

President's Message:

WELCOME FROM PAULA LUFF



Paula Luff, DePaul University
MASFAA President

For those of you who missed the outstanding conference in Grand Rapids this year, here's a brief look at what the MASFAA Executive Board has been up to and what we hope to accomplish in the next eleven months. In August, the incoming MASFAA board and committee chairs met for two days in Northern Illinois. At the retreat, the board reviewed the purpose of MASFAA and was fortunate to have NASFAA President, Justin Draeger, join us and share insight on the structure of governing boards for non-profit organizations, using NASFAA as an example. We also reviewed a draft of the strategic long range plan and results of the membership survey done last year to inform our goals and objectives for the coming year. What we learned from the survey is that our membership wants MASFAA to, among other things;

- Continue to offer summer institute training;
- Provide advanced training for members with 3-5 years of experience;
- Consider an institutional vs. individual membership fee structure;
- Provide more tools and guidance for legislative advocacy, and
- Offer more on-line tools and training.

All, of course, while advancing the strategic long range plan, containing costs and ensuring the fiscal integrity and financial stability of the association. Therefore, we set specific goals for the board and committee chairs to focus on this year. While we set more than 50 specific goals for the group, the six primary focus areas are:

1. Explore moving from an individual membership fee structure to an institutional based structure with an eye toward improving our financial picture and increasing membership numbers;
2. Continue to provide a quality fundamentals training for new financial aid professionals through the summer institute program;
3. Conduct a leadership symposium or mid-level professional training including an evaluation component; additionally the committee responsible for this event will consider videotaping symposium sessions to begin to build a training resource library;
4. Develop on-line tools and materials that MASFAA members can use to conduct 'Reality Store' activities or other early awareness activities through their state associations or institutions on a more consistent basis;
5. Provide resources for members to serve as advocates on behalf of their institutions and students - including developing a template for fast facts aid administrators should have on hand to answer policy implication questions; and
6. Deliver a substantial and timely program at the annual conference which also celebrates our 50th anniversary with the appropriate fanfare and style.

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MASFAA Moments is published quarterly with the purpose of providing a forum for communicating with members about issues affecting our profession as well as to inform members of the ongoing activity of MASFAA committees and the Executive Council.

Articles may be submitted by any person, committee, state association or organization. All submissions are subject to final acceptance and review by the editorial board prior to the publication of the newsletter. Submissions may be rejected, edited for content or edited for length. Articles must be intended for the benefit of MASFAA members and not for company marketing or promotional purposes.

Please send articles, photos and comments to:

Mary Jo Smith
Newsletter Committee Chair
maryjo.smith@usbank.com

Along with these very specific goals, the board is moving toward data driven decision making, meaning that our research committee will be very busy this year. In fact the research committee will be looking at a whole range of issues this year, everything from how often our newsletter is viewed on-line, to tracking the career paths of former summer institute participants to surveying the membership on their training needs.

As president, I look forward to meeting many of you at your state conferences as I travel around the region throughout the year. Please feel free to share your thoughts and expectations of MASFAA with me or any member of the executive board—we are here to listen. For a more lighthearted read, check out the sidebar below. Best wishes to you and yours during the upcoming holiday season!

- Paul Luff
MASFAA President

Paula's Top Ten

When I was younger, the month between Thanksgiving and Christmas seemed to drag on forever. Now that I am older (not old mind you, but older), the time between Labor Day and New Year's day seems to fly by. Perhaps that's because we have so many work-related obligations during this time of year –fall start-up, annual reporting (FISAP, surveys, etc.), conferences (state, MASFAA and SFA), professional organization committee and board meetings, and planning for next fall-- I'm not really sure. All I know is that we never seem to have enough time to do all that needs to be done before the end of the year. So when Mary Jo reminded me that it was time to submit an article for the newsletter, I thought "What project-meeting-deadline-family-obligation can be put on hold to give me time to write something?"; immediately followed by, "What the heck should I write about?"

