

MDHE DIGEST

Building Missouri's future... by degrees®

The Digest, an electronic newsletter produced by the Missouri Department of Higher Education, is intended for Missouri's financial aid officers, high school counselors and other secondary and higher education professionals interested in promoting student success and access to postsecondary education.

June 2011

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MDHE

Missouri Department of Higher Education

Digest

www.dhe.mo.gov

Mailboxes are being replaced since some of the older ones did not work properly. The previous boxes were aluminum. The new ones will be brass. "It will look real nice; it will go with the antique nature of the university," Henderson said. In addition, the opening into the mailroom is much

during an exclusive interview with The Clarion. Henderson said that in addition to the mailroom, the staff lounge is moving, and a new office for Auxiliary Services is opening. The refurbishments have affected the relocation of the staff lounge from the right side to the left side of the mailroom. It was also made smaller. According to Henderson, the lounge was well used a great deal by staff. Thus the downsizing of space. The Auxiliary Services office will move from the main mail room where the old staff lounge used to be. This will allow Sylvia Wilson, the Auxiliary Services director, to be closer to the mailroom. Henderson said Auxiliary Services was looking for a bigger area and

the size of the old ones at four feet wide. Resilient floor will be put in to benefit mailroom employees who stand most of the day. Henderson said the new mailroom will feature more light for the mailroom staff. He explained that being "downgrade" or partially underground due to the slope of the landscape outside, average light makes you feel like you're in a dungeon. "We're going to overdo it on the light."

Mailboxes are being replaced since some of the older ones did not work properly. The previous boxes were aluminum. The new ones will be brass. "It will look real nice; it will go with the antique nature of the university," Henderson said. In addition, the opening into the mailroom is much taller. Henderson believes this will allow access to those which better.

Even the finish on the new walls has been matched to the original finish. Henderson said, "It's going to look like it was always here." He added that they wanted the students to feel proud of the school just



Copy Editor
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mail postal service, overnight service as well as UPS services are offered through the mailroom. Any student, faculty or staff member can send mail through the mailroom.

The money for the renovation came from the Auxiliary Services budget. The mail-

pus include Dawson Hall where floors six and seven are under renovation due to a fire last semester. Also in Dawson Hall, life safety improvements will be made. Over the summer sprinkler systems will be installed on all floors. Henderson said the renovation is Auxiliary

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Missouri News

State legislative updates

Two pieces of legislation passed that will allow for competitive grants to be made from the Board of Nursing Fund to institutions of higher education – SB325 (Senator Jay Wasson) and HB223/231 (Representative Wayne Wallingford). The grants will allow postsecondary institutions to enhance and expand nursing education programs and will be awarded jointly by the State Board of Nursing and the MDHE. The fiscal year 2012 higher education budget includes \$1 million for the program and the State Board of Nursing has pledged \$1 million per year for three years for these awards. Institutions interested in applying for grants should watch the MDHE's website for upcoming details.

The 2011 Missouri legislative session also resulted in a new state aid program, the Advanced Placement Incentive Grant. The grants are for students who scored a three or better on at least two Advance Placement tests in math or science while attending a Missouri public high school and who receive either an [Access Missouri](#) or [A+ award](#). Because there was no appropriation for this program, the MDHE and the Office of Administration are currently exploring options for implementing it.

Finally, a statutory amendment was approved to restructure the Coordinating Board for Higher Education as well as the governing boards of the University of Missouri and Missouri State University to accommodate the loss of a Congressional district following the 2010 census. Each board will retain nine members, with at least one member, but no

more than two members, being appointed from each Congressional district.

