



# MASFAP MONITOR

October 2024 Volume 2024, Issue 4



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## Matthew's Message

**Matthew Kearney, MASFAP President**  
**Director Student Financial Services, Southeast Missouri State University**



### Game On, MASFAP!

As we enter the final quarter of 2024, I want to take a moment to celebrate the incredible teamwork displayed by our MASFAP board and members. Your dedication has been nothing short of championship-worthy! From creating valuable learning opportunities to offering support beyond our association to high school counselors, parents, and students, you're making a real difference. Every day, you're in the game, showing up for your institutions, communities, and the students we serve.

The MASFAP 2024 Conference is right around the corner, taking place November 4-6 at the Lodge of Four Seasons. This year's sessions promise to help you sharpen your skills, connect with colleagues across the state, and recharge your energy for the season ahead. Whether you're a veteran or a rookie, there's something for everyone—let's keep building each other up!

Our charity this year is **Feeding Missouri**, and we're taking the competition to a new level with a fundraising challenge that kicks off before the conference and continues

through our time at the Lodge. Stay tuned for more details on how you can join in the fun and make an impact off the field as well. Together, we'll help tackle hunger in Missouri!

Amidst ongoing FAFSA changes and challenges, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication each of you continues to put in. It's not easy, but remember, we are a team, and together we can overcome anything thrown our way.

I'm thrilled to see everyone at the conference! After our formal evening events, the President's Suite (Room 6234) will be open—come hang out, relax, and enjoy the company of your fellow MASFAP teammates. I can't wait to see you all there!

Let's finish 2024 strong and continue to lift each other up, on and off the field! **See you at the Lodge!**

# OUR ANNUAL MASFAP CONFERENCE

**WHEN:**  
**November 4-6, 2024**

**WHERE:**  
**Lodge of the Four Seasons**

**The competition is on,  
MASFAP!**

In partnership with Feeding Missouri, we will be launching a donation website soon.

**Teams:** Each MASFAP institution will be assigned to one of four color teams based on location of the institution.

**Objective:** These teams will compete in fundraising efforts.

**Goal:** Our primary goal is to raise funds to support college students facing food insecurity across the state.

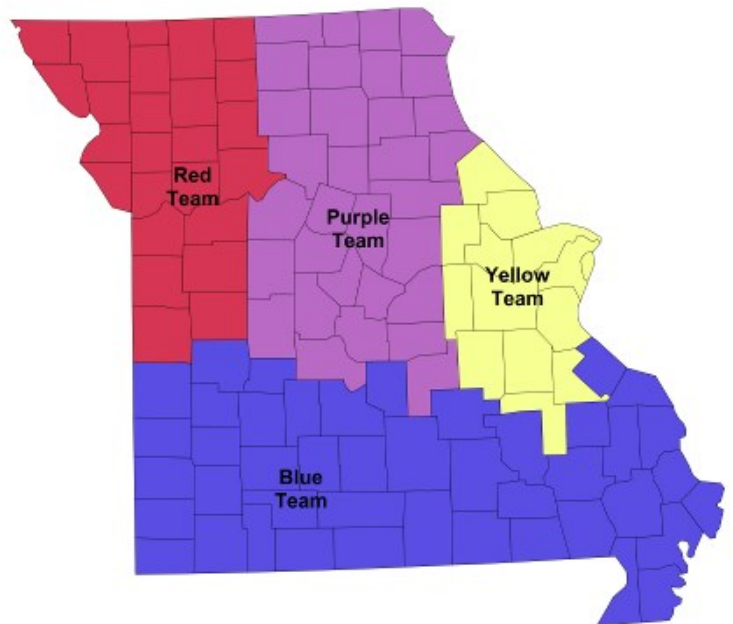
**Incentive:** Schools on the winning team will be entered into a drawing for a scholarship to directly support students on their campus!

Every donation, no matter the size, will make a difference in students' lives. Let's come together and make a significant impact in supporting students across our state!



**Donate here:**

<https://feedingmissouri.kindful.com/?campaign=1307190>





## RECENT CHANGES

Kaitlin Riner, Carthage Technical Center: I received a promotion. Since the retirement of our beloved Kelly Wilson, I have taken over the Financial Aid Coordinator position as of July 1. I have been in Financial Aid for about 3 years and love it. I can't wait to see what the future holds.



