1999-2000 MASFAP
Office Staffing & Policies Survey

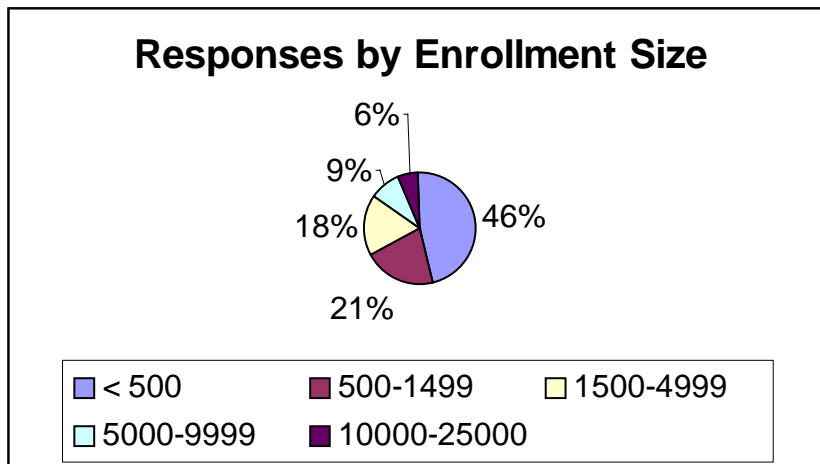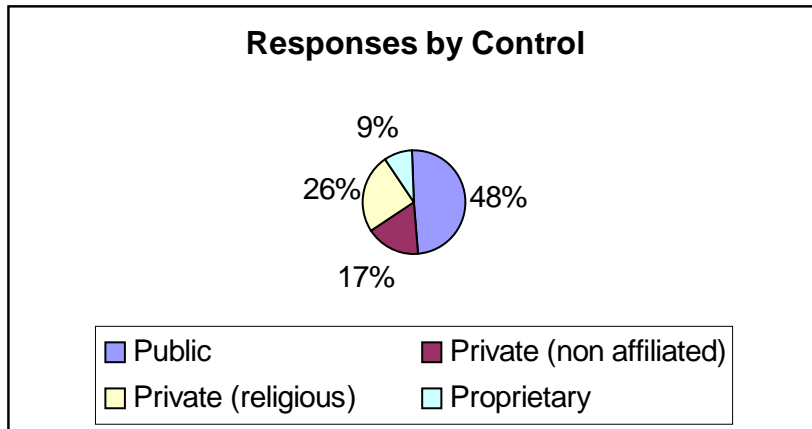Prepared by
The 1999-00 MASFAP Research Committee

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I.   Introduction

In accordance with the MASFAP Research Plan, this year's Research Committee conducted a survey of the membership regarding office staffing and policies. Surveys were sent to each institutional member of MASFAP and 65 responses were received. Although each sector and a variety of institutional sizes were represented, the majority of responses were from Public institutions and those schools with an enrollment below 500 students.

Responses by Control

9%
26%
48%
17%

☐ Public   ■ Private (non affiliated)
☐ Private (religious)   ☐ Proprietary

Responses by Enrollment Size

6%
9%
18%
46%
21%

☐ < 500   ■ 500-1499   ☐ 1500-4999
☐ 5000-9999   ■ 10000-25000

This report is broken down into two sections. The first discusses the results of staffing questions and issues while the second addresses responses relating to office & institutional policies. The 1999-00 MASFAP Research Committee appreciates those institutional members that were able to respond during one of the busiest times of the year and encourages membership input relating to the design of the next Staffing & Policy survey.

II.   Office Staffing

Table 1 illustrates the average number of full-time and part-time employees by institutional size as well as the corresponding student to staff ratio.

