



**FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web Release 6.0**

**Marketing Approach**

**March 2001**



# *Introduction*

- Objective

This Marketing Approach is designed to convey a recommended strategy as well as outline initiatives that may be performed to increase the use of the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web software by applicants applying for federal financial assistance.

- Scope

Creating a marketing approach helps to outline selected marketing tasks and the time required to complete those tasks. This approach, together with a detailed plan for implementation, constitute the marketing project plan. The initiative descriptions and marketing project plan are included in separate documents (see Appendices A and B).



## *Marketing Approach*

*The goal of the FAFSA Marketing Approach is to increase the number of new users **and** win back users who may have previously had a less-than-favorable experience with [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).*

- Marketing FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web requires an ongoing effort because a portion of the audience is new every year.
- For the 2002-2003 filing year, the site will be redesigned and therefore new to **everyone**.

*Now is the time to revolutionize the FAFSA marketing approach and not just maintain it.*

*Marketing is a critical component of release 6.0 given the recent “facelift” of the web site.*

- It is important to tell users about the updates so that they are not confused by the changes.
- Use this opportunity to introduce the new FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web to users who may have lost confidence in Release 5.0.

*A return on the investment in technology is realized when the number of applications filed electronically increases.*



## *Marketing Approach 6.0*

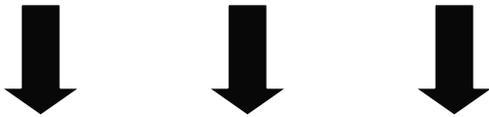
*This marketing approach is based on:*

- New Creative Design of Web Site
  - Capitalize on the opportunity to develop new key messages with the new look and feel of the site
  - Highlight changes and improvements to the site to win back users
- Prior Planning
  - Take advantage of research compiled for marketing Release 5.0
  - Begin marketing efforts earlier in the filing year
- Drive Increased Filing Results
  - The marketing approach is strategically designed to increase the number of students who file electronically

*To accomplish the goal of increased filing results, use a staged approach. A staged approach involves creating a foundation and building upon that foundation with marketing campaigns.*

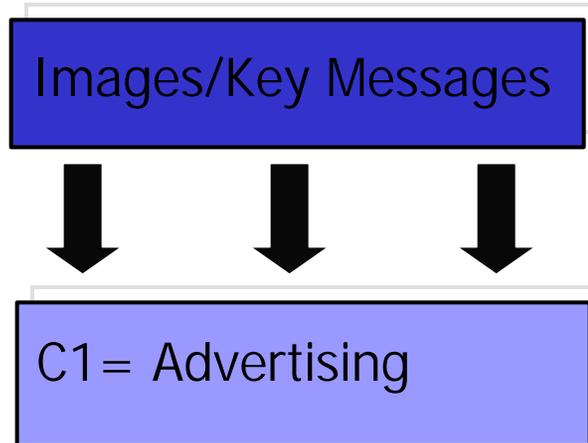
# *Staged Marketing Approach: Foundation*

Images/Key Messages



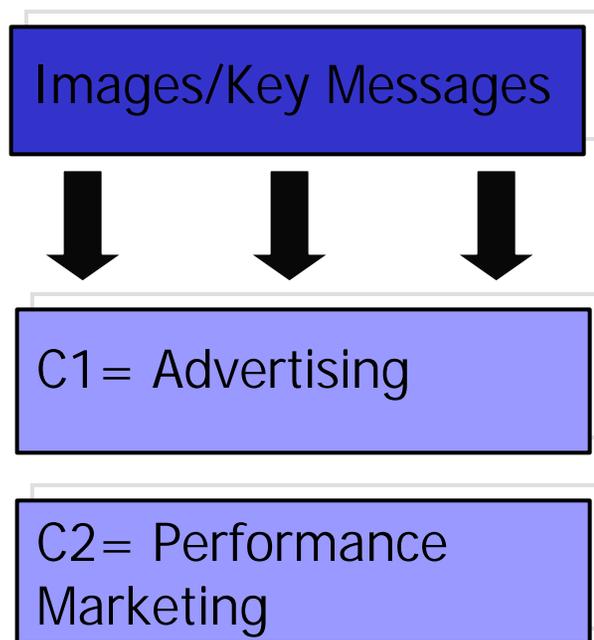
New marketing images and key messages must be developed in conjunction with the release of the new look and feel of the 6.0 web site. The “rebranding” efforts will serve as the foundation of the marketing approach.

