

nassgap

national association of state student grant and aid programs

www.nassgap.org

Chas Treadwell - (518) 474-3471

Marilyn Cargill - (800) 642-3177

November 8, 2007

Mr. David A. Bergeron
Director of Policy Budget Development Staff
Office of Postsecondary Education
United States Department of Education
1990 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Bergeron,

I am writing to introduce myself as president of the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP). At our recent NASSGAP fall membership meeting, Jeff Baker (FSA) indicated that you and your staff will be leading the implementation of the new College Access Challenge Grant program created by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-84).

On behalf of the NASSGAP membership, I would like to tell you how pleased we are to see this much-needed expansion of efforts to assist students in gaining access to the benefits of higher education. I would also like to offer any assistance NASSGAP can provide with the development and implementation of the Challenge Grant Program.

NASSGAP membership is drawn from single agencies in each state or territory that are responsible for state-funded student aid programs. The organization has been the primary source of state student financial aid program information since 1969, and our membership is dedicated to the promotion, strengthening, encouragement and enhancement of high standards in the administration and operation of student grant and aid programs.

You may already know us from the annual NASSGAP survey, which gathers and reports information on state-funded, postsecondary student financial aid by program type and amount awarded. The NASSGAP 2006 survey, released earlier this year, indicates states awarded nearly \$8.5 billion of student financial aid in academic year 2005-06, an increase of seven percent from the \$7.9 billion awarded last year. The report further documents that grants to needy students are the largest component of state aid. You can learn more about NASSGAP at our Web site: www.nassgap.org.

At our fall conference, our members raised several questions regarding the timetable and implementation details for the new program. As the administrators of several federal programs, including LEAP, Byrd Scholarships, and GEAR UP, we have considerable experience that may aid you and your staff as you structure policy, regulation, forms and procedures for the Challenge Grants.

Please do not hesitate to call on NASSGAP if we can be of any assistance as the Department implements the Challenge Grant Program. You can reach me directly at the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), the public non-profit

President
Marilyn Cargill
Vermont Student
Assistance Corporation
P.O. Box 2000
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, VT 05404
(802) 655-9602
cargill@vsac.org

President-Elect
Lee Andes
State Council of
Higher Education for
Virginia
James Monroe Bldg
10th Floor
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-2614
leeandes@schv.edu

Secretary
Vicki Merkel
Oregon Student
Assistance
Commission
1500 Valley River Dr,
Suite 100
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 687-7385
vicki.b.merkel@state.or.us

Treasurer
Ritchie Morrow
Nebraska Coordination
Commission for
Postsecondary Education
140 North 8th Street, Suite
300
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
(402) 471-0032
ritchie.morrow@cpep.ne.gov

Past-President
Mary Ann Welch
Rhode Island Higher
Education Assistance
Authority
560 Jefferson Blvd
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 736-1171
mawelch@riheaa.org

Member-at-Large
Stephanie Butler
Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education
PO Box 110505
Juneau, AK 99811-0505
(907) 465-6743
stephanie_butler@acpe.state.ak.us

Member-at-Large
Andrea Mansfield
Maryland Higher
Education Commission
839 Bestgate Road,
Suite 400
Annapolis, Maryland
21401
(410) 260-4558
amansfie@mhec.state.md.us

agency that provides assistance to Vermont students seeking education and training beyond high school. My telephone number at VSAC is 800-642-3177, extension 201, and my email address is cargill@vsac.org.

On behalf of the NASSGAP membership, I look forward to the new Challenge Grant partnership and to expanding the opportunities available for our country's students.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Cargill, President
National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs

nassgap

national association of state student grant and aid programs

www.nassgap.org

Chas Treadwell - (518) 474-3471

Marilyn Cargill - (800) 642-3177

President

Marilyn Cargill
Vermont Student
Assistance Corporation
P.O. Box 2000
10 East Allen Street
Winooski, VT 05404
(802) 655-9602
cargill@vsac.org

President-Elect

Lee Andes
State Council of
Higher Education for
Virginia
James Monroe Bldg
10th Floor
101 North 14th Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 225-2614
leeandes@schv.edu

Secretary

Vicki Merkel
Oregon Student
Assistance
Commission
1500 Valley River Dr.,
Suite 100
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 687-7385
vicki.b.merkel@state.or.us

Treasurer

Ritchie Morrow
Nebraska Coordination
Commission for
Postsecondary Education
140 North 8th Street, Suite
300
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509
(402) 471-0032
ritchie.morrow@cpep.ne.gov

Past-President

Mary Ann Welch
Rhode Island Higher
Education Assistance
Authority
560 Jefferson Blvd
Warwick, RI 02886
(401) 736-1171
mawelch@riheaa.org

Member-at-Large

Stephanie Butler
Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education
PO Box 110505
Juneau, AK 99811-0505
(907) 465-6743
stephanie_butler@acpe.state.ak.us

Member-at-Large

Andrea Mansfield
Maryland Higher
Education Commission
839 Bestgate Road,
Suite 400
Annapolis, Maryland
21401
(410) 260-4558
amansfie@mhec.state.md.us