MASFAP MONITOR

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

masfap.org

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Kimberly Meeker
MASFAP President
Director of Financial Aid, North Central Missouri College

Kimberly's Korner: Fueling Change with Positive Energy

If there is one thing financial aid professionals know, it's that change is inevitable.

And if there is one thing I've learned from serving alongside each of you this year, it's that no one navigates change quite like a financial aid administrator.

July 1 ushered in another wave of significant federal changes as provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (also referred to as the Working Families Tax Cut Act) began taking effect. New regulations, evolving guidance, implementation timelines, and the questions that inevitably follow have once again placed financial aid offices in the position of balancing compliance with compassion.

Sound familiar?

It seems every year brings another acronym, another legislative update, another deadline, and another opportunity to adapt. While the headlines may focus on what's changing, I believe it's equally important to focus on *how* we respond to those changes.

Throughout my presidency, I've shared lessons from Jon Gordon's The Energy Bus. One quote continues to resonate now more than ever:

"Positive energy and positive people create positive results. There is certainly a lot of negativity in the world and choosing positive energy helps us deal with the negative people and negative situations that can knock us off course."

Kimberly's Korner Continued

Positive energy doesn't mean pretending change isn't difficult. It doesn't ignore uncertainty or minimize the workload in front of us. Instead, it's a choice—a decision to lead with optimism, encourage one another, and focus our energy on what we can control.

And that brings me to another acronym many of us have been discussing lately: SOR—the Schedule of Reductions.

At first glance, SOR may feel like another compliance hurdle added to an already full plate. But what if we looked at it differently?

What if SOR also stood for:

Stewardship. Opportunity. Responsibility.

Stewardship reminds us that we are entrusted with administering federal financial aid responsibly and ethically.

Opportunity reminds us that every policy, every process, and every decision ultimately exists to create access and opportunity for students.

Responsibility reminds us that balancing compliance, institutional sustainability, and student success isn't new for us—it's what we do every single day.

This is our profession.

We are problem-solvers.

We are translators of complex regulations.

We are advocates for students.

We are leaders during uncertainty.

None of this work is easy. But it is meaningful.

Another favorite reminder from *The Energy Bus* feels especially appropriate right now:

"Every crisis offers an opportunity to grow stronger and wiser; to reach deep within and discover a better you that will create a better outcome."

The coming months will undoubtedly bring more questions than answers at times. Guidance will evolve. Processes will change. We will adjust, collaborate, and learn together—as we always do.

So, here's my encouragement to each of you.

Take a breath.

Remember why you chose this profession.

Lean on your MASFAP colleagues. Share ideas. Ask questions. Celebrate wins—big and small. Extend grace to yourself and to one another.

Kimberly's Korner Continued

Most importantly, remember this:

You are strong.

You are resilient.

You are wildly capable.

You've navigated unprecedented FAFSA changes, pandemic disruptions, simplification, new technology, staffing shortages, and countless regulatory updates. And each time, you've continued showing up for students.

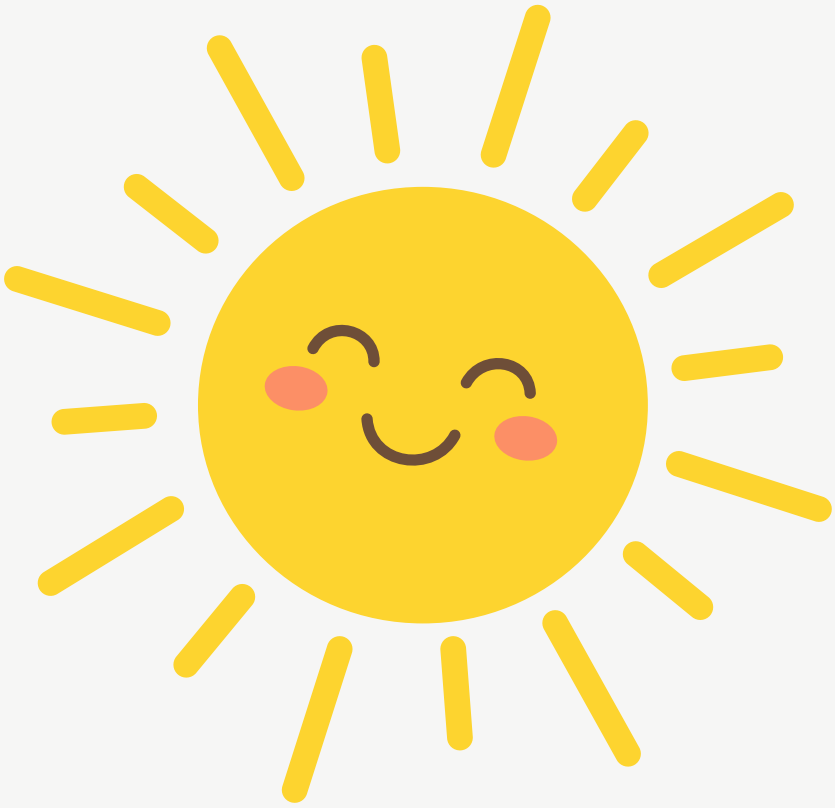
You'll do it again.

