Well, believe it or not, summer is rapidly drawing to a close. While semester institutions have already kicked off fall term, those of us at quarter schools are busily plugging away at all the prep work for fall start. As I write this, my family is preparing to head out for a camping trip to see a once-in-a-lifetime event: a total solar eclipse, smack dab in the path of totality. I’m sure that’s a metaphor for something profound . . . So what has WASFAA been up to this past month, and what is coming up soon?

Fall training is just around the corner—this is when WASFAA brings our own trainers to each state (sometimes a few locations in your state) to provide intensive one-day training at an amazing price. Stay tuned for details from our dynamic duo, Sarah Everitt and Thalassa Naylor, on the plans they and their excellent Training Committee have planned for you.

The Jerry R. Sims Management and Leadership Institute (MLI for short) Committee met recently in Eugene, Oregon (yes, home of the Ducks) and laid the foundation for an excellent professional development event. We hope to see you in our beloved Portland, Oregon on November 7-9! The Benson truly can’t be beat for location—in addition to being a lovely, gracious hotel and meeting venue, it’s located right in the heart of exciting downtown Portland. Cultural and culinary opportunities await just beyond the hotel doors. I’m also very excited for this year’s excellent and dynamic faculty lineup, with a range of experiences in virtually every sector of postsecondary education. Doug Severs from Oregon State University is leading our committee’s work. Calling all financial aid directors, associate and assistant directors—we look forward to engaging you in interactive discussion and sending you home with some great tools to bring your leadership and management skills to the next level. Scholarship opportunities are available.

A little further on the horizon is the WASFAA Annual Conference at the Grove Hotel in beautiful Boise, from April 22-24. I know it may seem far off now, but do start planning now to attend! There’s a lot more than potatoes in the gorgeous state of Idaho. If you’ve never been, I think you’ll be amazed at the incredible scenery, and I’m not exaggerating when I say that some of my favorite people are from Idaho—friendly, down-to-earth, thoughtful people who would do anything to help a friend. Do yourself a favor and pencil the conference into your calendar now. You won’t be disappointed!

We accomplish all this great work through the dedicated service of our many volunteers throughout the region, and to make it all possible, we have two more Executive Council meetings coming up in November and February. To learn more about the committees that do this work, you can check out our Executive Council page. If you have ideas and feedback for any of us, please don’t hesitate to drop us a line or give us a call—our contact information is listed on the web page for your convenience.

Thanks for being the amazing financial aid administrators you are and for giving your dedication and talents to the work we do to support students. I am grateful for the opportunity to be of service to you in return.

Warmly,
Helen Faith
EDITOR’S CORNER

DAVID DOWNING
Assistant Director of Communications - Washington State University
WASFAA Communications Committee Chair

Where has this year gone? September is here, and many of us have been busying welcoming back students for the fall and some of us are already planning for 2018-2019! I don’t know about you, but I can’t believe the 2018-2019 FAFSA will be available next month! I hope reading over this month’s newsletter gives you a short break away from the busy work ahead. WASFAA is busy preparing for upcoming trainings and events, so keep your eyes out for more information in the coming weeks, and on the WASFAA Facebook page!

We are continuing to make improvements to the monthly newsletter and would love to hear your feedback! This newsletter is for YOU and we want to make sure you get the most out of it. Please feel free to send us your thoughts and feedback to communications@wasfaa.org.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter please send your articles or submissions to communications@wasfaa.org by the 20th of each month.

WASFAA COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Sun Ow • Nicholas Dehaan • Ashley Coleman • Eli Herr • Wendy Olson • Adrienne Garcia-Specht • Dana Pride

WASFAA EDITORIAL POLICY

WASFAA welcomes all views and invites submissions of articles, essays, photographs or information of general interest to all members. Submissions should be brief and should not advertise specific products or services. Submissions may be edited. It may not be possible to publish all articles submitted.

Opinions expressed in the WASFAA Newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily of WASFAA, its members or the institutions represented by the authors. Email items for publication to communications@wasfaa.org.

JRSML INSTITUTE

Jerry R. Sims Management & Leadership Institute
Benson Hotel | Portland, Oregon | November 7-9, 2017
#JSMLI2017

Looking for an exciting educational opportunity? WASFAA is offering Ethnic Diversity and General Scholarships for the Jerry R. Sims Management & Leadership Institute. This premier training event is for financial aid directors, associate or assistant directors, and other professionals who aspire to leadership roles within the student aid profession. MLI offers attendees a unique opportunity to network with their peers in a collaborative and engaging cohort setting, led by experienced faculty who are themselves accomplished leaders within their institutions, and the financial aid community.

