

## Making Life a Little Less Complicated

It's not easy being you these days.

You're doing more work with fewer resources. And those shortages may have had an impact on your office's ability to do what's at the top of your to-do list: to work closely with students and counsel them on financial aid.

At Inceptia we understand what you're dealing with, and we also know what you value in a provider. They're pretty basic things, really. Affordability, honesty, efficiency, convenience and expertise.

More than ever, we're focused on bringing you those qualities — but with an important distinction. We want to provide effective, uncomplicated solutions that respect your time. We want to provide products focused on helping your students become financially successful adults.

By giving you and your students the tools to thrive, we're taking a step toward helping make your life a little easier right now and in the future, too.

In this issue, you'll find examples of how we're doing just that. I hope you'll grab a cup of coffee and take a few minutes to read about what's happening at Inceptia.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Downing". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sue Downing  
Vice President of Marketing

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*We are dedicated to finding fresh solutions for financial aid offices and schools, to contribute to the ultimate success of students. Read on to learn more.*



## College Bound, Inc. Benefits from Inceptia Donation

As part of our commitment to support other nonprofits, Inceptia made a \$1,500 donation to College Bound, Inc., a metropolitan D.C. organization that provides academic mentoring to high school and undergraduate students to help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

The Inceptia team enjoyed catching up with school representatives during exhibit hours.

**Top Right:** Ellen Neel, Glendale Community College Financial Aid Director and NASFAA board member with Inceptia Strategic Business Director Pat Robles-Friebert.

**Lower Right:** Inceptia Strategic Business Directors Matt Nettleton and Ron Lee handed out cupcakes to booth visitors.

# Our Partners Relax at NASFAA

## *Free your mind, and the rest will follow*

Visitors to Inceptia's booth at the NASFAA conference in Washington, D.C., got a truly Zen experience (including a takeaway worry stone to de-stress).

Our theme, *Relax*, showcased how Inceptia's suite of products is designed to make life less complicated and help you put students first.

Verification regulations were a hot topic at the conference, and there was a lot of interest in our full-service verification processing solution, Verification Gateway. Inceptia experts hosted multiple demonstrations on our innovative approach, which not only provides a quick and efficient online interface for students and parents but also eases the burden on financial aid staff.

Dave Macoubrie, Inceptia Vice President, Repayment Solutions, continued the theme of reducing stress by serving as moderator for a panel session, "Offloading the Additional Weight of Student Loans: Default Management Strategies that Work."

The session was an opportunity for financial aid professionals to share experiences and resources on how to monitor their Cohort Default Rate to identify problem areas, gain campus buy-in on the importance of keeping rates low, and take action to achieve a healthy CDR.

As NASFAA celebrated its 50th anniversary this year, we were especially proud to be a Platinum-level sponsor for the event. Thanks to everyone who stopped by to say hello. If you'd like to set up a time to chat about anything you saw or heard, let us know.



# A Simple Solution for a Time-Consuming Problem

Do the math and you'll see why more schools are choosing to outsource their verification processing.

A 2015 NASFAA Administrative Burden survey calculated the time spent on verification processing. It estimated that to complete the process of verifying 3,333 Title IV applicants, an average school would realistically need approximately 550 hours — or nearly one month of full-time work. And, that work typically falls to one or more employees who already have a full-time workload.

Add to this the time needed for requesting verification documentation and providing support for student verification questions, and it's clear how traditional verification processing can take a toll on financial aid staff.

## Lighten the load

Verification Gateway offers an innovative solution to this historically time-consuming and inefficient task. By pairing the time-saving benefits of a fully automated process with the flexibility and support of personal interaction, Inceptia is able to offer an effective, full-service approach to verification processing.

- Students and parents are guided through verification via an intuitive, centralized and secure experience on our mobile-ready Web portal.
- Schools receive completed verifications within two business days of receipt of all documentation, allowing greater efficiency in packaging student files and quicker disbursement of student aid.
- Verification Gateway is turn-key, requiring no additional IT resources from the school. The system is updated routinely to meet all federal regulatory requirements, eliminating the stress of monitoring and responding to changes that can occur throughout the year.

Verification Gateway can help your school effectively refocus resources, experience a positive return on investment, and build your reputation as an innovative higher education industry leader. Most importantly, with Verification Gateway, your financial aid staff will have more time to focus where it counts — with your students.

Call us at 888.529.2028 to find out more about Verification Gateway.



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Verification Gateway  
allows us to do what  
we need to get done.

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Joshua North  
Director of Financial Aid  
Highland Community College

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## Verification Gateway

### A Leap that Pays off for Highland Community College

Trying something new takes a leap of faith.

For Highland Community College, that step is paying off so far. The school selected Inceptia's Verification Gateway to process its 2016-2017 academic year verifications.

Joshua North, director of financial aid, joined the office in February. It's the first time he's worked with a third-party servicer to help with verification.

