

# nasfaanow

your association growing, changing, evolving

- ▶ make time to volunteer
- ▶ prior to ppy
- ▶ use research now!
- ▶ celebrating jim swanson

four opportunities for  
financial aid as  
part of the institutional  
research function

honoring excellence: the  
nasfaa awards

movers and shakers:  
nasfaa members on the rise!

## nasfaa's golden year

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the association  
celebrates a half century  
opening doors to  
educational opportunity





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TUESDAY 27TH  
WEDNESDAY 28TH  
THURSDAY 29TH



## NASFAA 2017

San Diego Convention Center ☀ June 26 - 29

San Diego, California

NEXT YEAR'S NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
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**NASFAA**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS



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# a message from the president

Half a century of changing lives for the better. That is what we all came together to celebrate at the 50th anniversary conference this July in Washington, DC—and what a celebration it was!

The festivities began at the 2015 conference with a kickoff parade through the streets of New Orleans, and culminated at the 2016 conference in Washington, DC. Throughout our year of celebration, NASFAA staff and volunteers kept the excitement high via updates to the 50th anniversary website, monthly trivia contests, and Throwback Thursday posts of vintage NASFAA images in social media.

Once attendees arrived in Washington for the big celebration, we kicked it into high gear with special events and content such as:

- The Student Aid Success Stories initiative, highlighting personal stories that demonstrate the enduring value of financial aid programs aimed at college access;
- A time capsule of selected items gathered over the past 50 years to be opened in 50 more years;
- A new, inspirational 50th anniversary video looking at the future of financial aid;
- An interactive, digital 50th anniversary timeline of NASFAA history;
- A special dinner for the Board of Directors and guests; and
- A Sunday evening dinner and anniversary party for all NASFAA conference attendees.

Perhaps the most unforgettable moment happened at our 2016 conference luncheon when our “Student Aid Success Stories” honorees spoke about their lives, their hopes, and their challenges, and explained how student aid and financial aid professionals had changed the course of their lives. Hearing them describe the obstacles they faced, their brave determination to achieve their dreams, and, finally, their success reminded us of the true value of the work we do.

Beyond our 50th celebration, NASFAA has had a very auspicious year in the public arena. Most significantly, President Obama last fall announced the move to prior-prior year (PPY). For several years NASFAA has been one of the leading advocates on PPY and worked extensively on Capitol Hill and with the executive branch to make this change occur. We know there will be bumps along the way, but the NASFAA policy team, our PPY Task Force, and the NASFAA Board of Directors are working to ensure as smooth a rollout as possible.

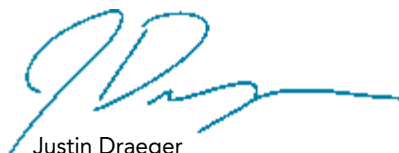
The advocacy efforts of NASFAA staff, combined with the work of NASFAA members visiting the Hill and working on policy-related task forces, resulted in many requests for NASFAA to help craft pending legislation this past year. As a result, several of NASFAA’s key policy positions—PPY, year-round Pell, simplification of loan repayment, authority to limit loan amounts—made their way into bills that could be included in reauthorization.

NASFAA has grown progressively stronger over the decades and continues to provide a forum for vigorous debate and collaboration on how to fulfill the promise of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Last fall, I was invited to testify before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce about operational issues and shortcomings of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA). It's important that NASFAA continue to serve as a trusted advisor to legislators and policymakers when it comes to improving the financial aid process for both schools and students; we are glad to serve that role now and in the future.

We have also proudly rolled out some fantastic new member benefits in the past year. NASFAA U has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, and in July 2016 we unveiled the Compliance Engine, a tool that expands upon the highly-valued Self-Evaluation Guide and Policies & Procedures Toolkit to offer many easy-to-use new features, including a series of self-assessment checklists to complete or assign tasks across departments. Built around financial aid administrators' busy schedules, the Compliance Engine aims to reduce the time spent on compliance administration, increase collaboration, and help institutions avoid unnecessary findings during an audit or program review.

NASFAA has grown progressively stronger over the past five decades and continues to provide a forum for vigorous debate and collaboration on how to fulfill the promise of the Higher Education Act of 1965—that no qualified student should miss out on college due to financial barriers. Our staff, Board leadership, and members are all on board and rowing in the same direction. Together, we are ready to head into the next 50 years of promoting equity in access, choice, and success for students pursuing higher education.



Justin Draeger  
NASFAA President & CEO



# a message from the national chair

It has been an extreme honor and privilege to serve as your national chair this past year. This has been another amazing, productive, and memorable year for NASFAA and I am thankful to have been part of it, starting with a parade winding through the streets of New Orleans to kick off our 50th anniversary celebration in July 2015, and ending with presiding over the 50th anniversary conference in Washington, DC, in July 2016. As if that weren't enough, over the year I had the opportunity to be in attendance at Des Moines North High School when President Obama and Secretary Duncan announced PPY and Early FAFSA in August 2015; acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in November 2015; and participate in the largest NASFAA Leadership Conference ever in February 2016. This has been a fun and rewarding experience and the highlight of my professional career, and I'm grateful to everyone who has been part of my journey.


NASFAA is a strong and relevant association and is moving in the proper direction. We have an exceptionally hard-working Board of Directors, who are dedicated to meeting the needs of our members. Under the dynamic leadership of Justin Draeger, we have a talented staff dedicated to supporting our members. Together, the Board and NASFAA staff have accomplished much during this past year—we are fulfilling our mission and meeting the goals of the 2014-17 Strategic Long-Range Plan—as you'll discover in the pages of this Annual Impact Report.

NASFAA is deliberate, strategic, and innovative. We continue to think big and invest in products and services that meet the needs of our membership and take our profession to new levels. And these efforts are paying off. NASFAA is experiencing positive results and increased influence from our advocacy work here in Washington, DC, as well as advancing our members' expertise and knowledge with the expansion of NASFAA U and the new Compliance Engine. NASFAA has brought in nearly \$1 million in grant funding over the past five years and continues to be strong financially. We continue to see a significant increase in the number of individuals interested in giving their time, talent, and service to NASFAA and hope that members will continue to volunteer in the future.



I'm proud to say that I'm a financial aid administrator; proud to be a member of an association dedicated to serving students; and proud to work with some of the most talented, caring, and professional people on any college campus in this work that supports students, institutions, and our nation.

Our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Higher Education Act and our 50th anniversary as a national association this year have allowed us to reflect on our history, our profession, and why we do what we do. Our colleagues who established NASFAA, and our leaders throughout the years, have held to the core principles of serving students and ensuring that everyone has equal access to postsecondary education, especially those who are low-income or first-generation students. Ours is a noble profession and I'm proud to say that I'm a financial aid administrator; proud to be a member of an association dedicated to serving students; and proud to work with some of the most talented, caring, and professional people on any college campus in this work that supports students, institutions, and our nation. As our 50th anniversary theme proclaimed, NASFAA has helped to open doors to educational opportunity for the last half-century and it is my sincere hope that we will proudly continue to do so for the next 50 years.



Dan Mann  
2015-16 NASFAA National Chair



# governance

Each year, NASFAA's Board of Directors charges the Association Governance Committee (AGC) with reviewing and reporting the progress to-date on NASFAA's Board-approved three-year Strategic Long-Range Plan (SLRP) for 2014-17.

"In this critical second year of our strategic plan, NASFAA's volunteers and staff have moved the association significantly closer to fulfilling the goals and objectives we set out for ourselves," said 2015-16 AGC Chair Eileen O'Leary. "I'm proud of all that our volunteers and staff have accomplished in the past 12 months."

Some examples of the past year's progress under each strategic goal are as follows:

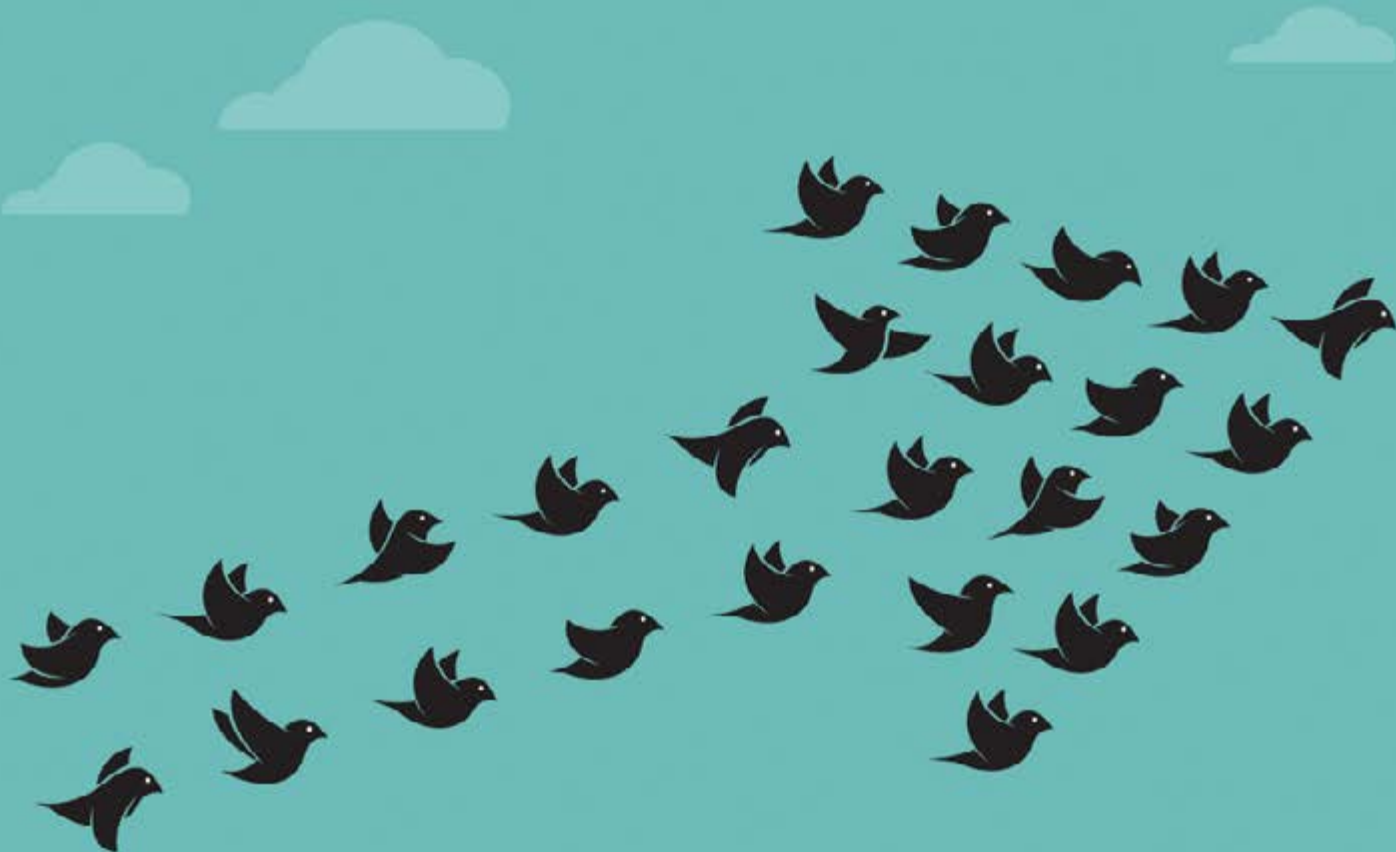
## Lead, cultivate, and encourage the development of public policies that support postsecondary education.

NASFAA's Policy Team had an extremely active and effective role in influencing student aid policy and engaging with the broader policy community over the past year. Most significantly, President Obama announced the move to prior-prior year (PPY) on September 13, 2015, via executive action. For several years NASFAA has been the lead advocate on PPY and worked extensively on the Hill and with the executive branch to make this change occur. The policy team is now spending considerable time working on issues related to a successful, smooth, and non-disruptive implementation of PPY.

The internal advocacy efforts of NASFAA staff, combined with the work of NASFAA members on five Advocacy Pipelines and five policy-related task forces within the last year, resulted in many requests for NASFAA to help craft pending legislation. This involvement is evidenced by the inclusion of NASFAA's key policy positions in draft reauthorization bills (PPY, year-round Federal Pell Grant, simplification of loan repayment, authority to limit loan amounts).

Notably, NASFAA President Justin Draeger was asked to testify before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce in November 2015 related to operational issues/shortcomings of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA).

Beyond direct work on the Hill, policy staff has stayed engaged with the broader higher education community by hosting two policy forums and attending no fewer than 12 external events each month. All told, the number of Hill staff, media, and association colleagues that call upon NASFAA to lead and provide guidance on student aid issues has increased over the last year.



“Effective boards hone the organization’s direction by making strategic thinking a part of regular, ongoing board work. With guidance from management, they stay current with internal and external forces that drive change. They look backward and forward to understand what has emerged and imagine what is possible.”

– *The Handbook of Nonprofit Governance*, BoardSource, Jossey-Bass, 2010.



## Ensure all association activities fall within the scope of the Board-approved mission and vision statements and represent the best use of time and resources.

Staff have worked hard to ensure that attention and resources remain focused on NASFAA's strategically identified priorities. As demonstrated through monthly dashboards provided to the Board, all 2015-16 products and services align with the association's budget. NASFAA exceeded revenue projections in most functional areas and expenses were generally kept within budget parameters. As needed, excess revenues have allowed NASFAA to more rapidly expand some products and services such as the Student Aid Index, the Compliance Engine, and certain policy initiatives.

2014-15 was a pilot year for a new system of volunteerism at NASFAA, with a move away from a system of annual, standing committees toward more agile task forces and thought-forces. Continuing in 2015-16, NASFAA maintains only a handful of standing committees, primarily focused on governance and oversight. Since the change, each task force convened:

- Is aligned with a specific need identified by NASFAA's leadership;
- Adheres to a detailed charter outlining expectations, goals, and deliverables;
- Sticks to strict deadlines with specific start and end dates for the group's work; and
- Delivers a final product, often in the form of a formal report, to the Board for review.

The change in volunteer strategy has proved effective. It allows association leaders to start with current needs (not existing committees) in mind, encourages new blood and volunteer diversity, and allows people to participate who might not be able to commit to a full year of service.

NASFAA also made efforts to obtain and consistently use technological resources that advance and leverage activities, products, and services. To further this goal, NASFAA selected two key products ripe for a technological update—the PDF-based Self-Evaluation Guide and the Policies and Procedures Tool. In July 2016, NASFAA debuted the first iteration of NASFAA's Compliance Engine (CE), which brings the Self-Evaluation Guide online as a series of checklists and makes it easier to use, savable, searchable, and assignable. A preliminary/beta version of the P&P Builder also launched at this time.

## Promote NASFAA as the trusted, recognized leader in the professional development of financial aid administrators.

In 2015-16, NASFAA developed the concept of a NASFAA Training Library, which includes three subcategories: 1) NASFAA U, 2) webinars, and 3) Learning Bytes. Learning Bytes are shorter "bite-sized" training opportunities such as podcasts, videos, and computer-based training.

Future webinars will vary in format and include audio with advanced PowerPoint, livestreaming video, and/or livestreaming video with a recorded panelist Q&A.

NASFAA has worked on presenter training to ensure materials are conveyed in the appropriate manner when taught via volunteer channels. The association also expanded its use of technology in training efforts, as appropriate. Examples include:

- Online courses and webinars utilize polling, live Q&A, and live discussion platforms.
- Webinars continue to provide in-depth handouts that can be saved electronically or printed.
- Learning Bytes offers similar functionality via online quiz questions and downloadable takeaways.

In an effort to develop the next generation of financial aid leaders, in 2016 NASFAA debuted a third track for its popular Leadership & Legislative Conference & Expo, on Enrollment Management. The goal of the track, which will be tweaked and updated in coming years based on year-one feedback, is to help financial aid professionals develop the experience and tools needed to be competitive with admissions colleagues in the enrollment management arena.

The number of NASFAA U credentials offered and earned also continued to grow in the past 12 months, as described in the Training segment of this report.

# the nasfaa board of directors

## officers

National Chair: Daniel Mann, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

National Chair-Elect: Lisa Blazer, University of Texas at San Antonio

Past National Chair: Eileen O'Leary, Stonehill College

Diversity Officer: James Brooks, University of Oregon

Treasurer: Brad Barnett, James Madison University

## regional representatives

EASFAA: Anthony Erwin, Northeastern University

MASFAA: Aaron Steffens, Luther College

RNASFAA: Arthur Young, Brigham Young University

SASFAA: Nathan Basford, The Florida State University

SWASFAA: Andrew Hammontree, Francis Tuttle Technology Center

WASFAA: Jack Edwards, Stanford University Graduate School of Business

WASFAA: Kevin Jensen, College of Western Idaho

## representatives at large

Angela Johnson, Cuyahoga Community College District (1st Year)

Ellen Neel, Glendale Community College (1st Year)

Nicholas Prewett, University of Missouri (1st Year)

Heather Boutell, Bellarmine University (2nd Year)

Paula Luff, DePaul University (2nd Year)

Craig Slaughter, DePauw University (2nd Year)

## commission directors

Lisanne Masterson, Blue Ridge Community College

Kay Soltis, Pacific Lutheran University

Keith Williams, Michigan State University

## ex-officio

President: Justin Draeger, NASFAA

Board Executive Secretary: Beth Maglione, NASFAA

Chief Financial Officer: Mitchell Weintraub, NASFAA/Cordia Partners

Assess and address, as needed, the perception of financial aid professionals among various stakeholders.

NASFAA held a focus group of college presidents at the American Council on Education's (ACE) annual meeting and fielded a survey of college presidents to gather information on their perceptions of the financial aid office.

NASFAA promoted the role and purpose of financial aid administrators among college presidents and Hill staff via a one-pager ("What Do Financial Aid Administrators Do?") with the goal of broadening understanding of and respect for the profession.