Table 1
Average Staffing Levels and Student to Staff Rations by Enrollment Size

Classification	Size < 500	500 - 1499	1500 - 4999	5000 - 9999	10000 - 25000
Full-Time Clerical	.47	.86	1.75	4.50	8.75
Part-Time Clerical	.17	.21	.33	.17	2.75
Full-Time Professional	.67	2.21	2.83	6.17	8.00
Part-Time Professional	.23	.00	.08	.17	.00
Full-Time Technical	.07	.00	.00	.00	.75
Part-Time Technical	.00	.00	.00	.00	.50
Full-Time Staff	1.20	3.07	4.58	10.67	17.50
Part-Time Staff	.40	.21	.42	.33	3.25
Total Staff*	1.40	3.18	4.79	10.83	19.13
Student:Staff Ratio					
Maximum	357:1	472:1	1043:1	923:1	1307:1
Minimum	.71:1	157:1	313:1	462:1	523:1

- Full-Time total + 1/2(Part_Time total) = Total Staff

There are a few facets of the data collected that are interesting to note. First, given the increasing dependence on computers and software in delivering financial aid services to students, it is somewhat surprising to note that the vast majority of offices do not have direct control of a "techie". Apparently, these offices have developed these skills on their own or have been given access to technical staff that reports to another office.

The second point relates to the trend in student to staff ratios as enrollment size increases. There is a large increase in the average number of staff when enrollment reaches the 5000 - 9999 range. Correspondingly, the growth in the number of students per staff member slows down at this point as well. In fact the maximum student:staff ratio is actually less at institutions with enrollment of 5000 - 9999 students than it is for those schools with 1500 - 4999.

Certainly technological resources are one factor that can directly impact the number of staff needed to deliver adequate financial aid services. Table 2 illustrates the percentage

of respondents in each enrollment category that reported having access to various technology resources.

Table 2
Computer/Technological Resources by Enrollment Size

Resource	Size < 500	500 - 1499	1500-4999	5000-9999	10000-25000	Average
PC Networkd	66.67%	28.57%	50.00%	0.00%	75.00%	36.71%
PC Mainfram	50.00%	92.86%	91.67%	100.00%	100.00%	72.42%
Web Site	3.33%	35.71%	50.00%	100.00%	75.00%	44..01%
Document	63.33%	85.71%	83.33%	100.00%	100.00%	72.06%
Imaging	3.33%	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	6.11%
Average	37.33%	48.57%	55.00%	66.67%	70.00%	

Roughly 75% of those schools that responded indicated that they utilized a web site in the administration of their financial aid programs. Table 3 provides more detail on what types of services are available via the institution's web site

Table 3
Internet Services by Enrollment Size

Service	Size < 500	500 - 1499	1500-4999	5000-9999	10000 - 25000
None	16.67%	21.43%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%
Read Only Info.	46.67%	57.14%	58.33%	83.33%	100.00%
Related Links	46.67%	57.14%	66.67%	83.33%	100.00%
Download Forms	40.00%	35.71%	25.00%	66.67%	100.00%
On-line Forms	30.00%	28.57%	33.33%	0.00%	25.00%
Loan Couns.	40.00%	35.71%	75.00%	66.67%	100.00%
Status Checks	10.00%	28.57%	8.33%	0.00%	25.00%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	39.58%	0.00%

There are many factors in addition to technological resources that determine how large the financial aid staff must be to adequately address the needs of the students they serve. Percentage of student receiving aid, volume of dollars processed, as well as institutional and student expectations are a few that come readily to mind. NASFAA had produced a calculator of sorts based upon the dollar volume of student aid processed annually. This calculator is accessible via their web site as well.

III.   Office Policies

There are many potential differences among MASFAP institutional members regarding policies that effect the daily operation of the financial aid office. Recognizing this, the Research Committee decided to focus on only a few of these issues. Additionally, this portion of the survey also gathered information that may be attributed more to the overall administration of the institution than it does the financial aid office.

The first area that was examined was the use of Professional Judgement. Tables 4 & 5 illustrate the frequency with which MASFAP members apply Professional Judgement and highlight similarities and differences between the various institutional control types.

