Hi. My name is Colleen Miller.

I work in the SFA Customer Support Branch in ED.

I hope you've taken advantage of the services the Customer Support Branch provides the professionals like yourselves in the financial aid community; including a toll-free telephone number you can call for help with Policy questions about the SFA Programs.

I also hope you are taking advantage of this terrific tool that the Customer Support Branch developed for you.

By show of hands, how many of you are familiar with and currently use the IFAP web site?

Great.

Let's proceed then with the tour.

Objectives for Today

- **Brief history of SFA's electronic publishing accomplishments**
- **Become familiar with the different components of IFAP**
- **Discover several methods of searching IFAP**
- **Learn where to get help**

Session 2-5

This afternoon I am going to give you a tour of the IFAP website.

I want you to become familiar with the five (5) major areas of IFAP; and what information is available here.

Then I will guide you through discovery of several methods of searching IFAP, so that you can quickly locate the information you need.

And last, but not least, we want you to know where to get help.

Acorn to Oak Tree

- **Fall 1994 SFA introduced the SFABBS**
- **July 1995 SFA BBS was available in a Windows format**
- **July 1996 WWW access to SFABBS**
- **March 1998 IFAP is launched**

Session 2-3

The SFA Customer Support Branch has been in the information dissemination business since it's inception.

Our efforts are growing and maturing. Like the ED Seal, we are on the growth path from an acorn to an Oak Tree.

In the Fall of 1994, SFA introduced the former SFA BBS. This was a DOS-based application with a very small information store. It was, however, the first time the Department made SFA publications available in electronic format.

In July 1995, we made the SFA BBS available in a Windows format. This required you to install our client software on your PC so that you could communicate with our server here in DC. As a Windows application, the SFA BBS was a bit more customer friendly, AND our information store was continuing to grow.

In July 1996, we made the information on the SFA BBS available on the World Wide Web. This web view was a "canned" feature of the bbs software, however we were unable to modify the pages to comply with ED's rigid standards for web pages. The ED Webmaster was very unhappy with us then.

Then, in March 1998, the IFAP web collection was rolled out.

We aren't that Oak Tree yet, but we're growing toward it.

Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP)

- **Presented by SFA Customer Support Branch (CSB)**
- **URLs http://ifap.ed.gov OR http://www.ifap.ed.gov**

Session 2-2

IFAP stands for "Information for Financial Aid Professionals"

IFAP is defined as "An electronic library for financial aid professionals containing publications, regulations and guidance regarding the administration of the Title IV Federal SFA Programs.

While we don't write the publications, the SFA Customer Support Branch serves as the Information Managers for IFAP.

The CSB formats, edits, and QCs all of the publications that are posted to IFAP.

We have registered two URLs for IFAP. URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator, and is just a fancy way of saying the world wide web address.

You can reach the IFAP site by typing either URL into the "location" or "address" window at the top of your Internet Browser.

{GO TO WEB PAGE…POINT TO URL WINDOW}

NEW Administrative Capability Requirements

- **Federal Register: November 29, 1996 (Volume 61, Number 231)**
- **Federal Register Notice: September 19, 1997 (Volume 62, Number 182)**
- **Dear Colleague Letter: GEN-97-11(OCT)**

Session 2-4

While we are certain that you will absolutely LOVE this tool; and will therefore want to visit it every hour on the hour, every day of every week…..

You know by now, that you are also REQUIRED to access the IFAP web site for many publications and other guidance related to administration of the Title IV Programs.

The two Federal Registers noted on this slide are those that addressed the new Administrative Capability requirements, which dictate "thou shalt use and love IFAP" (or something like that).