NASFAA also established the role of Diversity Officer to promote the diversity of the financial aid profession and provide for a broad cross section of experiences and credibility among financial aid administrators. This position was born out of the work of the Professional Diversity Caucus; the individual selected will work to "conceptualize, define, assess, and cultivate diversity as an institutional and educational resource." Jim Brooks (University of Oregon) accepted this role at the request of his colleagues.

NASFAA is also exploring certification as a potential means for individuals to enhance their professionalism, via the creation of a Task Force on Examining Certification.

Ensure the effective and strategic use of technology across all association activities.

Perhaps most significantly, NASFAA launched a brand-new, technology-based member tool this year. As mentioned earlier, NASFAA debuted the first iteration of its Compliance Engine in July 2016, along with a beta version of the P&P Builder tool (with further iterations to come).

Summer 2015 marked a total website and Content Management System (CMS) redevelopment for NASFAA.org, along with a revamped and redeveloped newsletter generator and connections to/from NASFAAs member database, all completed on-time and on budget. For 2016-17 and after, the next step is a membership database redevelopment that will overhaul and improve member tools such as the online store and shopping cart, event registration, member directories and the buyer's guide. The myNASFAA profile page has already been updated and launched.

# membership

NASFAA's institutional membership retention rate remains well above the industry average for an association of our size, at 95 percent. NASFAA continues to serve schools that educate the large majority of the nation's students. NASFAA member institutions serve nine out of 10 undergraduates in the country. Of the schools that did not renew their membership last year, half of the non-renewals resulted from school closings or consolidations; the other half cited budgetary restrictions and consisted of institutions with student body sizes that totaled less than 5,000. The NASFAA Finance Committee recently explored dues options for schools with very small student populations.



### NASFAA Members (by Sector)

Community Colleges	27.5%
For-Profit	10.1%
Graduate/Professional	4.5%
Nonprofit	38.9%
Public 4-Year	19.0%

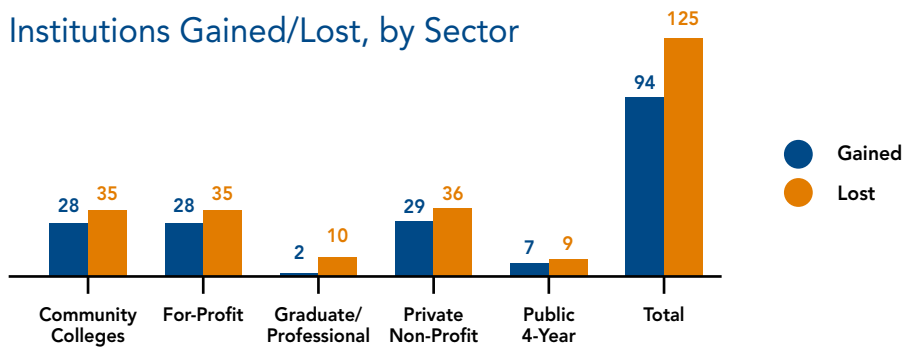


### NASFAA Members (by Institution Size)

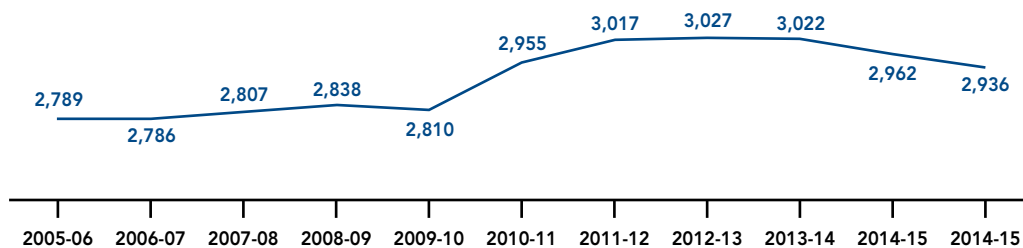
20,000 and above	5.1%
10,000-19,999	8.6%
5,000-9,999	14.0%
1,000-4,999	45.5%
Under 1,000	26.7%



### Institutions Gained/Lost, by Sector



### Total Institutional Members 2005-06 through 2015-16 (Adjusted to Include System Memberships)



NASFAA members are always advancing, whether enhancing their skills in their current roles, accepting promotions or job changes, or discovering new pathways as retirees. Here are a few of the NASFAA members who made changes in their professional lives in 2015-16.

# movers & shakers

## Promotions, Job Changes, and Awards

**Jody Adviento-Turner**, former financial aid specialist for Hawaii Community College, is now financial aid specialist for the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Jody has dedicated 17 years of service to the student aid field.

Rollins College promoted **Cory Baden** from financial aid advisor to assistant director of financial aid. He has worked in the student aid profession for four years.

With more than 10 years of service in the student aid profession, **Janet Balok** is now director of financial aid for Murray State University. She previously served as associate director of student financial aid services for Strayer University.

**Daniel Barkowitz** is now dean of enrollment management for St. Johns River State College. With 28 years of service in student aid, he previously worked for Columbia University, MIT, Boston College, and MEFA.

**Jill Barnhart Bertrand**, former financial aid compliance and training officer for Harvard University, is now director of the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships for Indiana University South Bend. Jill has committed 19 years to service in the field of student aid.

**Nancy Bragg** received the VASFAA Retirement Recognition Award. She has dedicated 27 years of service to the student aid profession.

**Ralph Brasure III** is now director of financial aid for Charter Oak State College. He has 16 years of experience in student aid and previously served as financial aid industry advisor for Jenzabar, Inc.

**Mary Frances Causey** has been promoted to associate dean of enrollment & director of financial aid at Prescott College, where she previously served as director of financial aid. She has dedicated 18 years of service to the student aid field.

**Judy Cuellar**, former assistant director of financial aid for Harding University, is now director of student financial services for Oklahoma Christian University. She has committed 11 years of service to the student aid profession.

With 10 years of service in student aid, **Alex DeLonis** is now director of financial aid processing for Ivy Tech Community College. He previously served as financial assistance and financial literacy coordinator for Oakton Community College.

**Karen Eckhart**, former loan processor for Concordia University Chicago, is now a student loan repayment administrator for Midwestern University. Karen has served in the student aid field for 15 years.



*Jody Adviento-Turner*



*Cory Baden*



*Daniel Barkowiz*



*Ralph Brasure III*



*Mary Frances Causey*



*Judy Cuellar*



*Sarah Evans*



*Angela Fowler*



*Billie Jo Hamilton*



*Robbin Haynes*



*Melissa Ibañez*



*James Kellam*





*Katie May*



*Francine Newman*



*Carol Perry*



*Michelle Richardson*



*Melanie Rinehart*



*June Schlabach*



*Kelly Schneider*



*Shannon Sheaff*



*Shannon Sirpilla*



*Amy Spinnato*



*Jim Swanson*



*Samantha Veeder*

Rockingham Community College promoted **Sarah Evans** to director of financial aid and veterans affairs. She formerly served as assistant director of financial aid/veterans affairs coordinator and has served in the field of student aid for six years.

**Michelle Flores** is now financial aid specialist for Dallas County Community College. She previously served as financial aid counselor for Grayson College and has served in the student aid field for five years.

**Angela Fowler** is now associate director of financial planning at Converse College, where she formerly served as financial aid planning counselor. She has dedicated 25 years of service to the student aid field.

**Victoria Goeke** is now assistant vice president of financial aid at the College of Southern Nevada. She previously served as senior financial aid consultant for Attain, LLC, and has dedicated 37 years of service to the student aid profession.

The University of South Florida promoted **Billie Jo Hamilton** to the role of associate vice president for enrollment planning & management. She has committed 35 years of dedicated service to the student financial aid profession.

**Terri Hare** is now director of financial aid and scholarships at Western Illinois University. She previously served as director of university scholarships at the same institution and has 26 years of experience in the student aid profession.

**Robbin Haynes**, former student loan specialist for Atlantic Cape Community College, is now a student loan administrator for Ocean Community College. Robbin has served in the student aid profession for 25 years.

The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Titusville promoted **Melissa Ibañez** from director of financial aid to associate vice president of enrollment management and director of financial aid. She also received PASFAA's President's Award in October 2015 for exemplary leadership and service to the association. Melissa has 27 years of experience in the student aid profession.

**James Kellam** is now director of financial planning for Converse College. He previously served as director of financial aid for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. He has served in the student aid field for 23 years.

**Scott Lapinski** is now director of financial aid at the University of Texas at Tyler. He has worked in student aid for 15 years and formerly served as director of financial aid & scholarships at the University of North Texas at Dallas.

**Melet Leafgreen**, former assistant director at Texas Christian University, is now associate director of financial aid processes at the University of Texas at Arlington. Melet has served in the field of student aid for 16 years.

With more than 20 years of experience in student aid, **Paula Lehrberger** is now director of financial aid services for Widener University. She previously served as director of financial aid for University of the Sciences.

**Zilma Lopes**, former assistant director of financial aid for Fayetteville Technical Community College, is now assistant director of financial aid for Central Carolina Community College. Zilma has dedicated five years to the student aid profession.

The University of Mount Union promoted **Emily Mattison** to assistant vice president for enrollment management and director of student financial services. She has 16 years of experience in student aid and formerly served as director of student financial aid services.

**Katie May** is now associate director of financial aid for Connecticut College. She previously served as supervisor - loan programs at the University of Connecticut. Katie has seven years of experience in the field of student aid.

With 11 years of service in student aid, **Vanessa Mayse** has been promoted to the role of associate director of student financial aid at Florida Southwestern State College from her previous role as assistant director.

**Margaret McGrail** is now vice president of enrollment services at Mercy College. She previously served as vice president of student services for the same university, and has dedicated 20 years of service to student aid.

**Laura Meek**, former director of financial aid at Ohio Dominican University, is now director of financial aid for Denison University. She has served in student aid for 22 years and is OASFAA treasurer-elect for 2016-17.

# Jim Swanson:

## from one epic journey to the next



Jim Swanson has traveled a long, successful career path in financial aid, dedicating nearly four decades to improving access to higher education for low-income students. In addition to assisting thousands of students over the years, he has volunteered at the state, regional, and national levels on too many committees and task forces to name, served on NASFAA's Board of Directors, and led state and regional associations as president. Swanson's colleagues and students know him for his down-to-earth personality and compassion, which shine through everything he does. NASFAA Vice President Beth Maglione said, "Jim is one of those people who makes everyone instantly feel at ease. He has a warm sense of humor and a kindness that seems to come right from his heart."

This year, as Swanson retired after 23 years as director of financial aid for Colorado College, NASFAA recognized his countless accomplishments with its Lifetime Membership Award—the highest honor that NASFAA can present to one of its members—at the 2016 National Conference.

"I am sincerely honored, blessed, and most appreciative to have received the NASFAA Lifetime Membership Award," Swanson said after the Conference. "What a truly incredible event to end my 39 years active in the financial aid profession."

As his retirement begins, Swanson will step onto a very different path: Spain's historic Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James). By the time this Annual Impact Report goes to press in November, he and his wife plan to have trekked the 500-mile northern route, starting in San Sebastian near the French border. They will hike 16 miles a day for 38 days along Spain's northern coast before reaching the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela and the shrine said to hold the remains of the Christian apostle St. James. "This is definitely going to be an adventure with much time to think and reflect," he said.

After the pilgrimage, Swanson and his wife expect to relax in the coastal town of Fisterra. "Many years ago, people thought Fisterra was the end of the world, as ships would sail westward and disappear from sight. In modern times, people like me will sit on the shores of Fisterra, gaze unto the horizon, and wonder if PPY, SULA, and the upcoming presidential elections in the US will be the end of the world," he joked.

Looking ahead, in addition to spending time with his dad, children, and grandchildren, Swanson is considering opportunities for consulting work at postsecondary institutions, and training others in the field, which he describes as "my true love in the financial aid profession."



**Carol Perry**, former financial aid advisor II for Guilford Technical Community College is now assistant director of financial aid/veterans affairs coordinator at Rockingham Community College. Carol has worked in the student aid profession for 10 years.

Dartmouth University has promoted **Kim Prestridge** to senior assistant director of financial aid. She has dedicated 15 years of service to the student aid profession.

**Michelle Richardson** is now a regional account executive at USA Funds. She previously served as account executive for Chase Student Loans and has 12 years of experience in the student aid field.

**Melanie Rinehart**, previously a staff accountant for St. Gregory's University, is now director of financial aid for Seminole State College. Melanie has worked in the field of student aid for three years.

Eastern Michigan University promoted **Kelly Schneider** to the role of assistant director of training and compliance. She previously served the university as senior financial aid adviser and has dedicated 11 years of service to the student aid profession.

**May Schumacher** has been promoted to the role of director of student financial services from assistant director of student fiscal services at Hays State University.

Mohave Community College promoted **Shannon Sheaff** from associate dean, financial aid and strategic data to director of financial aid. Shannon has dedicated 25 years of service to student aid.

With 12 years of experience in the student aid profession, **Shannon Sirpilla** is now financial aid advisor/veterans resource representative at Kirtland Community College. She previously served as financial aid systems manager for Oakland University.

**Amy Spinnato** is now director of financial aid at Harford Community College. She previously served as associate director of financial aid at Stevenson University and has served in the student aid field for 14 years.

**Samantha Veeder** is now associate dean of college enrollment/director of financial aid at the University of Rochester. She is the former executive director of financial aid at Syracuse University. Samantha has dedicated 24 years of service to student aid.

## Retirements

After 37 years of dedicated service in student aid, **Suzy Allen** has retired from her role as director of financial aid at the University of New Hampshire.

**Shirley Goines** retired from her role as director of student aid at Arkansas Tech University after many years of committed service to the student aid profession.

**Verna Hazen**, a 37-year veteran of the student aid field, retired from her role as associate vice president & director of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships at Rochester Institute of Technology.

After a 31-year career dedicated to student financial aid, **Mary Lawson** has retired from her role as financial aid director at Western Illinois University.

**Bert Logan** is retiring as director of financial aid & veterans services for Portland Community College. He has served in student aid for 27 years in several institutions, including San Diego State University, California State University, East Bay, University of Oregon, and Lane Community College, and he is a past president of the Oregon Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

After dedicating 35 years of service to the student aid profession, **Rosalind Martin** retired from her role as director of financial aid for Metro Technology Centers School District #22.

**Francine Newman** retired from her role as manager, return of Title IV funds, federal/state compliance, and academic standards at Nova Southeastern University. "It was a great joy to work in the financial aid field for close to 39 years," she said. She recently received FASFAA's Lifetime Service Recognition Award. Even after retirement, Newman plans to remain involved in her lifelong profession, student aid.

**June Schlabach** retired from her role as senior financial aid officer at Plymouth State University. Previously she had worked for Capital University and Hofstra University. She said, "After 43 wonderful years in the financial aid profession, I will start a new chapter in my life." June is looking forward to a future spending time with family and friends, as well as biking, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, and gardening.

**Jim Swanson** retired from Colorado College after 23 years as director of financial aid and a total of 39 years in the field. See highlights on page 18.

**If you retire, change jobs, or receive a promotion in 2016-17, let your colleagues know at [www.nasfaa.org/movers\\_and\\_shakers](http://www.nasfaa.org/movers_and_shakers)**



NASFAA TRAINING



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STUDENT AID

NASFAA

# NASFAA celebrates 50 years: the national conference

NASFAA's National Conference unites more than 2,000 NASFAA members annually to discuss current student aid issues, learn from area experts, share best practices, network, and enhance their knowledge and performance as financial aid professionals.

The 2016 conference marked the finale of NASFAA's 50th anniversary celebration with a dinner dance, a moving Student Aid Success Stories luncheon, the closing of the NASFAA time capsule, an inspiring video, an interactive timeline, and more. Held in Washington, DC, from July 10-13, 2016, the event featured 100 sessions and approximately 70 exhibitors.

This year's conference saw an increase in total registrants over the prior year, largely composed of registrants from NASFAA member institutions. The total percentage of member institutions represented at the conference has remained relatively steady over the past five years.



## National Conference Registration

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Number of Registrants	2,513	2,444	2,267	2,149	2,494
Percentage of Total Registrants from Institutions	75%	76%	74%	75.9%	75%
Percentage of NASFAA's Total Associate Members (NASFAA Business Partners) Represented at the Conference	58.9%	57.7%	47.7%	45.1%	42.7%
Percentage of NASFAA's Institutional Members Represented at the Conference	30.2%	30.2%	31.4%	27.5%	32.9%

## National Conference Programming

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of Interest Sessions	129	161	102	97	113
Number of Tracks	15	13	6	6	6
Number of Presenters and Moderators	360+	440+	200+	200+	250+

2012  
Chicago, IL

2013  
Las Vegas, NV

2014  
Nashville, TN

2015  
New Orleans, LA

2016  
Washington, DC





As NASFAA celebrates its 50th anniversary, I am celebrating 16 years since I first got involved in financial aid. Now, I know with even a decade and a half under my belt, I'm a lightweight compared to some folks at this conference who have been in this profession for 20, 30, 40, and for a few with us today, even 50 years!

Like most of you, I didn't set out to become a financial aid administrator or even to work in higher education. I took a job as an administrative assistant while my wife attended college, which transitioned into a role in financial aid.

Why I came into financial aid isn't as important as why I stayed. Serving students? Yes. Making a difference? Absolutely. But it was something more.

I didn't have a full vision of this profession until I started attending association meetings, first at the state level and then at the regional and national levels. It was then that I began to realize that NASFAA isn't just a loosely connected group of people who happen to be in the same profession. NASFAA represents a profession that has meant as much to me as to the students we serve.

NASFAA has a threefold mission:

1. Advocate for student aid policies that increase access and success.
2. Provide professional development for financial aid administrators.
3. Serve as a forum on student aid issues.

