

NASFAA NOW

YOUR ASSOCIATION - GROWING, CHANGING, EVOLVING

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2013-14

After more than 48 years, NASFAA continues to equip financial aid professionals with the tools, knowledge, and advocacy support needed to help remove financial barriers to higher education for students and families.

 **NASFAA**
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS



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Our Mission

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (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.

NASFAA is the largest postsecondary education association with institutional membership in Washington, D.C., and the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators in all sectors of post-secondary education. No other national association serves the needs of the financial aid community better or more effectively.



Statement of Ethical Principles

The primary goal of the financial aid professional is to help students achieve their educational goals through financial support and resources. NASFAA members are required to exemplify the highest level of ethical behavior and demonstrate the highest level of professionalism. The following guidelines were last updated by NASFAA's Board of Directors in March 2014.

We, financial aid professionals, declare our commitment to the following Statement of Ethical Principles. Financial aid administrators shall:

Advocate for students

- Remain aware of issues affecting students and continually advocate for their interests at the institutional, state and federal levels.
- Support federal, state and institutional efforts to encourage students, as early as the elementary grades, to aspire to and plan for education beyond high school.

Manifest the highest level of integrity

- Commit to the highest level of ethical behavior and refrain from conflict of interest or the perception thereof.
- Deal with others honestly and fairly, abiding by our commitments and always acting in a manner that merits the trust and confidence others have placed in us.
- Protect the privacy of individual student financial records.
- Promote the free expression of ideas and opinions, and foster respect for diverse viewpoints within the profession.

Support student access and success

- Commit to removing financial barriers for those who want to pursue postsecondary learning and support each student admitted to our institution.
- Without charge, assist students in applying for financial aid funds.
- Provide services and apply principles that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, or economic status.
- Understand the need for financial education and commit to educate students and families on how to responsibly manage expenses and debt.

Comply with federal and state laws

- Adhere to all applicable laws and regulations governing federal, state, and institutional financial aid programs.
- Actively participate in ongoing professional development and continuing education programs to ensure ample understanding of statutes, regulations, and best practices governing the financial aid programs.

- Encourage colleagues to participate in the financial aid professional associations available to them at the state, regional, or national level and offer assistance to other aid professionals as needed.

Strive for transparency and clarity

- Provide our students and parents with the information they need to make good decisions about attending and paying for college.
- Educate students and families through quality information that is consumer-tested when possible. This includes (but is not limited to) transparency and full disclosure on award notices.
- Ensure equity by applying all need-analysis formulas consistently across the institution's full population of student financial aid applicants.
- Inform institutions, students, and parents of any changes in financial aid programs that could affect their student aid eligibility.

Protect the privacy of financial aid applicants

- Ensure that student and parent private information provided to the financial aid office by financial aid applicants is protected in accordance with all state and federal statutes and regulations, including FERPA and the Higher Education Act, Section 483(a)(3)(E) (20 U.S.C. 1090).
- Protect the information on the FAFSA from inappropriate use by ensuring that this information is only used for the application, award, and administration of aid awarded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, state aid, or aid awarded by eligible institutions.

Refer to NASFAA's Code of Conduct, Enforcement Procedures, as well as the Ethical Principles, Code of Conduct and Enforcement Procedures Q&A for more information about NASFAA's ethical guidelines and how they will be enforced.

A Letter from The National Chair

Dear NASFAA Board & Members:

Like many of us, I chose the student aid profession out of a deep conviction; a desire not just for a career but for a purpose-driven life. So, while day-to-day challenges can at times feel overwhelming, I have enjoyed a meaningful, rich, and rewarding career. I've never regretted my decision.



To the extent that a college education serves as the "great sorting mechanism" in our society for determining who gets ahead, who stays the same, and who falls behind, then, in the words of poet Miller Williams, we "...cannot let luck alone turn doorknobs or not."

Some would say that we can no longer afford to provide access to college today for all who have earned that right. They would have us believe, as Naomi Klein once wrote, that "...there are strict and immovable limits to what actually is bountiful – the financial resources to build the kind of society we need." My fear is that they may not

necessarily believe these positions, but take them in order to maximize their own personal wealth and power, even if this comes at the expense of the great middle class and the destruction of our American way of life.

If we accept this argument, which on its surface at least seems to be born of a false belief in scarcity, then we are accepting that privilege of birth will be the determining factor of who is successful. Inherited vs. earned wealth, not talent and hard work, will decide our children's share of prosperity, well-being, and hope for the future.

However, after having traveled the country and being among you this past year, I have a renewed hope. I have faith that there exists in this country a vast sea of people of goodwill who are willing to devote their lives to creating a different social ethos—one in which individuals have a fair chance to be who they were created to be. They are you: financial aid administrators who do all you can to ensure a fair chance for every student that crosses the threshold of your office.

You represent the "canary in the coal mine" for what awaits us as a nation if we do not recommit ourselves to

access to higher and postsecondary education in this country. No one knows better than you do how our current national policies, or the lack thereof, translate into extraordinarily difficult circumstances that impact real Americans. Students aren't statistics. You know their names, their faces, their dreams and aspirations because you work with them every day. No one understands better than you do the return we reap from our public investment in the students we serve.

So have the courage to speak up, to stand up for the students who depend on us. I challenge you to recommit to the ideals reflected best in the words of Franklin Delano Roosevelt when he wrote, "Better the occasional faults of a Government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a Government frozen in the ice of its own indifference." Remember, this isn't just what we do... this is who we are. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your National Chair.

Sincerely,

Craig D. Munier
2013-14 NASFAA National Chair



A Letter from the President

Dear NASFAA Board & Members:

2013-14 marked another banner year for the association, with the introduction of another new member benefit, the Student Aid Index (sai.nasfaa.org).



The Index represents the NASFAA Board of Directors' further investment in tools that compound the value you receive from your NASFAA membership. Because our finances continue to be strong, we're able to use reserve funds to invest in new member benefits without having to increase dues to cover any development.

For example, in just the past few years we've developed new products and services like the Student Aid Index, AskRegs Knowledgebase, NASFAA University online courses, self-study guides, and credentialed testing from reserved project development funds. In the meantime, NASFAA dues revenue continues to cover ongoing operating expenses.

NASFAA also continues to grow its influence in the student aid policy and advocacy arenas. Whether we are testifying in congressional hearings, participating in negotiated rulemaking, or conducting briefings, our policy and advocacy staff continue to press issues that are most important to financial aid administrators. A dramatic increase in member involvement in our advocacy efforts—through our Advocacy Pipeline and our recent switch to more policy-based task forces—has further strengthened our effectiveness. Even though congressional action has stagnated, we are proud that so many bills have been introduced with NASFAA's guidance and influence.

In addition, this year the NASFAA Board of Directors adopted a newly updated strategic long-range plan. The new plan ensures the greatest benefit to NASFAA-member institutions by dedicating much of NASFAA's financial, volunteer, and staff resources toward expanding our products, tools, services, and advocacy.

We maintain our ongoing commitment to keeping you on top of regulatory compliance, standing up for your concerns on Capitol Hill, and helping you find the best approaches to serving your students and your institution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Justin Draeger".

Justin Draeger
NASFAA President & CEO

GOVERNANCE





Leading from Within

NASFAA's Board of Directors, led by the National Chair and in consultation with staff leadership, provides oversight and guidance for the future direction of the association, sets the mission, sets broad policies for the association, and establishes guidelines to direct much of NASFAA's volunteer work. This year, the Board focused its oversight efforts on two major areas: improving the experience and reach of NASFAA volunteerism and examining NASFAA's ethical standards with an eye toward improvement, education, and transparency.

Increasing Impact with Targeted Task Forces

NASFAA's more than 150 annual volunteers are the lifeblood of the association, without whom many key projects would not come to fruition. NASFAA's goal is to ensure that members' volunteer experiences represent time well spent and allow them to make meaningful contributions to the profession.

2013-14 National Chair Craig Munier said, "Increasingly, volunteers have greater time pressures—and more and more options for how they spend their time outside of work and family. They expect and deserve a meaningful return on their investment. ...That's why we took a look this year at ways NASFAA could improve the volunteer experience, increase the number of opportunities to help NASFAA achieve its mission, and bring more members who have never served before into the volunteer pipeline."

The NASFAA Board understands that, no matter how professionally committed, it is increasingly unlikely that financial aid professionals will volunteer to spend time in committee meetings or working on projects that don't efficiently and adequately tap their expertise. NASFAA's Board adopted a solution to move away from a system with 12 to 14 annual standing committees, to a more strategic task force model where volunteers are called when there is a specific need, and only for a specific, limited period. The work of each task force, the time frame, and the expected goals and outcomes are clearly outlined in a governing charter for each group.

According to *Road to Relevance: Five Strategies for Competitive Associations*, instead of standing committees, a primary model "for mobilizing the volunteer resource is the project specific, time-limited task force or work group." Besides better targeting volunteers' efforts, task forces have the added benefit of potentially

bringing more members into NASFAA's efforts, broadening diversity and inclusion.

Standing committees will continue as needed and must meet a two-part test. First, they must have a governance or oversight function, and second, that need must recur annually. Examples of ongoing standing committees include the Association Governance Committee, the Financial Affairs Committee and the Nominations and Elections Committee.

In the 2013-14 transition year, NASFAA maintained its existing committee structure and added five task forces, most of which have now completed their goals as specified in their charters. These task forces included the Program Integrity Negotiated Rulemaking Task Force, Public Service Loan Forgiveness Task Force, Campus-Based Allocation Formula Task Force, Consumer Information Task Force and the Ethics Task Force. In 2014-15, National Chair Eileen O'Leary will continue to explore this model with as many as 17 time- and topic-specific task forces working alongside a handful of standing or staff-led committees. An evaluation of this transition will take place at the end of the next fiscal year.

Task force volunteer opportunities are promoted widely to members via *Today's News* and on NASFAA.org. If you have an interest in becoming a NASFAA volunteer, please refer to www.NASFAA.org/volunteer.aspx for current opportunities.

Ensuring Ethical Compliance

"Because of our unique experience and training, financial aid professionals make judgments, apply skills, and reach informed decisions in situations that the general public cannot," said 2013-14 National Chair Craig Munier. "This expertise comes with responsibility—a set of ethics that should govern the decisions and actions of all financial aid professionals."

In keeping with this mandate, NASFAA's Board of Directors in 2013-14 oversaw the work of the Task Force on Ethical Standards, which was chaired by Mary Sommers (University of Nebraska – Kearney) and tasked with reexamining the association's Statement of Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct in light of new issues, challenges, and dynamics in higher education. Over the course of many months, the task force consulted extensively with members, legal counsel, and other professional associations to examine and update the documents. An updated Code and Statement were officially adopted and disseminated to members (www.NASFAA.org/ethics) in March 2014.

Following a detailed review at the June 2014 Board Meeting and a 30-day member comment period, the Board subsequently approved new Enforcement Procedures in September 2014. An education period will take place before actual Code of Conduct enforcement begins. During this time, Board leaders and members of the Task Force on Ethical Standards will undertake an educational outreach campaign designed to help members fully understand the Ethical Principles, the Code of Conduct, and the goals and framework for enforcing the Code of Conduct.

"Ultimately, the Board decided that setting a Code of Conduct without any additional education or repercussions would have a minimal impact on our ability to hold ourselves accountable," said Sommers. "The Enforcement Procedures were created with significant member input—and their primary goal is to educate and assist members in understanding and applying their ethical responsibilities."

"I'm extremely proud of the work of this 2013-14 board to take a look at ourselves as a governing body, ask the hard questions, and take action to improve the way we operate as an association—and improve the way we function as a profession," concluded Munier. "This Board was willing to examine challenging topics and address difficult questions to better serve the membership at large. It was my pleasure to serve as Board chair in 2013-14."

The 2013-14 NASFAA Board of Directors Officers

National Chair: Craig D. Munier, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Chair Elect: Eileen O'Leary, Stonehill College

Past Chair: Ron Day, Kennesaw State University

Treasurer: Dan Mann, University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign

Regional Representatives

EASFAA: Cathy Patella, Cayuga Community College

MASFAA: Lori Vedder, University of Michigan – Flint

RMASFAA: Jeff Jacobs, North Dakota State University at Fargo

SASFAA: Jeff Dennis, Greenville Technical College

SWASFAA: Lisa Hopper, National Park Community College

WASFAA: Jack Edwards, Stanford University Graduate School of Business

Representatives at Large

Neville Brown, Eastern Connecticut State University

Pamela Fowler, University of Michigan

Kay Lewis, University of Washington

Lisanne Masterson, Blue Ridge Community College

David Page, Dillard University

Mary Sommers, University of Nebraska at Kearney

Brent Tener, Vanderbilt University

Commission Directors

Dan Davenport, University of Idaho

Jim Brooks, University of Oregon

Paula Luff, DePaul University

Ex-officio

President: Justin Draeger, NASFAA

Board Secretary: Beth Maglione, NASFAA

Chief Financial Officer: Mitch Weintraub, NASFAA



Ten Tips that May Change Your Mind About Public Speaking

Public speaking. Those two words can generate fear, induce hives, and cause shortness of breath, sweaty palms, and a dry mouth in some people. Others seem to have no problem standing up in front of 500 people and delivering remarks that are entertaining, informative, and witty.

Some people are natural public speakers, but for the rest of us, the best antidote for nervousness is preparation. Once you know you have command of the topic and a solid presentation, you're much more likely to feel at ease when you step up to the lectern. So, here are ten tips to help you to prepare to give the kinds of presentations you'll enjoy delivering, and that others will want to hear.

1. Know your audience. Who are they? What are their expectations? Do they expect to be entertained, educated, and informed? What do they already know about your subject? You should present enough new information to keep them intrigued, but not so much that you overwhelm them. Learn all you can about your audience, including their knowledge and interests relating to the topic.

2. Prepare your remarks. You don't have to write down every little thing you will say, but you should know what you want to cover. Identify your key points and make sure that you structure your remarks so that the audience walks away with the information you wanted to share.

3. Give credit where credit is due. If you use quotes or information from other sources, always acknowledge them. This allows the audience to find the answers they need if they have questions later on.

4. Always tell your audience when you are giving your opinion. This is especially critical in financial aid, where many of us are looking for straight answers, and confusing fact with opinion could result in compliance issues or other problems.

5. Check your facts. You generally have just one chance to deliver your message to the audience, and can't go back and correct errors. You owe it to yourself and to your audience to feel confident that what you are presenting is true.

6. If you're comfortable, use humor. Using self-deprecating humor or telling funny personal stories that the audience can relate to can put both you and the audience at ease. Humor is always optional, however. If you're not comfortable, attempts at humor can raise your tension level or come across as forced. How do you know if you should use humor? Ask your friends and colleagues when you practice your remarks. Hopefully, they will tell you honestly how your humor comes across.





