

Oregon Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

May 2016 Newsletter

A publication of the Oregon Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, a not for-profit membership organization.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have all heard the saying about the only thing we can count on in life is death and taxes, right? Well, I also think financial aid administrators can add to that list that we can count on changes in financial aid.

Financial aid is heavily regulated and it takes many hands to assist students with their dream of accessing and completing a higher education. This year, 2016, is no exception. Many changes will be implemented as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for 2017-2018 becomes available on October 1, 2016 and the use of prior-prior tax year (PPY) is implemented within the FAFSA. As we move towards these soon-to-be new norms, we will all be adjusting to the new schedule of setting up our financial aid management systems and offering students their financial aid award letters earlier. Other changes that impact financial aid for our students, and our offices, relates to the free tuition waivers for eligible community college students, the Oregon Promise, beginning this fall 2016. These changes mean we will be working hard to get organized, create a strategic plan, and implement our plan.

With all of the changes in the air, we need to stick together as financial aid administrators to network, attend training, and provide outreach to students, their families, as well as high school counselors and mentors. Thank goodness we have the glorious state of Oregon to work in during these changing times. The salty air of the beach beckons us annually to the Oregon coast for networking and learning opportunities, our annual conference. The OASFAA Summer Drive-In Workshop is another opportunity to network with colleagues and receive valuable training. During these moments we come together to give each other support, a knowing look of *I understand your financial aid challenges*, and to develop a network of professionals from which to consult in our profession.

Your 2016-2017 Executive Council has rolled up their sleeves as a result of the Membership Survey that was completed and the strategic planning workshop that was held in March. Moving forward, OASFAA will have a vision of remaining financially sound and continuing to offer training to our membership and to individuals in public or private agencies or organizations concerned with student financial aid.

I invite you to volunteer within OASFAA. Get connected, even if this is your first time doing so, so that you can network with amazing, nice, fun, friendly, resourceful, welcoming, gracious, great group of people!

Jennifer Knight
Linfield College, Associate Director of Financial Aid
OASFAA President 2016-2017



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OASFAA VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

By Ashley Coleman, Volunteer Coordinator

This spring, the OASFAA Volunteer Spotlight shines on Jessica Steinhebel, Scholarship Program Coordinator at the Oregon Community Foundation. Jessica is Chair of the brand new Equity and Inclusion Action Committee and Co-Chair of the Communications Committee along with Rachael Kloke. Thank you for your service!



1. How did you get started in financial aid?

After leaving the mortgage business, I returned to the PNW and landed my first financial aid job as a Loan Program Assistant/ Default Loan Manager at Clark College in Vancouver, WA. Wow, that was in 2004!

2. How long have you been an OASFAA member?

I was an OASFAA member from 2007-2010, left financial aid to go into academic advising, and then returned to OASFAA in 2015.

3. Tell us about your volunteering experience so far with OASFAA.

My first volunteering experience didn't happen until 2015. Last year, I was part of the Newsletter Committee and the 2016 OASFAA Conference Committee. My work on the Publicity Sub-Committee led to me being the photographer for the annual conference. This year, I am co-chairing the Communications Committee, continuing as a photographer for the annual conference (I hope others join me), and as the chair for the newly revived Equity and Inclusion Action Committee. Volunteering has been a great way to reconnect with my friends and colleagues and make new ones as well. My position at the Oregon Community Foundation is a bit different than working in a traditional financial aid office, so OASFAA is a great way for me to also stay connected with what's happening in financial aid as a whole.

4. What are your goals as OASFAA Communications Co-Chair and as Chair of the new Equity and Inclusion Action Committee?

Rachael and I are still finalizing some of the goals of the Communications Committee. One of the goals that we are really passionate about is engaging the OASFAA community. As for the Equity and Inclusion Action Committee, one of the primary goals we have been asked to pursue is making sure that training topics related to EIA are addressed in all venues. Another goal is to look at ways OASFAA can incorporate Equity and Inclusion to engage the community. I am particularly interested in looking at how OASFAA supports and provides opportunities for EI in the profession, and how financial aid administrators incorporate EI when working with students and other communities outside of financial aid.