Lynda Bjorklun, Financial Aid Counselor at Stephens College, recently celebrated THIRTY YEARS in financial aid! Lynda's first job in financial aid was at Park College (now Park University) in May 1994. Congratulations, Lynda!

Keri Gilbert was promoted from Director of Financial Aid to Associate Vice President of Financial Aid Analytics and Compliance at Stephens College. Keri has been with Stephens since August 2021.



Becca Diskin is now the Program and Outreach Manager at the Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundation. Welcome Becca!

The Truman State University Financial Aid Office was awarded the Bulldog Award for customer service in August.



Cynthia Lawrence is joining to Cottey team on October 28! I am so excited for her to join the team and begin working on student accounts!

# MASFAP Happenings and Tidbits



Shoutout to Alex DeLonis (Saint Louis University) for receiving the Meritorious Service award at MASFAA Conference!

Shoutout to Amy Hager (Moberly Area Community College) for receiving an Award of Appreciation at the MASFAA conference!



Jefferson College Director of Financial Aid, Paula Carpenter, became Grammy for the first time. The Jefferson College team is so excited for her family and her beautiful new granddaughter. Let the spoiling begin!

Claire Valentina Carpenter ♡ was born 9/11 at 6:46 pm.

Congratulations Paula!!!

Val Jensen, Washington University: I adopted two new kitties. Pinot Grigio on the left and Poppy on the right



MOCAN is excited to welcome its newest team member, Wendell Stapleton, as Program Manager, Postsecondary Equity & Attainment. Wendell will be supporting the Boniface Scholars Postsecondary Success Initiative, a three-year collaboration in St. Louis. Wendell joins MOCAN from Maryville University where he served as a Life Coach.



# MASFAP Happenings and Tidbits

Here's a poem that Jessica Weir wrote (with help from Chat GPT) to help the Mizzou SFA Team celebrate National Financial Aid Day. How fun 😊!

## The Ballad of the Mizzou Financial Aid Dream Team

In the office where funds and forms collide,  
There's a group of fine folks—our joy and our pride.  
Teams so amazing, they handle it all,  
Let's give them a cheer (or twelve standing tall!).

The Advising Team's magic, it never does fail,  
Calming each student, no matter the wail.  
"Can I afford this?" "Will I get aid?"  
"Relax," they say, "You've got it made!"

The Scholarship Team, treasure hunters so bright,  
Dig for the funding from morning till night.  
Juggling awards like coins in a chest,  
Finding the money—they're simply the best!

Operations team, the glue behind the scene,  
Taming the chaos—cool, calm, and serene.  
Processing aid, sending reports,  
Running the show like pros of all sorts!

Let's not forget the behind-the-scenes Tech crew,  
The programmers coding with magic they brew.  
When systems freeze or glitches appear,  
They debug the chaos and make it all clear!

And last but not least, Leadership's here,  
Guiding with vision, through every fiscal year.  
Steering the ship when the seas get rough,  
With wisdom and humor, they've got the right stuff!

So here's to you all, our fabulous team,  
You make the impossible feel like a dream!  
We tackle the forms, the funds, the strife,  
But it's you, dear team, who bring it to life.



Student Financial Aid  
University of Missouri

-Jessica Weir and Chat GPT  
Financial Aid Day, October 16, 2024

# MASFAP On the Move

Some MASFAP folks with NASFAA's Tim Maggio at the MASFAA conference in Columbus.



Saint Louis University staff at MASFAA conference in Columbus.



Missouri Dinner at MASFAA conference.





# MASFAP On the Move—High School Counselor Workshops





# MASFAP On the Move—High School Counselor Workshops





# MASFAP On the Move—High School Counselor Workshops





# MASFAP On the Move—High School Counselor Workshops





# MASFAP On the Move—LDP in DC



## Early Awareness Committee Updates

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*Early Awareness Co-Chairs: Hannah Smith, Taylor Grimm, and Cherelle Washington*

### **High School Counselor Workshops**

The Early Awareness High School Counselor Workshops are well underway! As of Friday, October 18, we have held 10 of the 14 workshops across the state. We will host a workshop in Sedalia October 24. Our final workshops will be held in Hannibal, Kansas City, and St. Louis. We will also be hosting a virtual workshop soon – more details to come!

