

*Tina:*

I think we're gonna go ahead and get started, but Cindy and I wanted to do a little something so that we could get a sense of kind of where folks are in terms of the outreach that you do today, and it'll help us when we think about the types of resources we may highlight. So, I think, given the size of the room, we're going to exercise our arms. So, what I wanted to do is get a sense for how many of you are doing outreach to potential students, and when I say potential students, I'm thinking of students that aren't currently either enrolled or attending your institution. So, by a show of hands, are you currently doing outreach to potential students? I love it. Wait, wait. Keep it up. Now of those, lower your hand if you've been doing outreach – oh, keep your hand up if you've been doing outreach for more than one year. Everyone. Keep your hand up if you've been doing outreach for more than five years. Okay, still a lot. How about more than ten? Now we've got our diehards. All right. Great.

What we'd also like to do is I want to get a sense of who is it that you're doing outreach to? So, how many of you do outreach to high school students? Yep, that's what we thought. How about if we go a little earlier? How many of you are doing outreach to middle school students? Yep, it's still a good number. How about the parents of high school and middle school students? Mm hmm. Now, how many of you work with guidance counselors in your community? I'm impressed. Now, how many of you also work with college access or other community groups that are in your area, as well? Wonderful. Now the next piece is we want to know, okay, what is it that you do? So, when you look at outreach, how many of you do outreach, and one of the ways we've seen it kind of defined is kind of the one-on-one counseling with students, with parents, either as they come to your office or they may contact you? Mm hmm. Now, how about those who may do outreach at presentations at local schools? They're so good. How about those that do college fairs, attend college fairs, distribute materials? How about other events, so not necessarily at a school, but other community events? And my last one I think is how about materials, whether you're sending things in the mail, sending them electronically, do you send materials out, as well? This is wonderful.

It's so exciting to see the types of outreach we're doing, and we know that it's such an integral part of how do we make sure students know that a post-secondary education is possible? So, to see that kind of participation just is absolutely wonderful. So, we're hoping that we can share some information that you'll find helpful in what you're doing. What we're going to do is go ahead

and – let’s see. Where am I on our slides? We’ve already talked about that. We’re gonna start with resources for potential students, and I’m gonna start with some of our Web resources. A number of these websites have been around for a couple of years, some longer than others, so I’m just gonna do a very kind of high-level overview, and then highlight some of the features that I think may be of most importance to your target audience. We’re gonna start with college.gov.

If you were at the Federal Student Aid Conference two years ago, which I think was the last year that they split it between, say, Dallas and Vegas, in the general session, we had demonstrated college.gov, and just to give a little bit of background, it’s really kind of targeted toward high school students. It was designed and built based on high school student feedback and input, and one of the things they said was, “We want to hear from students who are like us.” They don’t want to hear from feds, such as myself. They don’t want to hear from celebrities, like Cindy. So, you’ll see that kind of influence throughout college.gov. So, what happens is when you first come to the site, what you see immediately is, in this case, it’s user-generated content. What we have is students have the ability to submit an image in their personalized I’m Going statement. So, in this case, the student is saying, “I’m going to college to fulfill my dreams.” So, students can immediately go on this site and they can actually kind of participate in the college.gov.

The other thing you’ll see immediately is that it doesn’t really look like your typical government site. College.gov is really intended to be that inspirational site. This is a site for students who are, “Do I want to go to college, do I not?” This is really kind of intended to give them that motivation to see the hope and the potential that a college education really is possible, and a lot of that is because we have kind of that peer influence, where we show students who are very similar to them – some that came from difficult backgrounds, some that are the first in their family to go to college – and we’re using that to kind of illustrate for them that it is possible. At the same time, though, we are providing relevant, high-level content around our Federal Student Aid programs, as well.

So, the peer-to-peer influence extends beyond just the homepage, and, since we demonstrated the site two years ago, there are a couple of really neat features I wanted to highlight for you today. The first is what we call, the top one is the I’m Going Guides page, and on this page we profile several college students, but the part that I really like is what we call the College Q&A, which is on the

lower half of that page. Basically, what we did is we took common questions that high school students have about college, and we asked college students to answer them. Now, we made sure that the answers were correct anytime they may have gotten into a program information area, but really it's college student answers to questions such as, "Deciding whether or not college is right for me. How do I go about getting there?" and, "What is college life like?" So, from that perspective it's, again, giving students a chance to see some answers from people that are like them.

The other tool I wanted to mention is on the lower half of the slide, and that's what we call Career Possibilities. We wanted to give students an opportunity to see careers, but rather than just giving them a giant list of possible careers, what we did was we spoke to college graduates, relatively recent graduates who are in particular careers. And we asked them to provide information about those careers, advice that they'd give students who may be interested in those careers, how they went about it, what do they really like about that particular job, and then we mashed them up, and we put them on this page. And so, when a student comes here, if they see a person that they think just looks interesting, they could click on that person and learn about the type of career they're in. But, around the page, we have kind of interest areas, such as I Like Writing. So, if they clicked on I Like Writing, they would see people and their careers, where an interest in writing may be particularly relevant for them. So, this was another way of kind of showing career options but in a different way than just giving a list of careers. We were also gently dipping our toes into social media through college.gov, but we'll talk about that a little bit later.

The next website I want to mention has been around for quite a bit longer, and that's Student Aid on the Web. So, I mentioned that college.gov is our primary inspiration website; well, college.gov is the information website. College.gov is really targeted to all potential students, and it truly is the trusted source for the detailed information you need on federal student aid and the Federal Student Aid programs. We have content for audiences that starts as early as middle school, goes to parents, and even adult students. In addition, the content is set up in such a way that it mirrors the student aid lifecycle, so you'll have the early awareness content, you'll have content about our federal student aid programs, applying for financial aid, and we also have a lot of content that gets into loan repayment, as well.