7. Know your time limits. There is nothing worse than exceeding your allotted time and watching your audience fidget, look at their watches and cell phones, or slip out the doors. Make sure you know how much time you have, plan your remarks to fit that time, and if you intend to take questions, work that into your time limits. It helps to decide in advance what material you could cut if you start to run over.

8. Practice your remarks. A timed practice will help ensure that you stay within your time limits, and will show you where simple adjustments can improve your presentation. Practice in front of a family member, a colleague, or a mirror, or try recording yourself with your computer or tablet. Check for bad habits like speaking too quickly or slowly, repeating “umm,” “you know,” or phrases like “at the end of the day.” Watch for repetitive nervous gestures. Do a run-through with any audiovisual materials you’ll use, and check to see if the venue has what you need. Plan for the unexpected, so that even if the projector fails, you can still deliver what your audience came for.

9. Don’t read your entire speech. There is nothing worse than speakers who never look up from their notes, or lose their place when they do look up. Occasionally you may need to read a statement verbatim—for a lengthy quote or where precise wording is crucial—but otherwise, try to avoid reading to the audience.

10. Finally, have fun with your speech. Take a breath and realize that generally your audience wants you to succeed. They are there because you have something important or worthwhile to share. If you enjoy the time you spend with them, they will enjoy themselves as well.

■ *By Cristi Millard, Director of Financial Aid for Salt Lake City Community College. Millard is a frequent presenter for professional conferences at the state, regional, and national levels.*

Once you’ve polished your public speaking skills, register for NASFAA’s Speakers’ Directory online in the Membership Center.

MEMBERSHIP

I love working in
financial aid
because

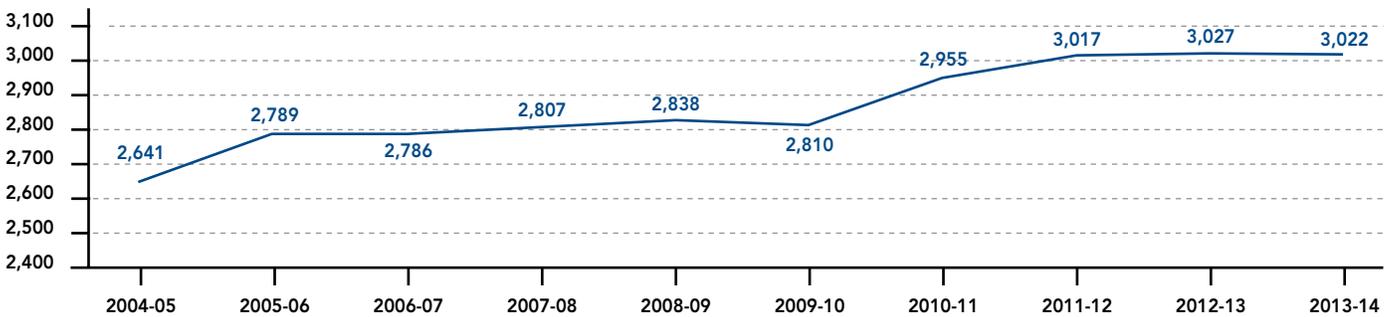
of great
colleagues!!



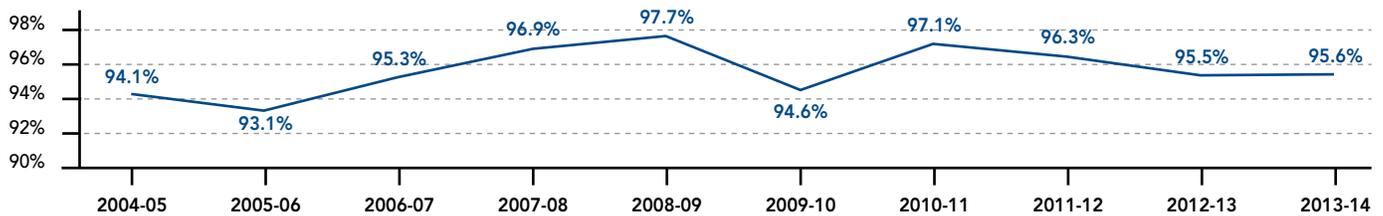
Staying Strong

After four years of continued growth, membership numbers have remained consistent and strong this year. At the end of 2013-14, NASFAA had 3,022 institutional members (when adjusted to include systems), only five members shy of the previous year's total. Retention rates also remain strong and were actually slightly higher this year, which tells us that members are satisfied with the value they receive from their NASFAA membership.

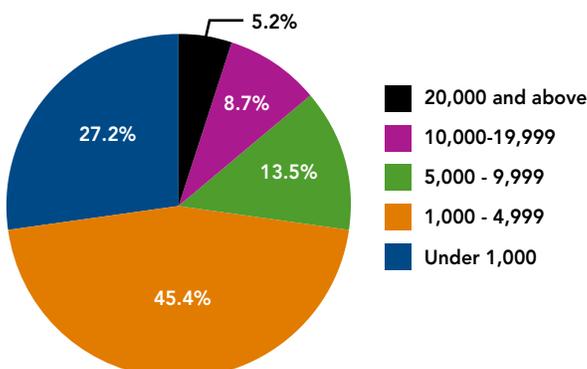
Total Institutional Members (Adjusted to Include System Memberships)



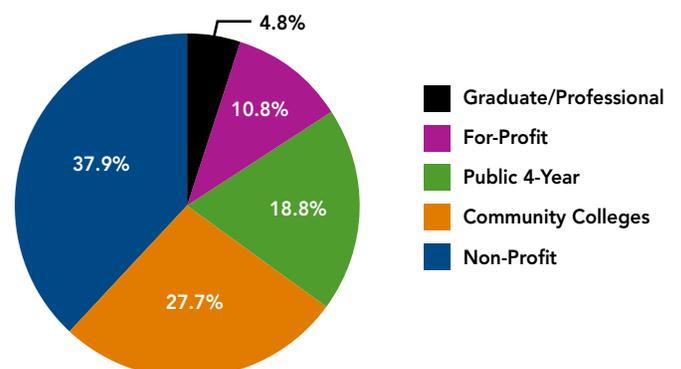
Institutional Retention Rate (Adjusted to Include System Memberships)



NASFAA Members (By Institution Size)



NASFAA Members (By Sector)



Movers & Shakers

Whether moving up the ladder at their current school, taking on new challenges at a different institution, or retiring to head in a new direction, here are some of the NASFAA members who took big steps into new roles in 2013-14.



CUNY Hunter College promoted **Ashley Abrams** to Assistant Director – Loan Coordinator. She had been Financial Aid Counselor for CUNY Lehman College.

Debbie Braswell is now Director of Financial Aid for Belhaven University. She previously worked for Hinds Community College.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County promoted **Keia Brown** to Associate Director of Scholarships.

The University of Idaho promoted **Meggie Cafferty** to Financial Aid Advisor.

James Carideo is now Director of Student Financial Aid for Penn State College of Medicine. He formerly served as Director of Financial Aid for Harrisburg Area Community College.

Le Moyne College promoted **William Cheetham** to Senior Director of Enrollment in March 2014; on July 1, 2014, he agreed to serve as Interim AVP of Enrollment.

The former Director of Financial Aid for William Jessup University, **Korey Compaan**, is now Dean of Enrollment for Crown College.

Prairie State College promoted **Carissa Davis** to Compliance Manager.

Brian De Young is now Director of Financial Aid for Shepherd University. He previously served as Associate Director of Financial Aid for Shenandoah University.

The former Director of Financial Aid for Cleveland State Community College, **Brenda DiSorbo**, is now Director of Financial Aid for Hood College.

Top to bottom: Iris Godes, Shana Gore, Russ Romandini.

Next page, top to bottom: Karen Hauser, Brian De Young.



Lloyd Dixon is now Director of Student Financial Aid for Mississippi Valley State University. He formerly served as Director of Student Financial Aid Services for Wilberforce University.

G. Susie Edwards is now Assistant District Director for Tarrant County College. She previously served as Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid for Butler County Community College.

The former Director of Financial Aid and VA for Spartanburg Community College, **Nancy Garmroth**, is now Director of Financial Planning for Converse College.

Iris Godes is now Assistant Vice President of Enrollment for Dean College. She formerly served as Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management for Quinsigamond Community College.

The University of West Florida promoted **Shana Gore** to Director of Financial Aid.

Melissa Haberman is now Loan Manager for University of Wisconsin – Madison. She previously served as Compliance and Training Coordinator for the University of Wisconsin Colleges.

Vanderbilt University promoted **Karen Hauser** to Associate Director.

Jeff Jacobs is now Director of Student Financial Services for North Dakota State University after previously serving as Director of Financial Aid for Bismark State College.

Mark Lafer founded Mark Lafer Consulting and launched “A College 4U” counseling service for middle-income families after retiring as Senior Policy Research Analyst for the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

Tarrant County College promoted **Elizabeth Landwermeyer** to Director of Student Financial Aid Services.

Karen Laverdiere, who previously served as Director of Financial Aid for Gwinnett Technical College, is now Director of Financial Aid for Jacksonville University.

David D. Mohning retired from his role as Executive Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Undergraduate Scholarships for Vanderbilt University this year. Mohning began working in student aid at Vanderbilt in 1991, and served as Assistant Professor for the Practice of Education for Vanderbilt's Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations. While in those two roles, he was also called upon to serve as Acting Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Director of Student Accounts and Student Loans. Prior to working for Vanderbilt, Mohning served as Director of Financial Aid for Miami University in Oxford Ohio for 20 years.

Mohning's colleagues know him for his unwavering commitment to students and the financial aid profession. He has served as a member of NASFAA's Board of Directors, chaired the Finance and Audit Committee, served as a Commission Director, and participated on several NASFAA committees, including the Presidential Search Committee. In July 2014, NASFAA awarded him one of its highest honors, the Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award, in recognition of more than four decades of outstanding service in the financial aid profession.

Mohning can rest assured that he is leaving financial aid administration at Vanderbilt in most capable hands, as Vanderbilt has chosen Brent Tener to succeed him as Executive Director. Tener has worked for Vanderbilt since 1992, most recently as Associate Director of Student Financial Aid and Director of Undergraduate Scholarships. He is currently a member of NASFAA's Board of Directors and NASFAA's Reauthorization Task Force, and has served on numerous NASFAA committees.



Tiffany Magee is now System Director of Financial Aid – Compliance and Training for Lone Star College. She previously served as Director of Financial Aid for Our Lady of the Lake College.

Nina Martinez, who previously served as Assistant Director of Loan Programs for California State University, Long Beach, is now a Financial Aid Consultant for Financial Aid Made Easy.

American Indian College Fund promoted **Patrick McTee** to Director of Student Success Services.

Harold Washington College promoted **James Mustard** to Assistant Director of Financial Aid.

Sandra Neel is now Executive Director of Financial Aid for the University of Louisville. She previously served as Senior Associate Director of Financial Aid for Bellarmine University.

Southern New Hampshire University promoted **Jeffrey Penta** to Associate Director of Financial Literacy.

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary promoted **Karen Rieck** to Associate Director of Financial Aid.

Columbus State University, in Georgia, promoted **Russ Romandini** to Director of Financial Aid and Enrollment Information.

Murray State College promoted **Marilyn Schwarz** to Executive Director of Enrollment Services.

Oakland University promoted **Shannon Sirpilla** to Financial Aid Systems Manager.

Brent Tener has been promoted to Executive Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Undergraduate Scholarships for Vanderbilt University.

Laura Thayer-Mencke is now Director of Financial Aid for Iowa Western Community College. She previously served as Coordinator of Financial Aid for Metropolitan Community College.

Robert Weinert, Jr., who previously served as a Financial Aid Officer for San Joaquin Valley College, is now Financial Aid Specialist for Cuesta College.

Gina Wesolowski is now Director of Student Financial Services for Midwestern University. She previously served as Corporate Director of Financial Aid for Anthem Education Group.

Formerly Financial Aid Counselor for Northeastern University, **Sabina Yesmin** is now Assistant Director of Financial Aid for Boston Architectural College.





Awards and Recognition

Claire Dwyer, Director of Financial Aid for St. Vincent's College, was honored with the 2013-14 P. Jerome Cunningham Award by the Connecticut Association of Professional Financial Aid Administrators for her distinguished service to the financial aid profession.

Recently Retired

Terri Gruba retired as Associate Director of Financial Aid for the University of Montana after 25 years in financial aid.

Director of Financial Aid **Emily Johnston**, retired from the University of Alabama after 29 years of service in financial aid.

After 36 years of service in student financial aid, **Susan Kane** retired as Director of Financial Aid and Scholarship Services for William Jewell College.

David Mohning retired as Executive Director of the Office of Student Financial Aid and Undergraduate Scholarships for Vanderbilt University after more than 40 years of service in financial aid.

Barry Paine retired as Financial Aid Support Analyst from Edison State College after 32 years of service in financial aid.

Karl Steidle retired as Director of Compliance - DOE after 41 years of service to Lincoln Educational Services, 37 of which were in financial aid.

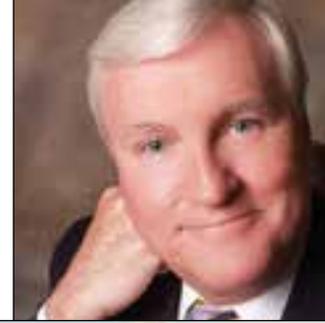
Cynthia Van Pelt retired as Director of Financial Aid for Eastern Michigan University after 38 years of service. She says, "I will miss all my financial aid colleagues! Keep up all the good work you do!"

Creighton University's **Robert (Bob) Walker** retired as Director of Financial Aid after 34 years of service in student aid. He says, "It's been a great ride!"

After 42 years of service in financial aid, **Paul Watson** retired as Financial Aid Director for University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Top to bottom, left: Elizabeth Landwermyer, Karen Rieck, Paul Watson, Keia Brown, Mark Lafer.

Top to bottom, right: Karl Steidle, Gina Wesolowski, James Carideo, Patrick McTee, Jeff Jacobs, Terri Gruba.





CONFERENCES



Reaching Higher and Cultivating Leadership

NASFAA's annual National and Leadership & Legislative conferences enhance members' professional development by presenting relevant, up-to-the-minute information on student aid in a collaborative environment that encourages networking and exchanging ideas.

Reaching Higher: The National Conference

Every summer, NASFAA presents the National Conference, a dynamic forum where financial aid administrators examine current issues in the field, share best practices, network, and ultimately reach new levels of excellence in the profession.

NASFAA held its annual National Conference in Las Vegas in July 2013 and Nashville June 29 - July 2, 2014. The 2014 conference focused on the quality, rather than the quantity, of the session offerings. This change received positive feedback from attendees, who chose from among more than 100 noteworthy sessions presented by Department of Education experts and financial aid office peers.

Data from Nashville show a small decrease in total registrants over the prior year due to lower participation levels by NASFAA Associates (the association's non-institutional business partner members). The total percentage of member institutions represented at the conference increased slightly from 2011 to 2014.

