



MASFAP Monitor

January 2024 Volume 2024, Issue 1



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Matthew's Message

**Matthew Kearney, MASFAP President
 Director Student Financial Services, Southeast
 Missouri State University**



Embracing Challenges, Celebrating Unity:

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter for 2024! As we embark on this new year, we find ourselves facing challenges that demand our collective strength, resilience, and innovation. Despite the hurdles posed by FAFSA Simplification and delayed processing, it's heartening to witness how our association continues to rise to the occasion.

FAFSA Simplification has undoubtedly presented its share of obstacles, affecting students and families across the nation. The delays in processing only compound these challenges. However, it is during such times that the true spirit of MASFAP shines through. As a community dedicated to supporting higher education, we are committed to navigating these complexities together.

I am thrilled to report that our delegates and Early Awareness Committee, along with many other MASFSAP members have been working tirelessly to

address these issues head-on. The collaborative efforts between MASFAP members are inspiring, as we collectively find innovative solutions to ensure that students and their families receive the financial aid they need. Our unity in the face of adversity exemplifies the strength of our association.

In the spirit of collaboration, I am excited to tout the Week of Action for FAFSA completion. This initiative underscores our commitment to empowering students and promoting financial literacy. By working together, we can make a significant impact and encourage more students to take the crucial step towards pursuing higher education.

Looking ahead, I am optimistic about the great year we have before us as a profession. The challenges we face will

Matthew's Message *(Continued)*

undoubtedly shape our journey, but with each obstacle comes an opportunity for growth and improvement. I eagerly anticipate the connections we will forge, the knowledge we will share, and the strides we will collectively make to better serve our students and their families.

As we navigate through 2024, let us remember that our strength lies in our unity and ability to collaborate. Together, we can overcome any challenge and continue to make a positive impact on the lives of those seeking higher education.

I am genuinely excited about the prospect of connecting with each one of you throughout the year. Your dedication to our mission is commendable, and I look forward to celebrating our successes together.

Here's to a year of resilience, collaboration, and achievement!

Warm regards,

Matthew Kearney

**BLOCK YOUR
CALENDAR OFF
NOW FOR OUR
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE:
November 4-6,
2024**

***Lodge of the
Four Seasons***



The Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel (MASFAP) is a dynamic association dedicated to serving and advocating for practitioners, users and providers of student financial aid programs.

MASFAP Week of Action



By Emily Haynam, University of Missouri – Columbia

Well, all, we did it! It was a pleasure to work with all of you to help over 100 students/families this week with their FAFSA questions!! 😊

Final numbers below. A total of 103 people over the course of four days, and an average of nearly 30 people per night were assisted.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Time Slot	Mon. 1/8	Tues. 1/9	Wed. - 1/10	Thurs. 1/11	
5:30-7:00	18	22	11	21	
7:00-8:30	8	10	5	8	Grand Total Count:
Total Counts:	26	32	16	29	103
				Average Per Night:	25.75

I cannot thank everyone enough for your willingness to volunteer and participate in this event! 😊😊

It takes a village, and we have a special one in Missouri. Over 70 volunteers in total, that's amazing!

We will never truly know the direct impact we have made, but many more families were alerted with the marketing efforts done by many schools/state/other groups and agencies for this event, the FAFSA Frenzy events, webinars, and other sources of assistance. I think we are succeeding as a MASFAP Team in getting the word out and helping folks in a variety of ways.

