



U.S. Department of Education The Office of Student Financial Assistance

**Schools Channel
Satisfaction Study**

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Introduction



Introduction

How to Use This Report

How This Report is Organized

This report is divided into the following sections:

- This **Introduction** presents the project’s background and objectives, provides a brief overview of CFI Group, and discusses how the information in this report can be used.
- The opening **Executive Summary** section presents the key findings and concludes with recommendations.
- The **General Findings and Conclusions** section includes findings and conclusions for the six segments.
- **Appendices: Data Tables** presents a full summary of all component and attribute scores for each segment, and includes some special analyses. The **Verbatim Comments section** provides the complete body of all verbatim comments collected from the survey respondents. Finally, the **Questionnaire** used for this study is included in the third appendix.

How to Interpret and Use the Results

In general, the results presented in this report serve as a decision tool for use in conjunction with other customer and management information available to SFA. Use the results to assist with:

- determining those areas on which to focus quality improvements;
- monitoring changes in customer perceptions, attitudes, and behavior over time; and
- evaluating the success of on-going quality improvement efforts (long term)

First, turn to the “Executive Summary” section (**see page 13**). This brief summary provides a snapshot of SFA’s overall performance, identifies high-leverage areas where improvements will have significant impact on satisfaction, and provides specific areas where customers would like to see improvements.

After reading the “Executive Summary”, turn to “General Conclusions and Recommendations”, for a specific discussion of each major component of interest. These discussions include a review of the attributes within that component, selected verbatim comments pertaining to that component, and any additional analysis that may be relevant toward understanding the results. These sections also pinpoint specific areas for improvement.



Introduction continued

Key Words You Will Want to Understand in Reading this Report

Results from this analysis are presented through numerous charts and tables provided in this report. To understand these charts and tables, some definitions are in order:

Attribute – Attributes reflect different aspects or qualities of a product/service component experienced by customers, which may contribute to satisfaction. Each attribute is captured by a specific scaled question from the questionnaire.

Attribute Rating – An attribute rating is the average of all responses to each question. Each rating has been converted to a 0-100 scale. In general, it indicates how negatively (low ratings) or positively (high ratings) customers perceive specific issues.

Component – Each component is defined by a set of attributes that are conceptually and empirically related to each other. For example, a component entitled “Customer Experience” may include two questions (“easy to do business with” and “provides consistent service”) about the perception of the customer’s interactions with a firm.

Component Score – A component score represents that component’s “performance”. In general, they tell how negatively (low scores) or positively (high scores) customers feel about the organization’s performance in general areas. Quantitatively, the score is the weighted average of the attributes that define the component in the CFI Group model. These scores are standardized on a 0-100 scale.

Component Impact – The impact of a component represents its ability to affect the customer’s satisfaction and future behavior. Components with higher impacts have greater leverage on measures of satisfaction and behavior than those with lower impacts. Quantitatively, a component’s impact represents the amount of change in Overall Satisfaction that would occur if that component’s score were to increase by 5 points.



Introduction continued

Background and Project Objectives

The 1998 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Programs (signed October 7, 1998) established a Performance Based Organization (PBO) to administer the Student Financial Assistance Programs (SFA) at the U.S. Department of Education. SFA is the first such PBO in the federal government, and one of its mandates is to measure customer satisfaction and to devise means to maintain and improve these measures over time for all of its customers.

To this end, SFA was among the first 30 high-impact federal agencies participating in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) in 1999. The ACSI, established in 1994, is a uniform, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with goods and services available to U.S. consumers, including both the private and public sectors. Developed by Dr. Claes Fornell at the University of Michigan, the methodology for the ACSI has become the standard measure for other national indices as well, including Sweden, Korea, and, recently, the entire European Union. During SFA's participation in 1999, two "segments" or "processes" were measured by the ACSI: the student application process, and the Department's forms and publications. The results from these initial studies created a demand to measure other segments.

CFI Group, a management consulting firm that specializes in the application of the ACSI methodology to individual organizations developed these additional measures for SFA. This report represents the second, or monitoring phase, study performed for the Schools Channel.

About CFI Group and the ACSI Methodology

CFI Group uses the ACSI methodology to identify the causes of satisfaction and relates satisfaction to business performance measures such as propensity to recommend a product or service, trust, compliance, etc. The methodology measures quality, satisfaction, and performance, and links them using a structural equation model. By structurally exploring these relationships, the system overcomes the inherent inability of people to report precisely the relative impact of the many factors influencing their satisfaction. Using CFI Group's results, organizations can identify and improve those factors that will improve customer satisfaction and other measures of business performance.



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

This report presents customer satisfaction ratings and scores for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance Programs. Specifically, this report focuses on schools who currently administer student loans under SFA's program rules. Schools were analyzed according to whether or not they use SFA software interface, "ED Express", by the size of the school—as determined by the monetary amount of financial aid they administer for students, and by whether or not the schools administer PELL grants. Data for this report (Q2/2001) was gathered during April, 2001, while the previous survey (Q3/2000) was in the field during August, 2000.

All scores and ratings presented in this report are calculated and presented using the methodology of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The ACSI, established in 1994, is a uniform, cross-industry measure of satisfaction with goods and services available to U.S. consumers, including both the private and public sectors. It has recently been adopted as the standard customer satisfaction measure by 30 high impact federal agencies. The ACSI presents scores as an index from 0 to 100, with 100 being the best possible.

Key results from the analysis are:

	All Schools	ED Express	Non-ED Express	PELL	Non-PELL
Overall Satisfaction	74.3	75.6	73.0	74.6	71.9
Customer Complaints	21.4%	23.0%	19.7%	21.5%	20.0%
Confidence	81.7	83.3	79.9	81.7	81.4
Customer Expectations	70.7	72.0	69.4	71.1	67.1

	ED Express			Non-ED Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Overall Satisfaction	72.4	76.7	77.9	70.2	72.5	76.0
Customer Complaints	25.1%	26.1%	17.8%	30.9%	14.2%	14.0%
Confidence	80.1	84.2	85.6	77.6	80.2	82.0
Customer Expectations	69.1	73.2	73.8	68.4	68.9	70.8



Executive Summary continued

Key Findings and Conclusions

Changes From Last Measurement Period

The following findings represent the areas where respondents' opinions of that area have changed since the last study, and a few key areas that have remained static.

ALL SCHOOLS				
	Q3/00	Q1/01	Difference	Significant (95% C.I.)
Program Eligibility	82.9	84.2	+1.3	
Program Support	80.6	82.2	+1.6	*
Training	83.1	85.9	+2.8	*
Monthly Reconciliation	77.5	81.5	+4.0	*
Use of NSLDS	80.1	82.2	+2.1	*
Aid Origination/Disbursement	78.8	81.9	+3.1	*
Customer Satisfaction	70.1	74.3	+4.2	*
Customer Complaints	26.5%	21.4%	-5.1	*

- Overall Satisfaction with SFA increased substantially from the last measurement period. (+4.2 points). This increase can be attributed to the increased scores reported in most of the quality components.
- The majority of respondents reported significant improvements in every component—except Program Eligibility—since the last reporting period.
- For all schools, the Monthly Reconciliation and Aid Origination and Disbursement business processes showed the greatest increase from last period.
- The complaint rate is down by over 5 percentage points, an affirmation of the schools' increased satisfaction with most business processes.
- The knowledge and courtesy of SFA staff continue to represent areas of strength within each business process. These attributes are rated the highest in each of the business processes where they are measured. This speaks highly of the customer representatives of SFA. As this is typically the main contact schools have with SFA, a high rating in these areas is contributing to the high customer satisfaction.
- Most respondents continue to report having difficulty knowing whom to call with questions.

Since the previous measurement phase, the Schools Channel has taken a number of actions that may be contributing to overall improvements in the reported scores. Chief among these is the establishment of a “one-stop” Schools portal allowing internet access to SFA's resources from the main Schools' homepage. Announcements to schools that this new portal was up and running began in March. This site contains a feature that allows the user to search the Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFFAP) database.



Executive Summary continued

However, as SFA continues to improve its computer- and internet-based information systems, they should be cognizant of the fact that not all users have the means to access this information and that they may not have the base computer knowledge necessary to use the enhanced tools. Without such universal access, improvements in these information systems are likely to bypass some schools.

Other actions that may be contributing to the positive trend in scores this period include increased numbers of site visits to PELL schools to help identify and troubleshoot problems these schools may be experiencing administering PELL grants. Additionally, there has been an increased concentration on working with schools on the Monthly Reconciliation process.

Segment Analysis

The aggregate respondent data has been analyzed according to use of ED Express software, school size and whether schools administer PELL grants. The results of those analyses follow.

ED / Non-ED Express Users

- Respondents at ED Express schools rate the overall quality of SFA and their satisfaction significantly higher than non-ED Express users. They also have higher expectations than the non-ED schools. The ED Express software interface appears to contribute positively to the overall experience schools have with SFA. As a result, ED schools expect higher levels of quality from SFA and they appear to be receiving it. **(see page 21 for details)**
- The schools using ED Express rate all components significantly higher—especially Monthly Reconciliation—than schools who don't use ED Express. Clearly, using software designed specifically to interface with SFA is providing a noticeable advantage to users. **(see page 21 for details)**
- Schools that use the ED Express software for the Monthly Reconciliation process have reported higher scores and lower impacts this period, indicating that this process is becoming easier to accomplish. However, ED schools do require more Program Support and Training than non-ED Express schools. As a result of not using the software interface, non-ED schools indicate that they need more help with Monthly Reconciliation. **(see page 34 for details)**
- ED Express users are significantly more confident than non-ED Express users that SFA will do a good job in the future of ensuring the availability of financial assistance for students.
- Respondents in the two groups are not indicating a significant difference about knowing whom to call with questions. The ED Express interface is not providing a measurable advantage to users. This is an area where a list of contacts could be incorporated into the interface—perhaps as a pop-up menu, thus providing additional value to ED Express users.
- Non-ED Express schools are less likely to complain to SFA. It is possible that many of their complaints may be directed at the 3rd party vendor supplying the computer interface instead of to SFA, whereas a considerable amount of the complaints from ED Express schools could pertain to the software interface.



Executive Summary continued

School Size

- Respondents at the smaller schools rate Satisfaction and Perceived Quality higher than their larger counterparts. ED Express small schools' ratings are similar to, or slightly higher, than non-ED small schools. **(see page 48 for details)**
- For all school segments, understanding instructions and knowing whom to call with questions continue to be areas that present difficulties in many business processes. Some of the difficulty appears to lie in the disparity of computer knowledge among respondents. Comments from respondents indicate that some who are accustomed to using paper appear to be having a difficult time adjusting to the growing dependence on computers for exchanging information. This makes the issue of knowing whom to call with questions all the more important.
- Small schools continue to rate components higher than medium and large schools. They also have lower complaint rates. Financial aid administrators at smaller schools have responsibilities across all functions, resulting in increased contact with SFA. Empirical evidence suggests that increased contact in a business-to-business relationship—essentially what the Schools-SFA relationship is—typically results in higher levels of satisfaction and fewer complaints.

PELL /Non-PELL Schools

Representatives from SFA have recently concentrated increased attention on PELL grant schools in an effort to identify problems these schools are having administering the program. Numerous site visits have taken place and many more are planned. During the site visits, problems were discussed, and in some cases, solutions were found. It is not clear whether these efforts are contributing to differences in the two groups' perceptions of the service provided by SFA. The following summarizes the PELL and non-PELL schools:

- Respondents at PELL schools rate Customer Satisfaction and Program Eligibility significantly higher than non-PELL schools **(see page 24 for details)**.
- Non-PELL schools rate Aid Origination and Disbursement significantly higher.
- For all other components, there are no significant differences between the two groups of schools.



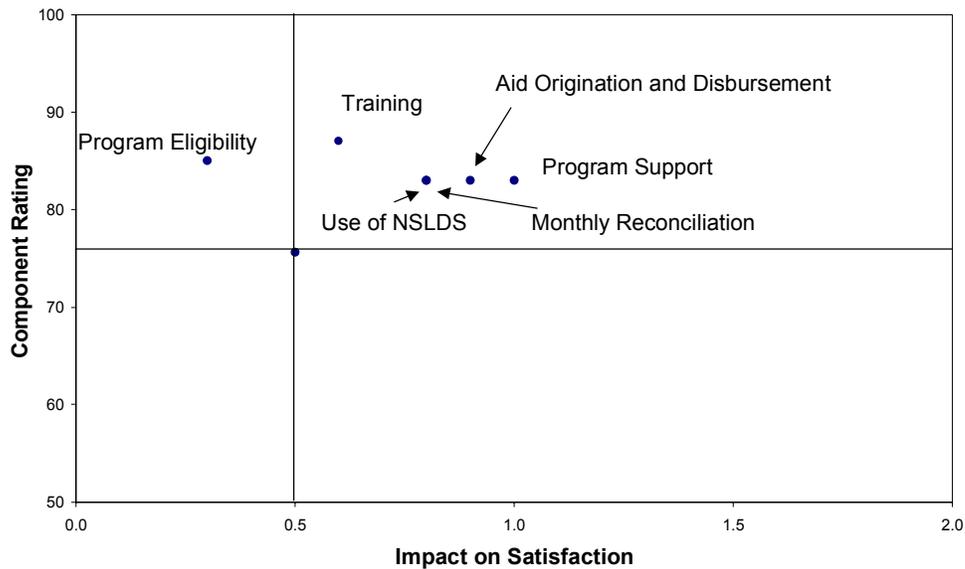
Executive Summary continued

Recommendations

The following charts provide a visual reference of the processes that are in need of attention and those that can be maintained. The vertical axis represents the component scores and the horizontal axis shows the impacts. Those components with a high impact and relatively low score are the areas that indicate where customers need assistance. For instance, Program Support is the highest impact component with ED Express users. This is consistent with the findings that ED schools need more help with the software interface.

For non-ED Express users, Monthly Reconciliation is the highest impact component, indicating they are in need of additional support with this process.

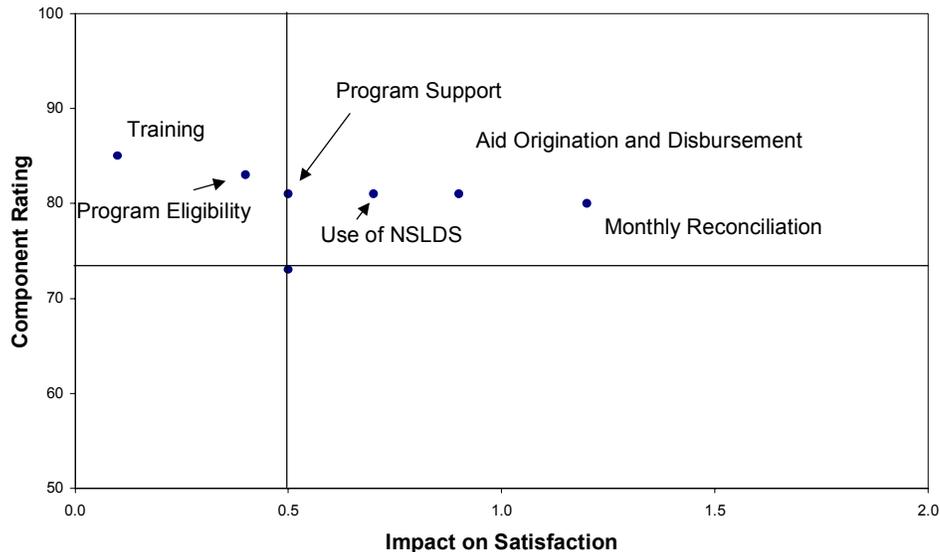
Ed Express Schools





Executive Summary continued

Non-Ed Express Schools



There remain areas that the Schools Channel should improve, or at least maintain which include:

- Continue to support areas of strength—Training, Program Eligibility. These areas are consistently rated high, and without continued support, their scores could suffer adversely.
- Help schools to adopt and use the ED Express interface. SFA should ensure that ED users are well-versed in the operating procedures of the software. While the ED Express schools rate most components significantly higher, there are indications that less computer-savvy respondents have difficulty using the program.
- Improve the instructions for software programs. Respondents are often unfamiliar and uneasy with SFA's software, specifically ED Express. As schools move into the ED Express program, they are indicating a need for additional training and support. Many respondents indicate that the instructions are difficult to understand, adding to their uneasiness and contributing to the need for extra support and training.
- Ensure that schools know whom to contact to provide help with software programs. When the instructions are inadequate, respondents want someone knowledgeable they can call. SFA should provide schools with comprehensive lists of help personnel. If schools' personnel are having difficulty using software programs, they need someone at SFA who can help them through the process.

Assess whether there are computing infrastructure or internet access disparities between large and small schools. There are indications, especially in the use of NSLDS, that small schools may be having more difficulty than larger schools submitting and accessing information electronically.



ED Express/Non-ED Express PELL/Non-PELL Comparisons



ED Express Users and Non-Users Comparison

Respondents were asked if they use the ED Express software interface to help administer the Title IV programs. Examples of uses of ED Express include helping to package a student's financial aid awards, providing PELL and Direct loan functions, or for updating a student's status.

The following table highlights component scores and attribute ratings given by ED Express users and non-users, along with an indication of any significant differences, at a 95% confidence interval. The scores and ratings in the table will be referenced in the individual component sections.

	Ed Express	Non Ed Express	Difference	Significant * 95% ci
Sample Size	740	714		
Program Eligibility	85.0	83.2	1.8	↑
Clarity of instructions for E - app	79.6	77.5	2.1	↑
Ease of submitting data	84.5	81.7	2.8	↑
Accuracy of data	85.1	83.9	1.2	
Courtesy of staff	89.1	89.8	-0.7	
Knowledge of staff	86.8	86.1	0.7	
Program Support	82.9	81.2	1.7	↑
Accuracy of information	84.8	82.5	2.3	↑
Timeliness of information	81.6	80.0	1.6	↑
Courtesy of support personal	89.8	87.5	2.3	↑
Knowledge of support staff	84.5	83.2	1.3	
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.6	72.8	-0.2	
Consistency of answers received	80.6	78.1	2.5	↑
Training	86.7	84.7	2.0	↑
Usefulness of training session	82.5	79.2	3.3	↑
Competence of instructors	86.3	84.6	1.7	↑
Availability of training	77.7	74.9	2.8	↑
Courtesy of training staff	92.5	91.0	1.5	
Knowledge of training staff	89.0	86.4	2.6	↑
Monthly Reconciliation	82.7	79.6	3.1	↑
Clarity of the instructions	75.3	74.8	0.5	
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.6	82.2	1.4	
Response time	82.6	78.6	4.0	↑
Courtesy of staff	89.9	87.0	2.9	↑
Knowledge of staff	86.3	84.1	2.2	↑
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.4	73.6	0.8	
Consistency of answers received	81.9	77.4	4.5	↑
Use of NSLDS	82.9	81.0	1.9	↑
Ease of navigation	80.7	79.8	0.9	
Helpfulness of the system	81.7	80.3	1.4	
Courtesy of staff	88.4	87.5	0.9	
Knowledge of staff	86.1	84.1	2.0	↑
Accuracy of the data	79.1	77.1	2.0	↑
Aid Origination and Disbursement	82.7	80.8	1.9	↑
Clarity of instructions	79.0	77.5	1.5	
Ease of submitting data	82.2	79.1	3.1	↑
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.8	83.6	1.2	
Courtesy of staff	88.8	87.0	1.8	↑
Knowledge of staff	85.9	84.8	1.1	
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.9	73.8	1.1	
Consistency of answers received	81.8	80.3	1.5	
Customer Expectations	72.0	69.4	2.6	↑
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	72.0	69.4	2.6	↑
Overall Quality	80.8	78.5	2.3	↑
Overall Quality of SFA	80.8	78.5	2.3	↑
Satisfaction	75.6	73.0	2.6	↑
Overall Satisfaction	81.0	78.9	2.1	↑
Compared to Expectations	73.1	70.8	2.3	↑
Compared to Ideal	70.3	66.9	3.4	↑
Customer Complaints	23.0	19.7	3.3	↑
Complaint rate	23.0	19.7	3.3	↑
Outcomes	83.3	79.9	3.4	↑
Confidence	83.3	79.9	3.4	↑



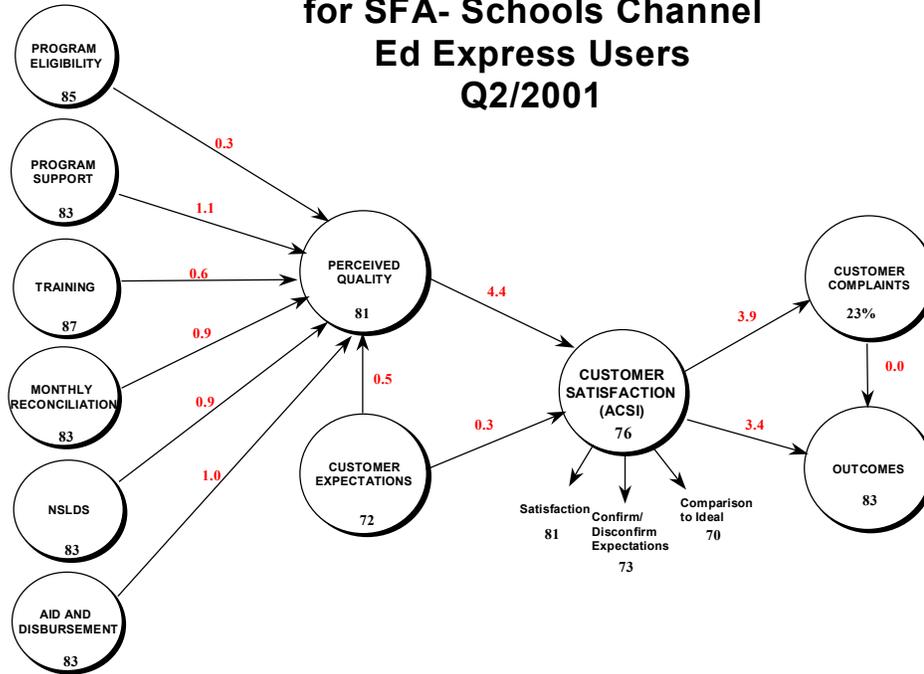
ED Express Users and Non-Users Comparison

On the following page, we present comparable model diagrams for ED Express users and non-ED Express users. These models show the six process components and scores on the left-hand side. The arrows from these components signify the amount of impact each component has on Perceived Quality, which in turn impacts Customer Satisfaction. On the right-hand side we show how a 5-point change in Customer Satisfaction will change the scores of each of the behavioral components, Complaints and Confidence. We did not calculate impacts for each of the six school segments, due to low sample sizes for some of the components.



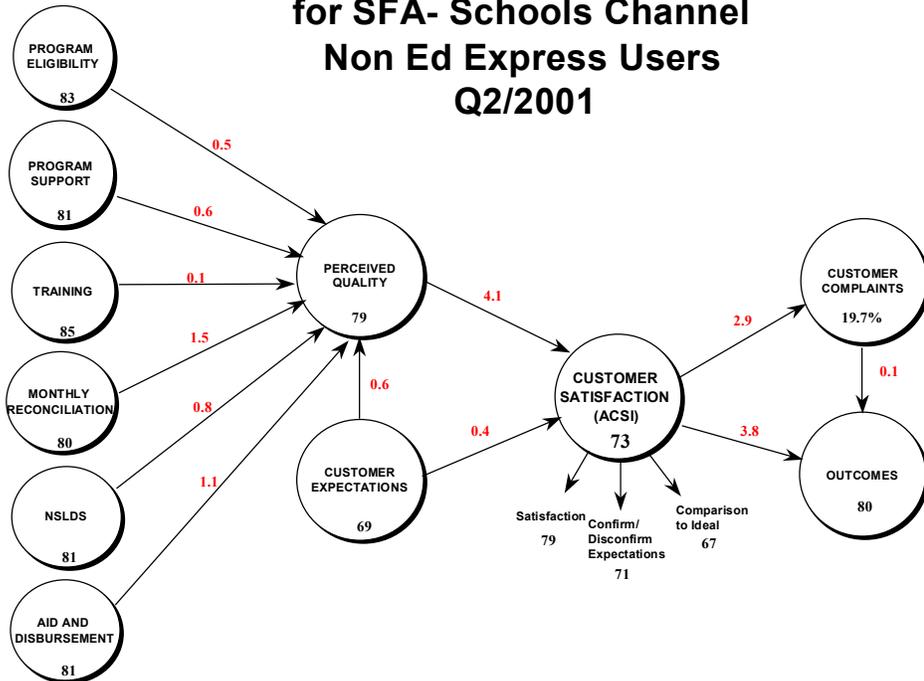
ED Express Users and Non-Users Comparison

ACSI Model for SFA- Schools Channel Ed Express Users Q2/2001



Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.

ACSI Model for SFA- Schools Channel Non Ed Express Users Q2/2001



Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.



PELL and Non-PELL Schools Comparison

For the purpose of comparing scores, the aggregate data was divided between schools that process PELL grants, and those that don't. However, no separate model was created. The comparison of the scores produced mixed results, with an almost equal number of attributes scoring significantly higher with PELL schools, and with non-PELL schools. The PELL schools are significantly more satisfied with SFA in general, and they also report significantly higher scores for the Program Eligibility component and three out of five of its attributes. Meanwhile, non-PELL schools score Aid Origination and Disbursement significantly higher than PELL schools.

	Pell	Non-Pell	Difference	Significant * 95% ci
Sample Size	1304	150		
Program Eligibility	84.4	82.0	2.4	↑
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.7	78.0	0.7	
Ease of submitting data	83.4	82.2	1.2	
Accuracy of data	85.1	80.3	4.8	↑
Courtesy of staff	89.6	87.6	2.0	↑
Knowledge of staff	87.0	83.1	3.9	↑
Program Support	82.3	81.1	1.2	
Accuracy of information	83.9	83.1	0.8	
Timeliness of information	81.1	79.1	2.0	↑
Courtesy of support personal	89.0	86.8	2.2	↑
Knowledge of support staff	84.0	83.8	0.2	
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.8	71.8	1.0	
Consistency of answers received	79.5	79.6	-0.1	
Training	85.8	86.8	-1.0	
Usefulness of training session	81.1	82.0	-0.9	
Competence of instructors	85.4	87.1	-1.7	↓
Availability of training	76.3	79.6	-3.3	↓
Courtesy of training staff	91.9	91.4	0.5	
Knowledge of training staff	87.8	89.4	-1.6	↓
Monthly Reconciliation	81.4	81.7	-0.3	
Clarity of the instructions	75.2	74.0	1.2	
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.1	82.7	0.4	
Response time	81.2	79.3	1.9	↑
Courtesy of staff	88.8	88.9	-0.1	
Knowledge of staff	85.4	86.5	-1.1	
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	73.9	76.3	-2.4	↓
Consistency of answers received	80.1	81.0	-0.9	
Use of NSLDS	82.3	81.2	1.1	
Ease of navigation	80.5	79.6	0.9	
Helpfulness of the system	81.3	79.8	1.5	
Courtesy of staff	88.5	84.4	4.1	↑
Knowledge of staff	85.6	83.0	2.6	↑
Accuracy of the data	78.1	80.2	-2.1	↓
Aid Origination and Disbursement	81.7	83.4	-1.7	↓
Clarity of instructions	78.1	81.0	-2.9	↓
Ease of submitting data	81.0	80.4	0.6	
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.2	84.6	-0.4	
Courtesy of staff	88.0	88.5	-0.5	
Knowledge of staff	85.2	88.0	-2.8	↓
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.2	77.5	-3.3	↓
Consistency of answers received	81.0	83.6	-2.6	↓
Customer Expectations	71.1	67.1	4.0	↑
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	71.1	67.1	4.0	↑
Overall Quality	79.8	78.5	1.3	
Overall Quality of SFA	79.8	78.5	1.3	
Satisfaction	74.6	71.9	2.7	↑
Overall Satisfaction	80.3	76.9	3.4	↑
Compared to Expectations	72.1	70.9	1.2	
Compared to Ideal	68.8	67.7	1.1	
Customer Complaints	21.5	20.0	1.5	
Complaint rate	21.5	20.0	1.5	
Outcomes	81.7	81.4	0.3	
Confidence	81.7	81.4	0.3	



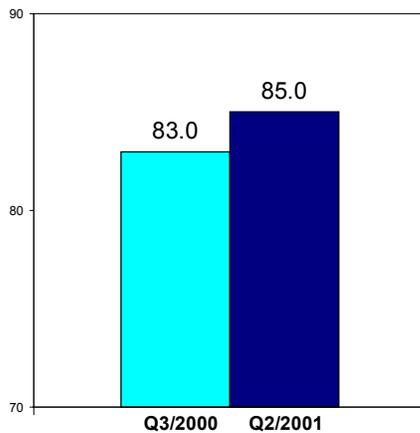
Detailed Findings and Conclusions



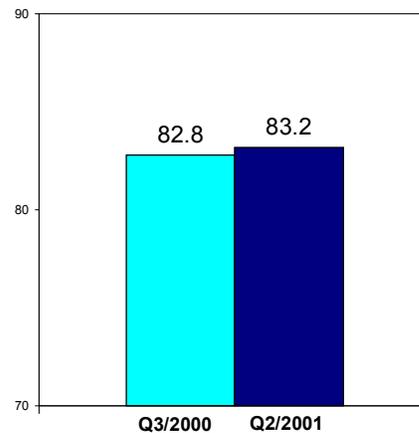
Detailed Findings and Conclusions

Program Eligibility

Respondents were asked to assess the process of recertifying their school to be eligible to disburse financial aid. For the respondent, this could mean submitting an application for designation as an eligible institution, initial participation, recertification, reinstatement, change in ownership, or to update a current approval. Updates include changes such as name or address change, new location or program, increased level of offerings, or change of officials.



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

On average, the respondents who use ED Express rated Program Eligibility the second highest component at 85.0. As in the previous measurement period, Q3/2000, this component has a very low total impact on Overall Satisfaction (0.3). This low impact indicates that the leverage that Program Eligibility has on the Customer Satisfaction score is minimal. ED Express users rate “clarity of instructions for E-app” and “ease of submitting data” significantly higher than non-ED users.

For those respondents who do not use ED Express, Program Eligibility was rated 83.2, also making it the second highest component among this group. Program Eligibility has a low total impact of 0.4, so Customer Satisfaction is not very sensitive to changes in this component.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Program Eligibility	84.0	85.3	85.8	81.8	85.1	82.7
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.6	80.1	80.0	76.4	78.9	77.4
Ease of submitting data	83.9	86.1	83.3	82.2	83.1	80.1
Accuracy of data	85.1	84.1	86.1	81.9	87.2	83.0
Courtesy of staff	87.3	89.3	90.6	88.5	91.4	89.6
Knowledge of staff	84.0	87.6	88.7	84.1	89.4	85.3

Looking at the table above, one can see the individual school segment attribute ratings for ED Express and Non-ED Express users. Schools of all sizes, and regardless of whether they use ED Express, rated “courtesy of staff” highest, while “clarity of instructions for E-app” continues to be an area where improvement is needed. The trend of smaller schools generally rating the attributes higher than, or equal to, the larger schools continues in this measurement period. SFA should continue to concentrate on providing simpler, more easily understood information about submitting the application electronically to all schools.

There are only two verbatim responses regarding Program Eligibility. The comments suggest that the respondents are having difficulty understanding the rules and regulations, or that they would like these rules to be a little more flexible.

“Make the process of approving additional location and programs easier. We can’t get it straight. We are trying to get approval for an additional location.”

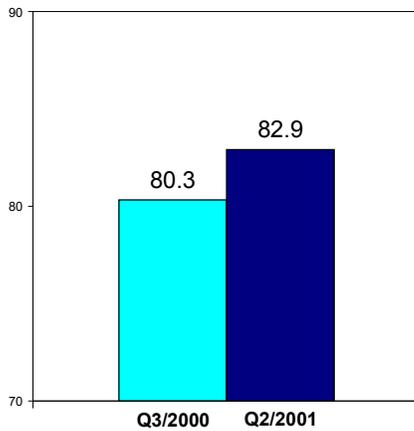
“Change the 90/10 rule. Allow schools such as ours to continue the program. We missed the cut off because of a couple of hundred dollars. We are being asked to leave the program. We can’t get the shorter programs approved for our school”.



