



# LOSFA LOOP

August 2008 Edition

Volume I-4

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

I wasn't sure what to write about this month (so much to choose from) when lo and behold, it appears that the long awaited Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is finally upon us! All recent pundits predicted another extension and that the conferees would not be able to reach an agreement, but they have surprised everyone and reached consensus. What does that mean for us? Well, for one, a lot of reading! The bill, which is 1,158 pages long, is a lot to sink our teeth into. You will be getting constant updates through NASFAA as this comes closer to reality, but a cursory review of several articles already in circulation indicates several things that will affect us at the state level:

- Simplification of the Financial Aid Application Process – Because the FAFSA is the application for all state aid programs, we will be analyzing how the new FAFSA- EZ can be adapted into our existing programming.
- Early estimates of financial aid to students through LOSFA's partnership with the Board of Regents, we will be instrumental through the College Access Challenge Grant to offer information to students as early as middle school on financial aid eligibility. Mock College Goal Sunday events using the FAFSA4caster are currently being planned for families of 8th graders.

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## Local financial aid representatives attend NASFAA conference

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) held its annual conference this year in Orlando, Fla. from July 6th through 9th. The theme of this year's conference was "New Beginnings – Come Share the Magic". Many representatives from Louisiana's financial aid community did share in the magic by playing a pivotal role in the conference.

Gwen Nixon, Director of Student Financial Assistance for the Louisiana Community and Technical College and David Roberts, Assistant Executive Director-Marketing and Outreach of LOSFA and the Louisiana statewide coordinator for the 2009 College Goal Sunday Event, both attended the College Goal Sunday Pre-Conference on Saturday, July 5th.

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*Marcia Weston, Director of College Access Programs for NASFAA, Calaundra Brown, with Baton Rouge Community College and Johnavae Quinn, Deputy Director of College Goal Sunday Operations.*

# ***Trailblazers Camp 2008***

***July 13-15***

*High school students from across the state gathered this summer to learn about financial aid opportunities, sample life on a college campus and meet new people. Here's what went on. . .in their own words.*

## **Northwestern State University**

***"I know a lot of people who don't fully understand the financial aid process and I think I can help them now."***



***"I learned more about financial aid in two days than in all three years at my high school."***



***"It cleared the confusion of requirements for TOPS that are a big problem at my school."***





***"I learned a lot at this camp and I feel prepared to share the information with my fellow students."***

***"This program will allow me the privilege of telling people what steps they can take to go to the college of their choice."***



***"FLY (Financial Literacy for You) was the most useful because it basically teaches you responsibility about money."***





***“I have gotten valuable information on scholarships and grants that I was not aware existed.”***



***“Way more information than regular workshops or pamphlets”***



***“Because we’re a small school, we’re last to get new information. There will be no excuses now for not meeting TOPS requirements because you didn’t know what classes to take.”***



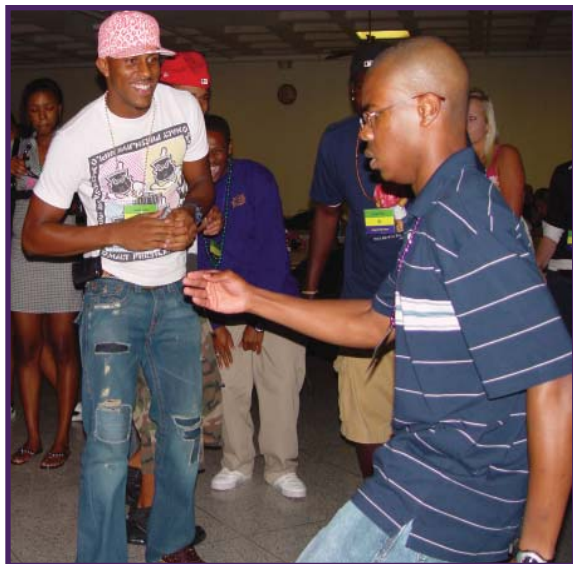
***“I honestly believe this program will make a difference for my class because I can share important details about colleges and deadlines with my counselor and Class of 2009.”***