I also wanted to share a tip that came up at least 4 times during the week about the FSA ID processing loop:

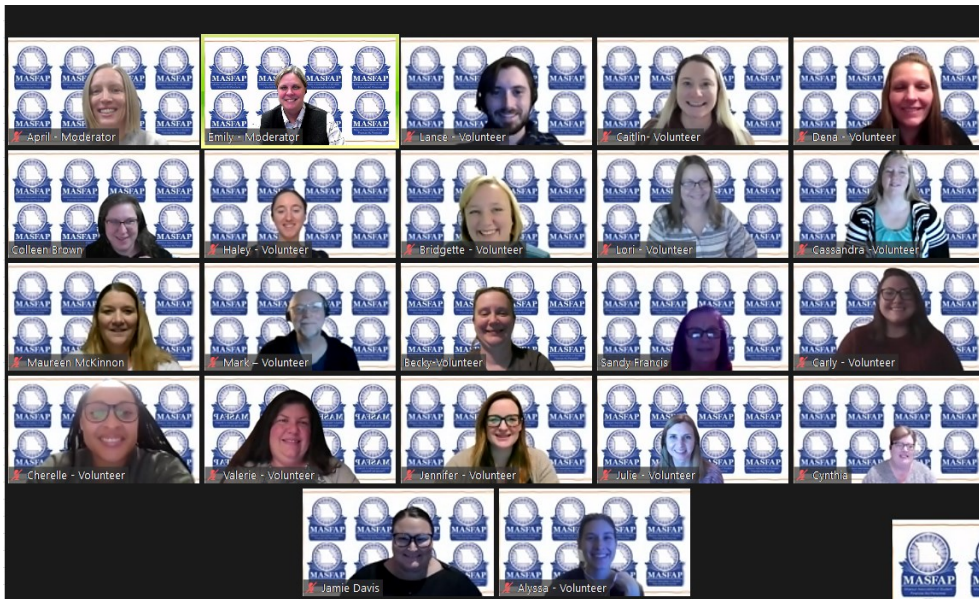
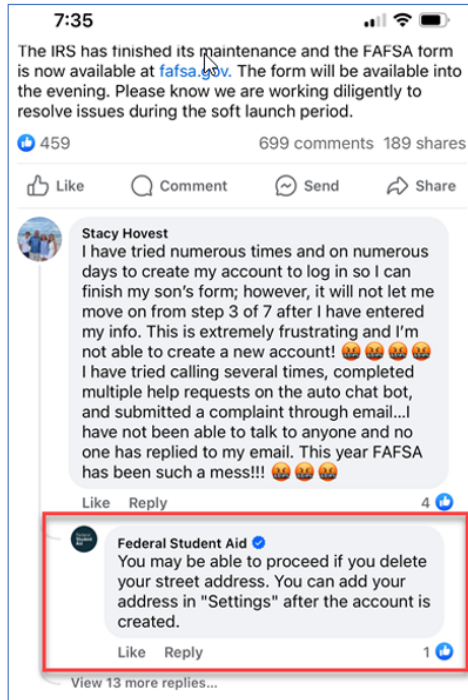
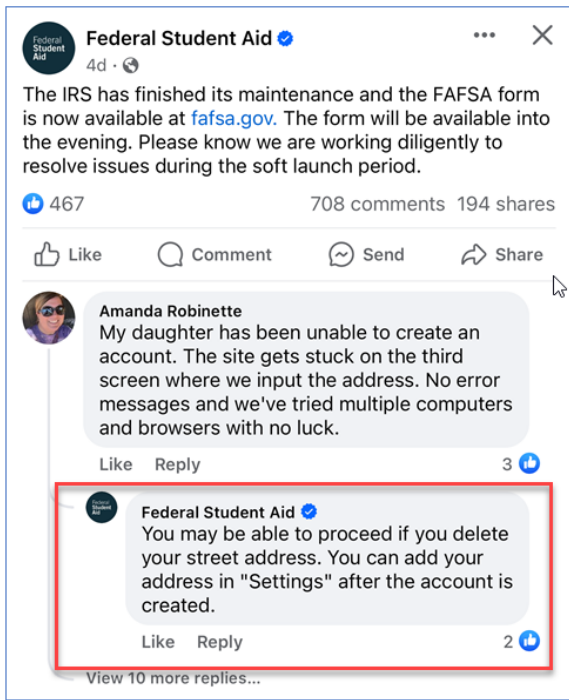
We learned that some participants were not able to advance past step 3 when creating their FSA ID, as they just kept getting looped back to the page and no error message