National Conference Registration

	2011 Boston	2012 Chicago	2013 Las Vegas	2014 Nashville
Total Number of Registrants	2,359	2,513	2,444	2,267
Percentage of Total Registrants that were from Institutions	74%	75%	76%	74%
Percentage of NASFAA's Total Associate Members (NASFAA Business Partners) Represented at the Conference	69.4%	58.9%	57.7%	47.7%
Percentage of NASFAA's Institutional Members Represented at the Conference	28.7%	30.2%	30.2%	31.4%

National Conference Registration

	2011 Boston	2012 Chicago	2013 Las Vegas	2014 Nashville
Number of Interest Sessions	135	129	161	102
Number of Tracks	13	15	13	6
Number of Presenters and Moderators	375+	360+	440+	200+

Celebrating Excellence: NASFAA Awards

Each year at the National Conference, NASFAA presents awards to deserving members of the financial aid profession and higher education community. NASFAA's Awards Committee selects award recipients, which are approved by the Board of Directors. In 2014, NASFAA conferred awards in the following categories:

The **Lifetime Membership Award** is the highest award that NASFAA can bestow on one of its members. The award recognizes outstanding or significant work toward achieving NASFAA's goals over a sustained period.

■ **Karen Fooks**, retired Director of Student Financial Affairs for the University of Florida, received the Lifetime Membership Award in recognition of 38 years of service to students and significant contributions to NASFAA's mission. Fooks served NASFAA as a member of the Board of Directors, on numerous committees and task forces, and as a NASFAA trainer, and contributed to NASFAA's efforts in the Negotiated Rulemaking process.

The **Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award** is awarded either for significant contributions in the furtherance of NASFAA's goals over a sustained period, or for a single contribution of momentous importance. NASFAA recognized four extraordinary individuals with this award in July 2014:

■ **Senator Lamar Alexander**, for his outstanding service as Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and sponsorship of legislation to support the student aid programs that make it possible for millions of Americans to obtain a postsecondary education. He is a tireless advocate for simplifying the student aid programs and reducing burden and barriers for needy and middle-income students.

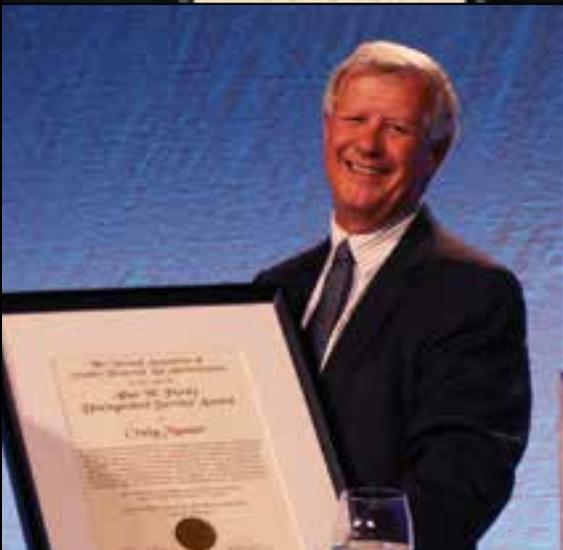
■ **Dr. Martha Kanter**, for her service as Under Secretary of Education at the U.S. Department of Education from 2009 through 2013, when she oversaw policies, programs, and activities related to federal student aid and postsecondary, adult, and career-technical education. Dr. Kanter helped oversee one of the largest federal student aid initiatives to date: the conversion to the Direct Loan program. She has been a long-time supporter of the financial aid community, spending many hours in meetings with financial aid administrators, and she is a tireless advocate for student aid recipients.

■ **Representative George Miller**, for his dedication and support of student aid as a member of the House of Representatives and as Chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor. Rep. Miller authored legislation to support the student aid programs and make it possible for millions of Americans to participate in postsecondary education. His vision and leadership have helped strengthen the long-term funding structure of the student aid programs, particularly the Federal Pell Grant program.

■ **Dr. David Mohning**, in recognition of more than four decades of outstanding service to students at Vanderbilt University and Miami University, as well as to NASFAA as a committed member of the Board of Directors and numerous committees.

■ **Craig Munier**, Director of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, for his service as 2013-14 NASFAA National Chair. During his term, he convened multiple task forces and served as a strong voice for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Top to bottom: Three of the five Allan W. Purdy Distinguished Service Award winners shown with 2013-14 Chair Craig Munier and President Justin Draeger: Dr. Martha Kanter; Dr. David Mohning; and Craig Munier. Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award winner Dr. Will Doyle.





Cultivating Leadership: The Leadership & Legislative Conference

Leaders of the state and regional financial aid associations from across the nation met in Washington, D.C. for NASFAA's fourth annual Leadership & Legislative Conference, March 9-11, 2014. This three-day event provides incoming state and regional financial aid association leaders with professional preparation for a successful year in office. The event also provides financial aid leaders the opportunity to network with colleagues, exchange ideas and best practices, and meet the NASFAA staff and leadership. NASFAA President Justin Draeger and 2013-14 National Chair Craig Munier addressed participants, along with the following guest speakers:

- Amy Jones, Deputy Director for Education and Human Services Policy for the Majority, House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- Allison Kimmel, Legislative Assistant, Representative Jared Polis (D-CO)
- Bill McInturff, Partner and Co-founder, Public Opinion Strategies
- Robert Moran, Deputy Policy Director for the Minority, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
- Mary Wall, Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, U.S. Department of Education
- Rich Williams, Education Policy Advisor for the Minority, House Committee on Education and the Workforce

In conjunction with the event, Leadership & Legislative Conference attendees visited US Senate and House of Representatives offices to share their views on the Federal Pell Grant program, student debt, loan repayment, and consumer information and transparency, among many other issues, with members of Congress and their staff.

Leadership & Legislative Conference Attendance

	Number of Registrants	Number of States Represented
March 2011	60	30
March 2012	75	39
March 2013	82	38
March 2014	88	42





The **Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award** recognizes contributions to the literature on student financial aid. NASFAA selects nominees based on published work that exemplifies the highest quality of research methodology, analysis, or topical writing on the subject of student financial aid or its administration.

■ **Dr. Will Doyle**, Associate Professor of Public Policy & Higher Education at Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, received the Robert P. Huff Golden Quill Award. NASFAA honored Doyle for his work investigating the antecedents and outcomes of higher education policy at the state and federal level, and use of theoretical and methodological insights from political science to better understand both higher education politics and policy.

The individuals selected for the **Regional Leadership Award** must exhibit high integrity and character. They must have shown creative leadership and inspired and encouraged others to actively participate in professional development. NASFAA honored the following individuals with this year's Regional Leadership Awards:

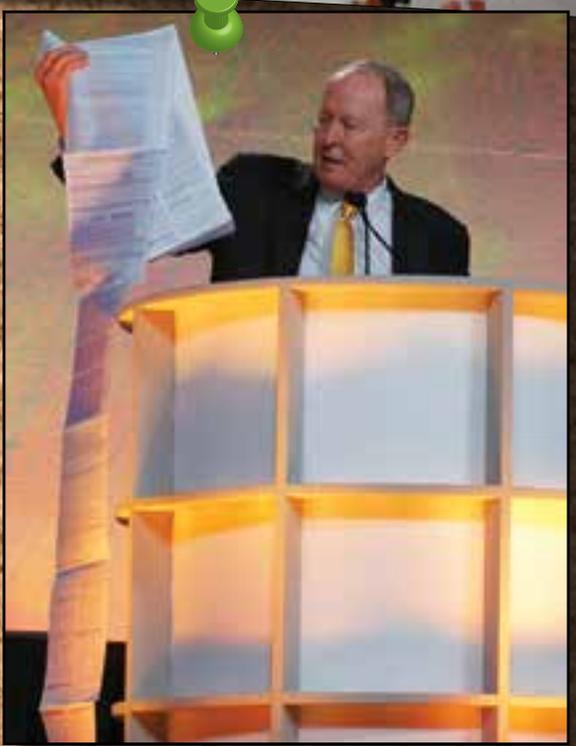
- EASFAA – Rich Heath, Director of Student Financial Services at Anne Arundel Community College in Maryland.
- MASFAA – Diane Lambart-Fleming, former Associate Director for Central Michigan University.
- RNASFAA – Brenda Hicks, Director of Financial Aid at Southwestern College in Kansas.
- SASFAA – Sandra Neel, Executive Director of Financial Aid at the University of Louisville.
- SWASFAA – Lisa Blazer, Associate Vice President for Financial Aid and Enrollment Services at University of Texas at San Antonio.
- WASFAA – Kay Soltis, Director of Financial Aid at Pacific Lutheran University.

The **Gold Star Award** recognizes innovative ideas in the financial aid arena at any level, targeted toward any constituency. This award is open to individuals working at NASFAA member institutions; regional associations; and state associations. The Gold Star award honors up to three ideas each year.

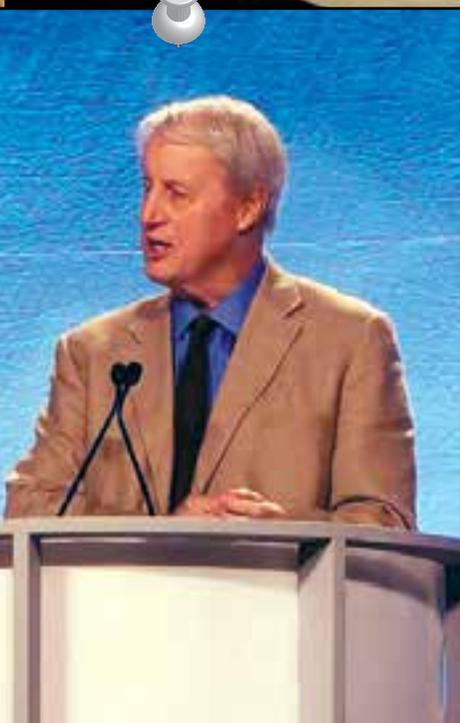
- Financial Aid Chat (#FAchat): A weekly, moderated Twitter chat for financial aid professionals. NASFAA honored three individuals for creating #FAchat: Justin Chase Brown, (then Assistant Director of Financial Aid at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh) Associate Director at the University of Missouri; Melissa Haberman, Compliance and Training Coordinator at the University of Wisconsin Colleges; and Jayme Jarrett, Financial Aid Counselor at Ohio Northern University.
- Financial Aid 101 – An Email Series: A customized email series featuring financial aid topics to help all families, regardless of where the student chooses to enroll. NASFAA honored Lisa Westendorf, Assistant Director of Communication in Financial Aid, University of Denver, for developing Financial Aid 101.
- Financial Aid Video Library (Honorable Mention): NASFAA made honorable mention of Michigan State University for creating their self-help video library tool that students and parents access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Top to bottom: Gold Star Award recipients shown with NASFAA's 2012-13 Chair Ron Day, 2013-14 Chair Craig Munier, 2014-15 Chair Eileen O'Leary, and President Justin Draeger. Top to Bottom: Melissa Haberman, Justin Chase-Brown and Jayme Jarrett; representatives from Michigan State University; Lisa Westendorf.

LOOKING BACK



THE 2014 CONFERENCE



Left page, clockwise, from top left: NASFAA staff enjoying the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum; NASFAA members relax at the first-time attendees lounge; first-time attendees work on a NASFAA-themed puzzle; U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander demonstrates the breadth of the FAFSA's instructions; NASFAA members check in for the conference; it's time to un-wine-d!

This page, clockwise, from top left: NASFAA President Craig Munier addresses the crowd; photo-booth fun; 2000 Disney Teacher of the Year Ron Clark; Pulitzer Prize and Emmy Award winner Hedrick Smith; Nashville strikes a chord with NASFAA staff.



TRAINING AND REGULATORY ASSISTANCE

NASFAA Training: A Workout for Your Career

Whether you're a musician, athlete or financial aid professional, success requires ongoing training. Every year, NASFAA offers members unparalleled sources of comprehensive and targeted training and reference materials. In-person and online instruction and tools prepare NASFAA members to achieve their professional goals and ensure that the doors of educational opportunity remain open to all students who are willing and able to succeed in higher education.



In 2012, NASFAA University opened its virtual doors to address the expanding training needs of financial aid professionals. NASFAA U offers a nationally recognized, consistent, and rigorous program of education in administering the Title IV student financial aid programs. In addition, it provides professional credentials to recognize the expertise that seasoned professionals have already gained through on-the-job experience.

NASFAA awards professional credentials for mastery in each topic area upon successful completion of a NASFAA-administered professional credential examination. NASFAA U offers five different options to qualify to sit for an exam:

1. Complete an independent study on specific topics using a Self-Study Guide.
2. Demonstrate five or more years of well-rounded professional experience.
3. Attend a state or regional training institute that uses the approved NASFAA U curriculum.
4. Participate in NASFAA U On-site Training at an institution.
5. Take one of our NASFAA instructor-led online courses.



NASFAA published four Self-Study Guides and updated the six existing Self-Study Guides in 2013-14. In addition to instructional text, each Guide includes quizzes, learning activities, and reflection questions to reinforce key concepts.

Self-Study Guide Orders and Downloads by Fiscal Year

Self-Study Guide Name	2012-13	2013-14
Overview of Student Aid Programs	62	178
Student Eligibility	66	141
Return of Title IV Funds	78	169
Need Analysis	26	143
Direct Loan Eligibility/Frequency (Part 1)	62	162
Direct Loan Repayment & Counseling Requirements (Part 2)	34	161
Application		126
Campus-Based Programs		66
Cost of Attendance		90
Federal Pell Grants and IASG		18
Total	328	1,254

NASFAA will issue six additional Self-Study Guides in 2014-15, including Consumer Information, Verification, TEACH Grants, Cash Management, Satisfactory Academic Progress, and Administrative Capability. This will complete the rollout of the planned Self-Study Guides.

State/Regional Training Institute Partnerships with NASFAA

The following state/regional groups partnered with NASFAA to offer training using the NASFAA approved curriculum:

FASFAA (October 2013)

GASFAA (September/October 2013)

MASFAA (October 2013)

Oklahoma College Assistance Program (September 2013; February/March/April 2014)

SWASFAA (November 2013)

TASFAA (February 2014 - 3 sites; March 2014 - 1 site)

WASFAA (June 2014)

NASFAA U On-site Training

NASFAA conducted on-site training at Gonzaga University in January 2014.



Since the inception of NASFAA U online courses, user satisfaction levels overall have averaged above four on a five-point scale. NASFAA continuously enhances courses in response to user feedback.