Table 4
**Use of Professional Judgement**

	Frequency			
PJ Category	Never	Seldom	Often	Regularly
Budget Adjustment	30.16%	55.56%	9.52%	4.76%
Dependency Over-ride	15.63%	73.44%	10.94%	0.00%
FAFSA Data Elements	25.00%	46.88%	23.44%	4.69%
Other	21.88%	64.06%	14.06%	0.00%
Average	23.16%	59.98%	14.49%	2.36%

Table 5
Use of Professional Judgement by Institutional Control

| PJ Category	Frequency Never	Seldom	Often	Regularly
Public				
Budget Adjust.	35.48%	41.94%	12.90%	3.23%
Dep. Over-ride	16.13%	67.74%	12.90%	0.00%
FAFSA Element	38.71%	32.26%	19.35%	6.45%
Sector Average	30.11%	47.31%	15.05%	3.23%
MASFAP Avg.	23.16%	59.98%	14.49%	2.36%
Private				
Budget Adjust.	18.18%	81.82%	0.00%	0.00%
Dep. Over-ride	9.09%	81.82%	0.00%	0.00%
FAFSA Element	9.09%	81.82%	9.09%	0.00%
Sector Average	12.12%	81.82%	3.03%	0.00%
MASFAP Avg.	23.16%	59.98%	14.49%	2.36%
Private (relig.)				
Budget Adjust.	11.76%	64.71%	11.76%	5.88%
Dep. Over-ride	23.53%	64.71%	11.76%	0.00%
FAFSA Element	11.76%	47.06%	35.29%	5.88%
Sector Avg.	15.69%	58.82%	19.61%	3.92%
MASFAP Avg.	23.16%	59.98%	14.49%	2.36%
Proprietary				
Budget Adjust.	50.00%	33.33%	0.00%	16.67%
Dep. Over-ride	0.00%	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%
FAFSA Element	16.67%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%
Sector Avg.	22.22%	55.56%	11.11%	5.56%
MASFAP Avg.	23.16%	59.98%	14.49%	2.36%

The responses to the remainder of the office/institution policy questions can be found in the following charts:

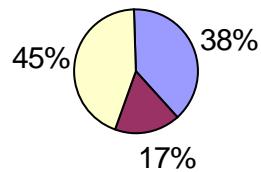**How often does the Financial Aid Office check SAP?**

14%   22%

64%
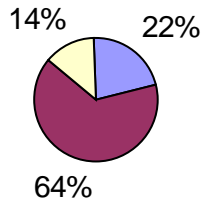
- ☐ At the end of an Academic Year
- ■ At the end of each term
- ☐ Other

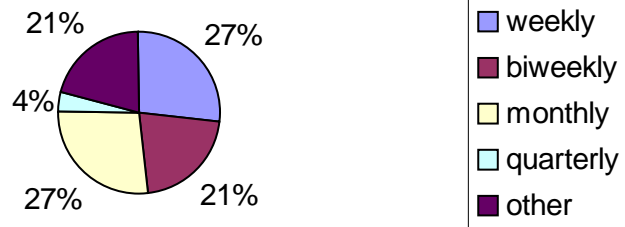**Is your Summer term normally a Header or Trailer to the Academic Year?**

15%

85%
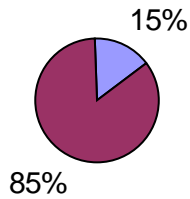
- ☐ Header
- ■ Trailer

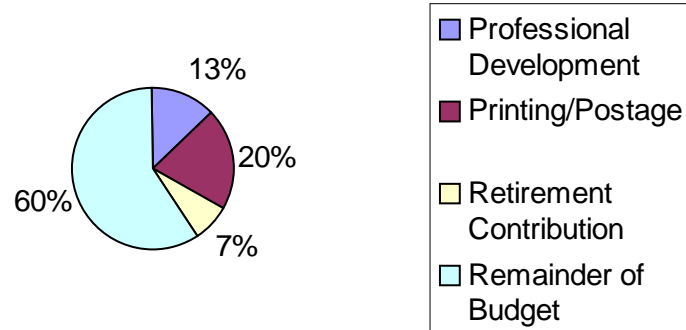**Does your institution participate in consortium agreements?**