The institute will be held at the Benson Hotel in Portland, Oregon on November 7-9, 2017. The schedule and agenda will be posted soon to our webpage. The scholarship deadline is September 7th, so apply today! Here is a link to the Benson website.

NEWSLETTER ADS

Newsletter ads are a great way to advertise your products and services, and the newsletter will be published electronically on a monthly basis.

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WASFAA SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay up to date with all things WASFAA on your favorite social media platforms.

Facebook  Twitter  LinkedIn
I urge you to read WASFAA’s 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, which is available on our website. To get you started, here’s some of what you’ll see:

**Vision**
To cultivate an increasingly educated society by supporting and furthering the work of informed, ethical, and diverse student financial aid administrators and related professionals.

**Mission**
The Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA) is an organization dedicated to advancing access to and choice in postsecondary education for students in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington through:

- Training and professional development of its members
- Encouraging and facilitating the exchange of information and ideas among its members
- Promoting the participation of members who honor and reflect the diversity of the student populations they serve
- Advocating for laws and regulations that result in the effective, fair, and equitable administration of student financial aid programs.

**Goals**
1. Increase the size and engagement of WASFAA membership.
2. Improve the Association’s operational efficiencies and fiscal controls to achieve a balanced operating budget without the use of asset reserves or carry-forward monies.
3. Provide optimally effective training and professional development opportunities that are responsive to member needs.
4. Collect, and then communicate to appropriate decision-makers, the public policy positions of WASFAA’s regional financial aid administrators; provide members with the support and education they need to further their own advocacy efforts.

**Your Role**
WASFAA is your organization. Put a more dynamic way, but at the risk of sounding like a move title, you are WASFAA. Your interest in the plan’s goals, your enthusiasm for participating in WASFAA activities, and your desire to grow as financial aid professionals are all critical to the success of WASFAA’s 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

Please let me know if you have questions or comments about any part of it. If I feel like I can’t respond adequately, I’ll enlist Jack’s and Barb’s help. Thanks for all you do for your students, and for letting WASFAA be part of your success.
STATE NEWS

Anthony Morrone
NAFAA President
Director of Financial Aid
Nevada State College

Here we are again; another academic year is upon us! By now, those of us at semester schools have survived the fall disbursement and are beginning to come up for air. But whether your school operates on semesters, trimesters, quarters or clock hours, one date looms large for us all: October 1 and the beginning of the 2018/2019 FAFSA processing cycle! Here in Nevada, Governor Brian Sandoval named October as “College Application Month” in a July proclamation, “...the necessity of a postsecondary education or certification is more critical than ever... all Nevada residents deserve access to the information, resources, and assistance that will enable them to make the best decision regarding their postsecondary education, a decision which will allow them to succeed and achieve personal and career goals... GoToCollegeNevada.org has partnered with community leaders, high schools, and Nevada’s higher education institutions to raise awareness about the importance of applying to, attending, and completing college through a month-long campaign providing information to Nevada’s high school students.”

As a member of the “Go to College Nevada” advisory board, I’d like to share just a few of the details of this initiative. Sponsored by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), the main goal of the program is to offer students an opportunity to apply to college during the school day, and to provide training and support to site coordinators and those who will assist students with their applications. On the website NevadaCollegeApplicationMonth.org, students, parents and educators can find valuable resources to help them prepare. For example, students can take an online pledge to go to college, during which they are asked to acknowledge some key concepts including, “Financial aid provided by the federal government is not my only option – I need to make sure to apply for scholarships from colleges and private organizations” and “Colleges want to help students get financial aid.” Now that the FAFSA becomes available at the same time, some high schools will combine financial aid events with the college application day. For those that continue to hold separate sessions in the evenings, Go to College Nevada maintains a list of financial aid offices that are willing to assist. In addition to the outreach efforts, NSHE is collecting survey data from students to track college-going attitudes and perceptions over time.

Speaking of overtime, I think I’ve reached my word limit for this article, but one more important event next month is the annual NAFAA Conference in Las Vegas on October 19 and 20. For those itching for a Vegas vacation, this could be the perfect opportunity to combine business and pleasure. We’ve got great room rates, or as WASFAA president and conference keynote speaker Helen Faith called them, “hella cheap!” Check out nafaaweb.org for more info.

Becky Phillips
ALASFAA President Elect
University of Alaska-Fairbanks
Financial Aid Advisor

Greetings from the 49th state! The State of Alaska faces a significant budget deficit brought on by both the falling price of oil and declining production demand. In an effort to bridge the budget gap, the state legislature has made significant cuts to both its state based student aid, as well as to its University system.