Shout out to Alex Miller who first brought up the solution she had learned from a participant who was told by FSA:

- o Delete out the address now from step 3 and it will allow you continue
- o People can add the address later in the settings after the account is created

MASFAP Week of Action, *Continued*

I also randomly saw this same tip being given by FSA the next day on their Facebook page with the same advice:



Check out this press from Mizzou's media relations:

[Link](#) here for the article



MDHEWD hired Cade Tremain as our Outreach Coordinator in the Southwest Region. Cade started with DHEWD in August 2023 and is a graduate of University of Central Missouri.

- Ethan Bragg, William Jewell College and his wife Rachel had their first child! Lincoln Robert Bragg was born at 8:02 AM on November 7, 2023 and measured at 6 pounds and 19 inches.



- Becca Diskin, Missouri Southern State University: Happy to announce that the Financial Aid Office at Missouri Southern is fully staffed! Such a valuable component of surviving 2024! Photo attached from our Christmas brunch.

- Brice Baumgartner, Hannibal-LaGrange University: In the fall I was recognized as a Colson Fellow, by The Colson Center for Christian Worldview. I am thankful for the two years of study with colleagues here at HLGU to complete this program.
- Hannah Smith, Saint Louis University: My partner and I just closed on a house this week!
- Saint Louis University: We are extremely excited to welcome Alex DeLonis as our Assistant Vice President for Student Financial Services at SLU next month!

- Saint Louis University: Our outreach team has been hard at work conducting FAFSA programming at local high schools! We began our outreach in August and have programming scheduled through February. Below is a glance at programming we have completed or is scheduled:
 - 28 Financial Aid 101 Presentations
 - 10 FAFSA Presentations
 - 13 FAFSA Completion Events
- Derek Bohnsack, Missouri Valley College: I was promoted to Director of Admissions & Financial Aid. And recently a previous employee came back to the college, Jessica Clevenger is our Assistant Director of Financial Aid. Also, we combined the Business office and Financial Aid into the same office - Student Financial Services - still separate duties but a one stop shop.
- Saint Louis University is excited to welcome new members to their team!



Back Row: Jacob Harlan, Erik Drehs, Garrett Worley, Edward Bambrick

Second Row: Madison Sidlo, Sarah Feager, Isabel Carleton, Brittany Bazile, Erin Gallagher

Front Row: Annie Herpel and Justin DeKock

Not pictured: Kiara Harmon

FAA Spotlight



Spotlight: Kris Stodgel, Central Methodist University

What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?

Director, Office of Financial Assistance. I “do it all”. 😊 I am in charge of 5 other employees in our office. We process aid packages for all of our campus locations. We handle Undergraduates located on our main campus in Fayette, as well as Graduate Students, on-line students, dual-credit students, and are participating in the Experimental Sites Initiative/ Second-Chance Pell program. I review FAFSA information after it has been processed by our document coordinators and/or aid coordinators. I assist in training all individuals in our office, work on all federal reports, and annual audits.

How long have you worked at your institution?

Six years – I came in at the tail-end of the 2016-17 academic year (we do summer as a trailer).

What has your career path been like?

I worked for many years in an office environment while living in Illinois, eventually becoming the Office Manager. When I had kids, I chose to work closer to home as a classroom aide. My family moved to Missouri in 2002. I was then a paraprofessional, and went on to obtain a BA in Early Childhood Education. I taught from 2007 to 2014. I then worked in a local church office as Director of Religious Education. I quit that job to come here and began in the Office of Financial Assistance in the role of Document Coordinator. I moved to the role of CGES (College of Graduate and Extended Studies) Aid Coordinator after 1 year. I worked in that role until fall 2022. I worked for a short time in our Business Office, and then moved back to Financial Assistance as the Director in July, 2022.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

I have an Assistant Director who has worked in Financial Assistance for over 10 years. I have a Loan Coordinator who is new to our office and the world of Financial Assistance (hired August 2023). Our CGES Aid Coordinator has been here just over 1 year. Our document coordinator for our CLAS and CGES students has been here for 3 years. Our current Administrative Assistant/Assistant Document Coordinator was also hired in August 2023. They are all great workers, and we get along very well, working as a great team to assist our students to the best of our ability.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

Other than my previous two directors, no.

