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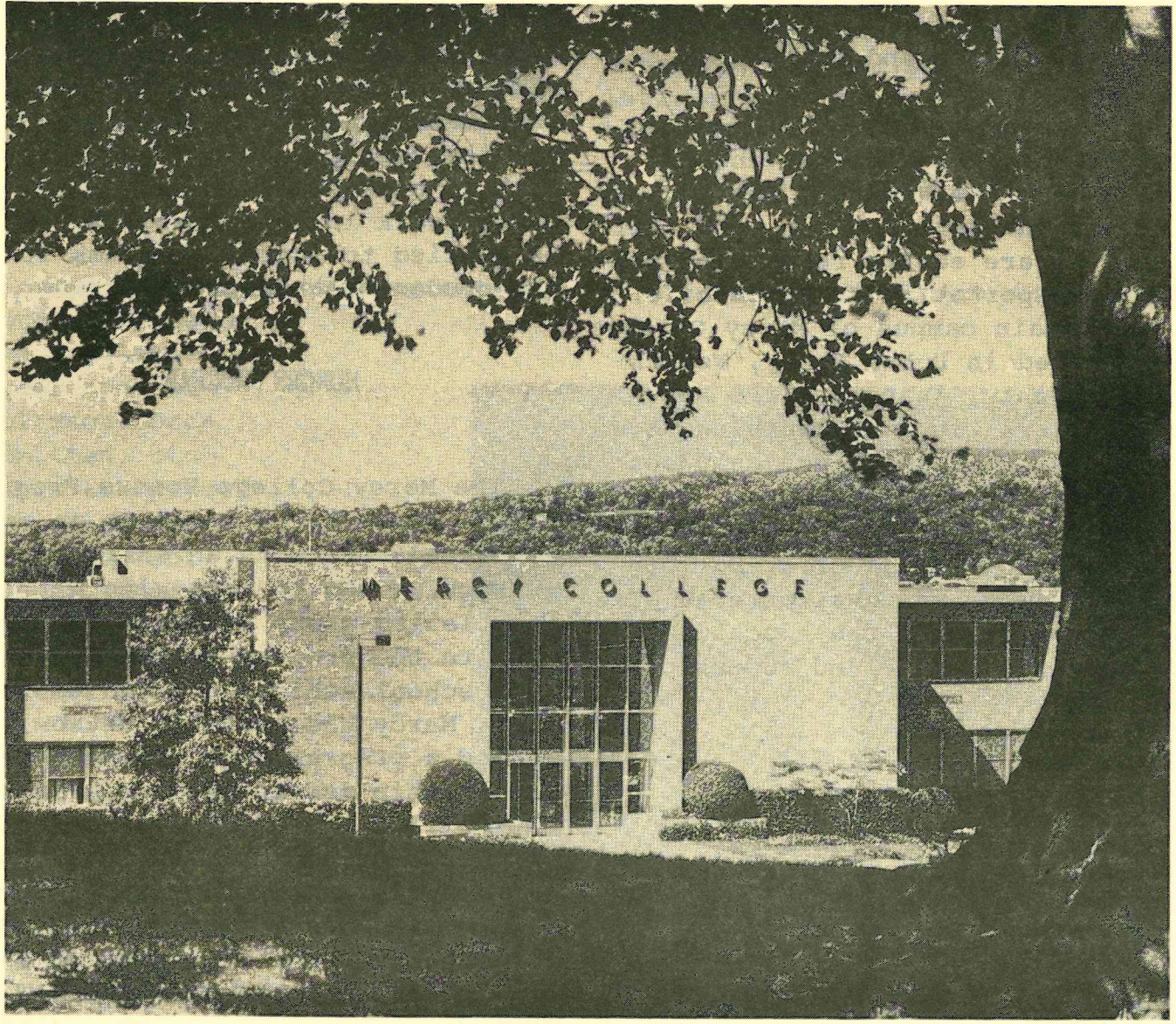
NYSOBBA

Quarterly



Vol. 4 No. 2

May 1991



PROFILE OF MERCY COLLEGE

LOCAL CAMPUSES

MANY PROGRAMS

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES

A multi-campus, independent institution of higher learning, Mercy College serves a coeducational student population that is diverse in culture, age, and academic preparation. To optimally meet the needs of its students, Mercy offers day, evening, or weekend courses of study.

A commuter college, Mercy attracts students from Westchester County and the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut metropolitan area. All campuses are easily reached by public transportation or automobile.