As we continue fueling change with positive energy, let's choose to see possibility where others see obstacles. Let's embrace stewardship, opportunity, and responsibility. And let's continue demonstrating what makes MASFAP so special—a community of professionals who don't just manage change...they lead through it.

Thank you for all you do for Missouri students and for one another. It is an honor to serve as your MASFAP President.

With gratitude and forward momentum,

Kimberly



Committee Updates

Corporate Support Committee Update

Join us in Lake Ozark, Missouri, November 9–11, for the 2026 MASFAP Conference: Fueling Change with Positive Energy: Inspiration, Intention, and Impact!
Get ready for a jam-packed schedule filled with engaging sessions, valuable networking opportunities, and practical ideas you can bring back to your institution. Together, we'll learn, connect, and be inspired to make a positive impact on the students and communities we serve.

If you register as an exhibitor you will receive: one conference exhibit space, which will consist of a 6' table, your organizations logo on streaming video during our video presentation, and acknowledgement of your sponsorship by the MASFAP President during lunch.
You also have the option to advertise in the MASFAP Program, which includes a ¼ page advertisement in the conference program. You can also choose this option without being an exhibitor and you do not need to be a MASFAP member to advertise!

– Ginny Burns

Newcomer Committee Update

The Newcomer Committee has been busy planning activities designed to welcome and connect our newest members to MASFAP. Our goal is to help new members build relationships, learn more about MASFAP, and become engaged in the organization through fun, informative, and interactive opportunities. We look forward to helping our newest members feel welcomed and supported as they begin their MASFAP journey.

-Charissa Davis, Sarah Williamson

Committee Updates

Early Awareness Committee Update

EAC is hard at work revamping our High School Counselor Workshop and getting dates on the calendar for 2026. Thank you to all who have already agreed to host a workshop on your campus! Now that FAFSA Simplification feels like a distant memory, we are refocusing the workshop on affordability conversations and working through complicated scenarios that our high school partners may face when counseling students on their post-secondary options. Weaving in valuable hands-on and small group learning opportunities, we are hoping that workshop participants will walk away more prepared and energized to tackle financing conversations. Keep an eye out for finalized workshop dates soon!

-Kaitlyn Venta, Hannah (Smith) Zenishek, and Taylor Grimm

Commitee Updates

The wait is over—registration is now open for the 2026 MASFAP Annual Conference, and we can't wait to see you this November 9 -11 in Lake Ozark!

This year's theme, Fueling Change with Positive Energy: Inspiration, Intention, Impact, reflects the incredible work financial aid professionals do every day to navigate change while continuing to support students. The Program Committee has been hard at work crafting an outstanding conference experience featuring the regulatory and compliance content you need, along with leadership, professional development, and skill-building sessions designed to inspire and strengthen you both personally and professionally.

We're especially excited to introduce a dedicated Bursar Track this year! These sessions are geared specifically toward our student accounts professionals and will be presented by experts working in bursar and student accounts offices. Whether your institution has a combined financial aid and student accounts office or you work closely with your bursar colleagues, this new track offers even more opportunities for collaboration and learning.

As always, the MASFAP Annual Conference continues to be one of the best professional development values available. While we have had to make adjustments to registration fees to keep pace with rising costs, we remain committed to providing an exceptional conference experience at an incredible value.

The registration fee for the 2026 conference is $375 per attendee. Even better, when the director of your institution's financial aid office attends and pays the full registration fee, every additional attendee from that institution receives a significantly reduced registration rate:

- Small Schools (0–999 students): $10 per additional attendee
- Medium Schools (1,000–9,999 students): $15 per additional attendee
- Large Schools (10,000+ students): $20 per additional attendee

Especially in a year shaped by OB3 and the many regulatory changes impacting our profession, there's never been a better time to invest in professional development for your entire office!