The Alaska Performance Scholarship was established in 2011 to keep Alaska’s top performing students in state for college, as well as to help Alaskans afford post-secondary education. Students could earn the scholarship by completing specific curriculum requirements, as well as meeting GPA and test score markers for each of the three scholarship levels. Level 1 provides up to $4,755 per year for students with a minimum high school GPA of 3.5 or higher, and an ACT score of 25, or a new SAT score of 1210. Level 2 is a scholarship of up to $3,366 per year with a minimum high school GPA of 3.0 and an ACT score of 23 or the new SAT score of 1130. Finally, level 3 provides a scholarship of up to $2,378 per year for students with a minimum high school GPA of 2.5, and an ACT score of 21 or a new SAT score of 1060 or better. Current plans are to phase out levels 2 & 3 by 2021, making the scholarship available to only the highest achieving Alaskan students.

Additionally, the University of Alaska System’s budget for the upcoming academic year was cut by $8m. stretching already tight resources even more thinly. Despite our challenges, there are bright spots on the financial aid horizon in the “Land of the Midnight Sun”. The Alaska Commission on Post-Secondary Education has introduced a 4.95% student loan refinance rate, providing many students with the ability to refinance any higher interest student loans they may have. ALASFAA is also working on launching its first website. We are hoping to be able to use this tool to provide resources to all of Alaska’s financial aid administrators, especially rural. We are looking forward to sponsoring a training session with WAASFA this coming October.
Do you know of any regulations that should be repealed, replaced or modified

By Tami Sato
WASFAA Federal Relations Chair

We need you! Volunteering is a great way to network with fellow financial aid professionals, obtain professional development, and make a difference to our organization. Check out the committee descriptions to see which of our 15 committees is the right fit for you. Sign up today using the volunteer form or update your preferences when you are renewing your 2017-18 WASFAA membership.

Please, let me know if you have any questions.

Ashley Coleman
WASFAA Volunteer Development Chair
ashleyjo@uoregon.edu

I think all of us in the financial aid arena can say a hearty “YES” to this question. Well, you have a chance to voice your opinion. The Department of Education, in response to Executive Order 13777, “Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda”, is seeking input on regulations that may be appropriate to repeal, replace or modify. Your WASFAA Federal Relations Committee has drafted a response and will share it with members when it is finalized and approved by council. Meanwhile, if you can think of regulations that are outdated, unnecessary, ineffective, impose costs that exceed benefit or create a burden, write it down and submit it to www.regulations.gov. Just enter the ID Docket number: ED-2017-OS-0074 to get to the page. It does not have to be long, maybe a paragraph. There are 5,887 comments already submitted. Well, mostly on civil rights and keeping VAWA regulations, but there are some on eliminating State Authorization, SULA and Gainful Employment. The deadline was August 21st, but the Department has extended this by 30 days to September 20th. So think of your biggest financial aid pet peeve and send it in! Who knows, it could make a difference.

I hope you had a wonderful summer, and wish you good luck in your preparations as we near the start of yet another Fall term!

What a privilege it is to live in a country that allows us to speak out for what is right. This year our State Issues and Federal Issues VPs have lead the charge in facilitating visits and submitting comments and proposals to legislators on many key issues. California’s $2 billion state grant program is always on the chopping block in the state legislature, and once again CASFAA came out in strong favor of maintaining eligibility and refraining from cuts for any school segment. We are happy to say that these efforts were successful! This year’s CASFAA conference, Finding Your Voice, will continue to give legs to such actions, giving the tools and knowledge required to help attendees become stronger advocates and leaders, and to stand up for the needs of their students and institutions. We look forward to meeting in Monterey, California, October 29th through 31st, at the Portola and Marriott hotels. Check out our registration site if you are interested!

Thank you for what you do for students in your institutions through service and support. We are involved in shaping current and future leaders, bolstering their opportunities for success. Do not grow weary in doing what is good!

We need you! Volunteering is a great way to network with fellow financial aid professionals, obtain professional development, and make a difference to our organization. Check out the committee descriptions to see which of our 15 committees is the right fit for you. Sign up today using the volunteer form or update your preferences when you are renewing your 2017-18 WASFAA membership.

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How to Find Scholarships
By Ciel Senechal
College Avenue Representative

Scholarships are a great option when it comes to paying for school, and may cover some (or even all) of a student’s college expenses. Here’s a list of resources to help your students get started on their own scholarship search:

The U.S. Department of Labor. CareerOneStop.org, a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, has a comprehensive scholarship search tool that allows users to search more than 7,500 scholarships, grants, fellowships, and other financial aid award opportunities. Users can easily sort results by narrowing down where they live, where they’ll study, award types they’re looking for, the type of degree they’re seeking, and so on. Results can even be sorted by name, deadline, and award amount, making it a terrific tool for students and families to find a number of available scholarships.