One tool that I wanted to highlight within Student Aid on the Web

is what we call MyFSA. Students can go onto Student Aid on the Web and create a MyFSA account and, through the MyFSA account, they can store information. They can then go onto the site and do things like a scholarship search, and they can save the scholarship search results within Student Aid on the Web. They also can access financial aid and other planning tools, as well, such as a tool that lets them compare award letters, for example. Another really neat thing about MyFSA is when they have information, they can also transfer it to FAFSA. They can also transfer it to certain college applications, as well.

If you're familiar with MyFSA, in the past, students used to be able to transfer their data to FAFSA4caster, but because of some changes, the simplification that's happening with FAFSA4caster, that capability is not gonna be available in the future, or after January 1. Also, because with Student Aid on the Web there was a particular interest in certain pages, so what we created are what we call shortcut URLs, which are ways that you can get students directly to certain content pages, such as the content for parents is [studentaid.ed.gov/parents](http://studentaid.ed.gov/parents). One that there's usually a lot of interest is, for instance, our scholarship search, so you can just \_\_\_\_\_ to [studentaid.ed.gov/scholarship](http://studentaid.ed.gov/scholarship), and it takes them right there, which is a lot easier than saying, "Go to Student Aid on the Web, click here, click here, click here, and then you'll get there." So, that's Student Aid on the Web.

FAFSA was covered yesterday, it was covered in the breakout sessions, so I'm not gonna spend any time on it here today, other than to say that Cindy and I have both been participating in testing of the 11-12 FAFSA application, and I think the improvements, especially the homepage improvements, I think students are gonna find it so much easier from a customer experience perspective. And then, FAFSA4caster I touched on. I know Michele covered this, as well. The main focus here is it truly is acting more like a calculator. The data entry is gonna be much simpler, but one of the things to keep in mind is students will no longer be able to save their data, and they will not be able to transfer it to FAFSA, so those are some important points to keep in mind with 4caster, with the changes, but they will be able to print their results. Last is College Navigator. This is the Department of Education's official search website. Students can come in here, and, on a variety of material they can do searches, they can do comparisons, and such, so this may be a site of interest if students want to explore their options.

I mentioned in the handout we have a summary, and it looks like –

for you people in the back, I'm sure you can see this clearly, but it's just a little front-and-back document that has a summary of some of our Web resources. But just to recap, so college.gov is the inspirational peer-to-peer site really geared toward high school students. Student Aid on the Web, the detailed informational site for really all students. FAFSA, the application. 4caster, determine your potential eligibility for aid, and College Navigator is our search site. An important point: Every single one of these sites is also available in Spanish.

Now we're gonna talk a little bit about social media, and then I'm going to put in a plug for my social media friends, but first we're gonna start with college.gov. I mentioned we were kind of dipping our toes into social media, and a lot of that is through college.gov. For about two years now, we have what we call a Facebook page. Through this page, we post weekly tips and information. We have links. We also have about 20 videos, and right now we have over 12,500 what we call Likes. In the past, they used to be called fans, when there used to be fan pages on Facebook, but now they're just called Likes. Facebook is really giving us a way to kind of test whether it makes sense for Federal Student Aid to be in Facebook, and also to see what's really working. In addition to that, we also have a college.gov YouTube channel. On the channel, we have over 60 videos that are posted. They're primarily focused around, again, that inspirational, people who have come from difficult backgrounds, and it's really kind of, again, the examples of students that are like the ones that you may be talking to and giving them examples of how they can overcome barriers to go to post-secondary education. There's also a feature on the site where students can also submit their own videos.

We've been talking for some time I think about public service announcements, so I think we're either in our fourth or our fifth. Right now, we have a PSA that's running both in TV and radio. Earlier this year, it was also playing in gas stations in select cities, in malls and on billboards. We are getting ready in January to launch our next PSA campaign, and this year is gonna be kind of a revamping of one of our most successful campaigns that was called My Story. We do have some DVDs of the PSAs, and if you have an interest in getting a copy of a DVD of either the current PSA or the one that'll be coming out in January, stop by our publications table, and we have an order form that we can give you to fill out if you'd like a copy of the DVD.

*Cindy:* Tina.

*Tina:* Yes?

*Cindy:* Where is the publications table?

*Tina:* Oh, why, thank you, Cindy. The publications table is located in the PC lab. If there's lots of people there, just give us a second and we'll make sure we get you the form, but it's a pretty quick form to fill out, and then we can take it back with us and make sure that you get it. Just so you know, the DVD for the January PSA, you may not be able to get that until the January timeframe, maybe a little earlier. Also, I should mention if there's a broadcast station in your area, and you want to make them aware, there's a place where you can write down their call letters and we'll make sure that we do a special kind of mailing to them so they get the PSA, as well.

I mentioned social media. As I said, we're kind of dipping our toes into it, but we have this great team who's really looking at how do we take social media and make it an integrated part of the information and the services that we deliver. You may have heard in the general session, there was such demand for this particular session that they've added one this afternoon. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend that you go. But I also know after the session they'll be posting some information, as well as the Session 51, Why Can't We Be Friends? Okay, and with that, I'm gonna hand it over to Cindy, who's gonna talk about our \_\_\_\_\_.