The main campus of Mercy College is located in Dobbs Ferry, Westchester County, just 10 miles north of New York City, on the banks of the Hudson River. Branch campuses are situated in Yorktown, Peekskill, White Plains, and the Bronx. The academic offerings of Mercy College are available at all locations, making the educational process convenient and accessible.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Mercy College offers programs of study leading to associate degrees and baccalaureate degrees in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Fine Arts, and Nursing. There are 29 undergraduate majors, ranging from accounting and business administra-

tion, to criminal justice, computer information systems, graphic design, journalism, social work, and medical and veterinary technology. Pre-professional preparation is available for law, medicine, dentistry, optometry, osteopathy and podiatry. There is a Graduate Program in Nursing at the Dobbs Ferry Campus.

Teacher certification programs are offered in elementary education, music education, the various areas of special education, and in teaching English as a Second Language. Mercy College also offers 32 certificate programs, including computer science, general business administration, accounting, pet-assisted therapy, and paralegal studies for those who do not yet wish to pursue a full degree. Course work in these programs can be applied to degree programs if the student matriculates.

HONORS PROGRAM

The Mercy College Honors Program allows students to learn at an accelerated rate with an enriched curriculum and to work with a stimulating group of people. Selection to the program is based on high school achievement and motivation. Mercy has recently established a program that guarantees scholarship assistance equal to one-half of the Mercy College tuition and automatic entry into the honors program to every full-time student who has at least a 3.2 academic average and a minimum of 550 on the verbal section of the SAT exam.

STUDENTS

At Mercy College, career-minded students can get on-the-job experience on the Co-operative Education Program. The program combines time at the workplace with classroom instruction for would-be scientists, accountants, computer experts, psychologists, and mathematicians. Full and part-time placements are available, and students receive a salary. Nationally, statistics show that 35 to 50 percent of seniors from co-op education programs return after graduation to work for their co-op companies.

Last year, about 85% of all Mercy College students received financial assistance which totaled more than \$14 million. In keeping with its mission to offer access to education to all, Mercy College has an extensive scholarship and financial aid program to assist students of all academic levels and categories. This past spring, the College strengthened the awards available to top-notch incoming freshmen. In addition to a wide variety of scholarships, loans, and work-study programs, Mercy also offers athletic grants and awards for overseas study.

ADMISSIONS

(cont'd on page 9)

Most undergraduate programs at Mercy College are available under open enrollment. Once admitted, students are placed according to academic background. Admissions counselors welcome the opportunity to talk with all interested students and students are invited to spend a day at Mercy College, attending classes and meeting students and faculty.



Central Region Meeting

The Central Region had a meeting on March 7, 1991 hosted by Colgate University. The session opened with a discussion on the financial problems of New York State, which not only has delayed the introduction of the Liberty Scholarship Program, but has resulted in a substantial reduction in Bundy Aid. Each school described how it was planning to absorb these cuts while also limiting the size of tuition increases. Varying combinations of salary reductions/freezes, elimination of positions, and program cuts are being undertaken by each school.

A discussion ensued involving money saving strategies and the pros and cons of maintaining job manuals for workers to possibly improve worker efficiency. The discussion then turned to collection techniques, particularly in these difficult times, not only for prior students but for those currently enrolled. Also discussed were registration procedures and how they are used to collect overdue balances. A topic of lively debate was the advantages and disadvantages of payment plans and internal loan programs.

Since some lending institutions have indicated the desire to transfer Stafford loan reimbursement via electronic funds, it was noted that schools should keep abreast of this. Most agreed, however, that at present no reduction in effort would be realized since students' signatures are still required and record-keeping for schools would not be simplified. There are some schools exploring the possibility

of designating preferred lenders for Stafford loans as a way to improve efficiency. Another item of discussion was various experiences schools have had with program reviews.

The final topic, and an ongoing problem which increases during recessionary times, is dealing with difficult people. It was suggested that "listening", staying level-headed and expressing little emotion were the main characteristics needed to handle the stress arising from these difficult situations.

Article submitted by
Thomas O'Neill
Colgate University

NOTE: This meeting was scheduled originally by the Professional Development Committee of NYSOBBA to discuss the Liberty Scholarship Program. When the Liberty Scholarship Program was put on hold for one year, the committee decided to hold the meeting anyway. From Thomas's review of the meeting, much good discussion came out of that meeting.