***“I think that the presentation about TOPS will be most useful because there are a lot of misconceptions about it.”***





## Southeastern Louisiana University . . . in their own words July 27-29



***"I believe, with my knowledge, those at my high school will understand more about TOPS."***

***"Financial aid is a hot topic that no one really knows about. This will help me clear things up."***





***“At first, I was complaining about taking more classes than I needed my senior year. Now, I know I need those classes to qualify for TOPS.”***



***“It (Trailblazers Camp) brings a much better understanding of how much college really costs as opposed to what kids think.”***



***“This program helps to clear up and demystify financial aid and how to get it.”***



***“It is a unique program that gives students valid and useful information that we will need during and after high school.”***



***“I have received some valuable information that I’m sure will clarify any questions from my classmates.”***





***"I didn't know there were so many ways that high schoolers could get so much financial aid and I have a better understanding now."***

***"The information that I've been given is very vital and things that our counselor hasn't told us."***

***"Our town has an abundance of students that need aid for college and this proved that we didn't know all that was out there."***



***"I will make sure to spread the word!"***

*NASFAA, continued from Page 1*



*Representatives from ECMC, whose foundation has been instrumental in helping Louisiana students, were also on-hand at the NASFAA conference.*

Cathy M. Simoneaux, Director of Scholarships & Financial Aid for Loyola University-New Orleans presented an interest session on the topic "Preparing for and Recovering from Emergencies".

Sherry Gladney, Director of Financial Aid for Louisiana State University Health Sciences-Shreveport, served as a moderator for the session "Life Without a Preferred Lender List".

Taina J. Savoit, Director of Financial Aid for McNeese State University, in addition to serving on the NASFAA Board of Directors for 2008-09 actually served as a moderator for two sessions: "TEACH Grants-Policy" and "Link and Learn More About Taxes". Mary Sue Rix, Director of Financial Aid for Centenary College of Louisiana served as a moderator for "Mastering Presentation Skills - Part 1: How to get Started" and was the presenter for "Mastering Presentation Skills - Part 2: Discover Skill Sets and Tips on How to be a Presenter".

Alvina Thomas, Dean of Student Services and Financial Aid for Louisiana Delta Community College and a member of NASFAA's Board of Directors for 2007-08 and 2008-09 served as a moderator for the session "Nuts and Bolts of Program Review and Audits".

Mary Parker, Director of Financial Aid for Louisiana State University and A&M College presented on the topic "Multiple Office Responsibilities - How to Multi-Task and Handle the Juggling Act".

Finally, Vicki Temple, Director of Financial Aid for Bossier Parish Community College served as a moderator for the session entitled "Casting a Wide Net in a Small Pond: Enrollment Planning in a Geographically Bound Market".

Other Louisiana representatives at the NASFAA Conference included:

- Sonita Boyd, Southern University at New Orleans
- Vickye Branton, Louisiana Technical College
- Cathy Brimmer, Xavier University
- Calandra Brown, Baton Rouge Community College
- Kimberly Bruce, Louisiana Delta Community College
- B. Carmichael, Louisiana Education Loan Authority
- Raymond Clarke, Southern University A&M College
- Germaine Edwards, Delgado Community College
- Jackie Greer, Grambling State University
- DeAnne Kipper, Louisiana Technical College
- Jacqueline LaChapelle, Louisiana State University
- Joni Leggio, Louisiana Education Loan Authority
- Sandy Livings-Veals, Xavier University
- Emily London-Jones, University of New Orleans

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*Joni Leggio, Louisiana Education Loan Authority*



*Germaine Edwards, Delgado Community College*



- Amy Marix, Louisiana State University A&M College
- Betty McCrary, LSU in Shreveport
- Tess Passey, Tulane University
- Kecia Poplus, Xavier University
- Stacey Pullen, Louisiana Technical College
- Sharon Reed, Grambling State University
- Sherita Robertson, Grambling State University
- Anne Rugege, Grambling State University
- Ursula Shorty, Southern University A&M College and LASFAA President
- Christie Smith, Louisiana Education Loan Authority
- Teri Smith, The University of Louisiana at Monroe
- Adrian Turner, Louisiana Technical College
- Anna Vaughan, Our lady of Holy Cross College
- Sandy Wilson, Louisiana Technical College
- Kathy Woods, Southern University at New Orleans



*LOSFA's David Roberts, Assistant Executive Director for Marketing and Outreach, and Juan Garcia, a financial aid representative from Iowa, promote College Goal Sunday at the NASFAA Conference.*