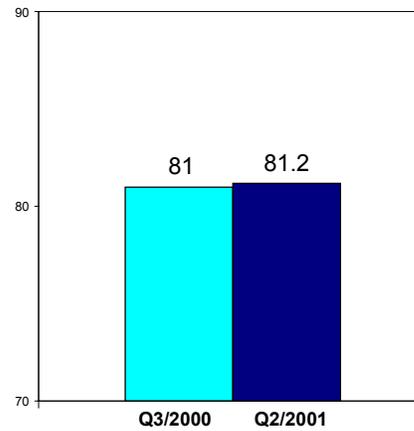
Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

Program Support

Respondents were asked to rate the Program Support they receive from SFA. This could be support from an account manager, a case manager, or the customer service call center.



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

ED Express users on average score Program Support at 82.9, with a total impact upon Customer Satisfaction of 1.0, the same impact as during the last measurement period. While improvement may be difficult because of the relatively high scores, a decline in this component would have a negative effect on Customer Satisfaction, due to the high level of leverage applied by this component. ED Express respondents rate the attributes “accuracy of information”, “timeliness of information”, and “courtesy of support personnel” significantly higher than non-ED Express schools.

Non-ED Express users on average gave this component the third highest score of 81.2. Among this group, Program Support has a small total impact of 0.5. Like ED Express users, improvement in this area may be difficult due to the already high scores.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Program Support	80.0	83.9	85.2	78.5	81.4	84.2
Accuracy of information	82.6	84.7	87.2	80.5	81.7	85.7
Timeliness of information	79.1	82.5	83.2	77.0	80.6	83.1
Courtesy of support personnel	87.6	90.6	91.3	86.2	87.5	89.2
Knowledge of support staff	81.8	85.1	86.7	80.1	83.7	86.5
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	68.1	74.9	74.8	70.0	73.3	75.7
Consistency of answers received	76.0	82.2	83.7	73.9	79.5	81.7

As shown in the table above, “clarity of knowing whom to call about questions” continues to be an area that SFA needs to improve. Schools who have questions, or are experiencing problems, are only going to become more frustrated when they cannot get these issues resolved. Not knowing whom to call will likely contribute significantly to this level of frustration. As SFA adds to, and improves, the information on its web portal, a directory of people most likely to supply some level of help would be well received by the schools. The other attributes continue to be rated relatively high, suggesting that once the respondent has contacted the correct person, they are happy with the support they receive. Consistent with most components, the smaller schools rate this component and its attributes higher than larger schools.

As the attribute scores suggest, the verbatim comments indicate that there is uncertainty about who to contact regarding problems. Respondents continue to request a contact list which would indicate who can provide the help they need. Respondents would also like to have a faster response, consistent answers, a knowledgeable staff and one point of contact. Regarding the single point of contact, SFA has made strides in this area with its web portal however, it may take time for most respondents to become fully aware of it.

“A little bit faster response. That’s my main recommendation. You wait several days for a response.”

“Be more accessible. Have better ways of knowing who to contact when you have questions.”

“Clarity of who to call on specific information. They don’t ever know who to call. When we call they don’t know and we don’t know. It would be nice if they assigned someone in each state to do that.”

“Give me one phone number to call for all financial aid. I also hate the automated phone system.”

“Having one source and telephone number to go to, instead of going through different people every time.”

“I am frustrated not knowing who to call. Sometimes, when I have gotten a hold of somebody they have not been able to answer my questions.”

“It would be a good idea if they published a web page of the options to select on their voicemail, so we can whip right through it when we get the phone numbers.”

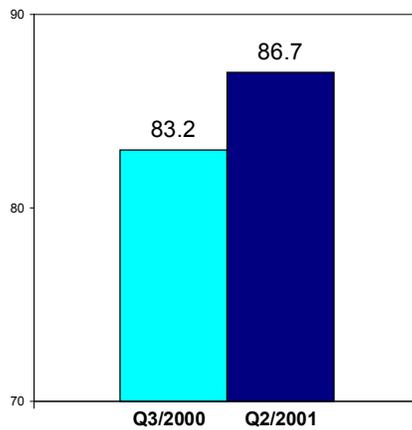
“It would be nice if there were people who handled different types of institutions, based on institution size—people to train smaller schools and those who are used to bigger universities.”



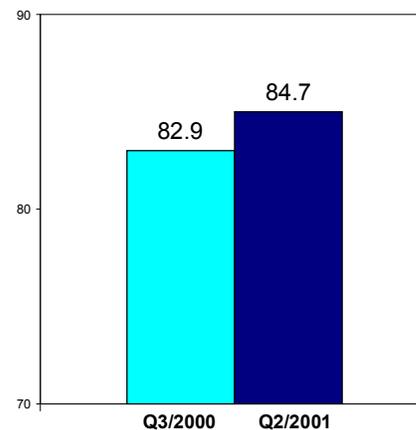
Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

Training

Respondents were asked to rate any SFA-provided training session or conference in which they had participated. These training sessions covered topics such as new policy regulations, systems, software, computer-based training, and the re-certification process



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

ED Express schools gave an average score of 86.7 to Training, which is the highest scoring component, with a total impact on Customer Satisfaction of 0.6. This means that Training has a moderate level of influence on overall Customer Satisfaction. Ed Express users rate all attributes, except “courtesy of training staff”, significantly higher than non-ED Express schools.

Likewise, schools that do not use ED Express rated this component the highest at 84.7. For this segment, Training’s total impact is 0.1. A 5-point increase in this component would have very little impact on Customer Satisfaction.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Training	85.0	86.2	89.1	83.3	84.7	87.1
Usefulness of training session	81.2	82.2	84.3	78.4	81.6	78.1
Competence of instructors	84.4	86.1	88.4	83.0	86.5	84.8
Availability of training	74.7	76.5	81.8	69.6	76.0	80.3
Courtesy of training staff	91.5	91.7	94.2	90.1	91.1	91.9
Knowledge of training staff	86.8	89.3	91.1	84.9	87.3	87.5

The individual school segment attribute ratings for ED Express and Non-ED Express users displayed above show that schools rated the “courtesy of training staff” and “knowledge of training staff” very high, however, the “availability of training” remains an area in need of attention, especially for the large schools. Schools who use ED Express also rated every attribute except “courtesy of training staff” significantly higher than those schools who do not use ED Express.

As with other components, the smaller the school, the higher they rate this component. Small schools especially rate “availability of training” much higher than large schools. This could be due to the size of the staff at the small schools. One would expect that the smaller schools have smaller staffs, and that a broader knowledge resides in each staff member. Each of these staff members probably has many opportunities to attend a variety of training sessions, thus the higher perception of the availability of training.

Additionally, in this measurement period, respondents were asked to rate the session they most recently attended. They were given five choices—ED Express training, NSLDS training, Pre-certification training, Electronic Access conference, and Direct Loan conference. These sessions received scores ranging from 84.9 to 88.0. Pre-certification training received the lowest usefulness rating, at 78.1. Knowledge and courtesy of the training staffs received high ratings across all five sessions/conferences. Availability is rated the lowest.

	Ed Express Training Session	NSLDS Training Session	Pre-certification Training Session	Electronic Access Conference	Direct Loan Conference
	N=145	N=55	N=41	N=136	N=62
Training	86.3	88.0	84.9	85.8	87.8
Usefulness of training session	82.3	80.2	78.1	83.5	85.3
Competence of instructors	86.5	86.4	81.8	86.4	87.5
Availability of training	75.3	81.6	79.1	75.7	81.0
Courtesy of training staff	92.1	92.9	91.3	91.3	92.8
Knowledge of training staff	88.8	89.9	85.1	88.2	88.9



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

The verbatim responses echo the need for more training sessions. While availability is an issue, the location where the training is held seems to be what prevents people from attending.

“Classes available closer to home.”

“Continue with the workshop. Have a user friendly atmosphere. They’re doing that now, and it’s very good, they should continue with the improvements.”

“Continued training. Not just training, taking it a step further into the function of your office. Some of the training sessions think you know a lot when you don’t. You come into it green and sometimes you flounder. You need to be able to apply it to your office. The quality of material is excellent, but we need to learn the basics. We need to be able to come up with a viable system that both fits our office, and also meets the requirements for the Department of Education. They need to have a “green” financial aid seminar.”

“Definitely training programs in our area. Generally, training programs are so far away.”

“For me and my staff we need more training on the electronic systems, like holding a training meeting every year. I would like to see more training on the electronic systems every year.”

“Have more training in localized areas. Have more in each state.”

“We are a small school, and the SEFA has training in Dallas, and it’s hard to get to Dallas. It would be nice to have more local training, like in Louisiana. If there’s a day, or half-day program, it’s difficult to fly up there to Dallas and come back just for one day.”

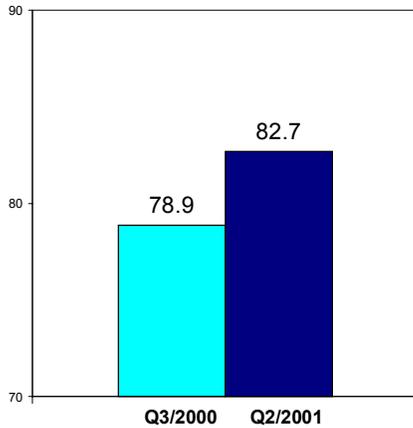
“Their training is very regionalized and we have to go to Philadelphia and it is a 6-hour drive. It is not very convenient. It is a poor impression that they are not willing to come out and train us.”



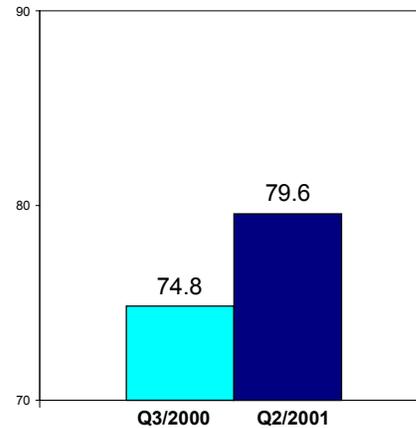
Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

Monthly Reconciliation

For the Monthly Reconciliation process, respondents were asked if they had personally completed the process required for the monthly accounting of funds and annual closeout of records in the past 12 months.



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

The component score for ED Express users increased 3.8 points from the last measurement period. At 82.7, ED users scored the Monthly Reconciliation process significantly higher (+3.1 points) than non-ED users, with a total impact on Customer Satisfaction of 0.8. ED Express users continue to view the reconciliation process as easier to accomplish than non-users, as indicated by the higher score and lower impact. However, ED schools do require more Program Support and Training than non-ED Express schools. The attributes “response time”, “courtesy of staff”, “knowledge of staff”, and “consistency of answers received” are rated significantly higher by ED Express users than by non-ED users.

Non-ED Express users on average scored Monthly Reconciliation at 79.6, making it the lowest scoring component. However, this score increased 4.8 points from the last period. For non-ED users, this is the highest impact component at 1.2, meaning that it has the most leverage on customer satisfaction of any of the components. This could be a result of not using the software interface, indicating that they need more help with Monthly Reconciliation.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Monthly Reconciliation	82.1	82.0	84.2	77.8	77.6	82.1
Clarity of the instructions	73.9	75.7	76.0	74.3	73.3	76.2
Accuracy of the records maintained	82.7	82.7	85.6	78.7	80.4	85.8
Response time	79.7	83.0	84.5	78.0	77.2	80.1
Courtesy of staff	89.3	88.8	91.8	84.3	85.9	89.3
Knowledge of staff	84.8	86.2	87.7	80.8	83.4	86.3
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.0	73.8	75.3	77.1	70.2	74.3
Consistency of answers received	80.7	81.6	83.4	74.6	76.5	79.6

Two new attributes were added for this measurement period, “clarity of knowing whom to call about questions”, and “consistency of answers received”. As can be seen in the table above, there is a large gap between the two lowest rated attributes, “clarity of knowing whom to call about questions”, and “clarity of the instructions” and the highest scoring attribute, “courtesy of staff”. While the staff may be polite when dealing with questions regarding Monthly Reconciliation, the instructions provided need to be more understandable, and as with other business processes, there is a high level of uncertainty about whom to call with questions. As with the other business processes, the smaller the school, the higher the rating for the component and attributes. Small schools that have fewer records to manage, and which has the financial aid responsibilities concentrated in fewer individuals, can probably administer the reconciliation process more easily.

The customer comments focused on the process being cumbersome and lengthy. As in other areas, it appears there is a range of proficiency with electronic access and reporting.

“I seem to have difficulty getting good answers from the PELL hotline and the PELL online seems to be down a lot. The process to get payments reconciled is quite cumbersome.”

“It would be helpful to have less data entry, and maybe better reporting to us from PELL for reconciliation.”

“The only problem that I really feel that has to be changed is the way the reconciliation is done. From what my 3rd party service told me, she was very specific about what she wanted to do. She has documentation proving what she asked for. The guy who was helping her did the wrong thing and it is still not balancing for us and it has been months and the problem hasn’t been taken care of.”

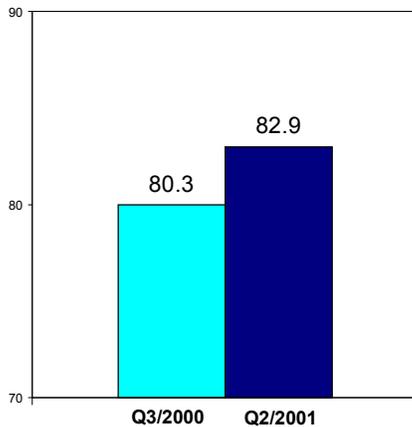
“Probably the biggest headache is reconciliation.”



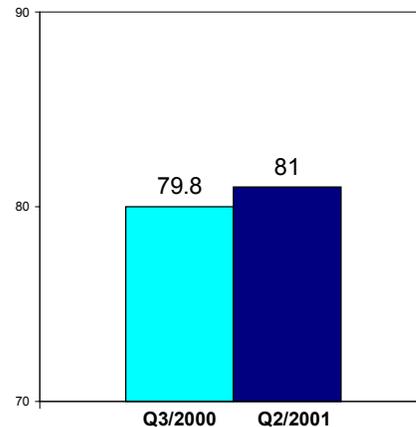
Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

Use of National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)

Respondents were asked to assess the National Student Loan Data System, or NSLDS, which is used to determine important information such as award verification, award amount, PELL overpayment, student financial history, or student status.



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

ED Express users on average scored the use of NSLDS at 82.9 with a total impact upon Customer Satisfaction of 0.8. The schools who don't use ED Express, but instead use a third-party interface, score the use of the database significantly lower at 81.0, with an impact of 0.7. For each group of users of NSLDS, a 5-point increase would result in a moderate improvement in Customer Satisfaction. ED Express users rate the attributes "knowledge of staff" and "accuracy of the data" significantly higher than non-ED Express users.

In the table above, one can see that "courtesy of staff" received the highest rating, contributing to the trend that prevails throughout all business processes. The "accuracy of data" attribute gets mixed ratings, depending upon the size of the school, with larger schools rating it quite low and smaller schools seemingly content with this area.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Use of NSLDS	79.7	83.4	86.1	79.5	81.1	83.5
Ease of navigation	79.3	81.8	81.1	80.8	81.2	76.6
Helpfulness of the system	79.3	82.4	83.4	79.7	81.0	80.2
Courtesy of staff	85.5	89.0	90.5	85.9	86.3	90.6
Knowledge of staff	82.9	86.8	88.6	81.0	85.2	85.9
Accuracy of the data	74.0	79.2	84.8	72.2	76.0	85.2

Small schools rate “ease of navigation” the lowest—perhaps an indication that their investment in computing infrastructure is lagging behind larger schools, or that their staffs are not as fluent in the latest computer training. As this is consistently a business process where smaller schools’ scores are lower than their large school counterparts, SFA should assess whether the smaller schools’ staffs would benefit from additional focused training.

A sample of the verbatim responses confirms the disparity in respondents’ comfort level with accessing and submitting data electronically. Additionally, respondents frequently mention problems with the accuracy of the data and the speed with which it is updated.

“Fix the NSLDS so I understand it. I don’t think that it is very user friendly.”

“Having instructions and being more clear with different software such as NSLDS.”

“I’d like to see the NSLDS become more user friendly, we would like to see it become a more user friendly program. I recently just went to a seminar and that’s what we were all complaining about.”

“Primarily increase the availability of student data exchange via the internet. Increase NSLDS data accuracy. Reduce the number of signature hold file downloads.”

“The accuracy on the NSLDS. Just sometimes the information is not updated as promptly as we would like.”

“The NSLDS data is sometimes screwed. The information contradicts itself sometimes. For example if the student fills out the wrong social security number on the form the NSLDS says to change it one way and the SFA says to do it another way.”

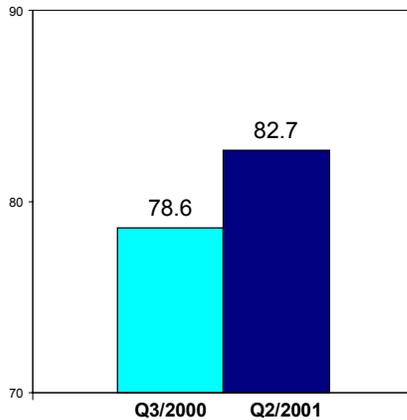
“Make the information more timely. They change the regulation every year and it takes a while for us to get it. So to streamline reporting process for the information put out on the NSLDS.”



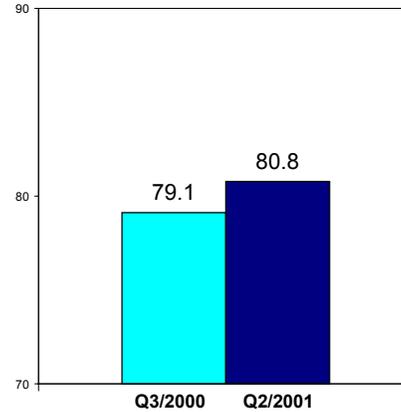
Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

Aid Origination and Disbursement

Respondents were asked to rate the aspects of the Aid Origination and Disbursement allocation process from SFA to their institution.



ED Express Schools



Non-ED Express Schools

ED Express respondents rated this business process an average of 82.7, one of the lowest scoring components, but 4.1 points higher than during the previous period. Aid Origination and Disbursement also has a relatively high total impact (0.9) upon Customer Satisfaction. The schools who use the ED Express interface rate “ease of submitting data” and “courtesy of staff” significantly higher than those schools who don’t use the interface.

Non-ED Express users also rated this component relatively low, at 80.8. It has the same impact (0.9) on Customer Satisfaction as ED Express users. Both groups rate “clarity of knowing whom to call about questions” as an area in need of attention. Improvements in this component will have a relatively high impact on Customer Satisfaction scores for both ED and non-ED users.



Detailed Findings and Conclusions continued

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Aid Origination and Disbursement	80.3	81.8	85.3	78.4	79.3	84.3
Clarity of instructions	77.2	77.8	81.5	74.5	75.9	81.2
Ease of submitting data	78.6	81.6	85.1	77.3	78.5	81.2
Accuracy of records from school reports	80.5	84.1	88.4	81.3	83.0	85.9
Courtesy of staff	86.5	87.4	91.9	84.3	85.7	90.1
Knowledge of staff	82.1	85.2	89.3	81.0	84.2	88.1
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	73.5	73.0	77.8	73.6	70.2	77.4
Consistency of answers received	80.4	80.8	83.7	77.9	78.8	83.7

Given the comparatively low number of records that small schools must process compared with larger institutions, the smaller schools are much more likely to rate every aspect of the process of Aid Origination and Disbursement higher. Once again, this appears to be an area that benefits from having responsibilities concentrated in fewer individuals, giving them a broader overview of the entire allocation, Aid Origination, and Disbursement process. These factors appear to be reflected in the scores.

Respondents' comments reiterate the need for improvement in this area by providing more clarity and simplifying the Aid Origination and Disbursement process.

"They need to eliminate the RFMS origination and disbursement requirement. We only need to do one of those. I can not see any reason why we need to do an origination and than disbursement."

"I would probably say the PELL payment system is cumbersome and too many steps required to update the system. Specifically, having to create origination records and then go a second time and create a disbursement records seems to be a duplication of efforts. We ought to be able to do it in one step."

"Make things less complicated. The whole origination disbursement is way to complicated. The other thing would be going to a web product for ED-Express."

"Specifically the redundancy of the disbursement process could be streamlined. Specifically the origination and then the additional step of disbursements is redundant and it should be one step."



Appendix A: Data Tables



Data Tables continued

Aggregate Scores and Ratings

Sample Size	1454
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	N=837
Program Eligibility	84.2
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.7
Ease of submitting data	83.3
Accuracy of data	84.6
Courtesy of staff	89.4
Knowledge of staff	86.5
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	N=1065
Program Support	82.2
Accuracy of information	83.8
Timeliness of information	80.9
Courtesy of support personal	88.8
Knowledge of support staff	84.0
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.7
Consistency of answers received	79.5
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	N=621
Training	85.9
Usefulness of training session	81.2
Competence of instructors	85.6
Availability of training	76.6
Courtesy of training staff	91.9
Knowledge of training staff	88.0
<hr/>	
	N=494
Monthly Reconciliation	81.5
Clarity of the instructions	75.1
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.1
Response time	81.1
Courtesy of staff	88.8
Knowledge of staff	85.5
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.1
Consistency of answers received	80.2



Data Tables continued

Aggregate Scores and Rating

Sample Size	1454
<hr/>	
	N=946
Use of NSLDS	82.2
Ease of navigation	80.4
Helpfulness of the system	81.1
Courtesy of staff	88.1
Knowledge of staff	85.3
Accuracy of the data	78.3
<hr/>	
	N=853
Aid Origination and Disbursement	81.9
Clarity of instructions	78.4
Ease of submitting data	80.9
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.3
Courtesy of staff	88.1
Knowledge of staff	85.5
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.4
Consistency of answers received	81.2
<hr/>	
	N=1400
Customer Expectations	70.7
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	70.7
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	N=1428
Overall Quality	79.7
Overall Quality of SFA	79.7
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	N=1442
Satisfaction	74.3
Overall Satisfaction	80.0
Compared to Expectations	72.0
Compared to Ideal	68.7
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	N=1450
Customer Complaints	21.4
Complaint rate	21.4
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	N=1435
Outcomes	81.7
Confidence	81.7



Data Tables continued

Aggregate Score Comparison

	Overall 2001	Overall 2000	Difference	Significant * 95% ci
Sample Size	1454	1433		
Program Eligibility	84.2	82.9	1.3	
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.7	77.3	1.4	
Ease of submitting data	83.3	81.5	1.8	↑
Accuracy of data	84.6	82.7	1.9	↑
Courtesy of staff	89.4	88.6	0.8	
Knowledge of staff	86.5	86.0	0.5	
Program Support	82.2	80.6	1.6	↑
Accuracy of information	83.8	82.3	1.5	
Timeliness of information	80.9	79.1	1.8	↑
Courtesy of support personal	88.8	87.7	1.1	
Knowledge of support staff	84.0	81.7	2.3	↑
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.7	68.2	4.5	↑
Consistency of answers received	79.5	N/A	N/A	
Training	85.9	83.1	2.8	↑
Usefulness of training session	81.2	78.1	3.1	↑
Competence of instructors	85.6	83.7	1.9	↑
Availability of training	76.6	71.2	5.4	↑
Courtesy of training staff	91.9	90.6	1.3	
Knowledge of training staff	88.0	85.6	2.4	↑
Monthly Reconciliation	81.5	77.5	4.0	↑
Clarity of the instructions	75.1	68.0	7.1	↑
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.1	75.3	7.8	↑
Response time	81.1	75.7	5.4	↑
Courtesy of staff	88.8	84.9	3.9	↑
Knowledge of staff	85.5	81.4	4.1	↑
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.1	N/A	N/A	
Consistency of answers received	80.2	N/A	N/A	
Use of NSLDS	82.2	80.1	2.1	↑
Ease of navigation	80.4	77.5	2.9	↑
Helpfulness of the system	81.1	78.5	2.6	↑
Courtesy of staff	88.1	85.9	2.2	↑
Knowledge of staff	85.3	83.7	1.6	↑
Accuracy of the data	78.3	76.5	1.8	↑
Aid Origination and Disbursement	81.9	78.8	3.1	↑
Clarity of instructions	78.4	71.0	7.4	↑
Ease of submitting data	80.9	75.5	5.4	↑
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.3	80.2	4.1	↑
Courtesy of staff	88.1	85.1	3.0	↑
Knowledge of staff	85.5	82.1	3.4	↑
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.4	N/A	N/A	
Consistency of answers received	81.2	N/A	N/A	
Customer Expectations	70.7	68.5	2.2	↑
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	70.7	68.5	2.2	↑
Overall Quality	79.7	76.8	2.9	↑
Overall Quality of SFA	79.7	76.8	2.9	↑
Satisfaction	74.3	70.1	4.2	↑
Overall Satisfaction	80.0	76.5	3.5	↑
Compared to Expectations	72.0	67.6	4.4	↑
Compared to Ideal	68.7	64.0	4.7	↑
Customer Complaints	21.4	26.5	-5.1	↓
Complaint rate	21.4	26.5	-5.1	↓
Outcomes	81.7	79.2	2.5	↑
Confidence	81.7	79.2	2.5	↑



Data Tables continued

Scores and Ratings For ED Express Users and Non ED Express Users

Sample Size	Ed Express N=740	Non Ed Express N=714
	N=467	N=370
Program Eligibility	85.0	83.2
Clarity of instructions for E - app	79.6	77.5
Ease of submitting data	84.5	81.7
Accuracy of data	85.1	83.9
Courtesy of staff	89.1	89.8
Knowledge of staff	86.8	86.1
	N=605	N=460
Program Support	82.9	81.2
Accuracy of information	84.8	82.5
Timeliness of information	81.6	80.0
Courtesy of support personal	89.8	87.5
Knowledge of support staff	84.5	83.2
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.6	72.8
Consistency of answers received	80.6	78.1
	N=373	N=248
Training	86.7	84.7
Usefulness of training session	82.5	79.2
Competence of instructors	86.3	84.6
Availability of training	77.7	74.9
Courtesy of training staff	92.5	91.0
Knowledge of training staff	89.0	86.4
	N=302	N=192
Monthly Reconciliation	82.7	79.6
Clarity of the instructions	75.3	74.8
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.6	82.2
Response time	82.6	78.6
Courtesy of staff	89.9	87.0
Knowledge of staff	86.3	84.1
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.4	73.6
Consistency of answers received	81.9	77.4



Data Tables continued

Scores and Ratings For ED Express Users and Non ED Express Users

Sample Size	Ed Express N=740	Non Ed Express N=714
	N=563	N=383
Use of NSLDS	82.9	81.0
Ease of navigation	80.7	79.8
Helpfulness of the system	81.7	80.3
Courtesy of staff	88.4	87.5
Knowledge of staff	86.1	84.1
Accuracy of the data	79.1	77.1
	N=493	N=360
Aid Origination and Disbursement	82.7	80.8
Clarity of instructions	79.0	77.5
Ease of submitting data	82.2	79.1
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.8	83.6
Courtesy of staff	88.8	87.0
Knowledge of staff	85.9	84.8
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.9	73.8
Consistency of answers received	81.8	80.3
	N=723	N=677
Customer Expectations	72.0	69.4
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	72.0	69.4
	N=734	N=694
Overall Quality	80.8	78.5
Overall Quality of SFA	80.8	78.5
	N=739	N=703
Satisfaction	75.6	73.0
Overall Satisfaction	81.0	78.9
Compared to Expectations	73.1	70.8
Compared to Ideal	70.3	66.9
	N=739	N=711
Customer Complaints	23.0	19.7
Complaint rate	23.0	19.7
	N=737	N=698
Outcomes	83.3	79.9
Confidence	83.3	79.9



Data Tables

Scores and Ratings Based on Size of School

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Sample Size	247	246	247	237	240	237
Program Eligibility	84.0	85.3	85.8	81.8	85.1	82.7
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.6	80.1	80.0	76.4	78.9	77.4
Ease of submitting data	83.9	86.1	83.3	82.2	83.1	80.1
Accuracy of data	85.1	84.1	86.1	81.9	87.2	83.0
Courtesy of staff	87.3	89.3	90.6	88.5	91.4	89.6
Knowledge of staff	84.0	87.6	88.7	84.1	89.4	85.3
Program Support	80.0	83.9	85.2	78.5	81.4	84.2
Accuracy of information	82.6	84.7	87.2	80.5	81.7	85.7
Timeliness of information	79.1	82.5	83.2	77.0	80.6	83.1
Courtesy of support personal	87.6	90.6	91.3	86.2	87.5	89.2
Knowledge of support staff	81.8	85.1	86.7	80.1	83.7	86.5
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	68.1	74.9	74.8	70.0	73.3	75.7
Consistency of answers received	76.0	82.2	83.7	73.9	79.5	81.7
Training	85.0	86.2	89.1	83.3	84.7	87.1
Usefulness of training session	81.2	82.2	84.3	78.4	81.6	78.1
Competence of instructors	84.4	86.1	88.4	83.0	86.5	84.8
Availability of training	74.7	76.5	81.8	69.6	76.0	80.3
Courtesy of training staff	91.5	91.7	94.2	90.1	91.1	91.9
Knowledge of training staff	86.8	89.3	91.1	84.9	87.3	87.5
Monthly Reconciliation	82.1	82.0	84.2	77.8	77.6	82.1
Clarity of the instructions	73.9	75.7	76.0	74.3	73.3	76.2
Accuracy of the records maintained	82.7	82.7	85.6	78.7	80.4	85.8
Response time	79.7	83.0	84.5	78.0	77.2	80.1
Courtesy of staff	89.3	88.8	91.8	84.3	85.9	89.3
Knowledge of staff	84.8	86.2	87.7	80.8	83.4	86.3
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.0	73.8	75.3	77.1	70.2	74.3
Consistency of answers received	80.7	81.6	83.4	74.6	76.5	79.6



Data Tables continued

Scores and Ratings Based on Size of School

	Ed Express			Non Ed Express		
	Large	Medium	Small	Large	Medium	Small
Sample Size	247	246	247	237	240	237
Use of NSLDS	79.7	83.4	86.1	79.5	81.1	83.5
Ease of navigation	79.3	81.8	81.1	80.8	81.2	76.6
Helpfulness of the system	79.3	82.4	83.4	79.7	81.0	80.2
Courtesy of staff	85.5	89.0	90.5	85.9	86.3	90.6
Knowledge of staff	82.9	86.8	88.6	81.0	85.2	85.9
Accuracy of the data	74.0	79.2	84.8	72.2	76.0	85.2
Aid Origination and Disbursement	80.3	81.8	85.3	78.4	79.3	84.3
Clarity of instructions	77.2	77.8	81.5	74.5	75.9	81.2
Ease of submitting data	78.6	81.6	85.1	77.3	78.5	81.2
Accuracy of records from school reports	80.5	84.1	88.4	81.3	83.0	85.9
Courtesy of staff	86.5	87.4	91.9	84.3	85.7	90.1
Knowledge of staff	82.1	85.2	89.3	81.0	84.2	88.1
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	73.5	73.0	77.8	73.6	70.2	77.4
Consistency of answers received	80.4	80.8	83.7	77.9	78.8	83.7
Customer Expectations	69.1	73.2	73.8	68.4	68.9	70.8
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	69.1	73.2	73.8	68.4	68.9	70.8
Overall Quality	78.1	81.7	82.7	77.0	77.8	80.7
Overall Quality of SFA	78.1	81.7	82.7	77.0	77.8	80.7
Satisfaction	72.4	76.7	77.9	70.2	72.5	76.0
Overall Satisfaction	78.5	81.8	82.8	76.7	79.0	81.1
Compared to Expectations	70.1	73.2	76.0	67.5	70.7	74.2
Compared to Ideal	65.2	72.0	73.8	63.7	66.7	70.4
Customer Complaints	25.1	26.1	17.8	30.9	14.2	14.0
Complaint rate	25.1	26.1	17.8	30.9	14.2	14.0
Outcomes	80.1	84.2	85.6	77.6	80.2	82.0
Confidence	80.1	84.2	85.6	77.6	80.2	82.0