A+ communications

To ensure all interested parties have received [A+ Scholarship program](#) information during the program's transition to the Missouri Department of Higher Education, we have sent all A+ related messages both to individuals signed up to receive information about Missouri state aid programs and FAMOUS, in addition to those signed up to receive information about the A+ Scholarship program. However, **effective July 1, 2011**, the MDHE will begin communicating information about the A+ Scholarship **only to those individuals signed up to receive e-distribution messages about the A+ Scholarship program.**

If you are interested in receiving A+ emails but are currently registered to receive only emails related to Missouri state aid programs and FAMOUS, you must [re-subscribe to the MDHE's electronic notifications](#) on the MDHE's website by completing the following steps:

1. On the subscription page, simply click "Re-subscribe with New Options"
2. Enter the requested information
3. Be certain to select all of the electronic notices you are interested in receiving, including "Send me information about the A+ Scholarship Program"
4. Click the "Submit" button



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Please note you will need to reselect any electronic notifications you are currently receiving, such as “Send me emails about Missouri state aid programs and FAMOUS,” to ensure continued receipt of those notices.

If you are currently registered to receive information about the A+ Scholarship program, no action is needed.

If you have questions, please contact:

Connie Bestgen, program specialist
(800) 473-6757, option 4, (573) 751-1772, or connie.bestgen@dhe.mo.gov

Amy Haller, program specialist
(573) 526-7958 or amy.haller@dhe.mo.gov

Kelli Reed, student assistance associate
(573) 751-2444 or kelli.reed@dhe.mo.gov

New map indicates high, low college-going areas

A new report compiled from data collected by the Missouri Departments of [Elementary and Secondary Education](#) and [Higher Education](#) shows the rates at which twelfth graders around the state are preparing for college by filing applications for student financial aid.

To be eligible for financial aid, students must file a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#), or FAFSA. This is the first time the two agencies have merged data to create a map showing areas of the state where

twelfth graders have filed FAFSAs.

“One of our goals as an agency is to help students overcome the obstacles that might prevent them from enrolling in and graduating from college,” said Leroy Wade, assistant commissioner for financial aid (MDHE). “Student financial aid is available from a variety of programs. The first step for almost all of them is to file a FAFSA.”

Research shows that students who complete a FAFSA by May and are accepted into a four-year college are more than 50 percent more likely to enroll in college than students who did not complete a FAFSA. Nationally, more than 1.7 million students fail to apply for student aid each year because they think they will be ineligible.

“We want students to not only plan and prepare academically for continuing their education and training beyond high school, but to complete the FAFSA to ensure financial support can be accessed when needed,” said Leigh Ann Grant-Engle, assistant commissioner of data system management (DESE).

“[FAFSA Frenzy](#)” events held around the state encourage students to file by April 1 to be considered for the state’s primary need-based financial aid program, Access Missouri. The U.S. Department of Education also uses FAFSA information to determine eligibility for Pell Grants, and colleges and universities use FAFSA results to award federal, state and institutional aid, including need-based grants and scholarships as well as student loans.

Missouri officials collect the filing data to estimate how many people will be eligible for state financial aid and to determine potential award amounts. Wade



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says it is still too early to say what award amounts will be for the coming academic year, but the map helps identify pockets of the state where financial aid applications are high, and areas where they are low.

The number of students in Missouri eligible for need-based financial aid has increased 15 to 20 percent each year since 2003.

Attention FFELP Loan Holders:

Electronically signed Master Promissory Note requirements

Pursuant to CFR 34 § 682.414 (a), the MDHE is requesting that lenders with whom the MDHE has participation agreements, submit certain documents related to electronic signatures. Each lender must submit written documentation of current and historical versions of its e-sign process to the MDHE by July 15, 2011. **Claims submitted after July 31, 2011**, may be returned or denied if the lender has not provided sufficient documentation to the MDHE for our files.

The following documentation is required:

- A description of the steps followed by a borrower to execute the promissory note (such as a flow chart),
- A copy of each screen as it would have appeared to the borrower of the loan or loans when the borrower signed the note electronically,
- A description of the field edits and other security measures used to ensure integrity of the data submitted to the originator electronically,

- A description of how the executed promissory note has been preserved to ensure that it has not been altered after it was executed, and
- Documentation supporting the lender's authentication and electronic signature process.