But that doesn't seem adequate to express the feelings I have about our associations. It wasn't until I attended a state-sponsored Financial Aid 101 training, put on by two people who are in this room today, that I first glimpsed the true nature of what I was doing. This work took on new meaning for me as I got involved with my state and national associations, where I learned that:

# common threads

## NASFAA President and CEO Justin Draeger's Opening Remarks at the 2016 NASFAA Conference

- I'm not just processing an application; I'm helping a student take the first step in redefining who they are.
- I'm not just tracking down verification paperwork; I'm helping needy students overcome barriers to financial aid and trying to make sure the right students get the money they need to achieve their higher education dreams.
- And, when I'm doing R2T4 calculations, I'm not just counting up hours earned or figuring out the last date of attendance in a module program; I'm ... well ... I don't have a good one for that requirement, but my point remains.

My point is that it was in my professional associations where I learned that there were thousands of people like me who knew that what they did made a difference. Even more, the associations transformed me into what I describe as "the thinking aid administrator."

The very first financial aid conference I attended was a U.S. Department of Education Electronic Access conference, which was excellent in terms of helping me to understand the ins and outs of what I was expected to do. But when I started participating in my professional associations, I came to understand that the rules and systems were created by people. That awareness gave me the courage to contemplate how I could challenge and change them. Put another way, when I left my first Department of Education conference, I thought about how to conform; when I left my association meetings, I began thinking about what I could change to better help students.

I know I'm preaching to the choir a bit. By virtue of you being involved with NASFAA, I know you're like me, and conformity—particularly to Byzantine rules and regulations that enact a real toll not just on schools, but more importantly, on students—is not in our DNA. We're not satisfied with simply looking for the best way to follow rules and regulations; we're looking for the best way to make them work for students.

For NASFAA, and our profession, we've reached a milestone. We're not at the beginning, and we're certainly not at the end... we're somewhere happily in-between!

We tend to look backwards at history sometimes with a sense of inevitability and the idea that everything was predestined to work out. But the truth is, where we are today was by no means inevitable, and certainly where we'll be tomorrow is not guaranteed. Where NASFAA is today is due in large part to the efforts of people sitting in this room who helped build the Association over these five decades.

NASFAA—which started with no paid staff, a limited volunteer structure, and virtually no budget—has grown today into a preeminent national association. We are known and respected on Capitol Hill, at the White House, and throughout the country, and we have both an extensive volunteer structure and a highly talented staff.

Now, I'm in a unique role, because I get to meet so many of NASFAA's members and see, first-hand, some of the common threads that bind us together. One part of NASFAA's mission speaks loudest to me, which I get to see as I travel to various states and regions, and that's our commitment to being a community that embraces the diversity of our opinions.

Senator Cory Booker summarized it best for me. In a recent interview where he was speaking about embracing differences in the context of our country, he talked about the distinction between tolerance and love. Tolerance, he said, means, "I'm going to stomach your right to be different, but if you disappear off the face of the earth I'm no worse off." Patriotism, on the other hand, "means love of country, which necessitates love of each other, that we have to be a nation that aspires for love, which recognizes that you have worth and dignity and I need you. You are part of my whole, part of the promise of this country."

That's how I feel about all of us. What has made us strong and will help us stay strong as a profession is not merely tolerating our differences, but recognizing that we are part of a whole—that we don't tolerate each other, we need each other—and more importantly, that students need us.

So, at this 50th anniversary milestone, over the next three days of this conference, and over the coming years, we'll debate, we'll lament, we'll rejoice, and we'll honor the past and look to the future. But most of all, let us recognize that common thread that holds us together: that no student be denied educational opportunity because of life's circumstances.

# Honoring Excellence: NASFAA's 2016 Awards

NASFAA presents awards to recognize the achievements of members of the financial aid profession and higher education community. Selected by the Awards Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors, recipients are announced at the annual National Conference. The following individuals were honored at the 2016 National Conference Awards Luncheon.

## The Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award

This is one of the highest awards that NASFAA bestows. It may be awarded either for significant contributions in the furtherance of NASFAA's goals over a sustained period of time, or for a single contribution of momentous importance.

**Paul Combe**, president and CEO of American Student Assistance. Combe has consistently promoted and advocated for the role of proactive, objective, nonprofit education debt management and advocacy services for student loan borrowers. Over his career, Combe has served as chairman of NASFAA's Need Analysis Standards Committee and as the liaison for NASFAA to the Committee on Need Analysis and Delivery. He has dedicated his work and career to making student debt more manageable.

**Dan Mann**, 2015-16 NASFAA national chair. Over his 35-year financial aid career, Mann has been active in state, regional, and national professional associations, most recently as NASFAA 2015-16 national chair. He has served as director of financial aid at various institutions, including his current tenure as director of financial aid at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he leads an operation that administered over \$755 million in financial aid awards last year.

## Lifetime Membership Award

This award is the very highest that NASFAA can bestow on a member. The award recognizes truly outstanding and significant achievements.

**Jim Swanson**, director of financial aid, Colorado College. For the past 37 years, Swanson has lived his passion of helping students, parents, high school counselors, and fellow college administrators with the student financial aid process and advocating for access to higher education for low-income families. Swanson has volunteered on numerous state, regional and national association committees and task forces, as well as on the College Board National Council and Financial Aid Standard and Services Advisory Committee (FASSAC). His leadership experience includes serving as president of state and regional financial aid associations. On the national level, he has served as a member of the NASFAA Board of Directors in positions including commission director and representative-at-large. He is also a current member of NASFAA's Ethics Commission.



*Paul Combe accepts the Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award from NASFAA President and CEO Justin Draeger (L) and NASFAA 2015-16 Chair Dan Mann (R).*



*Dan Mann accepts the Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award from Justin Draeger (L) and 2016-17 National Chair Lisa Blazer (R).*





*U.S. Representative John Kline accepts the Honorary Membership Award.*



*Clantha McCurdy accepts the Statement of Appreciation.*



*Michigan State University accepts the Gold Star Award.*



*Heather McDonnell accepts the Meritorious Achievement Award.*



*Joe Paul Case accepts the Statement of Appreciation.*



*Jim Swanson accepts the Lifetime Membership Award.*

## Meritorious Achievement Award

This award is presented to an individual who has made either an important single contribution to NASFAA or the profession, or significant multiple contributions.

**Heather McDonnell**, retired, associate dean of financial aid and admission, Sarah Lawrence College. McDonnell has been an active member of the student aid profession for 35 years. In addition to her countless leadership roles, committee chair assignments, and tireless advocacy for students, McDonnell has been a mentor to generations of aid professionals. She has been very active in both NASFAA and EASFAA and retired in 2015 after more than three decades in financial aid.

## Honorary Membership Award

**Honorary Membership in NASFAA is the highest honor that the association can bestow on a person who is neither a member nor affiliated with a member organization. Individuals receiving the award must have made truly outstanding contributions to NASFAA and to the profession over a sustained period of time.**

**Jamie Merisotis**, president & CEO, Lumina Foundation. Merisotis has long worked in the field of higher education with a goal of increasing access for lower-income students. He is a globally recognized leader in philanthropy, higher education and public policy. Since 2008, he has served as president and CEO of the Lumina Foundation, one of the largest private foundations in the United States and a driving force for increasing Americans' success in higher education.

**U.S. Congressman John Kline.** Congressman John Kline has proudly represented Minnesota's 2nd District in the U.S. House of Representatives since first being elected to Congress in 2002. In 2010, his peers chose him to serve as the chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee—the first member of Congress from Minnesota selected for this position. A 25-year veteran of the Marine Corps, he also serves on the House Armed Services Committee. Kline is a staunch advocate of the federal student aid programs and has worked in a bipartisan manner to help advance access, equity, and success in higher education. As the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, he has been a committed partner in and contributor to NASFAA's advocacy efforts.

## The Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award

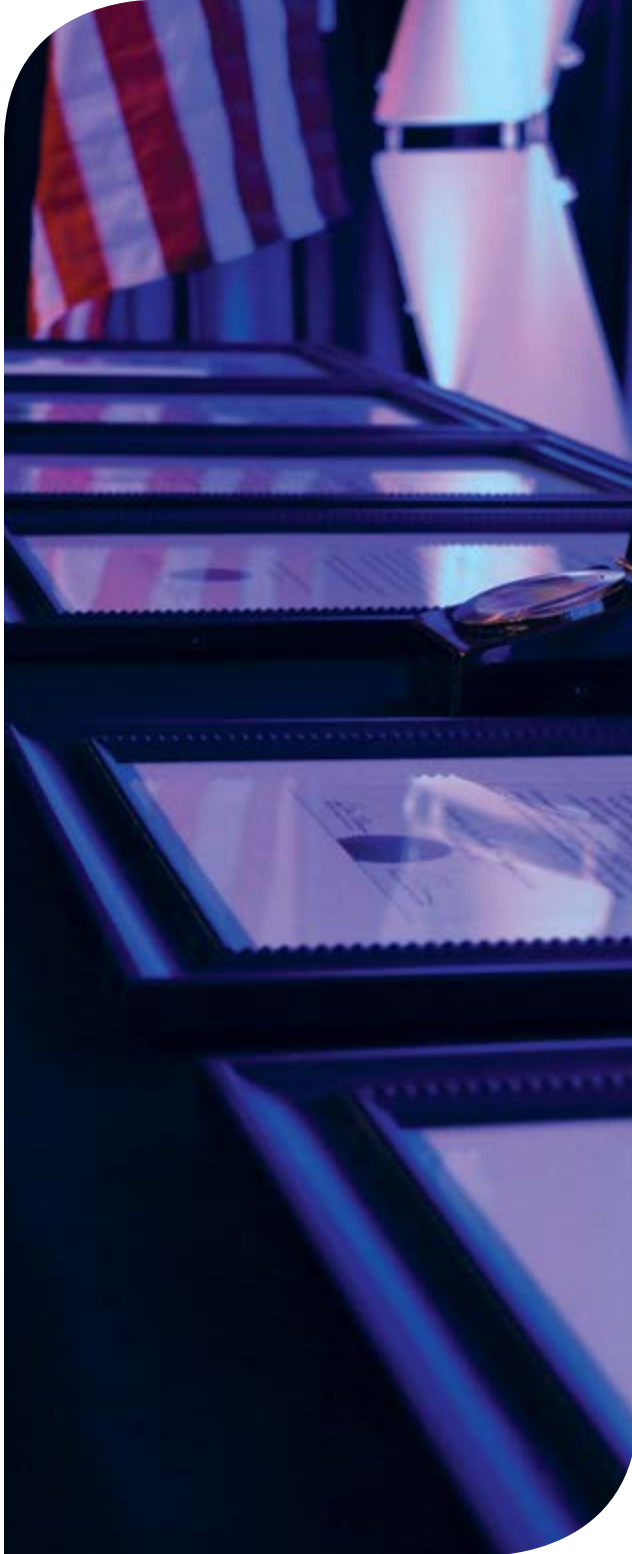
This award is presented to individuals chosen for their contributions to the body of research on student financial aid.

**Dr. Judith Scott-Clayton**, associate professor of economics and education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Scott-Clayton has made many contributions to the literature on financial aid, including, *On Money and Motivation: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis of Financial Incentives for College Achievement*. This careful study examined the impact of the West Virginia Promise program on college completion outcomes for qualifying students. It provides compelling evidence that the scholarship program supports college completion not only through providing direct financial support but also providing students with guideposts for what it means to be successful in college.

## Regional Leadership Awards

The individuals selected for these awards must exhibit high integrity and character, must have shown creative leadership, and should have inspired and encouraged others to actively participate in professional development. One award is given in each of six regions:

- EASFAA: Maribeth Quinn, director of financial aid, JFK Muhlenberg Snyder Schools
- MASFAA: Lori Vedder, director of financial aid, University of Michigan - Flint
- RNASFAA: Darry Voight, executive director of enrollment services, Casper College
- SASFAA: Ron Day, senior director of financial aid, Kennesaw State University
- SWASFAA: David Page, vice president for enrollment management, Dillard University
- WASFAA: Wendy Olson, director of institutional research, Whitworth University



## Gold Star Award

**The Gold Star Award recognizes innovative ideas in the financial aid arena at any level, targeted toward any constituency.**

Michigan State University, for “Utilizing Learning Management Systems for Financial Aid Training.” This online training program offers many benefits, including reaching learners from various geographical locations, allowing self-paced learning, and the ability to review training materials at any time.

## Statement of Appreciation

**This award is presented to recognize and thank an individual or individuals for service to NASFAA or the profession. It is an award by which NASFAA expresses gratitude for a job well done.**

**Joe Paul Case**, dean of financial aid, emeritus, Amherst College. Case has more than 40 years of countless meritorious contributions to the profession and is a past recipient of NASFAA’s Meritorious Achievement Award. Most recently, as a retiree, he has performed yeoman’s work on NASFAA’s 50th Anniversary Task Force. Through his abundance of work for and with NASFAA, MASFAA, COFHE, College Board, and other organizations, he has been one of the principal architects of the financial aid system used today.

**Clantha McCurdy**, senior deputy commissioner, Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) extends to Clantha McCurdy its sincerest appreciation for her role as chair of the 50th Anniversary Task Force. Over the past two years, she has provided dedication, leadership, and direction in planning the many special opportunities and events associated with NASFAA’s 50th anniversary. McCurdy has also been a devoted volunteer to NASFAA in several other capacities over the years, including serving as National Conference Chair for the 2013 Las Vegas Conference and Local Arrangements Chair for the 2011 Boston Conference. She embodies what it means to be a devoted, selfless volunteer to the financial aid profession, and NASFAA is grateful for her continued service.

2016 marks the 45th year NASFAA has offered a leadership conference opportunity for its members. This event has grown to not only prepare those moving into leadership roles within their states and regions, but also to promote leadership growth professionally within the financial aid community.

# NASFAA's leadership & legislative conference & expo



NASFAA held its 2016 Leadership & Legislative Conference & Expo in Arlington, VA, from February 22-24, 2016, at the Crystal City Hilton. Attendees chose from three separate pathways: Association Management; New and Aspiring Directors; and, new this year, Enrollment Management (EM). NASFAA added EM to its offerings to ensure that financial aid professionals are prepared to take an active role in EM decision making as well as to seek EM positions as more and more colleges and universities move toward this model. Aid administrators can play a particularly vital part when financial aid and admission goals are blended into a student success mission that goes beyond first-year students. The New and Aspiring Directors pathway, now in its second year, continued to provide leadership and management tools for new aid office directors and those aspiring to that position. Lastly, the flagship of the conference, Association Management, brought together newly elected state and regional association officers from across the country to learn leadership strategies, governance, and networking.

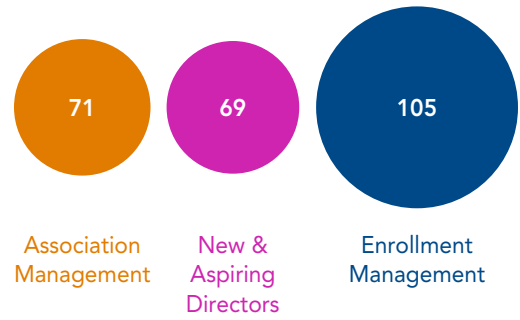
The 2016 conference earned the highest satisfaction survey results to date, and NASFAA plans to continue to build on this success in 2017.



### Leadership & Legislative Conference & Expo Conference Attendance

	Attendees	States Represented
March 2011	60	30
March 2012	75	39
March 2013	82	38
March 2014	88	42
March 2015	195 *	38
February 2016	245 **	38

### 2016 Attendance by Pathway



\* Aspiring and New Directors Pathway introduced in 2015

\*\* Enrollment Management Pathway introduced in 2016





# the NASFAA conference in pictures

In July 2016, NASFAA members united in Washington, DC to enrich their knowledge, exchange ideas, celebrate NASFAA's 50th anniversary, and step into the next next 50 years of opening doors to educational opportunity.











Page 31  
(clockwise from top left)

- Conference registration is quick and easy.
- U.S. Representative Robert "Bobby" Scott.
- NASFAA's booth, loaded with information.
- Happy conference attendees, the 50th anniversary time capsule, the NASFAA booth in action, one of the 100 interest sessions.

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(clockwise from top left)

- Irv Bodovsky tours NASFAA's online offerings.
- U.S. Department of Education Under Secretary Ted Mitchell.
- Keynote speaker, author Jeannette Walls.
- NASFAA's new Diversity Officer, James Brooks.
- NASFAA's proud Retiree Group.
- Old and new friends meet at evening events.
- Celebrating NASFAA's 50th anniversary in style!

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(clockwise from top left)

- Attendees network over lunch.
- The NASFAA Choir opens the 2016 conference.
- NASFAA's Student Aid Success Stories (SAS) honorees (L - R) Amber Briggs, Mary Eklund, Tabitha McAllister, Clantha McCurdy (Chair, Task Force on the 50th Anniversary), Janet Murguía, Ramón Murguía
- SAS honoree Tabatha McAllister embraces her former financial aid director, Heather McDonnell.





Success in the financial aid profession means keeping up with the latest requirements, learning everything you can at every opportunity, and knowing where to go for reliable, accurate information. NASFAA's Training and Regulatory Assistance resources meet all three of these objectives through credential training, webinars, compliance tools, and expert insights to address your toughest questions. The power to assist your students with the best information possible, support your institution's mission, and achieve your professional goals is always as close as the NASFAA website.

# training and regulatory assistance

## NASFAA U Credential Training

NASFAA U has seen tremendous growth over the last year. Credentialed professionals more than doubled in number and online class sizes grew to a maximum capacity of 90 seats, with most courses sold out. Training designed to promote mastery of a topic has taken hold as more colleges and universities are seeking out aid professionals with credentials on their resumes. This year saw the availability of 16 credential tests covering the gamut of federally regulated financial aid requirements. With multiple pathways providing access to the test, both members and non-members took advantage of this professional learning opportunity.

## NASFAA U Self-Study Guides

Self-Study Guides—a benefit of NASFAA Value Plus membership—have become a popular way of training for those who prefer to learn at their own pace. Guides include all needed materials with references to actual regulations and Federal Student Aid Handbook references, along with learning activities, reflection questions, and quizzes to test users' understanding and application of principles. The 2015-16 year saw the addition of four new guides: Cash Management, Administrative Capability, Professional Judgment and Packaging and Notification of Awards. One more guide is on deck for the 2016-17 year: Gainful Employment.

