



NASFAA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROFESSIONAL DIVERSITY CAUCUS

NASFAA Professional Diversity Caucus

Introduction

The purpose of the Professional Diversity Caucus is to assist in identifying the diversity of the NASFAA membership and provide suggestions to the NASFAA Board of Directors on how the association can best include and meet the needs of NASFAA's diverse membership.

Executive Summary

As a part of its research, the Caucus requested feedback from NASFAA members. The intent was to use the feedback to summarize the major areas of concern. A diversity policy for NASFAA that addresses the imperatives of a diversity initiative is included in this report. It explains how diversity and inclusivity are important elements that should be implemented within NASFAA. These concepts are beneficial to both NASFAA as an organization as well as to the financial aid administrators and higher education professionals NASFAA represents. The policy is inclusive in that it exhibits the values of the NASFAA mission statement, which states:

NASFAA provides professional development for financial aid administrators; advocates for public policies that increase student access and success; serves as a forum on student financial aid issues; and is committed to diversity throughout all activities.

Each section of the policy substantiates initiatives of the national association which primary focus is student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators in all sectors of postsecondary education.

In summary, the Caucus developed a policy of diversity and inclusion, and recommended benchmarks that can be used to measure the success of the recommended policy.

Our report to the Board includes the following:

- Diversity Policy Statement
- Determination of goals, benchmarks, and assessments
- Recommendations for attaining those goals, benchmarks, and assessments.

NASFAA strives to ensure that diversity and inclusivity are exhibited within the organization. Understanding and including diverse perspectives in membership is a top priority in NASFAA's strategic long-range plan and should be integrated into each priority.

It is with hope the recommendations of the Professional Diversity Caucus will be accepted by the Board and NASFAA will maintain diversity inclusiveness as an integral part of the association. Looking toward the future,

we hope the association will continue the quest to develop tools that engage all members of the association. We are optimistic these tools will ultimately encourage positive changes to assist in implementing policies that promote cultural diversity within individual organizations.

The Professional Diversity Caucus – Charge and Membership

The Professional Diversity Caucus has been assembled to identify and provide recommendations to the NASFAA Board of Directors on how the association can best meet the needs of its diverse membership and show the association's commitment to professional diversity and inclusion in the financial aid profession. In an effort to inform and support the new strategic long-range plan of the association, the Professional Diversity Caucus provides recommendations on what the NASFAA policy on diversity should encompass. In addition, as part of the efforts to support the NASFAA mission and diversity, the caucus has developed several presentations on diversity to engage our membership that are to be presented at the 2015 NASFAA National Conference.

The Professional Diversity Caucus is comprised of the following members:

- Wayne Harewood, Director of Financial Aid and TAP Certifying Officer, Kingsborough Community College
- Joan Bailey, Assistant Director of Financial Aid, St. Petersburg College
- Isela Boehm, Associate Director of Financial Aid, The Johns Hopkins University
- Alexis Brown, Financial Aid Director, BIR Training Center
- Jessica Knox, Assistant Director for Student Financial Services , Wellesley College
- Linnea Todd, Assistant Director/Workforce Education Advisor, Bellevue College
- Robert Weinert, Jr., Financial Aid Specialist, Cuesta College
- David Page, Commission Director, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Dillard University
- NASFAA Staff Liaisons: Justin Draeger, Tiffany Gibbs, Jennifer Martin

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Research

The Caucus was tasked with developing a diversity and inclusion statement for the association. We began with researching the diversity and inclusion statements other associations have in place. We reviewed the association diversity statements from organizations such as the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE); the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC); the American Association of University Professors (AAUP); and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). A complete list of the associations and diversity statements the Caucus used in its research can be found in Appendix A. Based upon the data gathered, the Caucus developed a statement we felt fit both NASFAA's mission and vision and supported our strategic long-range plan.

Proposed Statement

In support of its mission, NASFAA will pursue and promote, in principle and practice, the diversity and inclusion of its membership to represent the profession and the students we serve. NASFAA promotes a culture of diversity and inclusion by encouraging involvement and access regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, geographic location, professional level or institution type.