North says the product, "has worked quite well", both for the school and students who are using the Web portal.

"It's nice because we have a team of people that's very knowledgeable on the verification front. They're not trying to juggle all the different aspects of financial aid, they're able to focus specifically on verification."

His office appreciates the time they've gotten back to concentrate on other priorities, he says.

"Verification Gateway allows us to do what we need to get done. Without it, we'd probably be looking at increasing someone up to full-time or possibly getting a third person in the office."

He also likes the flexibility in reporting. Users have the ability to pull data whenever they like as well as get emails letting them know when students have been verified. That constant stream of information means the school's records are always up to date.

North's advice to schools considering making the leap to Verification Gateway? Do the math and track how many hours each week is dedicated to verifying students — including, he says, hours also spent chasing those students that don't respond.

## State of Michigan Chooses Inceptia Solutions

This spring, the State of Michigan Department of Treasury awarded Inceptia an extended purchasing contract to offer student loan default prevention management and financial literacy services to student borrowers attending MiDEAL institutions across Michigan.

Through this award, MiDEAL institutions can contract directly with Inceptia to

customize solutions that best meet their needs — using our Default Prevention Outreach, Grace Counseling Outreach and Financial Avenue products.

To further support students in the State of Michigan, Inceptia is offering Financial Avenue to all Michigan high schools free of charge.

"At no cost to the state, Michigan has taken a step toward helping colleges address the student loan default problem which is also in the best interest of students."

Ann Wohlfert  
State Bureau Administrator for the  
Michigan Department of Treasury



# Default Prevention Outreach Features New Reports

Inceptia's Default Prevention Outreach gives you an in-depth view of your school's delinquent portfolio. We are pleased to roll out several new reporting tools designed to ensure you know exactly where you've been, where you are, and where you're going in your efforts to prevent default:

## Cohort Activity - Defaults Report

Previously known as the Cohort Activity Report, this report allows schools to track default rates of closed and open cohort years.

This report provides the official and current default rate for each cohort year, including the number of borrowers in repayment, the number in default, any new defaulters, and the number of students saved (loans that are no longer in default).

You can view the borrower and loan details for all of the loans, allowing you to easily compare the data on defaulted loans to that of your system, to identify

and fix any discrepancies before the cohort year(s) close.

You can also take a deeper dive into your official and open cohort default rates by providing the institutional data variables: school branch, major, and enrollment code.

Once provided, you can view default rates for each cohort year by any or a combination of the three institutional variables.

In addition, by providing the school's less-than-half-time status for borrowers within the open cohort years, the report will compare the school's status to that of NSLDS, and flag any discrepancies.

By monitoring your Cohort Activity-Defaults Report regularly, you can avoid the timely appeal/challenge process and identify and fix discrepancies before the release of the Draft Cohort Default Rate file each year.

## Cohort Activity - All Report

This informational report provides a loan overview on each of the open cohort years, including:

- The number and percentage of loans in each status (i.e., in school/ grace, deferment, etc.)
- Additional information available on key statuses, such as repayment plans.
- Detailed listing of loan and borrower counts for the following groupings: servicer, repayment plan, servicer and repayment plan, loan status, and loan status and servicer.

## Risk Report

The Risk Report provides the current and potential delinquency and default risk for each active cohort year.

For more information about Default Prevention Outreach, call us at 888.529.2028.



Inceptia is offering several new reporting tools designed to ensure you know exactly where you've been, where you are, and where you're going in your efforts to prevent default.

# Providing Financial Literacy Education to Homeless Children & Youth

Nearly 1.3 million children and youth in the United States are homeless. Not only are their lives disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent and adequate housing, they also often don't have access to the educational resources that other kids do.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) is the only professional organization specifically dedicated to meeting the educational needs of these students.

This nonprofit provides professional development, resources, and training support for anyone interested in supporting the academic success of children and youth challenged by homelessness.

NAEHCY has partnered with Inceptia to further financial literacy education through Financial Avenue.

"Financial Avenue is important to our mission because one of the many things that our homeless students lack is financial literacy," says Cykeia Lee, director of higher education initiatives at NAEHCY.

*1.3 million youth in the United States are homeless.*

Through this partnership, Lee says her organization has been able to highlight how financial literacy should be accessible to everyone, including the most vulnerable students.

"Access to tools and resources that can teach them how to manage money, budget, and apply for financial aid and other useful resources can help them become one step closer to getting out of poverty."

NAEHCY and Inceptia have rolled out Financial Avenue to high schools, where staff are signing up to view the course content. Together, they're working on marketing the program to students.

"I have seen so many financial literacy tools come and go," Lee says. "Financial Avenue is the first tool that I have seen that's really tailored to students and young adults, uses real voices and stories from students and young adults, and really helps guide students to make better financial decisions."

