

knows the territory and the challenges. Thomas also brings to his work the experience he gained as a trainer for consolidation and loan servicing staff at Nelnet. He moved from that position to his current role last July.

“I’m thrilled to be working directly with the school folks who really make financial aid happen. Whatever I can do to find value or bring value to our customers is what I try to focus on,” says Thomas. “My goal is to figure out how I can lend my support and tailor our resources to fit each school’s needs.”

And in his spare time, Thomas admits he does look upward to the 14,000+ peaks around the state, contemplating the two or three he has climbed, as well as the ones he has yet to conquer.

“We’ve seen your superhuman abilities this year”

That’s how we framed the invitation to this fall’s Regional Roundtables for Superheroes of HERA. It was our way of recognizing the larger-than-life effort that was required from financial aid staff to comply with the extensive changes in federal law.

In September we sponsored two day-long roundtable events—one in Pueblo and one in Bloomfield—where more than 60 financial aid professionals gathered for an update on the regulatory side of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005. We focused our presentation on the latest clarifying guidance and regulations within HERA, while attendees focused on thoughtful discussion of the most pressing issues on their campuses.

The “superheroes” agenda included sharing new information about eligibility of direct assessment programs and distance learning for financial aid, as well as state and federal teacher loan forgiveness programs, return of Title IV, repayment alignment, identity theft, Grad PLUS loans and consolidations.

Punctuated by trivia questions about superheroes (did you know that Wonder Woman’s earrings allow her to breathe in outer space?), the roundtables also featured an engaging and entertaining session about work/life balance. Nationally recognized expert Mary LoVerde, formerly of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, offered a break in the serious discussion with her humorous and meaningful view of the importance of blending career with a happy, healthy family life.

Additional free training sessions continued throughout the fall with the first half of our most recent four-part series in November. See the box below for more information about upcoming sessions.



“Superman” Dan Rodgers of College Access Network leads the September training and update on HERA issues.

upcoming financial aid training

If you have a solid knowledge of financial aid basics and the FFEL Program, consider exploring December’s training sessions:

Workshop 3: Loan Certification to Disbursement
Thursday, December 7 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Workshop 4: Withdrawal to Return of Funds
Friday, December 8 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit www.college-access.net and choose “Training Schedule” from the Quick Links menu, or contact Compliance Trainer Julia Alexander at jalexander@college-access.net.