



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Federal Student Aid

TO: Secretary Rod Paige
U.S. Secretary of Education

FROM: Terri Shaw
Chief Operating Officer

RE: FSA Weekly Report

DATE: March 15, 2004

THE WEEK AHEAD

National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP): From March 14-17, FSA representatives will make several presentations at the NCHELP Conference in Myrtle Beach, SC.

South Dakota Association of Student Financial Aid: From March 15-16, FSA representatives are participating in the South Dakota Association of Student Financial Aid Conference.

NSS College Fair: For the week ending March 19, FSA representatives are participating in NSS College Fairs in Springfield, Massachusetts and Newark, New Jersey.

FSA IN THE FIELD

Feria Educativa: From March 5-6, FSA participated in the 4th Feria Educativa sponsored by the National Partnership for Hispanic Education at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The Education Fair advocated educational success and attainment for Hispanic youth and provided information to over 400 parents and students. Kathleen Leos, Associate Deputy Undersecretary and Senior Policy Analyst, Office of English Language Acquisition, Dr. Richard Carmona, Surgeon General of the United States and Congressman Jim Kolbe were among the distinguish speakers.

HUD's Neighborhood Networks Regional Technical Assistance Workshop: On March 10, FSA participated in HUD's Neighborhood Networks Regional Technical Assistance Workshop in Seattle, WA. FSA representatives spoke to those in attendance about available student financial aid resources for students and parents interested in pursuing postsecondary education.

Neighborhood Network is a community-based program that encourages the development of community technology centers in privately owned, HUD-insured and HUD-assisted housing. By catering to the needs of low-income children and adults, the Neighborhood Network Centers help people become self-sufficient by providing them access to computer technology, educational programs, job training, health care information, and other social services.

Weekly Report to Secretary Paige
March 15, 2004

Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel Spring Conference: From March 10-12, FSA representatives participated in the Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel Spring Conference.

Private Career Schools Conference: On March 14, FSA representatives presented at the Private Career Schools Conference in Dallas, TX.

Student Aid on the Web: *Student Aid on the Web* recorded its busiest week in history as students and parents worked to meet the March 1 deadline many colleges and state agencies set for the receipt of financial aid applications for the 2004-05 academic year. For the week ending February 28, *Student Aid on the Web* recorded 462,933 visits, 844,001 page views and 7,781,693 hits.

March 1, 2004 was the single busiest day ever for *Student Aid on the Web*. The site recorded 100,551 visits, 1,760,112 hits and 184,024 page views representing increases over March 1, 2003 of 352.5%, 107.9% and 141% respectively.

Through the week ending March 6, My FSA, the *Student Aid on the Web* feature that offers students and their families a single source of *free* information on choosing a career, selecting a college and identifying resources to pay for higher education, had recorded 24,133 accounts and averaged almost 150 new accounts per day for the week.

FAFSA on the Web: FAFSA on the Web, FSA's online application system for federal student aid, processed the three millionth application for 2004/05 season, 3 weeks ahead of last year and only 10 weeks into the season.

Customer Service Call Center Statistics: For the week ending March 3, the Customer Service Call Center received 405 inquiries, posted eight items to FSA Tech and posted four items to IFAP.

Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP.gov) Web site Usage: For the week ending March 3, www.ifap.ed.gov received 75,190 visits and 2.4 million hits.

Schools Portal Usage: For the week ending March 3, www.fsa4schools.ed.gov received 14,255 visits and 1.3 million hits.

OPERATIONAL METRICS

Application Activities through March 8, 2004: The Central Processing System (CPS) has processed 3,095,011 applications for the 2004-05 cycle, a 15.4% increase over the 2003-04 cycle.

Program Disbursements: Through the week ending March 6, annual Pell and Direct Loan disbursements reached \$10.6 billion and \$10.0 billion respectively for the 2003-04 academic year. Through the week ending March 9, annual FFEL disbursements reached \$23.0 billion for the 2003-04 academic year. Through February, annual Direct Consolidation Loan disbursements reached \$2.71 billion.

Total Default Recoveries: Through March 5, total FSA Default Recoveries for FY04 reached \$694.6 million, an increase of 19% from this time last year. Total non-consolidation recoveries reached \$605.3 million, an increase of 35%. Combined Recoveries from our private collection agency efforts have reached \$499.3 million, up 25% over the same period in FY03. February recovery totals were \$205.9 million representing the first time recovery totals have ever exceeded \$200 million in a single month.

1-800-4-FED-AID through March 6, 2004: Year to date, the Federal Student Aid Information Center (FSAIC) has received 1.61 million calls, a 9.3% decrease over last year. Service levels have decreased with 98.3% of calls completed, a 0.4% decrease over last year, and the average speed to answer increased by 35.6% over last year to 12.2 seconds.

Direct Loan Servicing Call Center Phone Activity through March 5, 2004: Year to date, the Direct Loan Servicing Centers received 1,233,545 calls to the Interactive Voice Response System, a decrease of 7.28% from 2003. Of those calls received, Borrower Services representatives handled 900,224, a decrease of 8.95% from 2003. The average speed of answer was 3.71 seconds, a decrease of 47.18% from 2003. The resolve rate for the Voice Response System was 26.82%, an increase of 5.66 % from 2003. The Abandoned Call Rate was 0.16%, a decrease of 46.81% from 2003.

KEY ISSUES

Common Origination and Disbursement (COD): This week, COD is implementing Release 3.0, which will enable FSA to process Pell Grant and Direct Loan information from schools for the 2004-2005 Award Year.

Voluntary Flexible Agreements (VFA) Performance Measures: FSA is evaluating the use of information gathered under the Cost Neutrality initiative as a basis for establishing monthly/quarterly performance measures associated with each individual VFA. VFA's provide incentives to guarantee agencies for better performance. These measures and the process for monitoring/tracking progress will be incorporated into a mechanism for publishing regular performance reports beginning as a pilot in June 2004.

E-Gov/eLoans: The GovLoans team finalized the website content for the first release scheduled to be launched on April 29. The Department of Labor/GovBenefits team invited you to speak at the GovBenefits 2nd anniversary and launch event. Ketchum Communications is drafting an outreach plan for GovLoans.gov and will interview GovLoans representatives from all five agency partners for the event.

2005-2006 FAFSA: The clearance package for the draft 2005-2006 FAFSA was approved by your office on March 8, and has been submitted to ED's Information Management Group as the first step in the clearance process. A Federal Register Notice will be published in the coming days, opening a 60-day period for public comment on the draft FAFSA. Comments received will be reviewed and considered by the FAFSA Design Group at the end of this first comment period. A second comment period of 30 days is required before OMB can make a final decision on clearance.

Weekly Report to Secretary Paige
March 15, 2004

ON THE HORIZON

Presentations at Regional and State Financial Aid Administrator Conferences: FSA representatives will be making presentations at the following state financial aid administrator conferences in the coming weeks:

March 22-24	Pacific Islands Financial Aid Association Annual Conference
April 6	California Community College Student Financial Aid Association Southern Spring Training
April 8	California Community College Student Financial Aid Association Northern Spring Training
April 7-9	Kentucky Association of Financial Aid Administrators Conference
April 18-21	South Carolina Association of Federal Aid Administrators Conference
April 19	Illinois Association of Financial Aid Administrators Conference

Common Origination and Disbursements (COD) Focus Group: On April 15-16, FSA will host the annual COD Focus Group in held in Reston, VA. This is an opportunity for schools to share their input into future system requirements.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please contact Chris Greene at 377-4003 with any questions.