Along with the traditional overview of goals and objectives that president's normally do (see main article), it seemed like the perfect time of year to stop and reflect on what we have to be thankful for as financial aid professionals. If we took a poll of all FA folks and asked what they are thankful for, the answers would be as varied as the individuals who end up doing this type of work – but my guess is that some things would stand out as themes. So in true David Letterman style, here is my take on a top ten thankful list for aid administrators:

10. A simplified FAFSA (joking!);
9. Paid time off at the holidays (and for some of us, short Fridays in the summer, etc.);
8. Complicated and confusing regulations – certainly the mental gymnastics required to slough through those mountains of legal mumbo jumbo has to have some positive effect on our brains, hopefully preventing (or at least delaying) the onset of Alzheimer's or other brain degeneration;
7. Fun, intelligent co-workers (not counting that one person you despise in [fill-in the blank] office);
6. Interesting work that challenges us on every level—intellectual, emotional, physical (hey, it takes stamina to sit for 8+ hours a day!);
5. The opportunity to explain the unexplainable to students and other campus offices (T4 regs anyone?) – think of this as preparation for another career, say running Area 51 or something like that;
4. Colleagues who respond to list serve questions at all hours of the day and night – don't you people ever sleep?!;
3. A career that gives us the opportunity to be of service to others;
2. A clear conscience, knowing we've done our best every day in a tough job; and the number one reason to be thankful...
1. A supportive, dedicated network of colleagues who are unfailingly generous with their time, energy and knowledge, and who make us realize --no matter how tough it gets--we are not alone.

Okay, so it got a little sappy there at the end, but it just goes to show that a) we know how to laugh at ourselves, and b) we really do have a lot to be thankful for in this line of work. So while you are celebrating the season this year, take a minute to add your profession to your blessing list, I know I am.

MASFAA MEMBERSHIP

Kaye C. Widney, West Virginia University
MASFAA Membership Services Chair

I find myself marveling at the fact that December is upon us and I've hardly stopped since starting the 2011-12 award cycle — I doubt if your office is any less busy than mine. We've weathered a lot in the financial aid world these past few months and will probably continue to do so as we move into the new year.

One way that we can stay on top of all the things that come our way is through our membership with MASFAA. It provides us an opportunity to exchange ideas with our colleagues and even if we are not able to attend the annual conference every year, we can still benefit from affiliation with this esteemed regional association. The Executive Board, under the leadership of President Paula Luff, is working hard to meet the needs of our membership.

It is time for you to renew membership for 2012. You can access the membership form online and submit your membership application today. Don't miss any of our activities as we begin 2012. As you know, our membership year runs concurrent with the calendar year so on December 31st your active membership will expire (unless you opted for the optional membership renewal at the time you registered for the recent Chicago conference.)

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact me. I can be reached at kaye.widney@mail.wvu.edu and I look forward to celebrating our 50th year as a regional association with you as an active membership of MASFAA.

MASFAA CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Tim Kremer, Director, University of Dubuque, MASFAA Archives Chair

The good financial aid experts in Michigan ordered up near-perfect weather for the conference in Grand Rapids. Thanks to all those who were actively involved in making the conference happen and for doing such a great job. The conference sessions provided timely training for all levels of financial aid professionals.

As we look forward to the coming year and the next conference in Milwaukee, WI, MASFAA will be celebrating 50 years as an association. Arman Habegger has volunteered to work with me on the Archives Committee as he was the chair for many years. He has also served as President of MASFAA. I look forward to researching MASFAA's first 50 years with him. Arman works for Findlay College in Findlay, Ohio which is in proximity to Bowling Green State University where MASFAA's paper archives are stored. I am sure we will be able to come up with some fantastic pictures of past events.

According to the archives, MASFAA was formalized as an association in October of 1962, electing its first officers to serve in 1963. Prior to that, representatives from the Big 8 and the Big 10 met informally. It was at such a meeting in 1962 at Purdue University that the group formalized their existence and became the Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

The first elected officials of MASFAA were George Rister, President; A.W. Purdy, 1st Vice-President; R.J. Harrison, 2nd Vice-President; James G. Dwyer, Secretary; and Edgar Swanson, Treasurer.