*Cathy Simoneaux, Director of Scholarships and Financial Aid for Loyola University - New Orleans*



*Kathy Woods (left) and Sonita Boyd, both with Southern University at New Orleans, were two of many Louisiana delegates at the conference.*



#### *Director, continued from Page 1*

- SLEAP will be replaced by a new grant program, Grants for Access and Persistence (GAP) and will be administered by the state agency. The new grant incorporates partnership with higher education institutions and philanthropic organizations. This is definitely a new direction and one we hope to be able to pursue. Much more on this to come in the near future.
- Guaranty agencies are required to develop and make available educational programs and materials to provide training in budgeting and financial management. LOSFA has these services available currently and you can contact your SLS rep for specific information.

Now that the 2008 state legislative session has come

to a close, we will be updating you on how it affected our state programs. A bulletin is currently in the works and rules that must be promulgated for these changes will be heard at our upcoming Student Financial Assistance Commission Meeting on August 22. We are very aware that the tuition bill is of utmost importance to you as you send out fee bills and compute TOPS credit to the appropriate students. We have corresponded with all management boards to confirm the increases and have already begun the notification process for those we have received.

We hope you have a great August as you welcome your students for the 2008-09 academic year.

-- Melanie

## Employee Spotlight

# Christy Marchand has a hobby that brightens up the room

Christy Marchand didn't expect an LSU Leisure Class to become a new passion when she enrolled 12 years ago. Always on the lookout for new crafts, learning how to make stained glass seemed like fun.

Over a decade later, it still seems like fun.

"I love doing it," she says, "it's an obsession." At first, she made gifts for family and friends. Then, she wanted to see if she could make enough money for a twenty-fifth anniversary trip to Ireland. She did. Now, she sells her goods at local craft shows and online.

Marchand plans to retire this fall and move to Arkansas with her husband. She's already got work lined up -- with the nationally renowned Stephen Wilson Stained Glass company and with Virgins, Saints and Sinners, a wholesale gift and apparel company.

*After 12 years as a hobby, Christy Marchand's stained glass artwork will get full-time attention when she retires later this year.*



Making stained glass art isn't for the faint of heart. "You have to be willing to bleed," Marchand concedes. And it's not inexpensive for large jobs -- sheets of glass have to be ordered wholesale and shipped in, the tools can be pricey -- but if those things don't scare you off, it's definitely worth the investment.

She spends hours in her workshop, Marchand says. Before she had a workshop, she was working on the washroom counter. And, aside from pet skunk Buster, the work can be a very solitary, so it helps to have a supportive partner.

"My husband is a saint," Marchand says. "He supports me fully and just lets me play and play."

The solitary nature of the work also makes meeting people at craft fairs more satisfying.



*These door panels are an example of the larger pieces Marchand makes. Custom design such as this are available upon request.*



*This booth at a recent craft fair shows the range of Christy Marchand's work.*





Marchand is particularly proud of this door installation. It is a custom piece, incorporating aspects of the customers' lives -- music, education, the medical field, and the couple's children. Below are examples of her small and medium-sized work -- a flamingo suncatcher, an LSU wall hanging and a small box.

"It's very gratifying to have people buy your work," she said. She plans to attend the Oak Alley Plantation Arts and Craft Fair, which is a juried show where exhibits are rated, on October 18 - 19. It will be the first year she's participated. She will also be at the St. Luke's Episcopal Arts and Crafts Fair on October 4, she said.

She tries to make a lot of smaller, less expensive pieces for craft fairs, Marchand says. The smaller pieces can be finished in an hour, but the larger pieces can take from two to three weeks since she isn't working on them full-time.

If you stop by her booth, you'll find objects starting from as little as \$5. If you want to order something larger, the price can go up to \$400. It really all depends on the size of the piece.

Anyone interested in learning how to make stained glass art should definitely try, Marchand says. She recommends contacting Kristi Keller at Glass Art-

istry. Keller taught Marchand and "she's still my guru."

It's a craft anyone can learn, with enough rules to provide structure while still "allowing you to be very adventurous."



