



FAFSA on the Web Release 5.0

Marketing Initiatives



Objective and Scope

This Marketing Initiatives document accompanies the Marketing Approach for FAFSA on the Web Release 5.0. The purpose of this document is to describe potential marketing initiatives SFA may choose to implement to increase usage of the FAFSA on the Web site. These initiatives were selected for inclusion in the Marketing Approach for the FAFSA on the Web Release 5.0 based on the ease and timing of implementation, as well as the anticipated effect each initiative is expected to create. Imbedded in the description of the initiatives is the purpose of the activity and what is involved in implementing each initiative. The estimated time frame to implement the initiative is listed along with the approximate cost. The target audience listed is the primary group who is expected to be most influenced by the initiative. Any initiatives that require efforts from outside vendors include applicable contact information.



I. Community Announcement

Develop a community announcement through the SFA Communications department reminding applicants that now is the time to file, and describing enhancements to the site, with the intention of having it picked up by major publications and columnists. Provide a contact for each audience so that further information can be obtained if necessary. Press release will be distributed to reporters, operating partners, financial partners, schools and students.

- Estimated Release Date: Week of January 29
- Approximate Cost: No cost
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students

II. Best Practices Study

Conduct a telephone interview with the top five schools with the highest percentage of on-line filing (i.e. DeVry Institute, New York University, College of Staten Island). Discuss the schools' strategy and tactics for encouraging their students to file on line. Summarize schools' best practices into an informational and promotional format (e.g. tri-fold brochure). Share this information with other schools (through direct mail or posted electronically on IFAP) to foster creative ideas for promoting FAFSA on the Web as well as friendly competition between schools.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 3 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$10, 000 for art work and mailing (assume printing and postage costs are covered in other budgets)
- Intended to Reach: Financial Aid Administrators

III. Post Office Posters

Distribute "Where in the World Are You Going?" posters to Post Offices around the country with a letter requesting that the poster be hung in the main post office lobby. It is intended that patrons of the post office will be reminded of filing the FAFSA when they visit the post office for mailing needs as well as to pick up tax forms.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 5 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$6,000 for printing posters (assume distribution is handled by USPS.)
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students



- Partner Contact Information: Pam Gibert, VP of Retail Operations, USPS
202-268-6965

IV. Search Engine Optimization

Endeavor to make www.fafsa.ed.gov appear higher in search engine results (e.g. Yahoo, Google, AltaVista) using the Search Engine Optimization solution available from Beacon Technologies. Beacon will develop a list of target phrases or "keywords" that represent FAFSA on the Web and are most often used by potential customers when searching for financial aid information on the internet. Beacon Technologies will procure a "shadow" domain name, optimize the "shadow" site to ensure that it performs well for these keywords in the search engines, and redirect the "shadow" site to www.fafsa.ed.gov. Once optimized for maximum performance, Beacon will submit the site to all the major directories and engines for inclusion in their site. After submission, they monitor the site's rankings on a daily basis to not only ensure that www.fafsa.ed.gov has been listed and is ranking well, but also to make sure it stays highly ranked. Beacon takes corrective measures to regain the top positions in the event of any decline in performance.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 3-4 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$5,000 initial set up fee and \$2,000 per month maintenance
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students
- Vendor Contact Information: John Scaramuzzo, Beacon Technologies
336-931-1295 x233 or muzzo@beacontec.com

V. E-mail Message

Create an e-mail message, including a link to www.fafsa.ed.gov, to remind students about filing electronically. Distribute this message to financial aid offices with a request to forward on to their students. The intent is to make this a simple request to financial aid administrators. This is an easy and effective way for FAAs to share information with their students.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 2 weeks
- Approximate Cost: No cost
- Intended to Reach: Financial Aid Administrators and Students



VI. FAA Association Newsletter

Work with the regional Financial Aid Administrator associations to advertise FAFSA on the Web messages in their publications. There are six regional associations affiliated with the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). This is a way to support NASFAA associations while publicizing FAFSA on the Web in well respected and read industry publications. Potential messages include promoting the Best Practices Study and the informational FAFSA on the Web video.

- Estimated Timeframe to Publish: 3 – 4 months
- Approximate Cost: \$8,000 (\$1,000 per regional organization plus set up/copy fees)
- Intended to Reach: Financial Aid Administrators
- Vendor Contact Information:
 - EASFAA
Kathleen Smith
Education Finance Council
1155 15th Street, NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20005
Fax (202) 494-0666
<http://www.easfaa.org/easfaa/index.html>
 - MASFAA
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Julia Perreault
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John Noah
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Lyon College
PO Box 2317
Batesville, AR 72501
Phone: 870-698-4250
Fax: 870-793-1791
Email: jnoah@lyon.edu

- WASFAA
info@wsfaa.org



VII. U.S. News & World Report

Advertise www.fafsa.ed.gov in the *U.S. News & World Report Paying for College* guide. The *U.S. News & World Report* Special Issues produce a jump in newsstand sales and trigger a spike in reader interest among clearly defined segments. This allows SFA to match marketing targets with the editions that attract the selected segment, college students and their parents.

