For over three years the majority of borrowers have been in a state of unaltered bliss. Not having to worry about updating their contact information on studentaid.gov or making payments to their service provider. Nevertheless, this blissful state will be ending in the next three months. Congress recently passed a law preventing further extensions of the COVID-19 Payment Pause. Meaning that student loan interest will resume September 1 and borrowers will begin making payments for the first time in more than three years in October 2023.

Furthermore on June 30 the US Supreme Court ruled that the Biden Administration did not have authority to forgive billions of dollars of Student Debt as promised in August of 2022. Even though Return to Repayment was a separate issue from Loan Forgiveness. Now many of these blissful borrowers hoping to have a portion if not all of their student loan debt forgiven are facing a very different reality.

Why is this important to your institutions?
Two words DEFAULT RATE. Even though the Department of Higher Education has announced that they will honor a 12 month on-ramp to repayment; for eligible borrowers that take advantage of the newly announced SAVE Plan, that will ultimately push back the onset of some default rates. It is still an important thing for institutions to keep in mind.

The general threshold for an institution’s Direct Loan Cohort Default Rate (CDR) is 30%. The consequences for exceeding the 30% threshold are:
- For any year, a school must create a default prevention taskforce to develop and implement a plan that is submitted to the U.S. Department of ED to address the high default rate.
• For a second consecutive year, a school must submit to ED a revised default prevention plan and may be placed on provisional certification.
• For three consecutive years, a school would lose eligibility to participate in both the Direct Loan Program and the Federal Pell Grant Program.

In addition, a single year with a CDR greater than 40% results in the immediate loss of eligibility to participate in the Direct Loan Program.

What can you and your institution do to help?
By providing the correct information and resources to your past and present borrowers. This may seem like a daunting task, but NASFAA has developed a Student Loan Repayment Toolkit complete with social media posts, brief videos and helpful tips for borrowers on how to proceed. Additionally, the Department of Ed has said they will be releasing more information on their SAVE Plan and will be communicating with borrowers as well.

Where should we begin?
Financial Aid Offices can’t do this alone. It is important to stay up to date and to think about your partners on campus. Campus partners may include: management teams, marketing departments, Academic and Faculty Advisors and Alumni Associations. Start connecting with these partners and discuss how they can best support your office and your campus’ borrowers. Discuss the importance of borrowers to get back into the swing of loan repayments, have them assist in the development of message content, and provide lists of resources for these offices to share.
Meet Crystal DeLong

SERVICE ORGANIZATION SECTOR REP - CITIZEN'S BANK

Current Position: Vice President, Regional Manager
Years in financial aid (or related field):
I started in financial aid in January of 2002, so I guess that makes it 21.5 years! I started as a work study student, went to a counselor role, served as a Director for 9 years and now am on the lender side.

What is the most valuable thing you have learned in your career?
Relationships matter! Networking matters! I would not be where I am today without the connections I have made in this industry. Take the time to say hello to the people you sit next to in sessions, at lunch, in the hallway! They may be your connection to your next position!

Why did you say “yes” to serving as a Sector Rep for CAFAA?
I have served on numerous state and regional associations throughout my career and have developed a passion for helping organizations be successful. I've met some amazing people from Colorado and can't wait to meet more! I also see the value that service organizations bring to an organization. I want to support my colleagues in the industry by representing us all on the board.

What's your number one goal as a Sector Rep?
My goal is to represent the voices of the service organizations that support CAFAA. And I also always have the goal of meeting all the great people in the organization. Again, relationships matter!!

Why is it important for institutions to connect with our various service providers? And what is the best way to get connected?
When you are at a conference and see the various booths set up it is always in your best interest to stop and say hello. If you are unsure of what the organization does, simply ask “What is it you can do for our college/university?”. There are many unique services that are provided and many of us offer free resources and tools for you too! We also tend to know a lot of people in the industry and can help connect you to others that do the same role as you or have the same software or maybe help you find your next career move! Either way, none of us are pushing a hard sale at you. We genuinely want to get to know you and introduce you to what services we provide.

If you could be any animal, what would it be and why?
I think I would be a dog. I am a very social person and love to be around people. Dogs are very loyal and many are hard working (not my dogs!). I wouldn't complain about a nap here or there either!!!

Let's Connect: Crystal.M.Delong@citzensbank.com

Join us at the RMASFAA 2023 Annual Conference
OCTOBER 8-11
FORT COLLINS, CO
REGISTER ONLINE TODAY!
The Department of Ed will no longer publish federal Pell Grant Payment and Disbursement Schedules. The amount of Pell Grant a student will be eligible to receive will be determined by the Student Aid Index and by the enrollment intensity (the number of credits the student is enrolled).