Ratings by Topic for 2013-14

	Dates	Rating
Student Eligibility	9/16 – 10/27	4.33
Return of Title IV Funds	10/14 – 11/24	4.33
Verification	11/12 – 12/22	4.19
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	12/2 – 12/22	3.83
Packaging & Award Notifications	2/3 – 3/16	4.34
Direct Loans	3/3 – 5/11	3.98
Cost of Attendance	5/5 – 6/15	4.53
Professional Judgment	5/21 – 7/9	3.73
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	6/2 – 6/22	4.3

Registered Participants and Online Course Sales for 2013-14

Course Name	2012-13 Participants	2013-14 Participants
Fall Courses		
Student Eligibility	*	39
Return of Title IV Funds	*	47
Verification	39	46
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	33	74
Spring Courses		
Professional Judgment	34	41
Cost of Attendance	31	42
Packaging and Notification of Awards	35	46
Direct Loans	*	45
Overview of the Financial Aid Programs	35	56
Total	207	436

*Course not available in 2012-13

Upcoming NASFAA U Facilitated Online Courses

Fall 2014:

- Student Eligibility (September 15-October 26, 2014)
- Campus-Based Programs (September 16-October 27, 2014)
- Verification (October 13-November 23, 2014)
- Return of Title IV Funds (October 14-November 24, 2014)
- Cost of Attendance (November 18, 2014-January 18, 2015)
- Overview of the Financial Aid Programs (December 1-21, 2014)

Spring 2015:

- Packaging and Award Notifications (January 20-March 9, 2015)
- Federal Methodology (January 26-March 10, 2015)
- Federal Pell Grant (February 23-April 19, 2015)
- Federal Direct Student Loan Program (March 3-May 12, 2015)
- Satisfactory Academic Progress (April 6-May 17, 2015)
- Professional Judgment (May 4-June 16, 2015)
- Cash Management (May 5-June 15, 2015)
- Overview of the Financial Aid Programs (June 1-21, 2015)



NASFAA offered nine credential tests for 2013-14, and received 622 orders from 343 individuals at 184 schools for the period. NASFAA has awarded 541 credentials since the program's inception.

Credentialed Examinations Ordered, by Fiscal Year

Credential Name	2012-13 Orders	2013-14 Orders
Professional Judgment	*	31
Student Eligibility	25	109
Return of Title IV Funds	16	85
Federal Methodology	3	57
Cost of Attendance	2	81
Direct Loan Eligibility/Frequency	*	47
Packaging and Notification of Awards	7	45
Verification	11	72
Application	*	95
Total	64	622

*Course not available in 2012-13

NASFAA U Credentials Earned from Inception through June 30, 2014

	Individual
Professional Judgment	19
Student Eligibility	106
Return of Title IV Funds	79
Federal Methodology	41
Cost of Attendance	61
Direct Loan	40
Packaging and Notification of Awards	48
Verification	73
Application	74
Total	541

Additional credential tests to be offered for 2014-15 include: Administrative Capability, Campus-based Programs, Cash Management, Consumer Information, Federal Pell Grant, Satisfactory Academic Progress, and TEACH Grants. This will complete the rollout of the planned credential tests.



2013-14 Webinar Series

NASFAA presents continuing education via live-streamed web events and recorded sessions that users can view on demand. All 2013-14 webinars included handouts and featured presenters from institutions and/or other organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY). Overall, webinar satisfaction continues to be high, with satisfaction ratings averaging at or above 94 percent.

Registration Levels and Ratings by Topic

Topic	Date	Registrants	Rating
Working with Special Populations	September 25	679	99.8%
Verification for 2014-15	November 20	1,017	93.6%
What is Conflicting Information?	December 18	698	94.2%
Nontraditional Program Issues related to Federal Loans	February 26	527	95.2%
Return of Title IV Funds	March 26	935	95.1%
Preparing for an Audit	May 21	693	97.8%
150% Subsidized Direct Loan Eligibility	June 18	982	95.7%

Comparison of Attendance and Satisfaction Rates

	2012-13	2013-14
Total purchasers*	1,061	1,155
Total registrants*	4,891	5,531
Average attendance rate	78%	61%
Average overall satisfaction	95.3%	95.9%

*Note: Only one registration is required per site. Nearly 44 percent of sites reported three or more participants viewing webinar broadcasts together.

2014-15 Webinar Series

NASFAA staff and the 2013-14 Training and Professional Development Committee selected the following topics for next year's webinar series:

Topic	Date
Consortium Agreements	September 24, 2014
Reporting Untaxed Income on the FAFSA	October 29, 2014
Verification for 2015-16	November 19, 2014
Consumer Information: Making Proper Disclosures	February 25, 2015
Student Eligibility: Enrollment Issues	March 25, 2015
Cohort Default Rate Issues	May 20, 2015
Hot Topic – (reserved for NASFAA to respond to a new topic that may arise)	June 17, 2015



The AskRegs Knowledgebase allows members to search and browse the body of regulatory questions posed to NASFAA Training and Regulatory Assistance (TRA) staff, as well as submit new questions for TRA to research. The Knowledgebase went live in October 2012. The number of questions submitted increased by two percent in 2013-14 as compared to 2012-13. Staff added 623 new questions and answers in 2013-14 for a total of 2,354 now available in the Knowledgebase.

	AskRegs Questions Submitted			2013-14 Resolution Rates	
	2012-13	2013-14	% Change	≤24 hours	>24 hours
July*	234	199	-15%	76%	24%
August	300	203	-32%	90%	10%
September	251	177	-29%	92%	8%
October**	195	248	27%	92%	8%
November***	212	202	-5%	84%	16%
December *	125	122	-2%	81%	19%
January	220	230	5%	93%	7%
February	207	204	-1%	88%	12%
March	183	248	36%	83%	17%
April	206	262	27%	89%	11%
May	214	254	19%	95%	5%
June*	174	234	34%	87%	13%
Total	2,521	2,583	2%		

*Questions aged when staff attended the National Conference and over major holidays.

**Increase in questions related to government shutdown.

***Knowledgebase launched November 2012.

Summary of Question Activity 2013-14

	Started	Submitted	Deflected*	Deflection Rate
July 2013	219	183	36	16%
August 2013	209	178	31	15%
September 2013	191	167	24	13%
October 2013	223	196	27	12%
November 2013	171	150	21	12%
December 2013	135	122	13	10%
January 2014	239	212	27	13%
February 2014	219	192	27	12%
March 2014	240	220	20	8%
April 2014	270	240	30	11%
May 2014	250	219	31	12%
June 2014	256	216	40	16%

*Deflected questions are those that members started but did not submit, possibly due to answers suggested by the Knowledgebase or searches conducted.

Q&As Posted in the AskRegs Knowledgebase

When a topic draws a number of similar questions or NASFAA receives new guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, TRA staff develops Question & Answer (Q&A) articles to provide instantly accessible answers. For 2013-14, NASFAA Q&As received more than 170,000 views.

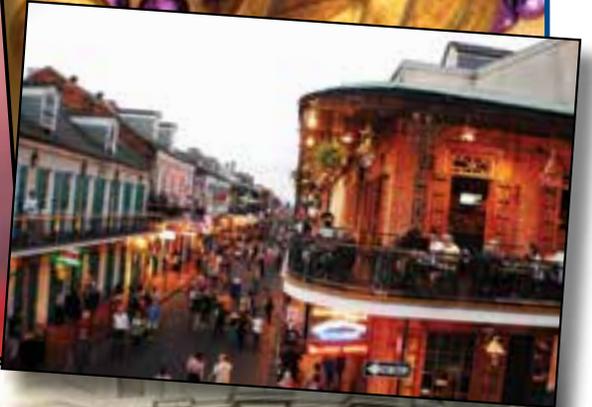
	No. of Searches	New Q&As Published	Total Q&As Viewed
FY 12-13*	17,997	1,750	50,094
July 2013	3,389	89**	8,507
August 2013	4,382	45	10,452
September 2013	4,569	31	15,213
October 2013	5,473	35	23,155
November 2013	4,469	22	15,905
December 2013	2,843	15	6,415
January 2014	5,291	67	14,357
February 2014	5,426	74	15,135
March 2014	5,823	59	18,248
April 2014	6,851	58	13,922
May 2014	6,701	51	15,045
June 2014	7,305	27	14,210
FY 13-14	62,522	2,354	170,564

*Database activated November 2012

**Twenty-two expired articles were removed as part of our regular, end-of-fiscal year review.



save the date
july 19-22, 2015



NASFAA NATIONAL conference

new orleans!

Hyatt regency

 **NASFAA**

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS



NASFAA TRAINING TRACK

The Training Track allows states and regions to select up to three separate, in-person conference sessions to be presented by NASFAA staff at state or regional conferences. NASFAA encourages states and regions to select a school-based presenter to co-present with NASFAA staff to provide valuable, on-campus perspectives. One session is always "Using NASFAA Tools," a session that helps members stay in compliance and increase their efficiency using products that are included in their NASFAA membership. The 2013-14 topics included the following:

- Cash Management (Ca)
- Consortium/Contractual Agreements (C)
- Federal Methodology – Hand Calculation (F)
- How to Find Answers for your Regulatory Issues (H)
- Return of Title IV: The Treatment of Modules (R)
- Shopping Sheet (S)
- Using NASFAA Tools (U)
- Verification for 2014-15 (V)

NASFAA trainers presented a total of 59 sessions at four regional conferences, 15 state-level association conferences, and the Tri-State conference in 2013-14.

The NASFAA Training Track is on hiatus for 2014-15 so that staff can concentrate on expanding and enhancing other products and services. NASFAA anticipates resuming the Training Track for 2015-16. In the meantime, states and regions may invite a member of the NASFAA policy team to attend a state or regional conference in 2014-15. NASFAA policy staff is able to do a general session on legislative and regulatory issues, providing both a retrospective and prospective view, and possibly one or two breakout sessions.

Sessions Presented at Regional and State Association Conferences by NASFAA Trainers in 2013-14

State/Region	Dates	Sessions	Included School Presenter
MASFAA	Oct 6-9	C,H,U	Y, Y, N
Idaho	Oct 7-8	U,V	Yes
Colorado	Oct 9-11	H,U,V	Yes
Texas	Oct 9-11	S,U	Yes
Pennsylvania	Oct 14-16	R,S,U	Y,Y,N
RNASFAA	Oct 21-23	H,U,V	Yes
Rhode Island	Oct 23	F,H,U	Yes
North Carolina	Nov 3-6	H,S,U	Yes
New Jersey	Nov 4-5	H,R,U	Yes
Tri-State (DE-DC-MD)	Nov 12-14	Ca,R,U	Y,Y,N
Connecticut	Dec 9-10	H,R,U	No
Ohio	Dec 11-12	Ca,H,U	Y,Y,N
California	Dec 15-17	H,S,U	Yes
SASFAA	Feb 17-18	F,H,U	Yes
South Carolina	Mar 21-Apr 2	H,R,U	Y,N,Y
Illinois	Apr 1-4	H,R,U	Yes
North Dakota	Apr 9-11	C,H,U	Y,Y,N
EASFAA	May 18-21	C,H,U	Yes
Georgia	May 21-23	H,S,U	Y,Y,N
Missouri	June 11	Ca,C,H,U	No



NASFAA ANNUAL STATE & REGIONAL TRAINING MATERIALS

Each year, NASFAA’s Training and Professional Development Committee and NASFAA staff collaborate to develop materials that help states and regions present a half day of instruction on a selected topic. State and regional presidents are invited to download these materials shortly after the NASFAA Conference. Topics available in 2013-14 and 2014-15 include the following:

2013-14: Compliance and Campus Collaboration - R2T4
Available July 2013

2014-15: Need Analysis
Available August 2014



NASFAA SELF-EVALUATION GUIDE

The Self-Evaluation Guide helps schools prepare for annual audits and provides an easy way to check compliance with the federal financial aid programs. NASFAA staff updated the Guide in winter 2013-14 on NASFAA.org.

Using Federal Tax Returns in Need Analysis

NASFAA updated the 2013-14 edition of Using Federal Tax Returns in Need Analysis guide, which is available on NASFAA’s website. The guide includes IRS Tax Transcript information and comparisons for the 2013 tax year.



NASFAA’s Policies & Procedures Tools are a set of integrated resources that help schools stay in compliance with student aid requirements. These tools provide an organized approach to developing and maintaining a policies and procedures manual for the financial aid office. The update, available online in July 2014, contains student aid regulations and Department of Education guidance through July 2014.



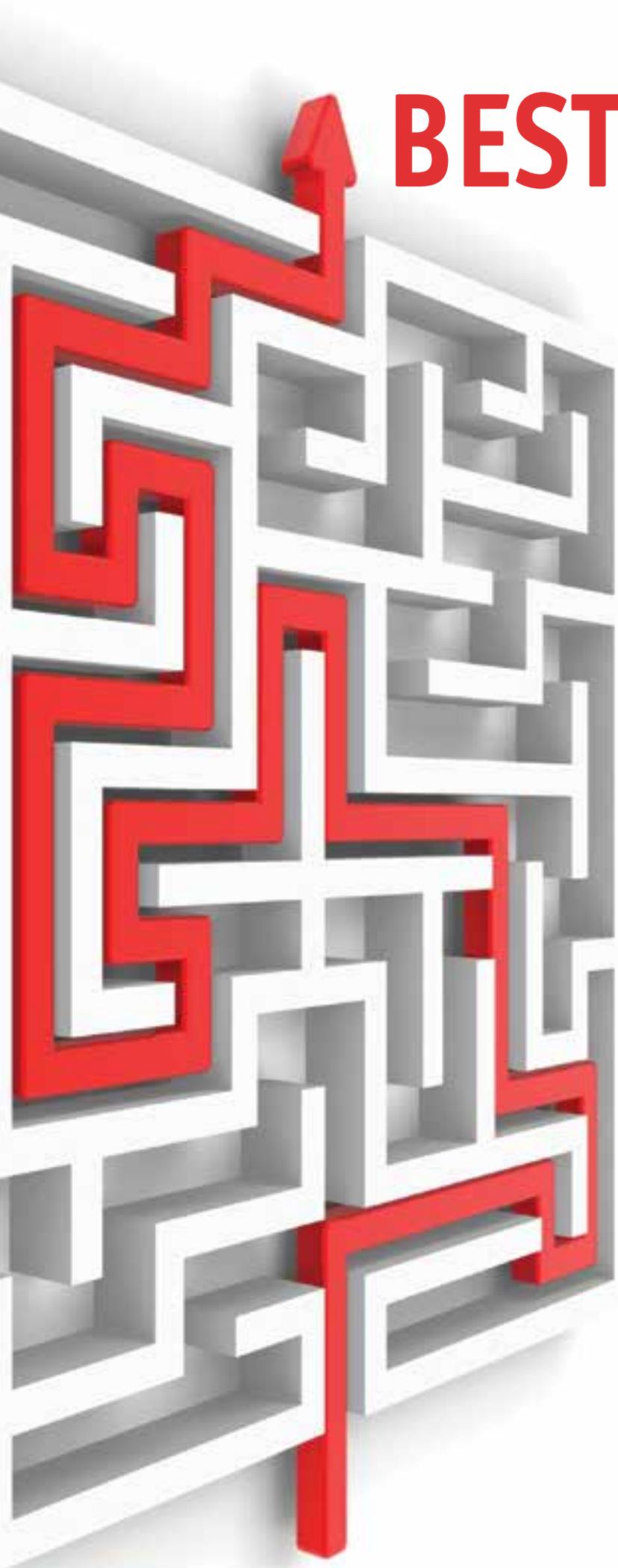
Standards of Excellence (SOE) is an objective, confidential peer review that helps schools ensure regulatory compliance, deliver financial aid funds in a cost-effective manner, maximize resources, and provide students and their families with quality customer service. In 2013-14, the SOE program completed 10 confidential reviews across the country.