*This church window was a custom piece commissioned for the chapel at Dixon Correctional Institute.*



Want to see more of Christy's work?  
Hop online and go to [www.whimzeeglass.com](http://www.whimzeeglass.com). Her custom jewelry can be seen on <http://www.virginssaintsandsinners.com>.

*In every issue of LOSFA LOOP, we will highlight a specific division within the agency. This issue we highlight:*

## Administrative Services

Most of the time, LOSFA runs like a well-oiled machine. But that smoothness doesn't happen by magic. It is the result of the hard work of a staff of dedicated employees whose job makes everyone else's job a little bit easier.

### Mailroom

There's a lot more to the mailroom than mail, according to supervisor Ronette Granger. Although, if it were just mail, that would be enough. Each morning, the mailroom crew processes the day's incoming mail. All incoming checks, for START and student loans, have to be processed and delivered to Cash Receipts and Imaging. All other mail has to be processed and sorted, ready for the day's first delivery by 11 a.m. It sounds easy enough, until you realize that the mailroom handles around 60,000 pieces of incoming mail a week and all the sorting is done by hand, by four employees. "We have so many pieces of mail a day, it's ridiculous," Granger said. Mail continues to come in during the day. That mail is delivered at 3 p.m.

The mailroom also handles all outgoing mail, an amount that varies depending on the day. Some days, only a few hundred pieces go out. Other days, it's tens of thousands. Outgoing mail is separated into bar code mail, which is run on the inserter, pre-sort mail, regular mail and FedEx/UPS shipments.

In addition to the actual mail, the mailroom also:

- receives all orders for the agency
- does the bulk of shredding for the agency
- delivers supplies
- repairs or coordinates repairs on machinery
- does cost analysis of shipping
- does daily runs to the Treasury Department, Department of Justice and banks
- moves furniture for the agency
- negotiates rates with delivery vendors
- acts as contact for Buildings and Grounds
- handles recycling of many office supplies
- acts as a back-up for Cash Receipts
- maintains the supplies in the stockroom
- handles any special requests for the agency -- like setting up and cleaning up after Commission meetings.

"We don't just deliver mail," Granger said. "We don't just process mail. It's so much more than mail."

### Cash Receipts and Imaging

Every check that comes into the agency, be it for START or loan repayment, has to go through Cash Receipts and Imaging. Each morning, the three employees in the department scan the checks, input information and prepare deposits. On an average day, they handle around 300 checks.

Each afternoon, the department images documents for the agency. All the documents the agency wants quick access to are scanned and indexed. Repayment plan documents, exit interviews, promissory notes, travel checks and forms -- if the agency uses it, the division handles it, with the exception of documents for Public Information and Scholarships and Grants.

"Anything the agency takes in or gives out," supervisor Sharie Robinson said, "we image that."

So, how much does the division handle daily? In addition to the morning checks, there are about 1,000 documents to be scanned and indexed daily.

Robinson says her office is focused on "being as accurate as possible" as it works behind the scenes.



## Purchasing

Running out of paper in your printer or need a new computer? Let Linda Roquemore know. She's in charge of purchasing for the agency and can get you "essentially anything you need to do the job."

It's not as easy as running out to the store, however. (Although she does that occasionally as well.) There are rules governing state purchasing and she has to make certain they are followed. Does an item need to go out to bid? Is it on state contract? Which vendor has the lowest price? How soon is the item required?

In addition to ordering supplies, she also has to pay for them. All invoices, except for vendors on professional service contracts, go through her and she also pays recurring bills such as maintenance contracts for the agency's machinery.

She's also the agency's property manager, making certain that everything that's been paid for is accounted for. Special requests go through her office. The new benches you'll be seeing in front of the building soon? She made that happen.

And if you're having problems with your telephone, Roquemore is the one who handles that too.

Her work can be very time-consuming, she said, but her door is always open. Not certain if a request goes through her department? Send her an email or make a quick phone call. "If you have a question, feel free to contact me."



Administrative  
Services

Kenyetta West, Jamela Forman,  
Sharie Robinson, Ronette Granger.  
Not Pictured: Galasia Jones,  
John Litell and Linda Roquemore.



Linda Roquemore



For more information, contact the  
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626, Ext. 1012

By E-mail: [custserv@osfa.la.gov](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov)

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov)

For submissions, opinions or comments for LOSFA Loop, please contact  
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