

# the Standard

news and commentary on technology and standards in postsecondary education

## Inside

- Nominations for PESC Board of Directors . . . . . 2
- Update on Data Transport Standard Effort . . . . . 3
- Interview with Bob Morley, Associate Registrar, USC. . . . . 4
- Loan Counseling Schema Workgroup Forms. . . . . 8
- 1st Annual Conference on Technology Standards. . . . . 9
- FSA Liaison Announced . . . . . 9
- Technology Tidbits and Standards Snippets . . . . . 10

## Spring 2004 Workgroup Summit

Final plans have been made for PESC’s Spring 2004 Workgroup Summit to be held Thursday, April 1, 2004 at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in New York City. The Workgroup Summit will take place in room Royal B and is an open meeting in which issues related to PESC’s workgroups are discussed and new ideas are exchanged. The agenda at this point looks as follows:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 8:30am – 8:45am   | Welcome and PESC Update<br>Michael Sessa, PESC       |
| 8:45am – 10:00am  | IMS Global Learning Consortium<br>Steve Griffin, IMS |
| 10:00am – 10:15am | Break  |
| 10:15am – 12:15pm | Standards Forum for Education                        |

See **Workgroup**, Page 2

## XML Registry and Repository for the Education Community

The Office of Federal Student Assistance (FSA) within the US Department of Education identified the need for a single registry and repository as part of their XML Framework initiative. The vision is to have a single location where all core components, sector libraries, schemas and knowledge management documentation is housed and available to the community. The custom-developed XML Registry and Repository is a web-based application that consists of Java Server Pages (JSPs) and Servlets that access an Oracle database and is based on OASIS’s ebXML specifications for Registry and Repository version 2.5. FSA gifted the XML Registry and Repository to the community December 2003. Currently the XML Registry and Repository is located on the FSA intranet undergoing PESC and department review. However, FSA is working to move the Registry and Repository to the internet with an expected release date of May 31, 2004. A full update on the XML Registry and Repository will be provided at the 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards May 3-5 in Washington, DC.



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The Standard is the electronic newsletter published monthly by The Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC). The Standard covers news and events that impact information technology and data exchange; and promotes PESC’s goals of improving service, controlling costs, and attaining interoperability within higher education. For information about subscriptions, advertising, and article submissions, please visit [www.StandardsCouncil.org](http://www.StandardsCouncil.org). © 2004 PESC

# Nominations for PESC Board of Directors

Please be advised that nominations are now open for the PESC Board of Directors. Nominees must be from organizations which are Members of PESC. Please direct nominees to Michael Sessa, PESC Executive Director, via email at Sessa@PESC.org, and include nominee name, title, organization, address, phone, email, and a brief bio. Also please ensure that your nominee is aware that you are making a nomination.

Nominations will be accepted through close of business Wednesday, April 14, 2004. Proxy ballots will then be immediately issued electronically to official Member contacts. Completed proxy ballots will be

accepted through close of business Wednesday April 28, 2004.

The official vote will take place during PESC's 6th Annual Meeting of the Membership Monday, May 3, 2004 from 4:30pm to 5:30pm, which takes place during the 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards.

For official Member contacts attending the 6th Annual Meeting, you can submit a proxy ballot and let it remain your official vote, or you can submit a regular ballot during the meeting, which would replace a previously submitted proxy.

## Workgroup, From Page 1

- Update from the Steering Committee  
Ed Hauser, SCT
- Overview of Policies and Procedures  
Jason Elwood, Miami University/DARS
- XML Registry and Repository  
Holly Hyland, US Department of Education
- Development Requests & Next Steps  
Michael Sessa, PESC

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 12:15pm – 1:45pm | Lunch on your own  |
| 1:45pm – 3:00pm  | Standard Student Authentication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAP Update</li> <li>• White Paper Discussion</li> </ul>   |
| 3:00pm – 3:45pm  | Single Institutional ID workgroup<br>Jerry Bracken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crosswalk Maintenance</li> <li>• Foreign School Code Sets</li> <li>• White Paper Discussion</li> </ul> |
| 3:45pm – 4:00pm  | Break  |
| 4:00pm – 5:00pm  | Web Services   |

## Fall 2004 Workgroup Summit

Mark your calendars! PESC's Fall 2004 Workgroup Summit will be held Oct. 5-6, 2004 in Newport Beach, CA at the Newport Beach Marriott located at 900 Newport Center Drive. The Summit kicks off on Tuesday afternoon at 1:30pm and continues through Wednesday afternoon concluding at 5pm. On Tuesday morning, we'll hold our Fall Membership meeting. More details will be provided shortly including hotel information, hotel rates, and registration information. Once again, we're partnering with AACRAO's Technology Conference which will be held October 3-5, 2004. Stay tuned for more info!

# Update on **Data Transport Standard Effort**

BY KIM SHIFLETTE

NCHELP's Electronic Standards Committee

The Data Transport Standards documentation is in progress, with the Core Transport documentation nearing completion. Test development of a reference implementation is also underway, to "prove" the feasibility of implementing the concepts described in the standards documentation, in the way they are described. The Data Transport Standard is based a set of on currently available and viable technology standards.