# *Staged Marketing Approach: Campaign 1*



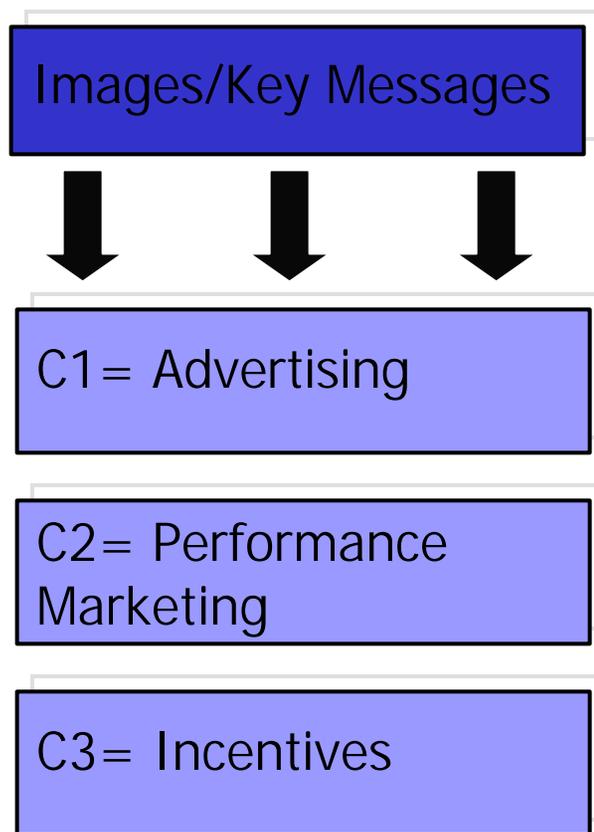
Advertising is an effective way to kick off the release of the new and improved FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web. Use the foundation of the new images and key messages in the advertising campaign to build awareness of the new release. Advertising will reach a majority of the target audiences and can include such initiatives as *US News & World Report*, Search Engine Optimization, Cinema Ads, and College Newspaper Ads.

## *Staged Marketing Approach: Campaign 2*



Performance marketing is an opportunity to attract affiliates (e.g. Yahoo) who are willing to put the FAFSA<sup>SM</sup> on the Web logo on their web site. In turn, these affiliates would receive “payment for performance” when they refer a user to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