## State/Regional Partnerships: NASFAA CORE Becomes NASFAA Authorized Events

Effective in 2016-17, NASFAA has phased out its NASFAA CORE training materials. For many years, NASFAA made CORE available to states and regions to assist with new-aid-administrator training programs, primarily boot camps or other training events. NASFAA offered free credential testing for all CORE training participants who were taught by credentialed instructors. Although the program enjoyed success through 2015-16, NASFAA's Training and Regulatory Assistance (TRA) team wanted to focus training on subject mastery. As such, TRA created NASFAA Authorized Events, a new, more streamlined teaching approach for those providing training at the state and regional level. Introduced in spring 2016, initial reviews for Authorized Events have been very positive.





Authorized Events is flexible, allowing for individual topics or bundled topics to meet associations' specific needs. States and regions can employ these materials at institutes, boot camps, or other events. In addition, Authorized Events go beyond basic knowledge into more advanced applications, allowing for professional development at every experience level.

Each Authorized Events topic comprises four parts: a self-study guide/workbook, an instructor's guide, a slide presentation, and a slide handout. The benefit of free credential testing when a credentialed professional teaches the material still remains in effect.

NASFAA Authorized Events addresses the following topics:

- Administrative Capability
- Application Process
- Campus-Based Programs
- Cash Management
- Consumer Information
- Cost of Attendance
- Direct Loan Program
- Federal Pell Grant and Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants
- Gainful Employment (coming in 2016-17)
- Need Analysis
- Packaging and Notification of Awards
- Professional Judgment
- Return of Title IV Funds
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Student Eligibility
- TEACH Grant
- Verification

## Regions and States Deploying Authorized Events to Date

Regions	States
WASFAA	Iowa Pennsylvania
SWASFAA	Hawaii Arkansas
SASFAA	Nebraska Missouri
RMASFAA	West Virginia
MASFAA	Louisiana Kentucky Oklahoma Washington

## NASFAA U Online Courses

"If you build it, they will come!" This famous line from the movie "Field of Dreams" aptly applies to NASFAA U's Online Courses. The growth of online courses exploded over the last year. In 2015-16, NASFAA committed additional resources to the online course area by hiring two dedicated instructors and adding to the technical support requirements of this program. The association also increased marketing efforts using *Today's News*. TRA scheduled the online courses with institutions' financial aid calendars in mind. Due to high demand, the course schedule offers Verification and Return of Title IV Funds twice per year. Classroom capacities grew to 90 seats and were almost always full. Growth was the objective and growth was the outcome.

The following ratings represent average course feedback for materials, instruction, live classes, assessments, and technology in 2015-16.

## 2015-16 NASFAA U Online Course Feedback

Administrative Capability	4.50
Cost of Attendance (Fall 2015)	4.31
Direct Loan	4.27
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs (Spring 2016)	4.14
Professional Judgment	3.83
Return of Title IV Funds (Fall 2015)	4.28
Return of Title IV Funds (Spring 2016)	4.26
Satisfactory Academic Progress	4.47
Verification (Fall 2015)	4.13
Verification (Spring 2016)	4.16

5 = Excellent 4 = Very Good 3 = Good 2 = Fair 1 = Poor

## Registered Participant Comparison

<b>Course Title</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Administrative Capability	—	77
Campus-Based Programs	31	—
Cash Management	38	—
Cost of Attendance	35	34
Direct Loans	44	86
Federal Methodology	21	—
Federal Pell Grant	24	—
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs – Fall	69	—
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs – Spring	71	92
Packaging and Notification of Awards	33	—
Professional Judgment	40	63
Return of Title IV Funds – Fall	57	90
Return of Title IV Funds – Spring	—	89
Satisfactory Academic Progress	59	74
Student Eligibility	27	—
Verification – Fall	57	90
Verification – Spring	—	90
Total	606	813
No. of Unique Schools that Registered	256	380
No. of Unique Students that Registered	487	726

— Course not offered during this period.

## NASFAA U Online Course Schedule 2016-17

<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	09/12/2016	10/03/2016
Student Eligibility	10/03/2016	10/31/2016
Cash Management	10/18/2016	11/15/2016
Verification	11/07/2016	12/12/2016
Return of Title IV Funds	01/30/2017	03/02/2017
Consumer Information*	02/27/2017	03/27/2017
Gainful Employment*	03/27/2017	05/01/2017
Professional Judgment	04/25/2017	05/23/2017
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	07/10/2017	07/31/2017

\* New Course

## NASFAA U Testing Center

NASFAA's credential testing is the only national credentialing program for financial aid administrators that will develop and document professional growth. The end of the 2014-15 year saw aid professionals earning a cumulative total of 1,369 credentials. As of June 30, 2016, that number has grown to 3,989. In other words, the credential program nearly tripled in a single year, surpassing all prior years since its inception! Administrative Capability and Consumer Information were added to the list of credential topics, bringing the total tests available to 16. Gainful Employment will be added to the credential offering in the 2016-17 year.

## Number of Credential Tests Ordered, by Year

2012-13: 64

2013-14: 622

2014-15: 1,490

2015-16: 5,120

## Cumulative Credentials Earned from Inception through June 30, 2016

	Number Passed
Administrative Capability	63
Application	332
Campus-Based Programs	170
Cash Management	32
Cost of Attendance	324
Direct Loan Program	302
Federal Methodology	231
Federal Pell Grant Test	229
Packaging and Notification of Awards	175
Professional Judgment	388
Return of Title IV Funds	401
Satisfactory Academic Progress	318
Student Eligibility	437
TEACH Grants	24
Verification	626
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,989</b>

## NASFAA Webinar Series

NASFAA webinars have become a mainstay for many financial aid professionals. In 2015-16, NASFAA produced 15 webinars with an average registration of 760 registrants per event. Use of a new webinar platform proved very successful and provided flexibility in webinar formats. A single sign-on method enhanced the registration process, improved survey mechanisms, and increased survey participation. Additionally, TRA convened a focus group as a part of a continuous improvement plan. This group produced valuable suggestions that TRA will implement in the upcoming year. The average satisfaction rating across all webinars was 97.1 percent compared to the 96.8 percent average in the prior year.

<b>Webinar</b>	<b>Registered</b>	<b>Attended</b>
Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeals	786	505
Washington Update	654	439
Best Practices in Customer Service	742	501
Title IV Funds Late Disbursements	974	574
2016-17 Verification	1,282	818
Graduate/Professional Town Hall – Oct. 2015	707	463
Non-Traditional Program Issues	539	324
Top AskRegs Questions	666	494
Consumer Information	688	441
Prior-Prior Year Town Hall	1,291	1,021
Summer Aid Issues	604	377
Graduate/Professional Town Hall – March 2016	315	158
PLUS Eligibility Issues	716	451
Transition Tools: An Overview of the PPY Toolkit	614	432
2016-17 Verification Frequently Asked Questions	823	528

Webinars for the coming year will feature guest speakers from the IRS and the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid, a presentation focused on financial literacy, and more of the popular Q & A webinar format. Look for ad hoc additions as well, based on emerging hot topics.





## 2016-17 Webinar Series Schedule

08/03/16	Dependency Mashup: Test Your Knowledge
08/31/16	PPY Webinar Series: Understanding the Treatment of Conflicting Information
09/14/16	Financial Wellness on Your Campus: Case Studies and Best Practices
10/06/16	Your Cohort Default Rate: What Does it Mean?
10/12/16	Federal Income Taxes Demystified
11/16/16	Citizenship Issues: Eligibility and Noncitizen Concerns
12/06/16	NASFAA Policy Update
12/14/16	Title IV Eligibility: Adding Programs
01/18/17	Transfer Student Mashup: Test Your Knowledge
02/01/17	Pell Recalculations: Required and Optional
02/22/17	Gainful Employment Issues
03/01/17	Graduate Professional Town Hall
03/22/17	Verification and Professional Judgment in a PPY World
04/12/17	Return of Title IV Funds: Common Questions and Common Audit Findings
05/10/17	Cash Management: Moving Beyond the Tiers
05/23/17	NASFAA Policy Update
06/07/17	Documentation: What, When, and Why

## Standards of Excellence

The Standards of Excellence (SOE) Review Program assesses institutions' delivery of student financial aid. These confidential, customized reviews highlight strengths, identify compliance exceptions, and recommend improvements. During 2015-16, interest in the SOE program remained high and NASFAA reviewed 16 institutions, expanded the SOE team with five new peer reviewers, and explored ways to enhance and expand the program. Watch for announcements from the SOE Review Program in *Today's News* later this year.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Cost Estimates Requested	48	70	87	72	73
Total Reviews Completed	21	13	10	13	16

## NASFAA AskRegs Knowledgebase

AskRegs is the financial aid version of an “easy button” and has become one of the most popular services NASFAA offers its members. The knowledgebase has grown to over 3,050 published questions and answers stemming from member input and requests. Members can search by keyword or topic to find information and answers. Most answers contain regulatory references that make it easy for aid professionals to explain the “why’s” of financial aid on their campus.

	No. of Knowledgebase Searches	New Q&As Published	Q&As Viewed
June 2015	11,895	22	17,920
July 2015	11,443	33	15,809
Aug 2015	14,388	29	15,195
Sep 2015	10,927	19	16,147
Oct 2015	11,164	18	19,985
Nov 2015	9,514	18	16,101
Dec 2015	8,485	2	14,489
Jan 2016	31,304	19	16,916
Feb 2016	22,461	8	12,461
Mar 2016	35,471	10	18,464
Apr 2016	35,016	39	16,080
May 2016	36,705	27	17,124
June 2016	37,887	32	20,947
<b>Total</b>	<b>276,660</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>217,638</b>

If a question cannot be found within the Knowledgebase, members have the opportunity to submit the question directly to the TRA staff. The 2015-16 year saw a 24 percent increase in questions submitted from the previous year for a total of 3,751 questions submitted in this year alone. That’s an average of 72 questions submitted each week. The table below shows that many users who start a question ultimately find a previous answer they need in the Knowledgebase prior to actually submitting a ticket.

## Summary of Question Tickets

	Started	Submitted
July 2015	670	287
Aug 2015	708	323
Sep 2015	665	294
Oct 2015	760	344
Nov 2015	581	262
Dec 2015	447	208
Jan 2016	649	303
Feb 2016	757	337
Mar 2016	805	346
Apr 2016	764	336
May 2016	713	331
Jun 2016	831	380



# The NASFAA Compliance Engine



Based on NASFAA's Self-Evaluation Guide, Compliance Engine checklists guide users through a series of self-assessments, so users can confirm compliance with the latest requirements and identify any potential problem areas.

Each checklist includes regulatory and other resources to help explain the requirement. Users can record and save their responses easily, and also record comments for each individual line item. The checklist screen is customizable, so users can choose to see only the columns used most.

Enabling a collaborative environment, entire checklists, checklist tabs/subsections, and even individual items can be assigned to other staff members at the institution. Dashboards available site wide summarize current work, assignments, and progress. Additional assignments-based commenting areas help streamline communication and keep compliance work centralized within the tool.

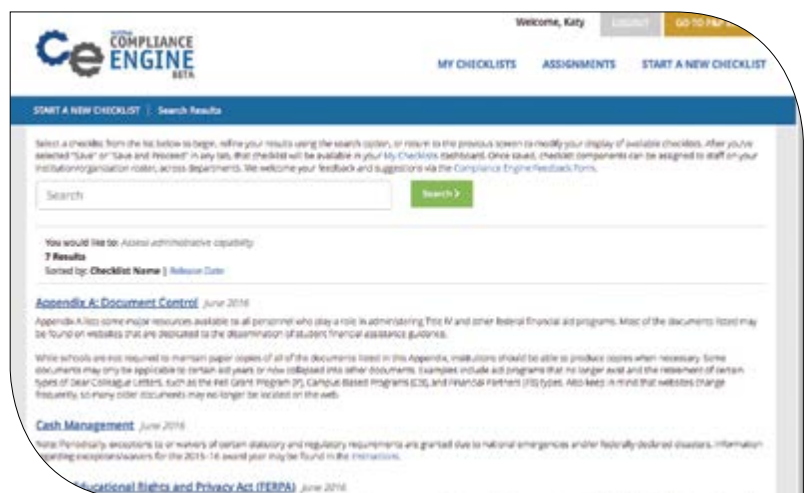
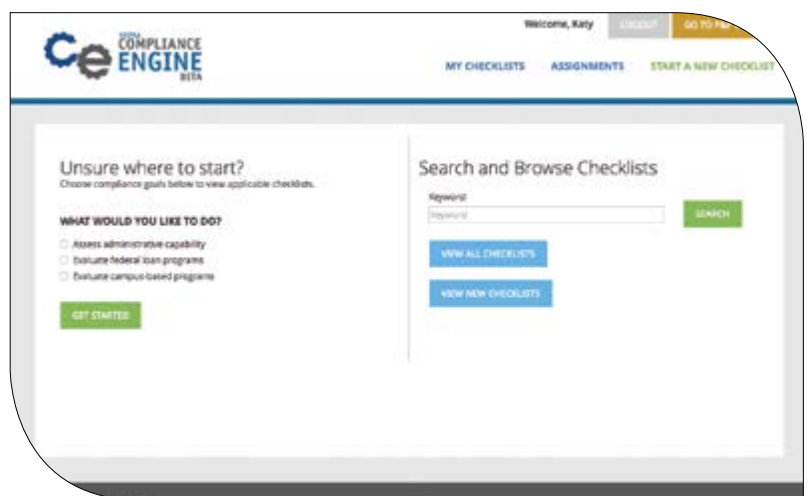
Intuitive sort and search functions get users to checklist topics easily, including a goal-based checklist selection option. Customizable reporting options integrated with campus-wide rosters and additional email fields mean that others can be notified of progress and concerns directly through the tool.

The next-generation online tool has arrived: The NASFAA Compliance Engine. With the goals of reducing the time spent on compliance administration, increasing collaboration, and helping institutions avoid unnecessary findings during an audit or program review, the Compliance Engine launched to a welcoming NASFAA-member audience at the 2016 National Conference.

Because the Compliance Engine components are constantly evolving, NASFAA will notify users when there are updates, new items available, and other critical considerations so that offices can stay on top of constantly changing requirements. Further, as the materials are updated, users will have the ability to push their work forward from version to version and year to year, with the updated items marked as needed. This allows users to build a library of compliance work to review, modify, and maintain for historical purposes—all in one place.

The Policies & Procedures Manual module of the Compliance Engine presents a series of templates to guide users through creation of a customized policies and procedures manual. Like the Compliance Engine checklist, regulatory and other resources are merely a click away, tasks can be assigned to colleagues across campus, and users will be notified when changes are made within the tool. Users can collaborate with comments and work can be exported into a report for further review and distribution.

The initial release of the Compliance Engine was the first in a series for the project. Now available in preview mode, NASFAA will release the full Policies & Procedures Manual module in January 2017. Additional features include the ability to transfer ownership of checklists and manuals, add files and images to manual copy, an organization-wide library view of compliance items, and notification maintenance options. NASFAA is excited to release and keep building upon this powerful tool that helps keep financial aid professionals on top of the latest requirements in the field.







# prior to PPY

by Sara Beth Holman

In August 2015, a month before the U.S. Department of Education made their announcement that Prior-Prior Year (PPY) income information will be used on the FAFSA® in 2017-18, the financial aid office at Lawrence University made the decision to begin using PPY parental income in its institutional (IM) needs analysis calculation for the 2016-17 incoming freshman cohort.

As a small, private, undergraduate liberal arts college in Appleton, Wisconsin, our goal in instituting PPY in 2016-17 at Lawrence University was threefold: To get accurate financial information earlier so we could review and package earlier, send out fewer tentative awards, and spend less time chasing documents.

Just two months later, on November 11, 2015, we sent out our first financial aid application prompt followed by a second prompt on December 14, 2015. In previous years, we would have sent the first prompt in mid-January. We set a priority deadline of February 1 for the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE and 2014 parent federal tax returns and W-2 forms, and a priority deadline of March 1 for the FAFSA. We already required first-year financial aid applicants to submit the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, parent tax returns, and parent W-2 forms in order to be considered for need-based institutional financial aid, so we didn't think it would be a big deal to ask for 2014 (PPY) documents rather than their 2015 (prior year) documents.

Those who submitted documents early had no difficulty. However, the closer we came to February, the more we received 2014 tax returns and 2015 W-2 forms. As March neared, everything we received was for 2015.

We specifically targeted our "Early Action 1" (EA1) group (admission application deadline of November 1; admission decision by December 15), offering them the opportunity for an early award notification if they submitted the PROFILE and 2014 parent tax documents by January 1. The results were as follows:

- Just shy of 10 percent (60 out of 602) of EA1 admits submitted the requested FA documents by January 1.
- Award notifications were sent to those 60 applicants in mid-January.
- Yield on the early award notification group was 27 percent (16 of the 60) as compared to 16 percent (99 of 602) of the full EA1 group and 17 percent (385 of 2276) of the full applicant pool.

As we received 2014 tax documents, we updated the Institutional Methodology (IM) fields in our system to reflect 2014 parental income, while the Federal Methodology (FM) fields reflected the data reported on the FAFSA. With this information, we calculated three figures:

- 1) FM Expected Family Contribution (EFC) based on 2016-17 FAFSA data and EFC tables
- 2) IM EFC based on our IM formula and 2014 income
- 3) Estimated Federal Methodology EFC based on the 2014 income in the IM fields, but using the 2016-17 FM EFC tables. This provided us with the ability to compare an applicant's FM EFC calculated based on 2014 versus 2015 parental income using the 2016-17 EFC formula.