We've attached a tentative conference agenda, and it's packed with timely, engaging sessions that we're incredibly excited to share with you. Even better, we're still putting the finishing touches on additional sessions featuring many of the faces you know and love from NASFAA, MASFAA, and other respected leaders in our profession.

This is one conference you won't want to miss!

Commitee Updates

REGISTER HERE!

We look forward to seeing you in November as we come together to learn, connect, and continue Fueling Change with Positive Energy: Inspiration, Intention, Impact.

See you at the conference!

Psst... there is also still time to register for the MASFAP Summer Book Club, which has been a great influence on this year's conference theme!

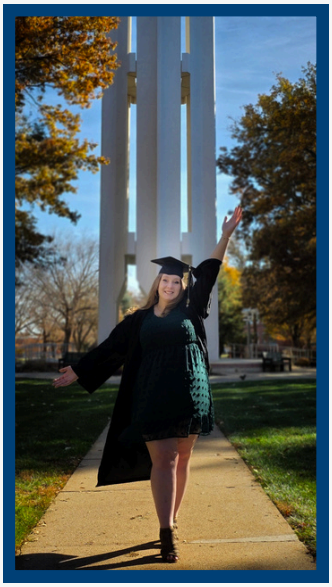
MASFAP Program Committee

The MASFAP Program Committee includes the following volunteers: Keri Gilbert (Chair), Stephens College, Whitney Bingham, North Central Missouri College, Lynda Bjorklun, Stephens College, Carly Blagg, Southeast Missouri State University, Ginny Burns, MOHELA, Meghan Carr, University of Missouri, Natalie Crawford, Drury University, Charissa Davis, University of Central Missouri, Alex DeLonis, Saint Louis University, Jason Enright, Stephens College, Melissa Findley, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation, Amy Hager, Moberly Area Community College, Haley Held, Saint Louis University, Kari Lenz, University of Missouri - Kansas City, Krissy Loenneke, Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing & Health Science, Michele Logue, University of Missouri - Kansas City, Tony Lubbers, University of Central Missouri, Kathy Luther, East Central College, Alex Miller, MOHELA, Madeline Waskowiak, University of Missouri - Kansas City, Jessica Weir, University of Missouri, Kaley Williams, Kansas City University, Linda Williams, Southeast Missouri State University, Sarah Williamson, North Central Missouri College, and Hannah Zenishek, Saint Louis University.

FUELING CHANGE WITH
POSITIVE ENERGY
INSPIRATION, INTENTION, IMPACT
MASFAP Conference | November 9-11, 2026

– Keri Gilbert, Stephens College

Tidbits & Happenings



I celebrated two special family milestones this year: welcoming a new daughter-in-law, Kennedy, when son, Kade, married, and watching daughter, Montana, graduate from NWMSU with a degree in Agricultural Education before beginning her career as the Agriculture Education Instructor/FFA Advisor at Macks Creek High School.

-Anna Plattner of Grand River Technical School

My son, Bennett, graduated and is enrolled at Columbia College as a Bio/Chem major. I am not sure what to do with my Friday nights and Saturdays in the fall without football and marching band competitions. Maybe canasta or bridge, let me know if you have any suggestions.

– Bryce Baumgardner, Hannibal-LaGrange University

Tidbits & Happenings

Kaitlyn Venta, MOCAN – Summer family vacation to South Haven, MI

Heather Gaumer, Sallie Mae - My son, Forrest, just started kindergarten this week at our year-round elementary school.

I had the opportunity to co-chair the MASFAA Summer Institute and Leadership Symposium, June 1-5 in Indianapolis. It was an amazing week of professional development, networking and collaborating with colleagues from across the region. It was a rewarding experience to help plan and facilitate a program that supports growth and development of new and seasoned financial aid leaders.

– Jamie Davis, University of Missouri - Columbia

Tidbits & Happenings

Alex DeLonis was elected as President for MASFAA! He will start his three-year term this November.

SLU hired **Destiny Shocklee** as Scholarship Coordinator!

Jeremy Henson, University of Missouri-Columbia – On July 6, he started new position as Senior Assistant Director of Operations

Tidbits & Happenings

Some of the SLU crew (**Dave Rice, Alex DeLonis, and Hannah Zenishek**) were able to present on our student call center at the NASFAA conference in late June!