5. Any words of wisdom you'd like to share with your fellow OASFAA members?

Don't be scared about volunteering! There are many opportunities that will work with your schedule. Not only is it fun, it's a great way to make some long lasting connections across the financial aid landscape.

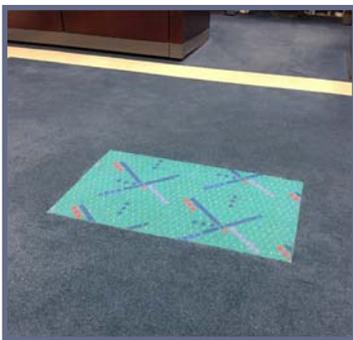
NASFAA LEADERSHIP & LEGISLATIVE CONFER-

By Mark Diestler, President-Elect 2016-2017

One of the first duties of the President-Elect and Treasurer of OASFAA is to travel to Washington, D.C. for the NASFAA Leadership & Legislative Conference & Expo (that's a mouthful, I'll refer to it as the Conference from this point on). We were on the Association Management track, but there was also a track for New & Aspiring Aid Directors and one for Enrollment Management. So in late February, Stacie Englund and I packed our bags and headed across the country. Long time OASFAA member, Mike Johnson, was also there representing WASFAA, but he was nice enough to hang with Stacie and me during much of the week. The weather was rainy and gloomy, reminded me of Eugene during that time of the year – we even had to rebook our flights home, as the airport grounded flights the evening we were set to fly home due to tornado warnings in the area.



The Conference was a real eye-opener for me. I've been in financial aid long enough that for me most conferences tend to be pretty much the same thing over and over, with slight updates. Not this one! Prior to the



conference I didn't know much about running a non-profit organization such as OASFAA. We received top-notch training from professionals within and outside of financial aid. We had an opportunity to learn about effectively running a meeting, parliamentary style. We also learned about fiscal fitness and volunteer management. Many attendees reflected on the conflicts of keeping unity in the association, yet being sure to be inclusive and bringing in new faces with fresh ideas. A faculty member from Georgetown taught us about legal and ethical implications of leading our association. We examined our own governing documents and got practical ways to work on a strategic plan and organizational goals. NASFAA President Justin Draeger even had a "bonus session" on balancing work-life commitments. Stacie was able to sit

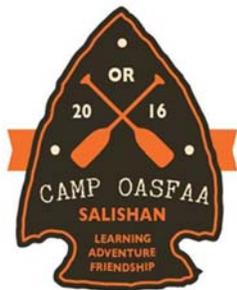
at a table of other associations' treasurers and discuss best practices, I know she brought back a number of great ideas that we might try in OASFAA.

On the final day of the Conference we went to Capitol Hill and had a chance to meet with a few of our state legislators. More specifically, aides for our state legislators. Originally we were planning on going as part of the larger WASFAA group, but the government relations staff at the University of Oregon were kind enough to schedule us with representatives from Oregon. The aides we met with were very knowledgeable about the financial aid programs. They really impressed me with their knowledge, even getting into the weeds on occasion. We met with staffers from the offices of: Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, Congressman Peter DeFazio, and Senator Jeff Merkley. We also had a meeting set up with Senator Ron Wyden's office, but it was pushed back and we were unable to attend. All the meetings went really well and it was great to speak face-to-face about what kind of issues schools are seeing in funding for Higher Education. Most of the discussions revolved around simplification efforts, both the FAFSA and the plethora of repayment options for borrowers; as well as college affordability. Congresswoman Bonamici sought insight on a new way of doing federal work-study. A reasonable, workable way and if changes were made to the formula (base guarantee) how that would affect institutions and students in Oregon. If you have any thoughts on this that you would like to share please pass them on to me.

If this conference sounds like something you would be interested in attending next year on behalf of our wonderful state association please email me at diestler@uoregon.edu.

OASFAA CONFERENCE WRAP UP

By Ashley Coleman, Annual Conference Co-Chair



The 2016 OASFAA Conference was held February 3-5 at Salishan Spa & Golf Resort in Gleneden Beach and it was a huge success! 135 campers (attendees) enjoyed our summer camp themed event.