*Cindy:* Thank you, Tina. I know it's really hard to listen to one voice for 20 minutes, but I think Tina did a really good job and I don't see any heads nodding, so I hope to achieve that same success.

*[Applause]*

Okay, let's talk about student publications. Tina's been talking about website resources, and I'm going to talk about the compact documents that we produce, whether in hardcopy or online, and remember we do have these online, as well as the ones that you can order from us. There's a chart up here on the screen of available publications. These are not all the publications that we produce. These are just some that we wanted to point out to you today, and if you look through the handouts that you, of course, picked up at the back of the room on your way in, you will find the letter that you actually also might have received by email within the last couple of days. It kind of looks like the FAFSA, the way it opens up like that, except there aren't any hard questions for you to answer. If you look in this letter, sort of the centerfold for you is a larger version of this chart. So, you can either look at the screen here or look at the letter that you received for this information, and the point of this chart is just to show you what to order when, or

what to send out a PDF of when. In other words, which publications are appropriate for which audiences? So, those of you who are reaching out to the younger students, and I saw a lot of you are, you're gonna want to focus a lot on the first few publications that are listed here. We've kind of gone chronologically through the student lifecycle in this chart.

If you're not aware of the College Preparation Checklist, any of you who do outreach, this is going to become your best friend, this publication. We have a lot of these at the back of the room. It's a little booklet. It's the size of a brochure, so it fits into a #10 envelope really easily. It starts in elementary school, it goes all the way through high school, and it talks to adult students, as well, about how to get ready for college, both financially and academically, and the bonus of this one is that there are sections for parents at each stage, except for the adult students. So, it tells the parents what to do, as well. So, everybody can use this. It's not off-putting. It's small, there's only a couple of pages per stage, so it's just a simple little thing. I'm nagging one of my nephews to use it right now, as a matter of fact. He's a senior in high school.

I'm gonna do a lot of hands-up so we can stay awake, because I think that worked really well for Tina. Anybody who's never heard of this or never seen it, hands up, please. Okay, so we've done a reasonable job of getting the word out about it, because the vast majority of you are aware of it. So, if you didn't pick up a copy at the back, definitely, feel free to do so, and you can order lots and lots of them. Yes, Tina is reminding me that the order limit on this is like 5,000, so it's not a problem. My Future My Way: Never heard of it, hands up. Okay, not bad. You guys are really in the know. I think since we're finding a high level of awareness of these publications, I'm just gonna zip through the slide pretty quickly, and just kind of reinforce maybe what you already know, and maybe you'll learn a couple of things, and then we'll just move on to the next step.

My Future My Way is a small booklet. It's a little workbook specifically for middle school and junior high school students, and it's got these anime characters \_\_\_\_\_ people, and they show what the student should be thinking about now, at this point of their life, and it focuses very much on careers, like what do you want to do with your future, and then what kinds of classes do you want to take in high school to move in that direction, and what kinds of classes might you take in college; what level of education should you get. You know, is it really better for you to go to a technical school than to a four-year college, et cetera, and there's

some quizzes and things in the book so that they can have it be a little more interactive than just reading something. The Bookmark, we have a brand new Bookmark, and we actually ran out of them at the publications table in the PC lab. It's blue and green on one side, and this side advertises studentaid.ed.gov. The other side is a white background with bright colors, advertising college.gov. You can order lots of these, as well, and it's just a handy-dandy little thing just to give to students and say, "Hey, go to these websites.

Okay, and then as the student gets closer to the point where they want to actually apply for aid, something that we highly, highly recommend is Do You Need Money for College, subtitle Federal Student Aid at a Glance. That's another thing that we've got at the back of the room for you, and we have some copies down in the PC lab, as well, at our FSA publications table. These, you can order many, many copies of. I believe that is 5,000, as well. Yeah? The front of it just says, "What is federal student aid and how do you get it?" and then on the back is a chart of what are the programs, how much might you be able to get in any given year. So, this is just your basic introduction, high-level overview, "What is federal student aid? What do I need to know about it?" So, I know that a lot of schools like to maybe send out an informational piece to all the students who are applying to them. This might be a good one for that, because it folds up easily, it's very light, it's very, very cheap to ship, or you can just email them the PDF, if that's the way you guys do things.

Funding Education Beyond High School a lot of people are familiar with. I don't have a copy of that with me because we actually ran out. That's a much thicker booklet, and that one goes into great, great detail about the programs. We've got a lot of usability studies that we've done over the years, and we found that a lot of students don't want to read such a big book. It tends to be more popular with the parents than the students, so I would say maybe Do You Need Money for College is much better for the students. They want something quick, and then it sends them online to get the detail they need. Funding Education Beyond High School is quite in depth, and also, because we have had to lower the quantities that we print due to the cost of printing this book, we are limiting the quantities that you can get, and we recommend that you only use it particularly for parents, but for people who really don't have easy access to the Internet, so they need something in paper, and they need and want that detailed level of information.

Paper FAFSA, we all know what that is, although we don't see it



that much these days. It is still being printed. We are gonna be printing some for the 11-12 year. And, again, these are limited, as well, because, honestly, everybody does it online these days. If you do need them for people who don't have Internet access, it's called a Special Request when you order them, and you just explain who the population is that you're working with and how many you need, and then we'll work with you. FAFSA on the Web Worksheet is coming out again within the next several weeks, and this one has been simplified. The online FAFSA, as you all have learned, has been greatly simplified, so they've also simplified the worksheet, and that should be out within the next – I'm not making any promises because I don't control that one, but within the next several weeks, that should be out in hardcopy, and of course they'll post it online in PDF, as well, so you'll be able to get it online pretty soon.

