

President's Highlights: May

I admit it: I am anxious about serving as the WASFAA President this year. I have volunteered for WASFAA for 10 years and have served on the Executive Council in many different roles off and on for those 10 years. Past presidents have been answering my questions over the last few months and have set great examples for me to follow. I feel mostly prepared, yet still nervous!

Volunteering for WASFAA was one of the best decisions I made. I was somewhat forced into it, when I became the state association president for Alaska. I made amazing friends that first year. Four of us really bonded, and we're still friends today. When your new friend chairs a committee, you can't say no to assisting- and that's how you get hooked!

The relationships I've built over years of volunteering and visiting states for training have kept me in the financial aid industry. Without the support system, and without finding my passion for training, I probably would have moved into a different field. My membership in WASFAA has helped me grow professionally and personally. Professionally, I can call up someone in each state and ask how they are implementing the new regulation. Personally, I can call up someone in each state and ask them to run a crazy race with me.

So, in the interest of being honest and sharing the benefits, fears and fun of serving within WASFAA, I'd like to introduce the theme for my President's Highlights this year: A Year in the Life of WASFAA Volunteers. Not only will I share what I've been up to over the past month (and not just the good stuff), I'll also share with you what one other WASFAA volunteer has been up to.

In April, I completed my first Presidential duty for WASFAA. I attended the Arizona state conference. It was AASFAA's 50th celebration (Congratulations!). I flew overnight to get to Gilbert, and when I got to the hotel, my room wasn't ready yet. I changed in the lobby so I could look some-what professional to give my presentation on SULA. I had a great time meeting new people. I haven't presented a training site in Arizona in several years, so I didn't know many people. AASFAA members made me feel welcome- Thank you for that! After the conference, I flew to Boise, Idaho for the annual conference. I spend several hours on Saturday with some WASFAA friends (Kim Wells, Dept of Education & Kelley Christianson, Central Washington University) running on the beautiful, hilly trails outside of Boise. Somewhere along the way, I picked up a major cold and spend the conference days trying to juggle talking with all of you while not spreading my germs. Honestly, much of the conference was attended with the assistance of medicine and it's a little fuzzy...

Also in April, many of you volunteered to moderate sessions at the annual conference- Thank you! A moderator's time commitment is fairly low. To prepare, you work with the presenters of your assigned session the week before the conference to collect biographies. At the event, you introduce the speaker, help track the number of attendees and report back to the conference committee. Many moderators are needed at each conference, and it's an easy way to volunteer. Consider signing up to moderate a session in Arizona next year.