The event kicked off with an Executive Council meeting, followed by the Newcomer's Session hosted by Susan Shogren from NASFAA and Jenna Greenwood from the University of Oregon. There were 38 newcomers at the conference this year.



Everyone gathered for lunch in the Long House, where we enjoyed a performance from the OASFAA 'Not So Ready for Prime Time' Players. They performed a skit highlighting the day-to-day humorous struggles of a financial aid administrator. After lunch, our keynote speaker Jan Michael Looking Wolf spoke and showed us some early instruments.

The rest of the conference consisted of learning opportunities at more than 40 breakout sessions, a federal update presented by Department of Education trainer Kim Wells and time spent in the vendor room. We had nine vendors this year: ECMC, Inceptia, American Student Assistance/SALT, Charter One, Discover, First Marblehead, Great Lakes, USA Funds and Wells Fargo. Campers were encouraged

to visit each booth so they would be entered to win camp-themed prizes.

Of course, it wouldn't be an OASFAA conference without some old fashioned fun. Wednesday night we enjoyed happy hour where your first drink ticket was courtesy of the Ford Family Foundation. After a wonderful dinner and awards, Jan Michael Looking Wolf's One Heart band performed. Then it was onto karaoke in the Attic Lounge! Throughout the conference, campers were challenged with finding scavenger hunt items on the Salishan property and collecting as many badges as they could for their name tag by participating in events. Karinda Farley from Southern Oregon University was the overall winner with the most badges collected and she won a special prize. In the vendor room, we had an arts & crafts booth set up where campers could paint their own pet rock, put together a sun magnet or create a popsicle stick frame or pen holder.

On Friday morning after breakfast (yum, bacon!),



we welcomed representatives from Backpacks for Kids, the charity that we supported for the second year in a row. Backpacks for Kids provides weekend meals to children in need from the Lincoln City area. The representatives chose the winner of the best decorated box contest, and Central Oregon Community College won for the second year in a row with their RV themed creation. They were the winners of a jam-packed summer camp themed gift basket. Congratulations! OASFAA raised \$3,890 in donated food and other items and ECMC matched \$2,000 to bring our grand total to **\$5,890!** Amazing job!

OASFAA Conference Wrap Up Con't. from Page 4.



OASFAA would like to extend a special thank you to all that participated in the conference. Thank you to our keynote speaker Jan Michael Looking Wolf and his One Heart band. Thank you to the Ford Family Foundation for once again sponsoring our drink tickets. A huge thank you to ECMC for donating \$2,000 to Backpacks for Kids. Thank you to the vendors for sponsoring our conference and to the campers for taking time away from the office to be there. Thanks to Salishan for once again taking great care of us. Thank you to the presenters for sharing your knowledge. Finally, a very special thank you goes out to the 2016 conference committee for working so hard to put on an amazing conference. We hope everyone had a wonderful time. If you weren't able to attend, the presentations and handouts have been posted to the [conference webpage](#).



Donna Fulton and I were lucky enough to co-chair both the 2015 and 2016 conferences together. I learned a lot from Donna during this process, and I want to thank her for being there through it all. Donna and I are passing the co-chairing torches onto Greg Kerr from ECMC and Leslie Limper from Pacific University, who will be organizing the 2017 OASFAA Conference to be held February 1-3 at Salishan. Please mark your calendars and be sure to attend!



Pictured inside the Backpacks for Kid Food Pantry in Lincoln City are program Co-Founder Pat Robertson, left, and Treasurer Susan Wahlke.

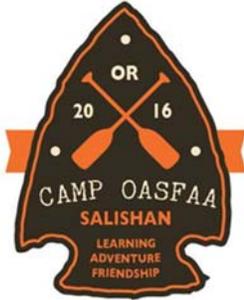


Camp OASFAA 2016

Salishan Resort- Gleneden Beach, Oregon

ANNUAL CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP REFLECTION

By Debbie O'Dea, Southern Oregon University



In my previous work I have attended conferences that are dry, impersonal, all-work-and-no-play. Perhaps it is the nature of what we, as Financial Aid Professionals, do on a day-to-day basis: dealing with funds which can lead to stressful situations in our work with students. The minute I checked in to Camp OASFAA and received my first button, though, I knew that this would be a different kind of conference.