Your Federal Student Loans, in working at our FSA publications table downstairs, I've actually been surprised at how many people are not aware of this book; they don't know what it is. It was a book about that big. I'm sure you can all tell from the back of the room how big that is. Is it gonna be 8 ½ x 11, this upcoming one? The same size? Okay, so it's a –

*Unknown Female:* Remember \_\_\_\_\_.

*Cindy:* Yeah. It's a small book, but it's thick and it's got lots of information about what federal student loans are there, what types of loans, and why get a federal student loan instead of a private loan, what the benefits of federal student loans are, information about deciding how much money to borrow, repayment information, default information, you know, just basically what you need to know about federal student loans. So, that's your detailed information about loans, and then the last two are just simple little brochures that give quick information, about Direct Loans, in particular. We've got Direct Loan Basics for Students, and Direct Loan Basics for Parents, and we do have samples of these two brochures down at the FSA publications table in the PC lab. Basically, what they do is they give answers to some of their frequently asked questions about the programs. So, simple information in these, and then Your Federal Student Loans provides more detailed information.

Okay, so where do you find all these publications. As I mentioned, they're available online and in print. Online, you can actually find most of these. If you want to send your students to one page and not have to try to remember a whole lot of different URLs for each of the individual publications, send them to

studentaid.ed.gov/pubs. That's our publications page, and if you scroll down from the screenshot that we're showing you here, there's various sections of this page, and each section has a different sort of theme to the publications that are in that section. So, we've got, for instance, this is showing federal student aid information/money for college. We have a FAFSA information section, we have a loan section, we have a consumer protection area, we have getting ready for college, et cetera, and there are actually publications on there that you're not going to see on FSA pubs because we have some one-page fact sheets that we only put on this site because we don't print them out. We just leave it up to you guys to either email a PDF to your students or print them out yourselves and make photocopies of them.

So, definitely check out that site if you're not aware of it. You might find some really good stuff in there. A couple of my favorites are there's a one-page fact sheet called Am I Dependent or Independent? And it just has a little checklist of the dependency status questions, and it helps them understand where that comes from and that they can't just declare themselves independent. And then, there's another one called Who Is My Parent When I Fill Out the FAFSA, and that goes into that frequently asked question of, "Well, whose information am I supposed to put? What if I live with this person? What if I live with that person?" et cetera. If you need publications in print, you can order them for free at fsapubs.gov, and if you go back to the little letter that we talked about before, the one that I opened up and showed you the centerfold and everything, there's a page in that called Your Guide to FSA Pubs.

So, if you're not familiar with ordering our publications, you can just read through that page and it'll explain how to do that. You need your school's OPE ID in order to sign on at fsapubs.gov, and then you can browse through the publications, tell us how many you want, and then check out. It's just like any Web shopping site, you know, you add to the cart and then you check out at the end, and then they send them to you. Also, Tina has put in a couple of plugs for the FSA pubs table in the PC lab. Come on by there. They have hardcopy order forms that you can use, or you can just go back to your office and order from there. Either way is fine.

Okay, so that's really the publications information that I wanted to present as far as the potential students, and then we wanted to throw in just a little bit for you as far as, "Well, what about those current students?" In particular, what about current students who don't have Title IV aid? What kind of stuff would you want to

give them? Well, I would definitely recommend Do You Need Money for College, which is this one. Again, they just need a quick overview. You know, “I haven’t been getting financial aid. I’ve been living off my credit cards. I’m starting to think maybe a student loan might be a better idea, but I don’t know anything about it because I’ve never done a FAFSA. I’m barely aware of the FAFSA.” Just give them this so that they can understand what that’s all about, and then you can work with them to make sure they get their FAFSA done.

As far as online resources for them, send them to Student Aid on the Web and I would definitely point out – ooh, I’m gonna use my pointer now. I’d like to thank Mr. Techieman for this pointer. Ooh. Okay, the two circled items on the screenshot here, one says Federal Student Aid programs, and that’s where you get to the meat of our programs online, all the details about all the various programs, the kinds of things that no publication can give you. You know, there’s some things you just have to go to the Web for because it’s just so much information. And then, the other one is called Applying for Financial Aid, and that’s where your current students who’ve never done their FAFSA are gonna learn a little bit about the application process, so then they can move on and stop living on their credit cards.

And then, for your current students who do have aid, specifically loans, I’m sure you guys are aware of these websites. We have online entrance counseling at studentloans.gov – and they can also sign their MPN there – online exit counseling, and information about the aid they’ve received \_\_\_\_\_ NSLDS, and then general loan information is in, as I mentioned, Your Federal Student Loans, and I’ve given you the direct URL to send them to Your Federal Student Loans, and there’s also the direct.ed.gov site, which gives general information about loans and what they’re all about, Direct Loans and how the program works.

Okay. Now, for those of you who are reaching out to school counselors, we have a few things that you might or might not be aware of, and this is where I think we run into an area where I’m glad you’re here, basically, because there’s some lack of awareness around some of these things because, really, we’ve been advertising this website, for instance, to counselors. We have not been advertising it to you guys, so thank you for coming today. Our website specifically for school counselors, TRIO people, gear-up people, NCAN – National College Access Network – any of those college access people, any of those mentors is fsa4counselors.ed.gov. It doesn’t go into the detail that IFAP does,

because those people don't need that detail. They just need a place where they can get some resources, maybe find out about training, find out where Federal Student Aid is gonna be, what conference are we gonna be talking at, or what college fairs are we gonna be at, et cetera. They can also find out, for instance, if they're a TRIO program and one of their kids is moving to another area of the country, they can go onto that website and look in an Excel spreadsheet and find a TRIO program in the new area of the country where the kid is gonna be going. There's a Power Point presentation on there that they can use for doing financial aid nights. There's a list of frequently asked questions, et cetera. I swear to you now, because I've just been given ownership of this site, that the site will be revamped, improved and updated over the next year. So, find me at next year's conference and slap my wrist if I haven't done. But it's pretty good right now. It's got a lot of really useful information for the counselors on there.

