

# nassgap

To: NASSGAP Members - HOHOwdy Partners - The Holiday Edition  
From: Dennis Obergfell  
Date 12/17/99  
Re:

- **A Thousand Bullet Points of Light**
  - **USDE Prime Choice Cut – LEAP.**
  - **Rich Text Format. Ways to avoid viruses on the cheap**
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- **A Thousand Bullet Points of Light... ok how about 100?**

A few weeks ago, I summarized the contents of a meeting an ad hoc committee of NASSGAP members had in Chicago on November 18, with Barry Morrow and Cameron Isahq of the Office of Student Financial Affairs (OSFA). The meeting was arranged for the purpose of discussing why state agencies were not referenced in the Department's Modernization Blueprint and Performance Plan manifestos. At the end of my summary I asked members to e-mail me their lists (in bullet point format) of the various relationships/links you believe exist between state grant agencies and the federal aid delivery system.

On 11/18, NASSGAP took the Department to task for leaving state grant agencies out of OSFA's Modernization Blueprint and Performance Plan documents. I know you are busy, but it is imperative that NASSGAP members inform OSFA of their errors in this regard, and more importantly to inform them of the various relationships that exists between the Department and state agencies.

<p><b><u>PLEASE ASSIST ME WITH THIS PROCESS.</u></b> I invite you to compile and send me a list of specific items, in bullet point format, including specific and general links that exist between states grant agencies and the federal financial aid delivery system (such as the state questions on the FAFSA). I will compile the lists, sort out the duplicate points, and forward one list to the Department. The list needs to state <b>clearly</b> to the Department the extent to which states rely upon the federal delivery system. Please do not limit yourself to FAFSA related connections. LEAP, GEAR UP, Byrd and Douglas programs are also fair game. <b><u>I would very much appreciate it if you could e-mail me your lists by January 4, 2000.</u></b></p>
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- **USDE Prime Choice Cut - LEAPP**

*Decisions, decisions..Eeny, meeny, myny, mo... Larry, Curley, and Congress are gone but not forgotten.*  
The FY 2000 budget is complete, so Congress is in recess until January 24, 2000. However, as previously reported, included in the budget legislation was a provision mandating a cut of 0.38% in each federal agency's total budget. For the Department, this amounts to \$112 million. Federal agencies were given the discretion as to how to implement mandated funding cuts, providing no one program received a budget cut greater than 15%. It has been reported that LEAP will be cut by the maximum 15% permitted.

The Department has not commented on which programs they will cut to comply with the new law. However, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), recently sent a memo to agency heads recommending that they cut programs receiving funding increases in excess of what the President

requested. Several student aid programs - including LEAPP, were funded at levels higher than the President requested. A 15% cut in LEAPP would reduce its FY2000 funding from \$40 million to \$34 million. If I'm not mistaken, that still leaves a few SLEAPP bucks available, which also means LEAPP is subject to Negotiated Rulemaking.

- **Rich Text Format. A way to avoid viruses on the cheap**

According to Tom Turner Director, Special Services with the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, "MS Word Documents sent via e-mail to large audiences are the perfect vector for mischief in the form of "macro" viruses." Tom recommends to save--and subsequently send--documents as an ".rtf" files (Rich Text File). Tom says "the text and the formatting will travel, but macro viruses won't be able to gain a foothold". I've taken Tom's advice and have saved this update in a .rtf file. If you have problem reading it, let me know.

- **I Swear**

A few weeks ago, Lee Fritschler was sworn-in by Secretary Riley to become the new Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, succeeding David Longanecker. Fritschler most recently served as President of Dickinson College.

- **Listserve service - Oklahoma style**

Many thanks to Shiela Joyner, Chair of NASSGAP Membership and Communications Committee, Pam Hicks and Randy McCrary of The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education for providing a listserve for NASSGAP members, another for NASSGAP's Executive Committee and a GEAR UP listserve for NASSGAP members and other agencies connected with the administration of the GEAR UP program. The listserve has proved to be invaluable to the membership over the years. *It should be noted that the state of Washington was first to host the listserve and did so from 1993 to November of 1997.*

**Recently listserve questions this past week:**

**New York**

From Chas Treadwell: "New York State has about a dozen postsecondary institutions that participate in the TAP program but do not participate in the Title IV federal programs. We also maintain a separate set of TAP institutional codes for all participating schools. It has occurred to us that we could streamline things for the student and us if we dropped the state school codes and used only the federal school codes. For this to work, we'd need ED to agree to assign "*dummy*" *federal school codes* to those 12 TAP-only schools. *Are there any other states out there who have a similar situation?"*

*Clarification from Geoffrey Flynn* - "For tuition and campus identification purposes (b/c of payment processing issues, i.e. branch campuses and programs with varied tuition) HESC would still be using our state-specific codes internally, but would appreciate the ability to utilize a Federally-provided single code for our handful of non-Title IV schools."