Work on this project is being shared online at [www.datatransportstandard.com](http://www.datatransportstandard.com) which is hosting an interactive work space for the project copies of all documentation and project related information is being placed onto this site. Java and .Net, testing platforms are slated for creation, with work already underway for the Java platform and .Net resources have been allocated. Once test procedures are ready, the Electronic Exchange Advisory Team (of NCHELP's Electronic Standards Committee) will ask for volunteers to conduct testing.

Target date for testing: The Java implementation should be ready soon, and the .Net implementation should be ready by the end of March. Testing participation will take 3 -4 hours a week. If the testing volunteer wishes to also develop their own implementation of the testing platform current estimates place the development time within 30 or 40 hours. For those people interested in testing, either with pre-developed testing platforms or from scratch, the EEAT requirements stipulate that individuals who wish to directly participate in the DTS effort should possess the following skills to contribute in a technically meaningful way.

- 1) Must have JAVA or .Net expertise.
- 2) Should be familiar with one or more:
  - WebServices(SOAP)
  - LDAP
  - UDDI

- SSL
- HTTP
- XML
- UUID

Companies who wish to donate server time to the DTS effort should have servers that meet the following:

Current production quality machines with a publicly accessible address on the Internet. You must be able to receive files from arbitrary participants. Recommended minimum system capabilities:

- GHz x86 CPU
- 512 MB RAM as an absolute minimum
- 2-3 GB Disk space free
- Dedicated connection to the internet with inbound firewall
- Ports open to be able to initiate connections to this machine
- On port 80 (HTTP) and 443 (HTTPS)

Interested persons should contact me at [kshiflet@usa-funds.org](mailto:kshiflet@usa-funds.org)

The project goal is to have the documentation delivered by Spring of 04. It should be emphasized that the EEAT is not developing a product, but are creating a usage standard for common, internet technologies and writing an implementation standard to guide each industry partner in their own individual implementations of this communication standard effort.

## New Members

PESC welcomes the following new organization to its membership:

### First Marblehead

PESC contact is David Luciano, Senior Vice President of Information Technology  
[www.FirstMarblehead.com](http://www.FirstMarblehead.com)

# Interview with Robert Morley

*Associate Registrar*

*University of Southern California*

■ ***Tell us little about the University of Southern California in terms of the number of students, specialties, types of degrees offered, number of campuses, international attendance and for what the University is best known?***

USC was founded in 1880 and has a current enrollment of 30,000, of which there are 6,000 international students from 150 countries, the largest number of international students at any college or university. In addition to its College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, USC also has 17 professional schools. Since 1969 USC has been a member of the Association of American Universities, the elective body that unites the 62 premier research universities in the United States and Canada. Under the leadership of President Steven B. Sample, USC has seen a dramatic rise in the academic quality of the undergraduate student body, with the 2003 class averaging 1365 on the SAT, with a 4.06 high school GPA. In athletics, USC is third in the number of national championships won. In Olympic competition, USC has fielded more athletes than any other institution and at least one USC athlete has won a gold medal in every summer Olympics since 1912, the only university in the world with this distinction.

■ ***What do most people not know about USC?***

USC is the largest private employer in the City of Los Angeles and each year the faculty and staff donates nearly one million dollars to initiatives and programs in the neighborhood surrounding the university.

■ ***What is your role with USC? How long have you been there?***

I've been the Associate Registrar at USC since 1981. During that time I've managed nearly all of the departments in the Registrar's office, at one time or another. Much of my time has been spent writing functional specifications for our student records systems, developing web applications and in general, developing various initiatives that implement technology.

interview

### ■ *What is your role with AACRAO?*

In 2002, I became AACRAO's first Vice President for Information Technology, a position whose creation I had first recommended in 1995. Coming into the position with essentially a blank slate, I identified several short term goals that I felt needed immediate attention: work more closely with the SPEEDE committee and provide more direct guidance and assistance; expand the EDI in Education meeting to an AACRAO Technology Conference; establish a stronger and more clearly defined relationship with PESC.

### ■ *Can you explain what SPEEDE is and what it has accomplished?*

SPEEDE (Standardization of Postsecondary Education Electronic Data Exchange) is an AACRAO committee that was formed approximately 15 years ago. The committee then as it is today, is made up of volunteers who have led the initiative for the electronic exchange of education records via standardized formats. The committee began its work by developing standards for the electronic exchange of transcripts using EDI (electronic data exchange). This allowed colleges and universities to exchange transcripts, sending them directly into each other's records database, with appropriate levels of routing and security, without human intervention. (Some universities prefer to simply receive the EDI transcript and print it out.) The committee also developed exchange standards for admission applications, verifications/certifications and a host of other transaction sets. The EDI movement continues to make good strides and using the University of Texas at Austin Internet Server as an exchange platform/clearinghouse, has now delivered well over a million transcripts – free of charge to the educational institutions – and over three million transactions. Most recently the committee has turned its attention to XML (Extensible Markup Language). The committee has participated with a number of PESC members in developing syntax and architecture that can be used to translate information into an XML schema. The committee has completed its work on the XML academic transcript schema and will soon submit their document to PESC for final technical review and approval by PESC

members. The committee anticipates that they will also develop XML schema for all of their remaining EDI transaction sets. The committee meets regularly in person and via conference call, often giving up weekends and personal vacation time in order to carry out their tasks. It's no wonder that the SPEEDE committee is often referred to as the "hardest working committee in AACRAO."