Then, of course, there's fsapubs.gov. You all are not the only ones who can actually use fsapubs.gov to order publications, and I really think, when you go out and you talk to school counselors, you need to be telling them about it, educate them about it. High schools, TRIO programs, the libraries, all these people, and basically any non-profit who is mentoring students who are headed toward college has access to this. All they need to do is get what's called an ML number, which is short for mailing list number. Obviously, they don't have OPE IDs. They're not post-secondary education institutions. They have ML numbers, so they'd do the same thing you do. They'd go to the homepage, they log in using their ID number, which is their ML number, and then they choose how many publications they want to put in their cart, and then they sign out. So, when you talk to them about FSA Pubs, explain how it works, and remind them, please, to provide their email address because that's a really important way for us to keep in touch with them and let them know about things.

*Tina:* Cindy, we should also mention that on the FSA Pubs homepage, near the login, there's some information on how a library or a high school can get an ML letter if they don't have one currently. So, as long as you can send them to the fsapubs.gov site, and let them know that there's some contact information for getting that ML letter, they'll be able to get that number so that they can start ordering publications.

*Cindy:* Yeah. Exactly. It gives the phone number for them to call if they don't have an ML number, or if they have one and they don't remember what it is, for instance. Okay, so what about publications for counselors? I know that a lot of people who do

outreach to school counselors are aware of the Counselors and Mentors Handbook, and ta-da! We have the 11-12 out already. It's available, and it should be in the process of doing the mass mailing out to the school counselors right now. This is something else that I personally want to make a plea to you guys who do outreach to counselors, because I sort of own the counselors handbook, and any of the requests for 200 of them come to me, and then I have to look at, "Well, why does this person need 200? Do they really understand who the audience is?" et cetera. When it's an FAA who's doing outreach to counselors and doing a training program, well obviously you want to give it to all the people who are coming to your program, but here's something to be aware of. We do send a copy of the counselors handbook to every high school TRIO program, gear-up program, National College Access Network participating organization and Bureau of Indian Education school on our mailing list every year when it comes out. Every address gets that automatically.

So, if you're going out there to do training, and you want 200 copies because you have 200 attendees, you might be handing something to somebody that they already have, so here's my little ideal world picture, and I know it doesn't always work this way. But ideal world, you decide you're gonna do training a couple of months from now, and you're starting to do your marketing for that training. In your marketing for that training, if you plan to use the counselors handbook during the training class, tell the people to bring it with them, and tell them if they don't have it, they can call 1-800-394-7084, which is the number for FSA Pubs, and you can get that number online. Tell them to get themselves a copy and bring it along with them, then all you have to do is maybe order a few copies to have for the people who inevitably will forget to bring them with them.

Now, that's if you're going to use it during the training. If you're not going to use it and you just want them to have something to take back with them, well that's easy. Just tell them about FSA Pubs and tell them to order themselves one. Give them something in hardcopy that tells them how to order it, give them the name of the book so they know exactly what they're ordering. You are teaching them to fish, okay? You're not handing them a fish and then they forget all about and they don't know how they got this book in the first place. They're going away, and then they can self-serve. Okay, off the soapbox. Down, girl, down.

Okay, so what is the counselors handbook? For those of you who aren't aware of it, it just gives basic program information and

FAFSA information for the counselors who are helping students work through that process of applying for federal student aid. It goes into a lot of detail about how does the FAFSA process work, because that's what these guys are doing, they're in the nitty-gritty of when the student is first applying. So, they need to understand, you know, first you maybe check out 4caster, you get your PIN, here's where you go to do the FAFSA, et cetera, and it covers some of the frequently asked questions or the frequently misunderstood questions when the students do the FAFSA, including, "Who is my parent?" et cetera, et cetera. If you wanted to look at this book, it is going to be – as soon as I have the final-final PDF back from the printer, we're gonna post it on the FSA for Counselors website, and you'll be able to find it there. You can download the PDF and flip through it.

Another thing you might want to use when you do your outreach to counselors is the FSA for Counselors brochure. On FSA Pubs, if you want to order it, you can order that in bulk. I think it's actually called Federal Student Aid for Counselors Website Brochure. It's like this long, strung-out thing. This image on the screen here shows, if you open up the brochure, what the inside of it looks like. Essentially, it's a screenshot of the homepage of the counselors site, and points out some of the facets of the site that they might be particularly interested in. So, that's a good tool for you to make them aware of the site. Okay, another thing you might want to mention to the school counselors is College Week Live. I just want to stress right now that this is not a U.S. Department of Education program. It is a [dot.com](#), and we have an agreement in place with them right now that we will do a couple of presentations during their online college fairs each year, and we also have a couple of virtual booths at their college fair.

