Deason and Hewitt began their vision together. They want to offer students aging out of the foster care system a place of non-judgmental support and an increased chance at success. According to Children's Law Center of Los Angeles less than 10 percent of foster youth enroll in college. "From the age of two to the age of 17, I was bounced around from school to school and from home to home, growing up in the foster care system, raised by someone other than my parents," Deason said. "Being raised in a foster home presents many life-changing obstacles, from low self-esteem and lack of education, to lack of relationships and depression."*

(article continues on next page)

## Success with Foster Youth... ...continued

"A lot of these students don't have any resources, a place to turn, money for books, or anyone to ask for help," Hewitt said. "Consequently, if they enroll and are not getting funds fast enough, they lose interest and drop out."

Hewitt said she has seen about 180 foster youth at Citrus, but knows of only three who have transferred. Club President Deason wants to increase that transfer rate. "That's ridiculous," she said. "It needs to be a lot higher."

Many foster students don't know about resources available to them, including grants and other programs. One resource offered to foster youth is the Chafee Grant, which pays up to \$5,000 per academic year. Students may also look into the Independent Living Program for housing, the Change a Life Foundation Scholarship, and the YESS program.

YESS, which stands for Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success, offers classes in 10-week increments at Citrus. These classes are designed to help students aging out of the system to prepare for life on their own. Students learn how to write a resume, complete a job application, write a check, open a bank account and eat properly. "I thought I might even drop out because I didn't know these resources were out there for me, and I didn't feel like I could get through this alone," club member Darneisha Nesby said. "I was shy and scared to reach out

because I thought people might look at me and think there's something wrong with me because I was in foster care."

"Darneisha really surprised me," Hewitt said, "because of how active she was from the get go." Deason knows what it is like to be homeless and on the streets. Now, she has her husband, Matt, the club's vice president, to support her. Matt is not a former foster youth, but he offers energetic support to his wife.

Deason said she doesn't want other foster youth to feel like they are alone because they aren't.

The club's first meeting was on March 12. Members have already designed club Tshirts, which are on sale for \$10, to promote the club and raise funds for projects and scholarships.

Foster to Famous has begun planning activities such as volunteering at foster homes and hosting a clothing drive. Club members were also involved in a fundraiser called Peace 4 Kids, which was a 2.5-mile walk in Long Beach that happened on March 27.

Foster to Famous aims to be a supportive, stable club for foster youth to meet each other, get resources, receive advice and build relationships. "Open up, join our family and we will be your support," Deason said about anyone who wants to join and volunteer.



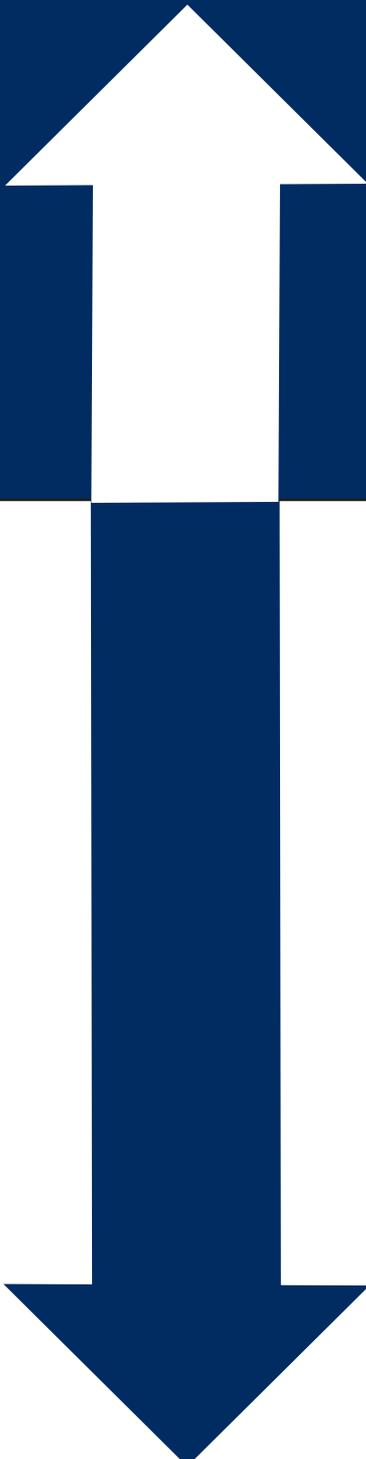
# Updates... ...from OCC and Fullerton College

The Orange Coast College Financial Aid Staff was very excited to participate in the "I Can Afford College" campaign with the theme "Free Rides to College." We were delighted that this campaign was able to help current and prospective Orange Coast College students. Our goal was to educate these students about Financial Aid. We want to encourage them to discover all the Financial Aid resources that are available so they may pursue the dream of a college education. To celebrate, OCC had an "Awareness Day" on May 18<sup>th</sup> and we hope one of our students will have the opportunity to win the grand prize of a car and a two year community college scholarship from the "I Can Afford College" campaign.