In addition, DCL GEN-97-11 addresses the new Administrative Capability requirements in real English. You know, non-legalese.
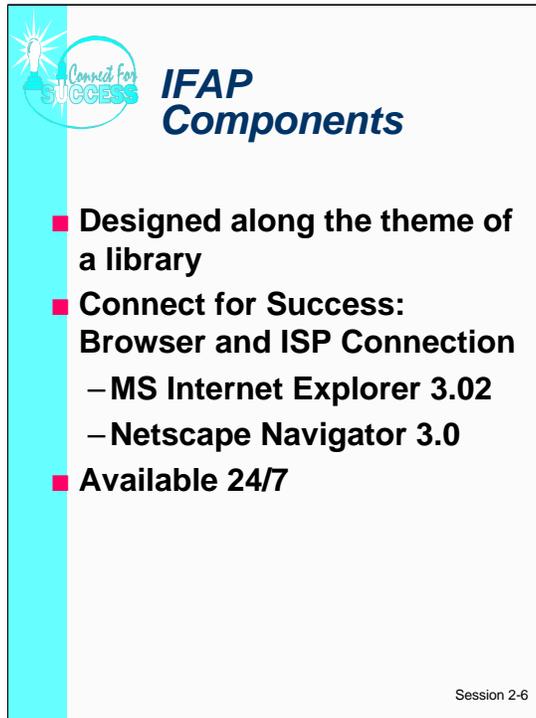
IFAP Components

- **Designed along the theme of a library**
- **Connect for Success: Browser and ISP Connection**
  - **MS Internet Explorer 3.02**
  - **Netscape Navigator 3.0**
- **Available 24/7**

Session 2-6

IFAP is designed along the theme of a library.

Currently four of the five areas of IFAP are represented by a picture of something you would commonly find in a library.

Connecting to IFAP is easy. You need an "Internet Service Provider", labeled "ISP" in the slide, and an Internet browser.

And, we've found (actually Jeff Baker made it quite clear to me on the day IFAP went live) that older browsers cannot interpret the relatively new scripting we've utilized - specifically in the Reference Desk area.

If you are using a browser older than the versions shown on this slide, you will encounter an error when you attempt to use the Reference Desk features.

You can obtain the latest version of these browsers by visiting either the Microsoft.com website (for Internet Explorer) or the Netscape.com website for the Netscape Navigator.

Please understand that we are not recommending or endorsing any particular products. We simply are sharing our experiences for success with you.

And, because we know you don't have traditional 9 - 5 office hours, the IFAP web site is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.
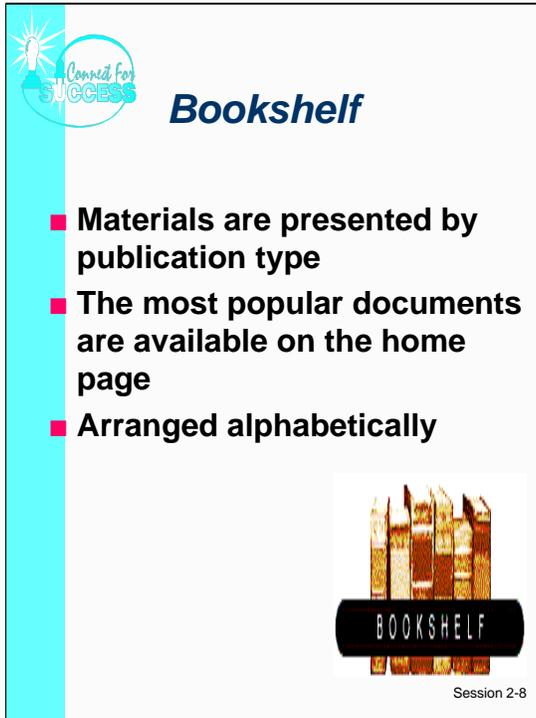
Bookshelf

- **Materials are presented by publication type**
- **The most popular documents are available on the home page**
- **Arranged alphabetically**

BOOKSHELF

Session 2-8

The Bookshelf Page lists all of the publications available on IFAP, by document type.

Just like at the library, if you know what publication you are looking for, the Bookshelf is the place to go.

All of the publications are listed alphabetically, and are HYPERLINKS to the menus we've developed for each document type.

{GO TO WEB PAGE HERE, PLEASE}

- alphabetical listing; blue underlined words are HYPERLINKS; to the menus for that publication type

{PLEASE CLICK ON ANY BOOKSHELF ITEM TO SHOW THE ASSOCIATED MENU)

{PLEASE RETURN TO MAIN/HOME PAGE}

You'll notice that we have also placed HYPERLINKS to the most frequently accessed publications right on the HomePage, for easy access.

