

MAFAA Public Relations Committee Meeting

University of St. Thomas

July 22, 2009

Attending: Lynn Ash, Paula Benson, Monica Bobek, Susan Brady, Liz Reardon, Michelle Richardson, Cathy Saari

Introductions:

Monica and Susan welcomed the committee to St. Thomas and group introductions were made.

Committee Goals:

Monica and Susan shared the goals for the committee for the upcoming year:

1. Coordinating financial aid booth at National College Fair
2. Promoting financial aid nights to school counselors
3. Promoting MASFAA Reality Store event to local media
4. Represent MAFAA to our constituencies
5. Our "go green" initiative to do it all with less

MN Education Fairs:

Liz suggested that a MAFAA presence at the 37 MN fairs held during fall and spring throughout the state could be a way of providing financial aid information to students and parents at the fairs and possibly packets to area counselors without paying for postage. Visit MACAC site at http://www.mn-acac.org/index.php?s=fairs_mef for details regarding the fair locations. **Cathy** will visit with Heather Peterson who is listed as the last MAFAA representative for the MN Education Fairs as the 2008-09 PR committee was not involved with these events. **Susan** will follow up with Lynette Wahl to find out if another committee or agency took on this role.

National College Fair:

New fair dates and times:

Wednesday, September 30 from 9 am – 12:30 pm & 4:30 -8 pm

Thursday, October 1 from 9 am – 12:30 pm

Liz suggested that MAFAA could use this event to build relationships with the high school counselor community by staffing a table in the MACAC sponsored counselor hospitality suite and providing information regarding our financial aid night events and materials for school counselors. This would involve soliciting more volunteers to be at the fair and developing a new handout with the link to our web materials.

Michelle volunteered to draft a “Who We Are/We Help You By...” flyer.

Liz will contact MACAC to request if we could have a space in the counselor break room and contact NACAC to request a sign for the counseling booth, and if we could include our materials in the preliminary packet mailed to school counselors. (Update: Liz learned that NACAC will send a post card to school counselors this year instead of a big packet. She is waiting for responses to the other initiatives.

Next we reviewed the timelines of tasks. See attached spreadsheet for **all** assignments. **Committee members** encouraged to volunteer at the fair for at least one of the 3 time periods.

Regional Financial Aid Nights:

Lois Larson requested that the committee explore ways to keep the costs down for this service. The PR committee mailed 1,029 packets to school counselors at a cost of \$1,514.50 (\$455.20 for printing, \$1035.30 postage and \$24 for parking permits). Regional nights have declined from 27 in 2005 to 14 in 2009 as more local events such as College Goal Sunday and high school nights are scheduled. We will continue to support our members and the school counselor community by promoting the regional night events and preparing presentation materials for use by all MAFAA members and school counselors but may have to move up our timeline to piggy back on other events.

Monica and **Liz** will explore obtaining an e-mail list of school counselors instead of the mailing labels from MOHE.

Susan will contact MOHE about including a link to our materials in the November 4 school counselor workshop.

Susan will contact Dave Vikander and **Michelle** will contact the other sites to find out if they plan to host an event again and if/when dates are set.

Julie will collect summary data from the MAFAA membership about the number of financial aid nights our members presented, the number in attendance, and the location at the end of the upcoming financial aid night cycle to better inform MAFAA about the public service provided by our membership.

MAFAA Brochure:

Susan shared a draft of the MAFAA Brochure. MAFAA has not published the brochure for the past 5 years but some committees and members have expressed an interest in having one available. The goal is to prepare the brochure and publish it on the website in a print ready format. **Julie** and **Anne** will finish the draft and get it posted to the MAFAA website.

MASFAA Reality Store:

Lois asked our committee to provide public relations support to the MASFAA Reality Store event scheduled for October 9 at Anwatin Middle School. Approximately 200 8th graders from Anwatin and Cityview School will participate in an early awareness event.

Susan and Monica reported on a conference call they had with Shanta James from Western Michigan University. The Reality Store is a game where students select a career, receive a paycheck and then budget for the month by visiting 20 stations for taxes, mortgages, etc. They roll dice for marital status and the number of kids.

The challenge for the 2009 event is that is scheduled the week before the MASFAA conference and so they must find a different way to obtain donations. (At all previous conferences members brought their donations to the conference and conference attendees could come early and staff the event).

Shanta and local contact Tracey Stokes-Hernandez from South Central College will use the MAFAA listserv to solicit volunteers for the event. Shanta is exploring ways to solicit donations of backpacks and school supplies from MASFAA members and local businesses.

Sarah Wernimont, the assistant principal at Anwatin, will contact the Minneapolis School District Communication Office for help with publicity.

Michelle shared her experiences with the Reality Store when it was held in Iowa. They had a great response by the local community. **Susan** and **Monica** will offer Shanta and Tracey the use of our college fair booth as a drop off site for donations. Every MASFAA and Minnesota financial aid office can coordinate with their admissions representative to bring their donations to our booth at the fair. **Susan** will ask Shanta for an official document to solicit contributions for our committee members to distribute among their own contacts. For example, Liz has a local bank connection and we have an admission staff member with a spouse at the MN Wild.

Meanwhile, **Lynn** and **Cathy** will collect the contact information for local TV stations and **Susan** will collect it for local radio stations so we can pitch this story idea as needed.

Other business:

Verify that you are a 2009-2010 MAFAA member so that Executive Council can approve you to serve on this committee at its July 24th meeting.

Submit on-line or paper requests for reimbursement for committee-related expenses.

Begin brainstorming public relations interest session topics for the Spring 2010 MAFAA conference. Last year our committee sponsored a session on Social Media. **Liz** will bring information on a "Zinch" presenter who was well received at the MACAC conference.

Next meeting:

August 19

University of St. Thomas

9-noon