Having just launched the new association, the following is a post script at the end of Secretary James Dwyer's letter to potential members: "P.S. Operating on a rather narrow budget prohibits the use of impressive stationary."

If you would happen to have any pictures or antidotes from past MASFAA conferences, workshops, or institutes, please let me know as I will be collecting items for sharing with all at the up-coming conference in Milwaukee. You can email me at tkremer@dbq.edu.



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2011 MASFAA Conference Survey

Rick Shipman, Conference Program Committee
Director of Financial Aid , Michigan State University

98% said the conference met or exceeded expectations!

As part of the MASFAA 2011 Conference Program Committee, I was assigned responsibility for surveying attendees. The survey information is used in multiple ways, but the most obvious are to let our Committee know what people thought about our efforts and to help guide decision making for next year's Committee.



Creating the interest session surveys was pretty straightforward as I simply followed the format of those I had been handed to complete myself in sessions I've attended at conferences. These were divided up and placed in moderator packets that went to the moderators of each interest session. The moderators handed them out, asked attendees to complete them before leaving, collected them, and routed them back to the Conference Program Committee folks. I had them compiled by student employees in my office and the resulting spreadsheets sent out to those planning next year's conference.

The 36 interest sessions all got at least average ratings, but the sessions delivered by our colleagues working in MASFAA region financial aid offices overwhelmingly received above average ratings. I think that's a great reflection on the talents of those in our region. And these consistently great ratings came from those new to the profession and those who have been in the profession for many years. The ability to put on such a presentation is a huge asset for our profession.

Creating the general session and overall survey was a little less straightforward because I really wanted it to be done on the web. I had created a word processing document that I presented to my fellow committee members earlier to get their feedback, so I did know the types of questions we wanted to ask. I then created a Survey Monkey account and found that it was as easy as I had heard from others to start a survey. I found that many of the response sets I had outlined on paper could be handled in different and better ways in the Survey Monkey design tool. You can create buttons that allow only one choice or multiple choices, you can insert skip logic that omits certain questions or presents them based on your answer to another question—think FAFSA on the Web! But what was best was that Survey Monkey compiled results to give numbers and percentages. That saved much time in doing the analysis of responses.

The 6 general sessions all got above average ratings and that was based on a 66% response rate which is pretty unbelievable for any survey. 98% said the conference met or exceeded their expectations. Maybe it isn't a surprise but almost 100% said they appreciated having a night off to make their own plans with friends and enjoy the local scenery.

The state with the most responses was:

- Michigan with 47%, no surprise given the location in Grand Rapids, MI.
- Indiana and Illinois followed with 13% and 12%, respectively.
- Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Missouri, West Virginia, and Minnesota were all represented with single digit percentages.

Of those who attended:

- 38% were from public 4 year schools;
- 29% from private 4 year schools;
- 15% were from public less than 4 year schools;
- 14% were not from schools;
- 4% were from private less than 4 year or proprietary schools; and
- 37% were first time MASFAA conference attendees.

70% reported they had never served on a MASFAA board or committee but 47 actually volunteered to serve over the next year. The names and service preferences of those individuals have been passed along to the current MASFAA leadership for action.

MASFAA Awards Committee

Lori L. Vedder, Awards Committee
Director, MFlint

The 2011 MASFAA Awards Committee worked to gather nominations and make the final decisions on those nominated for the various and very distinguished awards MASFAA presents each year. Making decisions of this nature is never easy, as MASFAA has so many deserving members but the task at hand was completed. Please congratulate the following individuals recognized at the October 2011 MASFAA Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan!

Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Award

This is the highest award MASFAA bestows on an individual. Individuals elected to receive it must have made outstanding achievements to the financial aid profession and to MASFAA's goals. Their career in the profession and within education itself must demonstrate service to fellow professionals, students and those other publics serviced by the professional administrator. The key criteria for this award is based on significant contributions over a period of time and are not typically given for a single contribution. The recipient must hold regular or associate membership in MASFAA.