	Cost Estimates Requested	Total Reviews Completed
FY 2009	43	5
FY 2010	101	16
FY 2011	48	21
FY 2012	70	13
FY 2013	84	10



CORE is a comprehensive set of instructional materials for teaching financial aid fundamentals to individuals with less than two years of experience. NASFAA updated the modules and toolkit that comprise CORE in early 2014. CORE became available for distribution online and on flash drive on May 1, 2014. Associations paid \$1,000 for an unlimited site license, with an additional charge of \$25 for the flash drive version to cover production, shipping, and handling. Pricing for institutional purchases is available on NASFAA.org under Publications. Value and Value Plus members may download CORE free as part of their membership benefits.

Year	Orders	State/ Regional Orders	Quantity Ordered	Included in Membership Package	Purchased á la Carte
2012-13	381	11	3,359	3,255	104
2013-14	517	13	4,348	4,210	138

A 3D maze with a red path leading to an upward-pointing arrow. The maze is constructed from white and grey blocks, creating a complex network of paths. A single red path starts from the bottom left and winds through the maze, eventually leading to a red arrow pointing upwards at the top left. The background is a light grey gradient.

BEST PRACTICES FOR

For some students selected for verification, the process can seem onerous at best, and at worst, may make college goals feel out of reach. With financial aid hanging in the balance, it is crucial that selected students understand what verification is, and what they must do to complete the process.

That's where financial aid administrators come in. Outreach is important, financial aid professionals told NASFAA, as are the soft skills necessary to provide excellent customer service and a heavy dose of patience. Read on to discover what works for some of your peers.

1. Automate: Many schools use students' existing online accounts to connect them with verification information and resources.

At Salisbury University, frequently accessing and updating student "GullNet" accounts is part of the institution culture, explained Michael Elliott, financial aid counselor at Salisbury University. That makes it easier for students selected for verification, who in their account find a To-Do list with instructions, links, and reminders.

At the University of Missouri, students selected for verification find, "in great detail, exactly what it is that we need but in an easy-to-read format, even with 'buttons' to get the online transcript or get the transcript by mail—but we prefer IRS data retrieval, which is listed first," said Justin Chase Brown, associate director of student financial aid. "We also put an image of a transcript so they know what it should look like. It allows them to directly click to go to the source of the information needed."



VERIFICATION SUCCESS

2. Communicate: Conversations on verification, as in many other areas of financial aid, often need to be taken offline.

“Excellent customer service skills go a long way with students who may be confused or frustrated about the verification process,” Elliott said. “Whether it’s over the phone, or through email, or an office visit, it’s just being able to communicate effectively with the student or the parent regarding the process—making them feel at ease about it, and giving them some reassurance.”

Some institutions designate specialists to handle verification requests. When students visit the financial aid office at Salt Lake Community College with verification questions, for instance, they are given the business card of the specialist they see to ensure they remain a steady contact in the future.

Keep in mind that verification, like many financial aid principles, may carry a learning curve for students and their parents. Practice patience with confused or angry students, recommends John Parris, financial aid technician at Arizona’s Cochise College.

“To us, the system is not always that complicated,” Parris said. “We always have to step back and try to turn it around and look at it from the student’s side. It can be overwhelming, and it can be terrifying.”

3. Educate: One of the best ways to quell concern over verification is to accurately define it. Cochise College’s financial aid director, Karen Emmer, explains to her confused students and parents that many students are selected for verification each year in a

broad attempt by the Department of Education to “keep everyone honest.”

This information can be particularly important for students who are selected for verification in multiple years and may be frustrated with the process. Emmer reminds them that, as with the FAFSA, subsequent years are easier to complete.

“I try to let the students know, ‘You already know how to do this. There is nothing hidden in the second year,’” she said, sometimes jokingly adding, “‘You’re just lucky—go out and get a lottery ticket!’”

4. Follow up: Financial aid administrators at the University of Missouri don’t wait for students selected for verification to come to them. With phone scripts in hand, they call all continuing students selected for verification in May, before finals week, in hopes of getting as much documentation as possible submitted before students head home for summer.

In late summer, administrators call incoming freshmen within 10 days of their arrival to campus, with the same intent – increasing the likelihood they have necessary documentation with them on campus. Doing so has increased the number of verification files completed before the school year begins, Brown said.

“The first week of classes went much more smoothly than in prior years,” Brown said – and what office wouldn’t welcome that change?

■ *By Katy Hopkins, NASFAA web reporter and editor. This article originally appeared in NASFAA’s Voices from the Aid Office series.*



It is crucial that selected students understand what verification is, and what they must do to complete the process.

NASFAA Unveils STUDENT AID INDEX

FREE to Members!

When questions come up in a financial aid office, you need quick, accurate, on-the-spot answers. In April 2014, after more than a year of development, NASFAA unveiled its newest benefit for members: the Student Aid Index (sai.nasfaa.org). This free, simple-to-use, mobile-friendly tool is available to NASFAA members only. You can watch a short demonstration video at www.nasfaa.org/index.

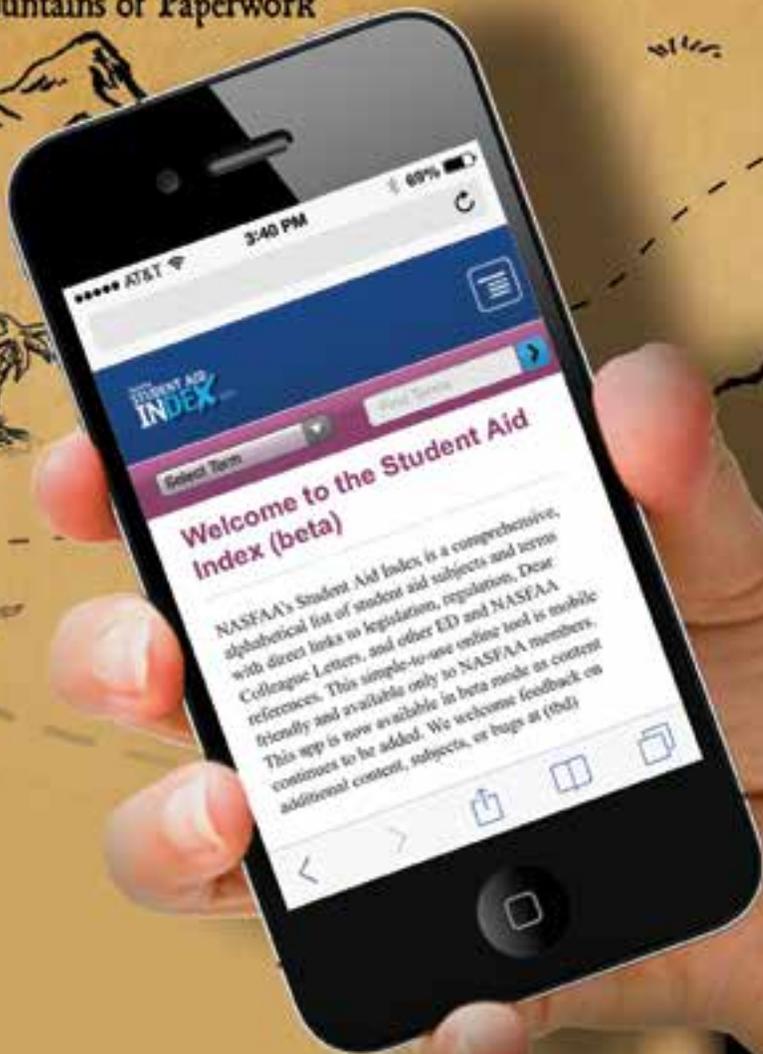
All institutional members will find the Index invaluable, but especially decision makers and leaders, such as financial aid directors, compliance officers, and program managers.

Student Aid Index helps users

- **Save time:** The Student Aid Index is the fastest way to find regulations, legislation, and other key resources within a web browser. No need to search for, download, and scroll through long PDFs, or waste time with Google searches.
- **Look good:** This management tool helps aid administrators quickly find the information needed to answer questions posed by parents, students, supervisors, and others.
- **Increase productivity:** The Index allows users to achieve more by spending less time looking for the information they need.

Key benefits include

- **Simple and intuitive:** Organized in a logical “tree” hierarchy, the tool makes it easy to find needed information by moving from general to more specific topics.
- **Extensive term search:** Members who would rather not search by hierarchy can search by terms at all levels, with direct links to the appropriate topic and subtopic.
- **Comprehensive:** Each topic and subtopic has resources associated with it, such as text descriptions, images, files, and web links.
- **Expert data, straight from the source:** Just a few clicks takes members directly to key resources, organized by topic, direct links to federal regulation, legislative text, Department of Education guidance (including the Federal Student Aid Handbook), and NASFAA interpretation and analysis.
- **Multiple delivery platforms, including**
 1. A version optimized for mobile devices, and
 2. A website-optimized version designed to integrate into NASFAA’s website (www.nasfaa.org) and viewable from any web browser.
- **Easy access:** It’s simple to add a shortcut to the Index right to a smartphone’s home screen, and/or bookmark favorite terms to return directly to those resources.
- **Fully scalable and constantly growing:** The Index was built with scalability in mind, so it can be quickly updated as new resources and guidance become available.



Mount Compliance

FAFSA Town

Initial member feedback has been extremely positive. Brad Barnett, senior associate director for financial aid at James Madison University said, "The Index gave me direct links for the resources I needed and cut my research time down to almost nothing." NASFAA 2013-14 Chair Craig Munier said, "I can't tell you how often I am in meetings on my campus wishing I could check financial aid rules. You can imagine how excited I am that the Index gives me access right from my tablet or my smartphone."

Since launch in early April, there have been over 10,000 unique visits to the site. After an initial busy release period, traffic has settled to around 1,200 user sessions a month. Popular terms include Student Eligibility, Verification, Direct Loans, and Packaging. While targeted for mobile devices, 83 percent of Student Aid Index users access the tool from a desktop computer; the iPhone is the most popular smartphone device for tool users.

A short video (1.5 minutes) at www.nasfaa.org/index demonstrates how users can make the most of this powerful tool. NASFAA encourages all members to access Student Aid Index and use it regularly to find quick, accurate information.

"The Index gave me direct links for the resources I needed and cut my research time down to almost nothing."

COMMUNICATIONS



Communicating our Message

The Communications Department advances NASFAA's mission to serve as a forum for the financial aid community. High-use, high-visibility products and services keep members and others informed and stimulate dialogue in the profession. Communications also initiates both proactive and reactive media outreach by pitching NASFAA-originated news to reporters and responding to media inquiries related to student aid issues.



Members frequently cite *Today's News*, NASFAA's daily electronic newsletter, as the number one reason they belong to NASFAA. Every weekday, *Today's News* serves more than 20,000 subscribers with original news, financial aid content from major news outlets, key announcements from the Department of Education, and guidance on taking advantage of all NASFAA services.

The NASFAA Website

Hand-in-glove with *Today's News*, the NASFAA.org website presents communication from every NASFAA department. NASFAA.org receives more than 1 million visits per year, with nearly 3 million annual page views by a consistently growing number of site users. The following statistics describe usage over the past three years:

1. Visits: Number of visits to the site during the period (includes multiple visits by the same person).
2. Average Visit Duration: Average number of minutes a visitor spends on the site during a browser session.
3. Page Views: The number of individual pages/items called from the site during visits.
4. Pages per Session: The average number of pages accessed during each individual user session.
5. Site Users: The number of unique site user sessions.



NASFAA Website Indicators – 2011 - 2014

Measure	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Visits	1,017,334	1,115,791	1,075,745
Average Visit Duration (in minutes)	3:19	3:20	3:11
Page Views	2,782,030	2,985,768	2,892,782
Pages Per Session	2.73	2.68	2.69
Site Users	340,302	424,894	463,384

The website experienced a slight decrease in site visits (3.6 percent) in 2013-14. This may be attributed partially to a more stable political environment over the year. The previous fiscal year saw a lot of site activity due to sequestration and other key topics. The same period shows a slight downward trend in visit duration (4.4 percent); this is not statistically significant, but it does align with the slight decline in overall traffic over the course of the year, and is consistent with the 3.1 percent decline in page views during the same period.

The site received an increase in overall users (9 percent) and pages per session (.5 percent) during the period, indicating that while overall traffic may be down slightly, more people are accessing site information.

Top Web Pages Visited, July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

1. Homepage
2. Today's News
3. State & Regional College Tuition Discounts
4. The 2014 NASFAA Conference
5. Manage Your Membership

Top Content

As part of our strategic priority to serve as the primary source of information on student financial aid issues, NASFAA presents members with a significant amount of original news content that they cannot find elsewhere. In 2013-14, NASFAA aimed to make original NASFAA news 50 percent of its top content (defined as the 15 most-read news articles each month). NASFAA achieved this goal with 55 percent of the top 15 news articles each month qualifying as "original news" from NASFAA reporters, policy staff, and NASFAA series submissions.

Month	Percentage of Top Content that Is Original NASFAA News
July 2013	93
August 2013	53
September 2013	33
October 2013	47
November 2013	60
December 2013	60
January 2014	67
February 2014	67
March 2014	60
April 2014	60
May 2014	26
June 2014	33

Most-Read Original Content, July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014

1. *Student Aid Perspectives: Deferred Action for "Dreamers": Advising DACA Students About Affording College*, by Angela D. Adams
2. *Student Aid Perspectives: Myths and Realities about Rising College Tuition*, by David H. Feldman
3. *Senate Reaches Student Loan Interest Rate Deal*, by Megan McClean, NASFAA Policy & Federal Relations Staff
4. *Voices from the Aid Office: 10 Tips For Better Communication With Difficult Parents and Students*, by Katy Hopkins, NASFAA Communications Staff
5. *A Tale of Two Income Years: Comparing Prior-Prior Year and Prior-Year Through Pell Grant Awards* (a NASFAA policy report)

NASFAA Original Article Series

As part of our original content offerings, NASFAA regularly publishes four article series and a survey series: Student Aid Perspectives, Voices from the Aid Office, Opening Doors, and MVP: Most Valuable Professional, and Poll the Pros.