"This would eliminate the time-consuming, exception-processing routine the agency has established in order to accommodate these schools, and would also give student an ability to use the NY "Blank Code" if they plan to go to school in NYS but do not yet know where. I see the latter as having the potential to benefit all states, in that students can at least get their ISIR established regardless and in advance of making their school choice."

**Kansas**

From N. Christine Crenshaw: "The Kansas Board of Regents has recently been strongly, strongly encouraged by the governor to increase tuition at public universities while ensuring that students on the financial margin not lose access and choice. In other words, need-based student financial aid is to be increased - how much and to whom is the question. I have done some analysis - but don't want to put anything out on the street that is as tentative as mine currently is."

*"My question is have any of you developed some formulas that I might take a look at or even pass on to the State Budget Director?"*



- **Revision of “dependents other than spouse” question.**  
The states support this change. Accurate responses should be facilitated by the bifurcation of the elements previously contained in one question. States note that applicants often miss the requirement to provide half support in order to answer yes and hope this change will also help reduce the incidence of errors. Would it be possible to place “more than half” in bold lettering to draw more attention to this requirement?
- **Business and investment farm net worth.**  
The states support the combining of these two types of assets into a single question.
- **Two (2) untaxed income worksheets**  
The states support the separation of the untaxed income into two (2) worksheets. The states do not necessarily support grouping untaxed income based on the tax form references primarily due to Social Security which may be taxed or untaxed. The states prefer the suggested draft worksheets.
- **Grade Level**  
The states support the addition of a code to permit the differentiation of first year graduate/professional students from continuing graduate/professional students. While states do not use this information, institutions within states have indicated this change would be beneficial.
- **Special Circumstances**  
If a check off block is included to allow families to indicate the existence of special circumstances, the states may use this data within their own programs to provide special processing opportunities for such families. However, this will not necessarily replace state initiatives that solicit this information directly from applicants to state programs.
- **Net Worth of Assets**  
The states believe the provision of net worth results in a reduction in data integrity. States continue to express concern with regard to the collapsing of these data elements, into a single figure that is then reported on the FAFSA. This combining of data can result in reduced data integrity and the elimination of previously possible data integrity checks. ETC.  
  
\*\*\*\*States: while this comment has been included for consideration as you review this letter, inclusion of a comment of this nature will need supporting documentation such as the degree of data integrity reduction experienced and the impact this has on your programs. If I can't include this type of information, this particular item will likely not result in consideration of a change in this area. If you have information pertinent to this paragraph, please send it to me. \*\*\*
- **Single Identifier**  
Changing from a six-digit school code to a eight-digit identifier will require significant changes within processing systems and thus should be announced on a timetable that permits those changes to occur in a manner that does not disrupt the delivery of aid to needy students. In addition, the numbering system should reflect the hierarchical organization of main and branch campuses.

The states support the change in coding in question 32 since it links the numerical code more appropriately to the academic level (“1” for freshman, etc). Will the spouse’s social security number be added? The states support this addition, which will expedite data integrity processes. The states understand that there has been considerable discussion with regard to the drug offense issue and encourages the expeditious resolution of the use of the worksheet.

The change in federal tax filing statutes and the elimination of an estimated category has resulted in more students being selected for verification. The states encourage the return of the estimated tax filer status.

States use the FAFSA as the foundation application for state aid in both centralized and decentralized state operations. NASSGAP strongly supports the retention of this common application document to allow the coordination of state, and institutional program data collection. In order to maintain its identity as a common application form, continued consultation with state partners is essential.

NASSGAP appreciates the opportunity to interact with regard to this very important process and document. The important relationship between NASSGAP and the Department, reflective of the state/federal partnership, has been fostered by the inclusion of a NASSGAP member on the core federal FAFSA team. NASSGAP strongly urges the continuation of this practice. The improved attention of the PBO and its leadership toward service to all constituents is much appreciated by the NASSGAP membership.

Sincerely, Mary Beth Kelly, Chairperson, NASSGAP  
ED Technical Forms Committee

### **Holiday medicine**

Break bread with others, drink plenty of fluids, and enjoy friends and family. See you next year.