



WASFAA PRESIDENT'S UPDATE — APRIL 2017



MIKE JOHNSON

*Director of Student Financial Aid
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I'm writing this a few hours after the sun moved north far enough to cross the imaginary line above the equator to usher in spring. It even feels a little spring-like in Portland, which is a welcome change from much of the last few weeks here. I hope that warm, sunny weather will come to all of you soon if it hasn't already. Now, on to more mundane business: my final monthly highlights.

I've continued to be busy with WASFAA-related activities. On February 25, I gave a financial aid update at the "Improving Financial Aid and Admissions Outcomes and Increasing Financial Aid and Economic Literacy" TRIO conference in Monterey. The conference was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, and conducted by the Washington DC-based Council for Opportunity in Education. We had an interesting, if speculative, conversation. I'm scheduled to present at a similar conference in Spokane in May.

On March 1 – 2, Past-President Barb Bickett and I attended the NASFAA Board meeting in DC. The June Board meeting will be my last as an observer; I'll become WASFAA's representative to the Board at the November meeting.

Speaking of NASFAA, the process for selecting the recipient of the NASFAA National Chairs' scholarship for one financial aid administrator/student from each region has almost been completed. A subcommittee of WASFAA Executive Council members is reviewing applications and will let the recipients and NASFAA know the results in early April. Good luck to all of you who applied!

The WASFAA Strategic Plan Committee continued its work in March. During a March 6 conference call, we reviewed and edited each goal and strategy/action. We are now reviewing the version

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of the plan that resulted, with the hope of presenting the final version to the EC at its April meeting.

WASFAA's team on the NASFAA Regional Thought Force also continued its work. The Thought Force discussed next steps with other regional members during a March 9 conference call led by Dr. Lisa Blazer, NASFAA National Chair. Our next step will involve reviewing and commenting on draft alignment plans.

On March 13 – 14, I attended the PacFAA Conference in Honolulu. March is a great time to go to Hawaii! Thank you to everyone for being so warm and welcoming. In addition to a federal update and sessions on policies and best practices, many participants attended NASFAA sessions that will potentially let them earn NASFAA credentials. During the business meeting that closed the conference, I learned a lot about PacFAA's impressive high school counselor training efforts, and the work they're doing on policies & procedures.

I have one more state conference to attend in my role as WASFAA President: the Arizona conference, which will be held April 27 – 28 at the Embassy Suites Phoenix-Scottsdale. As usual I'll be doing a session and providing a WASFAA update. I have a feeling that April will be a great time to visit in Arizona! I've been told that I should bring my golf clubs. We'll see.

In closing, and I'll have more to say about this during the WASFAA Conference in Seattle, I'd like to convey to you here how much I've appreciated and enjoyed the opportunity to serve you as WASFAA President this year. Thank you for letting me get to know so many of you, and for allowing me to have been part of what WASFAA is doing to support and further your work as financial aid administrators. It has been an honor and a privilege.

EDITOR'S CORNER

DAVID DOWNING

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WASFAA Communications
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Happy April! I hope that spring is in the air in your neck of the region. Here in Washington the snow is finally melting and I am looking forward to getting outdoors! I will be attending the WASFAA Conference this coming week in Seattle. If you are also attending the conference if you see me around feel free to say hello, and let me know how you like the newsletter- we are always looking to make improvements. While attending the conference, please use the hashtag #WASFAA2017 when posting pictures on social media so can share your photos! 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.

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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.

WHY AND HOW TO CHALLENGE DRAFT CDRS

*By Sun Ow, Senior Marketing Associate
Great Lakes Educational Loan Services,
Inc.*



Before you dive into the task of reviewing your draft cohort default rate (CDR) data from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for potential challenges, let's first briefly explore the whys of challenging draft CDRs.

Why Challenges Matter

To successfully challenge something, you're obligated to prove that it's inaccurate. You must identify significant facts and people related to a situation, verify information—and then take action to correct errors you find. Sports fans know that a successful challenge of a single play can significantly change the outcome of a game or season. What's at stake if you don't challenge incorrect draft CDR data?