Although I already had the incentive to be involved through my committee participation, receiving the scholarship motivated me to really make the most out of my Conference experience. The sessions were laid out very carefully and I did not have to worry about scheduling conflicts forcing me to choose one over another. As a first time attendee I was pleased to find that the sessions made space for open conversation and sharing of experiences; we all come from such diverse backgrounds and there was so much to be learned from the person on either side of me. It was clear each presenter gave time and thought to the topic they were discussing and how they presented the information.

What a testament to OASFAA and its members to see so much active participation in both the information and educational portion of the conference, and almost equal amounts of participation during the social and fun portions. The sense of community among our financial aid colleagues (who may be far removed from one another geographically) was apparent from the very first session.

Being able to get excited about three days of learning is a testament to what a special organization OASFAA is.

Additionally, I am extremely grateful to have been chosen as an Annual Conference Scholarship recipient, not only for my own experience, but because this allowed my office to send more people than we might otherwise have been able to. It was a great opportunity for bonding not only for our office but within the larger organization.

I am already looking forward to next year's OASFAA Conference, and sincerely hope the committee can once again find ways to give bacon an active role!



STAY SOCIAL WITH OASFAA!

Keeping in touch gets easier by the day! Thanks to the wide variety of social media and professional networking sites online, getting information, event updates, and establishing those all important professional connections is a snap!



Your OASFAA communications team is working hard to update our [Facebook](#), LinkedIn, and Twitter accounts with the latest in relevant financial aid news, training opportunities and member updates. The next time you are online, check out one of the OASFAA pages, you'll be glad you did!

Information on training events, such as Financial Aid 101/201, Annual Conference, and our Summer Drive-In Workshop will be posted on our Facebook and Twitter feeds! You may also get reminders about our WASFAA regional training posted as well as the Sister Dale Brown Institute.

OASFAA MEMBER NEWS

Promotions & Achievements

OASFAA's very own Helen Faith, Financial Aid Director at Lane Community College, took runner up for her meme "The New FAFSA: Faster. Earlier. Easier!" submitted into the NASFAA PPY Implementation Task Force contest to help schools promote PPY and the Early FAFSA going into effect for the 2017-2018 award year.

Anna Hitchcock and Danielle Basile have been promoted to Assistant Directors of Financial Aid at Concordia University.

Heather Hall Lewis was promoted to Associate Director effective March 1st (she was previously an Assistant Director).

Gerardo Ochoa will remain with Linfield College, but serving in a new capacity as Assistant Dean for Diversity and Community Partnerships.

Ingrid Green Baker was promoted to Director of Financial Aid at Pioneer Pacific College.

Shauna Wing was promoted to Corporate Director of Financial Aid at Pioneer Pacific College.

Carlos Villarroel was promoted to Associate Corporate Director of Financial Aid at Pioneer Pacific College.

Tina Phifer was recently promoted in the Scholarships team from a Financial Aid Counselor to an Assistant Director at the University of Oregon.

Regan Kaplan last year was promoted to Assistant Director at Oregon State University

New Hires

Julie Aalberg, formerly of Concordia University, has joined the Linfield College financial aid team. She is the new Assistant Director of Financial Aid for the Portland Campus.

Two new hires in the Concordia University online office: Lloyd Epperly and Karen Meketa. Lloyd was previously employed at Multnomah University as a Financial Aid Counselor. Karen was previously employed at the National College of Natural Medicine as the Assistant Registrar. Both Lloyd and Karen are Online Financial Aid Counselors.

Linfield College in McMinnville welcomes Noemi Flores to financial aid, her title is Financial Aid Specialist.

Stu Talene joined Pioneer Pacific College in October 2015 as a Financial Aid Officer

Shauna Harper has joined the Scholarships team as a Financial Aid Counselor at the University of Oregon.

Jake Logan, Hallie Price, and Cassie Smith have all join the staff at Oregon State University as Financial Aid Advisors over the last year.