Data Tables continued

Scores and Ratings Based on PELL and Non PELL Schools

	<u>Pell</u>	<u>Non-Pell</u>
Sample Size	1304	150
	N=748	N=89
Program Eligibility	84.4	82.0
Clarity of instructions for E - app	78.7	78.0
Ease of submitting data	83.4	82.2
Accuracy of data	85.1	80.3
Courtesy of staff	89.6	87.6
Knowledge of staff	87.0	83.1
	N=963	N=102
Program Support	82.3	81.1
Accuracy of information	83.9	83.1
Timeliness of information	81.1	79.1
Courtesy of support personal	89.0	86.8
Knowledge of support staff	84.0	83.8
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	72.8	71.8
Consistency of answers received	79.5	79.6
	N=559	N=62
Training	85.8	86.8
Usefulness of training session	81.1	82.0
Competence of instructors	85.4	87.1
Availability of training	76.3	79.6
Courtesy of training staff	91.9	91.4
Knowledge of training staff	87.8	89.4
	N=449	N=45
Monthly Reconciliation	81.4	81.7
Clarity of the instructions	75.2	74.0
Accuracy of the records maintained	83.1	82.7
Response time	81.2	79.3
Courtesy of staff	88.8	88.9
Knowledge of staff	85.4	86.5
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	73.9	76.3
Consistency of answers received	80.1	81.0



Data Tables continued

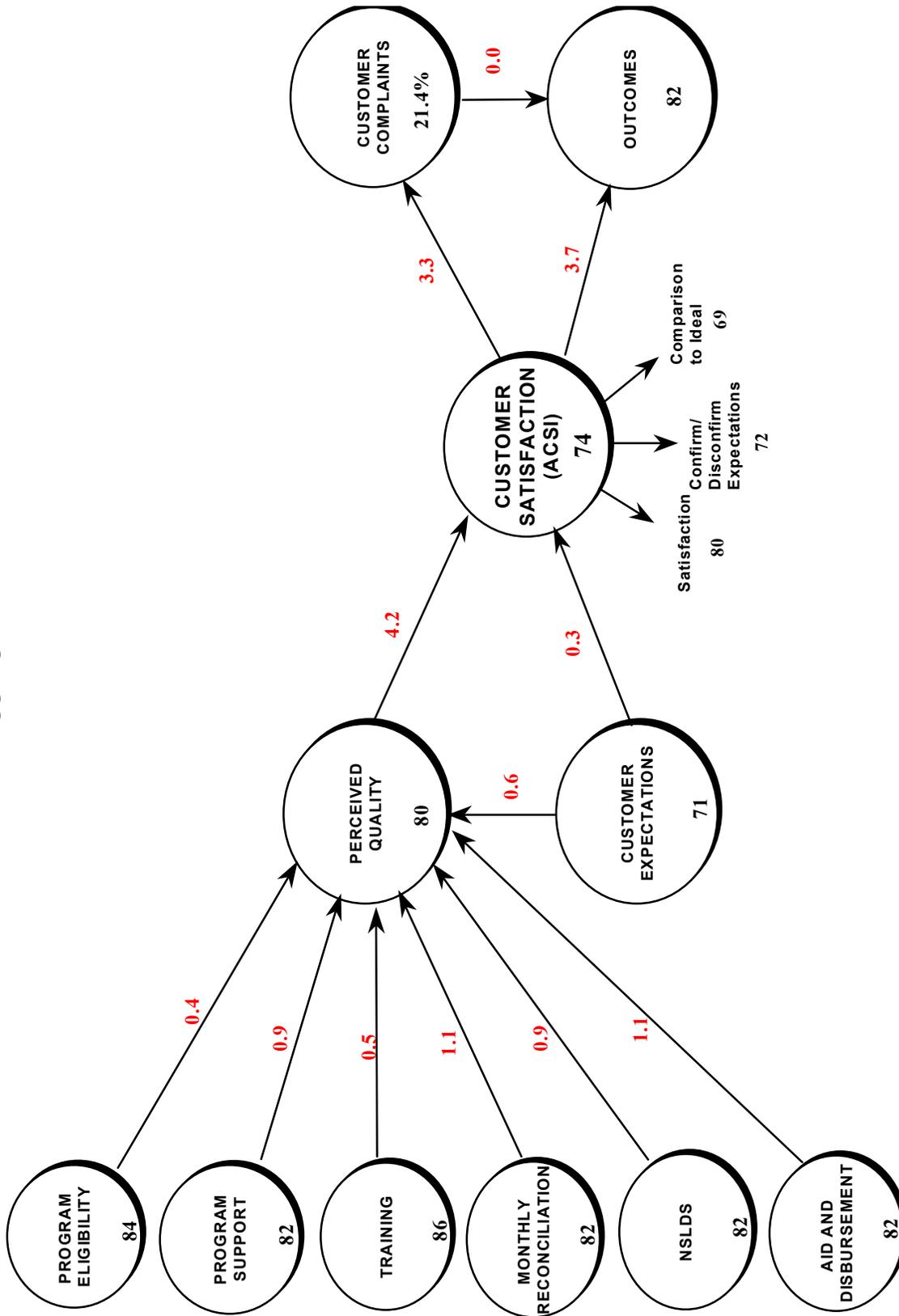
Scores and Ratings Based on PELL and Non PELL Schools

	<u>Pell</u>	<u>Non-Pell</u>
Sample Size	1304	150
	N=847	N=99
Use of NSLDS	82.3	81.2
Ease of navigation	80.5	79.6
Helpfulness of the system	81.3	79.8
Courtesy of staff	88.5	84.4
Knowledge of staff	85.6	83.0
Accuracy of the data	78.1	80.2
	N=783	N=70
Aid Origination and Disbursement	81.7	83.4
Clarity of instructions	78.1	81.0
Ease of submitting data	81.0	80.4
Accuracy of records from school reports	84.2	84.6
Courtesy of staff	88.0	88.5
Knowledge of staff	85.2	88.0
Clarity of knowing whom to call about questions	74.2	77.5
Consistency of answers received	81.0	83.6
	N=1257	N=143
Customer Expectations	71.1	67.1
Previous Expectations of SFA Quality	71.1	67.1
	N=1281	N=147
Overall Quality	79.8	78.5
Overall Quality of SFA	79.8	78.5
	N=1294	N=148
Satisfaction	74.6	71.9
Overall Satisfaction	80.3	76.9
Compared to Expectations	72.1	70.9
Compared to Ideal	68.8	67.7
	N=1300	N=150
Customer Complaints	21.5	20.0
Complaint rate	21.5	20.0
	N=1286	N=149
Outcomes	81.7	81.4
Confidence	81.7	81.4



Data Tables continued

The ACSI Model Picture for all Schools (Aggregate)

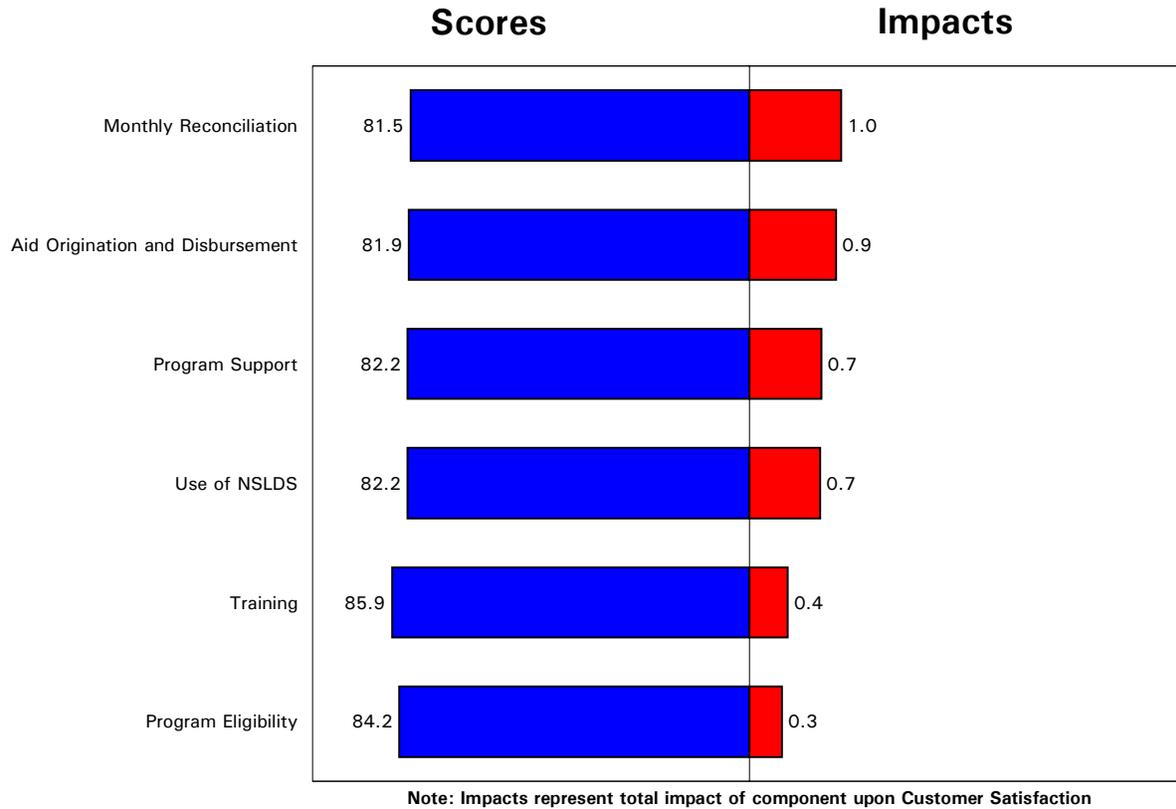


Note: Please refer to the appropriate accompanying tables for additional detail.



Data Tables continued

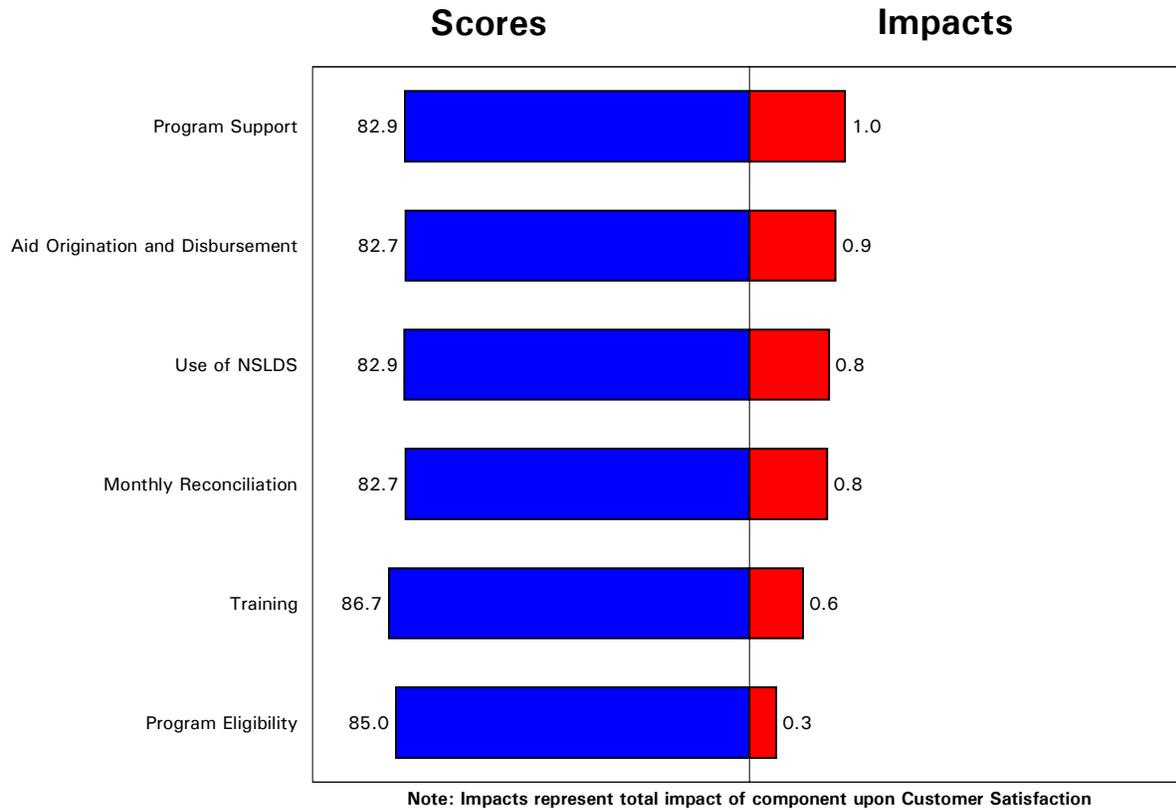
Aggregate Component Scores and Impacts





ED Express Users and Non-Users Comparison continued

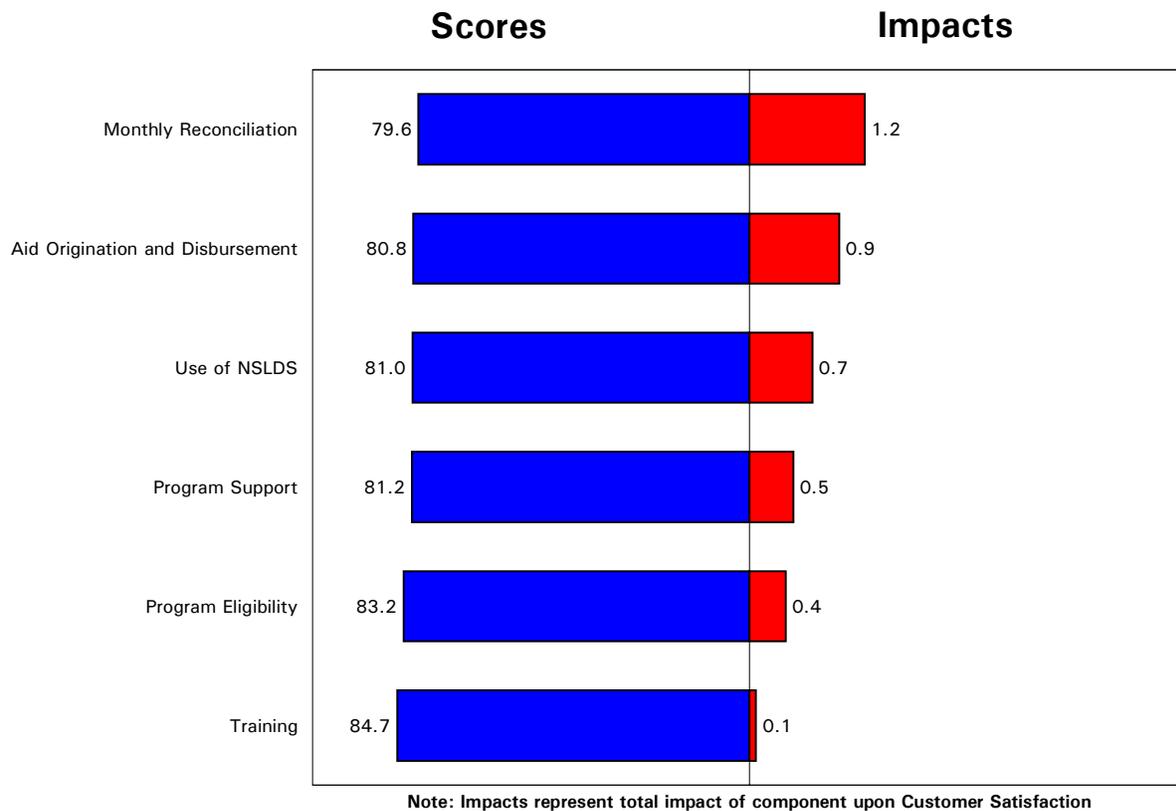
ED Express Users Component Scores and Impacts





ED Express Users and Non-Users Comparison continued

Non ED Express Users Component Scores and Impacts





Data Tables continued

Valid Percentages of Respondents Who Have or Have Not Seen Improvement in the Past 12 Months

	% Yes	% No	Valid N
Participated to recertify your school to disburse Financial aid?	59	41	1440
Received support from SFA in past 12 months?	75	25	1423
Participated in SFA Training Session?	43	57	1446
Personally completed the process for monthly reconciliation?	35	65	1413
Accessed the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) in the last 12 months?	65	35	1451
Personally involved with the aid origination or disbursement of funds from SFA?	61	39	1427



Appendix B: Verbatim Comments



Verbatim Comments

All respondents were asked, “In what specific ways could SFA improve its service to you?” Responses are listed herein, organized (where possible) by business process.

BUSINESS PROCESS-RELATED COMMENTS	61
PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY	61
PROGRAM SUPPORT	61
TRAINING	80
MONTHLY RECONCILIATION	87
AID ORIGINATION AND DISBURSEMENT	87
GENERAL PROCESS	88
TECHNICAL/SOFTWARE ISSUES	94
USE OF NSLDS	99
ED EXPRESS	103
OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS	104
OBTAINING INFORMATION	104
ONLINE INFORMATION	111
REGULATIONS	116
UNIQUE SCHOOL ISSUES	118
STUDENT ISSUES	120
COMMENTS ON OVERALL SATISFACTION	121
OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS	124



Verbatim Comments continued

Business Process-Related Comments

Program Eligibility

- *Make the process of approving additional location and programs easier. We can't get it straight. We are trying to get approval for an additional location. I think that it is about all that I can think of. Everything else seems to be working great.*
- *To change the 90/10 rule. To allow schools such as ours to continue the program. We missed the cut off because of a couple of hundred dollars. We are being asked to leave the program. We can't get the shorter programs approved for our school.*