Graduating from Leadership Northwest Missouri on July 16th

– **Kimberly Meeker, North Central Missouri College**

Logan University had some promotions! **James Rollins** has been promoted to Senior Financial Aid Advisor and **Rachel Murphy** has been promoted to Financial Aid Advisor.

MASFAP On the Move

Thanks for all who attended the **2026 MASFAP Town Hall**, which featured discussions on legislative and policy changes, state higher education updates, leadership initiatives, and OB3 implementation. The event provided an opportunity to connect and stay current on issues affecting students and institutions statewide.

FAA Spotlight -Breanna Scanlon

What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?
I am the Assistant Director at College of the Ozarks. I have the privilege of helping students and parents navigate the FAFSA, search for scholarships and try to meet student needs. I get to work close with our enrollment management team to help prospective students make the most informed decision about college. I process aid for the college and directly supervise our student workers in the FA office.

How long have you worked at your institution?
I started at College of the Ozarks in January 2026.

What has your career path been like?
I graduated from College of the Ozarks in December of 2016 and started my Financial Aid journey at Evangel University as a Financial Aid Counselor. I took a slight detour into academic advising for a year and a half around 2018, but felt the calling to come back to Financial Aid at Missouri State University in January 2020. I then moved into the Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Bryan University in 2024 until I moved into my current position at College of the Ozarks in January 2026.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution and a recent accomplishment.
I have the amazing privilege of working with and learning from our director, Jeff Ford, who has been in Financial Aid for many years. It has been such an honor to be able to learn more of the high-level parts of financial aid processing from him and look at how we can continually improve our processes.

I also get to work with four work study students during the semester. I have always enjoyed working alongside the students and being able to not only teach them, but to also learn from them as well. We have a great group of students who work in our office.

Do you have any mentors in your professional life?
I have been blessed to work with so many amazing people during my time in Financial Aid. Marcia Bates (Formerly Evangel University) helped teach me the basics when I came into Financial Aid. Victoria Jacobson (MSU) helped me sharpen my skills with graduate students. Josh Havemann (Bryan University) helped me establish some leadership basics and how to create a positive team culture. Now I am so excited to work with Jeff at College of the Ozarks and learn from his experience.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
I love working with the students and helping them navigate college and finances. I know how stressful paying for college can be and being able to help students navigate and overcome it is such a rewarding part of what I get to do every day.

What is your favorite local spot near your institution?
Being close to downtown Branson makes us very spoiled for choice, but my current favorite is Mythical 'Wich in Branson. It is such a fun place to go to, and their sandwiches are so great! My current favorite is the Seoul Roll.

Tell us a little about yourself and your family.
I grew up in Sparta (SE of Springfield) where I met my wonderful husband, Jack. We have been together for almost 12 years and now have an amazing 4 year old, Saoirse. We both have family close by, so we are so blessed to have a family that we can get together with and spend time with. Our home is also filled with three furry family members. We have two cats and our Great Pyrenees/ Poodle mix dog Grizzly, who have finally come to terms with having a human sibling.

What do you like to do in your free time?
With having a four year old, we are constantly moving. This summer we have been swimming a lot, going to garage sales/thrifting and grabbing our weekly cake pop. I love to hang out with my friends when we get the chance and I am an avid reader.

What is a book, podcast, movie, and/or series you would recommend?
I read so many books it is so hard to recommend just one. We do love movies in our household so I would definitely recommend Kpop Demon Hunters. The soundtrack is great, even if you don't have kids!
What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?
I listen to just about anything other than Jazz. It really depends on what my mood is. My favorite concert I have gone to is AJR in Kansas City. They do such an amazing job putting on a great performance with amazing visuals alongside their songs.

Do you like traveling?
We LOVE traveling. We traveled every year for our anniversary until Covid hit. By the time traveling was more accessible after Covid, we had an infant and have yet to make another big trip since then. Our current plan is our first trip to Disney World this October and maybe our first international trip since 2019 for our 10-year wedding anniversary.

Getting to know MASFAP!

What is your favorite summer activity?

"Spending time at the lake with the family and unplugging from everything."

– Jamie Davis, University of Missouri - Columbia

"Traveling! Give me a pool/beach, palm trees, lots of sun, umbrella drink and good friends!"

—Ginny Burns, MOHELA

"I Love mowing the yard! =)"

—Kelly Fleming, Barnes Jewish College

"Staying in the A/C!"