- Estimated Publication Date: Mid-September 2001
- Approximate Cost: \$80,000 for a horizontal half page 5-Color ad
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students
- Vendor Contact Information: *US News & World Report*, 202-955-2052

VIII. Cinema Ads

In-theater advertising program shown prior to and after every feature presentation seven days a week. Local, regional and national representation available. This tactic is primarily intended to impact college students. There are options of which colleges to target (e.g. colleges with large populations, colleges with low on line filing rates).

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 3-4 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$40,000 for 8 weeks at 30 targeted cinemas
- Intended to Reach: Students
- Vendor Contact Information: Howard Goldberg, 201-684-2600 x311

IX. CollegeView.com

Partner with this college search web site to sponsor their virtual financial aid center. This would allow for full integration using content from the Federal Student Financial Aid Home page and the Student Guide. Collegeview.com receives 75,000 unique visitors per month.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 2-3 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$50,000 set up plus \$0.30 per click fee for full sponsorship
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students



- Vendor Contact Information: Melissa Cronin, 1-800-927-8439 ext. 6562

Also available:

- Sponsor the “Applying for Aid” and “File the FAFSA” sections within the Financial Aid office, with links on the Financial Aid office home page, and other placement throughout the site: \$20, 000
- Sponsor the “File the FAFSA” section within Applying for Aid with links place throughout the site: \$12, 000
- Sponsor the “File the FAFSA” section within Applying for Aid: \$10,000

X. College Newspapers

Place half page advertisements in prominent or targeted college newspapers. Use this vehicle to repeat the key messages: File Now! File online! It’s easy, fast and secure.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: 2-3 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$10,000 (\$500 per paper on 20 select campuses)
- Intended to Reach: Students
- Vendor Contact Information: Contact individual schools selected for a media kit

XI. Spanish Public Service Announcement (PSA)

Produce a PSA for Spanish speaking audiences and disseminate to Spanish radio stations.

- Estimated Timeframe to Produce: 3-4 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$2,000
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students

XII. Promotional Video

Develop an informational and promotional video for FAFSA on the Web. Distribute the video to schools to be shown at financial aid information sessions. The intent is to make promoting FAFSA on the Web as easy as possible for guidance counselors and financial aid administrators. The video would also be effective at conferences and college fairs.



- Estimated Timeframe to Produce: 5-6 weeks
- Approximate Cost: \$40,000 for production plus \$20,000 for duplication and mailing
- Intended to Reach: Parents and Students

XIII. College Bookstore Insert

Partner with major college bookstores to provide shopping bag inserts. The inserts are distributed when students or parents purchase textbooks, apparel and other items at college bookstores. Advertisements are distributed in hundreds of bookstores throughout the country reaching millions of students.

- Estimated Timeframe to Complete: Fall 2001 or Spring 2002
- Approximate Cost: Minimum \$35,000 for 1 million inserts at a selection of schools
- Intended to Reach: Students
- Vendor Contact Information: The College Store, 1-800-622-7498 ext. 2344

Total Estimated Expenditures:

Community Announcement:	\$0
Best Practices Study:	\$10,000
Post Offices Posters:	\$6,000
Search Engine Optimization:	\$17,000
E-mail Message:	\$0
FAA Association Newsletters:	\$8,000
U.S. News and World Report Ad:	\$80,000
Cinema Ads:	\$40,000
College View.com:	\$50,000 (assume the cost per click is waived)
College Newspapers:	\$10,000
Spanish PSA:	\$2,000
Promotional Video:	\$60,000
College Bookstores:	<u>\$35,000</u>
Total	<u>\$318,000</u>



At a savings of \$2.50 per student who files online, it would take only an additional 127,200 students applying online to recoup these expenditures.



Emerging Ideas:

XIV. Imagitas Online Supplement

Imagitas produced the *Federal Student Financial Aid Planner* mass-mailing for SFA to be sent to parents of high school students. The company offers additional online products to supplement its direct mail approach.

- Estimated Timeframe and Approximate Cost to be determined
- Intended to Reach: Parents

XV. Jenzabar.com

The Jenzabar higher education portal provides a virtual online community for university professors, students and administrators, and course management tools that encourage faculty members to develop and publish course materials online. This portal is currently in use on over 1,000 campuses across the country. Accenture has an alliance with Jenzabar and can help SFA by leveraging that relationship.

- Estimated Timeframe and Approximate Cost to be determined
- Intended to Reach: Students

XVI. Incentives/rewards

Offer a reward or incentive to online filers. For example, collect the names of applicants who file online and enter the names in a drawing for one or more prizes, such as a gift certificate to the campus bookstore, or a DVD player.

- Estimated Timeframe and Approximate Cost to be determined
- Intended to Reach: Students