### ■ *How does SPEEDE work within the community? With PESC?*

The SPEEDE committee serves as the representative and the technical expertise for the AACRAO membership on matters related to the standardized electronic exchange of academic information. To that end, SPEEDE develops and maintains standards, promotes and educates, and provides training and implementation support to the AACRAO community.

SPEEDE's relationship with PESC goes back to the beginning of PESC when Betsy Bainbridge, formerly the SPEEDE Secretariat, called upon several members of the SPEEDE committee to help assist her in the formation of PESC. At the time, AACRAO's only standards body affiliation was with ANSI (American National Standards Institute), the only game in town at the time. All of the EDI standards were developed using ANSI procedures for technical review and approval.

However, ANSI serves a very large and diversified constituency, one in which AACRAO and SPEEDE didn't have the clout or financial resources of enterprises such as the health care industry, insurance, etc. With PESC's focus on postsecondary education, it presented AACRAO and SPEEDE with a standards process that was more efficient and more closely tied to the needs of our constituency. SPEEDE members have participated and will continue to participate in any number of PESC work groups.

Working with the PESC Standards Forum provided the SPEEDE committee with an excellent opportunity to launch their XML transcript schema initiative. The collaboration of PESC and AACRAO/SPEEDE, working with the California Community College Consortium for



agreement on an XML academic record schema is a perfect example of the value of a close working relationship in the standards world.

■ ***What can we look forward to from SPEEDE? From AACRAO?***

With the pending approval and release of the XML transcript schema, SPEEDE will now begin to attack the enormous challenge of assisting the AACRAO membership (as well as any other interested party including PESC members, e.g. California Community College Consortium) in the implementation of this new resource. SPEEDE will also look to develop new XML schema for standards that already exist in EDI format. While XML will be a focus in the future, AACRAO and SPEEDE will continue to support existing and future EDI initiatives. Institutions choosing EDI or XML will continue to receive the full support of SPEEDE and the University of Texas at Austin server. AACRAO will continue to look for opportunities to provide standardized electronic services to its members and related constituencies and will actively pursue and participate in various collaborations with PESC.

■ ***How is USC managing SEVIS? What area within USC is responsible for SEVIS?***

With the nation's largest international student population, to say that implementing SEVIS was a challenge is very much an understatement. As many of my colleagues at state institutions reminded me, laws that get enacted quickly seldom provide adequate time for stakeholder input, adequate testing, and almost never a thought as to how the institutions will find the resources to carry out the requirements. SEVIS seems to fit this description quite well. As for USC, the Registrar's Office and the Office for International Scholars share the duties and responsibilities for SEVIS. Although implementing SEVIS was a very painful process, it did provide the two offices the opportunity to review and revise our certification policies and procedures, to the benefit of all our students, both international and domestic.

■ ***Would it be beneficial to all parties involved if future SEVIS development were done in an open forum?***

Prefer not to answer this one. It's a government mandate and I don't think something that is supposedly considered homeland security is going to get a full review in an open forum.

■ ***What are the biggest issues admissions and registrar personnel face today?***

That depends upon whom you talk to. At a recent AACRAO meeting one issue that seemed to be universally embraced was uncertainty about our organizational place in the college/university. Much like data and information that now cross borders and defy ownership rules, the traditional roles of registrars have eroded and blurred the borders and called into question the ownership and responsibility for the information. As traditional stewards of information, this organizational uncertainty will challenge our ability to effectively incorporate new and emerging technology into our systems.

■ ***What are the technological issues they face? Is enough attention being paid to these issues?***

As is often the case, the issue isn't the technology itself, but rather it's how the technology is asked to accommodate demands, demands that are often somewhat in conflict with each other.

For example, we now have the ability to provide a person with a tremendous amount of their personal/financial/academic information and facility to retrieve/update/utilize that information. And, they demand it quickly, simply and in a ubiquitous fashion, e.g. anywhere and anytime.

However, there is an equally strident demand that all of this information must have the highest level of privacy and protection. In some cases it's personal choice, e.g. the threat of identity theft, and in other cases it may be state or local laws, e.g. denying the use of SSN as a primary identifier.

So essentially we're asked to make a person's access to their records and facilities fast, easy and available anywhere, anytime, but requiring higher and higher levels of privacy and protection. These demands are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they do require new/enhanced tools. That's one of the reasons why PESC workgroups such as authentication or single identifier are so important.

■ ***Are today's students outpacing the colleges and universities they attend in terms of their technological knowledge?***

In the past, we held all the technology cards, so to speak. Massive main frames, complex and highly integrated student systems, the early introduction of voice response and web based services, etc. all contributed to our image as technology leaders, lending a certain amount of credibility in the execution of our duties.

Today, however, our students arrive on our campus with technology skills and awareness that exceeds that of much of our faculty and staff. But, that's not the challenge. The challenge is expectation. Our students arrive on campus used to 24/7 resource availability, immediate confirmation of transactions, breath taking graphics, integrated resources that anticipate and prompt, among just a few. If Lands End, Amazon and Orbitz can do all of this, why can't you?

■ ***Is technology helping or hurting education?***

Respectfully prefer not to answer this one; it's so open that I'm not sure that I could provide a relatively short, meaningful response.