The College Board. The College Board also provides its own online scholarship search tool, with information for scholarships and aid totaling nearly $6 billion. Users can browse by sponsor name, or they can fill out and submit a few short questionnaires. This will provide them with a list of scholarships that they are more likely to qualify for based on their personal, academic, and affiliation information.

Federal and state agencies. The federal government offers various scholarship opportunities for students. In addition to financial aid, they may qualify for special scholarship opportunities if they served in the military (or if they are the child or spouse of a veteran), worked with AmeriCorps, are currently or formerly a foster care youth, and so on. To learn more about federal scholarship opportunities, visit the U.S. Department of Education online.

There are also scholarship opportunities available through state agencies. The U.S. Department of Education provides a helpful listing page that allows users to sort by state for a list of local agencies, including contact information and website information, that may be offering scholarships.

Local scholarships. Aside from state agencies, other organizations in the student’s area might offer scholarships, such as a church or local business or community organizations—for example, if the student or a parent was a member of the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts. Students can check the websites for local businesses and organizations to see if there is any information about upcoming scholarships. They will also want to ask friends, family members, and neighbors about any potential scholarship opportunities in their town. The local public library is also a terrific source for finding local scholarship information. If the library does not have this information posted on their website, a librarian or other library employee can point the student in the right direction.

Other online resources. While the U.S. Department of Labor and The College Board provide some very helpful scholarship search tools, it’s important that students don’t limit themselves to just a couple websites, and instead take advantage of any other online resource available. Some other websites worth checking out include Zinch.com, FastWeb.com, Cappex.com, and Niche.com.

Networking. Sometimes, some of the best opportunities come to those who network with the right people at the right time. Students should talk with other students at their school to learn about other scholarship opportunities that they may not have come across, or other sources that they may not have thought about. They should also ask teachers, friends, and parents if they know of anything as well. Not all scholarships are easily found online, and sometimes word of mouth is the best way to find out about an available opportunity.

Employers. Many companies offer annual scholarships to eligible employees. For example, McDonald’s offers one $1,000 scholarship each year to one of their high-achieving employees. If the student has a job, encourage them to ask about scholarship opportunities from their employer. They might also be eligible to receive scholarships through a parent’s place of employment.

The school. The student’s school is also a great resource for finding scholarships. Encourage your students to periodically visit your school’s website or financial aid office, where they can often receive updates about available scholarships. If the student is still in high school, suggest that they speak with their high school counselor who may likely have a lot of helpful information as well.

Finding the right scholarship is only half the battle. Because scholarships can be highly competitive, it’s important that students not skip any crucial steps during the application process and to ensure that their application stands out in the best way possible. After they’ve narrowed down a list of scholarships that they’d like to apply for, we recommend the following:

Understand the different types of scholarships. Applying for a scholarship can take a lot of time and effort, so your students will want to focus on the ones that they’re eligible for and more likely to receive. For example, some scholarships are merit-based and may be awarded to students with high GPAs, and/or they may have a special trait, interest, or talent requirement. Some scholarships are offered only to specific groups of people—for example, they might be gender-specific. Other scholarships might not have a heavy focus on grades and they may not be geared towards a particular group of individuals, but instead, are based on financial need. Once the student identifies the types of scholarships they’re...
looking for and likely to qualify for, it can be easier to focus their efforts and begin applying.

**Know the requirements.** Before applying for a particular scholarship, students should be sure to carefully read the application instructions and supply everything asked for. Requirements for scholarship applications will vary from one scholarship to the next, and the application process for one program can be completely different from another. Some scholarship programs might just require an essay, for instance—whereas others might also require a letter of recommendation and grade transcripts as well.

**Pay close attention to deadlines.** Most scholarships will have hard deadlines, and it’s important to be aware of them well in advance. Students will want to give themselves plenty of time to apply; if they rush through the application process at the last minute, they could hurt their chances. What’s worse is finding out about a terrific scholarship once it’s too late, or forgetting to apply until after the deadline passed. Students can avoid any disappointment by searching for scholarships ahead of time, and keep tabs on their deadlines.

**Create a plan of action.** Once the student has a list of scholarships they want to apply for, it can be helpful to create a plan of action to keep organized and on track. They may want to do this with a calendar or a spreadsheet. Log important information, such as the scholarship name, award amount, application requirements and deadlines. By estimating how much time each application will take, students may want to also create a schedule and commit to applying for a set number of scholarships each week or month. Encourage your students to take note of the scholarships with approaching deadlines, in addition to the ones that require a lot of materials as part of the application process, and get started on those first. Remind them that certain parts of the application—such as obtaining letters of recommendations and transcripts from their school—may take more time. As such, it’s important to get started on these parts of the scholarship applications as quickly as possible.