The following information is also required:

- The implementation date for each e-sign process for each loan type,
- The written documentation of your process must specify revisions made to the process and the date those revisions were implemented, and
- If your lending institution utilized another lender's process, you must specify in writing the process used, the dates you utilized the process and the specific loan types covered.

Please contact Debbie Crossnoe at 800-473-6757, with any questions or concerns regarding this process.



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National News

By Robert Powell, MDHE policy analyst



New Gainful Employment Rule

On June 2, 2011, the U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) the release of the final regulations for Gainful Employment programs. The [NPRM](#) had been issued in July of 2010, but the final rules were delayed due to the volume of feedback that the proposed rules received. The final rules were published in the June 13 [Federal Register](#).

Gainful Employment Website

In addition to the newly published Gainful Employment rule, the USDE has created a [website](#) addressing both the new rule and the Gainful Employment provisions from the [Oct. 29, 2010](#), Program Integrity final rules. This website compiles all of information the USDE has issued regarding various Gainful Employment provisions, including a [NSLDS user guide](#) and a [FAQ section](#).

Volume 6 of the 2010-2011 FSA Handbook Released

On May 20, the USDE released [Volume 6](#) – Managing Campus-Based Programs of the 2010-2011 Federal Student Aid Handbook. This and the other released volumes of the FSA handbook can be found on the USDE's [IFAP](#) website.

Recent Department of Education Guidance

In early June, the USDE issued several pieces of guidance regarding various areas of Title IV eligibility.

[DCL GEN-11-12](#) was issued on June 7, 2011. This letter provides new guidance detailing FSA eligibility for students enrolled for a trial period that leads to regular student enrollment.

On June 6, the USDE [issued clarifying guidance](#) regarding Satisfactory Academic Progress reviews for students in clock hour programs.

Also on June 6, another [Electronic Announcement](#) was issued regarding the establishment of eligibility for comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities.



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Default Prevention

2011-12 Default Prevention Grant recipients to be announced next month

To keep delinquency and [default rates](#) as low as possible in Missouri, the Missouri Department of Higher Education established a [Default Prevention Grant program](#) in 2001. Since then, the MDHE has awarded more than \$6.3 million to as many as 43 postsecondary institutions to aid in implementing and sustaining [debt management programs](#), [financial literacy](#) workshops, student success and retention efforts, and [default prevention](#) activities.

In March, the MDHE invited all Missouri postsecondary institutions participating in the Federal Stafford and/or PLUS loan programs to apply for the 2011-12 academic year DPG. The first step in the application process required postsecondary institutions to submit a letter of intent by the close of business on April 15, 2011. Official proposals were due in to the MDHE office by close of business on May 16. Institutions designated to receive funding through the MDHE's 2011-12 DPG program, will be notified on **Friday, July 1**.

For more information about the MDHE's DPG program or customized, in-depth financial literacy or default prevention training for you or your students, please contact [Marilyn Landrum](#), MDHE student assistance associate for default prevention, or [Sarah Schedler](#), MDHE program specialist.



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Training & Events

There are no articles available at this time. For more information regarding training opportunities available with the Missouri Department of Higher Education, please visit www.dhe.mo.gov/ppc/trainingservices.php.



What's New

Student success “best practices”

As a part of its mission to build Missouri's future... by degrees, the Missouri Department of Higher Education partners with many organizations and professionals dedicated to student success and access to postsecondary education. One of those organizations is [College Bound](#), a St. Louis-based organization that provides academic enrichment, social supports, and life skills to promising high school students from under-resourced backgrounds. Founded in 2006, College Bound has made a significant impact on St. Louis youth, helping nearly 400 motivated students in struggling urban school districts gain access to and succeed in postsecondary education.

