



FSA *Now*

The Monthly Newsletter for FSA Staff

Issue II Volume III

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FSA's New Employee Orientation Program

Workforce Support Services has developed another resource for new FSA employees to introduce them to life at FSA, the New Employee Orientation Program (NEOP).

The NEOP will supplement the Department's own employee orientation program and will be available to all new FSA employees. The NEOP will familiarize new employees with FSA history, its mission, programs, operations and organizational structure – FSA-specific topics not covered in the Department's orientation. It will also provide employees with information on government travel, training, time and attendance and FSA/ED communication resources. FSA subject matter experts will lead NEOP sessions, providing those in attendance with a first-hand account of what we do and those we serve. Terri Shaw will also take part personally welcoming new employees and highlighting her vision for the organization.

"FSA's mandate is so broad and the scope of our services so large that new employees can some-

times be overwhelmed," said Anne Teresa, director of FSA University. "The orientation program provides a forum for new employees to learn about our business from those who know it best."

The NEOP is a one-day session, lasting from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. EST and is scheduled once per quarter. The 2004 sessions are scheduled for March 17, June 2, September 1 and December 15. All NEOP sessions will take place in UCP's Learning Center. New employees in the regional offices will participate via videoconferencing.

"Workforce Support Services believes new employees need more tools to prepare them for working at FSA," said NEOP Coordinator Carolyn Craddock. "We are excited about the implementation of this new resource and believe it will be a valuable asset to the organization."

For more information on the NEOP, contact Workforce Support Services at FSAHumanResources@ed.gov.



Workforce Support Services conducted a pilot new employee orientation on December 9. Orientation participants included (left to right): Harold Shrewsberry, John Cutlip, Debbie Miller, Molly Wyatt, Bethanne Nichols, Daniel Dytang, David Howe, and William Blot.

We Help Put America Through School



FSA in Boston

Q & A with Region I Area Case Director Rosemary Torpey

Which three words best describe the Boston team? Why?

Hard working: *The Boston team is responsible for oversight of the Title IV eligible schools located throughout New England - approximately 400 schools - yet, we have relatively few staff members. We have been able to accomplish our goals and objectives because, day in and day out, every member of the team contributes to the overall effort.*

Caring: *Members of the Boston team really care about what we do. They recognize that what we do impacts peoples' lives. That realization results in a constant effort to do their best for students, schools and taxpayers.*

Quality: *Every member of the Boston team takes great pride in his or her work and makes every effort to provide quality service. Whether it is answering a student's question or writing a report, team members strive to do their best. They know that quality work reflects not only on them as individuals but on the Team and the Department as well. The desire to provide quality work products is also very closely related to another characteristic of the Team, caring. Because the Team cares, staff members want to do their best.*

What is the biggest challenge the Boston team is currently experiencing?

The biggest challenge the Boston team is currently experiencing relates to staffing. During the past year, the Team, which was small to begin with, lost several members (retirement, full time motherhood and illness). The reductions in staff meant that everyone on the Team was assigned additional duties and had to "kick it up a notch." Fortunately, we have recently been able to fill some of the vacancies and look forward to welcoming new staff members to the Team.

Describe some projects the Boston team is currently working on.

The Boston team is very proud of its school assessment project. Team members gather available data on an institution and analyze the data for trends and, based on their assessment, make a recommendation for action. The approach is based on the medical model. We look at the information on the patient, make a diagnosis and, based on what we see, develop the appropriate treatment plan. Using this proactive approach, we not only have a good understanding of our institutions, but we are able to recognize emerging compliance problems and implement corrections quickly.

What is the best thing about working in Region I?

A source of great pride on the Boston team is that staff members located in Boston and Washington, DC see themselves as members of the same team. Team members communicate on a daily basis and work together to accomplish our goals. We are the Boston team - not the regional component or the DC component.

The Boston Team's "Best of Boston"

Best Boston restaurant: *So many it is hard to pick just one - Oak Room is wonderful for steak; Red Bones is great for ribs; Top of the Hub has good food and a great atmosphere; Parker House Hotel has great lobster salad; Jimmy's Harborside for fish; The Elephant Walk for French Thai food; and No. 9 Park.*

Best local cuisine: *It's a toss up between the very good local seafood restaurants - lobster, clams, etc., and Italian food - especially in the North End (the local Italian neighborhood). There is also a small Chinatown section with many good Chinese restaurants featuring authentic Chinese cuisine.*

Favorite local pro sports team: *New England Patriots, of course. But, for the masochists among us there is always the Boston Red Sox.*

Favorite Region I college basketball and football teams: *People are pretty loyal to their schools, but overall - the University of Connecticut (UConn), Boston College (BC) and Providence College for basketball; and Boston College for football.*

The most notable Boston native: *There are many notable figures - John Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin of colonial/revolutionary period; President John F. Kennedy; Arthur Fiedler and Keith Lockhart of Boston Pops fame; Charles Bullfinch - the architect; Isabella Stuart Gardner - art collector and benefactress; and current presidential candidate John Kerry.*

FAST FACT

More students depend on federal student loans today to finance their education than ever before.

In fact, during FY 2002, more than 11 million loans were made to student and families.

