

2008-2009 MAFAA Public Relations Committee Year End Report

Membership:

Monica Bobek, University of St. Thomas
Susan Brady, University of St. Thomas
Anne Dahlen, MN State College, Southeast Technical
Laura Johnson, Century College
Ben Reed, Anoka Technical College

Brad Riebel, U.S. Bank
Cathy Saari, Univ. of MN – Twin Cities
Shannon Schaaf-Comeau, College of
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Lynette Wahl, Hamline University

Thank you to every MAFAA member who assisted a high school counselor with a financial aid question or concern, or who presented at a financial aid night or who volunteered at a financial aid event this year. The public relations committee may develop materials and tools to assist MAFAA members, but it is our individual members who put a face on our profession by sharing their expertise and talents with students, parents and others who truly provide MAFAA's "public relations".

This year, the public relations committee accomplished the following:

Coordinated financial aid volunteers and presentations at the National College Fair: The National College Fair was held October 1-2 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The committee developed an updated Power Point presentation and solicited MAFAA members as volunteers on the listserv and in MAFAA Matters. New initiatives this year included the development of a two-sided handout and an on-line volunteer sign up process and confirmation e-mail. 27 MAFAA members staffed the financial aid booth or gave one of 10 "Financial Aid 101: The Basics" presentations during the two-day fair. See the October 2008 MAFAA Matters for more details and a list of volunteers.

Promoted statewide financial aid presentations: The committee solicited volunteers to host regional financial aid nights and developed materials to promote these events to high school counselors throughout the state. 14 regional events were held along with 23 southwestern events during the months of December, January and February. Promotional packets were mailed to 1,029 high school counselors. The committee did not sponsor a scholarship drawing for students attending the regional financial aid nights. In the future, we recommend that the committee solicit financial aid event information from high school counselors who are willing to open their events to the community and develop a way to share these dates within communities.

Coordinated communication with other constituencies, including high school counselors, to build and maintain good working relationships: The committee developed two different mailings to promote the regional financial aid nights: one for the 14 regional events and one targeted exclusively to the counselors in southwestern Minnesota. The materials included information that each counselor could use for their own financial aid events, as well as promotions for College Goal Sunday and the December 2nd videoconference on Educational Training Vouchers for youth in foster care. Following the initial mailings, the committee received a request to provide a Spanish language version of the handout which it was able to do thanks to the assistance of Michelle Kidwell of the MN College Goal Sunday committee. Thanks, also, to Valerie Knopp and the MAFAA Loan Issues Committee, for updating the materials it provides for students and parents on its section of the MAFAA web site prior to the launch of the high school counselor mailings. One goal still in progress is the development of a MAFAA promotional brochure.

Other committee activities: The committee held meetings on August 7, September 24, November 13 and April 21 and posted its minutes to the MAFAA web site. The MAFAA banner and table covers were replaced and made available for all MAFAA events. Committee members are presenting an interest session on “Using Facebook and Other Social Media” for the spring conference and are exploring ways for MAFAA members to utilize these tools to build relationships with each other.

In closing, I would like to thank each member of the committee for their contributions this year. It has been a real pleasure to work with such a wonderfully talented and fun group. I would also be remiss to not recognize and publicly thank Scott Glime, MAFAA webmaster, for his assistance in making our materials easier for the public to access and for developing the online volunteer sign up process for the National College Fair.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Brady, Chair
April 28, 2009