Through its important work with at-risk student populations, College Bound has developed some important “best practices” for helping these students overcome barriers and succeed in their educational endeavors. During the [December 2010 meeting](#) of the [Coordinating Board for Higher Education](#), College Bound Executive Director Lisa Zarin expounded on measures she and her staff implemented to help students matriculate at postsecondary institutions across the country. Additionally, the [Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance](#), which was created by Congress in 1986 and is reauthorized through 2014, issued a related [report in June of 2010](#) outlining the impact of grant aid on college access and persistence. College Bound and other organizations with a similar focus identify the following as potential barriers to college access:

- **Award letters.** Some of the issues associated with award letters include the timing, the format, and the inconsistent information provided. These barriers have been experienced by Missouri's students and have also been discussed and reported at a national level. On March 17, 2011, the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance held a hearing regarding financial aid award letters. Two of the key concerns related to award letters are:
 1. **Timing.** Postsecondary schools have their own institutional deadlines and timelines for applying for aid and for awarding aid. When students consider and compare their options – especially those students with limited financial resources outside of financial aid – it can be difficult to have a complete and realistic picture if a student has only some award letters.
 2. **Format and inconsistent information.** The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 required that the U.S. Department of Education develop a standardized financial aid award letter, but such a form has not yet been made available. In a [December 2010 survey report from Mark Kantrowitz](#), 84 percent of the student and parent respondents indicated that financial aid award letters should be standardized to make it easier to understand and compare options. Additionally, most award letters do not clearly state a student's cost of attendance, unmet need, or expected out-of-pocket costs. These factors are problematic for



students in general, but for an at-risk student from an economically depressed situation, these factors can become overwhelming barriers.

- **Verification processes.** Verification procedures among postsecondary institutions may vary greatly, with some financial aid offices being more thorough, requiring more documentation, or requiring additional information that is not required by federal regulations. Verification procedures may be intimidating to any college student, but when it comes to at-risk students, complex verification procedures may become an insurmountable barrier.
- **Living on campus and campus services are critical.** At-risk students may include unaccompanied homeless youth, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, first-generation college students, and those experiencing other personal hardships. Living on campus – where all of the utilities and meals and other living expenses are included – can provide stability allowing students to focus on studies instead of worried about paying bills. Additionally, postsecondary institutions can help make life easier for these students by keeping housing and campus services open during school breaks. Establishing emergency funds or fee waivers for at-risk students can also be helpful. The inability to pay a \$10 campus health fee can be enough to cause an at-risk student who falls ill to withdraw from school.

[Grant Program](#), which was created by Congress in 2007 as part of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act and later extended via the [Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010](#). The state of Missouri has distributed CACG funds through a sub-grant process for the last several years to non-profit, philanthropic organizations or consortia operating in Missouri. A [list of the most recent CACG award recipients](#) may be found on www.dhe.mo.gov.

College Bound is one of many organizations that have benefitted from the [College Access Challenge](#)



Compliance Q&A

Provided by the MDHE compliance staff

even if the institution does not participate in a loan program. This is true whether the student is a Title IV aid recipient or not. [May 12, 2011]

Question:

Our institution offers programs that allow students to take non-credit coursework to obtain a certificate. These programs are not Title IV Eligible. Do these programs qualify as a gainful employment program? We think since they are not credit based courses they would not meet the qualifications stated in the [GEN-11-10 Dear Colleague Letter](#).

Response:

Because these programs are not Title IV Eligible, they do not fall under the gainful employment requirements as stated in the following Q&A on IFAP.

[http://ifap.ed.gov/
GainfulEmploymentInfo/2011GEFAQ.html](http://ifap.ed.gov/GainfulEmploymentInfo/2011GEFAQ.html)

G-Q2: Are non-Title IV eligible educational programs subject to the gainful employment disclosure and reporting requirements?

G-A2: No, only Title IV eligible programs are subject to the statutory and regulatory gainful employment requirements. However, all students enrolled in a Title IV-eligible program that leads to gainful employment in a recognized occupation – a GE Program – must be included in the disclosure and reporting requirements



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Staff News

Effective June 10, **Timothy Hopkins** resigned his position as research associate for the Missouri Department of Higher Education's financial assistance and outreach unit. After serving 3 1/2 years with the MDHE, Tim accepted a position with University of Missouri as a part of their Missouri College Advising Corps program. [College Access Challenge Grant](#) recipients who previously worked with Tim should now contact Leroy Wade, MDHE Assistant Commissioner with any questions or requests.



