Welcome to 2018! I hope all of you enjoyed a little time off over the holidays to rest and recharge your batteries between terms. I don’t know how it passed so quickly, but I just enjoyed two whole months between work-related trips. While I truly enjoy traveling for work, it does have an impact on my family and my office, and I’ll admit that the logistics of travel can be a bit draining at times.

WASFAA elections concluded recently, and I’m pleased to announce our newly elected 2018-19 Executive Council members for our newsletter readers.

• President-Elect: Scott Cline, California College of the Arts
• Vice President: John Bender, Lewis-Clark State College
• Secretary: David Downing, Washington State University
• Ethnic Diversity Representative-at-Large: Shawn Domingo, Chaminade University
• Treasurer: Mindy Bergeron, John F. Kennedy University

I will officially pass the presidential gavel to incoming WASFAA President Ashley Munro from the University of Alaska Fairbanks on May 1st, and I know that she and her new Executive Council will do a wonderful job of leading our association for the upcoming year. I would like to thank everyone who ran for an elected position—it takes dedication, humility, and courage to step up in this way, and we deeply value your commitment and willingness to serve your fellow WASFAA colleagues.

Right now, I’m on a plane home from Washington, DC, where I was at NASFAA attending the annual Regional Presidents’ Meeting. One of the many wonderful and exciting aspects of serving as your WASFAA president is getting to know some truly stellar financial aid professionals and advocates: NASFAA staff, the presidents from each region, and the current NASFAA board. The regional presidents’ meeting was led by NASFAA, with the Chair, Past Chair, and Chair-Elect present. Our two-day meeting was jam-packed—we had an opportunity to chat with Charles Patterson, the new Senior Advisor for Outreach at Federal Student Aid, talked about web platforms for our associations’ sites, discussed social media policies, and received an update on NASFAA University on day 1. On the second day, we started off with a media roundtable with higher education reporters from Bloomberg Government, Inside Higher Ed, and Politico. This gave the reporters an opportunity to collect background information and the financial aid office perspective on several relevant financial aid topics, and it gave us an opportunity to share our viewpoint to help inform their reporting. After the media roundtable, we spent time going over several topics that the regional presidents had identified, including setting up regional calls and conference visit exchanges to help us learn from one another, contracts for conference sites, identifying candidates to run for office, the challenges of providing in-person credential training in associations with large and often underserved geographical areas, and the possibility of negotiating better pricing on services needed by each region by collaborating in bid processes. In our off time, we had still more discussions about how best to
serve our regions and ensure relevance and excellence for our members. I left the meeting feeling energized and enthusiastic about our profession and all the wonderful people who do the endlessly complex, challenging, and important work of financial aid administration.

If you’d like to get similarly energized and meet dedicated, talented aid professionals like yourself, please be sure to put the WASFAA Annual Conference on your calendar! The conference will be held from April 22-24, and NASFAA President Justin Draeger and National Chair Billie Jo Hamilton are excited to join us at one of the west’s best-kept secrets, the charming and fun city of Boise. Stay up-to-date with all of the details at the conference mini-site: https://www.wasfaa.org/docs/conferences/2018/index.html

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**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!**

If you are looking for training and networking or know of someone that would benefit from this opportunity, you can register for the conference today!

WASFAA has both a General Scholarship and an Ethnic Diversity Scholarship available for financial aid professionals attending this event. Apply now or make a recommendation to a colleague. The conference provides the attendee with an excellent training opportunity and a venue to assist in building a strong network of colleagues within the financial aid profession. The deadline to apply for the conference scholarship is February 22, 2018 so apply today!

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**FEBRUARY FREE TRAININGS**

WASFAA is pleased to share web-based training opportunities for financial aid administrators provided by our industry partners. Topics range from financial aid compliance to helping students managing debt and repayment. These training and informational sessions are available to you free of charge. Click here for more detailed information on the sessions offered and the registration links.
Welcome to the first WASFAA Newsletter of 2018! We took the month of January off to recharge and re-energize for 2018! The Communications Committee plans to continue bringing the newsletter to you every month through the rest of 2018. We are always looking to improve the newsletter so if you have thoughts or ideas, please send them our way. One goal we have this year is to look for ways to create this newsletter digitally. If you have a favorite digital newsletter platform or examples of digital newsletters you currently receive, please send us examples or any other thoughts or feedback you have to communications@wasfaa.org. This month is full of great things, be sure to mark your calendars for all of the upcoming WASFAA events! If you would like to contribute to the March newsletter, please send your articles or submissions to communications@wasfaa.org.