This year's winner of the distinguished Allan W. Purdy Award is **Mary Jo Smith, U.S. Bank, Iowa.**

Award of Appreciation

The Award of Appreciation is presented as deemed necessary to recognize significant contribution to MASFAA and the Financial Aid Community and is considered to have an extremely high value. The individual selected need not be a MASFAA member or a financial aid administrator, but may come from the political, educational, business, or other community. The individuals selected to receive the award must have made outstanding achievements in the furtherance of MASFAA's goals; and have made significant contributions over a sustained period of time, except when a single contribution is of such momentous importance that it deserves this award.

This year's winner of the Award of Appreciation is **Laurie Wolfe, Des Moines Area Community College & Past-NASFAA National Chairperson, Iowa**

Meritorious Service Award

This award is presented on an optional basis and is considered to have an extremely high value. The award is of extremely high importance and the recipient must have made significant contributions to the profession, associations(s), or education in general. The selection is based on leadership or work on special projects. It is not required these projects last for the entire year or for an extended length of time; they could also be for a single accomplishment. Nominees may be financial aid administrators or people from related fields who merit consideration. The nominee need not be a member of MASFAA.

MASFAA recognizes **Aaron Steffens, Luther College, Iowa**

Outstanding New Professional Award

This award is given annually to recognize the outstanding contribution of a new professional to the financial aid profession. The recipient must have been in the profession for less than five years and made outstanding contributions at the institutional state, regional, and /or national levels. The recipient must be a current member of MASFAA.

Congratulations **Heather Gaumer, Simpson College, Iowa**

State Leadership Award

The State Leadership Award is presented annually to recognize the outstanding leadership of a member from each of the 9 states within MASFAA. The recipients, who must be current MASFAA members, must have made outstanding contributions to the financial aid profession at the state and regional levels over a sustained period of time, i.e., seven years or more. Leadership at the regional level is not the only criterion for this award, and the selection process will not be limited to current state elected leaders. The individuals selected for this award must: exhibit high integrity and character, have shown creative leadership; have inspired and encouraged others to participate actively in professional development activities; have sustained active involvement in professional organizations, and have supported the goals and objectives of MASFAA.

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MASFAA Awards Committee — continued

Hailing from these great states please recognize:

Illinois: **Paula Luff, DePaul University**

Indiana: **JoAnn Laugel, University of Evansville**

Iowa: **Joan Meyer, La'James College**

Michigan: **Margaret Rodriguez, University of Michigan**

Minnesota: **Dianne Danov, University of Minnesota Twin Cities**

Missouri: **Will Shaffner, Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA)**

Ohio: **Ann Marie Gruber, Lakeland Community College**

West Virginia: **Kaye Widney, West Virginia University**

Wisconsin: **Michelle Curtis, University of Wisconsin-Madison**

President's Award

This distinguished award is selected by the MASFAA President and is considered to be one of the highest awards carrying great importance. The award is based on an individual's contribution to the MASFAA during the President's term in office. While awarded at the President's discretion, may be given for completion of a special task, publication, survey or host of other criteria.

Let's congratulate this year's recipient **Brian Weingart, Alderson-Brauddus College, West Virginia.**

Committee of the Year Award

This award is given annually to the members of a committee or task force. The purpose is to recognize those who performed in an outstanding fashion.

The 2011 Committee of the Year Award went to Summer Institute. Committee members are:

Candi Frazier, West Virginia, Chair

Vickie Crupper, Michigan

JoAnn Ross, West Virginia

Jo Cassar, Michigan

Michiale Schneider, Ohio

Leo Hertling, Missouri

MASFAA Donor Development

Jayne Dinse, Donor Development Committee
Director, South Central College

MASFAA truly appreciates all the support it receives annually from organizations involved in financial aid funding and their need to support higher education. This support comes in many forms such as involvement in committees and activities as well as the financial support that allows our organization to accomplish our mission to promote and provide quality training and professional development opportunities, to advocate and support financial aid programs, and to facilitate effective communication and coordination among interrelated professional associations, thereby serving the needs and interests of students and postsecondary institutions. The financial support received this past year was an amazing \$50,450.