- Keri Gilbert, Stephens College

"My favorite summer activity is gardening! It is satisfying and therapeutic to see that I can keep plants alive and have fresh produce to eat."

—Kerry Hallahan, Logan University

"Spending long evenings playing outside with my kids."

—Jeremy Henson, University of Missouri Columbia

"Traveling and hiking to new places!"

—Becca Diskin, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

"My favorite summer activity is attending the National Hot Air Balloon Classic in Iowa with my family."

- Heather Gaumer, Sallie Mae

"I love being outside and working in the yard, flower beds and garden!"

– *Marla Fernandez, Truman*

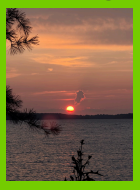
"Vacation at Julie Finn's!"

—Janice Barnes, Saint Louis University

"My favorite summer activity includes sun, water, good tunes, good company, and a cold drink!"

– Kimberly Meeker, North Central Missouri College

"I enjoy camping and lounging in the pool during the summer. Here is a sunset picture from Lake Carlyle."



—Julie Crabdree, Mineral Area

"My favorite summer activity revolves around time at the lake… playing euchre and bags (a.k.a. cornhole), skiing, coving with our friends, and simply enjoying quality time with my family. To me, it's the perfect family time and what summer is all about."

—Melissa Findley, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation

"My favorite summer activity is being outside, preferably playing golf or fishing."

– Brice Baumgardner, Hannibal-LaGrange University

"My favorite summer activity workwise is Journey to College Day, and personally it's going to the farmers market in the morning and reading by the pool in the afternoon!

—Alison Notter, MDHEWD

"Seeing shows at The Muny! We always picnic in Forest Park beforehand to get good parking and have been blessed with wonderful weather. We've gotten to see Hairspray, Shrek, and South Pacific – we have loved the season so far!"

– Hannah Zenishek, Saint Louis University

FAA Spotlight - Madeline Waskowiak

What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?
UMKC's Financial Wellness Support Specialist. I work within the financial wellness center helping students with any money related questions in 1:1 coaching appointments and workshops. I also supervise our five student workers and oversee our social media.

How long have you worked at your institution?
A full year in June!

What has your career path been like?
I initially worked with Missouri College Advising Corps and got connected with Anna and Michele Logue. My undergrad is education so staying in education adjacent spaces just makes sense to me.

Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution and a recent accomplishment.
The Financial Wellness Center is a team of two people, but we do work within the financial aid team! They are really great. UMKC's Financial Wellness Center's most recent accomplishment is securing the Higher Education Financial Wellness Alliance (HEFWA)'s National annual summit at UMKC for summer of 2027! We are beyond excited to have been chosen as a host school!

What is the most rewarding part of your job?
Working with the students and watching the student workers.

What is your favorite local spot near your institution?
We are within walking distance to so many great places!

Tell us a little about yourself and your family.
I'm initially from Omaha, Nebraska and my family is large, loud, and amazing. They all still live out in Nebraska, so I feel like I'm always traveling back to be with them. It takes lots of zoo trips to try being my niece and nephews' favorite aunt.

What do you like to do in your free time?
I really enjoy reading and exploring Kansas City. It's an occupational hazard where I am trying to explore as much as possible for as little as possible.

What is a book, podcast, movie, and/or series you would recommend?
Hmm, I just finished Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone by Benjamin Stevenson it's a really good mystery!

What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?
I'm always listening to albums and music that students recommend. It's a great opening conversation and it leads me listening to a WIDE range of music.

Do you like traveling?
I do enjoy traveling, I'm hoping to travel the south more in the next few years.

Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you.
I'm an avid cookbook reader! I like checking out cookbooks from the public libraries and discovering new cuisines this way!

Votes are in...

MASFAP has a new logo! It will be unveiled in the coming months, stay tuned!

Call for FAFSA Frenzy Volunteers!

If you are interested in supporting students and families with the FAFSA more directly, please fill out this intake survey.

A list will be compiled of what kind of FAFSA Frenzy Events you are available for throughout the 2026-2027 School Year and will be posted on the DHEWD Website so that high school counselors can reach out directly to you or your office for support of their events.

Registration Links

Freshmen Fridays: What's a PJ?
7/17 - 1pm

Co-event with Program for Book Club (Energy Bus)
7/21

Roundtable by FAMs
7/30 - 1pm

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 accurary, quality and appropriate length. Submissions may be limited to one article to 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 October 12, 2026.

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