Program Support

- *A better directory as to who to call. We have no document of the department listings.*
- *A little bit faster response. That's my main recommendation. You wait several days for a response. When I have a question I want an answer right then. I don't like to wait.*
- *A little more clarity on who to contact with a problem and faster response for tech support.*
- *A little more contact than what we get now from the case managers or some of our team. Maybe a phone call or a letter or something, I guess. A little more correspondence.*
- *A lot of times I would get a new person training and they don't know stuff. It would be nice to get with someone that's been there a while. I always seem to get someone that's very new.*
- *Accuracy of info, and quality, courtesy and knowledge in the customer service representative.*
- *Along with the increasing use of electronic means of financial aid. Do not ignore the personal one to one contact of a student's administrator, or another persons need for assistance. Don't ignore the personal contact with the person they are dealing with. I feel that the one on one contact has been lost.*
- *Answer my questions better. I would like a response to my questions.*
- *Answering faster on the calls we make. Sometimes when we have some origination records that are rejected, I submit the correct origination and sometimes 2 or 3 days pass before we receive the correct one. Sometimes I call and they say I'll call you back and then 2 days later they call back.*
- *Anytime you call you get pushed around. They need to notify us of different people and have a human answer the phone instead of a machine. I hate machines.*
- *Basically just be able to give me the answers I need. Over the last 12 years I've always been able to get the answers I need. In the last few months I have not been able to get the answers I need.*
- *Be customer friendly.*
- *Be friendly.*
- *Be more accessible. Have better ways of knowing who to contact when you have questions. That's all.*
- *Be more available and be clear with the regulations.*
- *Be more available to clients in Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.*
- *Be more consistent in their response—timeliness of response and their attitude.*
- *Be more user friendly. Use a common language and simplify everything, and make everyone eligible.*
- *Being contacted by e-mail and knowing who to contact for financial aid matters.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Being quicker to give guidance of concern to the financial community, when an issue arises. Getting us the handbook in a timely manner. We are just barley getting it. The issue of knowing who to contact, making that a clearer process, that would be helpful.*
- *Better communication once you submit an application you don't know what's going on with it. You have to call to know.*
- *Better guidance of what the changes are, what's new and what they want. NSLDS, the timeliness of the information is not current, over time it has improved but it could still be better. We use e-mail a lot to get answers to questions. We use that because the telephone is not a good option. It is hard to reach people sometimes.*
- *Better series of questions and answers and a better telephone notification system.*
- *Better staff training for their staff, enhancements of their electronic services.*
- *Better timeliness of the NSLDS, be more accurate in reporting by the contractor of the Perkins loans. For example, when we liquidate a loan it gets sent to them and it is accurate, but it is still creating student havoc. For the accurate reporting they could do it more often and have better technical support for the Perkins issues.*
- *Better, longer hours. The department shuts down about 4:30.*
- *By continuing to be customer oriented and finding out the needs of the customer. They can do this by inquiry and continuing to have a close relationship, like in surveys. Just close contact with the customer.*
- *By getting answers back on a more timely manner.*
- *By not assuming that all schools have technical support, and providing assistance in a lay persons in the technical areas.*
- *By the call center that the people are more knowledgeable. They have the same manual that I have and just read it to me and don't have answers for my problems.*
- *Clarify the role of the contact people, update the information of the contact person. Let the school know who the person is. Respond to our e-mails so we actually have something in writing so it is not left to interpretation.*
- *Clarity as far as who SFA should call. We don't know who to call.*
- *Clarity of who to call on specific information. They don't ever know who to call. When we call they don't know and we don't know. It would be nice if they assigned someone in each state to do that.*
- *Classes available closer to home. They are very helpful when you call. It does take a while to get a hold of them, and if they are on vacation then you are just out of luck.*
- *Consistency in answers.*
- *Consistency of answers, when you call for an answer for a question.*
- *Consistency of directions and opinions. I work with a variety of schools and my major problems are the knowledge of the case teams. It is the inconsistency of the staff. The second point is the case teams themselves change in each staff. Some staffs are nicer then others are, like the old school, and some are rude. It is hard to get a straight answer from them. Some teams are good and some are bad. Neither, the teams or the policy people work in the school, so their decisions are inappropriate. I find a large gap in the knowledge within the staff. Fortunately I know who the nice ones are and who is knowledgeable so I can call them. The average person doesn't know. The regulations aren't clear and getting the proper guidance isn't easy to get.*
- *Consistency of information. Easier instructions for the software.*
- *Consistency.*
- *Consistent answers. That when they change a policy everyone on their staff could implement it, for example, when the loan fee changed from 4% to 3%. That's the main thing I guess.*
- *Continue with the great customer service and the friendly attitude.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Continued student and customer service. Staying abreast of technology as a tool in aiding office efficiency.*
- *Cut down the time on waiting for phone. More knowledgeable staff and sometimes I get transferred to two or three persons and I don't even get an answer. Increased knowledge of staff.*
- *Direct Loan Origination Center needs to have better staff control over the database. You have high quality managers that are banging their heads against the wall trying to help the schools. The case management is excellent and the management agreement is excellent. The people at the regional office are excellent. The training provided like the direct line was excellent. Except the LOC they had a person there from the LOC speaking and he did not know what he was talking about. He was doing a presentation and did not know the data. The departments are doing a great job. And Washington is great. The issues are with Montgomery, Alabama.*
- *Each school should have a specific general representative, whom they can turn to when the program isn't going exactly like it should.*
- *Easier access for who to call in situations.*
- *Easily accessible humans and no charges when calling customer service.*
- *Emphasis on training, consolidated call center, one call does it all. Regulatory release.*
- *Enhance the transparency and clarity of whom to call for different topics.*
- *Exit interviewing, getting the exiting material on time. It would be nice to have just one personal contact.*
- *Extended hours. For me personally I tend to do work at off- hours, so it might be better for me to have people work extended hours or work weekends. I was out of financial aid for awhile and I came back 13 months ago and the service I have received has far exceeded what I used to get and I am very pleased.*
- *Faster responses to inquiries. Produce publications earlier for the award year. Avoid mixed messages related to Perkins. Access cash.*
- *First of all when I have a problem, the CPS is a great help. They serve as a go between. The CPS helps a lot. I wish there could be a way there could be one operation that could help rather than have to go through the CPS to get help. I am speaking mostly about the PELL program. I am also not a computer tech so maybe that's why I have so many problems.*
- *Following-up more quickly with responses or questions from the users. Timing is the issue, when we need additional money. Make reporting easier.*
- *For one thing, personnel in the office be more accessible, to improve accessibility of e-mail, interactive websites between institutions and the department of education. The Department of Education could increase the number of regional offices in the states, particularly California. The one other thing, would be more town-hall meeting between education and educational institutions, they don't really have them. Training sessions aren't the same thing.*
- *Get more information out to us on how to use their services. Give us one person to call.*
- *Get more updates. Continue training and updating the staff so they can give the most accurate updated information, in case someone calls in and we have to talk to them.*
- *Get out training materials in a more timely manner. The instructions that we need to perform our job. The consistency of support you receive when you call the 800 #. The answers are not always the same for the same question. I find it sometimes difficult for them to find the answer. The area trainer is sometimes who I talk to instead, because it is easier. Overall I am pleased with the improvements.*
- *Getting back with me quicker.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Give me one phone number to call for all financial aid. I also hate the automated phone system.*
- *Have a better training program for their staff. Make it easier to contact them.*
- *Have a central place to call with knowledgeable call relay.*
- *Have better customer service to answer questions.*
- *Have more knowledgeable general and support staff. The people who answer the phones need to get info or have contact with the educational system. Be more knowledgeable when receiving contact from educational institutions with concerns and questions. I was given incorrect information before. Make the systems more simplistic. There are a lot of technical issues, they have to make it more simplistic like plug and play, because we shouldn't have to be technical people as well as financial people.*
- *Have more knowledgeable people. Instead of finding the problem find the solution. For example, if the school is having a problem with computers, they should help find a solution instead of pointing fingers.*
- *Have more people available. I wanted to note that the staff members helping me on my application were really good, but we were her first school and that meant she didn't have a lot of knowledge at that time. But she did really well.*
- *Have more people familiar with the operations and their assistants available on site.*
- *Have more specific phone guidelines on whom to call with specific problems.*
- *Have people available to answer the phone instead of the answering machine and have them more knowledgeable.*
- *Have phone contact and computer contact. It is very good. I haven't had any problems. Stretch one-day meetings to 2 to make sure they are always hands on.*
- *Have toll free numbers. That's about it, they do a good job on everything else.*
- *Having customer service representatives be nicer. In Louisiana we had students finish high school in January. Even though they had met the requirements they didn't receive their diplomas yet. And the SFA didn't understand that. They need to know that the set of rules doesn't apply to everyone. They have different situations and stories. The main problem I have is with policy. The training and ED Express is great, it is just the policy I have a problem with. We need someone that we can talk to and explain the different stories and situations.*
- *Having more support for financial aid in one location instead of having different numbers to contact. More accuracy on records such as funding.*
- *Having one source and telephone number to go to, instead of going through different people every time.*
- *Having regional people that are accessible. I think sometimes you dial the numbers and all you get are voicemails. I think they are over-killed by more schools than they can handle during critical times. I think they are heading in the right direction. I think they have come a long way.*
- *I always complain about the telephone menus, they're not very clear.*
- *I am a pretty happy guy. I would like to have a better understanding of what department knows what and who is in those departments.*
- *I am frustrated not knowing who to call. Sometimes, when I have gotten a hold of somebody they have not been able to answer my questions.*
- *I am really hard pressed. I have been in the business for a long time and the improvement that I have seen in the schools over the years is remarkable. So I am really not sure what they can do. The entire delivery system has been so vastly improved and the training session and that the information is on the net. The information available to the professionals. The responsiveness of the senior management is remarkable. I have complete confidence in the current senior management team. Having seen them speak and working with them and knowing KJAX personally I am completely confident in their direction and ability to lead the profession. And to help us be more responsive to our clientele.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I am very pleased. I have good representatives that help me with what I need. They do a good job, and they continue to improve on their own. They don't wait for me to complain.*
- *I can't think of any one thing. We do get training, and we do get contacts from them. I guess it's just the availability issue—when we can contact them. It's windows of time—time issues. Other than that, e-mail works wonders. Their window of time is six hours different from ours, their day is ending, ours is beginning. If we don't make the effort to call them right when we get in, then we're out of luck. So if something comes up in the middle of the day, we have to call the next day. I guess we can't expect them to be there all the time but e-mail works well and our region person is really good at responding to us. I never wait more than a day and often times it's less than a day. If I e-mail something in the morning, I get something back in the afternoon and if I e-mail in the afternoon, I get something the next morning.*
- *I can't think of any. They have been very good. Anytime I have any question or problems they know the answers that I need. If they do not know the answers they get back to me real quick. They do an excellent job. They do very well and are top notch.*
- *I can't think of anything off the top of my head right now. Probably more direct contact with the school. Sometimes if I need an answer they seem so far away. Their presence is really not there.*
- *I can't think of anything. Being made aware of proper contact people.*
- *I can't think of anyway. I think that they do an excellent job. Like I said I am computer illiterate and they are always there to help. The only thing that they could improve on, and I do not know if it is their concern, is with the loans. I do not think that the schools should be responsible if the students go against the loans. I do not think that it should go to the schools default rate. We have no control over it. I think that they should not be so relaxed about it. I think that they should have some way of showing that the students can pay it back.*
- *I can't think of one thing. I have never had problems with the program. One time I complained about one customer service rep. that I had an unpleasant experience with.*
- *I don't feel that I can offer an informed answer. Maybe they could have more resources available to newer people so I could find out what's out there. Everything I have found out about the SEFA I have had to find out on my own. It would be nice to have some resource sent to me.*
- *I don't have any problems, I never have even thought about that. I pick up the phone and they answer my questions, it's great.*
- *I don't know of any. I think the directions for the IPEDs need to be clearer, and I don't like that you are timed, I didn't have enough time to make a copy of what we did. But the support center is great. They helped a lot when we called in.*
- *I don't know. I just had an experience just two days ago. She would not admit that she made the mistake. They need to be a little more trusting that we are not doing it wrong. This is just one experience I had with the Pell people. They are always just so judgmental that we are wrong. Direct Loan and NSLDS always do really good. When I call the P-Line I feel as though they have to set down their coffee cup just to talk to me.*
- *I don't know. They are always available to help me.*
- *I don't really have anything to say. Make it a little easier to know who to call for specific concerns. It can be hard to get a hold of people.*
- *I don't really know. I'm really pleased with what contact I've had, but it's not been much.*
- *I don't see. I am pretty illiterate and they are very helpful and could do everything for me.*
- *I guess if I would give a suggestion, I would say, because there are so many different programs to deal with, it is hard to know who exactly to call or talk with.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I guess more accurate information: some times I call and speak to a customer service rep concerning an issue and they give me information and it doesn't work. They only give me bits and pieces of information. I don't get everything. I don't know if they don't know. The SSER rosters that's for updating enrollment I think that needs to be simplified.*
- *I guess more availability of phone contacts. I want better quality of the phone contacts. Sometimes if the contact name is there, you get put on hold or they say that they will call you back and they are not always there for you to speak with.*
- *I guess probably have more regional training sessions and have people available to assist passive reconciliation issue.*
- *I guess process the application a little faster. When the students sends in the FAFSA they could process it faster. An easier method of finding someone to answer your questions without getting transferred all over the place. That is it.*
- *I guess that they can cut down the wait on the phone. Improve the NSDLS.*
- *I guess they could. When you call with questions I run into a lot of problems getting to the right person.*
- *I have a client school with opinions on eligibility specific issues. It is difficult to get a timely response. Find a way to provide a more timely response. I think the other thing would be to provide more clarity for student aid.*
- *I have had one situation that they needed more knowledge. I called about a question and no one knew the answer.*
- *I have had very positive experiences. Maybe more staffing to handle customer service or overall questions.*
- *I know they just started the new customer service line. That'll be helpful. I need a directory for where to go for different information.*
- *I liked it when they took all the consolidation stuff out of the handbook and it is now separate and I liked it better as one. I was disappointed they didn't have spring training. The NSLDS people never have a good answer on how to get things fixed. Not real clear, they don't tell you who to contact when you know information is wrong. I have lots of good things to say too, I don't want you to think it is all bad. I just got most of the sections of the handbook and the year is almost over. I could tell you more but I can't think of anything right now.*
- *I need a manual, if that's available. Send a phone list of who I would call if I have a problem. That's about all I can think that they could do. I think that the phone list would help a lot.*
- *I need to know who to call about my questions.*
- *I seem to have difficulty getting good answers from the Pell hotline and the Pell online seems to be down a lot. The process to get payments reconciled is quite cumbersome.*
- *I switched because of the bad communication, it was when you spoke with someone you would just keep getting transferred.*
- *I think a lot of it would be consistency. You get one answer from one person and another answer from someone else.*
- *I think better training, and better service on the phone.*
- *I think clarifying sometimes who to call, never know which office. Getting information out earlier on updates when there are changes made, such as the handbook. I think that's it.*
- *I think from some of my answers, simplicity when it comes to electronic services, customer services.*
- *I think if we had more clarity of who to go to for answers we would do a lot better because of the answers.*
- *I think it would be helpful to me if they would be a little more clear about who I contact for problems.*
- *I think it would be really good if we had a listing of people to call. I think in training, I would like to see good trainers with a good rapport.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think just in their overall knowledge base. I had obviously spoken with someone whose knowledge base wasn't very good. They could have been new, had a bad day, I don't know. That has only happened once in all these years. We had to send money back and reissue. We couldn't get an ISIR. I think overall, they do a fine job. I'm sure the call center stays busy all the time.*
- *I think just increase online system support and improve upon that.*
- *I think just more clear, concise instructions. Make it more understandable. Sometimes it's so obvious on some of the forms they send out.*
- *I think just providing consistent information when we call them.*
- *I think of the Internet—if they have forms and stuff on that. I would like more stuff on the Internet. Most of the time, it's 2 A.M. in the morning and you're looking for a specific form. It always hits you at night or something and you say, "I wish I could get that form or this form." You don't want to wait and call the next day. I know the IRS has that. You can download lots of files. It's in a .pdf file and you can go to the computer and print it. So you're working with an original form. I know you're working towards that direction. The more stuff they put in .pdf form the better. I call and they answer all my questions. My expectations weren't very high at first—you expect with a government agency to be very slow. But I call and they say, "bang bang!" here's the answer. Eric was very nice. It took half an hour over the phone and he walked me through the questions, saying the trick to this question is this, and this and he walked me right through it.*
- *I think that knowing who to call for what your problem is would be helpful. Having some direct name on who to call with a question would be nice. I cannot think right now.*
- *I think that the phone number that families call, the folks there are not trained adequately and they give erroneous answers and contradict what we have been trained to give.*
- *I think that their responses change too much. I get different answers from different people. If they could fix that, then we could get things straight.*
- *I think that there is only a decent consistency in their answers. I never know who the right person is to call to get answers to some questions.*
- *I think that they have large turnover of help, so better trained help.*
- *I think the service is good, so I would have no comment on service. I think delivering the funds to the students on a timely basis is really good. I think making sure the schools understand that they can ask questions and not be fearful of getting conflicting answers. The schools need to feel completely at ease for asking questions for anything, and not get tracked or in trouble. I think that the department should really make an effort to be able to recognize the difference between a mistake and something done to circumvent the process. As long as you have human beings you will get mistakes.*
- *I think the voicemail is frustrating.*
- *I think they are doing a good job now, because whenever I call in they are always helpful. If they don't know the answer to my questions, they find someone who does.*
- *I think they are doing fine now. I think clearer directions would be great. Sometimes I find they're ambiguous and I'm not quite sure what they are asking me to do. Just be clear and concise.*
- *I think they are getting a lot better than they were, but probably understanding and knowledge, a lot of times we get different answers to questions, so I think they need improvement in clarity of answers.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think they could make more available a listing of who to call for help. Make the holding time shorter. I had a bad experience in closing out one year and the only message they left is that they were not available at that time. They didn't leave a message of who to call in case of an emergency. Everything is on the Internet now and we don't get anything on hard copy any more. It would be good if we could receive a listing quarterly of what's on the Internet.*
- *I think they need to listen to people and make a determination from there. Then use their judgement, good judgement, to determine if people are really doing something bad or having a problem. We were balled out and made to feel like criminals and we didn't even know the problem until later.*
- *I think they're doing a good job but they could improve in some areas but I can't think of anything right now. Sometimes it's kind of hard to get a hold of somebody you don't know who to call all the time for the questions you have.*
- *I think they're doing it by moving services into the web. I think providing a place where they'll be online for schools to get information about the appropriate contact people with SEA and how to contact them. That would be a help to me, and other schools.*
- *I think to better identify contacts. Something that directs you immediately rather than an automated system.*
- *I think training and knowledge of people answering the phones, I'm referring to Pell Grant center. All others are great, it's just Pell that's not listening to the whole sentence one is saying. I don't think they really understand the question, or they say they don't know and hang up.*
- *I think when I call, sometimes the people don't give me the correct number. They sometimes make up an answer rather than giving me the correct answer.*
- *I think you asked the question about 2 years ago about a single point of contact. I still think that would help. If you take the time to read the information that tells you who to contact that could be simpler. Also, having them shift you out easily if you get the wrong person. Single point of contact and ease of shift out is what's needed. You have it in place you just need a way to make it smoother.*
- *I think, just to contact people. More clarity on the questions.*
- *I would just say the accuracy of the information when you call someone unless I talk to the regional director the information is incorrect. Sometimes they are hard to understand because they are from a different ethnic background.*
- *I would like the people that answer the 800 # to be well trained for our questions and the students.*
- *I would like to be able to actually talk to a person, because when you go online to check regulations very often my question doesn't fit into one category. I would like to easily get a person on the phone. No not really, overall they do a very good job considering they are a big government bureaucracy.*
- *I would like to have a specific person to talk about the things going on at my school.*
- *I would like to know who our representative is.*
- *I would like to see them utilize the internet more, instead of the modem. On the internet I would like to see the Title IV WAN become completely internet based. In dealing with the department, they treat us in a very generic way. They are not very personal like they know who they are dealing with i.e. like a private school or 2 year or 4 year schools. Nothing else I can think of.*
- *I would rather have mailings than e-mail. It is difficult to read things on this monitor and I hate to print them out. If it is vital I would rather have a paper mailed, especially if I am going to talk it over with my boss. I would like to have very clear telephone numbers and people to contact for certain issues. I usually get voicemail. The processing of faxes. The good news was they turned it on early, but it had a lot of problems. They shouldn't turn it on until it works right. I would like the department to move from software to web based. They should get the technical and legal issues resolved and move to web based.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I would rather talk to a person than a computer and I think there should be more ways to look up regulations than there are now.*
- *I would say clarify and make more available contacts in Washington D.C. Sometimes it is difficult to find out who to speak with. We barely got the student handbook last week and we needed it long ago.*
- *I would say more constancy in responses and timeliness of responses.*
- *I would say that the account manager should know their job completely. They need to explain things to us a little better.*
- *I would say that the only thing we seem to have a problem with is who to call. Provide a list of job description that we can call for what purpose.*
- *I would say they could improve their auditors. She wasn't timely or clear. I am not sure if it was the State or the Federal agency. I don't have any other comments.*
- *If case management had an individual assigned to the institution that would be helpful—one point of contact. I can't think of anything else right now.*
- *If I could talk to the same person every time I call in.*
- *If knowledgeable people were more available. If you have a question it is difficult to even know who to ask. That's all I can think of.*
- *If there is something I don't do, I wish they would call me and let me know.*
- *If there was more info on who to call for specific things.*
- *If they continue the improvements that they are making now. We still have problems with knowing who to contact, but they are getting addressed.*
- *If they could fire every campus based programs person and Pell Grant representative and rehire, that would be nice. They are the rudest and most incompetent people I have EVER dealt with. That's it.*
- *If they could make it easier to know where to go to ask a question and to have questions answered clearly. That's all.*
- *If they had someone sitting next to me, it would help. I can't think of anything to do better. They are just the most patient people, especially over the phone. They have been wonderful. I have nothing.*
- *If they sent somebody to the school when they started doing new things.*
- *If we have a question and you call, it seems I am connected to a thousand different people. I just get passed a long. It takes a week sometimes for them to call me back; quicker response. More input from financial aid administrators before the laws or regulations are changed, perhaps a survey of all the schools that participate in the Title IV programs, get comments from all the schools and not from just a few.*
- *If you could get answers without twenty minutes of punching buttons on your phone. There is not enough human contact. Also, when you write them documentation, sometimes it takes a while for certain areas to reply.*
- *I'll just say, for instance, I called to get a telephone number and it took the lady three days to get back to me. The lady who I talked to, she just really didn't have any idea how to help me. I don't know if that's a bad thing or not—maybe I called the wrong number in the first place. I just thought it took too long to respond back. It shouldn't take longer than the next day.*
- *Improve accuracy in answering of questions and in processing.*
- *Improve customer service. Sometimes they change things often. They change customer service reps often.*
- *Improve the information being giving out—the 800 number. Specifically, the dependent status information.*
- *Improved clarity on where to go for assistance or direction.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *In knowledge in answering my questions when I call in. Any time I have had questions I have had good responses in good time.*
- *In terms of representatives, they should be more knowledgeable. I called in and one said to do things one way, while another said to do it another way.*
- *In the timeliness of responses I asked a question on March 1, this is April third I still haven't got an answer. I spend 6 months talking to them about a special case and nothing is happening. A lot of students are in nontraditional situations and the department is not familiar with these situations. They had a meeting about it last year and they're talking but they're not doing anything.*
- *Increase in response time, speed.*
- *It is a matter of increased staffing, so we can get through to people more quickly. We always get a machine when we call the office in Philadelphia. We wonder if there is even anyone there. The numbers for contacts are constantly changing and I don't think that is good.*
- *It is difficult to get through on the phone. Also, sometimes the phone messages I leave don't get returned on a timely manner. That is my primary complaint.*
- *It is in the presentation of the information. On IFAB I don't always know who to talk to and it always takes a long process to find out who I need to call. It is organized functionally not professionally to help out with customer satisfaction. That may come from my old school where I would rather you give me a piece of paper saying it instead of making me look it up on the internet. The slip charts and information packet are not precise enough. I would rather have one sheet with the numbers of who to call. Since I don't have frequent contact with them it is hard to find out who to talk to when I have a question. It would be easier if I had one person to talk to.*
- *It used to be difficult to get customer service, but now it's a lot easier.*
- *It would be a good idea if they published a web page of the options to select on their voicemail, so we can whip right through it when we get the phone numbers. I thought the centralization of the department in Washington had more consistent information than they do now with the regions. The people on the 800-4-FEDAID, those people are incredible. Students get all the answers they need.*
- *It would be helpful if when a school has questions that they would know who to call. Also, that the response time on the answer would be timely.*
- *It would be nice if there were a phone list that could tell me who or which department to contact when I don't know a number. That would be the biggest thing at this time.*
- *It would be nice if there were people who handled different types of institutions, based on institution size; people to train smaller schools and those who are used to, with bigger universities. I talked to a person in the NSLDS and she gave me some wrong information, and she was not being really nice and not giving me the right information. She kept telling me that I was doing the wrong things. The students were trying to fill applications in FAFSA on the web, and they just had to start over when they finished logging it in.*
- *It's almost like the help center is not fully trained, when students call. Sometimes the student won't believe me and so they'll call and they give them a conflicting answer to mine.*
- *It's got to be more clear where the institution is able to call to resolve a problem.*
- *It's still very fragmented, they need to make it easier to get information without going to different locations or sites.*
- *I've never really had a problem. It's just a little aggravating when you call and the system is down when you really need it.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I've noted that sometimes I get different answers from the toll-free number. I think that may be from new hires or changes in policy, so it's mainly the inconsistency that's an issue for me. My sense is that the department is a kinder place, and in a sense we're all trying to get these people through school, and I've had occasion to comment to colleagues that this is the case.*
- *Just continue with the web-based system. Sometimes it is hard to get through to customer service.*
- *Just get the layers of people to answer the calls better, to have them make proper referrals. A lot of times we spend a lot of time getting a real person to return the call.*
- *Just in the timeliness of the data, the timeliness of the updates and changes and the timeliness of responding to inquiries and questions. Sometimes they answer the next day and that's not fast enough.*
- *Just make it a little easier to know who to call.*
- *Just make it more clear where to call to have questions answered and have them try to make it a more unified organization.*
- *Just the clarity of what area does what function. It is still kind of a little fuzzy.*
- *Just to make sure that when you call that you don't have to wait, but the representatives are very knowledgeable*
- *Knowing how to improve on who to call about certain issues. We haven't been exactly sure who to speak with.*
- *Knowing where to go for what and getting my calls answered. Getting shuffled from department to department. That's my biggest complaint.*
- *Knowing who to call for particular concerns.*
- *Knowing who to call in the future.*
- *Knowing who to contact is an issue.*
- *Knowing who to talk to when you have a question.*
- *Knowledgeable customer service. We have a lot of problems with direct loans and we get a lot of different answers and we getting people who know less than we do who are helping. More timely responses. It usually takes three days to get a call back. That's it.*
- *Language barriers and offering more training here in Puerto Rico. It's difficult for us to travel out of Puerto Rico because we're a low-income school. The language barrier is Spanish. More people at customer service that know Spanish and could help us out with questions we have. Looking at the overview I think there should be more Spanish speaking people in the SEFA.*
- *Less paper work. The turnaround time is horrendous. They have improved on it. Turnaround time and the disbursement of financial and the paper work has improved. I wish that you would have asked me about ED Express because they have been wonderful as far as the system. They have been excellent in technical support and with my problems and so forth. They seem supportive and consistent in their answers.*
- *Letting us know where to call for specific kinds of questions. That would be it.*
- *Mainly they deal with several contractors and have things done by subcontractors. It is hard to get the information. We are dealing with several contractors, people in the field. Things change so often with the technology that we do not have the technology to do all of these new things. We do not have the support on campus with all of the technology. We would like to have it on the school to keep up. That is the main thing I guess.*
- *Make it easier to contact someone and for me to know who I need to contact for certain things, i.e. who handles what areas.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Make it easier to know who to contact to trouble-shoot problems. You have to just go around before you get to the right person.*
- *Make it easier to know whom to contact when we need assistance.*
- *Make sure the staff on the helpline are fully trained.*
- *Make the phone tree more understandable.*
- *Make their training material more available to us. They could have their customer service people arranged by region so the students talk to the same people each time they call in.*
- *Materials that would better detail the changes on the ED Express, I have many problems because there are a number of changes that I can't make. Also, I might ask a question for their staff and they give me an answer, it might be the right one but I don't have enough information to understand it.*
- *Maybe a directory of who to call. Sometimes it is hard to know what office you need to get a hold of.*
- *Maybe make more frequent calls. Asking more questions or see if we have any concerns about financial aid.*
- *Maybe the people on the phone, I am not that computer literate. Then they talk to you like you are 2 years old. I think it is demeaning when they talk to you like that. I had that happen the other day and I had to bite my tongue. I wanted to yell at him. Then I called back and got someone better. That would be my biggest complaint.*
- *Maybe to put something out so you know where to call and who to call, they need to have training closer to our location.*
- *More clarifications on who to call. We had problems with that at one time. More precise data. That's it.*
- *More clarity on who to call with what problems.*
- *More consistency in answers.*
- *More consistency in the answers given.*
- *More consistency in their answers. You could call 3 times in five minutes and get 3 different people with 3 different answers.*
- *More consistent information. We get different answers. It is not consistent.*
- *More consolidation. There are so many places you have to call.*
- *More focus involving schools. Continue on their path to provide timely notification of policy and regulations. Empower the regional representatives. The regional reps have to speak with someone in D.C. regarding policy clarification primarily, and it takes the regional reps a long time to get back to us. I am not sure if that is because of the D.C. reps.*
- *More knowledgeable staff. We need information about which branch handles which processing. One of the things would be like how to get something done right. If you call one office they tell you someone else handles that. We had a lot of trouble with the NSLDS with the passwords. We kept getting told that we need to speak with this person or this person and we were not able to get the information that we needed to get what we were doing done. The biggest thing is we need to know who to call when we need something and when we do reach someone getting the right information.*
- *More telephone lines.*
- *My answer goes back to the Pell Grant program. We get varied answers to the same questions. We make phone calls, and do not get phone calls returned. That's my only complaint. They've come a long way in the last few years. I don't agree with needs analysis. People that work are penalized because they make \times amount of dollars and you have the families that are receiving untaxed income the same amount of dollars and they receive aid.*
- *My biggest complaint was when they charged me the phone call to give them feedback. They have fixed that, so I am happy.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *My main thing is to better train the people on the 800 number.*
- *None really, because when we call with a question they point us in the right direction. There is no need for improvement.*
- *Not being charged for certain—and I might be confusing this with another aspect outside of the SFA, because we're charged on certain telephone calls for assistance. Ultimately all the budget stuff comes to me. I'm not the one making these calls, but I get little charges coming up, it may be for ED Express. Maybe a better definition of—for example, of what SFA actually entails—one of the things we've talked about is the—when I asked you about the 4-FEDAID line. I'm not sure if that's something the SFA directly controls. But the information quality for the 1-800-4FEDAID number has been really poor in the last two or three years. The information that has been given out to students and parents inquiries has been poor. Whoever is answering the questions doesn't fully know the requirements that the school must comply with and it gives the students and parents false information. And it's probably because they're most likely talking to a customer service representative who hasn't worked in a financial aid office.*
- *Not such a long wait on the telephone.*
- *Help us more. Teach us like in NSLDS and to change things.*
- *NSLDS takes a long time for the information to come up. When I did go to insert the info the instructions I received didn't correspond to the screen that I was looking at. Their staff is courteous and knowledgeable.*
- *On ED Express they said that they would make a clearer line of who to call. Now I just dial a number and get transferred till I get where I need. I wish they would give me a list of who to call.*
- *Once we get the one single contact for all that we work with. I think there is really a lot of good progress. Once we get all of the stuff on the web we will be able to do things a lot better. I am really happy that we have several different ways to ask questions.*
- *One area is it is difficult to know which office to contact in certain matters, a guide to help us find the right one would be helpful. That's all I can think of right now.*
- *One difficulty that we are having is with the ITEDS report. We cannot copy that report off the computer. We would like to be able to get copies of that report. If they could have a clearer explanation of what help numbers go with what subject.*
- *One of the ways they could improve it, when I call I sometimes need an immediate answer, but they call within 24 hours. Sometimes when I call one number I get the wrong person so I have to call again, and sometimes they give me two different answers. But otherwise I am fairly happy.*
- *One puzzlement is the software. It is hurried out, but there are patches, but overall it's the same as the year before. In summary, test the software out better before sending it out. I think they do a good job in the publishing materials and the spiral bound. I know who to call if I have any problems, they are doing a good job as far as electronic communication. If you are on the e-mail don't do the fax or vice versa. My staff has gone on training and from what I have heard it is very useful. The training is worthwhile and they come back more knowledgeable. I think they are doing a great job.*
- *One stop shopping. Have a central phone number for inquiring instead of fifteen different numbers. Often, the personnel in the organization where students inquire about the financial aids are not trained properly. It would be wonderful if everything went to the internet for ease of data entry.*
- *People being a little more friendly. When the system is down and you have to call for service, the people have been rude to us.*
- *Probably clearer communications and not so many calls to get an answer.*
- *Probably to meet with someone. Do they come to the individual schools? That would be a question I would ask. I can't think of anything right now.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Provide better software that actually works. When we call in and ask a question they could not beat around the bush. Sometimes we have to talk to 3 different people and they don't take responsibility for the problem when it had to do with their software. That's about it.*
- *Provide better training for phone people.*
- *Provide technical support in the office. The financial people have to become tech people. They should have someone that understands the financial stuff but is in technical.*
- *Providing much better training to the folks that answer the 800 number.*
- *Response time and clarity of whom to contact.*
- *Return calls sooner. Clarification of regulations.*
- *Returning my telephone calls regarding FISAT and federal funding issues. More timely updates of NSLDS. More and more frequent updates of federal application processing.*
- *Right off hand I can't think of any. Whenever I call they answer my questions and take my call so I can't think of any.*
- *Right off-hand I can not think of any. The one thing that I can think of is the availability. They are always available when you call, to answer questions. That is about all that I can think of right now.*
- *Services are very good, they need to improve their response time.*
- *Some of that was brought up in the questions. More condensed answers, more coincidence in case managers. It should be the same nationally, but it is not.*
- *Some of the instructions are not really clear. The instruction for NSLDS to add new staff members is not easy to do. That is the only thing. The instructions are easy to obtain. I had to set up two people to be able to access it. I had the president sign just one paper thinking it would work for both of them but I was wrong. The thing I don't like is how wordy the instructions are. I had to call the customer service place to help me understand it, and that didn't answer all of my questions. It was a lot of work for what seems to be a simple process.*
- *Sometimes I have had trouble getting calls through.*
- *Sometimes it's the exact answer you are looking for. When you're searching through documents you have to get your own interpretations of it and not having access to how to explain. Maybe better communication on pulling down award applications on the file. I think that's it. I enjoy the training sessions on the participation we do.*
- *Sometimes knowing who to ask a question to is complicated.*
- *Supply me a person to help me. Continue with technology increase.*
- *Support FELT more. Give consistent answers to students as well as financial aides.*
- *The best service is last years customers support.*
- *The best way would be knowing who to call, and a better organized phone directory.*
- *The best way would be to have a system for direct contact with staff, and I don't mean through e-mail or anything like that.*
- *The clarity of information and the timeliness of information. Some of the regulations haven't been published and the year is almost at an end. At our local area office, we have a hard time reaching a contact person because they are on the road a lot. That's pretty much it.*
- *The comment record format. There are too many reporting places and too many formats. Also they need to make it easier to get something if we need it in a real hurry. It is hard to find who to call. They need a master index with phone numbers, e-mail addresses and websites to go to for our specific needs. That would be the best thing they could do.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The contact person that I have doesn't have an 800 number and I can't make long distance calls from my phone, I so e-mail her and she does respond but it would be easier if she had an 800 number. Have more interaction with my school. Give information, letters, and call once a week to see how things are going and ask if we have any questions.*
- *The customer service is satisfactory. In the range of a 9.*
- *The customer service people are not always very courteous and are very quick to pass you off to someone else. Sometimes you can call 2 or 3 different people and get different answers. It is a frustrating experience. That's mainly it.*
- *The debt collection service is hard to reach and get follow up and hard to get resolution of problems. Just improve the debt collections service. They need to give timely responses. I have had cases where there is bad data and it is hard to resolve so they need to give timely responses.*
- *The direct loan program phone associates are very poor. They are not competent enough, they don't follow through and they are not always courteous.*
- *The hardest part is getting to the right person to help you fix your problem. You get transferred a lot, you get referred to different numbers before you can find the person that can help you. NSLDS, the information is not updated timely enough. Students who clear defaults wait 60-90 days before they show good status.*
- *The help that I have gotten has been really great. Just maybe have extended hours of availability. Be available at 7 or 8 pm at night. I have been pleasantly surprised at the good quality service.*
- *The inconsistency of the answers, we get different responses from different people.*
- *The instructions for ED Express need to be clearer. You can get up to one point in the application just fine, then the instructions just stop. You can't go on till you call and receive help to go on. It is all the same with the electronic programs. Every time you call you get charged. I have employees that are very confident and can handle the computer and then others like myself who need help, there is times that you can't even figure out how to do it when you do get help. It may not be the counselor's fault, they are actually blaming everything on the school's lack of knowledge, instead of taking responsibility for their mistakes and making the student or parents think the school doesn't know what they are talking about.*
- *The internet makes it very simple. They could be quicker getting back to you. That's all.*
- *The IT is very good if you are talking to a person but if you are following the instructions it is not as easy. That is for the Title IV. Otherwise I have been very happy.*
- *The main way is to get a list of numbers of who to call when I have a problem, that is the biggest barrier.*
- *The only problem that I've had is finding the correct person who handles the correct problem. And finding the correct information on the website.*
- *The only thing they could do, I am in region 10 and they are being relocated and I would like that done as fast as possible. In the mean time they could give us more phone numbers.*
- *The Pell Grants online.ed.gov it needs to be updated and enhanced. The RFMS system needs to be enhanced and allow for easier data entry. The campus based programs needs to have staff members that return phone calls.*
- *The people are great and the help we receive is wonderful. The problem is the software they give us to use, in that it is too complicated. The Title IV WAN, ED Connect and ED Express. You have to be a computer nerd to figure this out. If Bill Gates were trying to sell this software he would not be a millionaire. Overall, SFT is excellent. They've improved a lot in the last 2 to 3 years.*
- *The people being trained to answer the questions accurately.*
- *The people in that department need to be a more aware of what is going on here. They need to understand what we have to go through here on campus.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The phone list for which contacts can be made for particular situations. I would like them in a phone book or a listing that groups them into categories because sometimes I end up getting the run around. I want to limit it to that one thing because we do not deal with them much because we have a third party service. Next year I will be able to better answer these questions.*
- *The phone numbers could be better adjusted to inquire. Not so much press #1 or #2, we want to speak to an actual person instead of a machine. The second one is they could have training programs made specifically for schools like ours. We are a cosmetology school.*
- *The phone system is terrible. If you have a need to talk to someone, they put you through 40 offices before you talk to the right person. Sometimes I get on the phone and wait for 6 minutes before I find out I have the wrong office. I would like to see more regional federal training. In the financial aid office I think it sticks better when they hear it from the Feds.*
- *The primary thing that comes to mind is there is not enough testing on the software. It is released with too many bugs in it. Shorten up the time that it takes for information to get posted to NSLDS. The last would be to make corrections in NSLDS less cumbersome. I have to ask because I do not know what the problem is other than a couple of experiences that I have run into. Even with the regional department looking for the problem, they were not able to resolve it. This is a repayment and overpayment that needed to be canceled and from the time when I first spoke with someone to get this corrected has now been over two years and it still has not been corrected.*
- *The response process could be little faster.*
- *The response time could improve and clarify their instructions. Those are my main concerns.*
- *The response time needs to be quicker.*
- *The RFMS, this is the first year that I did an electronic return of funds. I was reading the instructions so I called the RFMS because I had a question. I asked her a question and she wasn't real helpful, she was very vague with her answers. I entered in that screen to send back the money, and it said it would take 2-3 days for the money to show up. After a week I called the same lady, and she said it's not operational and she didn't tell me that before the first time I called her. I was thinking my transaction was voided, so I reduced my next call down by that amount of money. What I didn't know was that my electronic refund was processed on Dec 4th so that money was not there. When the check hit the bank there was an insufficient fund situation, all because the electronic refund had been processed without my knowledge. I didn't speak with anyone about this because of the original attitude of the woman I spoke with previously. So anytime I do an electronic refund we're going to call in and not assume.*
- *The think I would like to see ED Express. They don't offer enough. I would like to see it done at a closer location and more frequently. Maybe different school campuses. If I have had to call with a question to the region of federal offices I never know who to call. If they would call us once in a while to see if there is anything that we need help with that would be great.*
- *The timeliness of our answers received has been too long, and the consistency of answers, you get different answers for the same question from different people.*
- *Their big games have been using technology and customer support. They need to continue that. That is something that has changed in the last 2 years that has been a good change. They are there to help you instead of to hurt you.*
- *Their website should be more user friendly. More conferences on training and different processes. Better lists of people to contact. Training on different requirements, and so people know how to do their job.*
- *There could be better return of phone calls. If they are not available that day, they could call back the next day.*
- *There could be some way that I could contact them. I always get a machine and I would like it if someone would personally answer the phone instead of me leaving a message and them calling me back.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *There needs to be more information more quickly. The SEFA is sometimes inconsistent and fragmented in the sense of knowing where to go for what. There are too many variations of passwords to remember and they are difficult to keep track of. Shand Dunn was very helpful. The SEFA has come a long way but there is still a lot of work to be done. I am concerned that students will be getting more loans rather than grants.*
- *There's so much information that we don't know about, a better listing of topics of what they could help us with.*
- *They are doing a wonderful job. They are improving the customer assistance and the knowledge they have in answering the customer's questions. Keep up improving customer assistance.*
- *They are doing really good. It is hard to say. One thing, a lot of times when I call they are not there.*
- *They are ok, I call and they answer all my questions.*
- *They can provide consistent and timely information.*
- *They can train the people that answer the phone a little more thoroughly. They only know about their one little area. You call one place and they tell you to call another place and when you call that place they tell you to call the other place again. The customer people at the direct loan origination center should know how to use ED Express. The survey is way to general. You need to ask questions about Pells separately from direct loans. We process it two different ways and we have two different contacts. That is all that I can think of right now.*
- *They could be more forth coming with information. Return phone calls promptly and provide more information about upcoming system changes. Look for ways to say "Yes" instead of reasons to say "No."*
- *They could be more proactive in responding to feedback from colleges. Be more clear on who to call with questions, provide more clarity on who to call with questions.*
- *They could clearly identify phone numbers to call if we have a specific problem.*
- *They could contact me more.*
- *They could do a better job in answering phones and making names of people you can talk to and phone numbers available. They do good with the 800 number but when you need to talk to one of their employees that's the problem. They have done a lot of great work on the web page but I still find it hard to get what you need. Have more sophisticated searches. The need to improve the directory or the sight map so you can go in and identify what you need and find it. They could try to make improvement in reducing regulation. There are regulations for everything, schools that do a good job in providing financial aid shouldn't have to follow all of those regulations. Those are the three big ones.*
- *They could get the financial aid handbook out to the schools prior to the start of the award year. That's one of the biggest things. I never got the same response to questions and no one knew who to call. Each person gave me a different number to call with a different person to try to reach.*
- *They could have better instructors. They could also answer their phones a little more often.*
- *They could have more customer service. They could just have more. Sometimes you have to hold for a long time or you just cannot reach the person you are trying to.*
- *They could have more staff availability with knowledge of compliance issues and questions from the schools. Also they could have less voicemail and more direct contact.*
- *They could improve their service by training their employees better. Doing their processing in a more timely fashion.*
- *They could make it clearer as to what phone numbers to call when you have a problem. You can get your questions answered once you get the right person. I usually get an answering machine and they don't always call back in a timely manner. That is the main thing, they are very hard to get a hold of.*
- *They could simplify the processes and procedures. Also it is rare when you call to get a real person. You only seem to get just voicemail.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *They do everything we need them to do.*
- *They have really improved their customer service so much. If they could communicate just a little better so that every time you talk to a person you get the same answer. They're not consistent with their answers.*
- *They need a website for frequently asked questions for staff and students.*
- *They need more knowledgeable phone people.*
- *They need to be able to answer questions according to my institution, which is very non-traditional.*
- *They need to be more knowledgeable. They just don't know all the answers.*
- *They need to come up with consistent clear guidance. They need to hold all participants to the same standards. They need to put the guidance out more quickly.*
- *They need to consolidate all the points of contact to make it easier to know who to contact, in particular, the website addresses. The software needs to be more user friendly.*
- *They need to cut down on the amount of areas that you need to go to get help. They need to speed up their record keeping. Their database is not up to date. Specifically the NSLDS.*
- *They need to have more telephone personnel, I get lost in their directory. They have very slow responses for questions. They need to do something with the federal Pell Grant, the way that they are managing the data it makes it impossible to do.*
- *They need to have one central number for all financial aid professionals to call, to be routed to appropriate departments.*
- *They really need to provide easier access, for END-user to understand technology downloads; they need to simplify the process. They need to have a primary contact that directors can contact for any department-related issue, because the regional office representatives are not working. I like the fact that they are providing Electronic Access Conference, they are really helpful. For regulations for the student federal they need to publish it sooner, and put it on the web aid handbook sooner. We need to have that now. They have made significant strides to improve over the last five years, and they are moving in the right direction.*
- *They respond well to my questions so I don't have anything to say.*
- *They should enhance the lines that we call. For example, to know about police regulations.*
- *They should have a person available instead of the phone answering machine. The direct landing system needs to have online correction database.*
- *They should have one federal contact assigned to each school. If there were a single contact it would be easier to find who answers our questions, and improve consistency of information given from the regional office and the central office, and improve the quality of their processing especially at start-up.*
- *They try. They are beginning to illuminate some layers. Before you had to talk to ten people before you could get an answer but now a days they are more responsive to the college community. I think that is the most important because the information was always there but it was such a pain to get to it. In the past it seemed like you were bothering them when you asked them questions. Now a days that has gotten better. It still exists. It is not as bad as it used to be. It is that they don't want you to say what they told you. They are reluctant to say that the answer is the answer. They qualify so that sometimes you are not really sure that they are telling you what you are hearing. It was much worse in the past but it is much better now.*
- *They've always helped, been available and have always been there when I have questions. They have always been able to answer them.*
- *Think more accessibility to contacted people.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *To be able to get through to them faster over the telephone. That's it.*
- *To have representatives (state representatives) assigned so that when we are calling about questions we can receive consistent answers to our questions.*
- *To pull some kind of directory system.*
- *To train better people.*
- *Turnaround time for answering calls. I am specifically referring to the Pell Grants. I would like better clarification of who to call when we need assistance.*
- *Two things: One, it would be very valuable if their responses could be in writing. Two, if they could become knowledgeable about 1 year institutions. What I am getting at is that everything is for 2 or 4 year institutions and we end up having to interpret it for our institution.*
- *We have a problem with getting a hold of the right person or source. When we have questions on clearing default status, I get passed around from person to person. I get referred to one person and they refer me to someone else. And sometimes I end up with the original person I started with.*
- *We have had cases where we have had two different answers from different people and the timeliness has always been an issue.*
- *We need better people to represent them, like right phone and they need to know what they are saying.*
- *We would like it if we had a main contact, and then if they couldn't help us then they could refer us to someone else. That would just be easier than to have to think who deals with each thing.*
- *We would like to see the office try to turn it around on a timely manner. Sometimes their turnaround time is very slow.*
- *Well, one point of contact for both programs. One data in one place. To only go to one person to get your questions answered. Instead of having to go to different people for Pell, and grants etc. You should only have to go to one. I understand what the SFA is trying to do but it would be easier to deal with one person and it is really important where you have to send data. It would be easier to send data to one place. The good thing is with the improvement to the websites it is in line with what I am talking about. You can go on line now and get information about all systems and questions. That is mostly it.*
- *When calling for assistance we don't have to wait so long. Being put on hold until a rep can speak to me sometimes I have waited up to 15 minutes.*
- *When I call the 800 numbers that they have in the system, they always tell me that I have called the wrong number. I would rather be able to call the right number the first time.*
- *When I call the office in Atlanta for clarification purposes or questions about policies or regulations, I have been able to confuse the people there, by asking a question and getting an answer and then I ask a "what if" and they get all confused and cannot answer my questions.*
- *When people call the 1-800 call aid they do not always get accurate information. That is the big one because the parent and the students are the ones who call. The other thing is we are just now getting the student financial handbook for the year that is almost over. The handbooks need to be more timely. The financial systems that process the FAFSA always have some glitches. The process that goes through there has a problem with the software for processing the FAFSA. The EDE software has problems always. There is always a glitch in that system, they have to send another one, they always error on that, and we have to get version like the 7.1 and the 7.2. That is it.*
- *When speaking with someone I have trouble understanding. We have a problem with communication because of language. English is not his native language. I have yet to ask him to repeat himself a lot because I don't understand what he is asking for. It is also hard to get a hold of him and to get things done in a timely manner.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *When we have an over-payment for a Pell Grant, there is a collection form we have to send in. I made 5 phone calls to find out where to send it. I found out I was using the wrong form from the handbook. We had not been informed of a new form. Luckily I talked to my representative in Boston who sent me a new form.*
- *When you call somebody it's seems that you are always getting transferred. Better customer service.*
- *When you get information back from them they need to have a manual where the person can respond. I have waited 2-3 days for information. The website is hard to explore and gather information from, I call CPS and ask a question and sometimes they don't even know what I am talking about, I feel like I have more knowledge than they do. So I guess they need more knowledge at the switchboard.*
- *Work at the school for a while so that they will understand what they all do so they know. There are exceptions to everything and they don't always accept that. They have become much more flexible.*