■ ***Will distance education ever replace brick and mortar campuses?***

Not sure that this constituency, in this particular forum, would find anything I say interesting or compelling. If you think otherwise, please let me know and I'll respond. It's a hard topic to distill.

■ ***What is your role with PESC?***

In simplest terms, I serve on the PESC Board of Directors. But, since I am also on the AACRAO Board of Directors, it has given me the unique opportunity to serve as a liaison with standing between the two groups. At times it can be a little schizophrenic. Sometimes the matters at hand require me to wear only my PESC hat. Other times I'm responding to PESC queries as the official AACRAO representative. And more and more often, I wear two hats, ensuring that communication and collaboration is always open and ongoing, looking for the synergy opportunities that this relationship can provide. At the very beginning, I didn't fully understand the relationship between PESC, AACRAO and SPEEDE, among others. Since Michael Sessa, the Executive Director of PESC, and I came into our respective positions at the same time, it gave us an opportunity to learn together. As I said earlier, one of my goals as an AACRAO Board member was to establish a stronger and more clearly defined relationship with PESC. Putting on my PESC hat, I view one of my responsibilities as a PESC Board member is to identify and strengthen relationships with other organizations, when appropriate, including AACRAO.

■ ***Is enough being done to promote interoperability within the community?***

The quote from "Field of Dreams" comes to mind: "If you build it, they will come." But as we have learned, building or defining a standard is the first, and often easiest step. Convincing people that allocating resources to interoperability will, in the end, will have a payoff is the challenge. It's not a quick win or "low hanging fruit," but a long-term commitment. People have to have confidence that it's the right choice. What seems so obvious to many of us is not yet shared by others, people whose input is crucial to the success of interoperability. That's our challenge, to convince people that support of interoperability may not even be an advantage, but it may a requirement for success or even survival.

# Loan Counseling Schema Workgroup Forms

An XML schema to exchange online loan counseling data is needed by the industry, according to leaders and participants in Mapping Your Future, Inc., a non-profit organization sponsored by guaranty agencies and supported by lenders and servicers.

The need for this schema is based on increasing requests for electronic exchange of loan counseling data. Mapping Your Future would like other financial aid industry organizations, interested in exchanging loan counseling data, to participate in a collaborative effort to develop this schema. Mapping Your Future has been offering loan counseling since 1997 and now offers Stafford and Perkins entrance and exit counseling.

An overwhelming majority of the financial aid professionals responding to an informal Mapping Your Future survey a few years said they wanted to see more electronic transfer of data. Eighty-eight percent of those responding to the survey, which was distributed at a NASFAA conference, said they wanted electronic data transfer and about 82 percent of the professionals thought that electronic processing has enhanced the accuracy of student data.

Since that time, Mapping Your Future has been working with its Sponsors, Friends, members, and colleges and universities, to implement processes to exchange data electronically. The value of entrance and exit data for regulatory and default prevention purposes has increased the interest among those in the financial aid industry looking for methods to receive data electronically.

Once interest is determined in the collaborative effort, a workgroup will be formed to make sure the appropriate data elements are included and to initiate development of the schema. The schema will then be submitted to the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council for review and approval by its Members. By

agreeing on standards for data definitions, formats, packaging and transport, the industry can appropriately, readily, and securely exchange data without prior communications.

To kick-off this effort, PESC will sponsor a community-wide conference call on Wednesday April 21, 2004 at 12:00 noon EST (9:00am PST). The call in phone number is 800-508-7631, \*9976409\*. At this meeting, an overview of Mapping Your Future will be provided and the group will discuss how to move forward, frequency of meetings, deliverables, and timeframes. For more information or to participate in this effort, contact Cathy Mueller, Mapping Your Future Executive Director, at [Cathy.Mueller@Mapping-Your-Future.org](mailto:Cathy.Mueller@Mapping-Your-Future.org) or 940-497-0741 or Adele Marsh (AES), leader of the Mapping Your Future Technology Team at [AMarsh@AESsuccess.org](mailto:AMarsh@AESsuccess.org) or 717-720-2711.

Mapping Your Future is a national collaborative, public-service project of the financial aid industry - bringing together the expertise of the industry to provide free college, career, financial aid, and financial literacy services for schools, students, and families.

## Schedule of PESC Events

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| March 26    | Board nominations open                             |
| April 1     | Spring 2004 Workgroup Summit in New York City      |
| April 7-8   | EAP meeting in Washington, DC                      |
| April 14    | Board nominations close                            |
| April 21    | Loan counseling schema work group kick-off meeting |
| May 3       | 6th Annual Meeting                                 |
| May 3-5     | 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards  |
| October 5-6 | Fall 2004 Workgroup Summit                         |



# 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards

John Wookey, Senior Vice President of Application Development at Oracle Corporation, joins the 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards as a keynote speaker. Mr. Wookey participates alongside keynote speakers Terri Shaw, Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid (FSA), the US Department of Education, and Dr. Brian Fitzgerald, Staff Director.

Ms. Shaw will speak to “FSA’s Data Strategy” on Monday morning May 3; Dr. Fitzgerald will discuss “Simplification” of needs analysis and supporting processes during lunch on Monday May 3; and, Mr. Wookey will address “Global Change in Technology and Standards” during lunch on Tuesday May 4.