- This is your chance to correct inaccurate data before it's included in your official CDR data. With your school subject to sanctions or eligible for benefits based on your official CDR, you want it to be accurate; it matters.
- When you reduce your CDR, you naturally enhance your school's reputation as an institution invested in student success—which leads to other good things for your entire campus.
- This is the perfect opportunity to see trends in loan default at your school so that you can identify students most at risk of delinquency and default. Once you know more about your students, it's easier to implement proactive changes to help them avoid delinquency and default.

Making Your Challenge Count

To make the most of your efforts, make sure you meet deadlines and substantiate your challenge(s). Deadlines are posted on ED's Information for Financial Aid Professionals (IFAP) website. Consult Chapter 4 of ED's CDR Guide for valuable information about the Incorrect Data Challenge (IDC) and other challenges and appeals.

Keep these important tips in mind as you submit your challenge.

- **Submit your IDC challenge via the eCDR Appeals System on the IFAP website.** From there, you can also access user guides and online demonstrations for each type of challenge, adjustment, or appeal.
- **Include supporting documentation** along with your IDC

appeal; consult tables on pages 10-13 of Chapter 3.1 of ED's CDR Guide to ensure you include everything you need.

- **Send your challenge to the correct data manager**, or you may miss your window to challenge.
 - For Direct Loans or FFEL loans held by ED, submit your IDC to the appropriate federal servicer data manager. If two entities are listed for a loan, make sure you send your challenge to the correct entity (usage code B, not E) to ensure you meet the deadline.
 - For Family Federal Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans held by guaranty agencies, submit your IDC to the appropriate guaranty agency data manager via the eCDR Appeals System.

LETTING OUR VOICES BE HEARD IN WASHINGTON D.C.



Linnea Todd
Seattle Colleges

As part of the NASFAA Leadership and Legislative Conference in Washington D.C., attendees have an opportunity on the final day of the conference to schedule visits with their legislators on Capitol Hill. This year, WASFAA's Federal Relations Committee was able to schedule an opportunity for conference attendees from the western states to meet jointly with legislative staffers to discuss specific talking points. Believing that there was greater power in representing our industry as a unified force, I opted to participate in these joint meetings, along with 12 other financial aid administrators and one NASFAA staff member. As a member of the Washington Financial Aid Association (WFAA) executive council for the past several years, I have had several opportunities to participate in advocacy efforts at the state level, but as I waited in the long security line outside the senate office building in D.C. I was no less intimidated and nervous as I mentally reviewed the agenda, educational statistics and student stories I had prepped the night before.



Our group's first meeting was with Bryce McKibben, the higher education policy advisor for Senator Patty Murray (D-WA). I was particularly interested in this meeting as Senator Murray is a ranking member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Educator, Labor and Pensions. Additionally, Mr. McKibben completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Washington and wrote his graduate thesis on the community colleges of Washington State—the sector in which I currently work—which made me hopeful that our message would be well-received and the impacts to our students would feel more tangible. Lissa Warne from New York Film Academy in California lead our group in starting the discussion. Using both the WASFAA and CASFAA-developed student aid issues as our guides, group participants took turns discussing topics such as year-round Pell Grant, FAFSA simplification, consumer disclosures and student loan program reform. In total, we had an engaged in discussion for nearly an hour with Mr. McKibben, which was a pleasant surprise to everyone in the group.

For our second advocacy meeting, we journeyed to the Rayburn House Office Building to meet with Jenny Prescott, a staffer for Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC), who currently serves at the chair of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Similar to the first meeting, Ms. Prescott was very engaged in the dialogue with our members and was more than willing to discuss her office's current areas of focus for higher education.

My own takeaways from WASFAA's time on the hill were overall positive and not nearly as harrowing as I had anticipated. It was encouraging to interact with staffers that were both knowledgeable in student financial aid topics and willing to learn more from experts in the field, and equally beneficial to be able to offer mutual assistance and look to predictions for the future together. Although generally positive, they acknowledged the uncertainties they now faced with both a new administration and a focus on reducing federal involvement and spending. Both staffers expressed a need for greater data and student testimonies related to the topics we discussed. As a result, I will be following up with them and encourage other WASFAA members to contact the offices of Senator Murray and Representative Foxx to provide persuasive data and testimonies from your campuses. It is relatively easy to contact them at the following link: <https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme> <http://foxx.house.gov/contact/>



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2017 SISTER DALE BROWN SUMMER INSTITUTE

Financial Aid Fundamentals- Registration Now Open!