Diversity is not only important to NASFAA now, but will continue to be as it grows. "The Urban Institute's Francine Ostrower noted in a national survey of nonprofit governance in the United States that 86 percent of board members are white (non-Latino); a mere 7 percent are African American or black; and 3.5 percent are Latino" (Bradshaw and Fredette, 2012, p. 1). Bradshaw and Fredette went on to say that funders prefer to support boards that are diverse, unfortunately it has become a slow process. This work is also supported Nielsen and Huang (2009) who document that the "boards are still majority white and male" (p. 6).

Rationale

NASFAA serves an eclectic group of people. Members come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, beliefs, sexual orientations, nationalities, ages, and abilities. It is imperative that NASFAA's board and committees reflect the diversity of its membership. NASFAA's diversity statement likewise should be to promote fairness and equity for members across all sectors of postsecondary education, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented and underserved members by diversifying at every level. "The increasing attention to diversity... is not a momentary fad or fashion but reflects the inevitable consequences of a global economy and demographic changes." (Jane and Dipboye, 2004, p. 521) In order for NASFAA to survive, it too must change.

Additional Recommendations

Expand the Demographic Information Related to Diversity

In order to better understand and serve the NASFAA membership, it is the recommendation of the Professional Diversity Caucus to expand the information collected through NASFAA member profiles. Suggested additions include disability status, sexual orientation, and other questions that can be indicators of diversity. The benefit of collecting additional information such as disability status will allow NASFAA to anticipate and prepare for any special accommodations as the association plans activities. This additional information will allow for the inclusion of all NASFAA members to participate in events and not leave the needs of any subpopulation unmet. Currently, the member profiles gather data for institutional members, associate members, and retiree members. The member profiles can be expanded to include more detailed information, particularly for those members that are not directly working in financial aid or a postsecondary institution, as it would be beneficial to have additional areas of identification.

The information currently collected for membership statuses is limited to region, (i.e., WASFAA, EASFAA, SWASFAA), position type, highest level of education achieved, start year in financial aid, number of years of experience in financial aid, start year at current institution/organization, start year in current position, gender, race/ethnicity, and birthday. As NASFAA's Governance Committee updates the association's mission, vision, and strategic long-range plan, and as member profiles are expanded, it is suggested that Board members lead by example and update their profiles to reflect the commitment to inclusion and diversity. It is the recommendation of the Professional Diversity Caucus that membership profiles be expanded as soon as possible and suggest in the future NASFAA staff continue to implement the expansion of member profiles as an action item.

Annual Conference

It is strongly recommended that each year NASFAA's National Conference have a general session that will focus on issues of diversity and inclusion. This action will show members NASFAA is serious about diversifying the organization. In addition, it is also recommended that the board challenge the National Conference Program Task Force to develop a diversity track of at least ten sessions annually. The addition of this track will again reinforce the organization's commitment to diversity and also provide unique training opportunities to NASFAA members.

Based on the feedback received from attendees of previous conferences, the Caucus recognizes that some members may require special accommodations in order to attend the national conference. A special accommodations liaison should be identified within NASFAA staff or through the local arrangements committee for each National Conference to handle all accommodations and serve as the main point of communication for these types of arrangements. It is believed that providing this additional option for support to our members will create a more inviting and inclusive atmosphere within the organization. The Caucus recommends that the above recommendations be implemented for the 2016 NASFAA National Conference in Washington, D.C.

Research and Benchmarking

The Caucus believes developing and launching a survey or other instrument to determine how NASFAA can better engage minority-serving institutions would be a great way to gather additional data on the issue of diversity and inclusion within NASFAA membership. According to a 2006 Congressional report, the racial diversity of the United States is growing rapidly (Shrestha). Although this trend exists on a broader, national level, NASFAA currently collects only limited information from the membership regarding diversity issues within financial aid. This leaves a large gap in training and professional development opportunities that are offered to the membership. By surveying the membership, NASFAA will be able to better identify the most prominent issues affecting institutions in relation to providing financial aid-related services to minority student populations. Once these types of issues are identified, the association can then work to develop materials that will assist our membership in both navigating areas of difficulty and creating best practices in serving minority populations.