Please be advised that session descriptions for the 1st Annual Conference on Technology and Standards are now posted! Visit <http://www.standardscouncil.org/conference-main.asp> to view the session descriptions, for hotel information, and to register. Access to conference information is also available through [www.CBAnet.org](http://www.CBAnet.org), [www.EFC.org](http://www.EFC.org), [www.NCHELP.org](http://www.NCHELP.org), and [www.PESC.org](http://www.PESC.org).

The conference, being held May 3-5, 2004 in the

Washington DC metro area, also includes the support and participation of the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), ELM Resources, FSA, IMS Global Learning Consortium, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), and the Schools Interoperability Framework (SIF).

The conference is made possible through the generous sponsorship of the National Association of Student Loan Administrators (NASLA), CollegeBoard, AES, Nelnet, Datatel, and Citibank.

Membership organizations from any of the four associations (CBA, EFC, NCHELP, and PESC) are eligible for the discounted registration rate of \$600. The non-Member rate is \$750. Hotel reservations can be made by contacting the Marriott Crystal City directly at 800-228-9290. A conference rate of \$179 has been reserved for single/double rooms and the group name is “PESC.” The cut-off date to receive this discounted rate is April 12.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available! Please contact Ane Johnson directly at 202-263-0296.

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## FSA Liason Announced

BY JERRY SCHUBERT, CIO

At a previous FSA Software Developers Conference, the community requested a liaison that will be the point of contact with FSA. FSA is pleased to announce that Holly Hyland will be the FSA liaison and serve as point of contact with FSA. Contact Holly for special needs that are not being handled through our regular customer service centers. The following are the specific roles and responsibilities for the FSA liaison:

- Answer questions quickly and accurately for special needs situations. This is not meant to be a replacement to the current procedures, but to provide for an advocate who can assist in times when that is necessary.

- Coordinate, track, and ensure prompt responses by gathering information from our various subject matter experts in FSA.
- Analyze issues to identify trends resulting in improvements on a proactive basis.
- Advocate for quality improvement, as Holly will know what is working well and what is not working well.
- Provide a continuous customer feedback loop. This could provide a method for all partners, not just those at the conferences, to give us feedback.

You may contact Holly at 202-377-3710, via her cell at 703-593-3647, or via email at [holly.hyland@ed.gov](mailto:holly.hyland@ed.gov).

# Technology Tidbits

## *and Standards Snippets*

■ **According to George Hulme's recent InformationWeek article "there may be too many security specifications and standards."** Citing Security Assertion Markup Language, The Liberty Alliance development of a security spec that extends SAML and efforts by IBM, Microsoft, and VeriSign as examples, Hulme focuses on the inability of the standards to interact with each other. For additional information visit [www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=18312163](http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=18312163).

■ **Open source solutions are gaining wide deployment in governmental operations at the Federal, State and Local level,** according to an InfoWorld article. Attempting to cut IT spending, is one reason cited for the recent shift to open source. The article, found at [www.infoworld.com/article/04/03/12/11F\\_Eopgov\\_1.html](http://www.infoworld.com/article/04/03/12/11F_Eopgov_1.html), gives several examples of open source solutions in use across government.

■ **Chief Information Officer's have begun to look to centralized and integrated email security measures to fight the recent influx of spam and computer viruses.** CIO.com, features a few examples at [http://www.cio.com/archive/021504/et\\_sidebar\\_1.html](http://www.cio.com/archive/021504/et_sidebar_1.html).

### UT Austin Internet Server 'SPEEDEs' Along

February 2004 volume included:

- 32,646 TS130 transcripts  
Most ever in any one month.
- 27,696 TS131 acknowledgements
- 6,811 TS997 Functional acknowledgements
- 32,544 TS189 Admission Applications
- 11,708 TS138 test score reports
- 118,736 total transactions  
27% increase in volume over February 2003.

■ **JnetDirect recently introduced software to address relational database to XML data mapping.** The software, JSQMLMapper, is a bi-directional data-mapping tool that cuts requirements for custom coding to bring relational data into XML format. For additional information visit <http://www.adtmag.com/article.asp?id=9092>.

■ **CIO.com addresses the six myths (attraction is in the price tag, the savings aren't real, there's no support, it's a legal minefield, not for mission critical applications,**

and isn't ready for the desktop) of open source software at <http://www.cio.com/archive/030104/open.html>.

■ **IBM developerWorks explores when to use elements and when to use attributes in XML design.** In this article, Uche Ogbuji offers a set of guiding principles for what to put in elements and what to put in attributes. The article discusses general recommendations in terms of four principles: core content, structured information, readability, element/attribute binding. To access the article, visit <http://www-106.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/xleatt.html>. An additional article by the same author explores what he considers **the most important XML applications**. To access this piece, visit <http://www-106.ibm.com/developerworks/xml/library/x-stand3.html> items,

■ **Recently, eleven vendors, including Sun Microsystems and HP, joined with the U.S. General Service Administration E-Gov E-Authentication Initiative to show interoperability of the Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) and authorization information.** They demonstrated three separate successful scenarios using both types of SAML version 1.1 Single Sign-On to simulate interaction between a government or enterprise portal and sites from typical content or service providers. For additional information, visit <http://www.internetnews.com/devnews/article.php/3318151>

■ **The 50-percent rule, which prohibits colleges from participating in federal financial aid programs if at least half of their students study online or if more than half of the school's courses are offered at a distance, has come under fire based on a General Accounting Office report.** The rule, initially enacted to stop abuse of federal aid programs, could result in the denial of aid to thousands of students choosing to take courses online. The GAO has not found increases in abuse at institutions exempted from the law by a Department of Education pilot program, according to the report. The complete report may be accessed at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04279.pdf>.