These HYPERLINKS take you to the menus for: Electronic Announcements; Dear Colleague Letters; Federal Registers; Regulation Compilations and SFA Handbooks. These are NOT, however, the only document types available on IFAP.

{PLEASE RETURN TO PowerPoint}

Display Case

■ **Hot Issues**
■ **Frequent Updates**

DISPLAY CASE

Session 2-7

The Display Case is the area of IFAP you want to visit for the latest, hot issues. We've placed these items of interest directly on the home page for easy reference.

The contents of the Display Case change frequently, even hourly. Articles posted here will be remain here for no less than 24hrs - generally for several days. The items listed may appear here either because they contain new information or because an older publication has renewed relevance; such as the effective date of a previously published Federal Register is upon us.

Unlike the other graphics on the HomePage, the Display Case icon doesn't send you anywhere. All the information is reachable from the IFAP HomePage via HYPERLINKS.

{GO TO WEB PAGE, PLEASE!}

I'm please to inform you of two changes we will soon be making to this area of the page…..

As you can see, the Display Case needs to be placed in a more prominent location on the HomePage. You shouldn't have to scroll down to find it.

RE: the term "Display Case". It doesn't convey the importance this area warrants. We are planning a name change for this area. If you have a suggestion, please annotate it on your evaluation form.
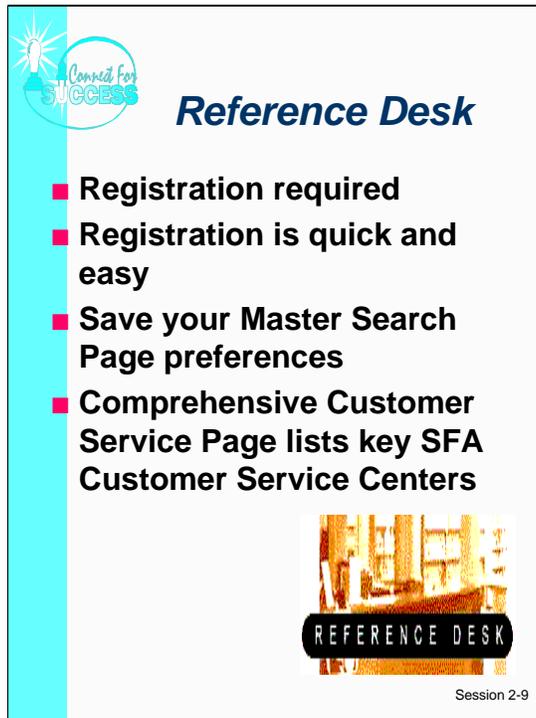
Reference Desk

- Registration required
- Registration is quick and easy
- Save your Master Search Page preferences
- Comprehensive Customer Service Page lists key SFA Customer Service Centers

Session 2-9

Requires registration forID and access to the features offered here.

Once you've completed the brief registration form, we will create a profile for each of our customers. We collect just a little information: your name, the institution or organization with which you are affiliated, your your email address, what type of financial aid professional you are:

THIS ISN'T A RANKING SYSTEM, LIKE GOOD/BAD/INDIFFERENT, WE JUST WANT TO KNOW WHO ARE CUSTOMERS ARE. Are you an FAA, an auditor, a third-party servicer, etc.

We will send your new username and password to you via email, within three work days.

The key feature currently available in this restricted area of the IFAP site is the ability to compose and then save your search. Thurman will demonstrate how to use this tool when he comes up here in just a moment.

The second feature currently available in this area of the page is the Customer Service Page. On this page we provide a comprehensive listing of all of the Customer Service Centers SFA supports. As you know, we have a customer support contact for each software package we develop; including, but not limited to: NSLDS, TIVWAN, EDExpress, Direct Loan, Pell Payments, etc. Here we provide a brief description of what services each center provides, a telephone number to contact that service, and in some cases, the ability to send an email message directly to that service center.