The Geneese Valley Region was also supposed to host a similar meeting at Rochester Colgate Divinity the same week but Mother Nature presented us with an ice storm and

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Electronic Disbursement of NYSHESC Student Loans

We live in an electronic age. Our grocery items are scanned electronically; our news is gathered and delivered electronically; our children are instructed in the use of electronics beginning in elementary school; we get calls from electronic voices; and we get answers from electronic systems. Basically our entire lives can be organized, scheduled, changed, and rescheduled electronically. It may not seem quite comfortable for some of us, but it is undeniably a faster, more efficient method of handling thousands of daily tasks.

It stands to reason then that the advent of EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) was inevitable. In August of last year, the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (NYSHESC) sent out a Student Loan Program Bulletin #394 to detail the procedures for EFT in the NYSHESC loan program. EFT is an optional method of disbursing student loans. While some of you may already be using it, many of you may not be fully aware of the availability of this method of loan disbursement.

If you need the specifics of how EFT works under the NYSHESC loan program, or would simply like a refresher, we would be glad to get a copy of our Bulletin #394 to you. NYSHESC has been involved in EFT to pay bills and receive payments for some time. The recommended procedures that have been established for EFT between lenders and schools were developed and fine-tuned with

representatives of both groups. Just as important is the fact that the NYSHESC procedures were reviewed with the U.S. Department of Education to assure compliance with federal requirements. If you have questions regarding EFT, you can call the NYSHESC Bureau of Loan Finance at (518) 473-1592.

If you are interested in using EFT, the first step you need to take is to locate a lender that will offer your school this service. Since EFT is an optional method of disbursement which a lender may offer to schools, the lender and school must enter into an agreement on the terms and conditions of service rendered. There is no standard agreement prescribed by NYSHESC.

EFT is a system that has benefits for everyone. It is cheaper for the lenders to transfer funds electronically than to process individual checks. Schools receive the funds safely and much faster, and reduce the labor-intensive process of handling individual checks.

Now that EFT has proven to be a safe, reliable, efficient way to do business, there is a new twist to the system on the horizon. NYSHESC was recently approached by several lending institutions and asked to act as their escrow agent for the electronic disbursement of funds to schools. That would mean, in very simple terms, that NYSHESC would be the funneling agent or clearing-house between participating lenders and schools for the electronic transfer of funds and data. Lenders

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Western Region Combines with NYSFAAA for Regional Meeting

On Friday, February 15, I co-chaired with NYSFAAA Western Region Director, Helen Lukasik, a day-long conference on the issue of Stafford loans. It had been a long awaited dream to integrate the Bursars and Financial Aid Offices on matters of regulations, procedures, and questions that impact both sectors; therefore, I was very excited to coordinate this program. Several weeks prior to the conference, I had contacted Patricia Mullins from HESC requesting that a HESC representative participate along with various lender associates to discuss the Stafford Loan Program. Norm Nadieu responded affirmatively to our invitation and the agenda was printed. The membership response was overwhelming! So many have never had the opportunity to interface with HESC in person and were anxious to learn from the corporation and be able to present specific problems and questions.

Two days prior to the conference, Norm called with a travel denial message. (Not only was Buffalo getting a "SNOW Job" from the weatherman, but from Albany too!!!) Needless to say, my co-chair and I were most distressed at the news. We try to be sensitive about the state budget crisis, however, this program was not a frivolous event... we were striving to administer the state program in an efficient manner and instruct our colleagues on new regulations and some various problematic cases.

Despite poor weather conditions

(WNY radio had a winter storm advisory), 56 members participated in our program. Commendations go to Diane Dixon of Educaid, Sharon Graybeal of Norstar, and Sharon Richardson of Lockport Savings Bank for their fine presentations. The absence of HESC was taken with great disappointment. Several unresolved matters were addressed to Neil Foley (see article to follow) for clarification to be relayed back to the membership. HESC'S inability to communicate "in the field" is a contradiction to Neil's February 11 memorandum addressing the need to administer Financial Aid more efficiently. Members of his staff are visiting schools that request assistance in streamlining the loan process. What about our request? I personally hope that the state budget will not hinder our future endeavors for HESC participation which is a vital asset to our organization.

The participants complimented the joint effort. They enjoyed the colleague exchange and the perspective of both sectors in administering this program. Hopefully more joint meetings will be arranged on individual campuses and in the regions.

Submitted by Lucy Wiertel
Western Region Director
Hilbert College

The following are the questions that were brought out in the Western Region Meeting and addressed to Neil Foley. Each question is followed by Neil's response.

What is the deadline for processing the old Stafford Loan applications? It was reported that Mil-

ton Wright said "end of May"; the majority thought it was September or October.