So, just to explain really briefly what this is, College Week Live, it's a website that always exists but it has different events that happen at different times. Primarily, what they do is online college fairs, so a lot of colleges across the country have signed up to participate in these fairs, and potential students will come on and e-chat with the school representative who is also online at the time. So, they can explore different schools and talk to different people from them, and Federal Student Aid will have a booth. We have a general booth with general financial aid information, and we also have a college.gov booth on College Week Live. We also provide presentations. They have, basically, these webinars and they go on throughout the day, and they'll be on different topics, and one of the topics always is financial aid. So, we'll get a Federal Student Aid person or two to talk about applying, using the FAFSA, et

cetera. So, that's something you might want to tell counselors about just to make them aware. This is free to students. They sign up for it, and then College Week Live has their email address and they'll send them reminders about upcoming events and things.

Another thing for the counselors is our counselor training program, known as National Training for Counselors and Mentors, also known as NT4CM, because we are the government and we have to abbreviate everything. This one is a joint effort, and this is very much a joint effort. This is not a federal thing. This is Federal Student Aid, NASFAA, **NCHELP**, NCAN, \_\_\_\_\_ and COE, which is the TRIO organization. All those organizations together have a memorandum of understanding and they all make up the steering committee for NT4CM, and what they do is they provide the curriculum and the sort of overall, high-level marketing materials, and then they recruit people from different states to be what's called a state coordinator. So, each state that participates will have a person who is designated as the state coordinator, and they might work at the state higher education agency or something, and that person will then find trainers within the state. The trainers are frequently financial aid administrators, for instance.

We have a list here of the states that are participating this year. Most of the trainings happen in the fall, a few states do trainings in the spring, as well, and the idea is to provide a half-day training for school counselors in the basics of financial aid for about four hours. So, what they do is the states will grab our curriculum and then use it so that we know that throughout all these states, the school counselors are getting a curriculum that is accurate and is consistent. If you wanted to get involved in your state in one way or another, whether to be a trainer or a state coordinator, or if you wanted to learn more about NT4CM in your state, you can contact [nt4cm@.gov](mailto:nt4cm@.gov), and ask them about that. If you just want general information about NT4CM, or if you wanted to let counselors in your state know about it, the URL is right there, [fsa4counselors.ed.gov/nt4cm](http://fsa4counselors.ed.gov/nt4cm). There's also a link from the homepage of the counselors website.

*Tina:*

It's also in the Web Resources handout, too.

*Cindy:*

Ooh, good. It's also in the Web Resources handout that you picked up at the back of the room. Okay, we would like to request that if you need to leave the room right now that you do so quietly, but if you want to stay and ask questions, please go to one of the microphones because I am old and my hearing is bad, and I will never hear you from way back there. We're gonna do a little bit of best practices talk, as well, for those of you who are staying, about

the types of things that you use at your schools to reach out to students, parents and counselors. So, if you're interested in that discussion, stick around.

*Tina:* And I'll also throw in that if there's things – I know we've talked about a number of Web resources, the NT4CM program, but if there's things that you feel that are kind of gaps in terms of the types of resources that Federal Student Aid is providing, we certainly would love to hear some discussion around that, as well, because those are things that we can take into consideration, too.

*Cindy:* Yeah, exactly, "What do you need from us?" And Tina is gonna type things in so they're gonna show up on the screen, sort of like having a white board, except electronically.

*Tina:* I'm gonna try. I think you have a question.

*Cindy:* Okay –

*Tina:* Oop, I don't think it worked.

*Cindy:* – now I know I turned this on.

*Tina:* I don't think I can do that. I think we're stuck.

*Cindy:* Really? Okay.

*Tina:* Yep.

*Cindy:* Okay, I can barely hear this. Can you guys hear me?

*Audience:* Yes.

*Tina:* Yeah.

*Cindy:* Is anybody controlling the sound at the moment?

*[Interruption]*

Okay. While we can, we've got the first person with a question at the microphone, or a comment. Go ahead, please.

*Audience:* Thanks. You mentioned that data from the FAFSA4caster will no longer be able to be transferred. Will that data still be captured and used to send reminders to students to file the actual FAFSA?

*Cindy:* Okay, will the 4caster data still be captured and used to send reminders? Thank you for that question. What he's referring to is



the fact that people used to put in, for instance, their email address, their name, whatever, et cetera, and then they could transfer some of their basic demographic information into the FAFSA when it was time to do so, and FAFSA4caster, or we, Federal Student Aid, would automatically generate a PIN for the student once they did FAFSA4caster, and would send them a reminder saying, "Hey, it's time to do your FAFSA. We don't collect any personally identifiable information anymore, including the email address. So, no, we don't capture and retain any data. They will not receive a reminder. Thank you for that question. Did you have anything else before we go to the next mic?"

*Audience:* Yeah, just in ways or maybe something that you could add or offer, I was wondering if the department has ever thought about maybe some basic translation services, like maybe offering a Q&A in various different languages, or some basic statements about federal student aid offered in multiple languages that we could plug into our own publications.

*Cindy:* Do you have any suggestions for the type of statements, or you mean just like in general?

*Audience:* Well, I mean like I know that some publications are published in various languages, our state also offers publications that are offered in various languages, but I can't pluck any nuggets out of those and put them into a publication that I'm sending to a specific parent, because we have a very small population of parents that speak a specific language. So, I don't know if a full publication is maybe something that would be good for them, but is there a way that you can offer basic language translations that schools can then take and use what they need to create a more informative publication? I would say specifically for parents, not students.

