

March 2018 WASFAA President's Highlights

Hello from the San Diego airport! I'm waiting for my flight home after a busy WASFAA Executive Council and Transition Meeting. I'm excited for President Elect Ashley Munro's presidential year—Ashley has served WASFAA in a many roles with consistent excellence, her knowledge is deep, and her organizational skills are outstanding. She will guide her incoming Executive Council with wisdom, excellence, and an eye toward innovation and ongoing improvement. She's also a really lovely person, and it's always a privilege to work with her.

Are you ready to come to beautiful Boise for the WASFAA Annual Conference April 22-24? There are so many reasons to attend! Visit the [conference website](#) for all of the details.

- Did you know that our esteemed NASFAA National Chair Billie Joe Hamilton will be speaking, and so will our legendary NASFAA President and CEO Justin Draeger? These rock stars of financial aid will bring their dazzling intellect and their passion for affordable postsecondary education to teach and inspire all of us.
- Boise is one of the best-kept secrets in the western region as a travel destination—it has the perfect mix of natural beauty, fun activities, and great food and shopping. Google it and you'll see!
- For me, I know the greatest highlight of the conference will be seeing all of you. At least half the value of attending in-person training events is the networking—sharing challenges and solutions, finding mentors, and learning how different our jobs can be from school to school is endlessly fascinating and rewarding.
- Here's another fun tidbit—at the business meeting, you'll get to vote on whether to add an institutional pricing option for WASFAA membership, which is kind of a big deal.

Did that last bullet point pique your interest? It should! The Executive Council has been discussing the potential benefits of offering an institutional option for membership for several years, and many of you responded to the membership survey we sent out last fall to gauge your interest. Thank you for taking the time to respond and for being so thoughtful in your comments. We heard resoundingly from our members that retaining our current individual membership was important, but that the addition of institutional option would also be appreciated. Some of the benefits of an institutional option include convenience of renewal for offices with multiple members, cost-effectiveness of being able to provide the benefits of membership to all employees at one institution (member pricing at training events, volunteer opportunities, and being included in our communications), and improved continuity of membership. It would also provide the ability of non-financial aid employees to easily participate in WASFAA training opportunities such as Fall Training at a reduced rate, giving us the opportunity to reach a wider audience and improve understanding and awareness of financial aid across our campuses. It was

also clear from your responses that you care about retaining individual voting rights, rather than switching to a model in which only one person at each institution can vote, which was very important feedback.

So this past week, the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Executive Councils reviewed your feedback together and had a serious and rich discussion on this topic—how to make an institutional model available to increase the size and engagement of our membership (Goal #1 of our current Strategic Plan) and make it easier to manage memberships and provide affordable training to staff from all areas of campus who might benefit. We were all surprised by the conclusion we ultimately reached—that this would not constitute a change to by-laws, but rather to pricing structure. In essence, we'd like to offer a streamlined process to renew and pay for multiple memberships at a bundled value price that may encourage schools to maximize the value WASFAA training and professional development opportunities.

I can't wait to see you NEXT MONTH in Boise! If you can't make it to the annual conference this time, I hope you'll keep an eye out for all the other outstanding training and professional development opportunities WASFAA offers throughout the year, including serving in one of our many volunteer roles. As my presidential year draws to a close, I am so deeply grateful for the opportunity to have served you this past year, and I am endlessly impressed by the dedication and excellence of the many volunteers who selflessly and passionately give of their time and expertise to make WASFAA so vibrant and relevant.

Sincerely,
Helen Faith