What did we learn from this? First, no matter what, when, and how you tell people, there will be confusion, so be prepared! Of the 1,502 admitted applicants who applied for financial aid, 1,074 submitted both the FAFSA and PROFILE. Of those, 725 submitted 2014 tax documents while 257 submitted 2015 tax documents. Not surprisingly, 141 of the 725 reported \$0 change in income, meaning that they completed their 2016-17 FAFSA with 2014 income and, as of July 1, 2016, had not updated it. That said, we did find that by verifying 2014 income for IM purposes while the FAFSA data represented 2015 income, we spent less time resolving conflicting information. We expected differences between the IM and FM data and only followed up where the differences were significant.

Based on what we've learned over the past nine months, I'm not worried about what the next year will bring. I don't think we will see a shift in who is eligible for aid and how much they are eligible to receive.

While most applicants who submitted 2014 tax documents submitted them earlier than in previous years, presumably because they were already filed and readily available, we discovered that a disproportionate number of low-income families no longer had their 2014 tax documents. They didn't know they should keep them, particularly the W-2 forms but in some cases tax returns. Some also weren't able to easily get a tax transcript because their address had changed and they weren't sure of the address that was used on their 2014 return.

Among the 725 applicants, 131 were eligible for Federal Pell Grant based on either 2014 or 2015 income. Of those, 44 percent had a \$0 EFC regardless of tax year, 7 percent gained eligibility based on 2014 income, and 5 percent lost eligibility based on 2014 income. Overall, 72 percent of Pell recipients would have experienced a change in grant of less than \$1,000 while only 8 percent would have seen a change of more than \$3,000.

We processed an almost identical number of professional judgment appeals (100 versus 97) compared to the previous year:

- 21% resulted in using 2015 income (for IM) instead of 2014 income
- 50% were income adjustments that used a 12-month period other than 2015
- 4% were due to changes in marital status since completing the aid application
- 25% were due to adjustments for specific expenses

PPY had an impact on institutional aid for 450 of the 693 applicants for whom we received 2014 tax documents. Of the approximately 400 new students we welcomed to campus in fall 2016, PPY altered the institutional aid for 81 of them, resulting in an average award that is \$494 higher than it would have been based on prior year income. What was the overall institutional cost of our decision to use PPY data? Approximately \$40,000 in an institutional aid budget of over \$36 million.

Based on what we've learned over the past nine months, I'm not worried about what the next year will bring. I don't think we will see a shift in who is eligible for aid and how much they are eligible to receive. Likewise, I don't think we will be bombarded with special circumstance requests, nor will we blow the discount rate. Sure, there will be some growing pains as we adjust to when students are applying for aid, when they expect to receive financial aid award notices, and perhaps when our "busy" times are, but, like any new aid program or change in regulations, in a year or two, PPY will be business as usual.

**Sara Beth Holman is director of financial aid at Lawrence University. For help in transitioning to PPY at your institution, visit NASFAA's Prior-Prior-Year Toolkit at [www.nasfaa.org/ppy\\_toolkit](http://www.nasfaa.org/ppy_toolkit).**



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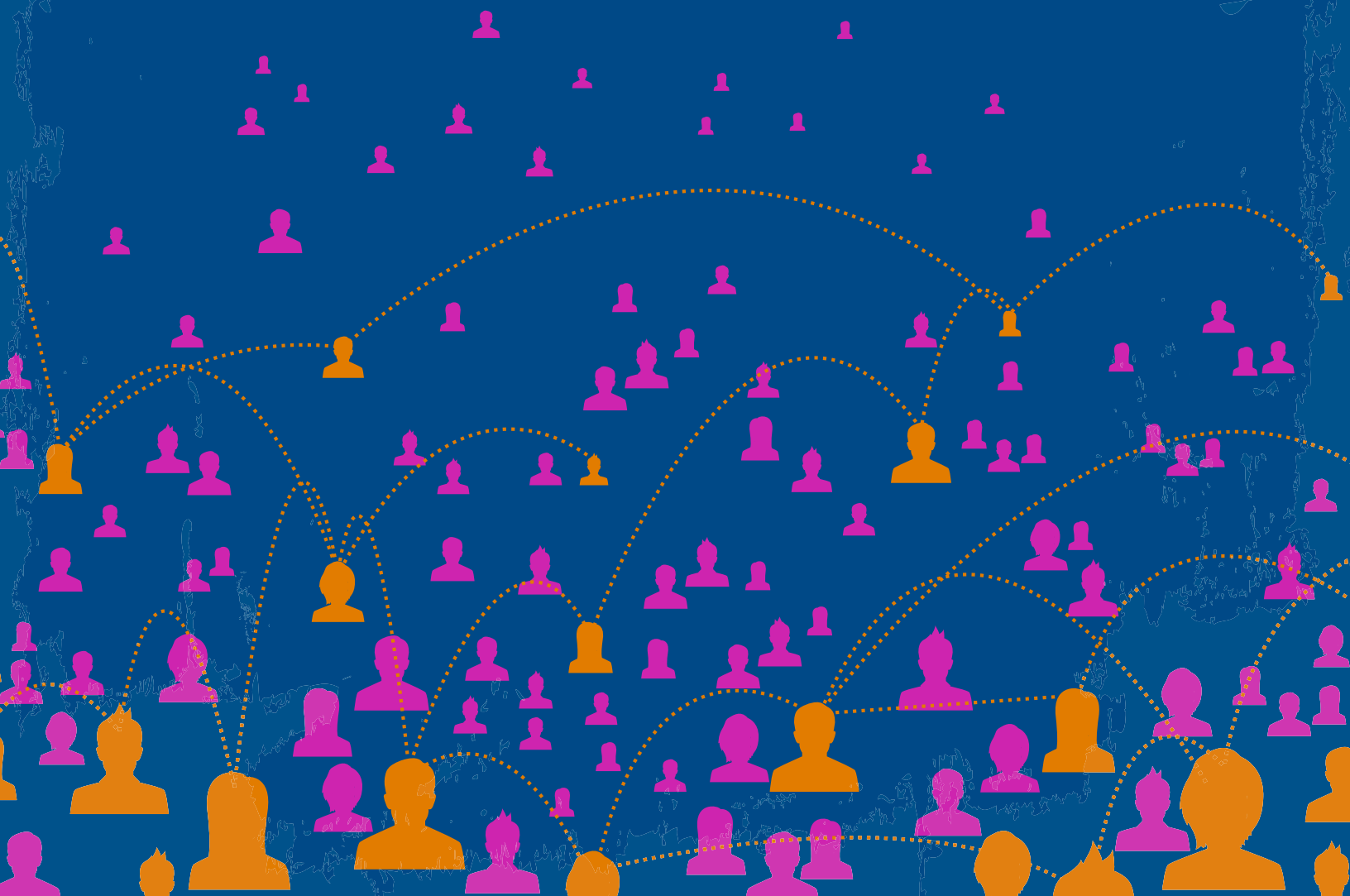
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 **NASFAA**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

# communications



Serving as a forum on student financial aid issues is one of NASFAA's top priorities. Using NASFAA.org, *Today's News*, social media channels, quick polls and surveys, and other products and services, NASFAA's Communications staff works daily to enhance communication, foster discussion, promote the exchange of ideas, and increase knowledge of pertinent issues. In addition to engaging with NASFAA members, the staff uses both proactive and reactive public relations efforts to reach out to lawmakers and the media, raising their awareness of our research, policy positions, and advocacy efforts. This helps to position NASFAA as a trusted source of reliable information on financial aid in the higher education community.

### NASFAA Website - NASFAA.org

Following a full relaunch in June 2015, staff continued to develop new content and tools for the NASFAA website. New content features include the NASFAA Legislative Tracker and Capitol Recap, which together help explain each piece of financial aid-related legislation and track its progress through the legislative process. The reorganized Advocacy, Policy & Research area also makes finding this information easier.

Another popular content resource on the website is the Prior-Prior Year Toolkit. Updated frequently, this toolkit compiles different types of content items to help guide aid offices through a successful transition to Early FAFSA and Prior-Prior Year (PPY). Some of its many available resources include blog posts, videos, news items, and ready-to-use meme images.

The Prior-Prior Year Toolkit served as an incentive for building the Financial Aid Timeline Tool, which gives aid administrators the ability to create a customizable financial aid and admissions timeline. This tool already automatically includes federal deadlines, and users can choose dates for common actions, or add their own. Once created, a permanent link makes it easy to share the timeline by email, via social media, and on institution websites. Editing tools allow administrators to keep their timelines up to date with minimal effort.





In addition to the site's new tools and features, NASFAA continued to promote use of existing site features that help tailor the website to individual needs and preferences. The Suggested Content tool allows users to receive on-screen and email notifications about updates and new NASFAA site content matching their preferences.

NASFAA.org Favorites is a site-specific bookmarking system that puts often-used links in the user's personalized dashboard, where they are accessible from every page with just a click.

To facilitate current and future content development, NASFAA added a dedicated, full-time web content specialist staff member who established and now maintains a web content users group. Additional staff received training on the site's content management system and are responsible for various items and sections of the site. This collaborative approach means that changes and updates happen more regularly and efficiently, the information is crafted directly by the experts, and a user-friendly management tool helps eliminate delay.

## NASFAA Website Indicators

NASFAA's website has seen a steady increase over the last few years in the number of site visits, page views, and site users.

**2015-16**

1,384,832	Visits
2:49	Average Visit Duration (in minutes)
3,792,642	Page Views
2.74	Pages Viewed Per Session
556,362	Site Users

**2014-15**

1,114,453	Visits
2:59	Average Visit Duration (in minutes)
2,974,592	Page Views
2.67	Pages Viewed Per Session
457,181	Site Users

**2013-14**

1,075,745	Visits
3:11	Average Visit Duration (in minutes)
2,892,782	Page Views
2.69	Pages Viewed Per Session
463,384	Site Users

## Top Content Pages Visited July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2016

1. Today's News
2. State & Regional College Tuition Discounts
3. 2016 Conference
4. AskRegs
5. State Financial Aid Programs

Site traffic continued to increase in 2015-16, with a 26 percent increase in overall visits and a 27 percent increase in page views. While the average time visitors spend on the site drops yearly, the increased number of pages per session possibly indicates that site users are finding what they need faster, and are actually looking at more in that shorter average time. Continued content and site feature enhancements have resulted in a more up-to-date site that is further optimized for user experience.

### myNASFAA Migration

In 2015-16, NASFAA kicked off a multi-phase project to migrate higher-level website components from existing technology to more customized, user-friendly, NASFAA-driven tools. Areas identified for improvement included the store and registration system, directories, organization management areas, and the Buyers Guide.

The most apparent result of this project is the revised myNASFAA profile management tools, which launched at the close of the fiscal year. Divided into five content tabs, it is easy for members to both locate the information that needs to be updated and to save their edits. Members can manage their email preferences in this area, and the new design allows any *Today's News* vacation holds to resume automatically on the date chosen. A transactions area lists the user's involvement with NASFAA, including purchases, registrations, credentials, and volunteerism. Each tab includes a box to quickly contact NASFAA's Membership staff for help.

### Today's News

Year after year, members cite *Today's News*, NASFAA's newsletter sent daily to nearly 21,000 subscribers, as a primary reason for their NASFAA membership. In addition to offering original and breaking news articles written by NASFAA staff members, *Today's News* includes relevant announcements from the U.S. Department of Education, information on upcoming training opportunities, updates about NASFAA's products and services, and a roundup of interesting headlines from major news outlets and trade press.

### Top Today's News Content

NASFAA writes and publishes a great number of original articles written specifically with the financial aid administrator in mind. At the end of each month, NASFAA's Communications staff looks to see how many of the 15 most-read articles from that month were "original news" items, meaning articles researched and written by NASFAA reporters, policy staff, and others. In its 2015-16 Strategic Priorities, the Communications staff set a target to ensure at least 60 percent of the most-read *Today's News* content was composed of original articles. The staff met this target in 2015-16 with an average of 63 percent of the top 15 news articles each month qualified as original news content. The breakdown by month appears on the following page.

	<b>% of Top Content Composed of Original NASFAA News</b>
Jul 2015	73
Aug 2015	80
Sep 2015	67
Oct 2015	54
Nov 2015	67
Dec 2015	87
Jan 2016	60
Feb 2016	67
Mar 2016	60
Apr 2016	47
May 2016	40
Jun 2016	60

### The 10 Most-Read Original Today's News Articles, July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

1. Mid-Year Verification Changes for 2015–16
2. Reporting Compliance Issue May Generate Letters to School Presidents
3. Changes Coming for 2016-17 Verification
4. IRS Tax Transcript Availability
5. Senator Blocks Perkins; Program Expires with Grandfathering Intact
6. ED Changes Amended Tax Return Guidance Again for 2015-16 and 2016-17
7. Two-Year Extension of the Perkins Loan Program Would Bring Dramatic Changes
8. A Few Things We Know about Perkins
9. We Asked, You Answered: See What Your Colleagues Said about Preparing for the Transition to PPY
10. ED Revokes Title IV Eligibility of 26 For-Profit Campuses

### NASFAA Original Article Series

As part of our original content offerings, NASFAA regularly publishes five article series. These include a video series and a survey series, respectively: Student Aid Perspectives, Ask Mr. Ethics, Voices from the Aid Office, MVP: Most Valuable Professional, Partners in Policy, The Policy Brief, and Poll the Pros.

### Student Aid Perspectives

Perspectives presents the viewpoints of experts on current issues in student aid and encourages thoughtful dialogue among NASFAA members. NASFAA published two Perspectives articles from July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016:

- Public, Means-Tested Benefits Can Help Low-income Students Make Ends Meet, by Amy Ellen Duke-Benfield
- Scrutiny on Endowments Overlooks Fundamental Facts, by Liz Clark

### Ask Mr. Ethics

NASFAA's Ask Mr. Ethics series, which debuted in March 2015, provides a forum for members to ask anonymous questions and receive practical advice about how best to deal with ethical dilemmas on campus while adhering to NASFAA's Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct. NASFAA published two Ask Mr. Ethics articles from July 1 2015, to June 30, 2016:

- Is It OK to Hold a Student's Credit Balance Until After the Final Financial Aid Disbursement?
- What's My Responsibility to Monitor Student Spending?

### Voices from the Aid Office

This occasional series features the thoughts and opinions of NASFAA members working on campus. NASFAA published three Voices articles from July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016:

- Best Practices for Identifying Scholarships
- 3 Strategies for Effective Campus Communication
- Summer Communication Tactics to Set Students Up for Success

### MVP: Most Valuable Professional

This series features brief question-and-answer interviews with NASFAA members across the country. This year's MVPs included:

- Angela Johnson, executive director of enrollment and financial aid at Cuyahoga Community College
- Rachelle Feldman, assistant vice chancellor and director of financial aid and scholarships at the University of California, Berkeley



- Gina Soliz, director of financial aid at Syracuse University's College of Law
- Ben Burton, chief student financial resources officer at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana
- Candi Frazier, senior associate director of Financial Aid and Student Employment at West Virginia University, in Morgantown, West Virginia

## Partners in Policy

NASFAA's Partners in Policy profiles colleagues at the associations, foundations, and think tanks that NASFAA works with to advance higher education and financial aid policies. In the last year, the series published three articles featuring the following organizations:

- Institute for Higher Education Policy
- New America
- The National College Access Network

## The Policy Brief

The Policy Brief is an occasional video series that gives members a quick glimpse into the activities of NASFAA's policy and federal relations team. The series produced two videos last year:

- PPY as a Successful Advocacy Case Study
- Innovative Learning Models

## Poll the Pros

This informal survey series helps members quickly discern how their work in the financial aid office compares to that of their colleagues across the country. Members can answer the latest poll question and instantly see how their colleagues answered that same question. NASFAA published six of these polls in 2015-16:

- How Would You Describe Your Institution's Support of Your Compliance Efforts?
- How Many Open Positions Do You Currently Have in Your Office?
- When Will You Complete New Student Aid Packages?
- How Many Private Education Loan Lenders Do You Include on Your Preferred Lender List?
- How Familiar Are You With the Concept of Enrollment Management?
- How Did You Get Your Start in Financial Aid?



# media

NASFAA was mentioned and/or quoted in a large number of articles in local, national, and trade publications in 2015-16.

## NASFAA Media Mentions: July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

Original mentions (as opposed to reprints)	194
Reprints (articles that are republished or syndicated)	298
Total NASFAA media mentions for the period	492

The number of original articles in the media that mention NASFAA tend to increase dramatically around NASFAA's annual conference each year. For example, in July 2015 the media published 32 original articles that mentioned NASFAA, and other news organizations republished or syndicated 22 additional articles. September 2015 was the only month during 2015-16 that saw more original articles mentioning NASFAA, with 33 original articles and 57 republished or syndicated articles. President Obama's announcement that prior-year income data would be used on the FAFSA starting in the 2017-18 school year primarily drove this spike in original articles. At that time, NASFAA issued a press release over the public relations newswire announcing the move to PPY and offering to weigh in on what the change, long advocated for by NASFAA, would mean for students, parents and schools. As a result, several prominent publications—including Inside Higher Ed, National Public Radio, and CNN—reached out to NASFAA for comment.

The following is a breakdown of the number of original mentions and reprints NASFAA received each month in 2015-16.

Month	Original Mentions	Reprints	Total Media Mentions
Jul 2015	32	22	54
Aug 2015	26	37	63
Sep 2015	33	57	90
Oct 2015	23	14	37
Nov 2015	12	24	36
Dec 2015	9	65	74
Jan 2016	10	41	51
Feb 2016	15	17	32
Mar 2016	13	5	18
Apr 2016	5	4	9
May 2016	7	9	16
Jun 2016	9	3	12

## Quality Coverage

As part of our strategic priority to serve as a primary source of information on student financial aid issues, in 2015-16 NASFAA set out to make at least two proactive media contacts each month, with at least one of these contacts addressing a consumer-focused issue. Our 2015-16 strategic priorities document defined success as having a conversion rate of at least 80 percent, meaning that of all the proactive media outreach efforts conducted—such as submitting an op-ed or pushing out a press release—at least 80 percent of these efforts resulted in an article being published. NASFAA met this target, ending the year with an 83 percent media conversion rate.