Training

- *Better training, more consistent software, more diversity as far as locations for electronics training.*
- *Classes available closer to home. They are very helpful when you call. It does take a while to get a hold of them, and if they are on vacation then you are just out of luck.*
- *Communication, as far as training my people and being able to work with facilities nearby.*
- *Consistency of service would be an improvement. Testing software before distributing it. Not to discover glitches in the software during use. Better access to training.*
- *Continue having annual workshops.*
- *Continue to have workshops. I like the direct lending because we are getting ready things like packaging and we do not have that system. We want to get in and use more components like ED Express.*
- *Continue with the workshop. Have a user friendly atmosphere. They're doing that now, and it's very good, they should continue with the improvements.*
- *Continued training. Not just training, taking it a step further into the function of your office. Some of the training sessions think you know a lot when you don't. You come into it green and sometimes you flounder. You need to be able to apply it to your office. The quality of material is excellent, but we need to learn the basics. We need to be able to come up with a viable system that both fits our office, and also meets the requirements for the Department of Education. They need to have a "green" financial aid seminar.*
- *Definitely training programs in our area. Generally, training programs are so far away. Training sessions for new financial aid administrators.*
- *Direct Loan Origination Center needs to have better staff control over the database. You have high quality managers that are banging their heads against the wall trying to help the schools. The case management is excellent and the management agreement is excellent. The people at the regional office are excellent. The training provided like the direct line was excellent. Except the LOC they had a person there from the LOC speaking and he did not know what he was talking about. He was doing a presentation and did not know the data. The departments are doing a great job. And Washington is great. The issues are with Montgomery, Alabama.*
- *Emphasis on training, consolidated call center, one call does it all. Regulatory release.*
- *Expanding their regional training and better navigation in the department of EDS website. A lot of times if you want to look for a specific regulation it is a little confusing.*
- *For me and my staff we need more training on the electronic systems, like holding a training meeting every year. I would like to see more training on the electronic systems every year.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Get more training sessions.*
- *Get out training materials in a more timely manner. The instructions that we need to perform our job. The consistency of support you receive when call the 800 #. The answers are not always the same for the same question. I find it sometimes difficult for them to find the answer. The area trainer is sometimes who I talk to instead, because it is easier. Over all I am pleased with the improvements.*
- *Have more training and conferences.*
- *Have more training in localized areas. Have more in each state.*
- *Have more training on changes that occur in the programs, more conferences. More opportunities to train.*
- *Have more training. Download information. I haven't seen it yet.*
- *Have more training. Have an overall training course.*
- *Have phone contact and computer contact. It is very good. I haven't had any problems. Stretch one-day meetings to 2 to make sure they are always hands on.*
- *Having customer service representatives be nicer. In Louisiana we had students finish high school in January. Even though they had meet the requirements they didn't receive their diplomas yet. And the SEA didn't understand that. They need to know that the set of rules doesn't apply to everyone. They have different situations and stories. The main problem I have is with policy. The training and ED Express is great, it is just the policy I have a problem with. We need someone that we can talk to and explain the different stories and situations.*
- *Having more conferences here in our state, like San Antonio. I have no problems.*
- *I am more concerned with the origination and disbursement. I probably need more training because I just lost a staff member in that area so I need to get more training.*
- *I am really hard pressed. I have been in the business for a long time and the improvement that I have seen in the schools over the years is remarkable. So I am really not sure what they can do. The entire delivery system has been so vastly improved and the training session and that the information is on the net. The information available to the professionals. The responsiveness of the senior management is remarkable. I have complete confidence in the current senior management team. Having seen them speak and working with them and knowing KJAX personally I am completely confident in their direction and ability to lead the profession. And to help us be more responsive to our clientele. That is it.*
- *I can't think of anything, except more regional meetings.*
- *I can't think of anything. Maybe more frequent training and more local sites.*
- *I don't know. More seminars in Puerto Rico, new loans, better training. They need better people to represent SEA.*
- *I don't know, probably more local training. There hasn't been any in my area. I can't think of anything else at this time.*
- *I don't know. I really don't have any complaints. Maybe more training sessions. I was going to have to go to Denver if I wanted to do certification, because they don't have one in my area this year. That's the only complaint I really have.*
- *I guess mention about workshop and training, and that would help.*
- *I guess probably have more regional training sessions and have people available to assist passive reconciliation issue.*
- *I guess the training sessions would be more hands-on stuff. The one in Dallas was a complete waste of time and the one in Atlanta. In Dallas it was more lecture stuff, it was things we've already been through. We want more educational stuff that would help us more in our office. They did that at the Atlanta one, and that helped us a lot.*
- *I need more training session.*
- *I think better training, and better service on the phone.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think if they had more training, more times a year, locally, it would be better for me so I wouldn't have to travel.*
- *I think it is great. More training for decentralized systems. If they could have systems where we could interact with them, it would be better. Other than that, everything is doing well.*
- *I think it would be really good if we had a listing of people to call. I think in training, I would like to see good trainers with a good rapport.*
- *I think they are doing a great job. They have become more open, and available. We are a small school, and the SEA has training in Dallas, and it's hard to get to Dallas. It would be nice to have more local training, like in Louisiana. If there's a day, or half-day program, it's difficult to fly up there to Dallas and come back just for one day. I have never had problems with them. I am satisfied with SEA.*
- *I think we need more regional training. They also need to be more specific at the training.*
- *I would like to see individualized training on the navigation, origination, with the whole package.*
- *I would like to see some more training classes available at all levels from entry to advanced levels.*
- *I would say more frequent electronic training. That's the biggest complaint I've heard in the financial-aid community.*
- *If I was notified of upcoming training or conference sessions.*
- *If there was more training closer to me.*
- *If they would make more workshops and seminars in local areas. In the state of Texas it would really help the institutions if the SEA organized training sessions in the San Antonio area.*
- *I'll say more regional field training. Maybe they could get out to college campuses. Get the people out. We all can't get there. More opportunities for training that appear to financial aid administrators that have been in for more than three years. It never hurts to have training.*
- *Improve software and staff training, their system is weak and has holes in it and they have shown they can get their other software in order so they can with this as well.*
- *Improve the integrity of data in NSLDS. Continue to provide training materials as early as possible.*
- *It just seems like a lot of information that you need to know. It would be nice if the training sessions were organized into different sections where you could learn different things. That way I don't have to learn what I already know.*
- *It seems that in the spring they have not had any training for new people. It was always the fall. I checked the website all the time for training opportunities. As a new person I had difficulty finding all the information is: SEA, RSMS.*
- *It would be nice if maybe there were a few more dates offered for the training workshops. Available dates offered.*
- *It'd be nice if the training sessions were closer.*
- *Just more training.*
- *Keep up the training. I can't see how they could improve their service.*
- *Language barriers and offering more training here in Puerto Rico. It's difficult for us to travel out of Puerto Rico because we're a low-income school. The language barrier is Spanish. More people at customer service that know Spanish and could help us out with questions we have. Looking at the overview I think there should be more Spanish speaking people in the SEA.*
- *Make available, on a more regional basis, general updating and training events.*
- *Make the training locations more for the area of those being trained. Stop changing the regulations. Do not make it necessary to upgrade the computer systems when there are changes because it is very costly.*
- *Make training available beyond the spring semester. By training I mean the ED Express training packages. So the training for 2001 and 2002 ED Express are already done.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Making training available.*
- *Maybe to put something out so you know where to call and who to call, they need to have training closer to our location.*
- *More additional training.*
- *More classes like maybe ED Express Refunds on the money.*
- *More frequent training at the state level or at more locations. I think that that's about it.*
- *More hands on training with the ED system. Easy access to manuals that have been updated on the system.*
- *More local training, we always have to travel out of state.*
- *More local training, and send information faster.*
- *More localized training.*
- *More localized training. I had to travel to get training.*
- *More often and more relevant training.*
- *More regional conferences. Just more help conferences, more in the area. They are not very close to me. Nothing else that I know of.*
- *More regional training.*
- *More timely work shops. And more locations. More school sites. If they would do more work shops then we would have more timely information.*
- *More training and that's primarily it.*
- *More training available.*
- *More training in a closer range.*
- *More training sessions, because I find that the trainings are far away. If something is implemented we need training right away and not years later. That is my issue, very little training.*
- *More training sessions.*
- *More training sessions.*
- *More training with ED Express, localized training.*
- *More training, more locations so it is more accessible for all. However, we have limited funds so a lot of times we can't go because of lack of funds.*
- *More training, more timely and relevant training.*
- *More training.*
- *More training.*
- *More training. Hands on training for ED Express, Pell on line, GAPS, RFMS, NSLDS. Training of similar staff on the call centers, ED Express, NSLDS, Pell Grant on line, etc.*
- *More training. I really enjoy the training when I go to Atlanta. Also more updates, more time for questions and answers.*
- *More training. Regional training for different levels and specific topics. A training session or day where specific areas would be covered so you can determine who should attend and whether it is for our school. I don't have any opinions on that.*
- *More training. That is it.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *More training. That's all.*
- *More workshops on the returns of Title IV funds.*
- *Moving toward internet transfer of data. The primary way would be to make the software more user friendly. More documentation. Most of us can't attend training sessions because of cost.*
- *My only suggestion is that they have interactive training courses over the web.*
- *New hands-on training for first year financial officers. Assistance for the schools wanting to move into the ED Connect arena.*
- *Offer more federal training. That would be the one thing.*
- *Offer more local training throughout the entire year, on all training topics, at local facilities. Use the internet for all processing rather than use the Title IV WAN system. Right now we can only get training mostly in the fall, it would be nice to have that available all year.*
- *Offer more local training. Provide more updated brochures. That would be it.*
- *Offer more training and give a more clear interpretation.*
- *Offer more training, and in more locations so I could send more staff. They need to offer more geographical locations and more training.*
- *Offer more training.*
- *Offer more training.*
- *Offer more web-based training. I commend the improvement of the materials over the last few years in the NSLDS. It's very easy and accurate now.*
- *Offer more workshops on training updates that come through, how to more effectively do the software. Everything else is fine.*
- *Offer training at better locations or more locations. They do not offer very many sites. You have to actually get on a plane to get to one. In my opinion they should not have to spend money to travel there. Improve the timeliness of the publication of the student financial aid handbook. The only suggestion is that they publish it before the year begins. We received the book after we had already done the work and processed.*
- *One puzzlement is the software. It is hurried out, but there are patches, but over all it's the same as the year before. In summary, test the software out better before sending it out. I think they do a good job in the publishing materials and the spiral bound. I know who to call if I have any problems, they are doing a good job as far as electronic communication. If you are on the e-mail don't do the fax or vice versa. My staff has gone on training and from what I have heard it is very useful. The training is worth while and they come back more knowledgeable. I think they are doing a great job.*
- *On-going training, some more training later in the year not just in the summer or spring.*
- *Physical they can stop asking for data they already have in the form of a report. Provide workshops through the year.*
- *Probably a little more coordination of passwords on the products. Continuation of training they are doing as well.*
- *Probably more information, better training.*
- *Probably more training at the regional level. Publications such as the verification and student financial aid handbooks need to come out sooner.*
- *Probably more training earlier in the award year.*
- *Probably not have the sessions in the middle of December have them more in the middle of the summer.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Probably turn around time in electronic process. Getting more conferences and workshops to our area, south Texas.*
- *Provide more personal training at individual schools. More technical assistance where they pull your files and work with you on a one-on-one basis to see if you are doing the work correctly, not an audit. That would be the biggest thing I need.*
- *Provide more training on the technical aspects. That is really about it.*
- *Provide more training. When I was at a last training I was disappointed they didn't stay focused on the agenda. They should have followed it. They went off on other things. They should have followed through. As long as they are following the agenda they either rush or they stay on it more than they should have.*
- *Provide training in Hawaii. Most of their training is on the mainland, and it makes it very inconvenient for those in Hawaii to attend. That's the best thing they could do.*
- *Regional training programs should be decentralized. Don't change programming.*
- *Some basic training other than what is on the internet. Training in everything especially in the software.*
- *Sometimes it's the exact answer you are looking for. When you're searching through documents you have to get your own interpretations of it and not having access to how to explain. Maybe better communication on pulling down award applications on the file. I think that's it. I enjoy the training sessions on the participation we do.*
- *Test their computer programs more thoroughly before release. Distribute publications in a more timely fashion. Have workshops in more areas, more often. We need them in our area more than once a year. We don't have the budget to go other places.*
- *The distance learning classes is vague and I think they are working on it more clarity.*
- *The instructions marked clearly and information. More training.*
- *The most specific way would be, very specific training sessions that are small and more available to access and train on software.*
- *The only thing I can think of is more training sessions. They do a good job, except several schools can only go if it is in state and the ones they need are at the out of state ones.*
- *The people who are presenting the training sessions are not knowledgeable enough. They need the actual people from SFA to come and do the training.*
- *The phone numbers could be better adjusted to inquire. Not so much press #1 or #2, we want to speak to an actual person instead of a machine. The second one, is they could have training programs made specifically for schools like ours. We are a cosmetology school.*
- *The phone system is terrible. If you have a need to talk to someone, they put you through 40 offices before you talk to the right person. Sometimes I get on the phone and wait for 6 minutes before I find out I have the wrong office. I would like to see more regional federal training. In the financial aid office I think it sticks better when they hear it from the Feds.*
- *Their website should be more user friendly. More conferences on training and different processes. Better lists of people to contact. Training on different requirements, and so people know how to do their job.*
- *There is so much, they need to streamline everything, from to ranks to the training process they need to streamline top to bottom.*
- *There seems to be more meetings of workshops that are long distance travel. More timely availability of the federal student aid handbook. The workshops need to be closer.*
- *They could have more training classes in general. I have been very satisfied.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *They could make sure they test all of their software and make sure it is all debugged before it is out on the market. More training by instructors that should talk to their audience if they don't know the answer. Make sure the answer gets back to the person asking the questions.*
- *They could offer affordable training within driving distance and more individual training.*
- *They could offer more workshops.*
- *They could provide more interactive on-line training. One excellent product they have come up with called the "SEA Coach" is training material on-line. I wish they would come up with more materials like that for rural areas because it is costly and difficult to go out-of-town for training. We are located about 3 hours from where we have to go and there is a mountain range between. They could keep working to simplify some of the processes. One is called RFMS. These processes are so time consuming for us. That is all I can think of right now.*
- *They could translate their regulations into more understandable language. They could provide more regional training.*
- *They have workshops all over the place. They have them for basic and more advanced people. If I want to get involved in something that I don't usually do than I can go to a basic workshop and can go and help out with that. There is no registration fee and we can send new people. We send five people and they were there for a week and they came back and said they felt reborn they had learned so much.*
- *They need more training opportunities.*
- *They need to do more training. Their training is very regionalized and we have to go to Philadelphia and it is a 6-hour drive. It is not very convenient. It is a poor impression that they are not willing to come out and train us. That is about it. If we could get more training that would be a good start.*
- *They need to give more training and a more in depth explanation of what is required. That is all.*
- *They need to have more training on different levels. They need to break the training down to different levels of experience.*
- *They should get information out earlier. They should also provide more training.*
- *They should have more training sessions and also cut down on the cost of things such as travel.*
- *They've improved quite a bit on the training and timeliness. They could still improve on training sessions and timeliness of the sessions. Basically they've improved quite a bit on the electronic and the NSLDS. They've improved quite a bit on that.*
- *To insure the spring training series is delivered on a yearly basis. Just that one thing will be fine.*
- *Training could be offered at more locations. Their training is often too distant for me to attend usually. They do not do it in very many places. Like the electric access conference, the closest one is 8 hours away. Many workshops are too far way for me to travel. That is my only complaint.*
- *Training opportunities, there are not enough. We need more. Better timeliness of regulation and handbook materials.*
- *We are on a clock hour system being a small school, not a credit hour, so going in and trying to find any of the new training available. If I could get brochures about the training, I'm just having a hard time with the internet.*
- *We need better training.*
- *We need on-going training.*
- *Working closer with the professional student aid organizations such as MASEAF in providing training for staff. That is all I can think of right now.*
- *You missed the Department of Ed workshops. I'd like them to bring them back.*



Verbatim Comments continued

Monthly Reconciliation

- *I know that we have a direct loan because of the reconciliation. We have had problems so the reconciliation is the problem.*
- *I seem to have difficulty getting good answers from the Pell hotline and the Pell online seems to be down a lot. The process to get payments reconciled is quite cumbersome.*
- *It would be helpful to have less data entry, and maybe better reporting to us from PELL for reconciliation.*
- *Probably the biggest headache is reconciliation.*
- *The only problem that I really feel that has to be changed is the way the reconciliation is done. From what my 3rd party service told me, she was very specific about what she wanted to do. She has documentation proving what she asked for. The guy who was helping her did the wrong thing and it is still not balancing for us and it has been months and the problem hasn't been taken care of.*
- *We're a direct loan school, they need to improve the reconciliation of funds.*

Aid Origination and Disbursement

- *Clarify the PELL payment origination disbursement because I have trouble with that.*
- *Disbursement of funds.*
- *Expand the hours for the GAPS line where you go in and ask for the disbursement. No one is there after 8 pm their time which is 6 our time. We are two hours different. So when I call nobody is there to help me.*
- *I am more concerned with the origination and disbursement. I probably need more training because I just lost a staff member in that area so I need to get more training.*
- *I guess simplification. Simplification in the area of origination and disbursement process.*
- *I hate the origination and disbursement. They need to eliminate the RFMS origination and disbursement requirement. We only need to do one of those. I can not see any reason why we need to do an origination and than disbursement.*
- *I think that they could make it easier to originate and disburse Pell money. I think that is very difficult. That is it.*
- *I would probably say the PELL payment system is cumbersome and too many steps required to update the system. Specifically, having to create origination records and then go a second time and create a disbursement records seems to be a duplication of efforts. We ought to be able to do it in one step.*
- *I would say the best way would be to simplify the process of report and disbursement of the Pell Grant.*
- *Make sure they check their software, so we don't have to keep getting updates. On the Pell Grant disbursement could be done differently. It is hard to do in a small office. That is all.*
- *Make the process of receiving actual funds less complicated.*
- *Make things less complicated. The whole origination disbursement is way to complicated. The other thing would be going to a web product for ED-E.*
- *Origination is having problems.*
- *Specifically the redundancy of the disbursement process could be streamlined. Specifically the origination and then the additional step of disbursements is redundant and it should be one step.*
- *Straighten out disbursements that are sent to the wrong place a little faster.*
- *Streamline the method by which we receive Pell Grant funds. Simplify the application so that parents and students can understand it. In the last year it has gotten more complicated.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Streamline the process even further as far as running the programs. If we had control over how they are run it would make the delivery of funds easier. More institutional control. That's it.*
- *The loan origination center needs to get their act together.*
- *The main thing I would like to change about change origination is into one step instead of multiple steps.*
- *The only problem I ever had is with the Pell disbursement system. It needs to be more user friendly.*
- *Timely disbursement and annual disbursement of funds. A lot of times they are slow. It should take about 1 week or so but it seems like lately it has taken like two or three weeks. I cannot think of anything. They could eliminate the \$10,000 charge per month for the employees. It is a waste of tax payers' money. Nothing else.*
- *To be more equitable in distribution methods. The fact that the money may not be distributed to the neediest and most deserving students.*
- *To improve origination and disbursement process. Renewal application process.*
- *We have to report disbursements. I wish the Pell was there. We are clock hour so we can't do that. I wish the origination Pell Grant could be higher. They could take it back at the end of the year, but they won't let us.*

General Process

- *Acknowledge that I haven't had time to think about this. I will tell you that the SEA does not come up in discussions or within the office as far as being difficult. It seems to be working well. I have been pleased with the movement to electronic processing. That's been very positive. The concern or criticisms relate to general things. What ends up happening because of government, we end up having to know about different databases and systems. That has been the things that caused us the most heartaches or headaches. When I first started 20 years ago, you just had to know the programs now you have to know the databases for all the different programs i.e., state, federal, lending, etc.*
- *Always better communications, everything could be quicker.*
- *Be more timely. That's about it for us.*
- *Change the origination center in Montgomery. Software should be more reliable. EDE software has bugs and it's late for new software to come. Changes, students aid report it's a lot less clear. Student verification is not there any more.*
- *Clarify instructions and time lines, make them more clerical.*
- *Clarify the programs, they are a nightmare.*
- *Continue to simplify the process, less administrative burden on the school.*
- *Continue to simplify.*
- *Continuing to put more resources and processes on the internet. They're doing really good in that direction. That's will give them enough work to do for a while. The reconciliation process could be put on the internet. It's not there yet. If they could make all the processes seamless. There are still a lot of parts that don't connect.*
- *Cut down on paper work.*
- *Direct loan program, put the LOC under control. Better accuracy of data on the LOC. Better close out and position between the LOC and the school.*
- *Ease of reporting out of the system.*
- *Every school balances differently. I like the old way of balancing at year-end.*
- *Faster increases in Pell authorizations.*
- *Faster return. From the time that the application is input and the time that we get the turnaround I think is to slow. I think that the turnarounds should be faster.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Find a way so that we don't have to print out all of our papers for our students.*
- *From my point of view, they could probably streamline activities for multiple school locations.*
- *Further simplification of processes and more timely communications. Processes. There are a lot of things that we have to do sending them information and they just need to simplify some of the processes.*
- *Getting info to us in a more timely manner such as the handbook. We had difficulty with the crime report. It was very complicated. We had problems getting info. We got passed around a lot. We had to fax our info, the whole process needs to be fixed. With the handbook I like the format it is easier to use. We just need to get it earlier.*
- *Getting the actual regulations clear to us at an earlier time instead of half way through the year to find out something begin changes. Changing the definition of what an independent student is. Increasing the amount that a student can borrow from Stafford.*
- *Getting the password system better. If you could get into the US Department of Education with one password that would help.*
- *Give us more time to get reports together. If they could submit to us all of the transactions that have taken place at this institution, like a summary, it would be easier to compile reports in a timely manner. We want to make sure the department and the school information is in concurrence with each other. That is about it.*
- *Have fewer reporting requirements. Timely regulatory relief. Timely distribution of funds. Being very careful in the wording of answers students are given at the 1-800 for fed number.*
- *Have more knowledgeable general and support staff. The people who answer the phones need to get info or have contact with the educational system. Be more knowledgeable when receiving contact from educational institutions with concerns and questions. I was given incorrect information before. Make the systems more simplistic. There are a lot of technical issues, they have to make it more simplistic like plug and play, because we shouldn't have to be technical people as well as financial people.*
- *I am not sure if it is their fault so much or the business of our offices. One of the things that they could do is get the student handbook to us in a timely manner. If we had to print it here it would print one sided off of the web and it would be expensive and not easy for us for how thick it is. I would like when we could report Pell once instead of at least three times. Maybe it is because we have a stable full-time student staff with no change. It is not easy for us. That part of it I like the old way that they did it.*
- *I don't know. I like the system. Maybe just the timing and the Pell Grant getting the information in there quicker. They lag behind in the grant amount.*
- *I guess process the application a little faster. When the students sends in the FAFSA they could process it faster. An easier method of finding someone to answer your questions without getting transferred all over the place. That is it.*
- *I think having just one set of passwords and ID's. Everything that I have to get into I have to get a million passwords. That's the biggest thing, otherwise I do like the combined idea.*
- *I think maybe if federal loans had been more available to me, the scholarship availability was fine, but maybe if it was a little easier to get loans. The people have always been perfectly nice and business-like to me.*
- *I think that the application should be more streamline and simplified. I understand it but when you get a high risk student that is just trying to get a career and they don't understand than I loose a lot of students because of that. They need to make it easier. I swear it is worse than filing the income taxes.*
- *I think that the process for funding is rampant to satisfying a political opinion. I think that this process needs to be streamlined. Whenever we tamper with the system we add unnecessarily to the complexity of the process. Try to use a 2 tiered process with cutoff points to determine the complexity of the process.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think the federal government doesn't give enough money. I think the programs get better every year, it is much easier to use than it used to be.*
- *I think the RFMS procedure could be simplified for financial aid. If you err and send in a record twice, they send it back as a duplicate and reject it even if it was accepted the first time.*
- *I think there needs to be more explanation for reasons of rejection. I'd like things to come out not only in social security number but in name also; and then I'd like a little bit of mechanism.*
- *I think they are doing a good job, they are planning on simplifying the process. That will be great. I think they will be moving faster and better.*
- *I think they could be a little quicker. I know that all institutions don't work the same way.*
- *I think they need to integrate all their processing.*
- *I think they need to try and consolidate all of their items out there and to spread it out. It needs to be simplified to where one password would get you into everything.*
- *I think, on the area of direct loans, when we have dependent students whose parents need to take out a plus loan, if we can get credit information back sooner. It takes up to 3 weeks for notification if a loan went through. Also, on direct loans the 732 report, due to reconciliation for direct loans. We need someone to be more specific on reports, and have a manual on how to read properly the 732 report.*
- *I want it to be more simplified. In their effort to make it more useable for themselves, they have made it more complicated for use and increased the amount of work that we have to do. It gets back to the point where we are dealing with the technology but we are still dealing with the same amount of staff. The technology is moving very quickly and it has made our jobs more complicated and increased the work that we have to do.*
- *I wish that we didn't have so many passwords that expire, because it's really hard to keep up with. I understand the importance though.*
- *I would like to see changes in the edit process in the need analysis system for the FAFSA. That would be my key issue.*
- *I would like to see the submitting process be easier.*
- *I would say minimizing required reports to several agencies. We should have an annual report submitted to one central agency. I think this is taking a lot of time for individuals such as myself.*
- *I would say the biggest areas are in the loan default areas. In the loan default, a lot of times the information is in error and when it is turned over to the USDE from the guarantor and a student is applying the next year they are in fault because it is messed up. It is a source of education to the student.*
- *I'd like to see one huge website with security, but one spot where you could go and find out anything about your school's aid and where students could access it, but just one big place. I'd like to see things posted on IFAB a little bit faster than they have been. We start processing closely after the first of January but I don't think verification work sheets and things are posted until a little bit later. I've been in financial aid for 11 years and there have been a lot of improvements made.*
- *If the SEA were to propose a more streamlined database it would be less of a burden for us and improve the chances of preventing fraud. We need to rethink the process of financial aid, a way of making it easier for parents and students. I think the process is too cumbersome and too confusing for parents and students.*
- *If they delete the process for the RT program that would help.*
- *Improve FISAP, make reporting easier. When a student fills out a FAFSA and the information is wrong, for example: when taxes paid is very close to the income, reject those people. Have less paper requiring the schools for the verification process.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Improve the application process by allowing access to federal tax returns. If they did that they would eliminate the verification of the accuracy of information that students provide. That's about it.*
- *Improve the consistency of the delivery system. I know the system is suppose to work but it is just hanging out there. Just a little more money in the system would help. Everybody looks at it as though it is not real money. I think everybody knows the problems, but if we could make the system better.*
- *In regards to establishing a program and sticking to it.*
- *In the past they would provide us a list when they exported electronic EAFSA. Now we can't get that anymore, so I guess we would like to see that come back. When we export the applications we send to get a list of what we sent.*
- *In the professional judgment area, I would like to be able to deny or lower loan amounts based on projected income of the students. Right now the SFA program does not allow us to do that, we are told that no one can be denied. The reason for that is a lot of times the students take out a loan they probably can not pay back because the amount they borrow is more than they can earn.*
- *Integrate all services into one database. I may be asking for too much.*
- *Keep developing quicker ways to get there because I'm at an adjusted time school. They are in an appropriate direction.*
- *Less paper work, easier process.*
- *Less regulations, the verification process, another thing is not to have the database match with select service. Just simplify the verification process.*
- *Make it easier to get in, and make it easier to get a password. I don't want to re-register and have my password reset and tell me what it is reset to. It won't accept my password, and I have called in and tried to get in and I use the system a lot and that's for the DLS. Everything else is just fine.*
- *Making it more real time. Making it faster. Making the response time and processing time right.*
- *More electronic processing. More simplified systems.*
- *More timely distribution of publications and support material. Open up the availability of experimental sites to high performing schools. They could reduce the auditing requirements for high performing schools. That's it. It is an added burden and cost to the college where there is no reason for the concerns.*
- *My biggest problem is when a student is in default with a previous loan. I have had problems with getting that default removed from that student.*
- *Occasionally, we get messages that a mistake has been made and those errors are frustrating. If there were some way of tightening up so they don't occur that would be helpful.*
- *On the student financial aid form they need to break it down.*
- *One way is to have them strictly report on time to the NSLDS. Especially with us doing away with the SAT's. I wonder if the department of Ed could support more the academic side of the system. The financial aid actually relies on a system such as the class system so when can we incorporate the academic side of the system. I guess I would like them to develop a system that could include the academic side of the system, which includes attendance, withdrawals, leave of absence etc.*
- *One way to access all student data and one phone number, one location to go to for all students. Also, keep information updated.*
- *Physical they can stop asking for data they already have in the form of a report. Provide workshops through the year.*
- *Probably the SAT could be organized more efficiently and have them posted faster.*
- *Probably turn around time in electronic process. Getting more conferences and workshops to our area, south Texas.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Probably, if they could do something about accessing the tax records, if the Feds could get around to checking them by computer that could help. That's about it. With all the electronics now it is really cumbersome anymore.*
- *Processing things when they ask for additional paperwork. They need to speed up the processing time in general. I think that when they ask for documentation to be faxed to them, they never verify. They need to verify they received the info some kind of confirmation.*
- *Quit changing programs and procedures every year.*
- *Record keeping. With the student loans, there is a lot of discrepancy sometimes. It seems like sometimes, one person doesn't know what the other is doing.*
- *Redo the RFMS and redo the instructions. Revamp that. It's too complicated that you sometimes don't even understand the instructions.*
- *Reduce the paper load.*
- *Schools are burdened too much with the verification. It puts them in a very adversarial position.*
- *Security, we are made to change our password too frequently, we have to keep writing it down, that defeats the purpose.*
- *Simplify the admission. The process is much too long.*
- *Simplify the application process for students and requesting of the Pell Grant funds.*
- *Simplify the process and have timely reports. Well getting the information back out of the computer whenever we need to have the ability to us. By process it seems like when we get an update for a program we need the following year there always seems to be some glitches and some upgrades needed to put those in and to fix the problem. It takes time for the processing. It takes us to get grant applications and loans processed.*
- *Simplify the processes, less paper work. Also, don't hold the school for the default rates.*
- *Simplify the reporting process*
- *Simplify the RFMS procedure. That would be one big step for me. I realize we are a small fish in a big pond. Keep expanding the Internet access. Basically one website that you could go to, to get all the information, or link to all the information that you need. Instead of having a different site for every little thing.*
- *Streamline the process. They need a lot of clarifications and make things simpler.*
- *The audit process could be modified. It is time consuming.*
- *The ease of the Pell payment and the clarity of instructions.*
- *The electronic application process. The participation agreement I received didn't correspond with the one I sent.*
- *The Perkins system is very hard. When we use the templates for our reports the Perkins system is hard to use.*
- *The redundancy of data collection and the duplication of similar numbers required by the department of education of state agencies. The time frames for obtaining data overworks the schools because of one agency working on a calendar year and other agency working on a fiscal year. I think the new refund policy is doing their best to drive proprietary school out of business, I'd be curious as to who helps formulate these new procedures, and if they even ask the private sector for any feedback.*
- *The return policy needs to be more clear. There is too much paperwork involved in receiving back the dollar amount that the student gets back. The application for financial aid is very long and tedious.*
- *The RFMS, this is the first year that I did an electronic return of funds. I was reading the instructions so I called the RFMS because I had a question. I asked her a question and she wasn't real helpful, she was very vague with her answers. I entered in that screen to send back the money, and it said it would take 2-3 days for the money to show up. After a week I called the same lady, and she said it's not operational and she didn't tell me that before the first time I*



Verbatim Comments continued

called her. I was thinking my transaction was voided, so I reduced my next call down by that amount of money. What I didn't know was that my electronic refund was processed on Dec 4th so that money was not there. When the check hit the bank there was an insufficient fund situation, all because the electronic refund had been processed without my knowledge. I didn't speak with anyone about this because of the original attitude of the woman I spoke with previously. So anytime I do an electronic refund we're going to call in and not assume.