As members of the financial aid community, we have the privilege of seeing diversity within our student population every day. Institutions strive to have a diverse student body. That being said, how diverse is the financial aid community itself?

In 2012, NASFAA distributed its salary survey to membership. Though evaluation of diversity was not the sole objective of the survey, some useful demographic data was gathered. NASFAA's membership, which in 2012 consisted of 2,723 institutions representing 18,000 individuals, received the survey. At least one employee from 1,655 institutions completed the survey. This represents 61 percent of NASFAA member institutions. According to the 2012 NASFAA Salary Model Report, 77 percent of the respondents were female and "almost 80% of respondents were white." Of the respondents, roughly another 8 percent identified as African American/Black, another nearly 6 percent identified as Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent Asian, and almost 2 percent Multiracial/Other. The least represented groups include American Indians or Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, which collectively made up 1 percent of the respondents.

Even though women outnumbered men in this survey, more men held a higher position within the financial aid office. The title of director was held by 27 percent of males versus 17 percent of females.

Though the 2012 NASFAA Salary Model Report does not reflect the whole of NASFAA membership, it does show a need for additional diversity. In the 2010 U.S. Census, 72 percent of the population identified as White, 13 percent identified as Black, and 16 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino. Nearly 5 percent of the population identified as Asian. The figures from the 2010 U.S. Census for American Indians or Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders are in line with the responses from those who participated in the 2012 NASFAA Salary Survey.

For gender, the breakdown in the U.S. in 2010 was nearly 51 percent female and 49 percent male. One may conclude there is a need for increased diversity in financial aid and higher education in the areas of race, ethnicity, and gender. Women far outnumber men in financial aid, which is not in line with the general population. The report suggests there is room for growth in diversity amongst all minorities represented within the financial aid profession.

The Caucus recommends the association create and use benchmarks to measure its diversity and inclusion efforts, and to use the information gathered to set future benchmarks. Depending on the information gathered, the organization will have the opportunity to consider if NASFAA is accomplishing its mission statement, if its mission needs to be changed, or what steps to take to ensure the mission of the organization is upheld.

Having reviewed various diversity and self-assessment tools for use with organizations, the Caucus is recommending that NASFAA use an assessment tool similar to that used by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) or by the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE). We are of the opinion that since ASAE is the association of associations, their tool would speak most to NASFAA's needs.

The NACE Diversity & Inclusion Self-Assessment tool is also being recommended as it can be used to adequately measure NASFAA's diversity and inclusion in all facets of the organization and to set and measure benchmarks. The NACE Diversity & Inclusion Self-Assessment is available without cost on the association website: <http://www.naceweb.org/knowledge/diversity.aspx>. The NACE self-assessment tool has three components; one is designed to help an association/organization "plan to plan benchmarks" then measure where the association/organization is currently and also identify where the association/organization is in reaching their benchmarks. For example, in planning benchmarks NASFAA would ask itself "Do we have a diversity, inclusion and nondiscrimination policy? Do we conduct at least one diversity and inclusion training session annually for staff/employees?" These are just two of the questions that would be answered in the "plan to plan benchmarks" section of the NACE Self-Assessment tool.

The ASAE association inclusion index is an online tool designed to measure and improve an association's diversity and inclusion philosophy. Access fee is \$199 for members and \$299 for non-members. NASFAA has already obtained access to the ASAE tool. This tool provides comprehensive reports in the following areas: mission and focus, leadership roles and accountability, resources, operations and communications and culture. The Caucus has developed a chart with the different elements of the index that identifies whether it would be membership, NASFAA staff, or the Board that would need to answer the different portions of the ASAE index, see Appendix B. Based on the proposed diversity statement, the Professional Diversity Caucus is of the opinion that the ASAE association inclusion index will also serve the purpose of allowing NASFAA to examine how much in sync is the association to the diversity statement, in other words are we practicing what we preach. The spreadsheet that has been put together will help the association to determine who would need to complete each section to allow the association to do a thorough assessment of its diversity and inclusiveness.