The following are examples of outlets that cited NASFAA during the period:

- AARP
- Bankrate
- Black Enterprise Magazine
- Bloomberg
- Brookings
- CBS MoneyWatch
- CBS Sports
- CNN
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- The Detroit Free-Press
- Diverse: Issues in Higher Education
- eCampus News
- Education Week
- Financial Advisor
- Forbes
- The Hechinger Report
- The Huffington Post
- Inside Higher Ed
- MarketWatch
- The Miami Herald
- Money
- NBC News
- NPR
- Politico
- Reuters
- Roll Call
- Time
- University Business Magazine
- USA Today
- U.S. News & World Report
- Vox
- The Wall Street Journal
- The Washington Post
- The Washington Times
- Yahoo! Finance





# social media



NASFAA continues to provide updates, content, and multimedia to our members through our social media channels. Over the last year, our audiences on social media have continued to grow, with an almost 50 percent increase on Facebook, a 27 percent increase on Twitter, and a nearly 6 percent increase on LinkedIn. NASFAA content pages received an average of 33 comments per month last year, including 67 comments in September, largely in response to a "Your Thoughts" question on the move to prior-year (PPY).

## Comments on NASFAA Content, by Month

July 2015	45
August 2015	25
September 2015	67
October 2015	33
November 2015	28
December 2015	21
January 2016	34
February 2016	34
March 2016	21
April 2016	20
May 2016	30
June 2016	38



## Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn

NASFAA members participate in many social media sites, and continue to engage with each other and with NASFAA through Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Activity on all three platforms steadily increased throughout 2015-16, with NASFAA's Twitter account on average gaining nearly 140 new followers each month.

## Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn Followers, by Month

	Facebook Followers	Twitter Followers	LinkedIn Followers
Jul 2015	3,545	6,480	6,176
Aug 2015	3,647	6,578	6,213
Sep 2015	3,847	6,714	6,249
Oct 2015	4,034	6,827	6,292
Nov 2015	4,154	6,957	6,327
Dec 2015	4,338	7,076	6,381
Jan 2016	4,503	7,229	6,420
Feb 2016	4,664	7,417	6,420
Mar 2016	4,805	7,517	6,431
Apr 2016	4,914	7,622	6,440
May 2016	4,971	7,788	6,482
Jun 2016	5,090	7,992	6,514

In an effort to increase engagement with members, connect with other higher education organizations, and help to educate the public about financial aid, NASFAA also participated in and organized several Twitter chats throughout the year.

- NASFAA participated in Twitter chats hosted by PBS Newshour, Young Invincibles, and College Summit, with topics including merit-based scholarships, improving the FAFSA, college counseling, and challenges with applying for financial aid.
- NASFAA hosted a Twitter chat before the December holidays, which focused on how financial aid can factor into the college application process.

During Financial Aid Awareness Month in February, NASFAA hosted a series of weekly Twitter chats (#FinAidFeb), each focused on a different financial aid theme, such as filling out the FAFSA, understanding different types of aid, budgeting and managing debt, and financing after college. NASFAA called for member volunteers to help field questions from students, parents, and other higher education stakeholders. The chats that NASFAA participated in were successful in increasing our engagement with members and the public, increasing our presence and following on social media, and raising our profile as a thought leader in higher education policy.



# advocacy

NASFAA's advocacy initiatives keep the complex needs of students, institutions, and the financial aid community at the forefront of higher education policymaking. Our advocacy efforts center on increasing access to and completion of higher education; simplifying the student aid process; minimizing student indebtedness; and promoting need-based aid.

NASFAA works to elevate the voices of financial aid offices at colleges and universities nationwide through forums, public policy development, and direct engagement with lawmakers and staff.

## NASFAA Forums

Policy forums—a central part of NASFAA's mission—allow NASFAA to leverage the expertise of our members and remain a leading voice in shaping the national conversation about the effectiveness and sustainability of crucial federal aid programs. These forums encourage key stakeholders in the higher education policy community—congressional staff, national association colleagues, and researchers—to meet to discuss and debate key issues in federal student aid policy.

In 2015-16, NASFAA sponsored three financial aid policy forums:

- **Postsecondary Education Financing Forum (May 2016):** For the first time, NASFAA hosted a Postsecondary Education Financing Forum in New York City, bringing together a diverse group of higher education economists, researchers, and practitioners to discuss policy issues surrounding financing higher education. The event, held on May 11, 2016, on the campus of New York University, featured a variety of speakers and presenters, including Martha Kanter, former U.S. Undersecretary of Education and representatives from Moody's Analytics, and the New York Federal Reserve Bank, as well as several NASFAA members. For those not able to attend in person, NASFAA livestreamed the event and archived it on the NASFAA website.



- **Federal Work-Study Program Study Release (June 2016):** On June 28, 2016, at the Hay-Adams Hotel in Washington, DC, NASFAA publicly released the final piece of a four-part study on the components of a robust Federal Work-Study Program, which was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The event included presentations from Erin Knepler from Public Agenda on the study's findings; Karen McCarthy from NASFAA on recommendations for policymakers; and Paula McClain and Ann Wessman from the National Student Employment Association on recommendations for institutions. The audience, composed of attendees from private and public institutions, associations, and the U.S. Department of Education and other policymakers, all received a hard copy of the study's executive summary.
- **State of Student Aid Congressional Briefing (June 2016):** This year, NASFAA expanded its annual Capitol Hill briefing following the release of the National Student Aid Profile, NASFAA's annual overview of federal programs. The expanded 2016 briefing included a panel of higher education policy experts invited to comment on the state of student aid and what lies ahead for these important programs. For the sixth year in a row, NASFAA began the event with an orientation for congressional staff about the student aid programs.

## Proactive Public Policy Efforts

NASFAA continued engaging in proactive public policy efforts this year through the work of five policy-related task forces that provided a number of new considerations and recommendations to guide NASFAA's policy and advocacy efforts. This work is even more important with the approaching Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization, and the task force model allows NASFAA to identify and get in front of student aid policy issues that are percolating on Capitol Hill, engage members, and develop policy recommendations to have on hand when needed.

**Task Force on Prior-Prior Year (PPY) Implementation (October 2015-Present):** In response to President Obama's September 13, 2015, announcement of the implementation of the use of prior-prior year (PPY) income information on the 2017-18 FAFSA, NASFAA immediately formed a task force to identify potential roadblocks to successful implementation and to develop strategies to overcome those barriers.

The task force, which will ultimately span about 18 months, has worked to:

- (1) Proactively identify implementation issues, work with the NASFAA staff, and collaborate with the U.S. Department of Education to ensure a successful rollout of PPY;
- (2) Solicit and deliver feedback from the NASFAA membership and Board of Directors on the PPY rollout;
- (3) Identify best practices, Q&As, and trainings related to PPY for the NASFAA membership;
- (4) Identify and address any issues impacting financial aid computer systems during the PPY transition; and
- (5) Facilitate collaborations with other key stakeholders invested in PPY, including the admissions and state grant agency communities.

A key achievement of the PPY Implementation Task Force was the launch of the PPY Toolkit ([nasfaa.org/ppy\\_toolkit](http://nasfaa.org/ppy_toolkit)), which features a variety of tools and resources for financial aid professionals.

Following implementation, the task force will conduct a review as PPY is rolled out and deliver final recommendations on the expected evolution of PPY going forward.

**Examining "One Grant, One Loan" Task Force (October 2015-June 2016):** Following increased congressional interest in the consolidation of the federal financial aid programs into "one grant" and "one loan," NASFAA formed a task force to examine how a "one grant, one loan" model would work in the event of adoption of this model by Congress. The task force developed 12 considerations for policymakers and a subsequent 11 recommendations in the event Congress determines that pursuing a "one grant, one loan" model is in the best interest of students and families.

The task force posed these important questions and considerations to policymakers interested in developing a “one grant, one loan” model:

- Will federal program consolidation truly make the financial aid process simpler for students and families, given the existence of other sources of financial aid?
- Will the Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program survive simplification efforts?
- What would happen to the campus-based Administrative Cost Allowance (ACA)?
- What would happen to the other Title IV grant programs and their federal funding?
- Would some students be awarded less grant funding under a “one grant” model than under the current model?
- Would there be a federal commitment to make up for that net loss in grant dollars?
- If the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program were eliminated, would the remaining “one grant” program funding be awarded strictly according to a federal formula, with institutions losing all of the awarding discretion they currently have under the rules of the FSEOG program?
- How would Congress reallocate savings if the “one loan” offered is an unsubsidized loan?
- Will one federal loan lead to higher debt loads?
- Will more borrowers be pushed into the private loan market?
- How will interest rates fare in a “one loan” system?

The task force published its final report in August 2016.

**Examining the Lack of Graduate-Specific Data Task Force (October 2015-May 2016):** The 2015 Graduate/Professional Issues Task Force Report identified several issues of importance to the graduate/professional (G/P) student community and corresponding recommendations to mitigate those issues. One of the issues identified included the lack of graduate-specific student aid data. To address this problem, the task force recommended the creation of a new task force to tackle this issue and identify data needs specific to graduate student financial aid.

The NASFAA Task Force Examining the Lack of Graduate-Specific Data considered ways to better counsel and inform students and prospective students about G/P programs at their institutions.

With that in mind, the task force developed seven recommendations:

1. Enhance National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS) reporting capabilities to provide graduate program-level data on indebtedness—utilizing Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes—and cohort default rates (CDRs), as well as national-level data so students and financial aid administrators may draw comparisons between the levels.
2. Create a Shopping Sheet with information specific to G/P students and G/P program-level data.
3. Additional work should be done to streamline and add consistency to assignment of CIP codes.
4. Additional consumer testing should be conducted to better understand and address the needs of prospective G/P students as they are applying for programs.
5. NASFAA should work with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to organize training for the G/P community on how to utilize the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS).
6. NPSAS survey directors should partner with financial aid administrators from G/P institutions to look for ways to link together student populations in similar program structures.
7. NCES should increase the population of G/P students surveyed in NPSAS.

The task force’s final report was published in July 2016.

**Consumer Information and Law Student Indebtedness Task Force (September 2015-September 2016):** With support from Access Group, NASFAA convened a task force of graduate/professional student financial aid administrators to identify recommendations to improve consumer information for law students, particularly the financial aid award letter, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) Shopping Sheet, and ED student aid websites, including StudentAid.gov and StudentLoans.gov.

The task force released two reports: one on focusing federal student aid websites on graduate and professional students, released in March 2016, and the other, released in September 2016, providing recommendations based on consumer testing of law student award letters and the Shopping Sheet.

**Dynamic Loan Limits Working Group (July 2015-December 2015):** NASFAA convened the Dynamic Loan Limits Working Group with the goal of determining whether the current Direct Loan limit structure should change, and if so, making a proposal outlining those changes. NASFAA's Indebtedness Task Force and Reauthorization Task Force previously tackled this issue in their 2013 reports; however, there remained a general sense that current statutory limits do not allow graduate/professional students or undergraduate students without parental support to finance higher education without turning to more expensive alternatives. To that end, the group explored the idea of varying/dynamic, loan limits for different schools or students using established criteria like program of study or meeting certain thresholds. During the working group discussions, five components for effective loan limits arose frequently:

- Flexibility
- Retention of existing statutory limits
- Institutional accountability
- Simplification (for schools and students)
- Reduction of administrative burden

The working group released a discussion draft in July 2016 that included two prior NASFAA recommendations—to allow schools to have the authority to limit loans and to simplify the structure of loan limits—and a new proposal to allow bonus borrowing for students attending exceptionally performing schools. NASFAA will continue to explore dynamic loan limits as reauthorization approaches.

## Reference Sheets

In November 2015, NASFAA released two quick-resource documents to help entities outside the financial aid office—including offices on campus as well as on Capitol Hill—understand the roles of financial aid administrators and how they can work together. At the request of its members, NASFAA also created a customizable PowerPoint of these documents for use when making presentations to institutional leadership, other campus offices, and the community.

## Key Meetings on Public Policy Issues

NASFAA staff met with staff from the following federal groups and organizations in 2015-16.

- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Government Accountability Office
- U.S. Office of Management and Budget
- House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
- Senate and House Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees
- White House Domestic Policy Council

**NASFAA Advocacy Pipeline:** NASFAA developed the Advocacy Pipeline in 2012-13 to bring more NASFAA members to Capitol Hill to advocate on behalf of their students, institutions, and the federal student aid programs. Since its inception, approximately 65 NASFAA members have met with dozens of congressional staff members in both the House and Senate through the Advocacy Pipeline initiative.

Fifteen NASFAA members from across the country and from all sectors participated in 25 meetings with congressional staff in 2015-16. For the first time, NASFAA solicited volunteers for participation in the program this year. Members interested in volunteering to participate should complete the volunteer form on the NASFAA website ([nasfaa.org/pipeline\\_interest\\_form](http://nasfaa.org/pipeline_interest_form)).

## Testimony on Capitol Hill

In November 2015, NASFAA President Justin Draeger testified before a joint hearing of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The hearing, titled "Federal Student Aid: Performance-Based Organization Review," focused on the performance of the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) within the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Draeger's testimony focused on the lack of partnership between FSA and financial aid offices at institutions and specifically addressed the problematic rollout of gainful employment reporting requirements.

At the request of committee leaders and as a follow-up to the hearing, NASFAA conducted a survey of its members in April 2016 about operational issues at FSA, including processing time, outstanding items, and the effects of delays on students. NASFAA sent the survey results to Congress in May 2016. More information about the hearing and additional resources, including the full FSA operational issues survey results sent to Congress, can be found on the NASFAA website ([nasfaa.org/fsa-testimony](http://nasfaa.org/fsa-testimony)).

**Legislative Tracker:** In January 2016, NASFAA launched a new tool to follow action in Congress on federal student aid issues: The NASFAA Legislative Tracker ([https://www.nasfaa.org/legislative\\_tracker](https://www.nasfaa.org/legislative_tracker)). This tool provides a summary, a status, co-sponsor numbers, and relevant links for further information for each piece of legislation introduced in the current session of Congress. The new tool breaks legislation into 10 categories ranging from "Access and Innovation" to "Tax Issues," and it also includes "Legislation We're Watching Closely" and "Legislation of Note Signed into Law" lists on the Tracker homepage.

### Early FAFSA/Prior-Prior Year

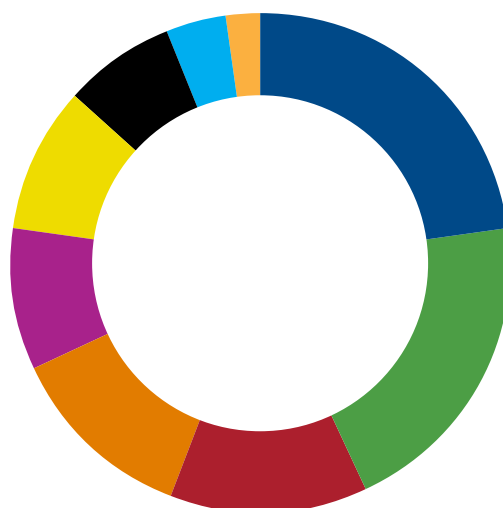
In September, President Obama announced his intention to allow the use of prior-prior year (PPY) tax information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and move the availability of the FAFSA® up from January 1 to October 1, so students and families can have more time to weigh important college decisions. The move to PPY follows NASFAA's 2013 research examining the impact of this change and subsequent advocacy with lawmakers on the potential benefits for students and families. NASFAA members nationwide participated in important advocacy on this issue on Capitol Hill, and ultimately, Congress gave the issue bipartisan support.

### Reauthorization Preparation

As another year comes to a close without action on HEA reauthorization, NASFAA's Policy & Federal Relations staff continues to work behind the scenes with legislators and legislative staff on ensuring that financial aid administrators have a voice at the table whenever substantive conversations about comprehensive HEA negotiations occur. As we look to the future, the NASFAA Legislative Tracker shows that legislators are focused on improving the federal student loan and repayment system and working towards greater access and innovation in higher education.

### Bills Introduced in 114th Session of Congress

Subject Area	Number of Bills	Percent
Loans & Repayment	57	23.0
Access & Innovation	50	22.2
Pell Grants	32	12.9
Tax Issues	30	12.1
Consumer Information & Transparency	23	9.3
Quality & Accountability	23	9.3
Military & Veterans Aid	18	7.3
FAFSA Simplification	10	4.0
Campus-Based Aid	5	2.0



Source: NASFAA Legislative Tracker



# make time to volunteer

by Amy Berrier



Volunteer? Who has the time, with PPY on the horizon, recent changes regarding conflicting information, and other regulatory burdens we deal with every day? Not to mention that we are all doing more with less due to issues like budget cuts and hiring freezes. But even with these challenges and time constraints, it is worth it to find space in your agenda for volunteering at your state, regional, or national association. Chances are, the benefits will far outweigh the time commitment.

I have volunteered at the state, regional, and national levels, and the greatest source of satisfaction I have experienced is the ability to advocate for ways to advance student access and success while improving conditions at my institution, in my community, and in my country. The nearly boundless intangible benefits include pride in making an impact, opportunities to tell legislators and policymakers the stories that otherwise would go untold, and a sense of accomplishment. I've learned that all of us can make a significant difference by lending our voices to influence financial aid laws and regulations.

Volunteering also provides valuable career benefits. For example, you can sharpen your professional skills; enhance personal and professional relationships; boost your visibility to others in the financial aid field; and augment the experience on your resume.

How can you get started? Your state financial aid association is a great place to start, and there are many opportunities at the regional and national levels as well. Look for volunteer opportunities that connect with your personal and professional interests, as well as the amount of time you are able to dedicate. For example, you might...