Also in June, **Rusty Monhollon**, Ph.D., was selected as the MDHE's assistant commissioner for academic affairs. Rusty joined MDHE as a senior associate for academic affairs in 2009. He has served as interim assistant commissioner for academic affairs during the past four months. During that period he conducted a rigorous statewide review of academic programs and forged closer ties to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and other education partners of MDHE. Before joining the MDHE, Rusty was associate professor of history and director of the master's of arts in humanities program at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. He also has held teaching appointments at Washburn University, Rockhurst University, the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri. His book "This is America?": The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas (Palgrave, 2002), received the Edward H. Tihen Publication Award from the Kansas State Historical Association in 2003. He is also the editor of *Baby Boom: People and Perspectives*, published by ABC-CLIO in 2010.





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Financial Literacy

Economic Tidbit

Weathering the Storm: Financial Tips and Resources for Tornado and Flood Recovery

Provided by the MDHE default prevention team

In light of the tornado that hit the Joplin area last month and mass flooding expected in several parts of the state this week, the Missouri Department of Higher Education wants you to be aware of resources available to aid in tornado and flood recovery. Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of the Treasury released its spring 2011 edition of *Weathering The Storm: Financial Tips and Resources for Tornado and Flood Recovery*. This resource serves as a guide for tornado and flood recovery victims residing in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. For your review, the MDHE's default prevention team has taken the liberty of featuring several topics from this publication:

Debt

- Call your creditors. Many will defer your loan payments, waive late fees, or raise your credit limit temporarily.
- If you need help identifying your creditors, you can do so by getting your free credit report at 877-322-8228 or visit www.annualcreditreport.com.

Bank and Credit Union Accounts

- For information about accessing bank accounts, lost records, ATM cards, direct deposits or how to reach your bank, visit www.fdic.gov.
- For information about credit unions, visit www.ncua.gov.
- Banks and credit unions keep extensive back-up records to ensure that customer account information is accurate and protected.
- Banks and credit unions generally have their computer systems operating so customers can access their money through debit and ATM cards, even if the physical office is damaged or closed.
- Most safe deposit boxes are located in fireproof and waterproof areas. If possible, contact the branch or office where your box was located to determine the condition of your box.

Budget

It is a good idea to develop a budget for the months ahead. Some things to include in a budget are:

- Housing (security deposit, monthly rent),
- Transportation (bus, subway or car),
- Communications expenses (phone, cell, fax), and
- Work related equipment/other costs.
- Free resources may be available for food, clothing and furniture. Explore these options first.



10 Tips for Avoiding Scams

1. Before you give out your personal information (Social Security number, date of birth, FEMA case number), make sure it is absolutely necessary and that the person asking for it represents a legitimate organization (such as a government agency or charity).
2. Avoid “officials” who ask for payments for government benefits. No government agency charges application fees for disaster relief benefits.
3. Always keep critical personal information and documents in a safe place.
4. Don't give out your checking account number over the phone unless you know the company and understand why the information is necessary.
5. Don't pay in advance for offers of housing.
6. Avoid offers for loans or credit cards that require payment in advance.
7. For home repairs, ask for references and referrals.
8. For home repairs, get more than one estimate in writing. Don't pay the full amount for the work until the work is completed and you're satisfied.
9. Pest control or water purification offers may not provide real services. Check these out before accepting offers, even for “free” tests or services. Read the “fine print” and get a second opinion.
10. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you believe you may be a victim of identity theft, contact the fraud departments of any one

of the three major credit bureaus at their toll-free numbers to place a “fraud alert” on your credit file. This can help prevent a thief from opening new accounts or making changes to your existing accounts. For more information about guarding against identity theft and resolving problems, visit www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft.

Compiled from: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency and National Endowment for Financial Education, California Society of Enrolled Agents, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., Federal Trade Commission, Home Builders Association of Alabama, Internal Revenue Service, and National Credit Union Administration, by the Office of Financial Education. Spring 2011 edition.