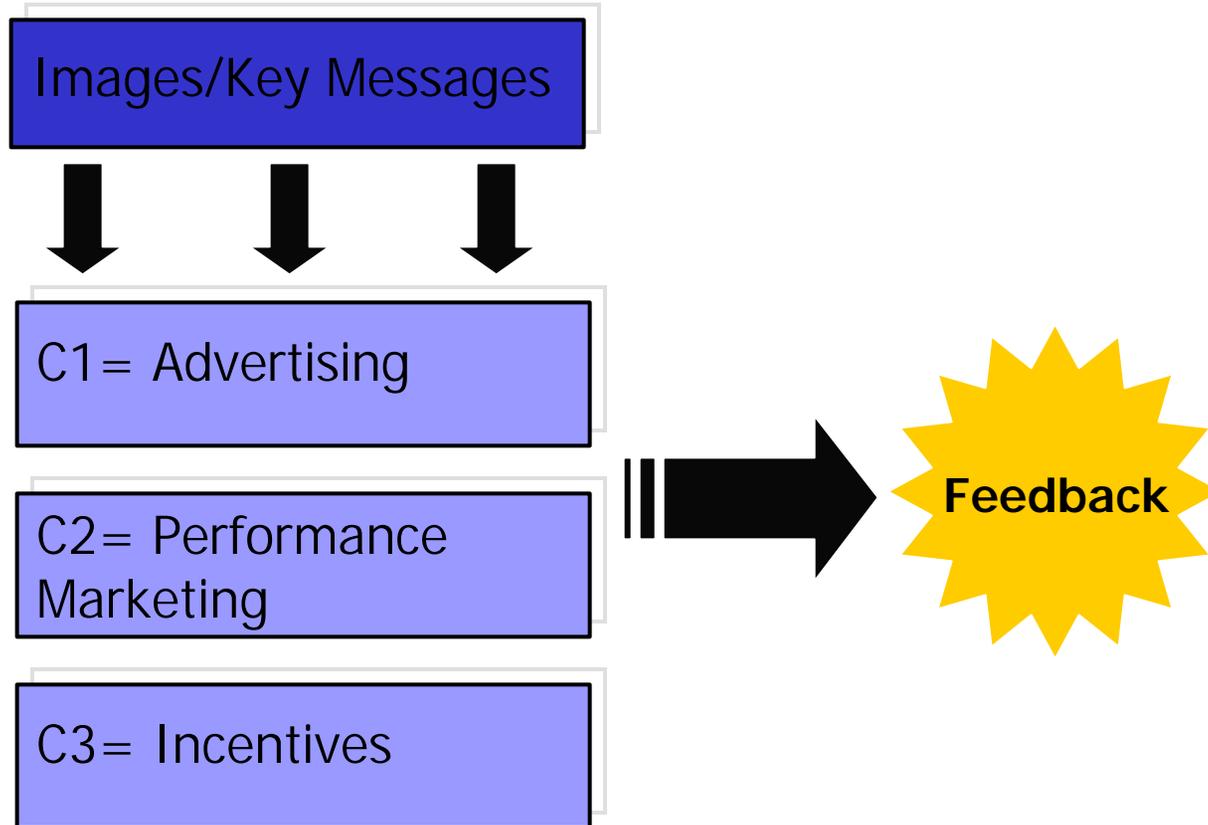
# *Staged Marketing Approach: Campaign 3*



With an incentive program, students would have an opportunity to win a prize for applying on line. These programs could be based at the school level (a certain number of prizes per school) or nationally (random drawings held for everyone who filed on line).

