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CAFAA NEWS

Official Newsletter of the Colorado Association of Financial Aid Administrators



Fraud Prevention Tips

CIEL SENECHAL, COLLEGE AVE

Higher Education fraud continues to be a growing threat to college campuses as the sophistication of fraud techniques continue to evolve. College Ave aims to provide schools with information on best practices to deter and mitigate student loan fraud. The information below can serve your team as a reference and resource to assist in identifying and reducing fraud risks on your campus.



What is fraud? Three main types:

1. **First Party Fraud:** In first party fraud, the student is the beneficiary of the proceeds, the fraud is usually self-reported by the alleged victim, and the victim knows the suspect. For example, the victim is the parent of the student whose name and information is unknowingly being used by the suspect to receive funding.
2. **Third Party Fraud:** This is the most common type of fraud. Generally known as identity theft, the suspect steals borrower/cosigner information, and the borrower who is listed on the application is not attending school.
3. **Synthetic Fraud:** This is a new and growing type of fraud where the borrower does not exist. The identity is generally a combination of real and fabricated information, and the criminal activity is sophisticated and complex to uncover.

Trends to look out for:

- A sudden increase of students applying only for private student loans (PSL), not filing a FAFSA and forgoing other sources of financial assistance.
- Students admitted to low-cost academic programs with limited admission criteria and applying only for PSL.
- An increase in the number of students attempting to enroll past well-known published deadlines.

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- For colleges offering online classes with limited admission criteria, an unusual number of students enrolling from one location or from states across the country.
- An influx of admission applications that are abnormally high in a short period of time.
- A rise in withdrawals and class absences, especially students with PSL.
- A surge in FAFSA applications in a single day.

Fraud Prevention Tips:

1. Question any situation that does not look right.
2. Issue a campus-wide employee alert of emerging fraud trends. Be sure to include your leadership, admissions, registrar, business office, academics, and your IT department.
3. For institutions who have a relationship with a bank or third party to manage refunds, ask if trends are emerging. For example, multiple students using the same account or an increase in out-of-state students opening accounts.
4. Your IT department should investigate unusual student account activity, such as a single IP address creating/accessing multiple accounts, spot checking out-of-state street address authenticity, and increases in requests for school email addresses.
5. Investigate any increases in V4 requests of FAFSA students to verify identity.
6. Encourage faculty to report unusual increases in withdrawals or no-shows.

Additional Action:

- Work with PSL lenders and advise them of any suspicious applications to mitigate fraud.
- Reach out to state associations and local institutions to share information and fraud trends.
- Contact your regional OIG to discuss and plan a fraud prevention workshop for employees.
- Familiarize your institution with compliance responsibilities for reporting fraud.

Ask Yourself:

1. Are you able to confirm identities of students who apply, are accepted, and attend your institution, or is that handled by another office? Do you share information?
2. What is your process when you identify federal or private fraudulent loans?
3. Will you notify PSL lenders if there is a fraudulent borrower, especially with a pending certification from that lender?
4. When you certify a PSL, do you confirm they are enrolled and attending your school?
5. Has there been an abnormal amount of PSL refunds being issued?

Fraud is a growing and ever-changing challenge. By sharing information with one another, staying abreast of fraud developments, and taking immediate action, you can help to mitigate this growing nuisance on your college campus.

A wise person once said...

STRIVE NOT TO BE A SUCCESS BUT RATHER TO BE OF VALUE.

~ALBERT EINSTEIN





Happy Holidays to You & Your Families!

SEE YOU IN THE NEW YEAR!
THE 2023-2024 CAFAA BOARD
MEMBERS

FSA Announces FAFSA Soft Launch Timeline

HOLLY DAUGHERTY COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR

As previously announced in November, students and families will be able to complete and submit the 2024-2025 FAFSA form online starting December 31. However, on December 18, 2023 FSA sent an [electronic announcement](#) stating, “We will be treating the period leading up to and following Dec. 31 as a soft launch period, which will allow us to monitor and respond in real time to any potential issues impacting the applicant experience.” After the long awaited release of the FAFSA this comes as a bit of a shock to institutions who are looking ahead to the new year for planning FAFSA completion events



