

Maine report to EASFAA 2/21/2021:

Executive Council:

William O'Shea, President, Maine College of Art & Design

Carry Frechette, Business Manager - Maine College of Art & Design

Jennifer Hutchinson, Member at Large, University of Maine Farmington

Meredith Lee, Member at Large, University of Maine

Joe Toner, Member at Large, University of Maine Farmington

Conference: There was a joint MASFAA/Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) meeting on 11/18/2021. We covered areas such as COVID and the impact on FAA's, EFC for the Maine State Grant and getting students ready for loan repayment post COVID relief period (5/1/2022). FAME covered the impact that the FAFSA Simplification bill will have on the Maine State Grant (MSG) program, referencing the FUTURE Act (1) written by NASFAA. FAME announced the reestablishment of the joint Maine Legislature/FAME Commission to study college affordability and college completion which was last conducted in 12/2014.

Membership: 105 members (up from 75 members last year) – the Members at Large and I agreed extend free membership to primary MASFAA members in an effort to move in the right direction and grow membership. Associate Membership notifications will be sent out next month to all interested Associate Members. We have built a new website ([masfaamaine.com](http://masfaamaine.com)) and are shifting from paper to paperless payment options.

Training: None planned at this time.

Special Initiatives: Currently working with FAA Directors to identify students who can be recorded and speak to the importance of the MSG. This compilation of videos will be presented by Ron Milliken to the appropriate Maine legislator or subcommittee as a reminder of the importance of the MSG and I believe it will help reestablish MASFAA as a relevant FAA organization.

Committees: I am putting together an Ad Hoc Committee of 2 members to conduct a brief feasibility study on holding a MASFAA Conference or retreat to get a gauge on location and dates.

Miscellaneous: MASFAA School Support Initiative (MSSI) counselors are currently assisting students with the 2022/2023 FAFSA process. We currently have 75 MSSI partnerships with schools and about 33 FAA partners from colleges that handle 75 schools. We continue to extend invitations to all of our high school partners.

On a high note, FAME increased the EFC to 9000 for Academic year 2021-2022, the amount of eligible students increased by 1,697. So far, about 475 eligible students have been awarded but schools are still working on changes for all their students financial aid packages.

*Reference (1): Specifically, the FUTURE Act improves the FAFSA filing process by addressing the existing shortcomings of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT).*

*There are currently categories of FAFSA filers — including married couples filing separately, those who filed as head of household, and those who did not file taxes — who cannot use the DRT.*

*The FUTURE Act allows students currently unable to use the DRT, including both non-tax-filers and tax filers of all filing statuses, to experience a simpler FAFSA process by transferring their data directly from the IRS to ED.*

*While it will likely take longer to implement the direct data sharing for some categories of tax filers because of logistical and technological challenges, non-tax-filers will be among the first to benefit. This will be particularly helpful, since non-tax-filers currently selected for verification must go through an arduous process of requesting separate documentation from the IRS to confirm to their school that they did not file taxes.*