You can earn NASFAA Professional Credentials at the WASFAA Sister Dale Brown Summer Institute. A professional credential benefits you by:

- Expanding your student financial aid knowledge
- Improving your job performance and service to students
- Providing tangible evidence of your knowledge for employers
- Differentiating between you and less qualified personnel
- Giving you and your organization a competitive edge

Each credential can cost you up to \$400 for materials and testing. Attendees at the Sister Dale Brown Summer Institute can earn up to 16 credentials for the registration price of \$750. Each track will be taught from NASFAA Credentialed faculty on a variety of subjects. After completion of the institute, attendees will have access to the set of materials and the test in their available topics.

Visit the [2017 Summer Institute Website](#) for more information and a sample list of sessions to help determine which track is right for you and register today!

NASFAA Topic	Beginner Track	Intermediate Track	Advanced Track
<i>Administrative Capability</i>			X
<i>Application Process</i>	X	X	X
<i>Campus-Based Programs</i>		X	X
<i>Cash Management</i>			X
<i>Consumer Information</i>			X
<i>Cost of Attendance</i>	X	X	X
<i>Direct Loans</i>	X	X	X
<i>Federal Methodology</i>	X	X	X
<i>Federal Pell Grant</i>	X	X	X
<i>Packaging</i>		X	X
<i>Professional Judgement</i>		X	X
<i>Return of Title IV Funds</i>		X	X
<i>Satisfactory Academic Progress</i>		X	X
<i>Student Eligibility</i>	X	X	X
<i>TEACH Grants</i>		X	X
<i>Verification</i>	X	X	X

X Indicates registered attendees will have access to materials and NASFAA credential test for these topics.

5 CONCEPTS TO ENHANCE YOUR FINANCIAL AID WEBSITE



Dianne Fulmer
Director, School Partnerships
Financial Aid TV (FATV)

Want to spiff up your financial aid website? There are some great ways to improve your content organization and make information clear and concise.

Consider these ideas to boost your webpages:

1. Keep it concise. Remember students' attention span may be limited so use easy-to-understand words and phrases. Avoid long paragraphs or sentences with dependent clauses. Focus on the essence and cut out unnecessary information.
 - Front-load keywords.
 - Use numbers instead of spelling them out.
2. Use subheadings and bullets to break up content. Website usability expert Gerry McGovern concluded that website visitors use "block reading" – that is review webpages in blocks and sections. Plus ClickTale's eye-tracking study indicated that users fixate longer on bulleted lists and text formatting. To help readers on financial aid websites be able to effectively skim the content, use sub headings to break up content.
 - Create an outline of content to determine subheading.
 - Use key-words.
 - Consider breaking up a paragraph into bulleted points.
3. Whitespace can help. Spacing between characters, words, lines and paragraphs is important. Manipulate margins and spacing can increase reading comprehension for students on your financial aid website.
 - Consider increasing paragraph spacing beyond single line spacing.
 - Pad tables to increase margins.
4. Strategically insert visuals. Tables, graphs, infographics, designed banners, and photos engage visitors. Visuals can reinforce content and enrich usability.
 - Present content in form of a table.
 - Find open-source graphics or stock images to break up content.
5. Include videos. Videos can strengthen your content

message and engage multiple senses. Plus studies show that people who see visuals and hear content are far more likely to retain the information days after exposure.

- Embed financial aid videos near related text.
- Consider using different video sizes based on the amount of text on the webpage.

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.

Dimensions	Cost for 3 months
Full page - 7 ½" x 10"	\$500
Half page - 7 ½" x 4 ¾" (horizontal only)	\$250
Quarter page - 3 ½" x 4 ¾"	\$100

STATE NEWS



DWIGHT R BERRETH
Northwest Nazarene University

IASFAA, Idaho State President

Greetings from Idaho to our WASFAA friends and colleagues!