What to Expect During the Soft Launch of the FAFSA

- Contributors, including those without a SSN, will be able to create a StudentAid.gov account (available Dec. 31)
- FSA will initiate planned pauses for site maintenance and updates as needed to create a better FAFSA experience.
- Applicants may experience a “waiting room” feature, to help control website volume.
- Students who complete their form during this period, will have their information stored for processing.
- Once a student's section is complete if a contributor can't access the site due to maintenance, the contributor can return to complete their portion once the site becomes available again.
- If FSA initiates site maintenance while a student or contributor is completing an application, they will be able to continue until they have completed the form.
- After all sections of the FAFSA are completed and submitted, students will receive an email noting their

submission date, estimated SAI, and estimated Pell eligibility. However, students won't receive a FAFSA Submission Summary until FSA processes it, beginning in late January.

What This Means for Institutions, State Aid Agencies, and College Access Partners

FSA recommends that as institutions develop FAFSA completion events to plan for the possible impacts the “soft launch” might create during late December and January. If possible, scheduling these events to take place in later January and into February. FSA also suggests that institutions may need to amplify key messages with students and families to clarify the FAFSA schedule and terms of the soft launch period.

In the meantime institutions can encourage students and families to access StudentAid.gov to learn more. FSA will be updating the site to include basic information about the soft launch and the changes applicants can anticipate. Additionally FSA will be providing online resources for completing the 2024-25 FAFSA soon. Including, instructions for creating a StudentAid.gov account without a Social Security number, how to complete the new 2024-25 FAFSA form, and what to do before and after completing the FAFSA form. These resources will be made available on StudentAid.gov closer to the 2024-25 FAFSA launch.

Institution Spotlight

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE



Want to be included in our Institution Spotlight?

SUBMIT THE [INSTITUTION SPOTLIGHT FORM](#) ON THE CAFAA WEBSITE

FOR QUESTIONS ON
SUBMITTING EMAIL:

HDAUGHERTY@COLORADOMESA.EDU



CAFAA onference Update

BY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

I feel the need... The need for speed...

The Conference Committee is ready for take off in planning the 2024 CAFAA Conference. This year's Top Gun themed conference is scheduled to take place May 8-10 at the beautiful Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs, CO. Online registration will open in early spring.

The annual conference is a great opportunity for professional development and networking opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and collaboration between Financial Aid administrators, institutions, and service providers across Colorado.

Conference Opportunities:

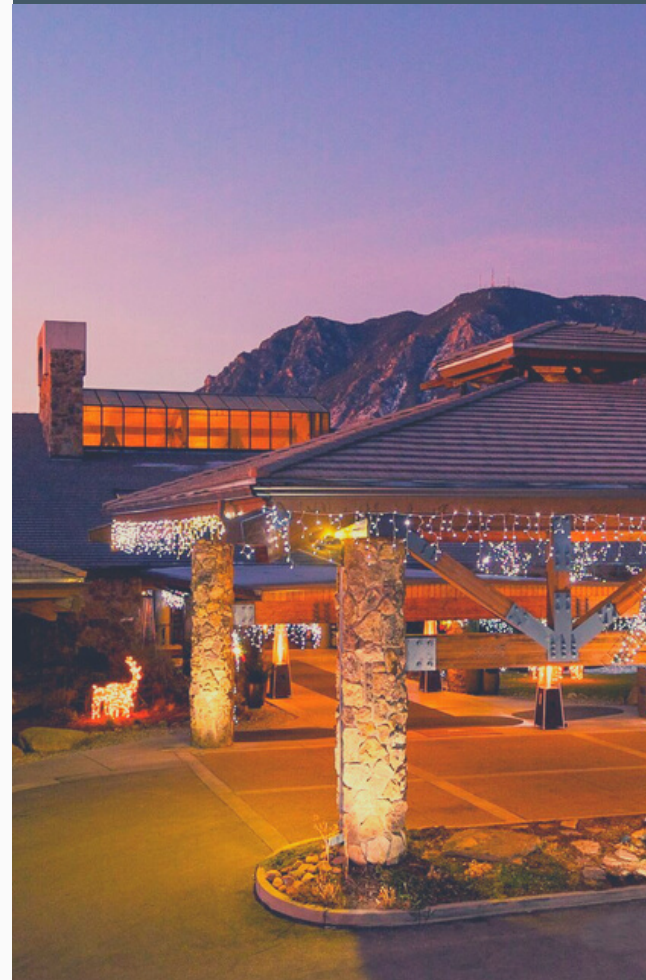
- **Donate Silent Auction Items:** Donations for the silent auction are welcome from anyone! Items can include event tickets, gift cards, artisan items, etc. If you have a favorite restaurant, bar, brewery, or distillery. We would love to get in contact with them and you can contact teh committee chairs to reach out.
- **Session Presenters:** This an opportunity for any of our members to share your insights, innovations, and success stories with a captive audience of peers, industry leaders, and emerging professionals. Want to sign up click on the following link to submit your proposal and secure your spot as a presenter: [Sign Up Link](#).
- **Conference Volunteers:** The Conference Committee can always use more volunteers. No great event would be complete without the help of volunteers like you! There will be opportunities to help with check-in, set-up, and many other tasks during the event in May.