*Cindy:* Right. I understand what you're saying because, in many cases, the student speaks English anyway, but maybe the parent is a relatively recent immigrant and they're still much more comfortable functioning in their primary language. As we mentioned, just about all of our publications are available in Spanish, but what we're looking for here is a number of different languages, maybe some very, very basic statement, overall thing explaining perhaps what is federal student aid, what is your kid applying for, and –

*Tina:* Like **Do You** Need Money –

*Cindy:* – yeah, exactly, that kind of thing. So, Tina is making a note of this. Unfortunately, we aren't able to type on here and show you

on the screen, but Tina is making a note of that, and we will take that back with us. At the moment, our translation services contract allows for Spanish translation, but anything that you guys tell us, we're gonna note it down and explore possibilities. Thank you. The rear microphone? Thank you.

*Audience:* Yes. I was actually just curious maybe to open up a discussion to talk about ways that other schools maximize different events that they offer to students or to parents, or to counselors just to explain how the FAFSA works. I know many of us do financial aid nights, but beyond that, what types of workshops do you offer? How do you measure the effectiveness of those, you know, the students that you reach? And I was just curious to know what other people are doing out there.

*Cindy:* Thank you for asking that question. This is opening up the discussion. Does somebody out there have what they consider to be a reasonably successful program that can respond to her question? C'mon, let's share some of our best practices here. Somebody must be doing something right, right?

*Audience:* Well, I'll share what we do, specifically. Right now, there are five schools that we do a three-step process with. So, in the fall, we go in and we just talk basically about what is financial aid. I kind of thought the information was a little overwhelming to try to do it in a one 45-minute period in one night, and then we get invited back this time of year to begin talking about what the FAFSA is, and then we possibly complete the FAFSA worksheet. And then, we schedule a time to actually complete the FAFSA online with the families in front of computers. Where we run into problems is we work with a lot of modest-income families, who they don't come in a three-step process always, and they don't have computer access. We're always at different parts of the process with these people. I was more curious to know how you work with that type of population, if this is sort of a focus or a mission that your school possibly has. So, that's something that works for us; I just didn't know what anyone else is doing out there.

*Cindy:* Anyone? Please come up to the mic and share.

*Audience:* Morning. We do the same thing in almost the same steps, but we actually, for those students who don't have computer access, the high school counselors make the computer lab. They schedule the computer lab for the students. We send letters home that tells the students exactly what they need to bring. That includes the parents' Social Security number, date of birth, all that information, and we schedule time for our counselors to go into the school

system at that period of time and help them complete the total process online. If they forget to bring something, we at least get them started by getting their PIN ID, and even just starting the process up to the point where they have to stop and save it. We remind them that they've got 30 to 45 days to come back and complete it. We also schedule time in our computer lab for those students who forget it, and they can schedule a time to come on campus and do it with us.

*Cindy:* That's great. Go ahead.

*Audience:* We do about the same thing, except ours is in just two sessions: One just about financial aid, and then the second part is working with the FAFSA with them in the springtime, or early spring. I will say that Missouri also – I'm from Missouri University of Science and Technology, and we also participate in what was College Goal Sunday and now is FAFSA Frenzy. I'm not exactly sure, but there are sites all over the state of Missouri that anybody can come to. They're not necessarily on a college campus. They're at a YMCA or a high school, or anywhere that's got a computer lab that will work with them on filling out the FAFSA, so we do that, as well.

*Cindy:* Do we have another one? Okay, go ahead at the back microphone.

*Audience:* This is Maria, from Illinois. We actually work on many of the campaigns that you've mentioned – College Goal Sunday, NT4CM – and we do have an \_\_\_\_\_ Corps, which is a version of Peace Corps, if you may, where we have peer mentors who handhold our students through the process, and we do everything from raising awareness – and we do this year-round – raising awareness about financial aid and preparing for college, and we follow up with hands-on workshops and FAFSA completion, and then consumer education, which includes packaging, comparison packaging, and a number of other things. We have a number of tools to help them go through it, with a very interactive tool, including the ones that come from FSA. But one of the things that has worked really well for us has been the NT4CM, and I'll tell you why. A lot of accountants, college \_\_\_\_\_ professionals, counselors, people who are helping our students go through the process, are showing up at our sessions. The incentive is that we provide them with the knowledge, and we pay them with **CEs** and **CPDU** credit if they will come out and work with us. So, they will sit through a half-day session. We have ten modules that we offer, everything from FAFSA made easy to FAFSA expert, where we do hand calculations of EFC – believe it or not, they really like it – a lot of case studies. They love it. It's the best-attended program, and we

go all the way through billing.

What we find is that when we have the hands-on workshops, they actually come because they want the added component to it. Beyond just talking about the content and the details of our programs and our services and the FAFSA, they want to actually work with it, so they come to our hands-on FAFSA completion workshops. They have an expert from either **ISAC** or the Department of Education, or financial aid administrators who will answer the tough questions, but at least they're there helping and actually going through the motions. After that, we see that a lot of them take on the responsibility for creating campaigns within their schools, and then we've just become a support system versus having to do all of their programs. So, it's a year-round thing.

*Cindy:* Thank you. It sounds like you guys are doing a lot of networking, which can really help. It takes the burden off you if you have other people working with you to help out with things. Go ahead.

*Audience:* Yes. I work with the College Access Challenge Grant Program at the university in the Virgin Islands, so I'm not a financial aid administrator, so I do a lot of the outreach. I work closely with the financial aid office. But what we've been doing is we actually go to where the people are. We tried going to the schools, and we do have some success going to the schools, but we have done outreach at public housing communities, we've done outreach at churches, and we take computers, we set up sessions for them, because it's really a handholding process and we have to follow through with them. When we go to them, they usually come back for follow-up sessions, when we're in the communities, and stuff like that.