What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

Taking on the Second Chance Pell Program in July 2022 has been a huge challenge – it's not easy to assist students where we have no real means of communication except our Provost and her team who visit the sites weekly. All items are handled “in person” and “on paper”. We have over twelve locations we serve currently.



FAA Spotlight, *Continued*

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I married my high school sweetheart in July 1990. We reside in Boonville, MO. He works for Caterpillar, Inc. (thus the move here to Missouri in 2002 from Illinois) We have two children, Kas will be 29 in February, and Madolyn will be 26 in February. Kas is married to Sarah, and they live in Boonville. Kas runs their own bakery business, which just started last spring. They have two cats. Madolyn lives in Midway, MO and obtained a degree at CMU in 2019. She works in Columbia, and has a dog we call "The Olive". My husband, Andy, and I have 4 dogs of our own at home. We are CUBS fans!!

What do you like to do in your free time?

Is free time a thing in financial aid? I have two main hobbies – running and weight training. I teach two nights a week at the YMCA in Boonville (it's a 30-minute, low-key cardio/strength class). I have been running distance since about 2007, and qualified for Boston and Chicago Marathons in 2022. I ran a 50K in April 2023.

What is the last good movie or Netflix series you watched and enjoyed?

I am not much of a Netflix watcher. I really enjoy ROKU channel for old TV shows – Bewitched, A Family Affair, The Partridge Family – I've binged these. (Showing my age). I also enjoy PLUTO TV as it has an entire channel devoted to Beverly Hills 90210 (I think I've seen them all about 10 times now).

What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?

I am a HUGE 70s music fan. I saw GENESIS back in the 80s, which was so cool. I've also seen John Mellencamp (his early days) 3 times – huge fan. I am also a HUGE fan of the King of Pop – Michael Jackson. I just got a new record player for Christmas, so pulled out the vinyl I still own (again, showing my age) over break.

Do you like traveling?

Yes and no. I don't do flying, and I do get car sick, so it can be tricky. And "I saw Titanic" so I wouldn't do a cruise – that also makes me nauseated.

Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you:

I have an identical twin sister. I can still write shorthand (to some extent), which I learned in high school.



Updates from MDHEWD

Journey to College

FAFSA Frenzy

MDHEWD recommends students participating in the dual credit/dual enrollment scholarship should check their status in the student portal account regularly. If they elected to do so, students will receive a notification that their status has changed once MDHEWD staff have completed the application review. If the student's application is incomplete, staff will contact the student, letting them know what information or documentation they need to provide to complete the application.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (MDHEWD) has launched a [FAFSA website](#) to help keep students informed while the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filing period is delayed. The new website includes information about what individuals can do now to prepare, how to file, and what to review for the FAFSA. Along with easy-to-follow steps, students can access answers to frequently asked questions, infographics, and helpful blogs.

MASFAP On The Move at MASFAA



What Is Your New Year's Resolution?

Bring my lunch to work this year! I'm over the skipped lunches or eating out!!

Hannah Masters, Cottey College

Personally, I want to practice Mindfulness, and professionally I want to be even more organized.

Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School

My resolutions for the new year are to hit 10,000 steps at least three days a week (which I will begin as soon as it is not so frigid outside) and to bake at least one loaf of sourdough each week!

Ethan Miller, Southeast Missouri State University

Not big into new year resolutions but time seems to go by so much faster now. So working to be more present in my family life, particularly being more mindful of spending time together without electronics.

Jamie Davis, University of Missouri—Columbia

My new year's resolution is to do more leisure reading. I just got a library card this week 😊

Jennifer Bell, Webster University

Personally I need to grow in my faith. If this is accomplished I will be a better person and professional.