STUDENT AID PERSPECTIVES

Student Aid Perspectives presents the viewpoints of experts on current issues in student aid and encourages thoughtful dialogue among NASFAA members. Perspectives articles published between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014 include:

- *One Loan: It's Really that Simple*, by Rick Shipman
- *Does the President's FY 2015 Budget Request Leave Graduate and Professional Students with the Short End of the Stick?* by José Espada
- *Leveling the Playing Field for Student Parents*, by Tiffany Boiman and Barbara Gault, Ph.D.
- *Helping Students Make Cents of College Costs, Financial Aid, and Net Price*, by Diane Cheng, Hamilton Freeman, and Dave Leopold
- FAFSA's Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Questions - Opening Doors or Creating Confusion? (Point/Counterpoint)
 - *Homelessness and Dependency Status – It Depends*, by Patricia Hurley
 - *Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Status: Improve It, Don't Remove It*, by Mark Delorey
- *Student Loans: Crisis, Bubble, or Manageable Policy Issue?* by Sandy Baum
- *Are You Sitting Down? Communicating Bad News Effectively*, by Brad Mello
- Two Perspectives on Student Unit Records (Point/Counterpoint)
 - *Student Unit Records Are Critical to Evaluating Our Effectiveness*, by Hans Peter L'Orange
 - *Privacy vs. Peeping*, by Frank J. Balz



VOICES FROM THE AID OFFICE

Voices from the Aid Office spotlights the thoughts and opinions of NASFAA members working on campus. Nine Voices articles were published from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014:

- *Best Practices for Verification Success*
- *Administering Distance Ed and the Challenges Financial Aid Administrators Face*
- *5 Steps to Take when Students Appear at Risk of Overborrowing*
- *5 Tips for Advising Undocumented Students about Financial Aid*
- *Working with Non-English Speaking Students*
- *Strategies to Promote Financial Literacy*
- *10 Tips for Better Communication with Difficult Parents and Students*
- *Social Media and the Financial Aid Office*
- *Handling Financial Aid Fraud*



OPENING DOORS

Opening Doors, a new series in 2013-14, profiles students who are succeeding in college with the help of financial aid, and the financial aid professionals who work with them. NASFAA has posted three Opening Doors articles since its inception in February 2014:

- Eliana Lozano Perez, University of South Florida
- Lauren Danen, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Taiwo Adefiyiju, Providence College, RI



MVP: Most Valuable Professional, also new in 2013-14, features brief question-and-answer interviews with NASFAA members across the country. This year's MVPs were:

- Shirley Ort, Associate Provost and Director of Scholarships and Student Aid at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill
- Lisa Koretoff, Director of Financial Aid at Guilford Technical Community College
- Brenda Brown, Director of Financial Aid at University of Miami School of Law
- Tony Sozzo, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Student Financial Planning and Student Activities at New York Medical College
- Tami Sato, Director of Financial Aid at Marshall B. Ketchum University
- Dan Davenport, Director of Student Financial Aid Services at the University of Idaho
- Kay Soltis, Director of Financial Aid at Pacific Lutheran University
- Jim White, Dean of Student Financial Services at Gonzaga University
- Brent Tener, Director of Undergraduate Scholarships at Vanderbilt University
- Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

Poll the Pros aims to learn more about NASFAA members and their work in student financial aid. Members can answer the latest poll question and instantly see how their colleagues answered that same question. NASFAA published seven of these polls in 2013-14:

- What Are You Most Looking Forward to at the 2014 National Conference?
- What Do You Like Best about Your Job?
- What Will Be the Hottest Topic During HEA Reauthorization?
- How Often Does Your School Self-Evaluate Your Administration of Title IV Programs?
- Does Your Institution's Financial Aid Office Employ a Dedicated Compliance Officer?
- What Percentage of Your Correspondence to Students Is Conducted via Email?
- Who Deals with Financial Aid Fraud at Your Institution?

Media

NASFAA in the News: NASFAA received a significant number of high-quality mentions in the local, national, and trade press.

Total NASFAA Media Mentions July 1, 2013, to June 30, 2014	Original Mentions (as opposed to reprints)	Reprints (articles that are republished or syndicated)
1,015	233	782

NASFAA tends to see large spikes in media mentions when specific news events coincide with our key issues. For example, during a heavy media cycle related to increases in student loan interest rates in July 2013, 187 news outlets nationwide reprinted an Associated Press (AP) article citing NASFAA. Similarly, 212 news outlets reprinted an AP article quoting NASFAA on fixed-rate tuition plans in December 2013.

Media Mentions, by Month July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014

	Reprints	Total Mentions
July 2013	210	254
August 2013	28	48
September 2013	72	89
October 2013	43	70
November 2013	69	80
December 2013	231	247
January 2014	9	23
February 2014	4	25
March 2014	14	31
April 2014	13	26
May 2014	26	33
June 2014	63	89

Quality of coverage: NASFAA also aims to cultivate relationships with key reporters and to ensure coverage in important publications read widely by both the higher education community and consumers. A few examples of outlets that cited NASFAA during the period include:

- Associated Press
- Bloomberg
- The Chronicle of Higher Education
- CNBC
- CNNMoney
- Forbes
- Fox Business
- Inside Higher Ed
- Kiplinger
- Los Angeles Times
- MarketWatch
- The New York Times
- Slate
- U.S. News & World Report
- USA Today
- The Washington Post

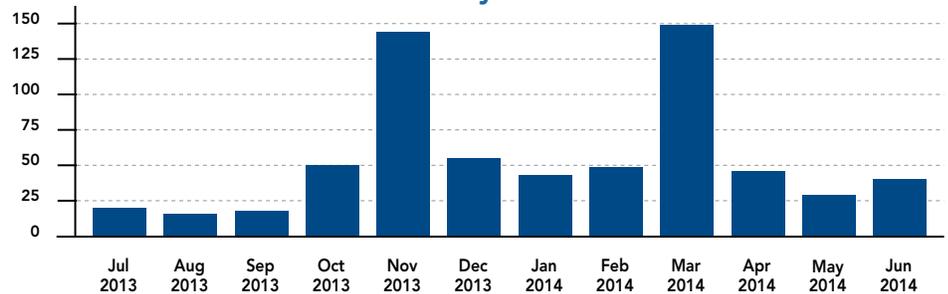


Social Media

The Communications team established benchmarks for tracking engagement and recorded monthly progress during 2013-14 in four key platforms of social media engagement: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and members' comments posted on NASFAA.org content pages.

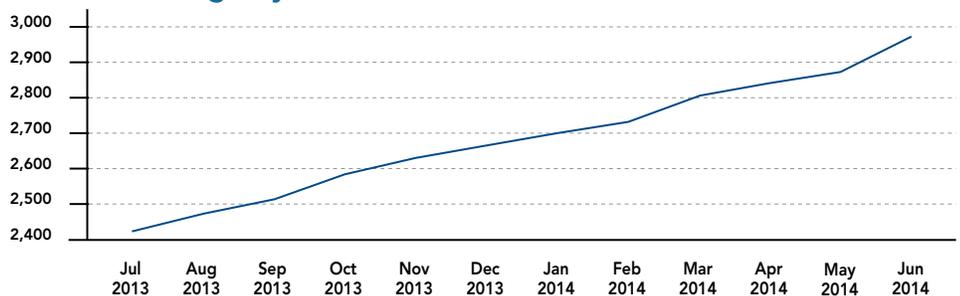
NASFAA content pages received an average of 54 comments per month, including November and March, when the number of comments spiked to nearly 150. In those two months we asked members to respond to two "Your Thoughts" questions: "The One Thing I Would Change in Student Aid Is..." (November 2013), and "What is the most unnecessarily burdensome financial aid requirement?" (March 2014).

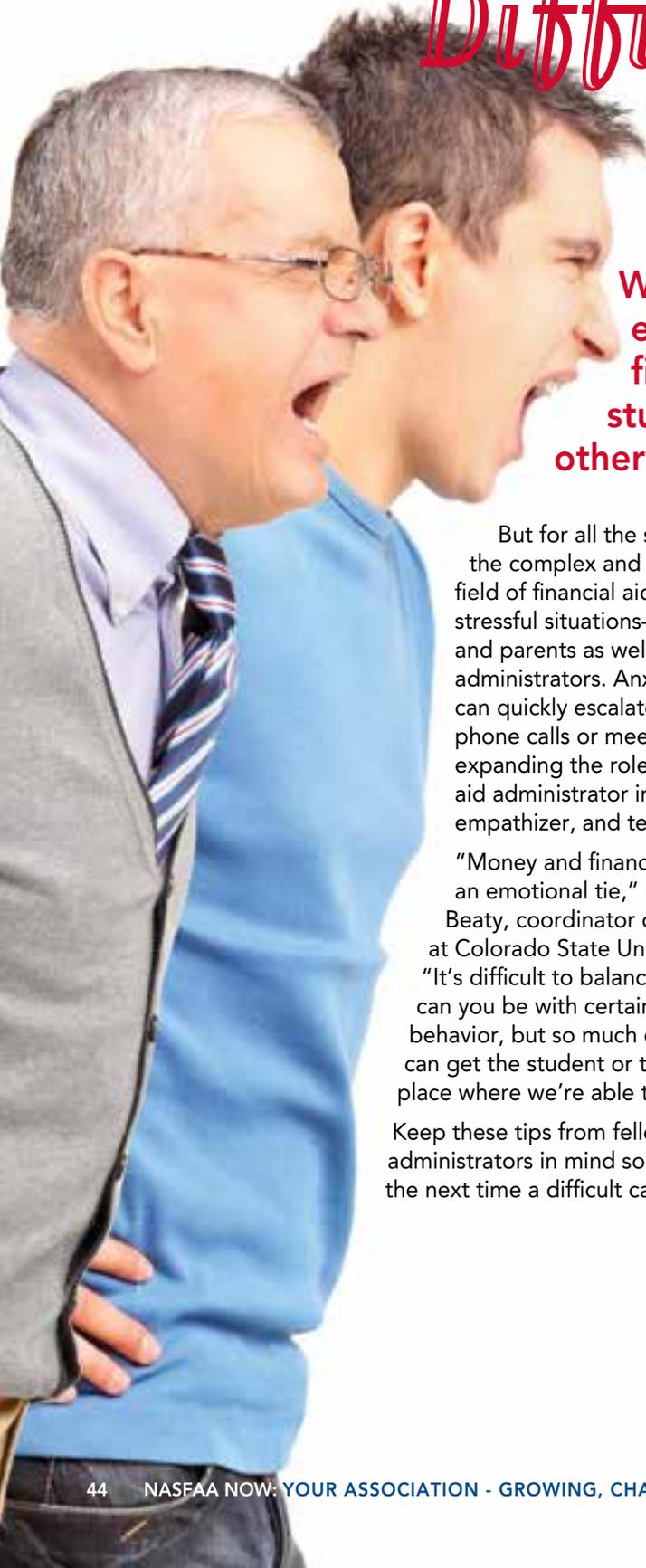
Comments on NASFAA Content by Month



NASFAA members are active on many social media sites, but Facebook is by far the most popular. Activity steadily increased throughout the period.

Facebook Usage by Month





10 Tips for Better Communication with *Difficult* Parents and Students

Working in financial aid can be extremely rewarding. Every day, financial aid administrators help to usher students through doors to education they otherwise might not have accessed.

But for all the success stories, the complex and often sensitive field of financial aid can also create stressful situations—for students and parents as well as financial aid administrators. Anxiety-laden issues can quickly escalate into difficult phone calls or meetings, instantly expanding the role of financial aid administrator into counselor, empathizer, and tension diffuser.

“Money and finances always have an emotional tie,” explains Eleni Beaty, coordinator of client services at Colorado State University (CSU). “It’s difficult to balance how tolerant can you be with certain types of behavior, but so much of the time, we can get the student or the parent to a place where we’re able to communicate.”

Keep these tips from fellow financial aid administrators in mind so you’re prepared the next time a difficult call comes in.

- 1. Recalibrate the conversation pace:** Don’t meet an angry or anxious caller at their talking pace, recommends Julie Metelski, training manager at General Dynamics Information Technology, which trains call center agents at the Federal Student Aid Information Center. Instead, establish control of the conversation by slowing down your own voice, staying calm, and practicing active listening as the frustrated party vents.
- 2. Identify the underlying issue:** A frustrated student or parent may not lead with what’s really bothering them. Ask probing questions to discern the source of the frustration, and repeat back the caller’s complaints so he or she knows you understand the issue. Acknowledge that you understand them and that you will partner with them to reach a solution.
- 3. Don’t take it personally:** As an aid administrator, you’re feeling the brunt of the tension, but you’re not the cause of it. Disengage from feeling personally attacked so you can operate efficiently. As the Federal Student Aid Information Center instructs its call center agents, “You are not the cause of the problem – work hard to become part of the solution.”

4. Work within realistic boundaries: It's human nature to want to make a frustrated party feel instantly better. But financial aid administrators have regulations and funding limits, among other considerations, to think about.

"A lot of financial aid administrators don't want to be totally direct and don't want to give bad news to students," says Jared Groce, financial aid administrator at Laurel Technical Institute - Sharon Campus. "We all care about these students but you can't take the blame on yourself for this situation."

Instead, Groce recommends being as transparent as possible and presenting all possible—and feasible—solutions to students and parents. Make sure students and parents understand the issue and why the possible resolutions might, in reality, be different than what they were hoping for.

5. Temporarily disconnect, if necessary: If you can't get to a solution, take a page out of CSU's book by having a catchphrase you can use to disconnect from a tense call, such as "It seems like we're not communicating well; would you like my supervisor to give you a call?"

Sometimes, just giving a caller some time to regroup and calm down can make a big difference. Beaty adds, "Nine times out of 10, when we call them back, they're at a place where they're able to communicate with us and resolve the situation."

The extra time can also give financial aid administrators a chance to collect the information necessary to present a student or parent with all possible solutions, Groce notes.

6. Delineate next steps: CSU has outlined procedures for difficult cases based on the severity of the situation. Employees can locate their caller's behavior (e.g., "mild frustration" or "out of control emotionally or physically") in a guide and find out where they should go next for help.

"You never know when these incidents are going to occur," says Beaty, who acknowledges that her institution's resources have built up over years. "Having those tools in place for when you need them, we have found, has been really helpful. Be proactive in creating something that can be adjusted over time."

7. Show internal support: Financial aid administrators need to know that they have the support of their superiors, and the university as a whole, when they're dealing with difficult cases. After a particularly difficult Friday afternoon phone call with a parent, Groce spent the weekend stressing over his tactics. But knowing he had support from his director—and would get feedback and advice either way—helped to alleviate his own tension, he said.

8. Take a breather: Difficult phone calls aren't just hard on the caller. As an aid administrator, it can be tough to bounce back from a stressful call. Instead of pushing through to another call, know yourself well enough to know when you should take a break, recommends Carol Mowbray, who also works with the Federal Student Aid Information Center. Directors should make it clear that short breaks, when necessary, are encouraged, CSU's Beaty says.