**WASFAA Training Committee Update**

WASFAA Training Committee is pleased to provide two pre-conference sessions to be held in beautiful...

**Boise, Idaho**  
**Sunday, April 22**  
**8:30 -11:30 am**

**From NASFAA U: Consumer Information**  
In this session, provided by trainers credentialed in this subject by NASFAA, you will learn all about the required disclosures of institutional information, financial assistance information, campus and fire safety, completion and transfer-out rates, and athletics. You will receive a copy of the self-study guide and a voucher, which will allow you to take the test to earn your NASFAA credential in this topic. (Cost is over $600 when done directly through NASFAA)

**Re-Imagining the Financial Aid Experience**  
In this session, you will learn about how to provide the next level in customer service. Join us for an interactive session on creating magic in the financial aid office, inspired by concepts from the Disney book *Be Our Guest, Perfecting the Art of Customer Service*. Participants will receive a copy of the book to take back to the office.

Cost for WASFAA Members: $45  
Please note that a separate registration is required.  
Conference information and link to pre-conference training: https://www.wasfaa.org/docs/conferences/2018/index.html

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**EDITOR’S CORNER**

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

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**COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

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

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**WASFAA SOCIAL MEDIA**

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

Facebook  
Twitter  
LinkedIn

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**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.

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**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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My first visit to Boise, Idaho was very memorable. Make sure you start looking out the airplane’s window when starting the descent as you will see beautiful mountains that lead into the valley which Boise calls home. Being from the desert, I always enjoy traveling around to other parts of the country, and I knew this trip would be no different. I always try to learn about the geography of the area and something historical when I visit. Mostly, so I sound smart when I tell my wife and kids about my trips.

The easily maneuverable airport’s signs will lead you to the shuttle/taxi/car service area outside. The hotel offers free shuttle service to and from the airport, it’s just a quick call away. A short drive from the airport, The Grove will welcome you as you ride a few short blocks to the west of the historical blue field of Boise State, right past a landmarked train depot, ending a few blocks from the beautiful capitol building.

We decided to meet together for a coffee in the afternoon so we could further discuss our planning for the conference and all the related activities that go into that. We had a great time conversing and tossing out ideas how to make the conference attendee-friendly and fun, while keeping professionalism at a forefront.

Before ending the day we decided to venture out into the city which was just around the corner. All around the venue, you will find plenty of markets, restaurants and sites to see during your free time at the conference. Sports fan? Visit the nearby Boise State Store located directly behind The Grove Hotel. Many varied eateries, all within walking distance, will tempt your palette. Coffee? Done. The adjacent Dutch Bros. in the square has you covered. There’s a multitude of things to do within easy walking distance of the hotel.

We want the conference to be an informative and fun activity for you to learn and share with colleagues within our region. We’re working hard to get you pertinent breakouts, relevant general sessions and camaraderie-building opportunities. The full agenda will be released very soon. All in all the conference and the city will offer great opportunities to learn, network, and explore.

I’d like to personally invite you to the April conference as we have so much to share with you within the conference and about the surrounding area.

WASFAA Nominations

Would you like to recognize an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the financial aid profession, your state associations, and to WASFAA? The WASFAA awards committee is accepting nominations through February 14th to prepare for the upcoming 2018 WASFAA Conference, when the awards are announced and distributed. Nominate a colleague today!

Nomination Form: https://www.wasfaa.org/docs/forms/awards_nom.html

Past Recipients: https://wasfaa.org/docs/about/awards.html

WASFAA Award Nominations Now Open!
Nominate by Feb 14th
When the DOE announced, in partnership with the IRS, that the FAFSA would begin masking the data transferred from the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to students and families, we all knew that additional calls, emails, and visits to schools financial aid offices would occur. But, the thought of this change leading to additional vulnerability to applicant data theft for schools is another concern that all institutions need to be aware of. Due to increased security from the IRS and the FAFSA, it is expected that individual institutions will be targeted for data more often. A typical call as innocent as “I just want to be sure the FAFSA transferred my income correctly” can actually be someone attempting to gain information they can use to access your student or student’s families secure tax information. What can schools do to provide an additional level of safety for their students? A recent NASFAA webinar led by Karen McCarthy, Director of Policy and Analysis at NASFAA attempted to provide some clarity.

The main thing stressed in this webinar was that allowing access to information by only requiring name and date of birth for ID verification was not enough. Schools need to add an additional level of security. Some recommendations to add to the basic authentication questions were: “Name a class you are currently enrolled in” or “What grade did you receive in a recently completed class” or “What high school or college did you previously attend?” Questions such as these, along with name/date of birth/student ID number, can add an additional layer of security for phone calls and/or emails. For in-person visits, these may not be as necessary, assuming your school requires some sort of photo id.

