

## President's Update – January 2017

Mike Johnson

Greetings WASFAA members!

Welcome to 2017! For a variety of reasons, this could be a really interesting year (and “interesting” may understate what we’ll experience – we’ll see). It’s possible that the HEA will be reauthorized; at the very least we should see substantive conversations about it, and likely some significant movement in that direction. It will be fascinating to see if continued streamlining of the financial aid application process, and the stated desires of several policy makers to simplify the federal financial aid programs, will find expression in that process. From what I’ve read on the Web recently, we could also be in for some interesting (there’s that word again) discussions about state authorization, gainful employment, and direct lending.

December was a relatively quiet month for WASFAA activities, due in part to the holidays at both ends, and in part to how busy everyone was wrapping up fall terms and beginning to work on 2017-18 systems and processes. The **Training Committee** kept going, providing its ***Moving Through the Maze: Early FAFSA and Prior-Prior Year training*** at venues in southern California, northern California, and western Washington. They did their best to come to western Oregon, too, but winter came early and often to the Portland area so they decided to cancel that one – which was a good call: the day it was supposed to happen ice and snow led to early closures of area schools and businesses (some not early enough in a lot of peoples’ minds), and quickly caused nearly impossible driving conditions. Co-Chairs Sarah Everitt and Thalassa Naylor reported that 150 people attended the fall training events, and they wanted me to be sure to thank the site coordinators for their assistance – so, on behalf of the WASFAA Executive Council, thank you all!

The **Annual Conference Committee** and the **Sister Dale Brown Summer Institute Committee** also continued to meet and plan their events. Speaking of those events, I can’t write monthly highlights without plugging them: the **Annual Conference** will be held **April 9 – 11** at the **Westin Seattle** and the **Sister Dale Brown Summer Institute** will happen **June 25-29** at the **University of Nevada-Reno**. Save those dates, and keep visiting the WASFAA website for information.

One hugely important piece of WASFAA news was the opening on December 19 of **voting for 2017-18 WASFAA elected officers**. WASFAA members have the opportunity to vote for President-Elect, Vice President, Secretary, and Ethnic Representative-At-Large. Be sure to exercise your right to have a say in how WASFAA will work on your behalf in the coming year. **Voting closes at 5:00 PM on January 13**. Don’t wait until the deadline, though: you know what happened to some of your scholarship applicants who did that....

On another election-related note: two WASFAA legends are running for 2017-18 NASFAA leadership positions: **Jim White**, Dean of Student Financial Services at Gonzaga, is a candidate for National Chair-Elect; and **Tami Sato**, Senior Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid at Marshall B. Ketchum University, is a candidate for Representative-At-Large. Both Jim and Tami have been active at the state, regional, and national levels for many years. They’ve served WASFAA in a variety of roles,

including stints as President – Jim in 2004-2005 and Tami in 2006-2007. We wish them the best as they aspire to serve in important roles at the national level next year.

I hope that the new year will find you happy, healthy, and productive. Some of you may have sent your first 2017-18 award notifications before you read my February update. If you were able to do that, I'd love to hear how it went. Feel free to send me an email with whatever information you think might interest WASFAA members and I'll write about it next time. Even better, your experiences would make a great article for the next **WASFAA Newsletter!**

Until next time....