At Fullerton College, Nancy Larson, Financial Aid Coordinator is retiring after 30 years of service to the North Orange County Community College District. She will be missed! Teresita Guillen is being transferred to the Financial Aid Office from EOPS, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Three colleges were awarded grant pilot programs called the Aid Success Study Project and Financial Aid As A Paycheck. The chosen colleges are Mt. San Antonio College, Long Beach City College, and Fullerton College.





# Enrollments are up

# Resources are down

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Sherrie Padilla  
Financial Aid Director  
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Kimberly Westby  
Dean of Student Support Services  
Cerritos Community College District

## Swipe, Sign, All worries gone!!! (for the most part)

By Sona Aslanyan, Los Angeles Mission College



As we near the completion of the Spring 2010 semester and the close of the academic year of 2009–2010, LA Mission College is slowly gearing towards the introduction of the new Higher One debit cards that will be used starting this summer for our disbursements. For an implementation that will hold for the whole LACCD district, here at LA Mission College we have been tagged as the “guinea pigs,” as they say. The new card, called the “myLACCD Debit Card,” was advertised at our Student Services Day on May 12<sup>th</sup>, where we worked together with Higher One to educate the students of the changes yet to come. Some students were quite alarmed and hesitant at the thought of such a great change, mainly because they have become so comfortable with the old ways of receiving paper checks; yet others were really excited and happy to witness such a change in progress. Our explaining to the students that the new Debit Cards will work like regular debit/credit cards helped to ease their worries. Their discovering that an ATM will be available on campus also helped to lighten the prospect of transition. Students will need to activate their new cards as soon as they receive them in the mail, and from there...it’s as simple as ‘Swipe and Sign.’

“MyLACCD Debit Card” is a tongue twister by name but a time saver by nature. For our office, and for the District itself, this should help with time spent on lost checks, stale dated checks, and bad EFT accounts. But with change also comes some challenges. We now need to focus our attention on educating our students about the new cards’ arrival. We have to make sure that their addresses are current and that they don’t throw away their cards thinking that it’s junk mail. Advertising, marketing and a little word of mouth will go a long way and for the next month or so, these will be our exact priorities. With the success at LA Mission, we hope to have the ball rolling through the rest of our eight sister campuses this fall.

To better serve the students’ needs, our staff members will also have their own debit cards to help familiarize themselves with the account online and how the whole implementation will work, from step 1 of receiving the card in the mail to the last step of withdrawing funds from their card. We at LA Mission College are excited and hope the new transition brings positive results.

## USA Funds will continue to be “There for You”

By Ron Lee, USA Funds

Although no new FFELP loans can be issued after June 30, it’s important to note that the budget reconciliation legislation does not eliminate the FFELP. As we have throughout our history as a student loan guarantor, USA Funds® will continue to provide attentive service to schools, students and parents in the administration of already-disbursed FFELP loans. Moreover, we offer resources to financial aid offices to help them with transition issues involving USA Funds-guaranteed loans.

Looking to the future, USA Funds will continue to support financial aid professionals, as well as the institutions, students and families they serve, with programs, products and services consistent with our nonprofit mission of enhancing preparation for, access to and success in higher education.

The types of services USA Funds delivers and the role we play will change, but the following are a few examples of services we will continue to provide:

- Support for initiatives that enhance the financial literacy of college students.
- Helping students minimize education debt and equipping them to repay their loans.
- Assistance for borrowers in resolving repayment problems.
- Training and program compliance support to financial aid administrators.
- Reaching out to underserved populations to help them benefit from higher education.

You can look forward in the coming months to additional communications about specific products and programs from USA Funds.

We are proud of the support we have provided during the past 50 years to more than 21 million students and parents and thousands of postsecondary institutions, and we look forward to continuing to be “there for you.”

### CREDITS

Editor, Graphic Design and Layout  
Dennis Schroeder

Copy Editors  
Calvin Rankin and Greg Ryan

### NEXT ISSUE

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