- *The SFA should be more careful to be more time based.*
- *The time frames and response back to the schools.*
- *The timeliness is the biggest concern of updating records and things. It takes a lot of time.*
- *The updating authorization quicker based on school reports.*
- *There are too many separate stovepipe systems in existence that could be consolidated.*
- *They could do things a little bit quicker as far as processing plus applications. It takes ten days to see if the application processed. Other than that, it is fine.*
- *They could have it so the school cannot get blocked because of one student. They could also verify every person.*
- *They could improve service to schools by providing a better overall picture of what a school has to do to get set up. There isn't anywhere that tells you where to go or what to do.*
- *They could improve their timeliness.*
- *They could simplify the processes and procedures. Also it is rare when you call to get a real person. You only seem to get just voicemail.*
- *They could talk to the government on making it less taxing and on making it more straightforward. I don't feel that the school should have so much leeway. They should just be straightforward and say if a person is eligible or not.*
- *They need to be a little more proactive in discussing changes, speaking specifically in regards to data enhancement. Its just little things that are confusing, and if they took a little time to get some advice on the little things, it would make it a lot easier.*
- *They need to simplify reporting and eliminate duplicating information between agencies.*
- *They should try to centralize everything so we wouldn't have to have a different passwords and user ID's to go into each different program or area.*
- *Things just change so fast. One day we do it one way and the next day we do it another. Nothing else I can think of at this time.*
- *To reconsider the RSMS programs for the Pell Grants. Reconsider the process, it is too cumbersome.*
- *Try to simplify the process, the electronic one sometimes takes awhile.*
- *We recruit nationally. I'd like to see some changes in the standard direct loan process. Particularly the standard origination schools.*
- *Well I think in some instances they have taken away some manuals or document that they used to send me. They now tell me to access the web or the internet and I never have time to access the web. I think I would like some written information that helps me look into or pick the important aspects of financial aid. Since everything is on the internet I don't have access which is very bad. Another thing I have a concern about is the student financial aid. I wish that they would give us access to the DRA # instead of having to send off for a duplicate student financial form, you know the form that the student fills out. I know that it is a privacy policy, but I think that the Director of Financial Aid programs should have access to the DRA codes.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *What we do working with Boston I think if we could do things a little faster as in processing. Faster feedback.*
- *When the students have the application, they have to fill out a lot of information. It would be better if they received a blank sheet where they can fill it out all at once.*

Technical/Software Issues

- *A little bit better quality control systems so when they release new processes they are more bug free. Denseness with the bureaucrats on the non-PBO side of the organization.*
- *Because their download is easy. Before I disliked all the CD's they sent us, and the download is great. As long as I keep my end of it up, they keep their end up. I think they've done wonderful with that. I think they've kept us well enough ahead because we don't care for it until the students are in class. Everyone we've talked to is very knowledgeable about what is coming and not coming.*
- *Better planning of their software and how it relates to the computer. It is constantly a problem. They don't properly test it. Their philosophy is put it out and don't debug it. When they bring it out the software doesn't work the way they intended. This could be reduced with proper testing of the software.*
- *Better staff training for their staff, enhancements of their electronic services.*
- *Better testing of software so there aren't so many revisions after it is issued. That is my biggest complaint. They need to streamline the software and eliminate some of the passwords.*
- *Better training, more consistent software, more diversity as far as locations for electronics training.*
- *By electronic updates, by going from paper to electronics. I can't think of anything else off the top of my head.*
- *Change the origination center in Montgomery. Software should be more reliable. EDE software has bugs and it's late for new software to come. Changes, students aid report it's a lot less clear. Student verification is not there any more.*
- *Check the software better for bugs before they send it out.*
- *Combine all the software programs into one, and get rid of FISAP. The department heads should be responsible for the verification process.*
- *Consistency of information. Easier instructions for the software.*
- *Consistency of service would be an improvement. Testing software before distributing it. Not to discover glitches in the software during use. Better access to training.*
- *Consolidating services making the instructions for the use of software a little clearer.*
- *Continue with the process to go electronic, forms and communication on line. That's all I can think of.*
- *Continued student and customer service. Staying abreast of technology as a tool in aiding office efficiency.*
- *Ease of technology and communication. More user friendly.*
- *Electronic. They're doing it, it's just the electronic access needs to be more in tune. I think the department is still unsure of what they're doing.*
- *Fund the programs at the approved rate. They have done a good job improving the program, computerizing it for easier operation. Within 5-6 years spending the right time on the things that need improvement.*
- *Get their updates right the first time.*
- *I don't know ever since we went electronic I wasn't as comfortable as I was when we got it in paper. I like to have paper in my hand. I'm not a confident with the computer.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I don't know, become as electronic as possible. Require schools to move toward electronic things so they don't have the ability to work their way out of certain things. To make the Pell Grant more portable.*
- *I don't know. I rather enjoy using the software. I think some of the federal regulations could be changed to make our job easier. Some of the guidance on interpretation of the regulations could be made clearer.*
- *I found that the administration of the system by computer programs was very complex and confusing to me. That's why I went with a service, because I found it too cumbersome to do it on my own.*
- *I guess sometimes, I think a new regulation, they need all the answers. Have new regulations, new software.*
- *I have no complaints. They are really going. The electronic process is solving a lot of problems. I really don't have any. They should eliminate the signature sheet. It should be some kind of code, some way to take care of that.*
- *I like all of their electronic initiatives and wish that more funding was available for needy students.*
- *I think some of the computer software could be a little more user friendly.*
- *I think some of their electronic systems could be more user friendly.*
- *I think they are doing a real good job. I can't think of anything off the top of my head, but I am glad they are moving forward with the computerized system. I guess if I had to say something, it would be to make specific situations of individual students to run more smoothly and to be easier to take care of. I would like to see more flexibility with regard to the September 30th deadline.*
- *I think they are in a continuous progressive mode so the only problem I would say I have is the number of upgrades due to new software.*
- *I think they could improve the computer system, go for more substance and less show. Sometimes they are engaged in just PR events.*
- *I want it to be more simplified. In their effort to make it more useable for themselves, they have made it more complicated for use and increased the amount of work that we have to do. It gets back to the point where we are dealing with the technology but we are still dealing with the same amount of staff. The technology is moving very quickly and it has made our jobs more complicated and increased the work that we have to do.*
- *I would have to say not changing the software as often as they do. We end up updating a lot of the information.*
- *I would like the computer updates upgraded with being fully tested. Initially send us a good product with no glitches.*
- *I would like them to send out updated programs for the CD-ROM when asked.*
- *I would like to have more reliable information either if it is at Pell or the software. I would like to see an improved software program.*
- *I would rather have mailings than e-mail. It is difficult to read things on this monitor and I hate to print them out. If it is vital I would rather have a paper mailed, especially if I am going to talk it over with my boss. I would like to have very clear telephone numbers and people to contact for certain issues. I usually get voicemail. The processing of faxes. The good news was they turned it on early, but it had a lot of problems. They shouldn't turn it on until it works right. I would like the department to move from software to web based. They should get the technical and legal issues resolved and move to web based.*
- *If I had one desire to get a capability out here to get a direct electronic dated up computer. That is the weakest link. It would be better if it was electronic. I would also have to hand it to them that they try to get it reconciled. Staff with loan registration center.*
- *Improve their communication with programs. When they have new programs don't release them until they have all the bugs out of them. That's fine.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Information could be available about new regulations, clarifications. The software provided should be actively tested so we don't have problems.*
- *Just clarify some of the requirements for computer access. Sometimes when trying to talk with the SEA the computers aren't talking to each other. I don't know if it is a file/protocol issue or a software problem where I may not be aware of the software required to access the data.*
- *Just more timely information about software problems.*
- *Knowledge of schools and information about their hours. They have so many different software packages. If there were some way of intertwining them so it would be faster.*
- *Make all of the software the same. It is all different. It would be better if it was all the same and follow the same format.*
- *Make sure software programs are fully tested by people who will be using them for glitches before they are released.*
- *Make sure that the software we use is up to date. That all the colleges have the computers and PC's that we have to have to operate the software. I want the maximum not the minimum.*
- *Make sure they check their software, so we don't have to keep getting updates. On the Pell Grant disbursement could be done differently. It is hard to do in a small office. That is all.*
- *Make the Express and Connect better without having all these upgrades. It seems like every time I install a new software, I need to do a new upgrade.*
- *Make the software easier to use.*
- *Make the training locations more for the area of those being trained. Stop changing the regulations. Do not make it necessary to upgrade the computer systems when there are changes because it is very costly.*
- *Make things simpler. Not having so many releases of the software.*
- *More computer support.*
- *More things in one program, make it in an easier format.*
- *Most of our issues tend to get updated late. Make the computer systems work the first time. We tend to struggle whenever anything new comes along.*
- *My major difficulty with SEA is the computerized programs. Whoever is in charge seems to think the financial aid people are computer experts and we are not. The reason it was better this year was because it didn't change much from two years ago, so I could use what I already learned than. But today, the draft program for the transfer monitoring process for NSLDS is a monster. I think it will take me a month to get it straightened out so that I have a workable program.*
- *No problems right now, except for updating EDGAPS.*
- *One difficulty that we are having is with the ITEDS report. We cannot copy that report off the computer. We would like to be able to get copies of that report. If they could have a clearer explanation of what help numbers go with what subject.*
- *One puzzlement is the software. It is hurried out, but there are patches, but over all it's the same as the year before. In summary, test the software out better before sending it out. I think they do a good job in the publishing materials and the spiral bound. I know who to call if I have any problems, they are doing a good job as far as electronic communication. If you are on the e-mail don't do the fax or vice versa. My staff has gone on training and from what I have heard it is very useful. The training is worthwhile and they come back more knowledgeable. I think they are doing a great job.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *One thing that occurs to me in moving closer to the ideal is to do more testing on the software, if that's possible, to eliminate some of the version changes. Changes in the process in which you access data are hard to keep up with, but I know it is probably unavoidable. To move toward more consistent procedures on the network, so things are accessed in the same way they have. I ask them to continue in that way.*
- *Provide better software that actually works. When we call in and ask a question they could not beat around the bush. Sometimes we have to talk to 3 different people and they don't take responsibility for the problem when it had to do with their software. That's about it.*
- *Quit changing software every year.*
- *Really, I don't have any complaints about it. The only thing would be the errors on the software, the only aggravation is that. But it's not a big deal. They are always very helpful.*
- *Rewrite some of the instructions for the software. They can be confusing at times. Consolidation of some departments so we don't have as many numbers. Help the smaller schools. Have a special board help with the little schools with the Title IV. Basically hold their hand as they go through the process.*
- *Simplify the process and have timely reports. Well getting the information back out of the computer whenever we need to have the ability to us. By process it seems like when we get an update for a program we need the following year there always seems to be some glitches and some upgrades needed to put those in and to fix the problem. It takes time for the processing. It takes us to get grant applications and loans processed.*
- *Stop releasing so many software updates.*
- *Supply me a person to help me. Continue with technology increase.*
- *Taking on the technologies today is causing a lot of grief. But they seem to be taking care of it.*
- *Technical information.*
- *Test their computer programs more thoroughly before release. Distribute publications in a more timely fashion. Have workshops in more areas, more often. We need them in our area more than once a year. We don't have the budget to go other places.*
- *The availability of it because there are times that it is not available, the electronic side of it, there have been times when the system has been down on their side and we can't access it. So I would have to say the technology side of it. Overall they are doing a very good job.*
- *The biggest concern is the download factor when a new release is available. A lot of times the download is unavailable for us so we end up needing to order hard disk anyway.*
- *The computer software is continually getting updated and sometimes it doesn't need it. There should be a system where you can automatically download so we can do our paperwork.*
- *The computer system is hard to navigate. It requires a separate modem.*
- *The electronic software should be more user friendly. I had a problem getting my student report data to the U.S. Department of Education.*
- *The notification is pretty good. I don't seem to have any problems with ED Express. The only thing that would be better is to make the software more user friendly.*
- *The one thing was the software. I wish they didn't make so many revisions here. I wish they could get it all fixed before they send it out. Every new program I get is better. I know they aren't going charge us for calls, I like that. I also like that we get notices out from CPS, customer service, about new stuff.*
- *The only complaint I have was to actually access your program. I know that you are trying to improve on that, but I think that easier access to the system would be good.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The only way is through a combination of systems. Just computer system. My understanding is that they're trying to mesh different systems together, and I think that's what we need.*
- *The paper work is too much sometimes. Get a consistent program. We've had a couple of crashes. The systems fall short sometimes.*
- *The people are great and the help we receive is wonderful. The problem is the software they give us to use, in that it is too complicated. The Title IV WAN, ED Connect and ED Express. You have to be a computer nerd to figure this out. If Bill Gates were trying to sell this software he would not be a millionaire. Overall, SFT is excellent. They've improved a lot in the last 2 to 3 years.*
- *The primary thing that comes to mind, is there is not enough testing on the software. It is released with too many bugs in it. Shorten up the time that it takes for information to get posted to NSLDS. The last would be to make corrections in NSLDS less cumbersome. I have to ask because I do not know what the problem is other than a couple of experiences that I have run into. Even with the regional department looking for the problem, they were not able to resolve it. This is a repayment and overpayment that needed to be canceled and from the time when I first spoke with someone to get this corrected has now been over two years and it still has not be corrected.*
- *The software needs to be a little more user friendly.*
- *The software needs to be easier to use. It's just rather complex to understand how the process works. Delay in address software problems in a timely basis they need to develop the means to inform us of the process.*
- *The timeliness of information, they have been really behind in getting the financial aid handled. It is confusing as to what we will be getting in the mail or what we should download of the internet. Like the forms and things. They now require us to download the software updates off the internet and because of the file size, with the amount of people that we have here, it is hard to do it. I have to do it after business hours for the amount of time that it takes. If fact the school will not allow me to do it during business hours. I think that is all that I have to say.*
- *Their big games have been using technology and customer support. They need to continue that. That is something that has changed in the last 2 years that has been a good change. They are there to help you instead of to hurt you.*
- *They are getting ahead of what I expect. Some of the online functions they have switched. Some timely notice would be more helpful. I used to get an update and now it just shuts off every once in a while. My biggest concern is the technology.*
- *They could be more timely in the software changes that they make. They can let us know when things aren't working right.*
- *They could make sure they test all of their software and make sure it is all debugged before it is out on the market. More training by instructors that should talk to their audience if they don't know the answer. Make sure the answer gets back to the person asking the questions.*
- *They need to consolidate all the points of contact, to make it easier to know who to contact, in particular, the website addresses. The software needs to be more user friendly.*
- *They need to have something more available to students and parents for completing the EAFSA. Possibly, help centers or locations in major cities that parents or students can go to. More testing of software to get rid of bugs and software before release.*
- *They really need to provide easier access, for END-users to understand technology downloads; they need to simplify the process. They need to have a primary contact that directors can contact for any department-related issue, because the regional office representatives are not working. I like the fact that they are providing Electronic Access Conference, they are really helpful. For regulations for the student federal they need to publish it sooner, and put it on the web aid handbook sooner. We need to have that now. They have made significant strides to improve over the last five years, and they are moving in the right direction.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Timeliness. Some of their publications are not up well in advance of the upcoming financial year. By publications I don't just mean print publications but also software.*
- *Training; one of the reasons I went with a service is because they change the software all the time. like the ED Express.*
- *Try to make the technical computer stuff more understandable.*
- *Upgrade their systems. Have more web-based programs.*
- *When people call the 1-800 call aid they do not always get accurate information. That is the big one because the parent and the students are the ones who call. The other thing is we are just now getting the student financial handbook for the year that is almost over. The handbooks need to be more timely. The financial systems that process the FAFSA always have some glitches. The process that goes through there has a problem with the software for processing the FAFSA. The EDE software has problems always. There is always a glitch in that system, they have to send another one, they always error on that, and we have to get version like the 7.1 and the 7.2. That is it.*

Use of NSLDS

- *Accuracy of the NSLDS is probably the largest problem we have with them. We find very consistently, that information about student defaulted loans are not at all timely.*
- *Better guidance of what the changes are, what's new and what they want. NSLDS, the timeliness of the information is not current. Over time it has improved but it could still be better. We use e-mail a lot to get answers to questions. We use that because the telephone is not a good option. It is hard to reach people sometimes. Those are the main things.*
- *Better timeliness of the NSLDS. Be more accurate in reporting by the contractor of the Perkins loans. When we liquidate a loan it gets sent to them and it is accurate, but it is still creating student havoc. For the accurate reporting they could do it more often and have better technical support for the Perkins issues.*
- *By correcting the Perkins info to go to NSLDS.*
- *By having a more accurate database. That is the only thing. Have it more up to date, the information isn't always current.*
- *Continuing to improve software such as ED Express and NSLDS.*
- *Fix the NSLDS so I understand it. I don't think that it is very user friendly.*
- *Having instructions and being more clear with different software such as NSLDS.*
- *Having more up to date information on the NSLDS is the one I mean.*
- *I am very happy with what they have done electronically. The EDE that they keep improving is helpful. The information available on the NSLDS has been very helpful also. You have caught me off guard and I just cannot think of anything right now. But these are the things that I like.*
- *I don't know if the SEA could fix this but it would be nice if the NSLDS could be updated more often.*
- *I don't know if it is the Department of Ed or what, but the students get a letter saying that their aid is clear than it gets put on NSLDS. We are supposed to be looking on that, they get a letter that says it is clear and it actually takes three months to clear, that is not doing a good service to the students or the school.*
- *I guess that they can cut down the wait on the phone. Improve the NSLDS.*
- *I guess with the NSLDS accuracy of data.*
- *I meet with them individually at the conferences about the NSLDS loan origination center. For individuals with closeout figures I contacted the department. A specific individual I have had to call more than twice.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think the biggest area of concern is NSLDS. They are requiring us to use it to confirm information for transferring students regarding past financial aid history. NSLDS still has inaccuracies and because of that, I don't feel confident I'm getting the correct information in a timely manner. I expect—I should expect for transfer students especially, someone starting in the fall, that I would be able to get information within 60 days before enrollment. One other thing that the department could improve, period, is how their information gets matched with the Department of Education concerning veteran status. The definition that the Department of Education has and what the Department of Defense has are two different definitions. Therefore, for financial aid purposes someone might be a qualifying veteran based on the Department of Education, but would be rejected— would be counted as a reject—by the Department of Defense because of the definition. One other thing I would like to see is an automatic TRA*
- *I think the major problem we have is the transfer students. We weren't able to get the data through the NSLDS as soon as we needed it. We couldn't pull up records to see if they have had Pell Grants or other financial aid.*
- *I think through NSLDS, I don't think the data is updated very often. Or it may be that we don't receive it.*
- *I would say the number one thing is the NSLDS data comes on two different sources and the info is not on the same data. The two sources are the ISIR and NSLDS.*
- *I'd like to see the NSLDS become more user friendly, we would like to see it become a more user friendly program. I recently just went to a seminar and that's what we were all complaining about.*
- *Improve the integrity of data in NSLDS. Continue to provide training materials as early as possible.*
- *Improve their service. I don't always think that the information on the NSLDS is current or the latest information. We went ahead and paid for her Pell Grant but I am not sure we will even get paid by the US Department of Education.*
- *Keep updated information on the NSLDS. Tell the people that actually use the NSLDS what has actually happened with the loans. Now you just get bounced around trying to get the right information.*
- *Make NSLDS easier to submit SSCR.*
- *Making the information more timely. They change the regulation every year and it takes a while for us to get it. So to streamline reporting process for the information put out on the NSLDS.*
- *More knowledgeable staff. We need information about which branch handles which processing. One of the things would be like how to get something done right. If you call one office they tell you someone else handles that. We had a lot of trouble with the NSLDS with the passwords. We kept getting told that we need to speak with this person or this person and we were not able to get the information that we needed to get what we were doing done. The biggest thing is we need to know who to call when we need something and when we do reach someone getting the right information.*
- *More timely response. The NSLDS needs to be updated more frequently.*
- *Nothing. NSLDS needs to be improved, more info.*
- *NSLDS data could be updated to download faster.*
- *NSLDS needs more accurate and current information.*
- *NSLDS takes a long time for the information to come up. When I did go to insert the info the instructions I received didn't correspond to the screen that I was looking at. Their staff is courteous and knowledgeable.*
- *NSLDS, the data takes too long to be posted to that server. We have some issues like bankruptcy, for example, there is no set way or directions on how to handle things like that. There are just limited guidelines to go by.*
- *Offer more web-based training. I commend the improvement of the materials over the last few years in the NSLDS. It's very easy and accurate now.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *On the NSLDS I don't know if it was the school or the lender that the information didn't get defaulted. It took five or six months after the loan defaulted to show up on NSLDS. We looked in July and it didn't show up on NSLDS till December.*
- *One specific person to speak to about our specific needs for just us.*
- *One way is to have them strictly report on time to the NSLDS. Especially with us doing away with the SAT's. I wonder if the Department of Ed could support more the academic side of the system. The financial aid actually relies on a system such as the class system so when can we incorporate the academic side of the system. I guess, I would like them to develop a system that could include the academic side of the system, which includes attendance, withdrawals, leave of absence etc.*
- *Primarily increase the availability of student data exchange via the internet. Increase NSLDS data accuracy. Reduce the number of signature hold file downloads.*
- *Probably in the NSLDS are getting it more accurate but I know that they're working on that.*
- *Quicker updated on NSLDS, that is the main thing. The call centers for students regarding the FASEA. They get different information, or not the information they need and they are sent back to the school. That is ok but if they are helping, they should be able to answer the questions. Work on their customer service there.*
- *Returning my telephone calls regarding FISAT and federal funding issues. More timely updates of NSLDS. More and more frequent updates of federal application processing.*
- *Some of the instructions are not really clear. The instruction for NSLDS to add new staff members is not easy to do. That is the only thing. The instructions are easy to obtain. I had to set up two people to be able to access it. I had the president sign just one paper thinking it would work for both of them but I was wrong. The thing I don't like is how wordy the instructions are. I had to call the customer service place to help me understand it, and that didn't answer all of my questions. It was a lot of work for what seems to be a simple process.*
- *The accuracy of data on the NSLDS, simplification of policies and procedures. An improved need analysis formula and verification procedures.*
- *The accuracy of NSLDS needs to be improved.*
- *The accuracy on the NSLDS. Just sometimes the information is not updated as promptly as we would like. That is all that I can think of at this time.*
- *The biggest thing would be to make NSLDS more user friendly, especially when correcting an error. They need to make a better system for analyzing our records when we switch to gaps.*
- *The data on NSLDS to be more accurate. They should update the information more often.*
- *The hardest part is getting to the right person to help you fix your problem. You get transferred a lot, you get referred to different numbers before you can find the person that can help you. NSLDS the information is not updated timely enough. Students who clear defaults wait 60-90 days before they show good status.*
- *The NSLDS and the SSCR. Hoping that students leaving one institution and transferring to another and being able to have accurate, updated information from the previous school. There needs to be a better way of finding out who is changing the data from when a student drops or graduates. When we need to report the student, the bank has a different status than the school has and then the SSCR's are changed without proof. It's consistently changing back to what you've had every six to eight weeks.*
- *The NSLDS data is sometimes screwed. The information contradicts itself sometimes. For example if the student fills out the wrong social security number on the form the NSLDS says to change it one way and the SEA says to do it another way.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The NSLDS database needs to be more current and more accurate. Fewer processing mistakes by the CPS.*
- *The NSLDS people weren't very nice. They were very short I don't know if it's because I don't call very often but they weren't helpful. CPS was a lot more helpful.*
- *The NSLDS program could provide more details regarding transfer students. ED Express is great, however for mainframe schools it's not helpful.*
- *The NSLDS reporting system is difficult because it ties in with the SSCR. They are two systems that are supposed to do the same thing, but they don't work well together. The consolidated booklets they give are too brief. For example, the desk references have too little information in them.*
- *The NSLDS systems needs to be updated, Pell overpayments, If loans have been paid. For example I had a student who made a payment on their Pell Grant and when it came time to file for the next Pell Grant the system showed that they hadn't paid. So I went back and had in my records where the student had paid. So the system just needs to upgrade itself.*
- *The only problem I am having is with the NSLDS. For about a year now I have been trying to get my own password. I get caught in a loop and I cannot complete the process. When I email for help, I am not getting a response. I need my own password. Right now I am using my assistant's password.*
- *The only problem is on the NSLDS database on the loan district.*
- *The primary thing that comes to mind, is there is not enough testing on the software. It is released with too many bugs in it. Shorten up the time that it takes for information to get posted to NSLDS. The last would be to make corrections in NSLDS less cumbersome. I have to ask because I do not know what the problem is other than a couple of experiences that I have run into. Even with the regional department looking for the problem, they were not able to resolve it. This is a repayment and overpayment that needed to be canceled and from the time when I first spoke with someone to get this corrected has now been over two years and it still has not be corrected.*
- *The timeliness of information in the NSLDS needs to be improved. That would be a great start.*
- *The website is great. I don't know, to have us go paperless. Keep NSLDS updated so we can get the info.*
- *There needs to be more clarification with the NSLDS in regards to being able to track students more efficiently. There seems to be a missing link.*
- *There's some work with the speed of having data corrected. Basically new NSLDS software in conjunction with Title IV.*
- *They could change the return of Title IV policy. Improve the accuracy NSLDS.*
- *They need to cut down on the amount of areas that you need to go to get help. They need to speed up their record keeping. Their database is not up to date. Specifically the NSLDS.*
- *They've improved quite a bit on the training and timeliness. They could still improve on training sessions and timeliness of the sessions. Basically they've improved quite a bit on the electronic and the NSLDS. They've improved quite a bit on that.*
- *To assist with cleaning up NSLDS.*
- *To me specifically I don't use it very often. On NSLDS it is only inaccurate because other schools don't update it.*
- *Update NSLDS in a more timely manner.*
- *Update NSLDS more quickly.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Work on the NSLDS. My complaint is that we do this report every quarter and we do it on the same people. I'm thinking that if the student has graduated from the school, I don't need to keep reporting that he's graduated. I don't mind doing the report, but shrink the report. Once they've graduated don't keep having me put that he's graduated. Why do they keep popping up on the report when he's graduated. I have not found anyone at the SFA who can answer that question.*

ED Express

- *Be more familiar with different computer systems besides ED Express.*
- *Continue to have workshops. I like the direct lending because we are getting ready things like packaging and we do not have that system. We want to get in and use more components ED Express.*
- *Continuing to improve software such as ED Express and NSLDS.*
- *Fix the problems with ED Express. So many glitches that it was recommended not to install and then they said to install the new 7.1. We have a low student population so it is not overwhelming.*
- *Get ED Express on line instead of just on software.*
- *Get rid of ED Connect.*
- *I am very happy with what they have done electronically. The EDE that they keep improving is helpful. The information available on the NSLDS has been very helpful also. You have caught me off guard and I just cannot think of anything right now. But these are the things that I like.*
- *Improve the ED Express.*
- *Materials that would better detail the changes on the ED Express. I have many problems because there are a number of changes that I can't make. Also, I might ask a question for their staff and they give me an answer, it might be the right one but I don't have enough information to understand it.*
- *Sending out email and letters saying where things are available for what we need. ED Express with Datatel is what we use and it is resilient. It is kind of crazy. It should be working more with data town with outside companies so that the system could be easy for the school. The department working with people outside would make it easier.*
- *Simplification of the return of federal funds. On the ED Express the letters part still needs some improvement.*
- *Software, they have changed ED Express but it could be better.*
- *The instructions for ED Express need to be clearer. You can get up to one point in the application just fine, then the instructions just stop. You can't go on till you call and receive help to go on. It is all the same with the electronic programs. Every time you call you get charged. I have employees that are very confident and can handle the computer and then others like myself who need help, there is times that you can't even figure out how to do it when you do get help. It may not be the counselor's fault, they are actually blaming everything on the school's lack of knowledge, instead of taking responsibility for their mistakes and making the student or parents think the school doesn't know what they are talking about.*
- *The notification is pretty good. I don't seem to have any problems with ED Express. The only thing that would be better is to make the software more user friendly.*
- *The NSLDS program could provide more details regarding transfer students. ED Express is great, however for mainframe schools it's not helpful.*
- *The one thing that I see is that their software isn't always user friendly, we do the ED Express, and we have to import it to the Ed Connect. They could combine it to make it easier. They should have continuity of flow of the IT.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The only difficulty that I have is ED software. There is a lot of confusion. I don't understand why they have to change it so often.*
- *The only problem we have is with ED Express*
- *The think I would like to see ED Express. They don't offer enough. I would like to see it done at a closer location and more frequently. Maybe different school campuses. If I have had to call with a question to the region of federal offices I never know who to call. If they would call us once in a while to see if there is anything that we need help with that would be great.*
- *Their instructions on SSCR the ED Express, ED Connect they could be more clear.*
- *We can not use Ed Express the way it is, I think. They need to add more solutions to Ed Express.*
- *You can use Ed Tech as a model. ED Express has tons of problems and I am grateful I'm not in it. You get what you pay for and ED Express is free.*