"It can really be quite upsetting sometimes," Beaty says. "The counselors really need to know that they have that kind of support and flexibility to be able to step away from the situation."

9. Shadow colleagues: "Customer service soft skills don't happen overnight, and they aren't magic," Metelski says. Ask to sit in on a call with a particularly skilled colleague, or offer to coach new employees in your aid office. Practice can build upon intuition, making difficult calls easier to manage.

10. Maintain your own perspective: Difficult calls are likely to be taxing on anyone. But remembering why you're working in financial aid—and why it's so important to students and parents—may give you a boost through tough times.

"We have to be mindful that the process can be very complex and anxiety-inducing to many individuals, and realize that by listening to them carefully and keeping their best interests in mind, together we get them the guidance and assistance they need," Mowbray says.

■ *By Katy Hopkins, NASFAA web reporter and editor. This article originally appeared in NASFAA's Voices from the Aid Office series.*





ADVOCACY



A Voice for Change

NASFAA's advocacy initiatives keep the complex needs of students, institutions, and the financial aid community at the forefront of policymaking and lawmaking. Our advocacy efforts center on increasing access to and completion of higher education; simplifying student aid; minimizing student indebtedness; and need-based aid. NASFAA emphasizes dialogue and interchange on critical issues to develop advocacy positions that reflect the knowledge and experience of our members in the field.

NASFAA Forums

Policy forums allow NASFAA to leverage the expertise of our members and remain a leading voice in shaping the conversation about the effectiveness and sustainability of crucial federal aid programs.

In 2013-14, NASFAA sponsored three financial aid policy forums:

- Student Aid Orientation for Congressional Staff (July 2014): For the fourth consecutive year, NASFAA held a student aid orientation on Capitol Hill for congressional staff. The Orientation gave Hill staff a basic overview of the student aid programs and their respective histories. The policy team timed this orientation to coincide with the 2014 update of the National Student Aid Profile, which NASFAA distributed electronically to a broad cross-section of House and Senate offices.
- Prior-Prior Year Income on the FAFSA (April 2014): As Congress works to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, one of NASFAA's core recommendations has been to switch to the use of prior-prior year (PPY) income on the FAFSA. NASFAA and higher education researcher Robert Kelchen produced

a white paper on this issue, funded by the Gates Foundation, "A Tale of Two Income Years: Comparing Prior-Prior Year and Prior-Year through Pell Grant Awards." The white paper discussed how a move to PPY tax data in need analysis would benefit both students and financial aid administrators by better aligning the application processes for college admissions and financial aid without drastically altering the expected award for most students. Importantly, it demonstrated how very low-income families and independent students with dependents of their own fare the best under a switch to PPY.

NASFAA presented a forum on Capitol Hill on April 23, 2014, featuring a panel discussion of the broad policy considerations contained within the white paper. Hill staff, lawmakers, research and association colleagues, and local NASFAA members participated in the well-attended event.

- NASFAA Legislative Symposium (March 2014): Leaders of state and regional financial aid associations across the nation convened in the Washington, D.C. area for the third annual NASFAA Legislative

Symposium. The Symposium was part of the larger Leadership & Legislative Conference held March 9-11, 2014. Full details about the conference appear on page 20.

Proactive Public Policy Efforts

- Consumer Information Task Force (November 2013 – June 2014): NASFAA convened its Consumer Information Task Force to conduct a thorough review of the current student consumer information requirements and propose ways to streamline both the content and delivery of those requirements. Chaired by NASFAA member Bonnie Joerschke, NASFAA's Board of Directors approved the recommendations of the task force in June 2014. Staff will continue to work these recommendations into our broader reauthorization advocacy efforts.
- Campus-Based Aid Allocation Task Force (November 2013 – June 2014): The NASFAA Campus-Based Aid Allocation Task Force, chaired by NASFAA member Pat Hurley, examined the formula by which congressional appropriations for the FSEOG, Federal Work Study, and Federal Perkins Loan programs are distributed to schools. In consultation with other stakeholders, the task force also formulated proposals for changes to the allocation formula for consideration by the NASFAA Board as part of the association's reauthorization recommendations. The task force developed its recommendations—which NASFAA's Board of Directors approved in June 2014—to achieve the following:
 - o More accurately and equitably reflect the comparative need of the student populations of schools applying for campus-based aid allocations;

- o Evaluate the efficacy of current reallocation rules for released funds;
- o Give new participating schools a fair chance to obtain funding; and
- o Assess the shifts in funding among current program participants that would result from recommended formula changes.
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness Task Force (March 2014 – June 2014): NASFAA convened its Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Task Force, chaired by NASFAA member Candi Frazer, to develop recommendations to improve the forgiveness program and strengthen its potential for long-term viability. NASFAA charged the task force with providing a framework for the PSLF program that achieves the following:
 - o Exemplifies the ideals of encouraging access to public service careers, with a particular focus on fairness and inclusion of underserved populations in advanced degree programs;
 - o Incentivizes talented individuals to work in public service to meet societal needs;
 - o Discourages over-borrowing; and
 - o Reduces program costs.

The recommendations provide for responsible stewardship of taxpayer funds by establishing forgiveness limits that ensure that borrowers—especially those with high earning potential—can be reasonably expected to repay their loans. The NASFAA Board of Directors approved the recommendations in June 2014.

Key Meetings on Public Policy Issues

NASFAA staff met with staff from the following groups and organizations in 2013-14:

- Department of Education
- Government Accountability Office
- House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
- Senate Banking Committee
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
- Senate and House Labor, Health, Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees
- White House Domestic Policy Council

NASFAA Advocacy Pipeline

NASFAA created the Advocacy Pipeline in response to a Board of Directors recommendation to bring a formal structure to our in-person advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. Throughout each year, the Pipeline brings NASFAA members to Washington to meet with members of the Senate and House who have ties to their home institutions and the ability to impact federal financial aid policy. These efforts enable NASFAA to raise awareness on Capitol Hill of financial aid administrators' concerns and put a human face on the broader policy initiatives with which NASFAA is involved. Since its inception 2012-13, nearly thirty NASFAA members have met with dozens of congressional staff members over the course of nine different Advocacy Pipeline events.

NASFAA Testifies on Capitol Hill



In December of 2013, NASFAA President Justin Draeger testified before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce as part of their hearing, "Keeping College Within Reach: Strengthening Pell Grants for Future Generations." His testimony offered suggestions for improving the Federal Pell Grant by making it more flexible to meet the needs of modern students, providing additional funds to give Pell recipients incentive to move through their programs more quickly, and providing information about the Pell Grant to low-income students earlier.



Blondeen Philemond was NASFAA's Policy Intern for summer 2014. Thanks to Dallas Martin Fund supporters, Blondeen had the opportunity to gain real-world policy experience on Capitol Hill. She wrote this letter to give members, and future Dallas Martin Endowment interns, a glimpse into her experiences this summer.



My Top Ten Takeaways as NASFAA's 2014 DME Intern

I have had such a rewarding internship experience as the DME Policy Intern for NASFAA. Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act served as the main focal point for many of my experiences here, and that exposure will be highly useful as I continue to investigate college access and affordability.

I've noticed several overarching themes that run through my time working in NASFAA's Washington, D.C. office. My top ten takeaways from the policy internship with NASFAA are these:

- 1) Asking questions and note taking are a must! Although that may seem a bit obvious, keeping an open ear and carrying a notepad is essential at all times. D.C. is home to an extremely knowledgeable and active policy community, so whether attending hearings or briefings or engaging in conference calls with the policy team and education staffers, I quickly found I needed to remember to ask questions when appropriate and take notes for personal research. Although it may be a bit intimidating to work with people who have such a high level of expertise within their discipline, I've always remembered that as an intern, I'm bound to interact with people who know more about a subject area than I do. I've chosen to use their knowledge as a pathway to propelling my own personal enrichment.
- 2) In following with the first takeaway, getting to know people within the policy world is highly important. The NASFAA staff has provided me the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds with varying perspectives and strategies for addressing the same policy problems. By communicating with members of the Washington, D.C. policy community, I'm able to analyze policies more objectively and extensively which has greatly enhanced my approach to thinking through policy implications and recommendations.
- 3) Team-building skills were made for the NASFAA office. In working with a team that is as highly collaborative as the Policy Team, exercising exceptional communication skills and teamwork is a must. Such an environment is a great place to build those skills, which can be highly useful within an academic or office setting.
- 4) All work and no play makes the DME intern a dull girl/boy. As a self-proclaimed workaholic who ends up doing a ton of work outside the internship, I initially left little room within my schedule to actually explore the District, but once I got in touch with the New Jersey State Society and the Rutgers and University of Rochester alumni clubs, it was almost impossible not to get involved. Traveling and sightseeing made my time as a DME intern all the more rewarding.
- 5) It is helpful that a DME intern have prior knowledge of financial aid policies and regulations. Such training made the transition into the policy internship as smooth as possible, and had I not previously served as an intern within a financial aid office, I would have undoubtedly been in over my head throughout this internship.
- 6) NASFAA members are highly dedicated to their cause. From task forces to committees, NASFAA members are wholeheartedly invested in the success of NASFAA as an association. They work to ensure the continued success of NASFAA by providing several services that meet the needs of NASFAA's membership. Such careful choreography takes an extensive amount of hard work and planning in order to deliver this high quality of services.
- 7) The membership is not only dedicated to NASFAA, but also to the growth of the DME intern. In meeting so many NASFAA members during the NASFAA National Conference, I learned so much about their dedication to the field of financial aid and providing a wide range of services that will ensure the success of students and institutions. They were also invested in my personal growth. As the DME intern, I had the opportunity to meet and speak with several members throughout my internship who were able to provide me with invaluable advice.
- 8) D.C. is just as exciting as everyone says it is! The District not boasts a great amount of opportunity for young professionals, but also offers tons of opportunities for people looking to get out and enjoy the city. The simple and convenient Metro system makes the excursions easy.
- 9) The cost of living in D.C. is absolutely out of this world. Of course, I knew this prior to my arrival, but mapping out monthly living expenses is critical! From the Metro, to food, to rent, living costs do add up, so they must be consistently tracked and regulated.
- 10) The opportunity to serve as a DME Policy intern with NASFAA is an invaluable experience. From attending hearings and briefings, to meeting with published researchers that I read about during graduate school, I am aware that such an opportunity is one that not all people will have prior to entering the workforce. I am now equipped with a knowledge base, resources, and experiences that many will not have. Such tools, which are directly applicable to my area of interest, will no doubt add to the quality of work that I am able to produce in the future. For this and many other reasons, I can say that it was my honor and a privilege to serve as the 2014 DME Policy Intern.



Setting Standards for Promoting Access

When Craig Munier accepted the gavel of 2013-14 National Chair, one of his priorities for his term was to develop a tool to determine which institutions are the best at handling college access.

In meetings with the Board of Directors, Munier stressed that as institutions compete for high academic rankings, they tend to focus on recruiting the “best and brightest” students, sometimes ignoring capable students who lack the advantage of a strong academic background, or students with limited financial means. He charged NASFAA’s Board of Directors with finding ways to incentivize institutions to do the right thing when it comes to access and diversity, by making access a focus and putting more resources into making college affordable.

In July 2013, the Board of Directors tasked the Access and Diversity Committee with reviewing prior activities and outcomes relating to access. After reviewing relevant literature and meeting with professionals in higher education administration, as well as legal experts in higher education diversity, the committee concluded that access and diversity in postsecondary education are among the core values of institutions of higher education. However, universally defining “access” and “diversity” is difficult, as institutional type, size, location, mission, and culture can affect how each institution defines these terms. For example, diversity could refer

to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, or sexual orientation. While many institutional mission statements refer to access and/or diversity, institutions’ actions in fulfilling their mission statements may vary greatly.

After its extensive review, the committee identified several existing tools to measure an institution’s commitment to and ability to increase access and diversity (see box), and came to two important conclusions:

1. The cost of education, financial aid availability, and the institution’s choice in how it uses its funds

all have an impact on student enrollment and persistence.

2. It takes commitment at the institutional level, not only at the financial aid office level, to be successful. In fact, access and diversity must be an institutional goal and should be included in the institution’s mission statement and widely disseminated across campus so that the commitment is clear.

The examples identified by the committee are starting points that institutions might consider when planning to measure the success of their access and diversity efforts. A NASFAA taskforce may also use these examples as a model in developing a tool that would allow members to make quantitative assessments of their institution’s commitment to access and diversity relative to institutions of a similar mission and size.

ED’s Ratings System Proposal: PIRS

Concurrent with NASFAA’s activities, in August 2013, President Barack Obama and U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan also announced an interest in supporting institutions that are successful in promoting access. They took a different approach, proposing

The Access and Diversity Committee identified several existing tools to measure an institution’s commitment to access and diversity:

- The Equity Scorecard (Bauman, Bustillos, Benison, Brown, and Bartee, 2010) (cue.usc.edu/our_tools/the_equity_scorecard.html)
- The Access and Diversity Toolkit, by the College Board (diversitycollaborative.collegeboard.org/toolkit)
- Experience-Attributes Metric (Association of American Medical Colleges) (www.aamc.org/initiatives/holisticreview/about/)
- The Student Achievement Measure (www.studentachievementmeasure.org)
- The National Survey of Student Engagement’s Five Benchmarks that Colleges Can Use to Determine Educational Effectiveness (nsse.iub.edu/nsse-update/)

For more information on these programs, check out the Access and Diversity Committee’s paper, “Measuring Excellence in Access and Diversity,” at www.nasfaa.org.

a ratings system that would reward institutions of higher education that meet certain access metrics with larger campus-based allocations or larger Federal Pell Grants for their students. Under the U.S. Department of Education (ED) proposal for the Postsecondary Institutions Rating System (PIRS), institutions could be reviewed and judged according to the following criteria:

- Percentage of Federal Pell Grant recipients
- Average cost of attendance
- Student loan debt
- Graduation rates
- Transfer rates

According to ED, these ratings would compare colleges with “similar missions.” However, no clarification has been provided on how the similarities would be defined.

NASFAA responded to the ED proposal in several ways. The association provided written comments and also joined with other higher-education organizations to discuss with ED officials suggestions and concerns for consideration as ED continues to develop PIRS. NASFAA also published a study, “Peers and PIRS: Challenges and Considerations for Rating Groups of Postsecondary Institutions” (www.nasfaa.org/pirs/), which offered considerations for determining peer groups and examined issues surrounding the development of such a rating system.

Looking Ahead

As of this writing, ED is still working on defining how PIRS will be implemented and will operate. It is expected to release a draft rating system in the fall of 2014, with a final version to be completed by spring 2015. At the same time, NASFAA is continuing to lead efforts to promote access in a way that also recognizes the diversity of the nation’s students and institutions. Munier’s goal acknowledges that, as financial aid administrators, one of the ways we can best serve students

is to be advocates for student access on our campuses and beyond. As institutions struggle to maintain revenue levels that support their academic mission, and look to rankings to attract the best and brightest students, it is essential that college access remain at the center of the discussion.