At our annual conference held recently in Grand Rapids Michigan we had twenty-five exhibitors, which was an increase of six from the prior year. These exhibitors generated \$45,500 of this revenue. The additional revenue comes from advertising in our newsletters and on the web. Also support came from our vendor product sessions and conference inserts. Still other associate members supported our association through the Early Awareness Event held prior to the conference.

Below you will find the list of supporters to our Association in alphabetical order:

Access Group, Inc.

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Discover

EdFinancial Services

ELM Resources

Fed Loan Servicing (PHEAA)

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National Student Loan Program NSLP

Nelnet

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Simple Tuition

SunTrust

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US Bank

USA Funds

Wells Fargo EFS

Student Success

Lori L. Vedder
Director, MFlint

He now resides in Wisconsin, a managing partner in his own law firm, but this wasn't always the case. Michael Miner, this year's MASFAA 2011 Student Success Story was once a regular college student, attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. It wasn't until he felt his family foundation begin to crumble that he sought out help in the Office of Financial Aid. Fortunately for Michael he fell into the hands of a caring and knowledgeable aid officer who recognized immediately that her assistance was truly needed!

Feeling the pressure of needing to return home and help out his Mother and siblings this young man was torn. He didn't know how he would continue to afford college, and dodge the worries of what was happening to his family back home, that is, until, he met Kristin. Kristin was able to identify resources for Michael to get him through his remaining time at the University. She was also able to convince him that his degree may be the way out for him and his family. She was right. Michael stayed committed throughout his remaining semesters and shared parting words with Kristin. She never forgot those words, "I want to go on to law school so that I can be the voice for those that need to be heard."

Upon seeing the call for nominations for this award, Kristin "googled" Michael Miner. She was not surprised to learn that Michael stuck by his own words and went on to law school. Michael shared an inspiring story at the MASFAA conference, accompanied by his Mother and fiancé. Michael is another reason we as aid professionals keep doing what we are doing, day in and day out on all of our campuses.

Please congratulate Michael Miner, Alumni from the University of Michigan and Assistant Director, Kristin Bhaumik, University of Michigan, his nominator for this award!



Kristin Bhaumik, University of Michigan, with Michael Miner, Student Success Story.

State and Conference Liaison

Jayne Dinse, State and Conference Liaison
Director, South Central College

MASFAA has a presence at most state conferences within the MASFAA region. This is possible through a tradition where the MASFAA President annually would visit each of the nine states that make up our region. This proved to be a very valuable experience, allowing the President to share with the state what is happening at the regional and national levels as well as member states to meet the leadership of our region. This tradition is not ending but changing.

As of this year, MASFAA will still have a representative at your state meetings but it maybe our President Elect or our Past President as we will be doing a rotation of the elected person going forward. The decision was made as we looked at the horrendous travel schedule this individual has with many of our meeting being held within weeks of each other along with required NASFAA meetings.

A rotating schedule has been established where as each elected official will still be visiting each state over the period of three year when they are President elect, President or Past President. Each state will have a different leader each year, but would have the President in attendance every three years. This year MASFAA President Paula Luff will be visiting Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and West Virginia. President elect Al Hermsen will be visiting Ohio, Iowa, and Missouri. Be sure and greet these folks when they attend your conference.

In cooperation with the state associations, MASFAA funds a State Exchange Program that was established in 2005, that allows each state president or state representative to visit another state association conference or meeting each year. The State Exchange Program is designed to allow state association leaders the opportunity to learn how other associations conduct business as well as expand their leadership network. Participants must be MASFAA members. The host State Association agrees to cover the cost of the conference registration and hotel. MASFAA will cover travel and other expenses up to \$500. This year Illinois will visit Missouri, Indiana goes to Ohio, Iowa heads to West Virginia, Michigan heads west to Badger territory (Wisconsin), Minnesota goes east to Illinois, Missouri goes to Indiana, Ohio goes to Iowa, West Virginia travels north to Michigan, and Wisconsin crosses the river to Vikingland (Minnesota).

Watch upcoming MASFAA Moments for highlights from these conference visits.