Catalog

- **If you don't know where to find…..   Start here!**
- **Organized by Program and Topic**

Just like at the library, if you don't know in which publication to look to find the information you need, you go to the Catalog. The Catalog provides a cross-reference by subject or author, for you to locate the publication that contains the information you need.

This area of the page is not yet operational. We expect it will be early in 1999.

More on this later.

Search and Ye Shall Find

- **Four (4) levels of searches:**
  – Global
  – "Advanced"
  – Within a publication
  – IFAP Master (customized) Search
- **Each level progressively narrows the search**
- **Boolean arguments supported**

Session 2-12

Presenter: There are four (4) levels of search available on IFAP. They are:

Global, "Advanced", "Within a publication" and IFAP Master search aka "customized search.

Global casts the widest net possible; whereas, the Master or Customized search allows you to construct very specific, narrow searches.

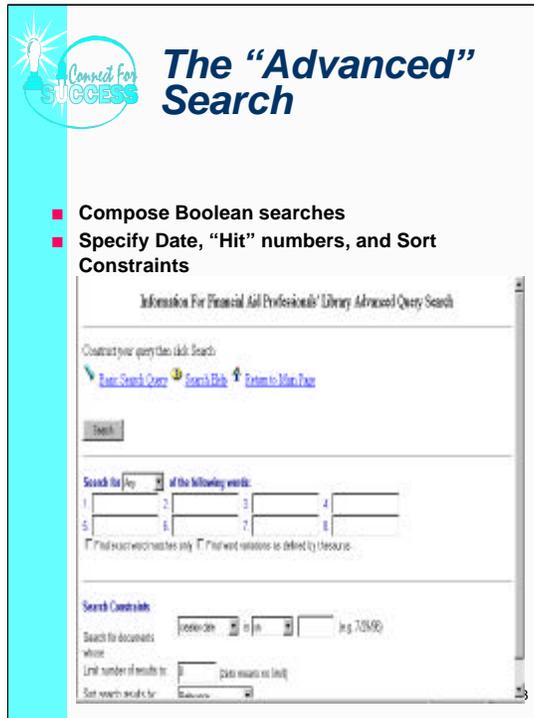*And, Boolean arguments - AND OR conditions are available.*

Let's take a look.
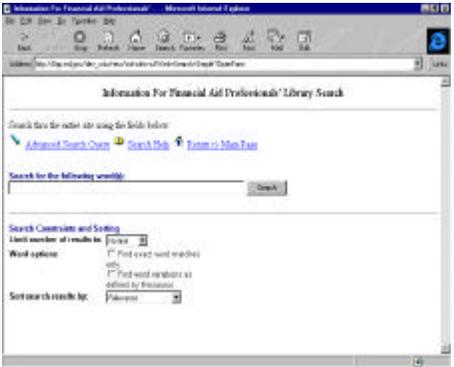
The "Global Search" is the most general search.

It searches all of the contents of IFAP.

This search is available directly from the HomePage and in various locations within IFAP where it is often labeled "Search Entire Site".

The "Advanced" Search also searches across all of the contents available on IFAP.

However, here you can construct **BOOLEAN** searches - where you enter multiple words and direct the search to find **ALL** or those words **OR ANY** of those words.

Though it's hard to see on this slide, you can also compose your query to only search within a certain date range, or for publications posted **PRIOR TO** or **AFTER** a particular date.
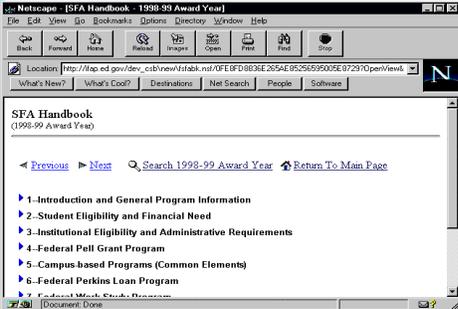
You can also limit the number of "HITS" IFAP's search should return to you.

And, last but not least, you can **SORT** your HITS by relevance, oldest first, or newest first.

