



# FSA Now

The Monthly Newsletter for FSA Staff

Issue V Volume V

August 2004

## Human Capital Plan Released

FSA's new Human Capital Management Plan (HCMP) maps the organization's future and plots the succession of a rapidly retiring workforce. Prepared in collaboration with the nonprofit Partnership for Public Service (PPS), the HCMP is intended to be a living document to supplement and support the success of FSA by aligning with its best-in-business practices.

The third objective is to strengthen FSA's results-oriented culture. It is essential that managers define employee expectations, recognize and reward high-performing employees and identify and deal with poor performers. As a result of these measures, employees will be better equipped to meet the expectations of a more cohesive organization.

"Its success resides in two things: continued leadership from top management and understanding and ownership by everyone at FSA," said Anne Teresa of HR's FSA University.

Workforce Support Services spearheaded HCMP's development during the past three months by conducting interviews and collecting data from across the organization.

The HCMP identified four crucial improvement initiatives for FSA to pursue over the next three years.

The first objective is to integrate human capital into strategic planning and daily operations. This aligns with the President's Management Agenda, ED's strategic plan and FSA's strategic goals by consistently making human capital management a priority throughout the organization.

The second objective is to develop current and future leaders to guarantee that FSA maintains an experienced, diverse workforce to support the organization's mission-critical success.

The final objective is to ensure that the right people are in the right jobs to effectively administer aid delivery. This objective calls for a hiring and recruiting process that allows FSA to compete for the most talented employees available.

Following the plan's completion, the Management Council attended a retreat August 4-6 to begin work on several of the many tasks identified in the Plan, including identifying strategies to retain and replenish a capable workforce.

The retreat enabled the Management Council to focus exclusively on FSA's human capital challenges and to begin work on the tasks spelled out in the Plan. They developed a 2005 human capital calendar to outline annual budgeting and human capital activities. In addition, the council identified human capital metrics for inclusion in a new Human Capital Dashboard, similar to the existing Executive Dashboard that highlights business operations metrics. Some of these measures include turnover rate and

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**To view the HCMP, visit FSANet**

**Human Capital Management Plan**

U.S. Department of Education  
Federal Student Aid  
July 2004

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*We Help Put America Through School*

# FSA Hits the Halls

What were you like in high school?

## Bill Paquin

*"I was interested in sports and girls and I guess nothing has changed."*



*Stockbridge Valley Central High School  
Munnsville, N.Y.*



*Institutional Review Specialist  
FSA/School Eligibility Channel, Seattle Case Management Team*

***FSA Hits the Halls is a monthly installment of a new column where we randomly ask FSA employees questions to find out a little more about our staff.***

*Lettered in four sports: football, basketball, baseball & track. Captain of the football team, co-captain of the basketball team, president of the varsity club, and senior class president.*

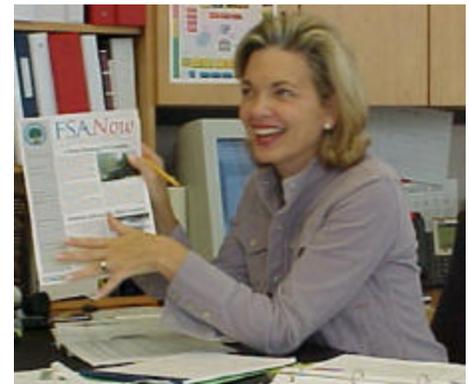
## Marianna O'Brien

*"I hung out at the cool places."*

*Senior class president, member of student council, basketball team. Cared about grades, sports and having a good time.*



*Georgetown Visitation Prep  
Washington, D.C.*



*General Manager, Communications*



*Cranston High School East  
Cranston, R.I.*



*Director, Policy Implementation and Liaison*

## Jeff Baker

*"I was Mr. Serious."*

*"I was a middle-achiever, C student, my teachers probably wouldn't remember me... and I'm still Mr. Serious."*



# Ethics Matters by Sean Dent

## Outside Activities

It has come to our attention that a number of FSA employees have received unsolicited invitations from the Gerson Lehrman Group (GLG) to serve as paid advisors on matters involving the student loan industry. The invitations are generally sent to the employee via their official Department e-mail address. GLG provides information services for investors in various businesses and is evidently interested in connecting FSA employees with GLG clients who share an interest in the private student loan industry.

Recently, an FSA employee received an e-mail encouraging him/her to participate in a paid 'phone conversation' with one of GLG's student loans clients. Unfortunately, such GLG e-mails fail to mention that employee participation as an 'expert' could trigger both the Criminal Conflicts of Interest Statute and the Standards of Ethical Conduct.