NEW CONTRIBUTOR SHOWCASE:

KRISTIN BHAUMIK

Amy Gaffney, University of Dubuque

Kristin "Krissy" Bhaumik did not realize that the one year she worked at a foreign school with Title IV aid eligibility would open doors for her in the United States. Having earned her literature degree, Krissy was actually seeking an editor position when she found a financial aid position. In January 2005, the University of Michigan was hiring an aid officer position which was filled by Krissy. She learned quickly as a front-line counselor. In July 2011, she was promoted to her current position as Assistant Director for Special Programs which works with counseling, processing, advising as well as default aversion efforts.



Kristin "Krissy" Bhaumik

Knowing this was not the literature related career she was initially seeking, when asked what Krissy's biggest surprise is working as a financial aid professional, her response was, "The community of colleagues versus other 'cut throat' dynamics in other jobs. It is most gratifying as a professional to feel the sense of family and community. And I am not just speaking of our U of M office---I mean the whole industry."

As a new professional, Krissy first experienced MASFAA through the MASFAA Summer Institute (SI). This provided Krissy an opportunity to meet people all over the region. "It lit a fire in me to want to stay connected to these people. I found opportunities at the state level with training and I am now active with training and I enjoy giving presentations. Then people start to know you ---and they start to 'volunteer' you." That's how I found myself part of MASFAA Summer Institute faculty a few years ago!"

Krissy is not just about work. She is married to her husband G2, a native of India. They have been together 12 years and enjoy international travel. If Krissy were to give advice to others who are considering a career in student financial aid, it would be "Find Your Bliss (by Joseph Campbell). Some are more comfortable working close to home, or in the background, while others are in front of the crowd! Others are okay with their name on the ballot. You can be involved in a way suitable to you. Everyone has a way to participate. We need volunteers. Do not get burned out in the everyday demands—look for humor every day and enjoy what you do."

And when talking of participation and volunteerism, Krissy knows what she is talking about. Here is a snapshot of her industry resume: in the Michigan association (MSFAA), she has served as a trainer, participated in the state leadership experience, Treasurer, and is currently on the ballot for Vice President. However, Krissy has also attended the NASFAA and MASFAA Leadership conferences. With a track record like that, I expect we will be hearing and seeing more from Krissy in the future!

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State of Minnesota Update

Doug Minter, Dean of Financial Aid, Gustavus Adolphus College

Many MAFAA members will say the fall has been crazy with getting their websites current with all the new regulations from net price calculators, gainful employment info, SAP regulation changes, new consumer information just to name a few. But at least the Minnesota weather has been wonderful throughout the fall. This is the first year Minnesota is not having a Fall Conference (aside from the years MASFAA is in Minnesota) so a small group of aid administrators attended the MASFAA conference in Grand Rapids and a large number of folks will be attending the Federal Student Aid Conference in Las Vegas.

This fall MAFAA members from across Minnesota assisted with the Minnesota National College Fair which was held at the Minneapolis Convention Center, October 4-5, 2011. Approximately 1500 "Paying for College" booklets were handed out to students and parents at the booth and the Financial Aid 101 Basics sessions. Another 1000 copies were sent with different high schools and counselors.

We held eight sessions throughout the two-day event and had over 450 attendees. The highest attended financial aid session was Wednesday morning with an impressive 102 participants.

We were fortunate to have 28 amazing volunteers from various colleges and universities. It was a great opportunity to band together from our individual school backgrounds in order to serve the community at large with financial aid information. It takes a lot of people and effort to make such an event a success. Pablo Picasso once said, "Action is the foundational key to all success," and it was great to see so many colleagues take action for this great cause!

Coordination of this event was done by Shannon Nealy from Minneapolis Community and Technical College and JoElyn Otto, St. Olaf College. Presenters were: Sheila Sejnoha, Debra Beal, Susan Brady, Michael Kotchevar, Cheryl Maplethorpe, Sandy Sundstrom, and David Woodward. Volunteers at the booth: Laura Wright, Kimberly Kolar, Angie Proehl, Angela Lofgren, Anne Dahlen, Jane Erbele, Thomas Hensch, Jackie Olsson, Ginny Dodds, Sally Mickelson, Monica Bobek, Kathy Ruby, Gayle Yamry, Steve Lindley, Kristin Basballe, Tina Kukowski, Ashley Wilkemeyer, Shannon Hanson, Shannon Schaaf, and Lisa Apitz.