Source: America's Student Loan Providers

Annual College Costs: 2002-2003

4-Year Private

Tuition & Fees: \$18,273

Room & Board: \$6,779

Total Cost: \$25,052

4-Year Public

Tuition & Fees: \$4,081

Room & Board: \$5,582

Total Cost: \$9,663

2-year Private

Tuition & Fees: \$9,890

Room & Board: \$5,327

Total Cost: \$15,217

2-Year Public

Tuition & Fees: \$1,735

Room & Board: No data

Total Cost: \$1,735

Source: The College Board, Annual Survey of Colleges

EXTRA! EXTRA!

ED Express Basics

The 2004-05 version of EDEExpress Basics was released on February 23. EDEExpress Basics is a self-paced, online training tool that teaches the basic skills required to access and navigate the EDEExpress and EDconnect software. EDEExpress Basics is recommended for financial aid professionals who have day-to-day responsibilities for using EDEExpress. The training takes approximately 40 hours and is 508-compliant for the visually impaired. As of February 9, EDEExpress Basics had 1,495 registered users, which represents almost 500 new users in the last four months.

Region II Card Collection Campaign

The New York Regional Office collected over 750 holiday card fronts and donated them to St. Jude's Ranch for Children. The Ranch converts the previous year's holiday cards into "new" cards for the next season. The Ranch's children precision-cut the card fronts and glue them to pre-printed card stock. The children receive 15 cents for each card made, which is divided between their savings and college funds, special group outings and extra pocket money.

Spring Conference Update

The Spring Conference will be held March 29-31 at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers in New York City. This year's conference will include a symposium on higher education access and awareness; the Ed Town Hall meeting with Terri Shaw and Assistant Secretary for Post Secondary Education Sally Stroup; and a keynote address by Secretary Paige. As of February 23, more than 800 financial aid professionals have registered for the Spring Conference. The deadline for new registrations is March 5. For more information on the Spring Conference, go to <http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/Spring.htm>.

Caught on Tape

Financial Partners learned that on a recent episode of "Judge Judy," a defendant admitted to obtaining Stafford subsidized and unsubsidized loans and using the funds for non-school related expenses. The issue was forwarded to the OIG office for further investigation.

FSA Now

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MyFSA

FSA Now talked to new COO Chief of Staff Jim Manning

Q: Describe your previous work experience. How will these experiences help you as Chief of Staff?

A: I came to DC 25 years ago to join the Foreign Service. While at the State Department, I served on the staffs of four Secretaries of State - Cy Vance, Ed Muskie, Al Haig and George Shultz. I loved every minute and got to witness a remarkable number of historic events. My Foreign Service career was put on hold when my oldest daughter was diagnosed with cancer. Needing another assignment, I joined the Reagan administration where I served as a Special Assistant to the President. I later directed Mrs. Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign. When George H.W. Bush was elected President in 1988, I accepted an invitation to serve at the US Department of Education as Chief of Staff and Deputy Assistant Secretary in OESE. In 1993, I joined the National Basketball Association as the Director of International Events. After a brief stint in the not-for-profit world, I returned to ED in 2000 as Chief of Staff to Deputy Secretary Bill Hansen. Serving as COS in OESE and ODS certainly gave me the opportunity to learn the in's and out's of how the Department works and how to work with folks across ED to get things done.

Q: How does your previous experience at FSA assist you in the transition back to FSA?

A: While at ODS, I was involved in the daily operations of the Department and took an active role in Department-wide management activities such as the Management Improvement Team and the Executive Management Team. I worked closely with the Deputy Secretary and was ultimately called on to serve as FSA's Acting COO between the tenures of Greg Woods and Terri Shaw. That experience certainly gave me the opportunity to come to really appreciate FSA, its important position in the Department, its critical role in the future of America, and the very special spirit of the men and women who comprise the FSA team. It also prepared me for my current role.

Q: What are your main responsibilities as Chief of Staff?

A: As Chief of Staff my main responsibilities are to help Terri be the best COO she can be. That may mean keeping the "trains running

on schedule" or seeing to it that she has the materials and proper staff briefings she needs to do the job. My role for Terri is slightly different than some of my previous COS experiences in that she routinely sees to much of her own preparation. She is a real dynamo. This simply allows me the opportunity to help by stepping in to pick up and handle daily operations type issues, so she may concentrate on the most pressing problems.

Q: As Chief of Staff, what is your vision for FSA?

A: As Chief of Staff my vision for FSA is one everyone at FSA ought to be familiar with - it's Terri's vision. She, the Secretary and the President have set out a road map for us. We've got two clean audits behind us - now she needs us to get the next one. We are close to getting off the GAO High Risk List - and we will. Then we'll all work to make sure we stay off it. Terri has us on track to becoming a well-oiled, high performing organization, which will be a model for government and business. I look forward to helping her reach that goal and to working with everyone here at FSA to make it happen.

Q: What are your personal and professional goals?

A: Regarding my own personal and professional goals, I would only say my resume, while eclectic, really represents a career that demonstrates a consistent commitment to service. I've loved it all and look forward to continuing to serve.

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

A: I'm a husband and father of four very active children. Keeping track of them and spending time with them has been how I have enjoyed spending my free time for the last quarter century. My wife and I were just in California to watch our son, a college freshman, compete in his swimming and diving league championships. Next week we'll be spending a couple nights on a pool deck in Montgomery County watching our youngest daughter, a high school freshman, compete in her own diving championships. Soccer season starts next month.