Presenter: Global searches are very slow. If you know which publication your information was presented in you can go directly to that site. The advantages are; narrows search, fewer hits,and quicker response. Our slide shows the search available within the SFA Handbook.

This type of search is available for all publications through the "Bookshelf".
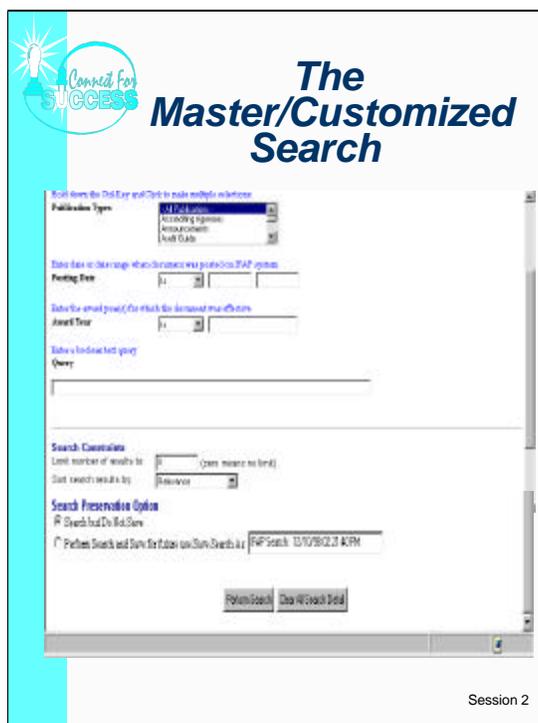
The Master Search or Customized Search is the "Mother of All Searches" on IFAP.

You access this search tool via the Reference Desk portion of IFAP.

This does require that you register with us through the Reference Desk.

The reason you must register is because of the "Save Search preferences" feature.

You'll note at the bottom of this slide there is a section called "Search Preservation Options". Once you've composed your search, you may choose to SAVE the arguments you've composed. In this way, you can easily re-launch the saved search when you next return to the IFAP site.

This search tool also allows you to narrow your search to one or more publications - or all, if you choose.

It also enables you to specify date ranges to search on. This is particularly useful if you've not visited the site for a while and want to get caught up on the latest postings. Just launch a search across all publications specifying the "posted date" as after the date you last visited IFAP.

You can compose Boolean searches here also.

You can also limit the number of results or HITS that are returned to you.

And, you can sort the results by date or relevance.

Searching within a Page

- Browser highlights search results
- Edit Find OR Ctrl F

Session 2-15

The RESULTS or HITS IFAP returns after you perform a search are documents, or chapters of publications.

While IFAP gets you really close to the information you need, your browser will help you zero right in on the information you were seeking.

In this slide the term that was searched on was "administrative cost allowance". IFAP found that term in Chapter 4 of the SFA Handbook.

That's nice. But your phone is ringing, you haven't eaten since noon yesterday, and thirteen (13) students are impatiently waiting for your undivided attention. Where is the information you sought regarding "administrative cost allowance"?

Your Browser will locate that specific phrase for you. Simply select "Edit" and "Find on Page" from your Browser's toolbar, and the "Find" window will appear. Type in, in our example - "administrative cost allowance", hit the "Find Next" button and your browser will trip through the open document and highlight the term you've searched on.

Neat, huh?

Though we'd love to take credit for this gem, it's your browser that performs this part of the task.

The Catalog area of the IFAP web site is currently under construction.

We expect this area of the IFAP site to be available early in 1999.

We are developing this area as another tool to help you locate the information you need.

Just like in the library, if you don't know in which publication to look to find the information you need, you reference the Catalog.

The Catalog provides a cross-reference by subject which helps you locate the publication you want.

The IFAP Catalog will provide you with a list of subjects, like those shown on this slide. Once you select a subject from this list, an associated listing of Topics will be presented to you.

Once you select the particular Topic you desire, IFAP will identify ALL of the publications that address the subject/topic pair you selected.

For instance, you may have a question about the passing scores for an ATB test.