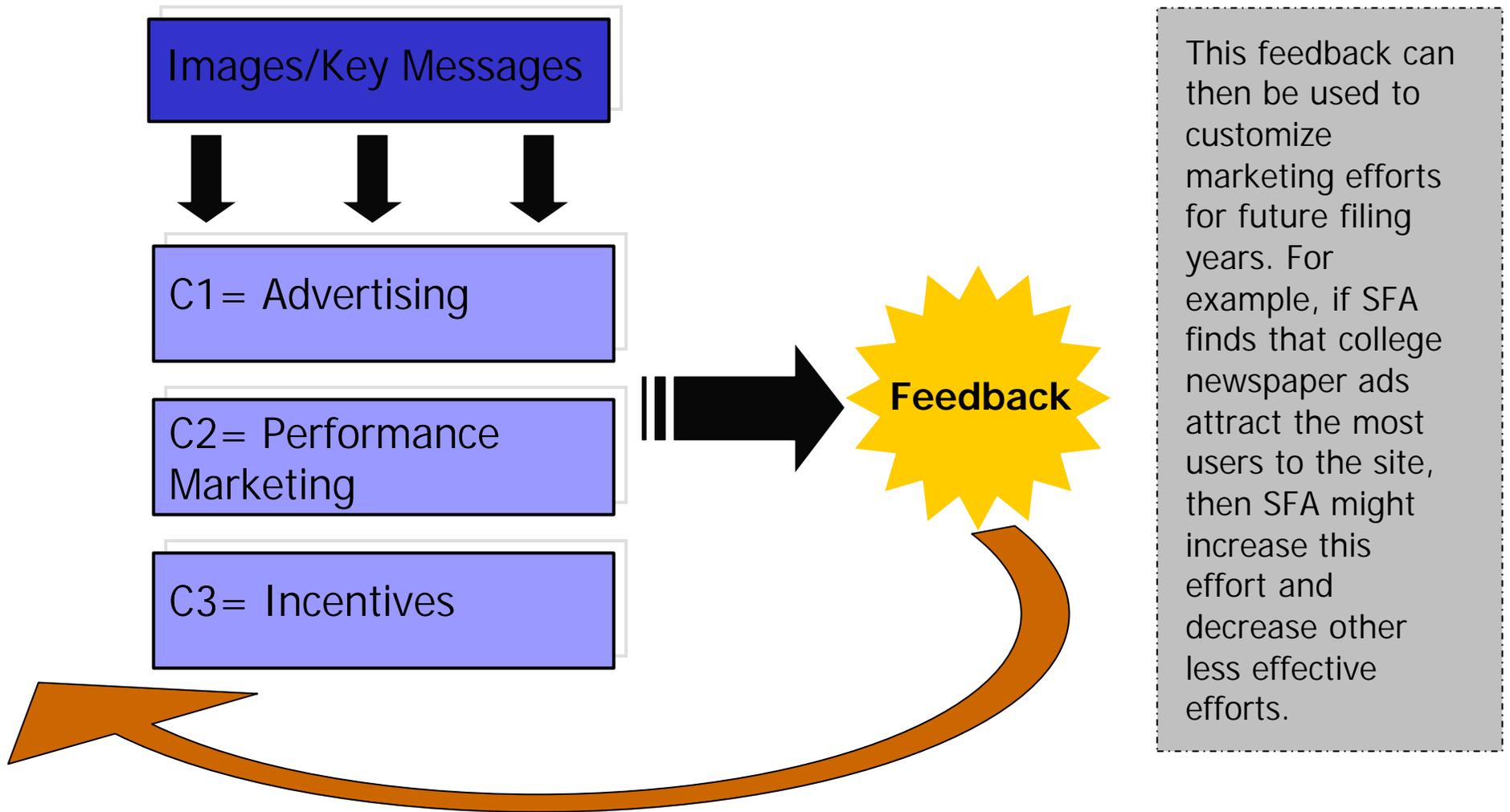
\*It is important to research the legal implications of distributing prizes before pursuing this effort. There may be cumbersome "sweepstakes" regulations.

# Staged Marketing Approach: Feedback



Consumer feedback is an important piece of this marketing approach. It will allow SFA to determine what methods are most effective in reaching their target audiences. Feedback may be collected through an additional page on the web site.

# *Staged Marketing Approach: Build on Experience*



*SFA leadership must decide what initiatives to pursue to increase online filing*

- Rebranding the marketing materials (e.g. new images and key messages)
- Advertising
  - Community Announcement
  - Toolkit
  - US News & World Report*
  - Search Engine Optimization
  - Cinema Ads
  - College Newspapers
  - Regional FAA Newsletters
  - E-mail Message
- Performance Marketing
- Incentives
- Feedback



*Once a selection of initiatives has been made,  
consider these other factors:*

- Who will be responsible for overseeing and implementing the initiatives?
- Will this team be available to work on these initiatives prior to the 6.0 release?
- Determine a funding source for the selected initiatives.



A grayscale background image of a cloudy sky, with the clouds appearing as dark, textured shapes against a lighter sky.

# Appendix A

## Marketing Initiatives

A grayscale background image of a cloudy sky, with the clouds appearing as dark, textured shapes against a lighter background.

# Appendix B

## Marketing Project Plan