If you receive such an invitation from GLG, and you're interested in exploring the opportunity, you are required to first request and obtain approval to perform this activity as an "outside activity." You may find a copy of the outside activity request for on ConnectED or at: [http://wdcrobiis08/doc\\_img/oaform.doc](http://wdcrobiis08/doc_img/oaform.doc). Importantly, even if you receive prior approval to serve as an GLG expert in your outside capacity, you will be prohibited from participating personally and substantially in an official capacity in any particular matter if that matter will have a direct and predictable effect on the financial interests of GLG and/or the specific GLG client. Additionally, you will be required to disqualify yourself from any Department matters where GLG is, or represents, a party.

As always, call Sean Dent at 202-401-6213 for advice tailored to your specific situation.



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## Tribal Colleges Conference

*The Tribal Colleges Conference held at the Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Mont. August 2-4 drew 135 attendees. This annual conference was for financial aid administrators, registrars and business officers of Tribal Colleges from across the US. Their theme was "A Pathway for Learning - A Bridge for Sharing."*

*The Conference focused on information related to the specific needs of tribal schools. FSA staff presented sessions on Application and Delivery System Updates, Return of Title IV Funds and Federal Updates. Additionally FSA staff hosted PC Lab assistance with COD, EDEExpress, as well as participated in roundtable discussions.*



*Micki Roemer, ASEDS General Manager, Schools Delivery, poses at the recent Tribal Colleges Conference.*

*FSA Now is a monthly newsletter for FSA Staff available on FSA.net. To share feedback or contribute ideas, e-mail FSA Communications.*

*FSA Now may contain news and information about commercial entities. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any products or services offered or expressed.*

# Quotable

“If a man empties his purse into his head, no one can take it from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the highest return.”

- Benjamin Franklin



## Annual Intern Fair



*FSA interns showcased their summer projects with displays at the annual intern fair held August 2.*

*All available employees were invited to attend and browse the interns' exhibits. Three employees acted as judges, and cash prizes were awarded.*

*Simone Brown won first place. She spent her summer working in HR teaching employees Spanish. Second place went to Yael Rosenwald, Applications Processing, and third place was awarded to Jessie Li, CIO.*

*The event rounded off the interns' 10-week employment at FSA.*

# In-House Consultants return to FSA

ED recently recognized FSA's Tony Magro and Karen Sefton for their work on detail for the first In-House Consultant program at a ceremony on July 29 held to honor participants.

In its pilot year, IHC asked 13 ED staff members to voluntarily surrender their current posts for a year in order to become consultants for ED. Both employees learned about IHC through FSA's All-Hands meeting.

Tony and Karen were both interested in how the program could teach them more about ED's other principal offices.

Tony, a management and program analyst in EPMS, said, "It allowed me a chance to perform a variety of management consulting tasks that I might not perform on a daily basis here at FSA, such as process mapping, providing technology application support, diagnosing barriers to work-load productivity and supporting general process redesign work."

Tony and Karen each worked on multiple projects. Karen, a management and program analyst in the Schools Channel in ASEDS, gained a broader view of ED through her consulting with Security Services, OPE and OESE, where she learned a lot about the No Child Left Behind Act. Tony tackled such projects as FOIA Process Redesign, ED OCIO Program Review, video teleconferencing and SES recruitment.

Each participant benefited greatly from the program and recommended it to other ED employees.

Tony said, "This was a valuable experience because it provided an opportunity to compare and contrast other analysts' strategies for identifying and solving various management challenges. I'd recommend it for others interested in performing general information-gathering tasks and reporting methods."

Karen praised the program's purpose and results, as well as her co-workers. She said, "One of the best things about our IHC group was that we all shared a commitment to improving the way the Department does business, and we each brought unique perspectives on how we could make it happen."

The IHC program benefits both the participants and FSA by enabling employees to transfer what they learned to help further enhance their current duties at FSA. "As an IHC, I had a lot of training in project management and leadership. I will use these skills in FSA, too," Karen said.

Tony said his experience with IHC would make him a better employee because he will be "more equipped to identify specific problems and present solutions appropriately."



*Karen Sefton and Tony Magro pose at the IHC Recognition ceremony.*

**"One of the best things about our IHC group was that we all shared a commitment to improving the way the Department does business, and we each brought unique perspectives on how we could make it happen."**

**-Karen Sefton**

Dr. Ann Manheimer, the director for performance and process improvement services at ED, who spearheaded the program, was impressed with both employees' work.