45%   38%

17%

- ☐ No
- ■ Only as the "host" school
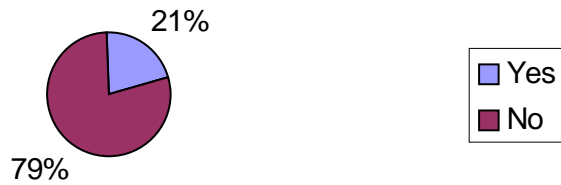- ☐ Without restrictions
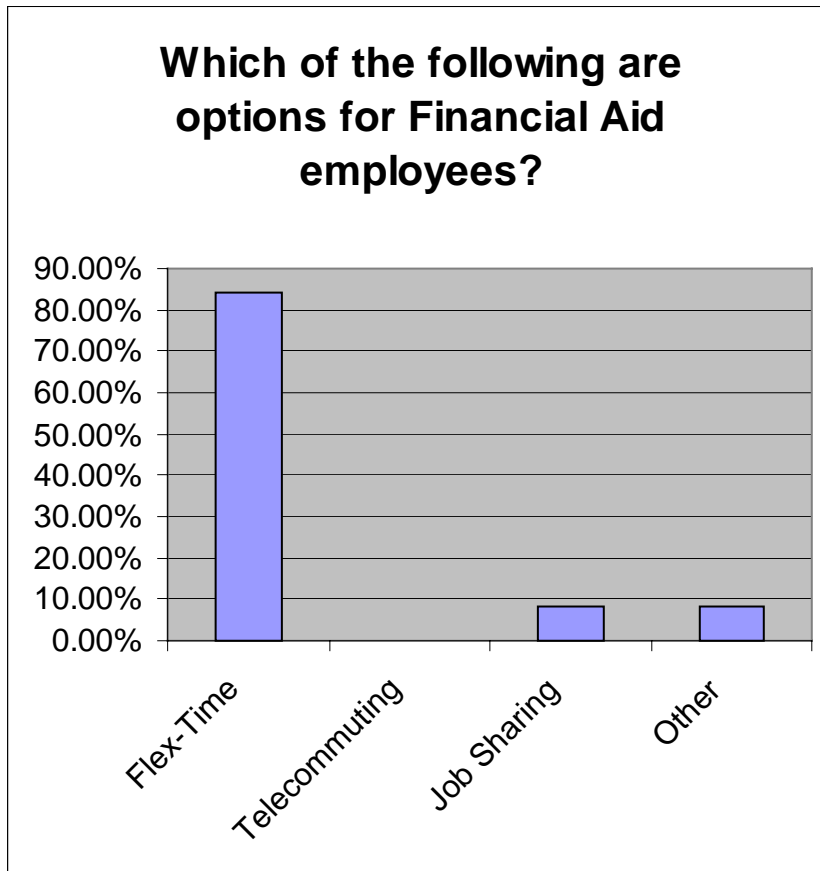
How often do you hold staff meetings?

21%   27%

4%

27%   21%

Legend:
- weekly
- biweekly
- monthly
- quarterly
- other

Financial Aid Office Budget

13%

20%

60%

7%

Legend:
- Professional Development
- Printing/Postage
- Retirement Contribution
- Remainder of Budget

Does your institution discount tuition?
(average discount = 28.67%)

21%

79%

Legend:
- Yes
- No

Which of the following are options for Financial Aid employees?

90.00%	
80.00%	
70.00%	
60.00%	
50.00%	
40.00%	
30.00%	
20.00%	
10.00%	
0.00%	

Flex-Time   Telecommuting   Job Sharing   Other

IV. Observations

The most striking facet of the data presented in this report is the diversity within the field of financial aid in general and MASFAP in particular. Each school tailors their policies in a way that best serves their students while maximizing the resources available to them. There is not one, universally right way to process financial aid. Rather, the often heard "it depends" is more appropriate. This in part defines the essence of good administration…knowing what is needed and will work in any given situation.

Hopefully this data will also provide some justification for MASFAP members seeking to increase the resources available to them. Knowing what is needed and actually securing the staff and or technology are often two very different things. In any event, the Research Committee thanks you again for taking the time to respond to this year's survey!