Brice Baumgartner, Hannibal-LaGrange University

My personal goal for 2024 is to spend more time in the present. Especially with my family. Too many times we are present but not there and I don't want to miss a moment of my twin daughters (2 years old!) growing up.

Derek Bohnsack, Missouri Valley College

My personal New Year's Resolution is to find more time to read.

Taylor Grimm, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

My personal New Year's Resolution is to workout at least 5x a week.

Cherelle Washington, MOCAN

To stress less.....

Ginny Burns, MOHELA

My resolution this year is to read at least 24 books!

Hannah Smith, Saint Louis University

FAA Spotlight



Spotlight: Paula Clay, MDHEWD

What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?

Director of Outreach and I manage the outreach team within the Communications & Outreach department. I am responsible for overseeing the department's outreach and services programs, such as FAFSA Frenzy, Apply Missouri, Decision Day, Journey to College K-8, and FAFSA Completion Project.

How long have you worked at your institution?

1 year and 8 months

What has your career path been like?

I started off my career as an Enrollment Services Representative at Westminster College in Fulton, MO. I was an Outreach & Early Awareness Specialist for the Missouri Department of Higher Education for a few years. Additionally, I worked 12 plus years at Lincoln University in various roles in financial aid, first-year experience and academic advising. Next, I worked in human resources as a Senior Employee Development Specialist for five years at MoDOT, before returning to the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development in 2022.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

The Outreach team is passionate about helping students pursue their postsecondary options and helping them understand how to access funds to help pay for college.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

Yes, Ruth Canada-Painter, who works for Heifer International, as an engagement and outreach program officer. The best advice I received from her was, "never assume you know what the community needs are, ask them." I learned that asking questions is a great way to build rapport with the community you serve.

What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

We are getting back to our pre-pandemic numbers in terms of high school visits, speaking events, and college fairs. We had an amazing Journey to College Day with over 125 high school counselors, college access and financial aid professionals! The day provided great conversation, networking and sharing information.

Tell us a bit about yourself and your family

I am originally from Ohio and moved to Missouri in 1998 where I met my husband Robert of 22 years. He is a former Mizzou football player and works for the Public Service Commission. (I am still living down the loss of **The** Ohio State to Mizzou in the Cotton Bowl.) I have a junior and sophomore in high school who I am very proud of and excited to help them with their postsecondary options. (It's my time to shine!)

What do you like to do in your free time?

I love thrifting and bookstores, that is where you will find me.

FAA Spotlight, *Continued*

What is the last good movie or Netflix series you watched and enjoyed?

The Equalizer 4

What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?

R&B – Any of the 6 Janet Jackson concerts I attended. 😊

Do you like traveling?

Yes, I only wish I did more of it. Last year, I made my first international trip to Mexico, and I loved it. It's my favorite thing to do with my family.

Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you:

I am a huge science-fiction fan, and my favorite writer is Octavia Butler. I am currently reading *Who Fears Death* by Nnedi Okorafor



Monitor 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 publishing in the newsletter. In general, submissions are made by members of the organization. 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. Submissions may be limited to one article per Monitor, per person, company, or organization, depending on space.

Articles are intended to be informational and for the benefit of MASFAP members, not for company promotion or advertising.

If the author is unavailable or a resolution can't be reached, the editor will refer it to the committee chairperson and President for a decision about publication.

The MASFAP Monitor is brought to you by the Communications Committee. **Submissions for the next MASFAP Monitor are due April 10, 2024.**

Meet the 2024 MASFAP Board



Hannah Masters— Technology

The technology committee is very lucky as our goals generate from the needs of our membership and other committees each year! If you want to help with a committee, but don't know where to start; volunteer for the technology

committee where you will work closely with a variety of board members and committees!!



Anna Plattner —Secretary

In the position of Secretary, my goal is to maintain the quality of minutes and information that has become the standard for my position.