### **Request an Expert**

Looking to get out into the community and help facilitate Financial Aid programming at local high schools? We need you! High School Counselors can request a Financial Aid professional through the MASFAP website and Early Awareness pairs them with an expert that can help. We are always looking for more volunteers to be on our list of experts so that we can better serve our High School partners. Interested in learning more? Contact Early Awareness at [earlyawareness@masfap.org](mailto:earlyawareness@masfap.org).

### **MASFAP Who's Making a Difference Scholarship**

Every year, MASFAP offers five \$1,000 scholarships to deserving Missouri students. Finalists are selected and voted on by the MASFAP membership at our annual conference in November. Look for more information in the conference program about casting your vote!

## My Scholarship Central—MOCAN

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My Scholarship Central is looking for more scholarship partners. Scholarship programs maintain complete control over their process - eligibility, application process, reviews and awarding. We bring your scholarship to a common application system that 16,000 students used last year. We are looking for scholarship programs from non-profits or foundations that are for Missouri students. Interested in learning more? Contact Kaitlyn Venta [kventa@mocollegecareer.org](mailto:kventa@mocollegecareer.org).





## MASFAP Committee Updates

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**Technology Committee**, Chair Hannah Masters: Work continues to assist with conference registration and planning. Looking forward to meeting everyone's technology needs at the conference!



**Newcomer Committee**, Co-Chairs Charissa Davis and Julie Loftin: The Newcomer/Welcome Committee has been busy! We have been meeting to plan Newcomer activities for our Fall conference. On Monday, November 4th, we will be hosting new and exciting activities to become more familiar with the history of MASFAP, the MASFAP board, and the exciting world that is financial aid. It is going to be a fun and exciting time to be a newcomer in MASFAP and we look forward to seeing you in November.



**Communication Committee**, Chair Melissa Findley: A huge shout out to committee members for being part of the committee—Matthew Kearney, MASFAP President; Shelley Lester, MOHELA; Sabrina Osborn, Metropolitan Community College; Natalie Crawford, Drury University; Keri Gilbert, Stephens College; Karen Thompson, Lincoln University; and Amy Hedrick, MDHEWD. MASFAP is on LinkedIn and X, and we would love for you to engage with us there by following us, liking our posts and sharing them! If you would like something posted on our MASFAP socials please reach out to us!

# FAA Spotlight



## *Spotlight: Amy Hager, Moberly Area Community College*

**What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?**

Director of Financial Aid, Moberly Area Community College

**How long have you worked at your institution?**

Since 1997

**What has your career path been like?**

I started as a work-study assistant while in college at Missouri Valley College in 1987. After graduating in 1991, I immediately began working in the financial aid profession. I began as a financial aid counselor at The University of Health Sciences-College of Osteopathic Medicine (now Kansas City University). I then moved to St. Louis for a short stint, and I worked at Sanford-Brown College and First Bank. In 1997, I accepted a position at Moberly Area Community College as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid, and I worked under Sharon Abernathy who was the director. I was promoted to director in January 1999.

**Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.**

I have the best team!!! Most of us have worked together a very long time. I am proud of the work they do every single day, and it brings me great joy when I think about our work together. They are smart, dedicated and hard-working, and they make my job easy. My Associate Director, Jennifer Haynes, and I have worked together for 25 years. Many others on our team have been with us many of those years. Peggy Webb – 20 years, Jenny Laughlin – 18 years, Katherine Peavler – 18 years, Ann Hall – 14 years, Denise Shively – 12 years, Levi Moore – 5 years, Jordan Perry – 1.5 years; and Gabrielle Mistretta and Cortnie Canote are the newest additions to our team!

**Do you have any mentors in your professional life?**

Top of mind are Cindy Butler and Melinda Wood. They have always been kind, and they supported and encouraged me.

**What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?**

Surviving the past four years together. Processing aid and continuous service to students through the pandemic was challenging because my institution did not have the ability to work remote; but we were creative, worked together, and made it happen. That was followed by a new software implementation, which we thought was the most challenging thing we had ever experienced, and we (thanks to Jennifer's leadership) made it through that, too. Then, this past year, we all found ourselves at ground zero – almost everything we knew about federal student aid was changing; but together we have taken the time to learn about the changes, implement changes and still provide services to our students. I am always proud of my staff after our annual audit reveals little to no errors found. In my opinion, that is a huge accomplishment because our work is hard, and it truly





# FAA Spotlight, Continued

recognizes their exceptional work, competency, integrity, and commitment.

## Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

I am originally from Moberly; after I college I lived/worked in Kansas City and St. Louis for a bit, then moved back home to work at MACC. My husband, Mark, two daughters (Madeline and Katherine), and two dogs (Olive and Jack). Madeline is an Occupational Therapist and recently moved back to Moberly, and Katherine is an event planner in Kansas City. As empty nesters, Mark and I love to travel, and our goal is to visit a new National Park every year. My daughters and I are Swifties!

## What do you like to do in your free time?

Hang out with my girls or read. I also work on various volunteer projects in my 'free time'. I love to attend the live theater any chance I can.

## What is the last good movie or Netflix series you watched and enjoyed?

I loved the Fall Guy with Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt! I also enjoy a good Hallmark movie.

## What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?

I love all genres of music. Right now, I am listening to a lot of Taylor Swift, Chappell Roan, Noah Kahan, Green Day, and Post Malone. As for the best concert, I went to see Taylor Swift's Eras concert last year in KC, and she is an exceptional entertainer, and we loved it! We are planning to see her again in Indianapolis in November. But I must give a nod to Joan Jett! She opened for Alanis Morissette this summer and totally rocked! She was incredible! Oh, and Green Day was fabulous!

## Do you like traveling?

Heck yeah! I love the beach, but I have a new love of visiting our National Parks. So much peaceful beauty in our country! Goals to travel around Europe at some point in my life, too.

## Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you:

I have a Little Free Library in my front yard, and it brings me joy to fill it with a variety of books for the people in my community. I include as many banned books as I can find.



# What Makes YOU Happy, MASFAP?

Spending time with friends and family, watching sports, and going to the gym.

**Krissy Loenneke, Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing & Health Sciences**

I love to laugh! So being around people who make me laugh and who I can have fun with brings me joy and makes me incredibly happy!

**Keri Gilbert, Stephens College**



Spending time visiting my parents! I love relaxing on their front porch with no cell service, watching the dogs enjoy country life!

**Hannah Masters, Cottey College**

A winery on a sunny fall day.

**Val Jensen, Washington University**

Being at the lake with my family.

**Melissa Findley, Missouri Scholarship & Loan Foundaton**

The Mizzou SFA Team that we have built really makes me happy. I love people. They make me happy. I love sitting around a fire pit with a drink in my hand with good people, doing all kinds of activities with friends and family, hanging out at social gatherings, golfing with strangers and making new friends for life, and just enjoying hanging out with all kinds of different people.

**Emily Haynam, University of Missouri—Columbia**

Spending time with family whether we are golfing, cheering our daughter on at the golf course or hockey game or playing music with my son.

**Jamie Davis, University of Missouri—Columbia**



Spending time with family and friends.

**Marla Fernandez, Truman State University**

Getting random pictures of my new grandbaby during the workday makes me soooooo happy!!

**Paula Carpenter, Jefferson College**

Francis, my grandson.

**Ginny Burns, MOHELA**

When my kids are home and we get to spend time together just talking about life!

**Anna Plattner, Grand River Technical School**



My doggies. Especially our newest addition: A Frenchie named Winston.

**Tony Lubbers, University of Central Missouri**





# FAA Spotlight



## Spotlight: Regina Morris, Three Rivers College

### What's your title, and describe your role and responsibilities at your institution?

Director of Financial Aid - overseeing the office, performing daily operations of program administration including federal and state funding, budgeting strategic planning, and other duties as assigned or needed.

### How long have you worked at your institution?

24 years – all in Financial Aid.

### What has your career path been like?

I started in Financial Aid in 2000 as Secretary, advanced to Administrative Assistant, Assistant Director, and Director in 2016.

### Tell us about your financial aid team at your institution.

I work with an amazing team in the Office of Financial Aid. They are compassionate and go above and beyond to try to assist students. We celebrate each other's achievements and accomplishments and are always willing to pick up the slack where needed to assist each other. They are always ready and willing to have any excuse to have a **Financial Aid Food Day**. They all have a great sense of humor and enjoy working in financial aid. They not only do an outstanding job but bring sunshine and lots of humor to the day!!