Other General Comments

Obtaining Information

- *A more timely distribution of the student aid handbook.*
- *Always better communications, everything could be quicker.*
- *Be able to print out the whole application.*
- *Be more clear with stuff. When you read their stuff it seems that you would need a lawyer to help interpret it.*
- *Be more consistent with the information. Give it out in a timely manner. Don't look at all institutions as being the same. Send communications out in ample time to respond.*
- *Be more timely with annual updates and publications. Make the programs more adaptable by financial aid professionals.*
- *Being new, it is hard to answer. How long it takes to get stuff, there was not a 2000-01 handbook in place when I got here. We just barely got it. I was surprised when I saw that we didn't even have the correct handbooks. I feel that we get a fair amount of gibberish. I just think that it takes a long time for them to get stuff to us in my opinion.*
- *Being quicker to give guidance of concern to the financial community, when an issue arises. Getting us the handbook in a timely manner. We are just barley getting it. The issue of knowing who to contact, making that a clearer process, that would be helpful.*
- *Better clarity.*
- *Better communication. Any information on policy stuff like that.*
- *Better communication. Getting information in a timely manner. Clarity, reporting forms, talking to a real live person. I don't have the answers.*
- *Better manuals. That's all.*
- *Better publications. That's about it.*
- *By having the publications come out more timely.*
- *Clarity and written instructions.*
- *Clear and timely instructions. We seem to get a lot of information really late. The handbooks should be here before we need them, not after. It would also be helpful to have some kind of technology programs. The Philadelphia regional office has been very helpful.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Clearer directions: cash management directions and cash closeouts and also the technical support.*
- *Clearer instructions.*
- *Communication. I wish there were opportunities for e-mail alerts. Sometimes, when there are significant things happening, it is hard to be alerted.*
- *Consistency of information regarding procedure.*
- *Continued consolidations of publications. Location of publications of resources, increase of regular US mail to schools from the SEA, highlighting programs and resources.*
- *Distribution of guidance material was inexcusably late this year.*
- *Earlier distribution of the Financial Aid Handbook. That's about it. I usually get it about a year after the award is closed.*
- *Ease of technology and communication. More user friendly.*
- *Exit interviewing, getting the exiting material on time. It would be nice to have just one personal contact.*
- *Faster responses to inquiries. Produce publications earlier for the award year. Avoid mixed messages related to Perkins. Access cash.*
- *Fewer acronyms, less phone calls, and more web or E-mail.*
- *First of all there is a lack of Spanish speaking people in the department of education. In Puerto Rico, 85% of the financial aid speak English, but not very well. So it is hard for them to call and talk to someone. We need more Spanish-speaking people. The publications should be checked that the correct Spanish is being used. The ones we get aren't correctly translated.*
- *For one thing I believe they should be much more willing, or stronger than willing, to authoritatively answer specific technical questions in writing. That has always been a weakness. Basically, if the financial person out in the field is doing something, very often these things are not very cut and dry, there is a lot of gray area. Very rarely do the Feds put into writing what is acceptable and unacceptable. They need to be more willing to put in writing what they think should happen. On important items like allocation letters, they should e-mail directly to the director of financial aid. That such a document is being sent electronically to the schools "mailbox". So that the director is aware of this, and not dependent upon other staffs' interpretation of what may be important for the director. They should be much more about clear who should be contacted for various issues, and as a back-up there should be one phone number to call that can be very specific as to whom to call.*
- *Get financial aid handbooks out before award year starts.*
- *Get in regulations and handbooks on time. The student financial aid book came in a year late.*
- *Get information out sooner regarding changes that are going to be made.*
- *Get the handbooks out earlier in the year. Have more information available. Work with the calendar, we have kids asking how much they are eligible for and when it is disbursed.*
- *Get the handbooks out quicker. That is the biggest complaint I have. Also keep the EAT conferences at 3 choices.*
- *Get the students pamphlets out faster and sooner.*
- *Getting guidance info out in a timely manner. It helps when the handbook comes out in a timely manner as opposed to us getting it in pieces.*
- *Getting handbook information here more timely that would be very helpful.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Getting info to us in a more timely manner such as the handbook. We had difficulty with the crime report. It was very complicated. We had problems getting info. We got passed around a lot. We had to fax our info. The whole process needs to be fixed. With the handbook I like the format, it is easier to use. We just need to get it earlier.*
- *Getting information out faster.*
- *Getting manuals out on time.*
- *Getting the information out there so we know where to get it. That's all I can think of.*
- *Getting the printed material out in a timely manner. Like the student handbook for financial aid. I don't have all of the chapters for the last year's handbook.*
- *Have clearer instructions on some of the forms. Closing out the account, like making the end of the year reports clearer and better. We went through the instructions and they didn't help at all.*
- *He can do some translating of books in Spanish. Sometimes it's hard to understand. The electronic is perfect.*
- *I am not sure if it is their fault so much or the business of our offices. One of the things that they could do is get the student handbook to us in a timely manner. If we had to print it here it would print one sided off of the web and it would be expensive and not easy for us for how thick it is. I would like when we could report Pell once instead of at least three times. Maybe it is because we have a stable full-time student staff with no change. It is not easy for us. That part of it I like the old way that they did it.*
- *I am not sure, they could increase the detail in the handbook.*
- *I don't have any suggestions right off the top of my head, I guess some of the instruction could be a little clearer.*
- *I don't know of any. I think the directions for the IPEDs need to be clearer, and I don't like that you are timed, I didn't have enough time to make a copy of what we did. But the support center is great. They helped a lot when we called in.*
- *I don't know. Somehow being able to link more information together. Different departments with different information but they are not linked together.*
- *I don't think they could do anything but supply books at seminars. Just the manuals.*
- *I liked it when they took all the consolidation stuff out of the handbook and it is now separate and I liked it better as one. I was disappointed they didn't have spring training. The NSLDS people never have a good answer on how to get things fixed. Not real clear, they don't tell you who to contact when you know information is wrong. I have lots of good things to say too, I don't want you to think it is all bad. I just got most of the sections of the handbook and the year is almost over. I could tell you more but I can't think of anything right now.*
- *I still prefer books for references instead of the computer. I think it is easier in a book or if you had some kind of browser where it could throw out whatever you wanted.*
- *I think a better explanation on the form.*
- *I think clarifying sometimes who to call, I never know which office. Getting information out earlier on updates when there are changes made, such as the handbook. I think that's it.*
- *I think it's probably more in relationship of direct loans. There could be more communication, ensuring that LOC is communicating to everyone. That would be my main area.*
- *I think sometimes, some of the information could be in a more precise format. When we are reviewing information with students, it's sometimes difficult for them to understand. For someone who has lots of experience, it's easy. But for someone who has not, it's difficult for them. There are a lot of high school students enrolled.*
- *I think talking among organizations. Maybe it's hard to get the different organizations together but they need to communicate together so I don't get bounced everywhere.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think that they could probably make things up to date. They really do a good job.*
- *I think the big thing, the SEA handbook for the year, I think the time frame for that is wrong. It is late getting here and we are worried about violating rules when we receive the handbook half way through the year.*
- *I think they could have more communication about software and the User guide. More information.*
- *I thought the instructions for some of the forms were a little difficult to understand.*
- *I would like to see more unused letters put out each month.*
- *I would rather have mailings than e-mail. It is difficult to read things on this monitor and I hate to print them out. If it is vital I would rather have a paper mailed, especially if I am going to talk it over with my boss. I would like to have very clear telephone numbers and people to contact for certain issues. I usually get voicemail. The processing of faxes. The good news was they turned it on early, but it had a lot of problems. They shouldn't turn it on until it works right. I would like the department to move from software to web based. They should get the technical and legal issues resolved and move to web based.*
- *I would say clarify and make more available contacts in Washington D.C. Sometimes it is difficult to find out who to speak with. We barely got the student handbook last week and we needed it long ago.*
- *I would think that they could be a little clearer with instructions, especially when it comes to the instructions. Not just on terminology but on concepts. We had three people working on our re-certification, and all three of us had different ideas of what was going on.*
- *If the handbook wouldn't be so confusing. It is so hard for me to understand.*
- *If the reference material was clearer. Some of the reference materials we get sometimes don't have step by step instructions to follow, more detailed information. I don't have a lot of complaints. Everything seems to be a pretty good system.*
- *I'm not sure right now. Better communication dealing with financial aid administrators.*
- *Improve the IFAP. It's difficult to find anything and when you do a word search and when you put in a word 9 times out of 10 it would say under construction. They need to be more timely in getting the information on the IFAP and fix the word search. We're still waiting for the handbook.*
- *In documentation and instructions that they send: give more detail on how to download stuff where to get the information to download what files will be created and how and when to send the files to them.*
- *In terms of the publications that come out, most of the time they are incredibly late. I had some problems in terms of the student loan systems. They are not updated enough.*
- *Index for the SEA handbook, a search engine for the handbook.*
- *Information could be clearer.*
- *Information in a more timely way would be better.*
- *It can improve the way IT listens to the Urban colleges. When we voice our concerns they need to learn to listen more and get things done.*
- *It has provided all the information that we need.*
- *It is in the presentation of the information. On IFAB I don't always know who to talk to and it always takes a long process to find out who I need to call. It is organized functionally not professionally to help out with customer satisfaction. That may come from my old school where I would rather you give me a piece of paper saying it instead of making me look it up on the internet. The flip charts and information packet are not precise enough. I would rather have one sheet with the numbers of who to call. Since I don't have frequent contact with them it is hard to find out who to talk to when I have a question. It would be easier if I had one person to talk to.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *It would be nice if we were receiving the chapters of the federal handbook in a timely fashion. Most of the information we need we don't get it until 6-8 months into the working year. It would be good if we could get the handbook information the prior year so like if we could 2002 handbook now it would be more helpful.*
- *Just by keeping us informed.*
- *Just get the handbook out. Because I am scared I am not doing something. Other than that, I think it is great.*
- *Just the quality of information given out. This has never happened to me personally, but it has happened to people that I work with.*
- *Keep releasing e-memos.*
- *Let me know what they're supposed to be doing and make it more clear to me.*
- *Looking up information.*
- *Make the instructions clearer. Put instructions on the screen so we don't have to refer to a lot of paper work. The order of the things that need to be done are not always logical. That is all I can think of right now.*
- *Making regulations more understandable, including the handbooks and stuff like that, and getting them out in a timely manner.*
- *Making the instructions clearer in all areas.*
- *More clarity in the updates in what they are wanting for the process of the SFA.*
- *More local training, and send information faster.*
- *More timeliness on release of instruction manuals.*
- *More timely and accurate information.*
- *More timely distribution of publications and support material. Open up the availability of experimental sites to high performing schools. They could reduce the auditing requirements for high performing schools. That's it. Availability: reducing audit requirements. It is an added burden and cost to the college where there is no reason for the concerns.*
- *More timely printing and distribution of materials.*
- *More understandable instruction. Make them clearer.*
- *Nothing comes to mind at this moment. I think overall it is very good, the handbook doesn't come out early enough.*
- *Offer more local training. Provide more updated brochures. That would be it.*
- *Offer training at better locations or more locations. They do not offer very many sites. You have to actually get on a plane to get to one. In my opinion they should not have to spend money to travel there. Improve the timeliness of the publication of the student financial aid handbook. The only suggestion is that they publish it before the year begins. We received the book after we had already done the work and processed.*
- *One of the things we don't like is the new website. It's difficult to find information in there, like publication information, SFA handbook. One improvement they can do is get the SFA handbook out early to us.*
- *Probably more information, better training.*
- *Probably more training at the regional level. Publications such as the verification and student financial aid handbooks need to come out sooner.*
- *Provide clear and simple instructions for applications. Easier access.*
- *Provide more current information.*
- *Provide paper copies of certain documents upon request, student financial handbook.*
- *Quicker with info, return of Pell Grants.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Readable, in terms of understanding instructions. Need to understand the difference in schools.*
- *Sending out email and letters saying where things are available for what we need. ED Express with Datatel is what we use and it is resilient. It is kind of crazy. It should be working more with data town with outside companies so that the system could be easy for the school. The department working with people outside would make it easier.*
- *Sometimes we have trouble with communications because the system is down.*
- *Streamlining, better language, user friendly regulations.*
- *Test their computer programs more thoroughly before release. Distribute publications in a more timely fashion. Have workshops in more areas more often. We need them in our area more than once a year. We don't have the budget to go other places.*
- *The clarity of information and the timeliness of information. Some of the regulations haven't been published and the year is almost at an end. At our local area office, we have a hard time reaching a contact person because they are on the road a lot. That's pretty much it.*
- *The different parts or areas of the SEFA program should communicate better with each other.*
- *The ease of the Pell payment and the clarity of instructions.*
- *The federal SEFA manual came late in the academic year.*
- *The federal student financial aid handbook needs to be available sooner.*
- *The handbook is not put out in time. It's not printed in a timely manner. That's my biggest complaint.*
- *The instructions could be clearer, a return to Title IV, the language is difficult.*
- *The instructions marked clearly and information. More training.*
- *The NSLDS reporting system is difficult because it ties in with the SSCR. They are two systems that are supposed to do the same thing, but they don't work well together. The consolidated booklets they give are too brief. For example, the desk references have too little information in them.*
- *The only thing this year that was lacking was the visibility of the manuals. They came late this year.*
- *The student aid handbook came out late this season. It still isn't complete for this year. Rather than coming out late I think we need that information 6 months before.*
- *The timeliness of information, they have been really behind in getting the financial aid handled. It is confusing as to what we will be getting in the mail or what we should download of the internet. Like the forms and things. They now require us to download the software updates off the internet and because of the file size, with the amount of people that we have here, it is hard to do it. I have to do it after business hours for the amount of time that it takes. In fact the school will not allow me to do it during business hours. I think that is all that I have to say.*
- *Their flip-books need to be more sequential and understandable.*
- *There could be better timeliness in the student financial handbook. It is getting close to the end of the year and we don't have a new handbook for next year. We don't get very consistent answers. Students call to see how their applications doing and they don't get consistent answers.*
- *There needs to be more information more quickly. The SEFA is sometimes inconsistent and fragmented in the sense of knowing where to go for what. There are too many variations of passwords to remember and they are difficult to keep track of. Shand Dunn was very helpful. The SEFA has come a long way but there is still a lot of work to be done. I am concerned that students will be getting more loans rather than grants.*
- *There seems to be more meetings of workshops that are long distance travel. More timely availability of the federal student aid handbook. The workshops need to be closer.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *They can be better organized, and provide clearer information.*
- *They can improve communications within their own offices. A lot of time one hand doesn't know what the other is doing. In one place you view the department as one identity.*
- *They could do a better job of keeping up their information.*
- *They could get the booklets out in a much more timely manner.*
- *They could get the financial aid handbook out to the schools prior to the start of the award year. That's one of the biggest things. I never got the same response to questions and no one knew who to call. Each person gave me a different number to call with a different person to try to reach.*
- *They could get their handbooks out in a more timely manner. That is my biggest objection.*
- *They could have info to us at the appropriate time.*
- *They could provide the literature or handbooks on time, not later. It's federal law.*
- *They could publish their manuals before the start of the financial aid fiscal year.*
- *They could send out the handbooks and dear college letters on paper.*
- *They could send out the handbooks on time. We just got the 2000-01 handbook and still haven't received it all yet. I have yet to see the 01-02 handbook.*
- *They do a decent job of getting written instructions and information.*
- *They need more communication. We need e-mail or letters to remind us about our applications.*
- *They need more consistent communication.*
- *They need more written literature.*
- *They really need to provide easier access, for END-user to understand technology downloads; they need to simplify the process. They need to have a primary contact that directors can contact for any department-related issue, because the regional office representatives are not working. I like the fact that they are providing Electronic Access Conference, they are really helpful. For regulations for the student federal they need to publish it sooner, and put it on the web aid handbook sooner. We need to have that now. They have made significant strides to improve over the last five years, and they are moving in the right direction.*
- *They should get information out earlier. They should also provide more training.*
- *Timeliness of documentation. Better phone representatives for students and parents. Consistency of answers from year to year. It would be nice if they would notify us when important things come up on the website. Notification of information. That's enough.*
- *Timeliness. Some of their publications are not up well in advance of the upcoming financial year. By publications I don't just mean print publications but also software.*
- *Timeliness of getting information to us: example publication of the handbook.*
- *To send out material in a timely manner for regulation changes. That would be about all.*
- *Training opportunities, there are not enough. We need more. Better timeliness of regulation and handbook materials.*
- *Try to be a little more user friendly, more common language direction, more easily understood directions and things like that. We have a three-inch manual and I know there is a lot of stuff. I don't know how they are going to reduce it but it gets frustrating. That's it, they are doing a good job.*
- *We are a Hispanic school. We need more information for the student, and the meaning of the words is hard to understand. We just need more information in Spanish.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *We don't get the student financial aid handbook soon enough.*
- *We just received the 2000-01 handbook about a month ago and the year is coming to a close. I go to the SFA Website and I always feel that I am missing something that I should have found, it needs to be more user friendly.*
- *We need to know what they want. It seems so unclear on the computer.*
- *Well I think in some instances they have taken away some manuals or documents that they used to send me. They now tell me to access the web or the internet and I never have time to access the web. I think I would like some written information that helps me look into or pick the important aspects of financial aid. Since everything is on the internet I don't have access which is very bad. Another thing I have a concern about is the student financial aid. I wish that they would give us access to the DRA # instead of having to send off for a duplicate student financial form, you know the form that the student fills out. I know that it is a privacy policy, but I think that the Director of Financial Aid programs should have access to the DRA codes.*
- *Well I think to eliminate, and to provide a better service like more information, simple small order, small school.*
- *When I look in the manual I don't find the information in more detail. I know it is difficult because every school is different. More explanation in the manual. More understandable. Some forms are difficult to understand.*
- *When people call the 1-800 call aid they do not always get accurate information. That is the big one because the parent and the students are the ones who call. The other thing is we are just now getting the student financial handbook for the year that is almost over. The handbooks need to be more timely. The financial systems that process the EAFSA always have some glitches. The process that goes through there has a problem with the software for processing the EAFSA. The EDE software has problems always. There is always a glitch in that system, they have to send another one, they always error on that, and we have to get version like the 7.1 and the 7.2. That is it.*
- *Writing the tech information, as well as the SFA regulations. There is not a lot of stability in their writings. I have a lot of questions. The constant changes in the regulations are perplexing.*

Online Information

- *A lot of their correspondence used to be sent in the mail. Now it's over the Internet and it's not in hard copy.*
- *As long as we can access all the information they have on the internet, that's the biggest thing. Being the director I have to rely on that to keep everyone updated and sometimes I can't access that page or it's not available. They did say they were working on it and they are very proactive when new issues come up. Basically I can't think of anything at the top of my head right now.*
- *Better on-line instructions.*
- *Centralize their services. There are so many things they are trying to do on the internet, which is good, but they can't seem to get their websites working right. They should either go back to paper recording, or do their homework a little better.*
- *Continue to improve IFAT. Sometimes it's hard to search in there. They've made a lot of progress on that issue, as well as others. Calling used to be a nightmare. It's much easier now. IFAT: just the search engine. The pages are down and under construction. They are just not readily available.*
- *Continued reduction in paper work. Change takes time and a lot of headway has been made in the last 3 or 4 years. Increased use of the internet. All of the processes that we take part in, we should be able to do those through the internet.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Continuing to put more resources and processes on the internet. They're doing really good in that direction. That's will give them enough work to do for a while. The reconciliation process could be put on the internet. It's not there yet. If they could make all the processes seamless. There are still a lot of parts that don't connect.*
- *Enabling internet processing. Basically being able to sit and process the applications through the internet, as far as the financial aid offices.*
- *Everything has changed. The internet capabilities have been really great.*
- *Everything online. Get rid of ED CON 32. Have everything web based, enhance NSLDS, eliminate SSCR.*
- *Getting everything over the internet. I am not computer illiterate but I get tense and tight, and I get frustrated using it. Some of the questions are difficult and I have difficulties answering them. It's not so much the SEA I just wish everything could be on paper. I hate computers, well using the internet so much.*
- *Give more clear directions on their on-line surveys. That is it.*
- *I am disappointed with their IFAT website. I have difficulty finding things on the IFAT website. I used to get an e-mail telling me when there were updates. I miss that service a lot.*
- *I am not sure. At this point I don't know. Make it easier to access. Put it on the internet.*
- *I am satisfied. There may be some minor changes on their websites. I do not know what exactly, their website is pretty effective. There is nothing else.*
- *I can't really think of any. The fact that they are on the Web and I can't think of anything else.*
- *I can't really think of anything. I think the thing that is really easy is the school portal for the website. That made things easier for us to access information.*
- *I can't think of anything. They are always trying to improve and I love the web page.*
- *I don't know. I don't like all that internet stuff, it's slow. They could improve the speed.*
- *I don't know. They are improving all the time I can tell by their web page that they are proactive.*
- *I guess just maintain their website and do it in a simple and user friendly way.*
- *I know that they are planning on doing the web-based downloading from peddle 4 wann. I am looking forward to that.*
- *I think as long as they continue updating information on the web, but if they could send a paper copy of the regulations, just in case I miss it on the web.*
- *I think of the Internet—if they have forms and stuff on that. I would like more stuff on the Internet. Most of the time, it's 2 A.M. in the morning and you're looking for a specific form. It always hits you at night or something and you say, "I wish I could get that form or this form." You don't want to wait and call the next day. I know the IRS has that. You can download lots of files. It's in a .pdf file and you can go to the computer and print it. So you're working with an original form. I know you're working towards that direction. The more stuff they put in .pdf form the better. I call and they answer all my questions. My expectations weren't very high at first—you expect with a government agency to be very slow. But I call and they say "bang bang!" here's the answer. Eric was very nice. It took half an hour over the phone and he walked me through the questions saying the trick to this question is this, and this and he walked me right through it.*
- *I think one of the great things they did this last year was to add SEA tech, which allows for a large broadcast of information to be made available in a very timely fashion to the financial aid community. What I think would be helpful is for this same avenue to be available for other than technical issues. Policy issues. Off and on, the SEA tech—they'll say this is a policy issue, that's kind of where it ends, there is no way to address this because this is a policy issue, it says. It isn't like they will forward it on to policies. They may do that, but there isn't any way they can get back and respond in that way over the SEA tech. If a question is being raised on SEA tech or another vehicle there should be a*



Verbatim Comments continued

way that policy could respond to those questions through the same avenue. That was just an easy example of one. The other thing I think is we have the Internet as a good means of reaching a large population of all financial aid professionals that they can use. That means to get out timely notifications

- I think they could make more available a listing of who to call for help. Make the holding time shorter. I had a bad experience in closing out one year and the only message they left is that they were not available at that time. They didn't leave a message of who to call in case of an emergency. Everything is on the Internet now and we don't get anything on hard copy any more. It would be good if we could receive a listing quarterly of what's on the Internet.*
- I think they're doing it by moving services into the web. I think providing a place where they'll be online for schools to get information about the appropriate contact people with SEA and how to contact them. That would be a help to me, and other schools.*
- I would like to see everything done over the internet, I think too much time is taken up learning the system. The entire process needs to be simplified for students and administrators.*
- I would like to see them utilize the internet more, instead of the modem. On the internet I would like to see the Title IV WAN become completely internet based. In dealing with the department, they treat us in a very generic way. They are not very personal like they know who they are dealing with. i.e. like a private school or 2 year or 4 year schools. Nothing else I can think of.*
- I'd like to see one huge website with security, but one spot where you could go and find out anything about your school's aid and where students could access it, but just one big place. I'd like to see things posted on IFAB a little bit faster than they have been. We start processing closely after the first of January but I don't think verification work sheets and things are posted until a little bit later. I've been in financial aid for 11 years and there have been a lot of improvements made.*
- If they just bring the websites on that they talked about at the conference, that they said they would. That would make me confident. They briefed us on the new websites that are in development that they said would be coming in the next few months. That would be wonderful if they had those. Also I know that this is not your department but, the system of collecting data over the internet instead of paper, has saved me many hours of work. That is it I think.*
- If we're going to use that on-line stuff, get it easier to do and easier to manage, so that even dumb people like me can understand it. We have a glitch in the phone system, when I call the service center we can't connect. I have to use a completely outside line. The fault is probably on our side of the phone, but I don't know.*
- Improve the IFAP. It's difficult to find anything and when you do a word search and when you put in a word 9 times out of 10 it would say under construction. They need to be more timely in getting the information on the IFAP and fix the word search. We're still waiting for the handbook.*
- Improving its website—its seems to be down some. Make it a little more user friendly, easier to find things, more intuitive.*
- Just continue with the web-based system. Sometimes it is hard to get through to customer service.*
- Make it faster on the web, it takes forever for the information to transmit. The students are constantly complaining about the pace. SEA has come a long way and they do a tremendous job. I hope they would have a FAS/FAA express, I caution them to delete that as a service, the transmission is faster and your confident that they get there with FASEA express. They are still dependent on the EDE, they need to send an official campus base notification.*
- Make their on-line handbook more user friendly for Macs.*
- Making available more internet via the web. Improve upon the services there, such as the search engines.*
- Move all of the services to the internet. Right now there is still some services you need to get by dialing up a modem. They've been working on it though.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Move the Phys AP to the internet and take it out of the Title IV.*
- *Moving toward internet transfer of data. The primary way would be to make the software more user friendly. More documentation. Most of us can't attend training sessions because of cost.*
- *Now that everything is on the internet, it is hard for me to find and pull out everything I need.*
- *On some of the web screens, make them more keyboard accessible rather than with a mouse.*
- *On the website, the searching sometimes doesn't flow too nice. That's all.*
- *Once they get this internet access to submit applications, it'll speed up the process.*
- *Once we get the one single contact for all that we work with. I think there is really a lot of good progress once we get all of the stuff on the web we will be able to do things a lot better. I am really happy that we have several different ways to ask questions.*
- *One of the things we don't like is the new website. It's difficult to find information in there, like publication information, SFA handbook. One improvement they can do is get the SFA handbook out early to us.*
- *One sign-on to the web.*
- *One stop shopping. Have a central phone number for inquiring instead of fifteen different numbers. Often, the personnel in the organization where students inquire about the financial aids are not trained properly. It would be wonderful if everything went to the internet for ease of data entry.*
- *Probably on the SFA website a better search engine. Sometimes we don't know where to find them.*
- *Probably the more things they have on the web the better.*
- *Put everything on the web.*
- *Putting more information online. Do more reports electronically.*
- *Right now, I think the services are very good. I think the web-based information is useful for us. I really can't think of anything off the top of my head. In the past year, they have made the information available to us and made it easier for us to get.*
- *Simplify the RFMS procedure. That would be one big step for me. I realize we are a small fish in a big pond. Keep expanding the Internet access. Basically one website that you could go to, to get all the information, or link to all the information that you need. Instead of having a different site for every little thing.*
- *Sometimes I think their instructions that are online are too wordy. If they would state things simply. The instructions need to be simplified.*
- *That's a good question. On the internet portion, make it quicker and easier.*
- *The EDE Express software needs to be placed on the web and not at the school so that all of the databases of the schools are on a website. Everything needs to be changed into HTML so they can interface into administration systems. We want to be able to do things over the internet and not have to convert files. Verification should be cross-verified with the IRS for when they do the data matches. If the departments have all the databases on the website, they can originate all the files right then at their disposal. No ISARS transferred back and forth to the schools, and the schools would only report correction information and disbursement information. Anytime the department needs any kind of report, they'll have it right there in the database.*
- *The GAPS website is down too often and data is not timely.*
- *The IFAP website needs to be worked on. It's very hard to find information.*
- *The internet access where you download information is confusing.*
- *The internet makes it very simple. They could be quicker getting back to you. That's all.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *The Pell Grants online.ed.gov it needs to be updated and enhanced. The RFMS system needs to be enhanced and allow for easier data entry. The campus based programs needs to have staff members that return phone calls.*
- *The programs that used to connect back and forth to us. Government should be web-base. Such as ED Express, and ED Connect.*
- *The website is great. I don't know, to have us go paperless. Keep NSLDS updated so we can get the info.*
- *Their website should be more user friendly. More conferences on training and different processes. Better lists of people to contact. Training on different requirements, and so people know how to do their job.*
- *There has to be one website for all the programs.*
- *They could do a better job in answering phones and making names of people you can talk to and phone numbers available. They do good with the 800 number but when you need to talk to one of their employees that's the problem. They have done a lot of great work on the web page but I still find it hard to get what you need. Have more sophisticated searches. The need to improve the directory or the sight map so you can go in and identify what you need and find it. They could try to make improvement in reducing regulation. There are regulations for everything, schools that do a good job in providing financial aid shouldn't have to follow all of those regulations. Those are the three big ones.*
- *They could make all their on-line stuff compatible for a Mac as well as for a PC. They should take all of their handbooks off the internet and keep them in book form. It is a lot easier for me that way. The only reason I go on-line is because I am required to. I also think they should have their stuff apply to small schools as well as large schools. Most of the time we get a lot of mail that doesn't apply to us and I think it is just a waste of our time, the taxpayer's money, and the school's money.*
- *They could provide better web-related resources. That would be the main thing. My students find it very frustrating to apply for aid and get kicked off the web. They hit "submit" and get thrown off the web and have to start over so I give them a paper application. That's not as frustrating as dealing with the website.*
- *They just got a new website and I couldn't get the information I needed so I had to go to the old website. I wanted to print out the verification booklet and couldn't do it. Also my password was not correct.*
- *They might make the IFAP website easier to navigate. It would be helpful if they had a daily or weekly summary of activities.*
- *They need to get everything on the internet. Currently we are having to use Title IV WAN. It would be nice to do everything on the internet.*
- *To make sure the information is available by means of the internet, that it is very current, and that it maintains a close working relationship with the NASEFAA.*
- *Update the website more frequently, maybe more detailed headlines.*
- *Update the websites. Clearer regulations that can be passed from the top down.*
- *We are having problems with the web-based loan origination and reporting systems. That is the area that we have the most problems with.*
- *Well, one point of contact for both programs. One data in one place. To only go to one person to get your questions answered. Instead of having to go to different people for Pell, and grants etc. You should only have to go to one. I understand what the SEFA is trying to do but it would be easier to deal with one person and it is really important where you have to send data. It would be easier to send data to one place. The good thing is with the improvement to the websites it is in line with what I am talking about. You can go on line now and get information about all systems and questions. That is mostly it.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *When I go on the web, I put something in and go into the library and the reply comes up that it is in construction, if the web could recognize more words. It would be nice if you put something in and it is not the right words, that it would give you help to where to look for it. Like a help menu.*
- *When you get information back from them they need to have a manual where the person can respond, I have waited 2-3 days for information. The website is hard to explore and gather information from. I call CPS and ask a question and sometimes they don't even know what I am talking about. I feel like I have more knowledge than they do. So I guess they need more knowledge at the switchboard.*