Jamie Davis—Budget and Finance

I am excited to see the amazing work MASFAP will do in 2024 and my goal is to help support the association in any way I can.



Bridgette Betz—Program

The Program Committee is up and running and already thinking about the fall! If you want to be a part of this exciting team, please volunteer! Also, if you have a topic of interest you would like to see presented (or want to present yourself), please share that with me – all ideas are welcome!



Charissa Davis and Julie Loftin—Newcomer

We are honored to chair the 2024 Newcomer Committee. Our goals are to continue with the tradition of making newcomers feel welcome by promoting inclusivity and access for new members, and building strong relationships across the state! We invite any member, old or new, who would like to help welcome newcomers to join the committee. The committee requires a monthly time commitment for roughly one, hour long zoom meeting. The bulk of our work will be centered around the 2024 MASFAP fall conference. We look forward to working with a committee full of MASFAP members interested in

helping our newbies feel like they are truly a part of our MASFAP family!



Cherelle Washington, Hannah Smith and Taylor Grimm—Early Awareness

The Early Awareness Committee is busy helping make sure High School Counselors and College Access Providers across the state are prepared now that the Better FAFSA has been officially released! The Early Awareness Committee, in conjunction with MOCAN, hosted/is hosting four in-person FAFSA walkthrough presentations 1/9/24 in Sikeston (moved to virtual due to the weather), 1/11/24 in Springfield, 1/12/24 in Kansas City (moved to virtual due to the weather), and 1/16/24 in Moberly. Sign up is located for these events and others at <https://mocollegecareer.org/events/>.

Some Committee members also volunteered for MASFAP's Week of Action and will have so many other events coming up including the counselor trainings – we hope



you will consider volunteering for this committee!

We need you!

The Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel (MASFAP) is a dynamic association dedicated to serving and advocating for practitioners, users and providers of student financial aid programs.

DEI Ad Hoc Committee



Co-Chairs Jennifer Bell and Ethan Miller — Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Announcing the MASFAP Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

As financial aid administrators, diversity in all forms, as well as equity and inclusion are concepts central to the work that we do every day, both in service to students, and in acknowledgement of the colleagues that we work alongside. With this in mind, we are excited to announce the addition of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Ad-hoc committee to MASFAP for 2024! This committee will be co-chaired by Ethan Miller (SEMO) and Jennifer Bell (Webster University), who are a part of MASFAP's Board this year.

As we begin this important work in service to our MASFAP membership, we are proceeding with three initial goals in mind.

1. **Assess the Needs of MASFAP Membership around issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that impact our daily work, and our profession as a whole.** We want to know about your most important and pressing DEI needs and how MASFAP can help address them. Having an understanding of what our membership is hoping for will help to inform our committee's priorities and work going forward.
2. **Professional Development.** MASFAP understands that the institutions within its membership have varying levels of professional development resources available to its financial aid office staff, and it is our goal to ensure that all MASFAP members have access to professional development opportunities around Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion issues that impact our profession and the students that we serve.
3. **Aligning our efforts with existing MASFAA and NASFAA DEI initiatives.** There is already some great work being done at the regional and national levels within our larger umbrella organizations. We believe that there is strength in numbers and that when we have a shared vision, we can get more done together. One band. One sound!

As we look to kick off our work this spring, we are seeking some enthusiastic committee members from our membership who are interested in working to have an impact within MASFAP around issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Please reach out to either Ethan Miller (eamiller@semo.edu) or Jennifer Bell (jenniferbell@webster.edu) with any questions that you might have, or to express interest in serving on the DEI ad-hoc committee this year. We look forward to serving you!

2024 Executive Board / Committee Chairs



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Serving Missouri since 1967

Visit us online!
www.MASFAP.org

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Disclaimer:
MASFAP, the Executive Board and Executive Committee are not responsible for the accuracy of any information contained in this newsletter as an authority, but rather its use as a guide. Further, the opinions expressed by the contributors are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official opinion of MASFAP, the Executive Board or the Committees.

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