■ **The National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs and the Meteor Advisory Team recently announced the availability of Version 3.0 of the Meteor Software,** giving student loan borrowers web access to detailed, real time information on their loans with a single sign-on. The new version also provides new screens for Customer Service Representatives and a consolidated "super screen" for Financial Aid Professionals to see exactly what data is returned by each organization with regard to a particular loan. For more information about the Meteor Project, visit [www.nchelp.org/Meteor.htm](http://www.nchelp.org/Meteor.htm).

Please see the notice on page 12 for updated information about COD.

[Skip Nav](#)



The banner features the U.S. Department of Education logo on the left, the text "U.S. Department of Education" and "Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) Library" in the center, and the IFAP logo on the right. Below the text is a navigation menu with links: HOME | Help Center | What's New | Schools Portal | Other Links | Feedback | Privacy. A tagline at the bottom reads: "The IFAP online library contains technical publications, regulations, and policy guidance on the administration of the Federal Student Aid programs."

Publication Date: March 12, 2003

Author: General Manager| School Delivery Channel| FSA ASEDS

Summary: COD System Implementation for 2004-2005 Award Year

Posted on 03-12-2004

To: All Destination Points  
 From: General Manager, School Delivery Channel, FSA ASEDS  
 Summary: COD System Implementation for 2004-2005 Award Year

During this weekend, March 12-14, 2004, we will implement additional Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System functionality that supports the processing of Pell Grants and Direct Loans for the 2004-2005 Award Year. (For details on the COD System outage, see the Electronic Announcement that we posted on March 4, 2004 at <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/0304CODoutage0312.html>.)

Following a couple reminders and start date information for 2004-2005 Pell Grant authorizations and disbursement processing, we describe the key features and enhancements we are adding to the COD System as well as the modifications we are making to existing functionality.

### **Reminders**

- For the 2004-2005 Award Year, the COD System will continue to process both the Common Record, XML format for Full Participants as well as the fixed-length flat files for Phase In Participants. Beginning with the 2005-2006 Award Year, ALL schools will be required to process with COD as Full Participants.
- Prior to submitting 2004-2005 records to the COD System, ensure that your school software/system is ready to process 2004-2005 records. If your school uses a third party software provider, please check with your provider for the availability of the provider's 2004-2005 software release.

Note: For EDEExpress users, the 2004-2005 EDEExpress for Windows Release 2.0 will be available in early April 2004.

### **2004-2005 Pell Grant Authorizations and Disbursement Processing Start Dates**

Initial Pell Grant Authorizations for 2004-2005 will be determined in May 2004. Current Funding Levels (CFLs) will be established in COD at that time, and an Electronic Statement of Account (ESOA) containing this information will be sent to a school's SAIG mailbox. Funds for the Pell Grant Program will be available in GAPS on July 1, 2004.

Pell Grant disbursement processing for the 2004-2005 Award Year will begin on June 21, 2004.

- From implementation of the COD System for the 2004-2005 Award Year until June 21, 2004, **Phase In Participants** may submit *only* origination records. Schools that submit disbursement records prior to June 21, 2004 will receive

reject Edit 408 (Disbursement Date is Not Valid for Processing Date, Not in Valid Range, or Not a Valid Date Format).

- From implementation of the COD System for the 2004 2005 Award Year until June 21, 2004, **Full Participants** may submit common records that contain anticipated disbursement information provided the Disbursement Release Indicator (DRI) value is equal to "False". If the DRI value is equal to "True", the actual disbursement will be rejected, and schools will receive Edit 996 (Invalid Value). Beginning June 21, 2004, schools may change the DRI to "True", and COD will process the actual disbursements.