Professional Milestones

Scott James celebrated his 16th year in the Financial Aid Office at The Art Institute of Portland.

Carmen Sayre celebrated her 10th year in the Financial Aid Office at The Art Institute of Portland

Umit Tanit Anwar joined the Financial Aid Team at The Art Institute of Portland and brings over 7 years of experience with her.

Ashley Coleman celebrated her 5 year anniversary at the University of Oregon on February 14th.

Henry George, Assistant Director for Loans & Communications is the 2016 recipient of the Portland State University Student Support Services Award of Appreciation. He will receive this award on May 17, 2016.

Celebrations

Thais Diaz of Concordia University, has welcomed a second child into her family this April.

Staci Miles, Assistant Director at University of Oregon, and her husband Todd welcomed their new baby girl Larkin on December 14th



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

By Peter Goss, Segmental VP Private 4 Year

Greetings to my colleagues in the independent sector.

While our President(s) and Treasurer have been working behind the scenes for several months already. The first official Exec Council meeting of the new cycle was held in March, it was a full and productive meeting, covering a wide range of topics. Besides myself, our sector is well-represented on the Exec Council this year with 4 voting members: President, Past-President, Treasurer, sector VP.

As part of its agenda, the Exec Council also appointed committee chairs, and our sector is represented with slots for the High School Counselor, Annual Conference, Communications, Mentoring, Membership, Summer Drive-in, and Site Selection committees.

The training schedule for the next 12 months is, at least roughly, penciled out as:

Summer Drive-In (July-Aug) – Jocelyn Hubbs from NCU is co-chair
FA 101/201 (early Nov)
Annual Conference (Feb 2017) – Leslie Limper from Pacific is co-chair

Much discussion was around budgets, and arcane details of the OASFAA policies and procedures manual (yes, we have one of those too!). But there was also some focused brainstorming/discussion around the types of training we provide, as well as the means of delivery, as well as the nature/cost of membership, and the value and structure of the VP positions. All with the goal of better serving our members and pursuing our mission.

It is not yet known if the Summer Drive-In will include a business meeting – keep your eyes and ears open, but hopefully many of you will be attending (if not helping out on the event committee) regardless.

I will leave it there, as for many of you your eyes may already be glazing over. However, if you have any questions at all, please let me know, and the same applies if you have any ideas or issues you'd like me to bring up to the Exec Council for our next quarterly meeting. Your ideas and concerns can be emailed to me at pgoss@uws.edu.



REGIONAL HAPPY HOURS: COMING SOON!



One of the greatest aspects of the OASFAA Annual Conference is the opportunity to see old friends and to make new ones. Each year, we gather along the gorgeous Oregon coast and catch up over great food and drinks with our conference buddies.

Who's to say that this can only happen once a year? The Communications Committee is working with volunteers at University of Oregon, Linfield College, Concordia University, and a handful of other wonderful OASFAA folks to establish regional happy hours throughout the state.

As more details are finalized dates and locations will be made available to OASFAA members by email and social networking sites. If you have questions or would like to help, please feel free to reach out to the Communications Committee through the [OASFAA Facebook](#) page!

EDITORIAL POLICY

OASFAA welcomes all views and invites submissions of articles, essays, photographs, or information of general interest to all members. Submissions should be brief, and should advertise specific products or services. Submissions may be edited. It may not be possible to publish all articles submitted. Opinions expressed in the OASFAA newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily of OASFAA, its members, or the institutions represented by the authors. Email items for publication to the Communications Committee .

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BACON BITS: CANDIED BACON

By Rachael Kloke, Communications Co-Chair

Bacon, sweet candy meat sent down from the heavens! This deliciously sweet and savory item makes everything just a little bit better, from adding a salty crunch to your cobb salad to making a Saturday morning just a little extra special, there is no wrong that bacon cannot right.

With that being said, you might just want to try Alex Guarnaschelli's Candied Bacon recipe.

Candied Bacon

Ingredients

12 slices bacon, about 1/4 in. thick

Finely ground black pepper

1/3 C light brown sugar

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F.