Questions or to volunteer with the conference contact: [Karlett Christie](#) Conference Chair or [Tori Pacheco](#), Conference Co-Chair.



Get Ready to Take Flight With CAFAA 2024

ANNUAL CAFAA CONFERENCE
MAY 8-10, 2024
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO





EVENTS, UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

To have your event or announcement included please email hdaugherty@coloradomesa.edu

A Poem to Say Thank You for All You Do

CAFAA BOARD

'Twas the night before winter break, and all across the campus, not a creature was stirring, except those in financial aid, the directors and us.

The students were headed home after finals were done, to spend time with their family and friends; to enjoy a break full of memories and endless fun.

The week was quiet, there was much to do, as the financial aid office prepared for the Dec 31st launch of a FAFSA, better and new.

While the directors were busy making lists and checking them twice, ensuring they had submitted their student's '22 Federal Work Study earnings, in order to make sure to stay in compliance.

The staff huddled round their computers with a gleam in their eyes, waiting to see who had made SAP or who was in for an unfortunate surprise.

The workers were nestled all snug at their desks, while questions of 2425 verification made their heads feel muddled at best.

With the to do lists complete and the desks organized all tidy and neat, the last of the workers flicked off the light, wishing each and everyone Happy Holidays and good night!

The CAFAA Board wants to thank each and every one of our members for your dedication to the Financial Aid profession and all that you do for your campuses and our organization. Happy Holidays see you all in the New Year!

Upcoming Events:

Spring Monthly Virtual PDT
Sessions
SECOND TUESDAY OF
EACH MONTH
12:00 PM

CAFAA Spring Conference
Colorado Springs, CO
MAY 8-10

Members

ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY - AIMS COMMUNITY COLLEGE - ARAPAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - BEL-RAE INSTITUTE OF ANIMAL TECHNOLOGY - CAMPUSLOGIC - CITIZENS ONE STUDENT LOANS - CO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION - COLLEGE AVE. STUDENT LOANS - COLORADO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY - COLORADO COLLEGE - COLORADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEMS - CDHE - COLORADO GEARUP - COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY - COLORADO MOUNTAIN COLLEGE - COLORADO NORTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE - COLORADO SCHOOL OF MINES - COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, FORT COLLINS - COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF AURORA - COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER CREDIBLE - DENVER SEMINARY - DISCOVER STUDENT LOANS - EARNEST - ELM RESOURCES FORT LEWIS COLLEGE - FRONT RANGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE - FUNDING U - INCEPTIA IRON BRIDGE RESOURCES - LATIN AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION - METRO STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER - MPOWER FINANCING - NELNET - NORTHEASTERN JUNIOR COLLEGE - PAUL MITCHELL THE SCHOOL DENVER - PIKES PEAK COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLATT COLLEGE - PUEBLO COMMUNITY COLLEGE - RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE REGIS UNIVERSITY - ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN - SALLIE MAE SCHOLARNET - SOFI - TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES - TRINIDAD STATE JUNIOR COLLEGE - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, COLORADO SPRINGS - UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, DENVER - UNIVERSITY OF DENVER UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO - WESTERN COLORADO UNIVERSITY

Membership renewals will open January, 2024

Be sure to update your institution/organization's roster to include all active members.

We Want to Hear From You

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, 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