Regulations

- *Be more available and be clear with the regulations.*
- *Be more specific, when it comes to policy guidance, but I know that's out of their hands. They can't do much about it.*
- *Better clarity on specific instructions or rules. Going through reauthorization. Changing the rules. There is too much gray area and too much that is unclear.*
- *Better communication, faster communication, issues relating to regulations. It takes them too long to get clarification out. It's a complex process. They could improve it by bringing everything on to one database and let the institute use it instead of running them on different ones.*
- *Certain regulatory needs to be changed. Changes to regulations that are cumbersome, like the drug question, eliminate it. Eliminate the requirements for us to be concerned with whether someone has been registered with the draft. Sometimes the person was too old to register, and it shouldn't matter anymore if they are too old.*
- *Change the refunds policy.*
- *Change the Title IV refund policy.*
- *Clearer policies on regulations.*
- *Continuing to help us work with Congress on rules and regulations that are a nuisance and burden.*
- *Cut down on the federal regulations. Title IV refund could be simplified. I can navigate through it, however it is still drudging through it.*
- *Don't change the rules.*
- *Fewer complications in program administration and rules and interpretation of laws.*
- *Getting the actual regulations clear to us at an earlier time instead of half way through the year to find out something begin changes. Changing the definition of what an independent student is. Increasing the amount that a student can borrow from Stafford.*
- *Give complete clarification for returns of the Title IV funds. Sometimes they give you regulations and you need to be a lawyer to understand it. It should be like here is your school and 1 2 3 this is what you need, more black and white.*
- *Give me a better way of knowing about the new regulations that come out of the office.*
- *I don't know. I rather enjoy using the software. I think some of the federal regulations could be changed to make our job easier. Some of the guidance on interpretation of the regulations could be made clearer.*
- *I guess sometimes, I think a new regulation, they need all the answers. Have new regulations, new software.*
- *I have no idea. The biggest thing is that the rules change so much for the laws. If they could just get one set of rules and stick with them.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I really don't have anything to say, maybe if they didn't change things so often. I mean all the little rules, or laws, I know you probably don't have anything to do with that. They change the FASEA every year and they really shoot themselves because they are constantly changing. It means that we have to continuously know and change our ways of keeping up with things.*
- *I think they could be more responsive to the financial aid community concerns, regarding regulations and regulatory requirements. Return of funds.*
- *I would rather talk to a person than a computer and I think there should be more ways to look up regulations than there are now.*
- *I would say that their policies and regulations should be published earlier so that the financial aid officer can adjust to that change.*
- *If we have a question and you call, it seems I am connected to a thousand different people. I just get passed a long. It takes a week sometimes for them to call me back, quicker response. More input from financial aid administrators before the laws or regulations are changed, perhaps a survey of all the schools that participate in the Title IV programs, get comments from all the schools and not from just a few.*
- *Information could be available about new regulations, clarifications. The software provided should be actively tested so we don't have problems.*
- *Less regulations, the verification process, another thing is not to have the database match with select service. Just simplify the verification process.*
- *Less regulations. I can't think of anything else right now.*
- *Make the training locations more for the area of those being trained. Stop changing the regulations. Do not make it necessary to upgrade the computer systems when there are changes because it is very costly.*
- *Making regulations more understandable, including the handbooks and stuff like that, and getting them out in a timely manner.*
- *More on-line help. Just regulations and rules. Make it easier to do research and find regulations. Streamline the verification process and do data matches with IRS. That is about it.*
- *Not for me personally but probably to make it more clear for students who live independent of their parents. Their qualifications for being dependant or independent regardless of being independent or not. We get several complaints about that. That's the only thing I can think of that has so far been an issue*
- *Quit changing the regulations.*
- *Return calls sooner. Clarification of regulations.*
- *Streamlining of regulations.*
- *Streamlining, better language, user friendly regulations.*
- *Take away some of the regulations, getting Pell Grant money faster. Regulations governing refund of Title IV fronts.*
- *The accuracy of data on the NSLDS, simplification of policies and procedures. An improved need analysis formula and verification procedures.*
- *The Title IV refund policy needs to be improved, in that it is a little ambiguous in knowing what exactly the student needs to pay and what the institution needs to pay.*
- *There needs to be a consistency with the regulations they set and the examples. The two entities are not working together and they should be. Consistency, the interpretation of the regulation.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *They could do a better job in answering phones and making names of people you can talk to and phone numbers available. They do good with the 800 number but when you need to talk to one of their employees that's the problem. They have done a lot of great work on the web page but I still find it hard to get what you need. Have more sophisticated searches. The need to improve the directory or the sight map so you can go in and identify what you need and find it. They could try to make improvement in reducing regulation. There are regulations for everything, schools that do a good job in providing financial aid shouldn't have to follow all of those regulations. Those are the three big ones.*
- *They could simplify the regulations and cut them out. I think they should consolidate some of the grant programs.*
- *They could translate their regulations into more understandable language. They could provide more regional training.*
- *Throw away half of the SFA manual. The Department of Education's return of funds policy is very out of whack. They need to think about the school and the students rather than themselves. We should have a choice to participate in plus loans.*
- *To relax the reporting requirements.*
- *Update the websites. Clearer regulations that can be passed from the top down.*
- *We need clear and concrete written clarification regarding regulations and interpretations of federal regulations. Provide more non-traditional examples about regulations.*
- *When a new regulation goes into effect have some information written down for us. More guidance on the new regulation.*
- *When writing the rules and regulations that they have, there is not a lot of feedback to the people who use the program. It works better than anything else out there, but it's not perfect.*
- *Writing the tech information as well as the SFA regulations. There is not a lot of stability in their writings. I have a lot of questions. The constant changes in the regulations are perplexing.*

Unique School Issues

- *Be less bureaucratic. Don't make all the schools fit in the same hole. Don't make all schools follow the same rules. Don't think we are all trying to take advantage of them. Respect the professionalism of the staff.*
- *Better explanation. Some of the programs aren't that clear, and they need to make it clear so we can understand it. If you are not a big school it doesn't make a lot of sense.*
- *By treating all schools fairly. I represent a proprietary school. We do not get the same treatment. It is not fair.*
- *Consistency in the way it is administered. They are constantly changing and updating. I have to keep upgrading services and this is a small school. It puts a burden on me. That's probably it. That is the major thing.*
- *I can't think of any. We're a real small school and they've done their job.*
- *I don't know if they would consider small schools separately and have different standards. We are a one-year school and I have to do what a four-year person has to do.*
- *I really don't think that they could, with how little of a school we are. We get all the service we need.*
- *I think given the reality of their job, they are trying to give the same service for all type of institutions, and they are different, such as private, proprietary, and public institutions. That would be the main thing.*
- *I think it is good the way it is, we are a small institution.*
- *I think that they could have more realistic examples of student budget cost of attendance and budgets. I also think they should have sessions specifically on smaller workshops with certain schools, like smaller schools vs. the bigger schools or academic schools vs. beauty schools.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think that they could improve by providing more funding for a clock hour program just the same as it is for a 2 year, 4 year and 6 year program. I believe the students have the opportunity to choose the education and the career they desire. Thus the funding should be the same across the board.*
- *I think that they need to look at the smaller schools in terms of financial aid, i.e. loan limits, deferments, calculation of ESA.*
- *Probably the realization that all institutions do not fall in a certain category. We do our own reporting the same and institutions are different. When contractors are hired they often put institutions in the same category and they design their programs along those same lines, which may work for a percent of the institutions but may not work for 20 percent. I have an example. We are part of the USC but we are actually 5 different entities and our information on NSLDS looks like we are one institution and for reporting purposes we are not.*
- *Readable, in terms of understanding instructions. Need to understand the difference in schools.*
- *Really our situation, why we don't have what we need is because we're a small school. Once they provide information they provide it for bigger schools. When they understand the size of the institution, they make adjustments to help us out.*
- *Rewrite some of the instructions for the software. They can be confusing at times. Consolidation of some departments so we don't have as many numbers. Help the smaller schools. Have a special board help with the little schools with the Title IV. Basically hold their hand as they go through the process.*
- *Something needs to be done about the excess burden on private school owners.*
- *The process is so complicated that for a small school I have the need to hire a processor, which is so expensive.*
- *The SEA and financial aid regulations in general are designed for 2 to 4 year typical schools. This school is smaller and not a traditional and non-termed based and so our school falls into a lot of gray area. To make it better they should reevaluate the regulations to consider the small schools. And the uniqueness and individuality of the small schools.*
- *They could be a little more attentive to proprietary schools, rather than just concentrate on the 4 year degree schools. Just show schools like ours a little more attention.*
- *They could make all their on-line stuff compatible for a Mac as well as for a PC. They should take all of their handbooks off the internet and keep them in book form. It is a lot easier for me that way. The only reason I go on-line is because I am required to. I also think they should have their stuff apply to small schools as well as large schools. Most of the time we get a lot of mail that doesn't apply to us and I think it is just a waste of our time, the taxpayer's money, and the school's money.*
- *They need something for more funding for smaller school schools. And short term programs. More funding*
- *They need to be able to answer questions according to my institution, which is very non-traditional.*
- *They need to separate trade schools from colleges and universities. They need to keep the for-profit schools separate from the non-profit schools.*
- *Two things: One, it would be very valuable if their responses could be in writing. Two, if they could become knowledgeable about 1 year institutions. What I am getting at is that everything is for 2 or 4 year institutions and we end up having to interpret it for our institution.*
- *We are a banner school. They have been doing pretty good ED relating to the office we are on.*
- *We have different branches in different states, and sometimes the process gets very cumbersome. It gets frustrating—one school code and one school. Two school codes for each department. Multiple school codes and branches. It gets confusing with so many codes. Sometimes they don't think about us. They are getting better and it is a lot better. If they continue to do what they keep doing then it will get better. It is already showing.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *We should be treated like a degree-granting institution.*
- *Your regulations and procedures are targeted towards big universities. Therefore, it is hard for small schools like us to keep up with the technological and basically the overall requirements you have. I'm only a one-man office and I have to do and learn as much as a whole financial aid office from a big school has to. In that way, it is very hard to keep up.*

Student Issues

- *Consistency for students. Students call 800 # and will get 5 different answers.*
- *Everything is fine as far as support. It is the applications that the students have difficulty understanding, for example what some of the questions mean.*
- *Give graduates more funds instead of loans or increase the funds and less loans. It's sad when they come in and say what can you offer and the only thing we can do is offer them loans.*
- *Have fewer reporting requirements. Timely regulatory relief. Timely distribution of funds. Being very careful in the wording of answers students are given at the 1-800 for fed number.*
- *I think the only thing I have had problems with is when students get information from them it isn't always complete. Sometimes the information isn't quite to us. The students blame us saying we did something wrong. If we are supposed to have the students' information and we don't have it yet, give them more information before they get off the phone.*
- *I think the student population that we serve is the people the SEA could improve service to.*
- *I would like to see all of the students be able to go on a 40 hour per week schedule, rather than just the 30 hours per week.*
- *It is important for the student to increase capacity for financial aid programs.*
- *More accuracy on the general toll-free number for the students.*
- *Quicker updated on NSLDS, that is the main thing. The call centers for students regarding the FAFSA. They get different information, or not the information they need and they are sent back to the school. That is ok but if they are helping, they should be able to answer the questions. Work on their customer service there.*
- *Respect the school's financial aid officers as far as their expertise in financial aid matters, many times when the students call the 800 number the people at the SEA tell students that the school's financial people are wrong, or don't know what they are doing. A lot of times the information the students receive from SEA is inaccurate on the procedures of the school's financial aid offices. So we end up having to argue with the student and the SEA both. Overall I am pleased with the SEA, it's been a great tool and I couldn't survive without it.*
- *The 1-800 FED ED number could be better informed, questions that the students answer give them false hope with professional judgment. I think the FAFSA doesn't gather enough information about family situations. That is all.*
- *The area where I see the most missed information when students call the fed aide for questions the answers that they get from that number are different then what I have been taught in training.*
- *The helpline where students call should be supportive of our decision, so we don't have angry parents and students calling. They have set us up in a bad position.*
- *They make it so the forms that students get are confusing.*
- *They need to have something more available to students and parents for completing the FAFSA. Possibly, help centers or locations in major cities that parents or students can go to. More testing of software to get rid of bugs and software before release.*
- *They've had some trouble with their web-site for students. I think that should be a priority.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *Timeliness of documentation. Better phone representatives for students and parents. Consistency of answers from year to year. It would be nice if they would notify us when important things come up on the website. Notification of information. That's enough.*
- *We are finding that it is hard for students to get through to the direct loan service.*
- *When students call with questions, I wish that the staff was a little more knowledgeable.*
- *When students contact the SFA they be given accurate info pertaining to all the aspects of what can and cannot be done.*
- *Work more closely with me and when my students call and tell them to talk to me that they would and not just give me a song and dance that they can't.*

Comments on Overall Satisfaction

- *Actually I can't think of anything. It's works really good. I am pleased with them.*
- *Actually, I am not sure that I have any ideas to improve because the electronic exchange is fast and accurate. It is the most efficient way to get information on a timely basis.*
- *As of right now, everything is fine.*
- *Boy, at this point, I don't know how to answer that. I think they're doing a good job with what I needed help with.*
- *Continue doing what you are doing. They seem to do very well.*
- *Everything is fine.*
- *Everything is fine.*
- *Everything is good.*
- *Everything is just ok.*
- *Everything they have is fine. All the information you need is there.*
- *From my aspect, everything is going fine.*
- *Going good.*
- *I am happy, I can't think of anything.*
- *I am just completely satisfied with them.*
- *I am pretty satisfied.*
- *I am satisfied, what could be the answer.*
- *I am very satisfied.*
- *I can't think of any way, the service is very good, they've gotten better every year.*
- *I can't think of anything. It works good.*
- *I can't think of anything. They are doing a good job. I was out of financial aid for a few years and just came back and it is a great improvement.*
- *I do not think they can improve. I like it the way it is. I feel safe.*
- *I don't feel anything is wrong, everything is fine.*
- *I don't have any complaints. I just think they are doing a good job.*
- *I don't have any suggestions. I am pretty satisfied.*
- *I don't have any suggestions. I am pretty satisfied.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I don't know of any at the moment. I think they do a good job.*
- *I don't know. I don't really have a comment. I think they are exceeding my expectations right now.*
- *I don't know. I mean, they do fine.*
- *I don't know. It is working fine. We have no problems with the SFA at all. So I have no complaints.*
- *I don't know. It's all pretty good.*
- *I don't really know. Not off the top of my head. What I think they are doing is good.*
- *I don't see any problems.*
- *I don't talk to them too much. I haven't hit any snags. I am content with it.*
- *I don't think it needs to improve. We stay within the perimeter.*
- *I have been very pleased with the ease, convenience, simplicity, availability and how to use it. If the department continues to do that, they will be better than they were before.*
- *I have no comments, overall I'm pretty satisfied.*
- *I have no idea. I am satisfied.*
- *I have no problems whatsoever. Everything is handled very efficiently. I don't know how you could improve it. All you have to do is obey all the rules, and then everything works smoothly.*
- *I haven't come across any problems at this point.*
- *I haven't ever had a problem. I really have to think about that because I've never had a problem.*
- *I haven't had any bad experience.*
- *I like what they do. I think they do a good job. I think they're just a world ahead of how they used to be.*
- *I really don't have a suggestion. We don't call often but when I do I would give it a 9 or 10.*
- *I really don't have any idea. I am quite satisfied with everything the way it is now.*
- *I really don't have any problems. Everything I've ever needed to obtain, I've been able to obtain.*
- *I really don't have anything. They are very, very, very good.*
- *I really don't know. I have never had any problems. I think you are doing a fine job.*
- *I think that they have been doing a wonderful job.*
- *I think that they have improved a lot recently. I can't see how it can be otherwise. That's it.*
- *I think they are doing pretty good.*
- *I think they do a pretty good job. I don't have any complaints about them. They do a good job.*
- *I think they're doing fine.*
- *I think you are doing all right.*
- *I'm happy with it, I can't think of anything to improve.*
- *I'm not sure how to answer that. I am satisfied.*
- *I'm not sure, they've done a good job of improving. Just continue to meet the needs of the people.*
- *I'm pretty happy.*
- *I'm pretty much satisfied.*
- *I'm pretty satisfied, and can't think of anything right now.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I'm rating everything as an eight, so my overall expectations are being met. I can't think of anything they can improve on.*
- *I'm satisfied.*
- *It's just been great. We haven't had any problems.*
- *It's just very good they don't need any improvement.*
- *It's working well.*
- *I've been happy with everything.*
- *I've had no problems with them.*
- *I've never had any problems with it. It's been OK.*
- *No complaints.*
- *None that I can think of at this point. They do a good job.*
- *None, they do just fine.*
- *None. I have had good service.*
- *Not much. They are already doing it. All of the computer stuff that you are doing. You are keeping up with things and all of the necessary things that there are. That is it.*
- *Nothing, I am very pleased. In my opinion they provide me with everything I need. I have no other comments.*
- *Nothing, really. To me, it's fine.*
- *Overall they have done a really good job. Just keep on going the way they are going. That is a far cry compared to 10 years ago to where they wouldn't help you or service you at all.*
- *Really there is nothing. They have always done an excellent job. Well, I guess just continue to update information systems, but they already do a good job.*
- *Right now I feel like they are doing a very good job with how they handle things. I don't have any complaints of how they should change things.*
- *Right off I don't know. They've always helped.*
- *That would be difficult for me to answer. We have been very satisfied.*
- *They are doing a fine job I guess. They just seem to do what they should be doing.*
- *They are doing a great job, I can't really think of anything.*
- *They are doing a great job. I can't think of anything.*
- *They are easy to work with and easy to talk to. I don't have any problems with them. Right off hand I can't think of anything, recently I haven't had any problems.*
- *They are fine. I have no problems with them.*
- *They are good.*
- *They do everything I need.*
- *They do pretty well just keep up the good work.*
- *They do what I need them to do.*
- *They give us everything we need to work with so I don't know how they could improve right now.*
- *They have done a great job with what they have. I can't think of anything right now.*
- *They really couldn't, they are pretty good now.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *They're doing a good job.*
- *They're doing fine.*
- *They've done a tremendous job of improving in the last year. I am happy, I don't have any suggestions.*
- *Timeliness is still an issue although it has improved. The concept of partnership instead of policing I have seen a great deal of improvement but it could go further. Overall I am impressed with them. One thing is they seem to be working more with third party vendors. That will solve a lot of the remaining issues we have if they continue that.*
- *To me, it works good. There is nothing I would really do differently.*
- *We are extremely satisfied.*
- *We are pretty pleased with the program. We mainly deal with the PELL program and I can't think of any improvements.*
- *We are very pleased.*
- *We are very satisfied with what they have done for us. Off the top of my head I can't think of anything they need to improve on.*
- *We really haven't had any issues were the service has fallen short of our need. We are satisfied.*
- *Were actually pretty happy*
- *What they are doing is good. Keep updating.*

Other General Comments

- *Additional funding. Grant funding.*
- *Always more money.*
- *Being a female in a male class, with financial aid, it has helped me achieve my goals. I don't see where they could improve.*
- *By continuing doing what they are doing, improving every day.*
- *By simplifying the interest rate structure.*
- *Do as much as possible in reducing the number of changes from year to year. Provide as much student financial aid as you can.*
- *Foster a more supportive atmosphere throughout the financial aid community.*
- *Get rid of the politicians, they are the money hogs.*
- *I am going to say, at the moment they are working on it as much as they can, each year they are getting better and better. When they are ready to get all the info together so that it can all be called up at once, it will be best.*
- *I don't have anything specific, but I stay away from 10 for example the only thing I rated was the courtesy. There is always room for improvement.*
- *I don't know how they could do it, you guys are just administering the program. The EFC is going to be moved from the front page to another one and I heard from the last meeting I went to that it was going to be moved off of the front page of the ICER. Only the school knows if they are going to qualify. This is all speculation that is what I heard, now that the department head has gone to the web thing. They have sent out pens. They need to classify it better, I have students come up to me and asked what it is for, they say they have this pen and some literature came with it. They didn't understand it, I haven't seen it, they just come up and ask what the pen is for.*
- *I don't know if they could do this or not but it would be a level playing field between the direct loan program and the FFELP.*



Verbatim Comments continued

- *I think there are too many departments and they could be improved.*
- *I would like to have more autonomy. We have to do everything through the university. I would make a strong recommendation to get a real feel for the need of the university.*
- *Improve continually.*
- *It has a very good plan for the improvements for the coming years. It will improve the availability of aid to the students and school. Just keep on track.*
- *Just continue.*
- *Just not so complicated and bureaucratic and having changes.*
- *Keep an open mind.*
- *Less red tape.*
- *More money would be good, but that is probably not their control. Overall they are doing good.*
- *My answer goes back to the Pell Grant program. We get varied answers to the same questions. We make phone calls, and do not get phone calls returned. That's my only complaint. They've come along way in the last few years. I don't agree with needs analysis. People that work are penalized because they make \times amount of dollars and you have the families that are receiving untaxed income the same amount of dollars and they receive aid.*
- *Offer more federal programs other than just the Pell Grant. More programs available for us, we only have the Pell Grant to work with, we need more non-repayable programs for our students to be eligible for. That's all I can think of.*
- *Quality control in designing.*
- *Quick response.*
- *Run it more like a business, have more accountability.*
- *Some uniformity across regional offices. There is a lot of differences between regions.*
- *Technical Support. I don't know why there is a need for the SFA and the accrediting commission. I don't understand the value of both. They do the same thing and overlap. It is a replication and duplication of things I have to do and it costs more for all the schools involved.*
- *That is a big job. I think they do good considering how much there is to do. They could get rid of the return to Title IV. It's not a refund policy but not a fair policy the way it is written. It penalizes the student, they say it benefits the student but actually it is holding a lot larger liability.*
- *That is an open-ended question. Probably make it easier to use.*
- *That would be difficult our school motto mimics it.*
- *The most important thing would be the availability of funding.*
- *The school should provide Pell Grants for those with a bachelor degree.*
- *They are based on an individual need given to the student not the institution and eliminate the department of education it is a waste of money.*
- *They could send me a box of hundred dollar bills every month. Nothing to change.*
- *They need to be consistent.*
- *To interact more with the Department of Education.*
- *Upgrading more.*
- *When you deal with any federal agencies, it can be a real pain in the butt sometimes.*



Appendix C: Questionnaire

U.S. Department of Education

Student Financial Assistance Questionnaire

Schools Channel

(Items in **BOLD** are interviewer instructions, and are not intended to be read to the Client)
(Items marked *i.e.* or *e.g.* should only be read if respondent needs clarification)

Introduction (Do not read)

INTRO1. May I please speak to _____ (name from SFA list)?

- 1 (If speaking to the right person, continue at INTR03)
- 2 (If holding for the right person, continue at INTR03 when person comes to phone)
- 3 Person not available (reschedule or call back)
- 4 No Such Person >> (continue to INTR02)
- 9 Refusal/Hung Up

INTRO2. May I please speak with the person in your department responsible for interactions with the U.S. Department of Education related to student financial assistance?

- 1 Yes (continue at INTRO3)
- 2 No Such Person >> Thank you and have a nice day!
- 9 Refusal/Hung Up >> Thank you and have a nice day!

INTRO3. (When respondent comes to phone)

Hello, my name is _____ calling from PGM on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. We are calling as part of an initiative the SFA (the Office of Student Financial Assistance) has undertaken to improve its customers' satisfaction. Do you work at school with the SFA on matters related to student financial assistance? (i.e., in positions such as **Student Financial Aid Coordinator, or Student Financial Administrator.**)

- 1 Yes (Continue)
- 2 No (Return to INTR02)
- 3 No Such Person >> Thank you and have a nice day!
- 9 Refusal/Hung Up

INTRO4. The SFA is conducting research with customers such as yourself to measure satisfaction with the products and services the SFA provides to your institution. I would like to take some time now to go through this survey with you. Your answers are voluntary, but your opinions are very important for this research. Your responses will be held completely confidential, and you will never be identified by name. This interview is authorized by Office of Management and Budget Control No 3090-0271. This interview will take 10-12 minutes. Is this a good time?

- 1 Yes (Continue)
- 2 No Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?

Screening Questions (Do not read)

Before we begin, I would like to ask you a couple of questions about yourself.

Q1. First, how long have you worked in your current position? **(do not read: listen for response and categorize answers)**

- 1 Less than 1 year
- 2 1 year, but fewer than 5 years
- 3 5 or more years
- 9 Refused

Q2. Have you or any immediate family members personally applied for any federal student aid for college in the past year? **(i.e., by immediate family member I mean someone who lives or lived with you.)**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 8 Don't Know
- 9 Refused

ED Express (Do Not Read)

Q3. Have you, in the last 12 months, used ED Express to help you administer the Title IV programs?

(Read if necessary: Do you actually see the ED Express logo on your computer screen when you log on?)

(Also read if necessary to explain administration of Title IV programs: For example, have you used it for packaging a student's financial aid awards, providing PELL and Direct loan functions, or for updating a student's status?)

- 1 Yes **(Programmer: Assign to quota column "A" and correct tier. If quota cell is filled, terminate interview, otherwise continue.)**
- 2 No **(Programmer: Assign to quota column "B" and correct tier. If quota cell is filled, terminate interview, otherwise continue.)**
- 8 Don't Know **(Programmer: Assign to quota column "C" and correct tier. Continue)**
- 9 Refused **(Programmer: Assign to quota column "C" and correct tier. Continue)**

Prior Expectations (Do not read)

(Programmer note: The following lead-in will differ slightly in wording depending upon the respondent's answer to Q1 above. Version "A" shall be the default; if the respondent answers "less than a year" to question Q1 above, use Version "B". This also affects the lead-in at the beginning of the Overall Quality section).

Most of the questions I will be asking you are about your interaction with the Office of Student Financial Assistance during this past year. These next three questions deal with your previous expectations you may have had in working with the SFA.

Now think back to [(**A**) *your current job at this time a year ago.*/ (**B**) *before you began your current position working with the SFA*] and remember your expectations of the overall quality of the SFA at that time. Please give me a rating on a 10 point scale on which "1" means your expectations were "not very high" and "10" means your expectations were "very high."

Q4. How would you rate your prior expectations of the overall quality of the SFA?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

98 Don't know

99 Refused

Program Eligibility (Do not read)

In the past 12 months, have you participated in the process to certify your school to be eligible to disburse financial aid? By this we mean submitting an application for designation as an eligible institution, initial participation, recertification, reinstatement, change in ownership, or to update a current approval. Updates include changes such as name or address change, new location or program, increased level of offerings, or change of officials.

- 1 YES (continue)**
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**
- 8 Don't know (skip to the next section)**
- 9 Refused (skip to the next section)**

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q5. The clarity of instructions for E-Applications
- Q6. The ease of submitting data
- Q7. The accuracy of data for your school (as shown in E-Application System)
- Q8. The courtesy of the staff member handling your application
- Q9. The knowledge of the staff member handling your application

Program Support (Do not read)

Have you received support from SFA in the past 12 months? By support, please think of your account managers, case managers, and the customer service call center.

- 1 YES (continue)**
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**
- 8 Don't know (skip to the next section)**
- 9 Refused (skip to the next section)**

On a scale of 1 to 10, where “1” means “very low” and “10” means “very high”, how would you rate...

- Q10. The accuracy of information provided to you
- Q11. The timeliness of information provided to you
- Q12. The courtesy of personnel involved in the support process
- Q13. The knowledge of personnel involved in the support process
- Q14. The clarity of knowing whom to call with questions
- Q15. The consistency of answers received

Training (Do not read)

Q16. In the last 12 months, have you personally participated in a training session, or a conference sponsored by the SFA? By this I mean sessions that provide training on such things as new policy regulations, systems, software, computer-based training, and re-certification.

- 1 YES (CONTINUE)**
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**
- 8 Don't know (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**
- 9 Refused (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**

Q17. What was the most recent SFA-sponsored training session or conference you attended? (**Read the first five choices, if none of those, assign to Other/None of the Above**)

- Qa. ED Express (**READ ONLY IF NECESSARY: This could include Application Processing, Packaging, Direct Loan, or Pell**)
- Qb. NSLDS
- Qc. Pre-certification
- Qd. Electronic Access Conference
- Qe. Direct Loan Conference
- Qf. Other/None of the Above (**DON'T READ**)

I would like to ask you about the MOST recent SFA-sponsored training session or conference that you attended. On a scale of 1 to 10, where “1” means “poor” and “10” means “excellent”, how would you rate...

- Q18. The usefulness of the sessions
- Q19. The competence of the instructors or presenters
- Q20. The courtesy of the training or presenting staff
- Q21. The knowledge of the training or presenting staff
- Q22. The availability of training when needed

Monthly Reconciliation (Do Not read)

Q23. In the last 12 months, have you personally completed the process required for the monthly accounting of funds and annual closeout of records?

- 1 YES (continue)
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)
- 8 Don't know (skip to the next section)
- 9 Refused (skip to the next section)

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q24. The clarity of the instructions
- Q25. The accuracy of the records maintained by SFA
- Q26. The response time
- Q27. The courtesy of staff member handling your account
- Q28. The knowledge of the staff member handling your account
- Q29. The clarity of knowing who to call with questions
- Q30. The consistency of answers received

Use of NSLDS (Do Not Read)

Q31. In the last 12 months, have you personally accessed the National Student Loan Data System, or NSLDS? By this, I mean have you used NSLDS to determine award verification, award amount, PELL overpayment, student financial history, or student status?

- 1 YES (continue)
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)
- 8 Don't know (skip to the next section)
- 9 Refused (skip to the next section)

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q32. The ease of navigation
- Q33. The helpfulness of the system to get the job done
- Q34. The courtesy of the staff at the telephone help center
- Q35. The knowledge of the staff at the telephone help center
- Q36. The accuracy of the data

Aid Origination and Disbursement (Do not read)

Now I would like to ask about a few aspects of the aid origination and disbursement of funds from the SFA to your institution.

- Q37. Are you personally involved or familiar with the aid origination and/or the disbursement of funds from SFA?

- 1 YES (continue)**
- 2 NO (SKIP TO THE NEXT SECTION)**
- 8 Don't know (skip to the next section)**
- 9 Refused (skip to the next section)**

Using a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" means "poor" and "10" means "excellent", how would you rate...

- Q38. The clarity of instructions
- Q39. The ease of submitting data
- Q40. The accuracy of records SFA maintains from school reports
- Q41. The courtesy of SFA staff concerning your account
- Q42. The knowledge of SFA staff concerning your account
- Q43. The clarity of knowing whom to call with questions
- Q44. The consistency of answers received

Overall Quality (Do not read)

- Q45. Now, please consider all your experiences and impressions in the past year regarding the SFA. Using a 10-point scale, on which "1" means "not very high" and "10" means "very high," how would you rate the overall quality of the SFA?

[RECORD RATING 1-10]

- 98 Don't know
- 99 Refused

ACSI Benchmark Questions (Do not read)

- Q46. Please consider all of your job-related experiences working with the SFA from the past year. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "very dissatisfied" and 10 means "very satisfied", how satisfied are you with the SFA?
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused
- Q47. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "exceeds your expectations," to what extent has the SFA fallen short of or exceeded your expectations?
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused
- Q48. Forget for a moment your experience with the SFA. Now, imagine what an ideal federal organization providing student financial assistance for institutions such as yours would be like. How well do you think the SFA compares with that ideal program you just imagined? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all close to the ideal," and "10" means "very close to the ideal."
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]
- Q49. 98 Don't know
99 Refused

Outcome Measures (Do not read)

- Q50. Have you ever formally complained about any aspect of the SFA to someone else at your school, or anyone in the U.S. Department of Education?
- 1 Yes
2 No
9 *Refused*
- Q51. Using a scale of 1 to 10 where "1" means "not at all confident" and "10" means "completely confident", how confident are you that the SFA will do a good job in the future of ensuring the availability of financial assistance for students?
- [RECORD RATING 1-10]
- 98 Don't know
99 Refused

Epilogue Questions (Do not read)

- Q52. In what specific way could the SFA improve its service to you?
- _____
- _____

Q53. (If the person interviewed was not on the list, please ask her/him her/his name, phone number, and her/his title):

- 1 Yes (**record names/phone numbers**)_____
- 2 No (continue)
- 3 Refusal (continue)

Q54. One final question: Is there anyone else where you work who also interacts with the SFA besides yourself?

- 1 Yes (**record names/phone numbers**)_____
- 2 No >> Thank you for your time and have a nice day!
- 3 Refusal >> Thank you for your time and have a nice day!

That's all the questions I had for you. Thank you for your time, and have a good day.