## **COD System Processing Function Enhancements and Modifications for 2004 2005**

### **Non Program Specific Changes**

- As explained in an Electronic Announcement posted on March 10, 2004 at <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/0310CODSchemaChange0405.html>, COD acknowledges 2003 2004 and 2004 2005 Common Record documents for Full Participants as follows:
  - All **2003 2004 Award Year** Common Record documents (both web and system-generated) are acknowledged using **Version 2.0c** of the Common Record XML Schema.
  - All **2004 2005 Award Year** Common Record documents (both web and system-generated) are acknowledged using **Version 2.0d** of the Common Record XML Schema.
  - If a Common Record document contains data for **multiple award years**, the document is acknowledged using the schema version for the latest award year. (For example, if a Common Record document contains both 2003 2004 and 2004 2005 data, the document is acknowledged using Version 2.0d of the Common Record XML Schema.)
- The variable Batch Number on the SAIG Transmission Batch Header is increased from positions 42 67 to 42 91. Positions 42 61 are reserved for school use. Positions 62 91 are reserved for use by the Department of Education. The COD System populates positions 62 91 with the Batch/Document ID on acknowledgements for **all** award years. If a school populates positions 62 91 on the incoming record, COD overwrites the data with the Batch/Document ID. Note: EDConnect users must upgrade to EDConnect version 5.3 or higher for their records to be transmitted to COD. EDConnect version 6.0 will be available in mid April 2004.
- For the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward, Full Participants are able to choose the message class in which they send and receive documents to and from the COD System. Message class options include the following:
  - Non program specific and non award year specific (COMRECIN, COMRECOP);
  - Non program specific and award year specific (2004 2005);
  - Program specific (Pell or Direct Loan) and non award year specific; and
- Program specific (Pell or Direct Loan) and award year specific (2004 2005). The complete list of message classes available for use in 2004 2005 is available in the 2004 2005 COD Technical Reference Volume 2, Section 2 at <http://www.fsadownload.ed.gov/index.htm>. For award years prior to 2004 2005, Full Participants must continue to send documents in the non program specific and non award year specific message class (COMRECIN, COMRECOP).
- Two new tags have been added to the 2004 2005 Common Record Layout to assist schools in processing. These tags are also located on the Batch Detail Response screen on the COD web site. The tags are as follows:
  - CPS Verification Indicator- Upon receipt of an actual disbursement if the school's verification status code for a Pell award is equal to "Blank" or "W", the COD System reviews the CPS verification indicator on file with COD. If the CPS verification indicator for the award year is equal to "Y", COD returns the CPS Verification Indicator with a value of "True" to the school in the response.
  - CPS Highest Transaction Number- COD compares all CPS transaction numbers for an award year. Upon receipt of an actual disbursement if any CPS transaction number on file at COD for a student is greater than the school reported transaction number, COD returns the CPS highest transaction number to the school in the response.
- Several screens on the COD web site are modified as follows:
  - The Batch ID label under the COD web site's Batch Search and Batch Detail Information screen is renamed Document ID.
  - The Batch Search screen includes additional search options in the drop down menu for the Batch Type field. The search options include: Common Record, DL Phase In Sub/Unsub Origination, DL Phase In PLUS



Origination, DL Phase In Disbursement, DL Phase In Change, Booking Notification, Credit Decision Override, Payment to Servicing, Promissory Note, and Web Initiated Response (Common Record).

- The Search Results screen that displays after searching by Entity ID and SSN includes the following new columns:
  - Record Type- This column displays the value Common (Common Record), DL (Direct Loan), or PL (Pell).
  - Document Type- This column displays the value BN (Booking Notification), ND (Negative Disbursement), PS (Payment to Servicing), PN (Promissory Note), RC (Receipt), RS (Response), or WB (Web Response).
  - Date Received- This column displays the date the batch was received by COD.
  - Date Response Sent - This column displays the date the response was sent to the school.
  - Warning - This column displays a "Y" if there are warnings in the batch.
- The Batch Detail Information screen displays two separate sections for Common Record only. These two sections are School Reported Data and Batch Statistics.
- Due to the changes to the Batch Detail Information screen, there will be a two-week delay in the conversion of batches submitted prior to the implementation of the COD System for the 2004 2005 Award Year to include the new information. When viewing a batch submitted prior to the implementation, zero values will display in some of the fields until the batch is converted to the new format. The expected completion date for the conversion is March 29, 2004.
- A new column, Award Type, is added to the Batch Detail Information screen. This column displays the value: PEL (Pell), DLS (Direct Loan Subsidized), DLU (Direct Loan Unsubsidized), or DLP (Direct Loan PLUS).
- The Award No column under the Batch Detail Information screen displays the last three digits of the Award ID.
- On the Cash Activity screen, the GAPS Debit Date field is populated with a date that COD receives from GAPS. The GAPS software update is tentatively scheduled for April 18, 2004.
  - *New transactions that enter the COD System before the April 18, 2004 software update* will be populated with zeroes.
  - *New transactions that enter the COD System after the April 18, 2004 software update* will be populated with the date COD receives from GAPS.
- COD web users are able to view the actual data submitted by schools to COD and the acknowledgments sent to schools from COD. The Batch Search screen is modified to show the incoming view when a school selects a status (accepted, rejected, or corrected) on the Batch Detail Information screen. The incoming and outgoing data is view only; however, web users can make changes to data on the existing update screens.
- The Person Direct Loan Information screen and the Person Pell Grant Information screen include an award year drop down menu as well as fields for the Award Amount Approved and Award Amount Disbursed.
- A new screen, Applicant Detail, is added under the Person tab on the COD web site. This new screen displays the CPS data that COD receives from CPS. This screen displays the following information: Original SSN, CPS Transaction Number, Award Year, Original Name Code, EFC, Date of Birth, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, Current SSN, Secondary EFC, Address, City, State, Zip, Pell Eligibility Flag, Verification Selection Indicator, SSA Match Flag, NSLDS Match Flag, Processed Record Type, and Process Date.

Additionally, the Application Data Type and Transaction Data Type are displayed for the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward.

### **Changes Specific to the Pell Grant Program**

- The conditions that trigger Pell Grant data being transmitted from COD to NSLDS are expanded. COD sends data to NSLDS when an initial actual disbursement for a Pell Award is accepted by COD. This includes initial Pell actual disbursements accepted 30 days in advance of the disbursement date. Additionally, updated data are sent from COD to NSLDS when a change is made to the following data elements in the COD System: Current SSN, DOB, Current First Name, Cost of Attendance, CPS Transaction Number, POP Flag, Verification Status, Total Percent of Eligibility Used, Award Amount, and Disbursement or Disbursement Adjustment Activity.
- For the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward, there are six school submitted data elements that no longer are used in

the processing of a Pell award. These data elements are:

- Academic Calendar Code;
- Payment Methodology Code;
- Weeks Used Calculate;
- Weeks Program Academic Year;
- Hours Award Year; and
- Hours Program Academic Year.