State of Illinois Update

Jana Albrecht, Illinois State University

The Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA) has been very busy with events these past few months. The Training and Professional Development committee offered two workshops this fall. These one-day workshops included a federal update and sixteen breakout sessions. Almost 200 participants left the training feeling informed and ready to tackle new and old issues.

The ILASFAA Reality Store was a huge success this year. Central Junior High in Peoria, Illinois, the school selected for this event, was located less than 5 miles from our conference location and has a large population of needy students. Fifty ILASFAA members were able to volunteer for the event. Two hundred and forty 8th grade students participated and the teachers and principal were thrilled with the results. Because of the generosity of our organization, each student received a T-shirt and a bag of treats. The students were very well behaved, and ILASFAA members are still talking about the event. Our Regional Coordinators have already made contact with a school in Springfield, Illinois to begin planning the Reality Store for 2012.

At the Board Retreat, we set many goals including updating our strategic plan, remaining active with legislators, and planning for our annual conference. Our Governance Committee has already met to examine the strategic plan. Thanks to the hard work of our Past President, Michelle Trame, we have a new strategic plan draft to review at our next board meeting. The Legislative Issues Committee is in the process of scheduling visits to Springfield to discuss funding with our Illinois Representatives. Our conference committees have already held numerous meetings to plan our 2012 conference held April 11 – 13 at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield.

About 40 ILASFAA members enjoyed the MASFAA conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan, this past October. Our own Mo Amos led the Newcomer's Reception on Sunday where newcomers enjoyed appetizers and some fun icebreakers. Fifteen of our ILASFAA members presented, moderated, or served on MASFAA conference committees this year. The MASFAA conference wasn't all business as the Illinois group did manage to have time to get together on Monday night for appetizers and dinner. Illinois members are looking forward to next year's MASFAA conference, and Amanda Fijal will be the Chair for the Program Committee next year. Other ILASFAA members will be heavily involved with MASFAA this year with several Illinois members serving on the board.

State of Iowa Update

Amy Gaffney, University of Dubuque

The 2011 IASFAA Fall Conference was held November 2-4 at the beautiful Coralville Marriott Hotel in Coralville, Iowa. The theme this fall was "IASFAA—In It To Win It." The winning attitude of IASFAA members was evidenced by the large number of members attending. A newcomer track of sessions was offered to assist new professionals or to provide a refresher to seasoned professionals.

NASFAA training on Satisfactory Academic Progress was held on the morning of November 2nd prior to the start of the conference. The conference started that afternoon with the opening session, Gaining Access to Higher Education, presented by Dr. Laurie Wolfe and a panel of area high school and college students. Laurie discussed information about the proposed Dream Act legislation. The students talked about their struggles as undocumented students and their desire to go to college and find a job in the United States.

Sessions were also presented to assist members in helping our returning military men and women. Due to having the largest call-up in history of Iowa soldiers, this information was very timely as we are seeing many of these soldiers returning to school to begin or continue their education. LTC Jeff Schulz, retired Veteran and Community Leader, presented a general session entitled "Warrior to Citizen: Bringing Soldiers Back." The information presented in the session helped us understand how these men and women are feeling as they try to read-just to civilian life, as well as talked about some of the mental anguish these soldiers may have. Tom Beasley, a consultant for the Iowa Department of Education presented an entry-level session on military benefits as well as another session designed for more in-depth information for those that process military benefits on their individual campuses.

Dave Bartlett from the USDOE presented the federal update and a general session on the verification changes that are looming. Dave also conducted a SAP Town Hall session, although he did take questions about any subject. Gainful employment, program reviews, financial literacy, modular programs and student borrowing habits are a handful of the other interest sessions that were offered at the conference. IASFAA members were also introduced to our newest celebrity, Greg Geistkemper from St. Ambrose University. Greg was the host of IASFAA's version of the hit game show "Minute to Win It." Many IASFAA members joined in the fun and laughter associated with these games, as well as some humiliation!