The deadline for processing the current Stafford/SLS application/promissory note is June 30, 1991. NYSHESC Bulletin #91-L-4, S-5, dated March 6, 1991, details application processing and electronic transmission procedures for the 1991-92 academic year. Should any questions remain on any issues discussed in this bulletin, Brenda Smith, (518) 473-0480, will be happy to provide assistance.

Problems result from HESC-processed Stafford loan checks not being identified as "1st disbursement" and "2nd disbursement." Can these checks be labeled as such?

NYSHESC Disbursement System (HDS) loan check processing provides to schools a "Check Roster," listing various information pertaining to the checks being forwarded to the school. Although individual checks (drafts) do not state the disbursement number, the "check roster" clearly indicates the anticipated second disbursement date. ((Exhibit #72 in the Guaranteed Education Loans Handbook provides an example of this information.)

Can PLUS loans have a co-payable option and a multiple disbursement option? Several institutions indicated that this option would ensure payment on the tuition accounts deferred based on PLUS loan funds. Handled as an option on the loan application, this would not impact the schools who do not want the burden of endorsing these checks.

PLUS loans, per federal regulation, are exempt from the co-payable and multiple disbursement options. I appreciate your concerns regarding ensuring the receipt of these funds at the school; however, NYSHESC does not have discretion in the interpretation of the regulations as they affect the processing of PLUS loans.

When the period of the loan is one semester only, why is there a need for multiple disbursements? This has had a major negative effect on student accounts (e.g. late fees being imposed on balance due until second disbursement is received).

Per the Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989, the proceeds of any Stafford or SLS loan must be disbursed in two or more installments, regardless of the amount of the loan or the length of the period of enrollment. If, however, the date on which the first disbursement is made occurs on or after the earliest date that the second disbursement could be made, the lender may deliver the proceeds of all disbursements on the loan using a single check. NYSHESC, again, does not have discretion in the interpretation of federal law.

The following are Neil Foley's opening and closing remarks in response to Lucy's letter.

I read with interest your account of the successful day-long conference held in February. It was with extreme regret that NYSHESC was unable to be represented at the conference. I wish to assure you, however, that We remain committed

to the same professional development goals as NYSOBBA and NYSFAAA. we shall continue to be available to work together in achieving these goals, despite current New York State budgetary constraints.

I hope this information fully addresses your immediate concerns. Please be assured that NYSHESC is committed to and agrees with the need for dialogue among all participants in the loan program. Our presence will continue to be felt "in the field" whenever possible. Additionally, our telephone lines are always open. Do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any assistance. I value your opinions, as well as those of the entire NYSOBBA membership.

Submitted by Lucy Wiertel
Western Region Director
Hilbert College

Gwen Connors of Utica College of Syracuse University also posed a question to HESC recently regarding the Stafford loan. The question and response follow.

What is the length of time a Stafford/SLS loan check may be held before it is to be returned to the bank?

Bulletin #392 (8/16/90, item C) issued by NYSHESC is correct: schools have always had 120 days after the disbursement date to negotiate the check. But Dear Col-

league Letter Gen-88-32 specified that second disbursements must be negotiated by schools within 45 days, and we have recently received verbal confirmation from the U.S. Department of Education(ED) that it is their policy that the "45-day rule" applies to both disbursements. However, this rule is not currently in federal regulation. We are disputing the position that the 45-day rule supercedes the 120-day rule for any disbursement and are currently requesting written clarification on ED's position. When we receive clarification, we will notify the financial aid community. Until that time, we suggest that you adhere to the 45-day rule for check negotiation, given the slight possibility that ED may determine that it is within their authority to penalize schools for negotiating checks after 45 days have elapsed.

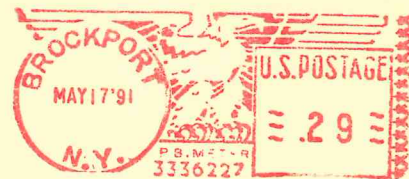
Article submitted by Gwen Connors
Response by Steven Bomeisl
Manager, Office of Policy
Bureau of Loan Services

Due date
June 10, 1991

Please submit your articles, pictures, puzzles, quips/quotes etc. by the above date for submission in the next issue. Mail to: Barbara Dupre Suny Brockport Bursar Office Brockport, NY 14420. Or Fax to (716) 395-5445.

NYSOBBA NEWSLETTER

SUNY Brockport
Brockport, NY 14420



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