Note: These data element updates do not affect the processing of Pell awards for years prior to the 2004 2005 Award Year.

When a school submits data for any of these data elements for the 2004 2005 Award Year, the COD system ignores the data and does not perform edits. If a Full Participant submits data in these fields, the data are ignored and are not included in a response document. If a Phase-in Participant submits data in these fields, the data are ignored but will be included in an origination acknowledgement response and in the Year to Date report. These fields are removed from any reports and COD web site pages. Additionally, the data are no longer transmitted from COD to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS).

- For the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward, the Pell Award Detail screen displays the following new fields: Selected for Verification by CPS, CPS Highest Application Process Date, and CPS Highest Transaction Number. These fields do not display for awards years prior to 2004 2005.
- To assist schools in meeting verification reporting needs, a new report is available for the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward. The report identifies student disbursement records selected for verification by the Central Processing System (CPS) for which the school has not reported verification activity to COD.

Per the default settings, the report is pushed to the school's SAIG mailbox (in a pre formatted report format) and to the school's COD newsbox (in a PDF or comma delimited format) once every month. Additionally, schools can request the report as needed by submitting a batch data request and by using the Pell Data Request link located on the Batch screen on the COD web site.

### *Changes Specific to the Direct Loan Program*

- All COD web users are able to search for a Master Promissory Note (MPN) by SSN, MPN ID, Name (Last, First), or First Name (first two characters) with Date of Birth. This new search capability allows web users to find MPNs that are linked, unlinked, pending, or rejected.
- The School Summary Financial Information screen (Direct Loan drop down menu) on the COD web site is redesigned to reflect only information that is provided on the School Account Statement (SAS). The screen includes amounts for Net Drawdowns/Payments, Booked Disbursements (replaces former Disbursement Amount field), Booked Adjustments (replaces former Disbursement Adjustment Amount field), Total Net Booked Disbursements, Unbooked Disbursements, Unbooked Adjustments, Total Net Unbooked Disbursements (replaces former Disbursement Amount for Disbursements with Missing Pnote Status field), and Cash > Accepted and Posted Disbursements. The former Number of Disbursements with Missing Pnote Status field no longer displays on the screen.
- For the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward, the COD System requires anticipated disbursement amounts on all Direct Loans. As a result, COD Edit 110 (School must print/provide the disclosure statement unless it sends disbursement data to COD at least 5 days before the first disbursement date.) no longer applies to Direct Loans for the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward.

In accordance with this new requirement, COD has a new reject edit, COD Edit 117 (Disbursement information is incomplete or rejected. Direct Loan award is not accepted.). COD Edit 117 is returned to schools for an ***initial award*** when:

- The sum of the anticipated and actual gross disbursements does not equal the Award Amount;
- Anticipated or actual disbursements are rejected; or
- A school that is ineligible to disburse a loan in a single installment submits a single disbursement greater than,

less than, or equal to the award amount.

- For the 2004 2005 Award Year and forward, the COD System automatically recalculates the anticipated disbursements until the sum of the disbursements is equal to the new award amount when a downward adjustment to an existing Direct Loan award is submitted to COD. The COD System then returns to schools a new warning edit, COD Edit 118 (The sum of the anticipated disbursements does not equal the updated Direct Loan award amount. COD will recalculate the anticipated disbursements.). For more details on the recalculation method, see the 2004 2005 COD Technical Reference Volume 2, Section 1 at <http://www.fsadownload.ed.gov/index.htm>.
- The COD System automatically recalculates the anticipated disbursements to zero when a Direct Loan is inactivated. The COD System then returns to schools a new warning edit, COD Edit 119 (COD has reduced the anticipated disbursements and made this loan inactive based upon your record reducing the award amount to \$0.).
- The Direct Loan Program does not process awards or disbursements using pennies. As a result, if a Full Participant submits an award or disbursement with pennies, the COD System truncates the cents to the right of the decimal. The truncated amount displays as such on the COD web site and in any responses to schools. Schools are notified of the change to the amount via a corrected tag. Also, the COD web site does not allow users to enter pennies in an award or disbursement amount.
- The Direct Loan Rebuild file is updated to include information for Full Participants. The following new fields are added to accommodate the Common Record layout: Disbursement Release Indicator, Previous Disbursement Sequence Number, CPS Transaction Number, Endorser Amount, and Disbursement Date. Additionally, the following fields are for Phase-In Participants only, (and are populated with "Blank" for Full Participants): Borrower's Alien Registration Number, Disbursement Activity, Additional Unsubsidized Eligibility of Dependent Student, and Original Disbursement Date of an Adjusted Disbursement Date Activity.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions about this announcement or COD, please contact the COD School Relations Center at: 1 800 4PGRANT for Pell Grants, or 1 800 848 0978 for Direct Loans. You may also email COD Customer Service at: [CODSupport@acs-inc.com](mailto:CODSupport@acs-inc.com).

Thank you for your continued support of the COD System.

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