It is our recommendation that NASFAA use either of these tools as is, or as guidance to build a similar tool. The Caucus believes that diversity issues within the association have been addressed on such a limited and sporadic basis for so long that it is imperative we begin working to address this topic in a timely manner.

References

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- Nielsen, S., & Huang, H. (n.d.). Diversity, inclusion, and the nonprofit sector. *National Civic Review*, 4-8.
- Shrestha, L.B. (2006, June 7). *The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States*. Retrieved from <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/68820.pdf>.
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Appendix A

Association Diversity Statements

ASAE

In principle and in practice, ASAE values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of association management. ASAE promotes involvement and expanded access to leadership opportunity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, geographic location, or professional level.

ACT

ACT recognizes the importance of inclusion in people and ideas. With a mission and presence that are both national and international in focus, embracing the elements that make individuals different and unique is not only the right thing to do, it is an organizational imperative.

ACT's plans for inclusion go beyond equal employment opportunity and strive to create a working environment that is truly diverse and brings out the best in each of our employees—employees who are different in terms of race, age, education, gender, skills, traits, learning styles, lifestyles, beliefs, sexual orientation, and physical attributes.

American Association of Community Colleges

AACC promotes increased access and success for the diverse community college population by securing federal and private support to colleges and providing opportunities, resources, and information related to persistence, retention, program completion, and transfer.

AACC is committed to diversity in its policies, programs, and relationships, as well as in its efforts to build, maintain, and promote a culture of equity and inclusion.

American Association of University Professors

The AAUP has a longstanding commitment to increasing diversity in higher education. In 1976, the AAUP's governing Council declared that "the Association is committed to use its procedures and to take measures, including censure, against colleges and universities practicing illegal or unconstitutional discrimination, or discrimination on a basis not demonstrably related to the job function involved, including, but not limited to, age, sex, disability, race, religion, national origin, marital status, or sexual orientation."

Association for the Study of Higher Education

Through its peer-reviewed publications, annual conference sessions, presidential invited sessions, and other intellectual and professional fora, the Association for the Study of Higher Education promotes scholarly discourse and debate about important issues and ideas, questions, problems, and possibilities in the study of higher education. At its 2011 opening meeting, the ASHE Board of Directors reaffirmed its commitment to

diversity in point of view and perspective in scholarly deliberation. The editors and editorial boards of ASHE publications carry out their responsibilities in accord with these commitments. The ASHE Board reasserts its belief in and support of the intellectual, academic, and professional freedom and judgment of the appointed ASHE editors and editorial boards charged with carrying out all aspects of work associated with production of the scholarly products for which they bear responsibility.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education

CASE is committed to growing the diversity of the advancement profession and helping colleges, universities and independent schools strengthen relationships with an increasingly diverse alumni population. Successful advancement offices will employ individuals who can tap the resources of diverse alumni, who expect approaches and programming to mirror their cultures, values and experiences.

CASE has adopted the following diversity mission statement:

CASE aspires to help institutions connect with their diverse constituencies and create pathways for current and future employees of diverse backgrounds.

ETS: Education Testing Service

At ETS, we believe that a diverse workforce promotes the range of viewpoints and perspectives that best serve test takers and score users and supports our mission to advance quality and equity in education for learners worldwide, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Our executive leadership and Board of Trustees have demonstrated their commitment to diversity as a strategic asset through policies and practices that ensure ETS's services, products, programs and outreach embrace differences relating to race, ethnicity, age, culture, gender, faith, national and regional origin, disability, sexual orientation, family status, educational level and background, and employee status and function.

National College Access Network

NCAN will take action at the national level to increase equity for students in entering and completing postsecondary education. With ongoing support and input from our members and partners, we will strive for relevant, identifiable, change-oriented, and normative actions that embrace the values of equity and diversity and, more importantly, realize them in our day-to-day operations. The NCAN board and staff is pledged to aligning these core values with expectations of ourselves and to modeling these expectations for our members and partners as well.

National Education Association

The National Education Association is committed to equal educational opportunity, the highest quality education, and a safe learning environment for all students. The Association supports and encourages appropriate inclusion. Appropriate inclusion is characterized by practices and programs which provide for the following on a sustained basis.