As this relates to a Student Eligibility issue, that is the Subject you would select from the Catalog page. Then from the topics list provided, you would select "Ability-to-Benefit". IFAP will then show you all of the publications which address ATB, including the Blue Book, Federal Registers, the Handbook and Dear Colleague Letters.

CSB has indexed all the publications on IFAP according to content. This is not strictly a word search.
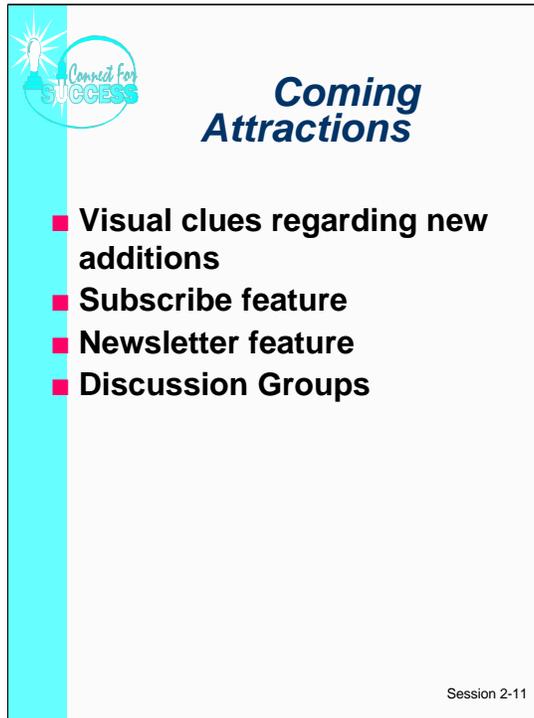
Coming Attractions

- Visual clues regarding new additions
- Subscribe feature
- Newsletter feature
- Discussion Groups

Session 2-11

Presenter: Coming Attractions

A. Visual clues regarding updates to IFAP - new icon or flag

B. Customers will be able to subscribe(IFAP sends an email to you when an area is selected under the subscribe function) on certain areas of IFAP.

     -Customer will need to be registered on IFAP to use this function.

     -Customers will have the options to subscribe and unsubscribe.

C. Newsletter function which will summarize the latest updates on IFAP and email them to you periodically.

Go to next slide.

Support for IFAP

- **SFA Customer Support Branch manages IFAP**
- **Provides accurate information fast**
- **Mission Statement: To foster an improved flow of information and promote customer service ideals in the student financial assistance community**

Session 2-17

Speaker: Let's think back to our Acorn to Oak Tree analogy. This is still a work in progress. We are not a tree, yet. We are currently a sapling, struggling to become the "majestic oak".
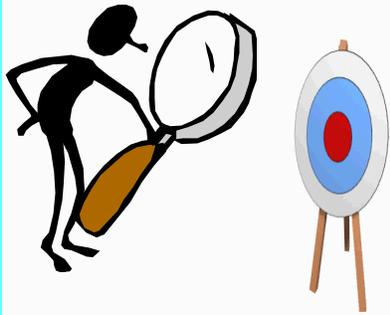
Mention the things on the on the screen as ways were are improving.

Go to next screen.

Quality Control

- Quality control of content
- Creating the best possible product

Session 2-18

Presenter: We are constantly inspecting our work to insure our projects always to hit the mark.

Read or mention the bullets.

Go to next screen.

Speaker: Mention that we take information from the telephone, faxes, and our email address.

Customer Support

• Call Customer Support at 1-800-433-7327

• E-mail Customer Support at csb@ed.gov .

• Fax Customer Support at 1-202-260-4199.

• Write to Customer Support at:
  U.S. Department of Education
  OSFAP/PTAS/TPID/ Customer Support Branch
  ROB-3/ Room 4517
  600 Independence Avenue, SW
  Washington, DC 20202-5231

Session 2-20

Speaker: There are four ways for you to contact us. Telephone, Email, fax, or Snail-mail when all else fails. That sums up the IFAP tour.

Go to next slide.

Questions and Answers

- **Questions???????????**
- **Visit the PC lab at the Electronic Access Conference, if you can.**

Session 2-21

Speaker: We will now be happy to answer any questions you may have.