

Dear NEOA Colleagues:

NEOA has had a busy and productive year thus far! The fall calendar was filled with several successful events, including five state conferences and three professional development days. Over ninety NEOA members attended "Realizing the College Dream", a professional development activity hosted by UNH. In addition, New Hampshire NEOA members generated regional and national media recognition for TRIO as presidential primary candidates campaigning in New Hampshire responded to questions about TRIO/Gear Up programs.

TRIO Day, celebrated in Worcester, MA this year, was attended by over 600 students and staff from 43 different programs. The two-day event offered participants 20 college tours, a college fair with over 70 participating institutions, six workshops and an array of social events. Many thanks to our TRIO Day co-chairs Marsha Inniss, Jodi DiGregorio and Rosa Inniss from TERI along with a strong contingent from the Colleges of Worcester Consortium for organizing this outstanding event!

One of NEOA's goals this year was to streamline the appearance and content of our professional publications. Our Public Relations team, led by Paul Lynskey, developed several new products for our association, including three new brochures and our newly reformatted newsletter. We hope you like the new look!

Nationally, increasing appropriations for our programs remains a top priority. I am pleased to report that eleven of New England's twelve Senators have signed the Lincoln-Collins letter supporting an increase of \$120 million. Representatives Payne (D – NJ) and Lee (R – NE) recently circulated a similar letter in the House; I am confident the New England members of the U.S. House of Representatives will demonstrate their strong support.

Finally, our Annual Conference is at hand! I want to acknowledge and thank NEOA Vice-President Nella Signorello for her terrific leadership in organizing this year's conference at the Water's Edge Resort in Westbrook, CT. Nella and the conference committee have been working on this event for over a year and deserve a solid round of applause.

There has never been a more exciting time for college access and completion initiatives and I am proud to say that NEOA is at the forefront of a national agenda. But, we need future leaders! So, I encourage you to sign up for NEOA's Leadership Institute, get involved in your state and regional association, and encourage your colleagues to do the same. It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve as NEOA's President this year and I look forward to the remaining months.

All my best,
Tracy Karasinski
NEOA President

INTRODUCING THE NEW NEOA NEWSLETTER!



NEOA is an important resource that assists all who work to enhance educational opportunities. The NEOA quarterly newsletter is designed to be read in ten minutes or less, and is focused on news items and helpful information that can be used within our jobs. Each edition will include unique feature articles, regular reports on state initiatives, resources on the NEOA website, best practices and program overviews, and important NEOA Board meeting and President's updates. I'd like to also introduce you to the newsletter editor Migdalia Gomez, who is excited to take on this responsibility. Feel free to contact her with feedback and suggestions at mgomez@mefa.org.

Best wishes,
Paul Lynskey
Chair, Public Relations/Communications

2008 NEOA CONFERENCE

I look forward to welcoming you to Water's Edge Resort & Spa, host of the 2008 NEOA Conference: "*Celebrating 43 Years of Educational Opportunity*". The conference will provide network opportunities for new and seasoned professionals, workshop presentations, and exciting events!

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Timothy Shriver, will accept an award on behalf of his father, Sargent Shriver, who led many social initiatives, including Upward Bound. During Wednesday's lunch, we will recognize our NEOA TRIO Achievers. Wednesday evening is the Alumni Reception; so stop by and mingle with our New England TRIO alum! Friday we will hear updates from COE President Dr. Arnold Mitchem, David Megquier, and Eileen Bland, from the U.S Department of Education. Lastly, remember to stop by the Executive Board Room to check out the silent auction and raffle.

*On behalf of NEOA, and the 2008 Conference Committee,
we hope you enjoy our time at Water's Edge!*

Nella Signorello
*Vice President
Chair, Annual Conference*

TECH Blurb

"Board of Directors" section of the website

Officer elections will take place at the annual business meeting, so you might want to learn more about these positions.



- ◆ From the NEOA homepage (<http://www.neaonline.org>), click on **"Board of Directors"**.
- ◆ On the next page, a menu of options will appear on the left-hand side. Here you can read the **"Board Job Descriptions"**, view a list of **"Current Board Members"**, and read an overview of the NEOA's **"Strategic Plan"**.

The Board page also contains a link to the nominations page, where you can learn about nominating someone for a board position.

Casey Henderson
Chair, Technology Committee

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

TRIO Day was successful— kudos to the TRIO Day Committee who worked diligently in obtaining funds to support TRIO Day. TERI, a long time supporter of TRIO Day, generously provided funds aiding in the success.

Plans are quickly winding up for the Annual Conference which promises to be well attended and another NEOA success story. The following sources have provided funds for the conference: Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority— (MEFA), Rhode Island Higher Education Assistance Authority—(RIHEAA), Wainwright Bank, Nellie Mae, and the Rhode Island Education Opportunity Association (RIEOA).

You are invited to contact the Development Chair to discover ways you can partner with us to promote college access and success.

Julia V. Nesbitt
Jnesbitt@RIC.edu
Development Chair

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Castleton State College—SSS
Director – Kelley Gilmour

For over 20 years, the Castleton State College SSS program has served 230 TRIO-eligible students annually. Students participate in many services including a Summer Transition Program for new students during the week before fall classes begin, academic counseling, individual and small group tutoring, writing, math, and Spanish clinics, and a variety of workshops. Each year, 25 or more participants receive a TRIO Grant ranging from \$800 to \$2,300 and students also participate in a laptop loan program. TRIO students are encouraged to develop their leadership skills by applying for TRIO mentoring and peer-counseling positions.

Castleton SSS students consistently succeed academically. Over 90% are in good academic standing each semester and a number of SSS students are acknowledged at the annual Castleton Student Awards Ceremony for their many achievements in the classroom, the community, and in extra-curricular activities.

Jennifer Jones
State Liaison, VT

ANNUAL POLICY SEMINAR: NEOA in DC

Thanks to all of you who joined us March 9-12 in D.C. and helped make Policy Seminar 2008 a great success.

Team leaders for Hill visits included Rony Delva (CT), Cliff Marrett (CT), Ramon Gonzales (MA), Pati Gregson (MA), Linda Rottman (ME), Len Lamberti (NH), Eric Klein (RI) and Karen Madden (VT). NEOA President Tracy Karasinski did a superior job reporting our results at the Tuesday evening debriefing session.

Appropriations season is well underway and we currently have 49 Senators signed on to the letter supporting an increase of **\$120 million for TRIO in FY 2009**. A similar letter is now circulating to House members this week.

COE still expects the **final Higher Education Reauthorization bill** to be signed into law this spring by the President. House and Senate staffs are working out the differences between their two bills and the TRIO community is actively lobbying members of both chambers to include the provisions important to us (including the grant appeals language and the repeal of the final sections of the Absolute Priority).

Currently, the House and Senate are in their home districts and states for the Easter recess. This is a great opportunity for you to meet with your elected officials at home.

Sarah Morrell
Chair, Legislation & Education, and State Initiatives Committee