*Cindy:* Yeah, that's a good point. That's like what Tina was saying about the students, when we talk to the students about college.gov, they were saying, "We want to hear from people who we can relate to," et cetera, and if you come to people where they're comfortable, in their housing area, or whatever, then it's just got that extra level of, "Okay, I'm in familiar surroundings. I'm a little more ready to listen to this. I'm not freaked out by where I'm in some strange place." Anybody else with ideas? These have been really great. Yeah, Tina is like, "What do they want from us? What do they want from us?" What can we do, and let's blue sky it a little bit, while keeping in mind that we are in a bad economy right now. But feel free to make suggestions with the understanding that we are not making any promises to you. Yes?

*Audience:* Some of us are very strong technical people and we're horrible at standing in front of people, and we work for enrollment

management people that are used to standing in front of people. If I had something, you know, \_\_\_\_\_ small schools, if I had something \_\_\_\_\_ on our days that we bring somebody that I could plug in there that you've already produced that says, "This is the FAFSA. This is who your parent is. How many people in your family? You're not the head of household." I mean those kind of things, because when I get up there, people usually, they tell me that I'm lecturing people because I'm big, I have a deep voice, and the assumption is that I'm telling them how to do it. You know, I'm not. That's not my strength, but I'm in a very small office and so I'm the one doing it. If we had a resource, and I bet you there's a lot of schools – because I know you have the entrance counseling tape, but if you had something similar on how to do the FAFSA that was young people up there doing it, you know, a mixture of incomes and ethnicities, it would be wonderful if we had something like that.

*Cindy:* Thank you. Is that something you guys talk a little bit about in your social media event? I've been to so many sessions I've lost track of who said what in which session, and in some session at some point, somebody was saying, "Get students to make videos about financial aid and put them up on YouTube." We're gonna have one of our social media reps – boy, this is like major plug time here.

*Unknown Female:* Yeah, well at the department, something that we're working on with social media, hopefully, is getting a lot of student-generated videos and content, and kind of taking the government speak and bringing it down to a student level. So, hopefully, in the near future that's something you'll see from us. I mean we have a Flip cam, a little \$200.00 cam, and we're gonna try to make really interactive videos to explain the financial aid process in an easier way to understand. So, definitely look out for that, and hopefully pretty soon we'll start doing some of that.

*Cindy:* Thank you so much, and seriously, if you guys haven't been to their session yet, I was there yesterday, it's really interesting and very entertaining. Go ahead.

*Audience:* Okay. Thank you. I apologize if I'm not framing this question that well. Given the progression of educational attainment needed in many professions today, are there any FSA publications geared specifically to potential graduate students?

*Cindy:* How many times have I been asked that question while I've been here? Let me count the ways. Not to the extent that there should be. Yes, but on Student Aid on the Web, if you go to the

homepage and you look at the left-hand side of the page, there is a section for graduate students. It does talk about places to look for money to help you pay for graduate school, so it does have some ideas there, places to look for money. It gives some general information for graduate students. That's not a publication, it's a Web page, but really, honestly, once somebody's on their way to grad school, they have Internet access anyway at their college, or whatever. Go ahead, and then I'll continue.

*Tina:* I know there used to be, you know, we Direct Loan Basics and Entrance Counseling for Graduate Students, which was a publication that was specifically targeted toward that, and then the entrance counseling component kind of got brought into the larger entrance counseling publication, and exit, as well. So, one of the things that we are evaluating is is there a need to have something that's still more informational that's targeted toward the graduate student, because when that publication went away, you also lost kind of the basics part of it. You lost some of the information that was relevant, and I think that's a lot of the feedback we've been getting at the pubs table, and hearing it here is helpful because it just kind of reinforces that that's a content area that we really need to take a closer look at.

*Cindy:* Yeah, and if nothing else, we'll try to make a push to beef up the graduate student page on the website. At the moment, the best thing really that I can recommend is that they take a quick look at that page, see if it helps them, and get the publication called Your Federal Student Loans, because most of what we have to offer graduate students is the loans, and that goes into that information. So, thank you for that. Yes? Go ahead.

*Audience:* Hi. My name is Lisa \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm with Education Quest Foundation in Nebraska. Are you guys familiar with that organization, or is anybody? Yeah? Okay. We're a non-profit, and what we do is we help students with college planning. There's three offices in Nebraska, and everything that we do is for free. We provide financial aid presentations, we provide publications, and helping students with the whole college-going process. There's a couple organizations in the nation that are similar to us, and I guess my question is is there any emphasis or any outlook or research done to be able to expand those kinds of organizations nationwide? Our organization is just for the state of Nebraska, and we believe it's one of the most effective programs in the state. We're considered one of the goldmines for Nebraska because of what we do and reaching so many students across our state. Do you know if there's any organization looking at us, or any

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organization looking at similar organizations to see how we can provide those kinds of services nationwide?

*Cindy:* Can we get your information afterwards and –

*Audience:* Certainly.

*Cindy:* – we'll see what we can find out for you?

*Audience:* Certainly. Okay, and also, going along with that, I think it would be very beneficial if you did research on those organizations. I think there's about nine or ten of us across the nation. If we can actually unite and see what kind of practices are done in other states so we can better what we do, and how we go about reaching students who need that college access component that we can provide. Like I said, everything we do is for free, and if you research Nebraska and talk to the Department of Ed there, you'll hear Education Quest and lots of people will be thinking what a great organization we are. Thank you very much.

*Cindy:* Thank you. Anyone else? Going once, going twice. Bueller? Okay, thank you so much.

*[End of Audio]*