A full continuum of placement options and services within each option. Placement and services must be determined for each student by a team that includes all stakeholders and must be specified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Appropriate professional development, as part of normal work activity, of all educators and support staff associated with such programs. Appropriate training must also be provided for administrators, parents, and other stakeholders.

Adequate time, as part of the normal school day, to engage in coordinated and collaborative planning on behalf of all students.

Class sizes that are responsive to student needs.

Staff and technical assistance that is specifically appropriate to student and teacher needs.

Inclusion practices and programs which lack these fundamental characteristics are inappropriate and must end.

Associations with Detailed/Long Diversity Statements or Resolutions

American Council on Education: <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/ACE-Board-Statement-on-Diversity.aspx>

Association of American Colleges and Universities: <http://www.aacu.org/about/statements/2013/inclusiveexcellence.cfm>

Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities: <http://www.nasulgc.org/page.aspx?pid=1566>

International Association of Universities: http://www.iau-aiu.net/sites/all/files/IAU%20Policy%20statement%20on%20Equitable%20access%20Final%20version%20August%202008%20Eng_0.pdf

Western Association of Schools and Colleges: <http://www.wascsenior.org/>

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Appendix B

Completing the ASAE Inclusion Index

The ASAE Inclusion Index is an online tool divided into domains and subdomains containing multiple choice and yes/no questions. The following chart indicates who should provide input for each domain and subdomain, along with additional comments.

Domain/Subdomain	Staff Input	Task Force Input	Comments
Profile			
Respondent Profile	✓		Information regarding the role and responsibilities of the individual completing the index online.
Organizational Profile	✓		Information regarding NASFAA; some fields pre-populated based on NASFAA ASAE membership profile.
Mission and Focus			
Mission and Focus	✓	✓	Analyses how diversity and inclusion is reflected in NASFAA core values, metrics, code of ethics, etc.
Global and International	N/A	N/A	NASFAA does not conduct business in other countries.
Roles and Leadership Accountability			
Board of Directors	✓	✓	Perception of the Board of Directors' role and accountability regarding diversity and inclusion.
Membership	✓	✓	Perception of the general membership's role and accountability regarding diversity and inclusion.
Volunteer Groups	✓	✓	Perception of volunteer groups' role and accountability regarding diversity and inclusion.
Senior Administration	✓	✓	Perception of senior administration's role and accountability regarding diversity and inclusion.
Accountability and Strategy	✓	✓	Impact of diversity and inclusion on NASFAA's decisions and strategic planning (reference new SLRP).
Resources			
Fundraising/Resource Acquisition	✓		Impact of diversity and inclusion on NASFAA fundraising efforts.
Diversity and Inclusion as a Cost or Investment	✓	✓	Integration of diversity and inclusion on fundraising efforts; perception of diversity and inclusion on use of resources.

Domain/Subdomain	Staff Input	Task Force Input	Comments
Operations			
Hiring	✓		Role of diversity and inclusion in hiring and employment practices.
Policies	✓		Role of diversity and inclusion in human resources policies and procedures.
Equal Employment Opportunity	✓		Presence of various equal employment opportunity policies and practices.
Retention	✓		Availability of professional development and mentoring to NASFAA staff.
Vendors	✓		Impact of diversity and inclusion on vendors used by NASFAA.
Organization Performance	✓	✓	Impact of diversity and inclusion on NASFAA performance.
Communications and Culture			
Cultural Competency	✓	✓	Knowledge of and opportunities to express cultural identities and world views.
Identity Safety	✓	✓	Safety regarding expression; appreciation of individual contributions, value of identity within NASFAA, staff responsibility for diversity and inclusion, and influence of power groups regarding diversity and inclusion.
Marketing/Communications	✓	✓	Role of diversity and inclusion in communication strategy and language usage, use of market demographics, translation of materials into other languages, and external communications regarding diversity and inclusion.
Meetings/Event Planning	✓	✓	Impact of diversity and inclusion on presenter and topic selection, ability of participants to indicate dietary and/or religious restrictions, assistance for participants with financial hardships, availability of materials in different languages, resources for individuals with disabilities, and positive inclusion of different groups in event planning.



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