They spoil me with the greatest gifts for Bosses Day and my birthday!

### Do you have any mentors in your professional life?

Pauletta Burns and Laura Milligan both worked in the Financial Aid Office as Directors. These 2 ladies made an impact in my life that I will never forget. They provided leadership, guidance, and most of all friendship.

### What have been your biggest accomplishments on your team?

I Survived (We survived) (well, we think we have) the 24-25 FAFSA rollout. This has probably been one of the most challenging years in Financial Aid for me and the staff. Just when we thought we were moving forward.... more changes came and we started again.

Improving our customer service satisfaction survey from in customer service from 62% in Fall 2015 to 99% in Fall 2023 and overall satisfaction from 60% to 99%.



*Regina and daughter Miranda at the Reba concert.*

## FAA Spotlight, Continued

**Tell us a bit about yourself and your family.**

Married with 1 daughter and 2 grandchildren.

**What do you like to do in your free time?**

Bonfires, spending time with family, cooking, and canning and curling up on the couch with my dogs.

**What is the last good movie or Netflix series you watched and enjoyed?**

This isn't a movie or Netflix but one of my favorite series is Yellowstone!!!!

**What kind of music do you listen to and what's the best concert you've been to?**

Country, Rock and Worship music.

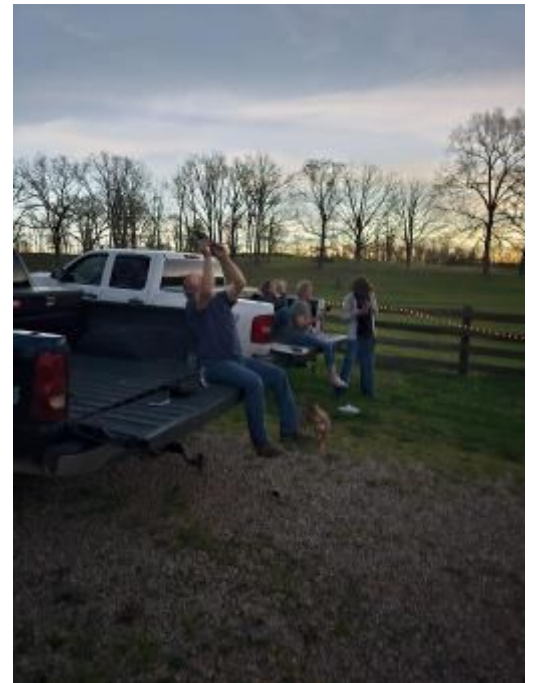
Daughter recently took me to Reba McEntire concert for my birthday last year in October. It was an amazing concert and we had a great time; however I did manage to catch covid after avoiding it since 2020!

**Do you like traveling?**

Occasionally but really just like to hibernate on my days off on the farm with family and friends or just enjoy the quiet time along with all the nature.

**Tell us a fun fact or something few people know about you:**

I love cows, lambs and killed my first deer last deer season.



*Pics of Regina and fam on eclipse day on their farm.*



## Next MASFAP Newsletter Mid-January



The Missouri Association of Student Financial Aid Personnel (MASFAP) is a dynamic association dedicated to serving and advocating for practitioners, users and providers of student financial aid programs.

### Monitor Submission Policy

Articles may be submitted by any person, company or organization for consideration by the MASFAP Monitor staff and are subject to approval prior to publishing in the newsletter. In general, submissions are made by members of the organization. The author's name should be included in the submission. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit the content of any article or information submitted.

Articles will be edited for accuracy, quality and appropriate length. Submissions may be limited to one article per Monitor, per person, company, or organization, depending on space.

Articles are intended to be informational and for the benefit of MASFAP members, not for company promotion or advertising.

If the author is unavailable or a resolution can't be reached, the editor will refer it to the committee chairperson and President for a decision about publication.

The MASFAP Monitor is brought to you by the Communications Committee.

**Submissions for the next MASFAP Monitor are due January 10, 2025.**

**SUBMIT**



## 2024 Executive Board / Committee Chairs



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Visit us online!

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### Disclaimer:

MASFAP, the Executive Board and Executive Committee are not responsible for the accuracy of any information contained in this newsletter as an authority, but rather its use as a guide. Further, the opinions expressed by the contributors are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official opinion of MASFAP, the Executive Board or the Committees.

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