As I write this in Boise, we are finally seeing signs that a longer and colder than normal Winter may be over. The snow has melted and the rain showers and rainbows tell us Spring is probably here. Some 70 degree temperatures in recent days give me hope Summer will come quickly too! In other parts of the state, they are still semi-buried in snow and cold weather, but it's likely they too will be out of it soon enough. We see all four seasons here, and had another great IASFAA Annual conference last Fall (October 2016) in Boise. It will be a great place for you all to plan to visit in a year when the 2018 WASFAA Annual Conference returns to Idaho! I suppose that's enough of the Chamber of Commerce commercial!

Regardless of the weather, in all corners of the state we are conducting our annual IASFAA Executive Council (EC)

elections using our online elections process. We have about 75 voting members and many of them have already voted. When you read this, we will have elected a new President-Elect, Vice-President and Secretary/Treasurer-Elect. We have a great slate of candidates representing all parts of our state! We will look forward to introducing you to our new members to join John Bender – President, Courtney Robinson – Secretary-Treasurer (both from LCSC in Lewiston), and me – Past-President (NNU in Nampa) as our new EC to begin service on May 1, 2017.






Speaking of John, he recently returned from a great trip to Washington, DC where he took part in the Association Management Pathway of the NASFAA Leadership & Legislative Conference on behalf of IASFAA and Idaho. Each year, IASFAA steps up to fund this trip for our President-Elect to give us the best chance to have a good year of progress in our state. John says he has returned energized and with some ideas to move Financial Aid forward in Idaho and to strengthen IASFAA as well. I am ready to let John make his mark. I look forward to watching and assisting him in that pursuit as Past-President this next year.

For me, I want to thank WASFAA and IASFAA (which, for me, means all the great people!) for the opportunity to serve and get involved again this past year. I think both are great professional organizations that serve different needs to our respective members, but both are ways to create positive relationships. I look forward to continuing the collaboration to make both better! We have had both successes and challenges this year. Regardless of the challenges we face each year, and sometimes daily, I feel blessed to have a chance to impact our students and surroundings in such a positive way. I wish you all well in that endeavor as well!

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SHAUNA GRANT

*Associate Director, Office of Student Financial Assistance
University of Alaska Anchorage*

ALASFAA, Alaska State President

Hello WASFAA! Spring is in the air and with it a flurry of activity. ALASFAA held a joint conference with the Alaska CAN group on March 23-24 featuring a financial aid track to complement the other tracks incorporating Best Practices, Skill Teaching, Access, and meeting the 65 by 2025 goals. We were pleased to host Suzanne Scheldt, a federal trainer from the Seattle office who provided a federal update, as

APRIL FREE TRAININGS

WASFAA is pleased to share web based training opportunities for financial aid administrators provided by our industry partners during the month of April. 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.

well as Professional Judgement and Cost of Attendance/ Budget Adjustment sessions. The conference incorporated various local administrators and university staff to round out the content including working with millennials, financial literacy, CTE program opportunities and a state update. Elections are underway for the ALASFAA executive council as well as to choose our new logo for the 1718 year. We were unable to have a quorum at the ALASFAA meeting for voting purposes so election results will be delayed until an electronic vote is completed. We have narrowed our logo to a tie so will choose that as well during this voting session. The disposition of the state budget including the FY18 budget for the UA university system remains in limbo. Last word was another budget reduction, with the Senate recommendation at 9.5 percent below the board of regents request. This would result in a \$70 million dollar reduction in our budget over the last 4 years. Needless to say our

outlook is one of economy. Work is underway on Strategic Pathways, a plan to reduce and or consolidate university programs, divisions and campuses. There are five options to the Strategic Pathways plans for [Phase Two](#) with Option Four garnering more support over others. With the Board of Regents decision to not pursue single accreditation among the multiple campuses this seems the most reasonable.

ALASFAA are preparing to pass the ceremonial baton to a new EC soon and I look forward to working with a new group of volunteers. The fact we have people willing to volunteer their time and expertise to an association in light of these challenging times is a testament to their commitment to financial aid and the people who administer it. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as president for the FY17 ALASFAA board.