**Be wary of scams.** While most of the offers you come across are legitimate, students may come across some alleged scholarships that are actually scams. Some are designed to steal money from students and families, and others are set up for the purpose of identity theft. Remind your students that they should never be asked to pay any fees when applying for aid or scholarships. If they are, it’s a huge red flag that something is off. If they’re asked to supply a lot of personal information to an organization they’re unfamiliar with, or something about the process just doesn’t seem right, it’s important to do research first. Search online for more information about the scholarship and its legitimacy. If they do come across something that seems suspicious, they can learn more about how to spot potential fraud and how to report a scam at the U.S. Department of Education’s website.

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**Don’t give up.** Tell your students to try not to get discouraged during the application process. Criteria for some scholarships may seem intimidating at first, but remind them that they don’t necessarily have to have perfect grades or terrific achievements in order to qualify. Perseverance and believing in themselves is key!
Fall into Stress Relief with These Quick and Easy Tips
By Matt Lehmann
Senior Marketing Associate

Great Lakes Loan Servicing

Fall is a time for nature to wind down—and for financial aid offices to ramp up. With so much to do, it can be hard to remember to step back and take care of yourself. Fortunately, there are 5 simple ideas for reducing fall stress that you can incorporate into your daily routine as easily as falling into a pile of autumn leaves.

1. Make time for you. Although you may feel too busy to take a break, you can always make time for a mini relaxation session. Try blocking off some time on your calendar—even if it’s just five minutes—to take a few deep breaths every hour. You’ll notice a difference immediately.

2. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. When we feel like situations are out of our control, it activates stress hormones that can cause damage over time. Be honest with yourself—do you have too much on your plate? Delegate! Sort out a few things you can ask your coworkers to help with.

3. Eat smart. It can be tough to eat right when you’re busy, but giving your body the fuel it needs instead of something quick from the vending machine can help you operate at optimal levels and avoid feeling stressed.

4. Take a walk. If you spend a lot of your day in the same spot, a change could do you good. Get up out of your seat, even if it’s just for a minute. Getting your body moving can offer immediate relief and get those endorphins flowing to help improve your mood in a stressful situation.

5. Talk yourself through it. Be your own cheerleader! It may sound cheesy, but talking calmly to yourself about the tasks at hand can have a huge impact on your state of mind. Don’t worry about seeming crazy—just walk through why you’re feeling stressed, what you need to accomplish to complete your work, and remind yourself that everything will be OK.

WASFAA Fall Training is Coming!
By Thalassa Naylor & Sarah Everett
WASFAA Training Co-Chairs

The beautiful Gonzaga University campus in Spokane, Washington (home of the 2017 NCAA basketball champions!) was the setting for a productive two day working session by your WASFAA Training Committee to prepare for the upcoming fall training series.

This year, by popular demand, we will be offering another opportunity for financial aid staff to earn a NASFAA U credential, this time in Student Eligibility. WASFAA is able to offer this training and a voucher to take the credential test at a significantly discounted rate over going directly through NASFAA. We have also created a fun, interactive and insightful day of Customer Service content based on the concepts in the Disney book, “Be Our Guest.”

We had a lot of fun preparing this content for you. We even bonded more closely as a team when kitchen fire at our hotel resulted in all of us wandering around the parking lot at 3:00am for 30 minutes with other sleepy hotel guests and six fire trucks! The next day, fueled by Starbucks coffee to help us power through our sleep deprivation, we continued our work and stayed on course to create this content for you. The committee is experienced, enthusiastic and passionate about financial aid and helping fellow financial aid administrators gain knowledge and step up your game so you can be a winner in providing great service to your students.

Training will be offered at approximately ten locations around the WASFAA region during the fall season (September through December). Look for the dates, locations, and money-saving details in to come out from your state financial aid associations and the next WASFAA Newsletter. We hope to have you join us!

Your 17-18 WASFAA Training Committee: Shawn Domingo, Chaminade University--Aurie Clifford, Pima Community College--Nicole McMil- lin, College of Western Idaho--Ashley Munro, University of Alaska-Fairbanks--Sarah Everett, Gonzaga University--Anthony Morrone, Nevada State College--Danette Wells, Bastyr University--Nick Valdivia, California State University-Long Beach--Ron Diaz, Stanford University--Thalassa Naylor, Sallie Mae

Don’t forget to renew your WASFAA Membership for 2017-2018