Obviously, it can be a bit trickier for parents. Assuming the parent has been granted access by the student to comply with FERPA, financial aid offices still need to be careful about providing detailed information over the phone. Something that was recommended was to ask the parent to provide you with their adjusted gross income or other tax field in question and then reply either “yes, that is the amount that was transferred over” OR “no, that was not the amount that was transferred.” This provides the parent with the information they are seeking without giving away their secure information.

These are some brief examples of ways to be more secure to keep up with the changes to the DRT. For more information on protecting student privacy at your institution, visit ptac.ed.gov for resources, trainings, and FAQs.
How can scholarship providers hand out need-based awards to college students if they can’t objectively confirm the need? In 2017, the Department of Education issued guidance that makes information sharing between institutions and scholarship providers impossible. Why this is a bad idea—and suggestions for dealing with “scholarship gridlock” in the interim—follow.

In January of 2017, we reviewed new guidance from the Privacy Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) on the subject of data sharing between financial aid offices and external scholarship organizations, we were quite concerned. As college costs increase, the number of students who count on scholarships increases, too. With more than two-thirds of all college students borrowing money for school today, we believe the use of external, vetted scholarships is one of the best ways to reduce student debt and keep students in class.

A Disservice to Students, Schools, and Well-Meaning Scholarship Providers

The 2017 PTAC guidance states that financial aid offices are no longer allowed to share FAFSA/ISIR information with external scholarship organizations. Such data can only be used for application, award, or administration of aid awarded under Federal Student Aid programs, state aid programs, or aid awarded by eligible institutions. This guidance also impacts sharing data with tribal organizations that are trying to manage and award their scholarship and grant funds. Institutions are prohibited from sharing student information even if the student has signed a FERPA waiver requesting that a school release data on their behalf.

Such interpretation is having an impact that goes far beyond the intention of the PTAC, because the ability for external scholarship and grant organizations to allocate and disburse funds to students has now come to a standstill. As it is, the Institute for Higher Education Policy estimates that approximately $100 million in private scholarships goes unclaimed each year. It’s likely that this PTAC guidance is already leaving even more money on the table, because many scholarship providers awards are based on financial needs—which can’t be objectively determined without seeing FAFSA data.

It is for this reason that we, along with many others in the student financial services community, endorsed the National Scholarship Providers Association Letter to the U.S. Department of Education. We are certain there is a way to designate scholarship providers as trusted entities that are eligible to receive FAFSA data—and manage it responsibly—per existing statute.

Creative Solutions for Ending Scholarship Gridlock

In the meantime, we encourage schools to consider these ideas for sharing student information in a way that may alleviate the current scholarship gridlock:

• Generate a form that a student can fill in with all information necessary for a scholarship organization to award and disburse funds. On the form, include a section where a financial aid officer can certify the accuracy of the student-reported information. Because the student is supplying the information, and the school official is merely certifying the accuracy of the information, the school is not releasing any confidential information to a third party.

• Create a financial aid summary for students that can be generated upon request and delivered to the student. It should contain all relevant information students might need as part of their college funding journey. This summary could be delivered as a secured, sealed document that can’t be adjusted by the student. Make it available upon request by the student—or automatically delivered to all aid applicants. Doing so would enable students to understand their financial aid package and explore alternative funding options.

A proven leader in higher education, Amy Glynn spent more than a decade in financial aid, ensuring products and services were in compliance with Federal Title IV regulations while meeting the highest service levels possible. Today she is the Vice President of Financial Aid & Community Initiatives at CampusLogic. She earned her Master of Science in Higher Education from Walden University.
HELP YOUR STUDENTS FIND SCHOLARSHIP MONEY

by Sun Ow
Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc.

When many students hear the word “scholarship,” they mistakenly think it’s something reserved only for a select few. Here’s how you can help your students discover the billions of dollars in scholarships available for individuals just like them.

Complete the FAFSA

Like many other types of aid, a lot of scholarships require a completed FAFSA as part of their application requirements. Encourage your students to visit fafsa.gov to get the process started.

Secure Letters of Recommendation

A good word from the right source can go a long way in helping students stand out from the crowd when applying for scholarships. Suggest they approach teachers, coaches, employers, and advisors for a letter of recommendation at least a month before the application deadline—and be sure to include clear instructions on what’s required.