It's a tradition with IASFAA to honor those IASFAA members who have made significant contribution to the organization over the years. At the Awards Luncheon on Thursday during the Fall Conference in Iowa City, the special awards were presented. We received many very deserving nominations for the various awards this fall and the Awards Committee had the task of determining the recipients.

Let's congratulate the following recipients for receiving our very prestigious awards:
John Heisner Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award — Jennifer Sassman, Wartburg College
Distinguished Service Award — Joan Meyer, LaJames International
Meritorious Service Award — Mary Jacobsen, iLink
Student Success Story of the Year — Lindsay Frederiksen, Iowa State University

The Reality Store is an early awareness event sponsored by the Community Outreach Committee of IASFAA. The interactive financial program is designed to provide students with real life experiences, including budgeting and check book management. Students pass through different stations such as: paying taxes, opening a checking/savings account, housing, utilities and much more. At these stations students make real life decisions based on their income level and family status. It gives students a great opportunity to learn how to stay within a budget.

The 2011-12 Leadership Symposium group gathered October 5-6 in Boone, IA. There were four faculty and ten participants who partook in the activities at Camp Hantesa. This meeting was just the beginning to a great personal and professional development experience for all fourteen people involved. Skills were developed or enhanced that are necessary to effectively serve campus communities and/or IASFAA. A new and exciting network has also been started for the participants to enhance their ability to get their job done and grow personally.



Jennifer Sassman
*John Heisner Memorial
Lifetime Achievement
Award*



Joan Meyer
*Distinguished Service
Award*



Mary Jacobsen
*Meritorious Service
Award*



Xx and Lindsay
Frederiksen
Student Success Story

Proactive Preparation for 2012

Roger Eldridge, Vice President, Marketing and Sales-Midwest
Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc

Prepare Now for a Headache-Free 2012-2013

Being proactive about preparation now can help your entire academic year go smoothly. There are a number of areas to keep in mind as you prepare, and by following them, you can ensure you are maintaining compliance and staying informed, that your office is taking consistent action, and that you are helping your students while protecting their privacy.

Policies and Procedures

Stay in compliance and avoid institutional liability by reviewing your Policies & Procedures. Make updates to satisfactory academic progress, verification (which has been completely overhauled for 2012-13), FAFSA, professional judgment, and any other areas that need it. Having a P&P manual not only helps you be prepared in the event of an audit, it gives everyone in your office step-by-step instructions, so that their actions can be consistent.

FERPA

To make sure you're protecting the privacy of student records and reducing the risk of fraud and identity theft, review FERPA policies at least once a year, incorporating any changes that are needed. Take note that the U.S. Department of Education is expected to release final rules in the coming months. Think about creating a policy review committee containing members from various departments on campus.

FAFSA

Make sure your IT networks, financial aid budget, and student aid forms are ready for the latest FAFSA updates by reviewing the ISIR guide for changes. And, when it's available, explore the FAFSA test website at fafsademotest.ed.gov, to experience the FAFSA from a student's point of view. The User ID is eddemo and the password is fafsa test.

Cost of Attendance

A great way to help your students avoid over-borrowing and/or being underfunded is to make sure your school's cost of attendance is a realistic representation of expenses. You can research costs through student surveys (for items such as transportation, clothing, etc.), the Bureau of Labor statistics, realty websites for apartment rental costs, and by interviewing the student housing office. Then, make changes to your cost of attendance as needed.

Consumer Information Requirements

It's important that students and families have the information they need to make an educated decision about the upcoming year. Create a central repository to allow students to access the appropriate department for each section. For example, provide students with information on new procedures for verification, satisfactory academic progress, R2T4, where to locate their aggregate loan balance, and more.

Resources

You are not alone! There are resources to help you as you prepare, including:

- NASFAA tools at nasfaa.org
- Ed.gov
- Ifap.ed.gov
- Guarantor and servicer web sites
- Webinars
- State, regional, and national association conferences and training opportunities

By being proactive in your preparation, you can do everything it takes to maintain compliance, stay informed, and make sure you are ready to help your students, while protecting their privacy.