"Karen has an uncanny ability to study complex systems, master them quickly and devise ways to make them operate more effectively," she said. "Tony has a can-do attitude and was willing to do whatever it took to get the job done," she added.

Last year's program ran from April 23, 2003 through April 22, 2004. The next IHC has already begun and FSA's Karen Williams is participating.

## Attention: Publications People

**WHAT:** FSA Publications – Improving Our Business Process

**WHERE:** FSA Learning Center

**WHEN:** October 1, 2004, 9:30 – 1:00 (tentative)

**WHY:** Participants will:

- understand the need for and desirability of aligning with ED
- learn the roles and responsibilities of FSA writers, FSA Communications and OPA
- have an opportunity to express concerns and make improvements to new FSA process
- commit to using new FSA-appropriate style guides
- know where to get support and assistance during the publications process



## Conference Update

**EAC dates:** Nov. 1-4 in Orlando\*; Nov. 30 - Dec. 3 Las Vegas

**Total Registrants as of 8/16:** 1,050

**For info:**

<http://edeworkshop.ncspearson.com/welcome.htm>

Tentatively plan for 4 General Sessions including a Town Hall Meeting

45+ interest sessions conducted by FSA and OPE staff

**\*Orlando's conference falls on Election Day. Please be sure to obtain an absentee ballot from your state. Follow this link for more information about your state's absentee voting policy:** <http://www.fvap.gov/links/statelinks.html>

# From the Regions...

*FSA*Now is looking to highlight specific regional projects. Please let us know if you have any thoughts or ideas to include in *FSA*Now.

## FSA Serves Vocational Education in Kansas City

Kansas City's School Relations Office and the Student Aid Awareness Office in Washington D.C. represented FSA at the Career and Education Fair at the 40<sup>th</sup> annual SkillsUSA-VICA national championships and conference June 22-24.

FSA staffers Katherine Coates, Linda Coffey and Mark Walsh attended the event and distributed a wide variety of FSA publications while visiting with students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors.

Kansas City's School Relations Lead, Mark Walsh, noted that Region VII has always participated in events like this. "We exhibit at four or five events like this each year, fitting them in with our typical work. Everyone enjoys sharing our material and knowledge in this type of forum."

SkillsUSA-VICA, originally founded in 1967 as the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, includes 13,000 high school and college chapters and boasts more than 265,000 members throughout the United States.



*Katherine Coates, right, Early Awareness Coordinator, shows inquiring students what FSA can do for them.*

## Human Capital Plan Made a Priority

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elapsed time to recruit and hire for vacant positions.

Most importantly, the management council renewed their commitment to human capital. *Calvin Thomas of Workforce Support Services said, "To be successful, the hard work lies ahead of us and will require the cooperation and support of everyone at FSA."*

*Each member of the Management Council discussed his or her current organization, identified critical/key positions and discussed the organization's readiness with respect to bench strength to fill these positions. The Council also discussed how to improve employee performance by more clearly defining performance expectations for employees and by effectively tapping FSA's rich talent pool.*

*"Since arriving at FSA, my goal has been to ensure our employees know what is expected of them and how they fit into the mission of the organization," said Terri Shaw. "They also want to know that they will be recognized for high performance and that management will appropriately address poor performance."*

*The retreat also included speakers from the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), an agency that "develops and operates unique and innovative space reconnaissance systems and conducts intelligence-related activities essential for U.S. National Security." The NRO spoke about their performance plan issues and their replacement planning process. In addition, Bill Leidinger, of ED's HR, also spoke at the retreat about ED's support and perspective on human capital.*

*The entire retreat was organized by PPS, which has played a significant role in creating FSA's human capital plan. PPS is a "non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing public service through a campaign of educational efforts, policy research, public-private partnerships and legislative advocacy." A copy of FSA's Human Capital Management Plan is posted on FSA*Net.



### extra! Extra!



*Anne Radice, ED's Chief of Staff, recently commended FSA for consistently meeting the 10-day average turnaround goal on controlled correspondence.*

*Responding to inquiries in a timely manner is one of FSA's priorities in its quest to ensure customer needs are met.*

*In the last year, there were 4,995 pieces of controlled correspondence assigned to FSA.*

*FSA would specifically like to thank Matthew Boggs, FSA's controlled correspondence contact, for his work as well as all FSA employees for their continued dedication to serving our customers.*