Federal Work-study earned will now need to be reported to COD. If you missed a few or all the live webinars offered in the month of July, don’t worry! You can still access the recorded webinars at the time that is most convenient to you by login into the FSA Training Center (fsatraining.ed.gov), then select the “FAFSA Simplification Training and Resources”.

The Department of Education is no longer allowed to share a students living arrangements with campuses (on-campus, off-campus or with parents).

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT YOUR INSTITUTION'S PACKAGING STRATEGY?

Here there a few of the new things I have learned so far:

- The FAFSA will no longer collect parent information from independent students, even if the student would like to provide it.
- The FAFSA will also no longer ask about a student's intended housing. Institutions will need to collect information on whether they plan to live on campus, off campus, or with a parent separately.
- The central processing system (CPS) will be replaced by the FAFSA processing system (FPS).
- The FAA Access website will be replaced with the FAFSA Partner Portal.
- CPS will stop accepting corrections for the award year on September 21, 2024.

I can't believe we are halfway thru the year 2023! That means, we are getting closer to the start of the Fall 2023 semester and to the implementation of the FAFSA Simplification. If you have not watched the webinars the U.S. Department of Education is offering, this is the time to do it. I know many of us are very busy preparing to receive our new incoming students in the fall semester, but don't forget to also set up time aside to learn about all the upcoming changes with the new FAFSA. There are a lot of changes coming up, and there is a lot of good information out there already.

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In spring of 2023 Colorado Mesa University launched a FAFSA Simplification working group for our campus. The team is made of 5 Financial Aid Staff members, 2 Academic Advisors, 1 Admissions staff member and 1 Marketing Department representative. The team is focusing on four key areas:

1. Communication
2. Training
3. Policy Development
4. Data and Technical Needs

Each key area has dedicated members within the working group who are responsible for defining the needs and aspects associated with each topic. This includes creating timelines, identifying and pulling in additional offices or individuals from across campus and the surrounding community, and developing content. To help collaboration amongst the team we are using monday.com to track our progress, communicate with the team and note our future needs.

Career Advance Colorado

HOLLY DAUGHERTY COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

On Tuesday July 18, Governor Jared Polis announced another state initiative aimed to help close the gap on the workforce shortage happening in Colorado. The state currently has two job openings for every available worker.

Starting in August Career Advance Colorado will provide tuition, fees and course materials to students pursuing degrees and careers in early childhood education, education, firefighting, law enforcement, construction and forestry. The program which came out of legislation this year, dedicated $39 million to the community college system, area district colleges, technical colleges, and CMU for their Western Colorado Community College campus students. Another $5 million will go to the Department of Higher Education to set up two new short-term degree nursing programs at community and technical colleges.

“We’re excited to save Coloradans money and train people for good-paying jobs by offering free community college education for in-demand positions at the state’s 19 community and technical colleges,” Polis said.

To qualify these students must have a completed FAFSA/CASFA.
Announcing Virtual PDT Opportunities

The Professional Development Committee is excited to launch our virtual FAFSA Simplification series. Join us the second Tuesday of each month during the noon hour for a lunch and learn series to share ideas, discuss the hurdles, collaborate and learn from your peers on all aspects of FAFSA Simplification.

- Tuesday Aug 8th
- Tuesday Sept 12th
- Tuesday Oct 10th
- Tuesday Nov 7th

An email with meeting links and monthly topics will be sent out soon.

We look forward to learning with you!

Volunteer With CAFAA

Events like the annual conference are put on with the help of volunteers like you! These volunteer opportunities not only help the organization, but they are also great additions to your personal resume. There are multiple committees within CAFAA for you to become involved with. Follow the QR Code to let us know you are interested.

CAFAA Committees:

- Financial Aid Awareness
- Professional Development
- Communications
- Conference

Upcoming Events:

Virtual CAFAA PDT Session
Zoom
AUG 8

Virtual CAFAA PDT Session
Zoom
SEP 12

RMASFAA Annual Conference
Fort Collins, CO
OCT 8-10

Virtual CAFAA PDT Session
Zoom
OCT 10

Virtual CAFAA PDT Session
Zoom
NOV 7

CAFAA Spring Conference
Colorado Springs, CO
MAY 8-10
Our Communications Committee is working hard on getting you up to date information. We will be updating our social media channels, website and blogs in the near future. If you have an idea for content we would love to hear from you:

- Holly Daugherty, Chair: hdaugherty@coloradomesa.edu
- Veronica Valles, Co-Chair: vvalles@regis.edu

Newsletter updates, including spotlight sections and upcoming events, must be submitted no later than the 15th of each month to be included in the following monthly newsletter.