Write a Unique Essay

A traditional part of the scholarship application, a written essay is a chance to shine a spotlight on an applicant’s unique situation. Encourage students to take something interesting from their background and make it stand out. For example, have they had to overcome adversity in their life? Were they motivated by an awesome occurrence? Be sure to recommend having their drafts edited by a teacher or parent before submitting.

Have All Documents Handy

Make students aware of the documents they may need to complete their applications, such as high school transcripts, and suggest they have both hard and electronic copies on hand. If not readily available, these documents may take some time to get, so it’s a good idea to get them in order early in the process.

Look Locally

Be sure to promote any local scholarship opportunities in your school’s financial aid office. Check with area civic organizations, churches, and other philanthropic groups to see what’s available.

Utilize Online Scholarship Searches

There are a variety of websites available featuring extensive lists of scholarships. Here are some examples your students can check out to aid in their search.

- Cappex (cappex.com)
- The College Board (bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search)
- College Greenlight (collegegreenlight.com)
- FastWeb (fastweb.com)
- Niche (colleges.niche.com)
- Red Kite (myredkite.com)
- Scholarship America (scholarshipamerica.org)
- Scholarship Monkey (scholarshipmonkey.com)

Apply to Many, Focus on Few

As your students dig into their searches, they may notice dozens of “no essay” or sweepstakes-type scholarships. Let them know that while casting a wide net is good, narrowing their focus to the opportunities they match with best increases their chances of scholarship success.

Join the Scholarship Movement

If you’re interested in other ways to make the scholarship process easier for you and your students, visit Scholarship-Movement.org to see how electronic scholarship disbursements can get vital scholarship funds applied to your students’ accounts efficiently and accurately.

Sun Ow is a Sr. Marketing Associate with Great Lakes, serving schools in Northern California, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, and Hawaii. You can reach Sun at (866)348-0710 or by email at sow@glhec.org. Additional information about Great Lakes can be found online at schools.mygreatlakes.org.
Greetings from the 49th state at 30 below. We are headed into some cold weather here in Alaska, but we in ALASFAA will have our excitement about upcoming events to keep us warm!

On March 1-2, ALASFAA will be sponsoring the “Alaska Can-Alaska Will” Conference, organized by the Alaska Postsecondary Access & Completion Network, a non-profit member organization that builds and strengthens partnerships to increase the percentage of all Alaskans who complete postsecondary education, particularly credentials relevant to a robust Alaskan economy. The Network has a goal of “65 by 2025”, which means it is striving to make sure that 65% of Alaskans have some sort of post-secondary education by the year 2025. This can mean anything from a certificate or apprenticeship program to a bachelor’s degree. Alaska is 49th in the nation for post-secondary completion rates which will lead to a shortfall of educated workers in by 2020 (“65 by 25 Urgency” http://65by2025.org/about/urgency/). This conference will bring together concerned parties from every facet of the workforce and education fields to communicate and plan regarding how to accomplish “65 by 2025”, making Alaska stronger.

In addition to supporting and participating in the conference, ALASFAA will meet and make plans for our upcoming election of officers. We look forward to getting together and making our own plans to help support Alaska’s higher education.
Happy New Year from sunny Arizona! AASFAA is excited to celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2018. We will be hosting our spring conference April 19th & 20th at the Doubletree Hotel in Phoenix, AZ. We have several exciting sessions on the way for this conference such as Year Round Pell, Professional Judgement and Cyber Security as well as many awards for very deserving professionals! We have several individuals who have been in the business for quite some time and have contributed to our AASFAA organization. At our conference we will be celebrating those individuals with a few lifetime membership awards. We are also looking to recognize our wonderful federal trainer, Bruce Honer, for all the hard work and dedication he has put into training and informing our region.

We have also had the opportunity to provide 2 drive in trainings to our members during the last few months. One was held in northern Arizona and the other in our southern region. Our final drive-in will be held in February at our central location in Phoenix on the topic of R2T4. We are happy to be able to provide these valuable trainings at out $25 for members, what a deal, right?!

We currently have nominations open for our 18-19 Board, and will hold our elections very soon. It has been such an honor to serve as AASFAA’s president this year, and I look forward to helping Rebekah Hoppel-Salcedo as she transitions from president elect to president. I hope to see you all very soon at the WASFAA conference!

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THE FUNCTION OF EDUCATION IS TO TEACH ONE TO THINK INTENSIVELY AND TO THINK CRITICALLY. INTELLIGENCE PLUS CHARACTER - THAT IS THE GOAL OF TRUE EDUCATION.  
- Martin Luther King, Jr