## Financial Avenue Toolkits *Helping you help students succeed*

Whether you'd like ways to recruit students to Financial Avenue, or you're looking for classroom materials to complement what's in our modules, our Administrator Portal is a handy resource.

### Marketing Toolkit

On the marketing side, you'll find materials to pique students' interest — like a variety of flyers and our program brochure. You'll also find article templates for email communication or newsletters, promotional videos, and a social media guide with sample content and suggested website verbiage to help you spread the word.

### Educator Toolkit

For educators, the portal features presentations with discussion questions and activities to supplement the course content.

Here, you'll also find the video content, with embeddable links, from each course. To show you how other schools are using Financial Avenue in their programs, we feature best practices on the portal.

Many states have predetermined standards for how this kind of curriculum will be delivered at the high school level, so we've

compared Financial Avenue's learning objectives against some of our partner states' guidelines. It's a simple way to ensure you're compliant with standards.

**Here's how to access the toolkits:**

- Go to [FinancialAvenue.org](https://FinancialAvenue.org)
- Click Login
- Click on Administrator in the Log In box
- Enter your Email Address and Password, and select Log In.

# Default Prevention Outreach Effective Part of “Long Play” for Columbia College

About 30 miles up the road from the state capital in Jefferson City, Missouri, you’ll find Columbia College.

Last year, the school was looking for a cost-effective approach to lowering its Cohort Default Rate.

Administrators at the private, four-year institution had heard about Inceptia’s Default Prevention Outreach and were curious to know more about it.

“We had some colleagues in Missouri that were using the product, so we reached out to see how things were going for them,” says Nathan Miller, senior director of Columbia College’s Department of Student Success. “They had seen positive results, so we took that into consideration.”

After also comparing the pricing structure with other providers — which Miller says also tipped the scales in Inceptia’s favor — Columbia College signed on with Inceptia in May 2015.

Using Default Prevention Outreach, he says, has been an effective part of the “long play” required to see an impact on a school’s Cohort Default Rate.

Still, he sees things moving in the right direction: The institution’s FY 2015 CDR is the first year in the past several years that the rate has been trending lower.

Inceptia’s reporting tools have helped Miller and his team get a true picture of the school’s progress.

“The report we share the most often is the Trending Default Rate,” he says. “We hadn’t looked at the data before in that sense, the default rate over the cohort time period and the year-over-year data.”

That particular report — with its ability to compare data with previous years and to compare with trends for the most current year — has helped prove the value in using Default Prevention Outreach.

Miller says he’s pleased with the trends he’s seen so far, but the biggest impact to date has been an understanding of the data and the ability to discuss results with Inceptia.

“That consistent update on our cohort progress has been really helpful. It’s really given us something to help communicate to our administrative team. When I’ve made the case for retaining Inceptia’s services for another year, I’ve been able to do that without reservation.”

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“Inceptia has been really responsive to our requests for unique data. I feel the relationship is two-way — they’re not just feeding us information and when we need more information on a data point they’re willing to provide it.”

Nathan Miller  
Senior Director, Student Success

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## Inceptia Digs into Industry Issues

We're tackling some of the topics that are top of mind for financial aid professionals. Here's a look at two recent research papers:

### ***Financial Aid Management Practices: The Benefits of Outsourcing Verification***

It may be an understatement to say today's financial aid professionals are a little stressed. It's clear that schools need help. And outsourcing is a viable option.

The brief specifically addresses the benefits of outsourcing verification and the impact of helping institutions refocus their resources. Data provided will assist those evaluating their verification strategy and provide guidance and support for schools considering a third-party servicer.

### ***The ROI of Financial Education***

At a time when outcomes are king, the nature of financial education dictates that its results are often not immediately seen. This can make it difficult to know which strategies are effective or will gain schools the greatest return on their efforts.

In this paper, we examine the effects of financial education on student satisfaction and financial stress levels, retention and cohort default rates and lifelong financial behaviors. A simplified review of the numbers provides a basis for calculating the return on investment for financial education programs.

To order your free copy of these research papers, and to see what else we're talking about, visit [www.inceptia.org/resource-center/research-briefs](http://www.inceptia.org/resource-center/research-briefs).



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### **About Inceptia**

Inceptia, a division of National Student Loan Program (NSLP), is a nonprofit organization committed to offering effective and uncomplicated financial aid management solutions in such key areas as default prevention, verification, and financial education. Our mission is to support schools as they launch brilliant futures for students, armed with the knowledge to become financially responsible citizens. Since 1986, we have helped more than two million students at 5,500 schools nationwide reach their higher education dreams. Each year, we help more than 180,000 students learn how to pay for college, borrow wisely, resolve their delinquency issues and repay their student loan obligations. And with our default prevention and verification solutions, we help financial aid administrators maximize their resources, so they can spend more time focusing on students. More information at [Inceptia.org](http://Inceptia.org).