■ *By James J. Brooks,
Director of Financial Aid
and Scholarships for the
University of Oregon. Brooks
served as a Commission
Director for NASFAA’s Board
of Directors in 2013-14.*





RESEARCH

Digging Deeper

NASFAA's research activities explore and examine issues in student aid to support our advocacy, training, and outreach efforts. Our independent and collaborative studies encourage data-supported, critical analysis of student aid policy and methods of encouraging equity in access, choice, and success in higher education.

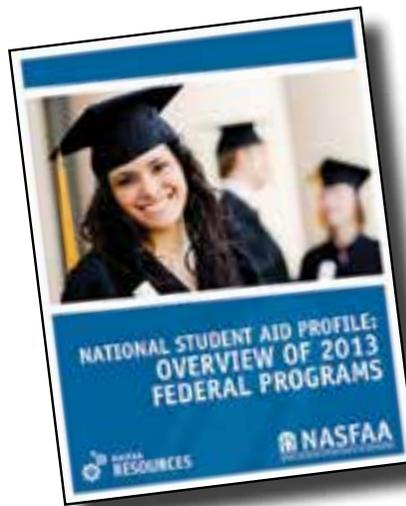
Surveys

NASFAA administered several surveys to all or targeted segments of the membership in 2013-14:

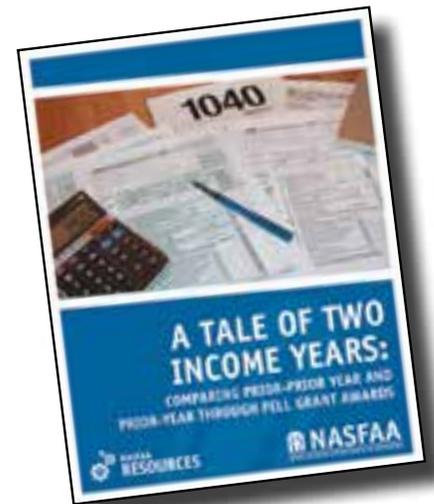
- 2013 National Conference Evaluation, Las Vegas (July 2013)
- Annual Institutional Loan Survey (August 2013, in partnership with the College Board)
- Survey on Community College Participation in the Direct Loan Program (June 2014)

Major Research Reports

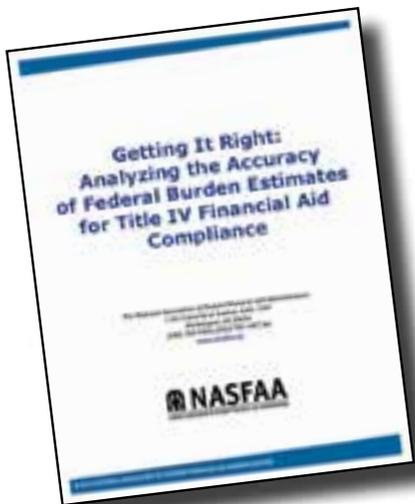
NASFAA released five major research reports between July 2013 and June 2014:



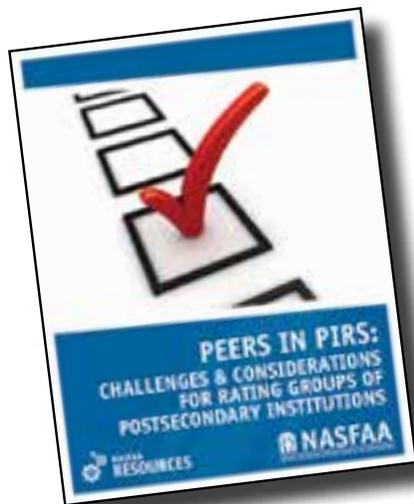
2013 National Profile (July 2013): The 2013 NASFAA Student Aid Profile provides the latest information and data about each of the programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act. The Profile also presents recent trends in federal program appropriations, lists income levels of students and families who receive aid, and includes a description of the federal student application.



"A Tale of Two Income Years: Comparing Prior-Prior Year and Prior-Year through Pell Grant Awards" (November 2013): This study examined the effects of using different income years on Federal Pell Grant award amounts. The results support the July 2013 Reauthorization Task Force recommendations to move to Prior-Prior Year (PPY). The study shows that moving to PPY could potentially provide needy students and families with the information they need to make financial decisions earlier in the process, and it would not significantly impact Pell Grant awards for the neediest groups. It also showed that dependent students from very low-income families and independent students with dependents of their own (two of the neediest cohorts) could be ideal candidates for PPY, because even some income variability from year to year does not affect their aid eligibility. The report also outlines ways to mitigate negative consequences for students who would not fare as well under a move to PPY, such as proactively identifying these groups early on and exploring ways to streamline the professional judgment process. The study concludes with a recommendation to make a full move to PPY income.



“Getting It Right: Analyzing the Accuracy of Federal Burden Estimates for Title IV Financial Aid Compliance” (November 2013): This white paper stresses the need for greater transparency from the Department of Education on how administrative burden is calculated and estimated with respect to federal student aid regulations. It demonstrates an inverse relationship between administrative reporting requirements and one-on-one financial aid counseling—i.e., the more time aid administrators spend attempting to comply with regulations, the less time they have to attend to the needs of students and their families. The paper further found that administrative burden estimates that do not accurately reflect the time and resource constraints faced by postsecondary financial aid offices could ultimately harm students. NASFAA staff disseminated this report widely on Capitol Hill and throughout the higher education policy community. Content from this report was included in materials provided to the Task Force of College Presidents convened by Senator Lamar Alexander to investigate burdensome federal regulations.



“Peers in PIRS: Challenges & Considerations For Rating Groups Of Postsecondary Institutions” (March 2014): NASFAA partnered with independent research consultant Alisa Cunningham to produce a policy brief focused on the challenges associated with grouping and comparing peer institutions under the Obama Administration’s proposed college rating system. The paper analyzed institutional case studies to illustrate some of the differences and similarities among colleges and universities in three states. It demonstrated that predicted postsecondary outcomes need to be corrected or adjusted for various inputs, such as the characteristics and backgrounds of entering students. The paper also provides examples that speak to the feasibility of institutional mission as a peer-group identifier. NASFAA policy staff presented this paper’s findings on several industry panels, and the work also informed the comments NASFAA submitted to the Department of Education in response to a call for feedback on the Obama Administration’s proposed college ratings system.



Reimagining Aid Design and Delivery (RADD) Phase Two (June 2014): The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded NASFAA a grant to work as a part of a consortium of organizations studying the policy implications of moving to an automatic income-based repayment (auto-IBR) system. The consortium produced a white paper, released in March 2014, titled “Automatic for the Borrower: How Repayment Based on Income Can Reduce Loan Defaults and Manage Risk,” which proposed a series of innovative fixes to streamline the repayment process, including:

- Reducing defaults by automatically enrolling all new federal student loan borrowers in a single repayment plan based on income;
- Simplifying the repayment process by collecting payments through an employer withholding system; and
- Ensuring schools provide value to students by instituting new institutional accountability measures based on students’ ability to repay their debt.

NASFAA intends to continue researching this topic. Work has already begun on a third phase of the RADD project to design the specific mechanics of an employer withholding process and to understand the potential policy implications of such a system.



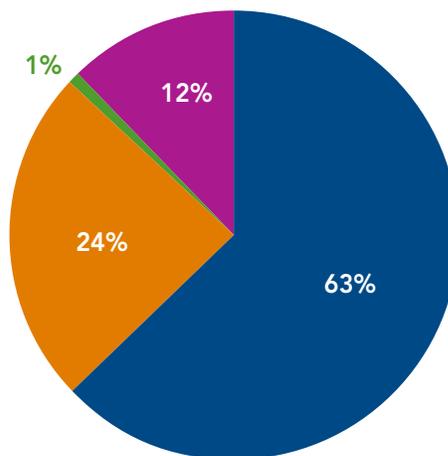
FINANCIALS

Excellence in Fiscal Oversight

NASFAA continues to stay within its budget and keep overhead low to ensure that the majority of expenditures are spent to support the needs of NASFAA members.

In fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014) 80 percent of NASFAA’s expenditures were devoted to membership programs, training, meetings, and advocacy. NASFAA spent an additional 3 percent on developing new projects and initiatives such as the Student Aid Index, unveiled as part of the standard member package in April 2014. We have once again succeeded in keeping overhead and administrative expenses low and channeling our funds instead into direct member benefits. Administrative costs amounted to 17 percent in FY14 compared to about 20 percent in FY13 (considerably less than the 26 percent average reported by other nonprofits in the American Society of Association Executives’ 2012 Operating Ratio Report).

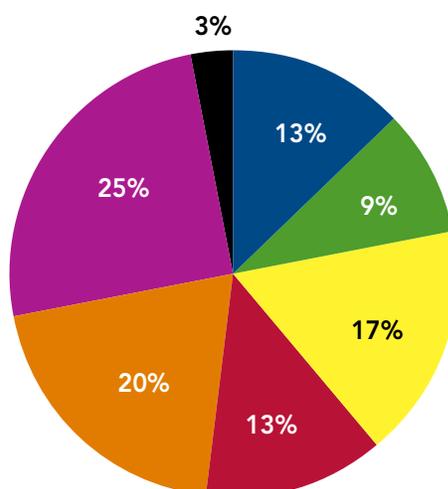
NASFAA Revenue



- Membership Dues
- Conference & Meetings
- Grants & Research
- Training & Programs

Total Operating Revenue: \$7.5 million

NASFAA Expenditures



- Membership Support
- Advocacy
- Administrative & General
- Communications & Web Expenses
- Conference & Meetings
- Programs & Training
- New Program Development

Total Operating Expenditures: \$7.2 million



THE DALLAS MARTIN ENDOWMENT



The Next Generation

In 2013-14, the NASFAA Board of Directors, in consultation with the DME Advisory Committee, allocated \$105,000 to the fund, bringing the fund to its initial fundraising goal of \$300,000. A big thank you to our generous donors who have contributed to the Dallas Martin Endowment for Public Policy and Student Aid and continue to support its mission of cultivating the next generation of student aid advocates.

Shown below: Donors from inception through June 2014 at the \$100 level and above. A full list of donors can be found on the NASFAA website at www.nasfaa.org/give.

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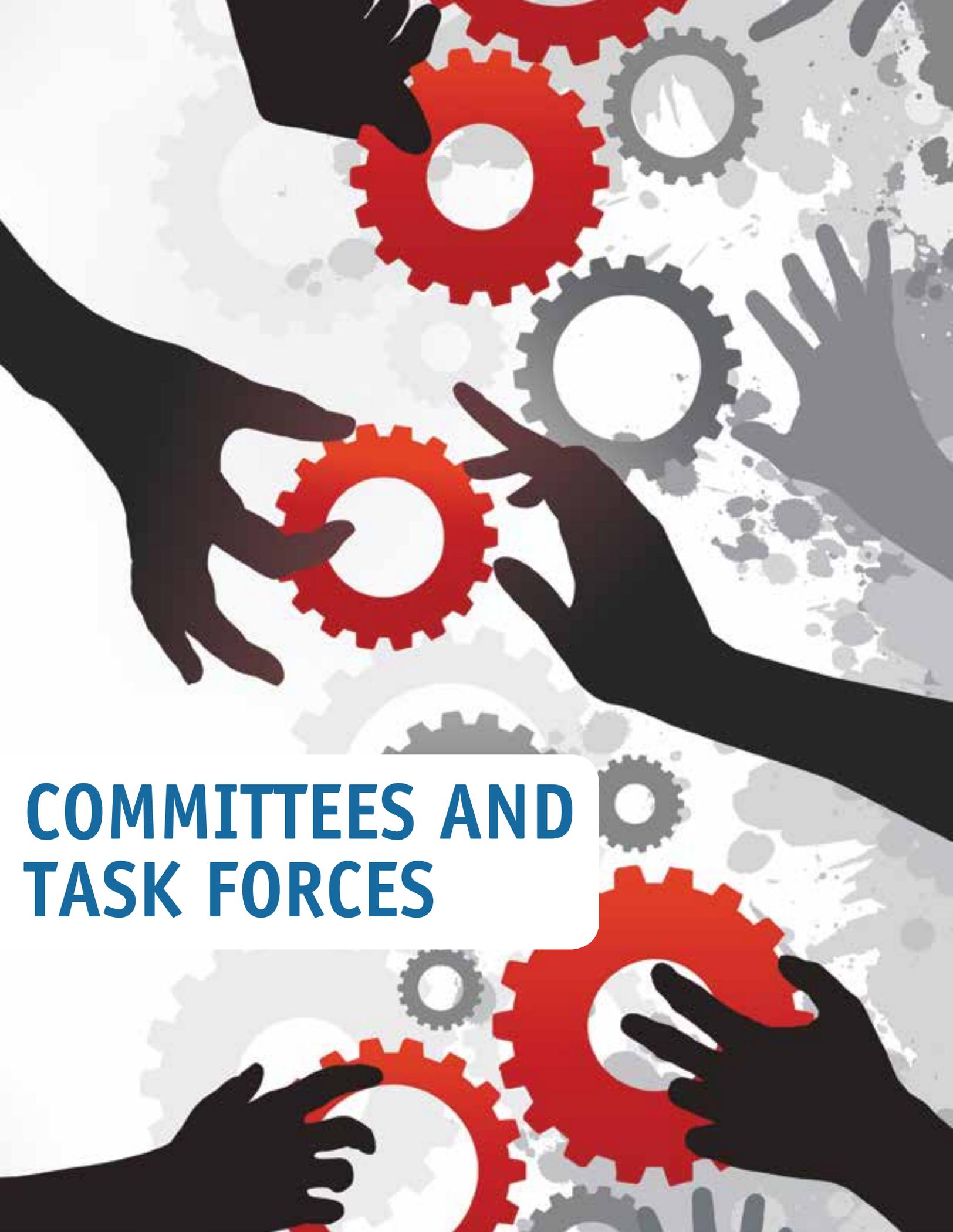
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Taking Action

Our energetic Task Force and Committee members volunteer their knowledge, experience, and talent to advance NASFAA's work throughout the year. We thank the more than 170 individuals who helped us achieve our goals in 2013-14. If you would like to volunteer to help NASFAA address the issues that affect you, your colleagues, and the students you serve, visit www.nasfaa.org/volunteer.aspx.

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WHERE TO START?



ANALYZE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION.

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PLAN YOUR STRATEGY.

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CHOOSE YOUR PATHWAY.

You can choose from **two** pathways, the *New & Aspiring Aid Directors Pathway* or the *Association Management Pathway*.

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NEW
FOR 2015!



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