- Volunteer at a training event or conference
- Mentor newer financial aid administrators
- Actively participate on association committees and task forces
- Work to influence change at your institution or in your association
- Advocate on behalf of students
- Run for elected office in your association

Volunteering doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. A number of state associations are ramping up their state advocacy efforts by holding state legislative days at their capitol buildings. Several regional associations emphasize advocacy and hold annual Capitol Hill events in Washington, DC. The Advocacy, Policy, and Research tab on NASFAA's website also provides great resources and tools to help all of us become aware of the current issues and make a difference through advocacy (visit [https://www.nasfaa.org/Take\\_Action](https://www.nasfaa.org/Take_Action)).

Over my years of extensive involvement at the state, regional, and national levels, I have attended many trainings, conferences, meetings, and advocacy events that have directly benefited my institution. I have presented at numerous conferences, learned from session attendees, influenced and educated congressional representatives, and more. In addition to its personal benefits, this involvement directly benefits my institution and students. I'm able to share the knowledge and training I gain—in areas as diverse as financial literacy, student success initiatives, available scholarship programs, and more—with my department, leading to better student service.

Make it a priority to get involved in your state, regional, and national association at whatever level you can. Our time is our most precious resource, but the countless rewards we can receive and benefits we can give through volunteering make it worth every minute we spend.

**Amy Berrier is the assistant director for operations in the Financial Aid Office, University of North Carolina – Greensboro. For more information on volunteering with NASFAA, see [www.nasfaa.org/Get\\_Involved](http://www.nasfaa.org/Get_Involved)**

# my top 10 takeaways as the 2016 DME intern

The Dallas Martin Endowment Policy Internship was unlike anything I could have imagined. Although I knew it would be a great internship just from the job description, the experience has been even better than I expected.



Since I moved to DC last year, I've had the opportunity to intern at a think tank, a foundation, and now an association. Each experience has provided a unique approach to higher education. I have enjoyed looking at higher education policy through the lens of financial aid administrators. Here are my top 10 takeaways from my time with NASFAA!

1. Take advantage of every opportunity to learn more. The nice thing about DC is that organizations frequently host events. Even if I didn't know much about a certain topic, I went to events so I could learn more outside of the office. In the office, I made sure to take note of any topic I wanted to learn more about so I could read up on it.
2. Having strong background knowledge on topics makes your job much easier. During my first internship in higher education policy, I spent a lot of my time learning the basics. At NASFAA, because I had done previous work on financial aid, I was able to hit the ground running and take advantage of everything available through this internship.
3. Being a good writer is incredibly important. I've always been told how important it is to be a good writer, but it didn't really hit me until I came to grad school. I'm glad I had the opportunity to write some articles for NASFAA's *Today's News*. It was a great way to learn how to write for your audience and make things clear and concise.



*Janette and some members of the NASFAA staff.*

4. NASFAA's influence on policy is very evident. Early in my internship, the Senate Appropriations bill came up, and I remember how excited everyone was that the language to restore Year-Round Pell was language that NASFAA had proposed. Throughout the summer, I've seen NASFAA's advice sought out and their ideas included in many more policy proposals.
5. Advocacy really works. One of my favorite experiences this summer was participating in the Advocacy Pipeline and watching our members in action. The congressional staffers with whom we met were engaged because NASFAA was providing knowledge on issues they didn't even know existed. NASFAA's advocacy is a catalyst for positive change.
6. Don't be afraid to ask. This includes asking if you can attend certain events or help out on certain projects. When I started, I knew I wanted to do research-oriented projects and have the opportunity to write more in addition to the policy work. I'm glad I asked, because the answer was always, "Yes!"
7. Work doesn't feel like work when you have a great team. I got to know the policy team pretty well, and I have loved every moment with them! They are a hard-working group, but they also enjoy having fun conversations about musicals and history.
8. NASFAA members provide important opinions to the higher education policy discussion. Our members are deeply committed to the students they serve, so their ideas or concerns are always focused on how to make things better for students. Often, policy discussions can get so wrapped up in numbers and ideas that it's easy to forget who is impacted by the policy.
9. It is important to be up to date with all news, especially higher education news. The internship is busy and it gets difficult to find time to sit and read through articles. However, there are almost daily developments in higher education. In DC, you'll always be in a conversation about current events, so be ready!
10. "Look around, look around, at how lucky we are to be alive right now." I had to end with a lyric from the musical "Hamilton." Knowing that I had to write a weekly blog post pushed me to appreciate the cool things I do. Usually, I'm so busy that I'm doing things just to check them off a list. But appreciating the moment, snapping a picture, and then reflecting on it later made me realize I am having some pretty unique experiences in DC.

**Visit the NASFAA website to watch a short video of Janette addressing the 2016 National Conference audience at [https://www.nasfaa.org/janettes\\_thank\\_you](https://www.nasfaa.org/janettes_thank_you), and to read about Janette's experiences as a DME policy intern on her blog at [www.nasfaa.org/janettes\\_journal](http://www.nasfaa.org/janettes_journal).**





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# research

NASFAA's research initiatives explore issues in the administration of federal student aid and support the organization's advocacy, membership, and strategic long-range plan efforts. This year's studies focused on bridging the gap between research and practice by producing reports that included best practice takeaways specifically targeted to members and institutions.

NASFAA strengthened its external research presence by expanding its work with other groups. Conducting collaborative research with other associations and surveying members on behalf of other groups, NASFAA strived to proactively influence the higher education research agenda and better support financial aid administrators. In addition, NASFAA recognized the 50th anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965 with a special issue of the *Journal of Student Financial Aid* examining the history, accomplishments, and future of student aid.

## Surveys

In 2015-16, NASFAA administered 12 surveys to our membership. The results of these surveys aided various research initiatives both within and outside of the association.

### Surveys for internal association use:

- 2015 National Conference Evaluation, New Orleans (July 2015)
- 2015 NASFAA Benchmarking Survey (October 2015)
- NASFAA U Survey (December 2015)
- Federal Work-Study Administration (FWS) Survey (NASFAA's first non-collaborative survey to include non-members). NASFAA surveyed its members, members of the National Student Employment Association, and FWS administrators identified by a marketing firm (January 2016).
- Compliance Engine Development Survey (February 2016)
- 2016 Leadership and Legislative Conference Evaluation, Washington, DC (March 2016)
- Survey of College Presidents (April 2016)

**Quick Scan Surveys:**

- Perkins Prep Survey
- Federal Student Aid Experience Survey
- Federal Student Aid Operational Issues Survey

**Surveys performed on behalf of external groups:**

- Award Displacement Survey, in partnership with the National Scholarship Providers Association (November 2015)
- Annual Institutional Loan Survey, used for Trends in Student Aid, in partnership with the College Board (May 2016)
- 2016 Graduate and Professional Financial Education Survey, in partnership with Access Group (June 2016)

## Major Research Reports

NASFAA released several major research reports between July 2015 and June 2016 and also participated in multiple collaborations with other organizations.

**NASFAA Research Reports:** NASFAA conducted and published three major research reports during 2015-16 exploring two different areas.

- **2016 NASFAA Benchmarking Report (February 2016):** This report presents findings from the 2015 NASFAA Benchmarking Survey (formerly NASFAA Salary Model Survey and NASFAA Staffing Model Report), which updates the 1995, 1999, 2006, and 2012 reports. NASFAA restructured and combined the former surveys and reports based on the recommendations of the NASFAA Management Benchmarking Task Force. A new addition to NASFAA's benchmarking survey, a section on financial aid office (FAO) campus relations, examines where the FAO falls in the institutional reporting structure, how the FAO aligns with the campus mission, and ways the FAO interacts with other offices. Key findings from this report included changes in salaries, changes in number of aid applications handled by FAOs, and new findings on how FAOs feel they fall in their institution reporting structure as well as their relationship with school administration.

- **2015 and 2016 National Student Aid Profile (July 2015 and June 2016 respectively):** The NASFAA Student Aid Profile provides the latest information and data about each of the programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). The Profile also presents recent trends in federal program appropriations, lists income levels of students and families who receive aid, and includes a description of the federal student aid application. In 2016, NASFAA added a section detailing congressional action on student aid issues and legislation on student aid topics introduced in Congress in 2015.

**Grant-Funded Research:** NASFAA received two large grant awards to conduct research on financial aid issues during 2015-16.

- **NASFAA Research on Consumer Information and Law Student Indebtedness:** Access Group awarded NASFAA grant support for 2015-16, and NASFAA formed our Consumer Information and Law Student Indebtedness (CILSI) Task Force to complete the goals of this project. To begin the project, the task force made recommendations for the StudentAid.gov and StudentLoans.gov websites that would expand their focus to include the needs of graduate/professional (G/P) students and allow for greater transparency related to G/P program costs and borrowing. With websites tailored to their distinctive needs, G/P students will be better-informed consumers with a clearer understanding of their options, leading to institutional choices that are good matches for their long-term financial and educational goals. The CILSI Task Force recommendations appear in the report "Focusing Federal Student Aid Websites on Graduate and Professional Students" (March 2016). NASFAA will release findings from the task force's other work on this grant in 2016-17.
- **NASFAA Research on Federal Work-Study (June, 2016):** The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded NASFAA a grant to study the components needed to efficiently and effectively administer FWS and ways in which schools can strengthen their FWS programs to yield greater persistence and completion among students while staying within federal parameters. The goal of this research was to determine what components would create a framework for understanding, evaluating, and improving FWS that program administrators could use on their campuses. In conjunction with Public Agenda, NASFAA conducted a literature review and policy scan to examine the administration and impact of the FWS program,

surveys to capture information on best practices and innovative programs in FWS, and 11 focus groups with a total of 88 participants. This study identified seven components incorporated by optimally functional and innovative FWS programs, as well as 17 recommendations for policymakers, institutions, NASFAA and/or the U.S. Department of Education, and future research.

**Collaborations:** NASFAA collaborated with multiple groups and associations during 2015-16 to examine various issues in federal student aid.

- **Research Meets Practice: Findings from a Collaboration between NASFAA and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE):** Throughout 2014-15, NASFAA and ASHE engaged in a collaborative effort that paid particular attention to how financial aid serves as a crucial instrument to combat inequality through promoting student access and success. As part of this collaboration, NASFAA delivered a white paper to the ASHE membership at their Annual Conference in November 2015 and to the NASFAA membership in January 2016. The findings identified three major themes with the common thread of the need for stronger communication between the research community and financial aid practitioners on the front end to determine topics for research and the most desirable form for consumption. With these themes in mind, NASFAA released a report proposing three recommendations to help better facilitate conversations between practitioners and researchers.
- **Texas Guaranteed (TG):** NASFAA has collaborated with TG since early 2014 on a multi-phase research project to examine how students respond to current counseling systems and to provide recommendations to higher education practitioners and policymakers on how to better respond to the growing complexity of the federal student loan program. In September 2015 and January 2016, respectively, NASFAA and TG released reports No. 4 and No. 5 on best practices and a summary of the overall project findings.
- **Beyond 12:** NASFAA renewed its partnership with Beyond 12 and several other associations to offer assistance using an online ticketing system for students with questions related to the borrower defense to repayment.

- **Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Professional Standards for Higher Education:** NASFAA continued to serve on the CAS board and participated in providing feedback on other standards for various postsecondary program areas.
- **National Center for Education Statistics Technical Review Panels (TRPs):** Constituted of faculty and researchers in postsecondary education, representatives of national associations, and government representatives, the TRPs provide advice and recommendations on the technical and substantive aspects of a particular study. In 2015-16 NASFAA Research Staff participated in TRPs for the following studies:
  - National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, 2016 (August 2016)
  - 2012/17 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (August 2016)
  - 2016/17 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (October 2015)
  - 2012/17 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study Second Panel (June 2016)

## Other Research Projects

**Research on College and University Presidents:** At the request of the Board of Directors, NASFAA contracted McKinley Advisors to conduct research on college and university presidents to better understand their perceptions of the financial aid office, administrators, and the profession at large. The NASFAA Board received these results during their July 2015 meeting and they were presented to the membership during the 2016 NASFAA National Conference in Washington, DC.

**Customizable Results from the 2015 NASFAA Administrative Burden Data:** As a follow-up to our 2010 survey and report, NASFAA surveyed its members in 2015 to better understand how ongoing regulatory changes are affecting college financial aid offices. Using the responses to selected questions from the 2015 survey, NASFAA created a new tool allowing members to look deeper into the data and determine how their office may compare to other institutions.



# four opportunities for financial aid as part of the institutional research function

by the Association for Institutional Research (AIR)

“Data are everywhere across institutions of higher education, and access to analytical tools and reporting software means that a wide array of higher education employees can be actively involved in converting data into decision-support information.”

(Swing, R. E. & Ross, L. E., 2016, Statement of Aspirational Practice for Institutional Research)

Financial aid professionals play a critical role in the success of students and institutions, and are part of the large network that ensures that quality, timely, and appropriate data and information are used to support decisions. That is, financial aid is part of the institutional research (IR) function. Although most colleges and universities have offices of IR (or similar), the work of IR takes place throughout the institution. Recognizing that, financial aid administrators can take several steps to make even more effective use of data and information for decision making.

### Build relationships with IR and other data producers.

Participation in a network of data producers helps ensure that data and information provided to decision makers are timely, relevant, and holistic. When offices and units collaborate, a broad array of stakeholders is supported, a wide network of data and information is created, and the cadre of professionals with data literacy skills grows. IR professionals are a resource—they often serve as coaches for colleagues across the institution to build the skills and tools required for data management and analyses. Likewise, financial aid professionals' expertise is of great value to the larger institutional community. In times of increased demand, collaboration can strengthen the decision making foundation with support that individual units and functions cannot realize on their own.

### Embrace your roles as a data producer, data consumer, and decision maker.

Staff across the institution, including financial aid, have frontline responsibilities for fostering student development and success. Collaboration between financial aid, IR, and other producers and consumers of data provides students with access to the information they need to make decisions about their college experiences. In addition, these relationships provide administrators, staff, and faculty with access to data and information to support decisions about policies, structures, and programs.

### Support students as decision makers.

“Colleges and universities have responsibilities for assisting students in decisions about their educational pathways. Students deserve access to usable information that is focused on their decisions, is of high quality, and is not so highly aggregated or obfuscated by higher education jargon to fail to be useful,” according to R. L. Swing and L. E. Ross in their 2016 *Change* magazine article, *A New Vision for Institutional Research*. Financial aid produces information with students as the target audience and unit of analysis. This work can be extended to intentionally align the release of all information with the cycles of student decisions, from pre-matriculation through post-graduation. Furthermore, assessment of student satisfaction with the financial aid function provides valuable information that can be used to keep student success at the forefront.

### Stay focused on the goal: Informed decisions to improve student success.

Financial aid professionals have a holistic perspective of students' needs and the effect of those needs on success. Working with others across the institution to break down silos, financial aid professionals can help “tell the data story” and intentionally connect data and information to the student experience.

Myriad higher education professionals produce the data and information that provide a holistic view of students and their educational experiences. Our shared challenge is to harness individuals' collective talents to provide quality data to all stakeholders who, in turn, make informed decisions. This is only accomplished by a team approach, when professionals throughout the institution work collaboratively to improve student success.

**Submitted by the Association for Institutional Research (AIR). For more information on AIR, visit <https://www.airweb.org/>. To learn more about connecting research and practice, see [https://www.nasfaa.org/research\\_meets\\_practice](https://www.nasfaa.org/research_meets_practice). In fall 2016, NASFAA's Research Department will begin providing additional resources to help NASFAA members use data and research in the financial aid office.**

# journal of student financial aid

Now in its 45th year, the *Journal* presents peer-reviewed research that informs financial aid professionals and policymakers on financial aid issues and trends, and serves as the foundation for future study. From its small financial-aid community circulation in 1971, the *Journal's* three annual issues are now read around the globe, with 33,930 downloads reported from 154 countries in 2015-16 alone. This year the *Journal* delivered a total of 17 original research articles, issue articles, and book reviews to its readers in August 2015, November 2015, and April 2016.

## 2015-16 Publications

To recognize the 50th anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965, NASFAA published a Special Issue of the *Journal* in November 2015. Ten articles by 12 authors explored the act's history, the impact of student aid, and issues surrounding the upcoming reauthorization. Dr. Laura Perna, James S. Riepe professor and founding executive director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania, served as guest editor of the issue (Vol 45, No. 3, 2015), which presented the following articles:

- Reauthorization: An Opportunity for Substantive Change in How Students Pay for College by Jacob P. Gross
- The Role of Financial Aid in Promoting College Access and Success: Research Evidence and Proposals for Reform by Judith Scott-Clayton
- The Federal Pell Grant Program and Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act by Sandy Baum
- Borrowing and Repaying Student Loans by Nicholas W. Hillman
- Does Federal Financial Aid Policy Influence the Institutional Aid Policies of Four-Year Colleges and Universities? An Exploratory Analysis by Don Hossler and Jihye Kwon
- Envisioning a Modern Federal-State Partnership in the Reauthorization of the HEA as an Engine to Increase Social Mobility by F. King Alexander and Ashley Arceneaux
- Back to the Future: What Previous HEA Reauthorizations Might Say About the Next One by Dan Madzalan
- Reauthorization Ready: How NASFAA Influences the Higher Education Policymaking Process by Megan McClean Coval
- Preparing for HEA Reauthorization: Recommendations for Practitioners by Brittany Inge, Pamela Fowler, and Jacob P. Gross
- Book Review: Using Research Evidence in Education: From the Schoolhouse Door to Capitol Hill by Charlotte Etier

In addition, NASFAA published two regular issues in 2015-16:

### Vol. 45, No. 2, 2015

- Using a Merit-Based Scholarship Program to Increase Rates of College Enrollment in an Urban School District: The Case of the Pittsburgh Promise by Robert Bozick, Gabriella Gonzalez, and John Engberg
- Non-Borrowing Students' Perceptions of Student Loans and Strategies of Paying for College by Mo Xue and Xia Chao
- Book Review: American Higher Education in Crisis? What Everyone Needs to Know by Ben Miller
- Book Review: The Student Loan Mess: How Good Intentions Created a Trillion-dollar Problem by Justin Chase Brown

### Vol. 46, No 1, 2016

- Are Student Loan Default Rates Linked to Institutional Capacity? by Terry T. Ishitani and Sean A. McKittrick
- How Money Helps Keep Students in College: The Relationship between Family Finances, Merit-based Aid, and Retention in Higher Education by Alexandre M. Olbrecht, Christopher Romano, and Jeremy Teigen
- Book Review: The Real College Debt Crisis: How Student Borrowing Threatens Financial Well-Being and Erodes the American Dream by Ellie M. Bruecker

All *Journal* articles from 1971 to present can be found online at [publications.nasfaa.org/jsfa/](http://publications.nasfaa.org/jsfa/)

### Special Issue Planned for 2017

Partnerships between researchers and financial aid administrators is the focus of NASFAA's upcoming Special Issue, targeted for publication on November 1, 2017. Justin Chase Brown, director of scholarships and financial aid at University of Nebraska – Lincoln and Dr. Rajeev Darolia, assistant professor of public affairs and of education at the University of Missouri will serve as guest editors of the issue.

### Continued Readership Growth

Since NASFAA began tracking readership in June 2013, users have downloaded articles from the *Journal* microsite and repository 88,656 times, and readership continues to grow. In 2015-16, readers downloaded 4,602 more articles than in the prior year, and 12,408 more than in 2013-14. The greatest number of downloads in 2015-16 occurred in November 2015, when NASFAA published the Special Issue.

### Total Journal Downloads per Year

Year	Downloads
July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016	33,930
July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015	29,328
July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014	21,522

### Five Most Downloaded Journal Articles in 2015-16

Article Title	Downloads
A History of Financial Aid to Students	3,308
Debt and College Students' Life Transitions: The Effect of Education Debt on Career Choice in America	2,720
Borrowing and Repaying Student Loans	1,303
College on Credit: How Borrowers Perceive Their Education Debt	908
Increasing FAFSA Completion Rates: Research, Policies, and Practices	901

### Paperless Publishing

Recognizing that NASFAA members and researchers almost exclusively access the *Journal* electronically, in 2015-16, the *Journal* became a 100 percent paperless publication. In recent years, NASFAA had compiled each three-issue volume into a single print publication mailed in December. However, as articles can be easily printed directly from the website, it made both financial and ecological sense to move to a fully paperless publication.



# use research now!

by Scott Cline

Who, me? You want me to look at research?  
No, that's not for me. That's for academics,  
researchers, policy people—I'm a financial aid  
administrator, that's not for me!

Far too often, it feels as if a large divide exists between those who "do research" and those who "practice financial aid." But believe me, there is no need for the divide. By taking the following simple steps, you can change the dynamic and leverage all of the great resources out there on higher education from NASFAA and other sources.

## 1. Start with a real problem that you have now

As much fun as it is to read research to help you fall asleep at night, tackling research like a fiction bestseller does not usually lead to the best results. Instead, make sure your venture into research is very practical and targets a specific problem, issue, or concern in your office, institution, or association.

For example, suppose you and your colleagues are trying to figure out why so few transfer students are participating in your institution's work-study program. You all toss out ideas and several sound good, but in the end, nobody knows the reason. This is a prime example of a real and time-sensitive problem you can address with research. Other examples include when you need more information to make a decision or define a problem.

## 2. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good

It is tempting to look for one perfect research paper that answers the exact problem you have in mind, such as a study on transfer work-study students at rural, two-year, public institutions in the state of Florida. You probably won't find what you need. Instead, start with the basic concepts, such as "work-study" and "transfer students." When you start with the basics, you can always narrow the search. If you receive 4,000 results, you can add limitations to narrow the search. Conversely, if you end up with only one or two resources, you may need to broaden your search.

## 3. Know when to stop

Diving into research is like pulling on a sweater thread; you never know how long it will go. It is tough to know when you have understood the research conversation sufficiently to address your problem. Keep asking yourself: Do I have enough information to answer my questions? There is no right answer to the number of articles you should review, but there are some wrong ones. You should never read one paper, find "the answer," and move on, but the opposite is also true—reviewing more than 20 or 30 articles might be overkill. Five research articles is usually a good start. Building on that information by another five to 10 articles will usually give you a very good basis to answer a problem or provide enough information to make your decision.



#### 4. Treat researching like a conversation (but not a one-way conversation)

Reading and using research can feel like jumping mid-stream into a conversation where people are speaking a foreign language you do not speak. The key is to look for the clues to help you navigate the conversation:

- Check when the research was published to get a hint about the timeline of the conversation.
- Check the introduction for hints at the context set by the authors, as well as related work.
- Check the methods section to learn how the research was performed and what was studied.
- Don't get bogged down by unfamiliar statistical symbols; consider the paper as a whole and/or look for hints in the context of the study.
- Check the results, outcomes, and recommendations to gather valuable takeaways from the study.
- Use a critical eye throughout, considering factors like the sample size, bias, and whether the conclusions fit the results.

Like arriving in the middle of a movie, you may not have all of the information you need to fully understand everything right away. But, you can grasp most of what you need by jumping into the research, asking questions of it, and using the clues you pick up along the way to construct a fuller picture.

#### 5. Take the Plunge

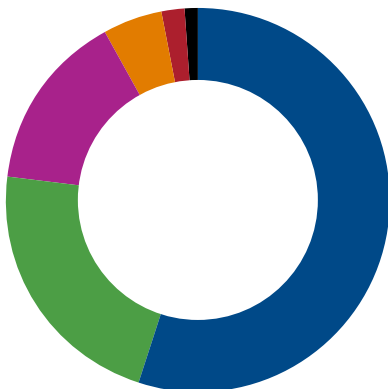
In a growing world of financial aid data and outcome-based decision making, financial aid administrators need to dive more and more into research to find answers to their questions. As you begin using research to address practical problems, you'll become more fluent in the "language" of research and start reaping more benefits from the *Journal of Financial Aid*, NASFAA's targeted studies, and research from other higher education groups. You will increasingly find studies you read are guiding more of your questions and informing more of your decisions. If you need help understanding research or knowing where to start, NASFAA's Research Department is always happy to help. You may contact them at [Research@nasfaa.org](mailto:Research@nasfaa.org).

**Scott Cline is the associate vice president of enrollment at California University of the Arts. For more information on connecting research to practice, see NASFAA's publication, "Research Meets Practice: Findings From a Collaboration Between NASFAA and the Association for the Study of Higher Education" at [https://www.nasfaa.org/research\\_meets\\_practice](https://www.nasfaa.org/research_meets_practice). This fall, NASFAA's Research Department will begin providing additional resources to help members use data and research in the financial aid office.**

# financials

As a tax-exempt nonprofit, NASFAA is 100 percent committed to keeping overhead low and channeling any excess revenue back into member products and services. NASFAA's Board of Directors and Financial Affairs Committee serve as check-and-balance to staff in terms of fiduciary oversight, and ensure that staff are at all times working to constrain administrative costs and maximize member dollars on programmatic development and maintenance.

In fiscal year (FY) 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016) NASFAA devoted 75 percent of total expenditures to membership programs, training, meetings, communications and advocacy. NASFAA spent an additional 8 percent on developing new projects and initiatives such as the just-launched Compliance Engine. Administrative costs amounted to 17 percent this past year, compared to 19 percent in FY15, and 17 percent in FY14 (considerably less than the 26 percent average reported by other nonprofits in the American Society of Association Executives' 2012 Operating Ratio Report).



## Revenue

### Sector

Membership Dues	\$4,705,464	55%
Conference & Meetings	\$1,829,690	22%
Training & Programs	\$1,270,409	15%
Grants & Research	\$427,714	5%
Advertising	\$194,593	2%
Other	\$66,893	1%
Publications	\$9,983	0%
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$8,504,746</b>	



### Expenses

Sector	Amount	Percentage
Training & Programs	\$2,540,798	30%
Administrative & General	\$1,421,283	17%
Conference & Meetings	\$1,453,545	17%
Communications & Web Expenses	\$914,523	11%
Membership Support	\$766,038	9%
Advocacy	\$699,480	8%
New Program Development	\$696,155	8%
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$8,491,821</b>	



# the dallas martin endowment



Created to cultivate the next generation of student aid advocates, the Dallas Martin Endowment (DME) for Public Policy and Student Aid provides internships in Washington, DC to upper-division undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in financial aid policy and research. To date, the fund has brought in five very talented summer interns.

During fiscal year 2015-16, the DME received several generous donations in honor of NASFAA's 50th Anniversary, including a \$50,000 gift from Edson Sample, who was NASFAA's elected president in 1974-75.

As a group, the NASFAA Past Presidents and National Chairs donated \$16,500 to establish a 50th Anniversary Scholarship. This one-time, need-based scholarship will be awarded to six deserving students (one per region) with preference given to someone already working in the financial aid profession. For information on how to apply for NASFAA's 50th Anniversary Scholarship, please contact your regional association this fall/winter.

Many other individuals, as well as the Pennsylvania Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and other state financial aid associations, also donated to the DME this year, some in honor of NASFAA's 50th Anniversary. The top three donation levels are included below. For a full list of DME donors since inception, visit [nasfaa.org/give](http://nasfaa.org/give).

**Diamond Level (\$1,000 or more)**

Coffey Consulting, LLC

Robert Evans

Inceptia

NASFAA Past Presidents and National Chairs

National College Access Network

Edson Sample

Janette Martinez / 2016

**Platinum Level (\$500 to \$999)**

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Justin Draeger

Valerie Patnaude

University of Louisville

Angel Flores / 2015

**Gold Level (\$100 to \$499)**

Amy Berrier

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Cheryl Storie

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Eileen Welsh

West Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Anonymous Donor

Blondeen Philamond / 2014



Charlotte Etier / 2013



Margot O'Meara / 2012





# committees and task forces

NASFAA depends on the talents and energy of financial aid professionals at member institutions to carry out many association activities. The association's task force and committee structure varies from year-to-year depending upon the needs of the association but every year these talented individuals work hand in hand with NASFAA's staff to accomplish our overall mission and objectives.

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# nasfaa's code of conduct

NASFAA's Code outlines the mandatory professional conduct and set of behaviors expected of members. Subject to enforcement procedures that went into effect July 1, 2015, institutional members of NASFAA will ensure that:

1. No action will be taken by financial aid staff that is for their personal benefit or could be perceived to be a conflict of interest.
    - a) Employees within the financial aid office will not award aid to themselves or their immediate family members. Staff will reserve this task to an institutionally designated person, to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.
    - b) If a preferred lender list is provided, it will be compiled without prejudice and for the sole benefit of the students attending the institution. The information included about lenders and loan terms will be transparent, complete, and accurate. The complete process through which preferred lenders are selected will be fully and publically disclosed. Borrowers will not be auto-assigned to any particular lender.
    - c) A borrower's choice of a lender will not be denied, impeded, or unnecessarily delayed by the institution, even if that lender is not included on the institution's preferred lender list.
    - d) No amount of cash, gift, or benefit in excess of a de minimis amount shall be accepted by a financial aid staff member from any financial aid applicant (or his/her family), or from any entity doing business with or seeking to do business with the institution (including service on advisory committees or boards beyond reimbursement for reasonable expenses directly associated with such service).
  2. Information provided by the financial aid office is accurate, unbiased, and does not reflect preference arising from actual or potential personal gain.
  3. Institutional award notifications and/or other institutionally provided materials shall include the following:
    - a) A breakdown of individual components of the institution's Cost of Attendance, designating all potential billable charges.
    - b) Clear identification of each award, indicating type of aid, i.e. gift aid (grant, scholarship), work, or loan.
    - c) Standard terminology and definitions, using NASFAA's glossary of award letter terms.
    - d) Renewal requirements for each award.
  4. All required consumer information is displayed in a prominent location on the institutional web site(s) and in any printed materials, easily identified and found, and labeled as "Consumer Information."
  5. Financial aid professionals will disclose to their institution any involvement, interest in, or potential conflict of interest with any entity with which the institution has a business relationship.
- See the Statement of Ethical Principles on the following page and [www.nasfaa.org/Ethics](http://www.nasfaa.org/Ethics) for more information on NASFAA's ethical guidelines and how they are enforced.
- To report a potential violation of NASFAA's Code of Conduct, refer to the Ethics Complaint Submission Form found on NASFAA's website.



ETHICS

RESPECT

HONESTY

INTEGRITY



# statement of ethical principles

The primary goal of the financial aid professional is to help students achieve their educational goals through financial support and resources. NASFAA's Statement of Ethical Principles is aspirational and serves as a set of guiding policies and behaviors. The following guidelines were last updated by NASFAA's Board of Directors in March 2014.

We, financial aid professionals, declare our commitment to the following Statement of Ethical Principles. Financial aid administrators shall:

## Advocate for students

- Remain aware of issues affecting students and continually advocate for their interests at the institutional, state and federal levels.
- Support federal, state and institutional efforts to encourage students, as early as the elementary grades, to aspire to and plan for education beyond high school.

## Manifest the highest level of integrity

- Commit to the highest level of ethical behavior and refrain from conflict of interest or the perception thereof.
- Deal with others honestly and fairly, abiding by our commitments and always acting in a manner that merits the trust and confidence others have placed in us.
- Protect the privacy of individual student financial records.
- Promote the free expression of ideas and opinions, and foster respect for diverse viewpoints within the profession.

## Support student access and success

- Commit to removing financial barriers for those who want to pursue postsecondary learning, and support each student admitted to our institution.
- Without charge, assist students in applying for financial aid funds.
- Provide services and apply principles that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, or economic status.
- Understand the need for financial education and commit to educate students and families on how to responsibly manage expenses and debt.

## Comply with federal and state laws

- Adhere to all applicable laws and regulations governing federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs.
- Actively participate in ongoing professional development and continuing education programs to ensure ample understanding of statutes, regulations, and best practices governing the financial aid programs.
- Encourage colleagues to participate in the financial aid professional associations available to them at the state, regional, or national level and offer assistance to other aid professionals as needed.



### Strive for transparency and clarity

- Provide our students and parents with the information they need to make good decisions about attending and paying for college.
- Educate students and families through quality information that is consumer-tested when possible. This includes (but is not limited to) transparency and full disclosure on award notices.
- Ensure equity by applying all need-analysis formulas consistently across the institution's full population of student financial aid applicants.
- Inform institutions, students, and parents of any changes in financial aid programs that could affect their student aid eligibility.

### Protect the privacy of financial aid applicants

- Ensure that student and parent private information provided to the financial aid office by financial aid applicants is protected in accordance with all state and federal statutes and regulations, including FERPA and the Higher Education Act, Section 483(a)(3)(E) (20 U.S.C. 1090).
- Protect the information on the FAFSA from inappropriate use by ensuring that this information is only used for the application, award, and administration of aid awarded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, state aid, or aid awarded by eligible institutions.

Refer to NASFAA's the Code of Conduct on page 90 and [www.nasfaa.org/Ethics](http://www.nasfaa.org/Ethics) for more information on NASFAA's ethical guidelines and how they are enforced.

# NASFAA STUDENT AID INDEX



NASFAA's Student Aid Index compiles important financial aid resources into one convenient tool so you have the information you need, when you need it.

[SAI.NASFAA.ORG](http://SAI.NASFAA.ORG)

- ✕ Save time: Direct access to regulations, legislation, and other key resources—no more conducting Google searches to find answers.
- ✕ Look good. Quickly locate the citations you need to support your decisions and recommendations—and demonstrate your expertise in front of parents, students, and your supervisor.
- ✕ Increase your productivity. Use this simple, intuitive tool to get more done by spending less time searching for the information you need.
- ✕ Included with membership. If you are a NASFAA member, you can enjoy the Student Aid Index gratis, and let us know how you like it.

AVAILABLE NOW FOR NASFAA MEMBERS ONLY



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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS



# IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE TEST

**With all my years of experience,  
I was worried I wouldn't pass.**

Then I thought to myself, I help students every day. I know what I'm doing.

Earning credentials is about **strengthening** what I already know so I can continue to **help** students as the financial aid regulations **change and evolve**.

Earning credentials tells my boss, my staff, my students, and the world, I **have what it takes** to be successful and I **know what I'm doing** in the financial aid office.

**NASFAA U Credentials.  
Earn yours today.**

## Choose from 16 Credentials!

### Part 1

Application Process  
Student Eligibility  
Cost of Attendance  
Federal Methodology  
Verification

### Part 2

Federal Pell Grants  
Campus-Based Programs  
TEACH  
Direct Loans  
Packaging

### Part 3

Return of Title IV Funds  
Professional Judgment  
Satisfactory Academic Progress  
Cash Management  
Consumer Information  
Administrative Capability

*For new financial aid professionals, NASFAA recommends moving through the credentials in the order shown; however, this sequence is not a requirement.*



**CREDENTIALLED  
TRAINING**



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# REMOVE THE RISK

risk



NASFAA's Standards of Excellence Review Program helps remove the risk of compliance issues for your Title IV programs.

#### Program Benefits:

- Improved customer service to your students
- Confidential, unbiased review
- Completed by credible peers in the higher education profession
- Ability to obtain quick and confidential guidance from ED, when needed
- No fines or published findings
- Resources provided to ensure continued compliance
- Tailored to the specific needs of your institution

For more information, please contact the SOE Program Administrator at [excellence@nasfaa.org](mailto:excellence@nasfaa.org) or (202) 785-6953.



# TAKE A **BYTE** OUT OF **TRAINING!**



NASFAA Learning Bytes are an exciting new training opportunity for financial aid professionals who have limited time and resources, but seek professional development and regulatory training. Quick, convenient, and affordable, **Learning Bytes** are one-hour, self-paced, online seminars with multimedia content, built-in assessments, and in-depth take-away materials.

Visit [nasfaa.org/learning\\_bytes](https://nasfaa.org/learning_bytes) to learn more!

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**Powering efficiency,  
collaboration,  
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- ⚙️ Reduces the risk of unnecessary findings during an audit or program review

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