Put bacon slices in a bowl, season them with pepper and toss with the brown sugar. Cover a baking sheet with parch-

ment or foil and arrange the bacon in a single layer on top. Sprinkle any sugar left in the bowl over the bacon. Top with another layer of parchment or foil and top it, squarely, with another baking sheet. The baking sheet will flatten the bacon as it cooks.

Place the tray in the center of the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Check the bacon by lifting the top tray and parchment. If it is not golden brown and fairly crispy, resist the temptation to turn up the oven temperature, and cook it for 10 to 15 minutes longer. Check it again. Keep in mind that when you remove the tray and transfer the bacon to a serving platter or individual plates, the bacon will "crisp" up a little more. Be patient!

Recipe courtesy of Alex Guarnaschelli

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FIVE SIMPLE TIPS FOR REDUCING SPRING STRESS

Submitted by Sun Ow, Senior Marketing Associate

Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc.

It's no secret that spring is one of the busiest times in the financial aid office. With so much to do, it can seem impossible to fit another task into an already busy day, especially when that task is taking care of yourself. Fortunately, Great Lakes is here with 5 simple ideas for reducing spring stress that you could (and should) incorporate into your daily routine with minimal effort—and big results.

Make a to-do list. Have a lot on your plate? Trying to keep it all straight in your head can get in the way of being productive. Instead, write down a to-do list—and keep it realistic. Consider using an app such as Wunderlist, which allows you to break down your task list by category, and then by day and week. It's satisfying to check things off as you complete them, and it lets you see how much you actually accomplish.

Change your scenery. If you spend a lot of your day in the same spot, a change could do you good. If you can, work from a conference room for a while, or treat yourself with a cup of coffee (and free Wi-Fi) from the café down the street. The difference in environment gets your brain thinking differently, and helps you fight the midday slump.

Meditate. (Seriously). Although it may seem silly to the uninitiated, just a few minutes of practice each day can help ease anxiety. Research suggests it may

alter your brain's neural pathways, making you better able to handle stress. Try this: sit up straight with both feet flat on the floor. Close your eyes, and focus on reciting (out loud or to yourself) a positive mantra, such as *I feel at peace* (or Great Lakes' favorite, *We love our schools*). Put one hand on your stomach to sync the mantra with your breaths, and feel all the distractions float away.

Reach out. Use your social network to your advantage. Talking to someone—even if it's not directly about a problem—helps you get a fresh perspective while keeping your personal connections strong. Try to keep a standing lunch date with a friend outside of your office. It will give you a dependable outlet to look forward to each week.



Take time for a 10-minute tidy. At the end of each work day, try to set aside 10 minutes to clear away the clutter—whether it's the scattered papers on your desk, or the old emails hanging out in your inbox. Taking this time will help eliminate the need for huge cleaning projects, and it will give you a chance to decompress before leaving the office. Heading home on a neutral note will help you leave the stress of work at work, and give you a head start on that good night's sleep.

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE UPDATE

By Kelli Macha, Segmental VP Community Colleges

We all know firsthand that working in financial aid is always busy, especially at this time of year. This year we're dealing with the Oregon Promise and various senate bills that are great for students but also gave us the task of changing how we work to make these happen. And then, of course, there's those changes happening in the near future that will affect many other office practices. The upcoming early FAFSA access and the use of prior-prior year for 17/18 will mean a lot of adjusting to our work calendars. We have a lot to keep us busy!

This is one of the reasons I am so amazed by and love the people who work in financial aid: we are so busy and yet we remain passionate about our work. In fact, many of us also find some time to volunteer. We each have our reasons, maybe it's a local project or it could be volunteering for OASFAA. I've done (and continue to do) both but it wasn't until I became a member of the E.C. that I realized just how many opportunities there are available to us. OASFAA is a dynamic organization that keeps up with the current training needs and also creates opportunities for professional development! We are currently looking at many things including how to engage everyone more efficiently and keep the lines of communication open to all. All sectors come together to review our policies and procedures and to create this informational, engaging and welcoming atmosphere. Please, if you're waiting on the sidelines, know that you are welcomed with open arms to participate as much or as little as you like. Whether or not you participate is up to you but you're missing out if you decide to stay on the sidelines. If you have ideas or suggestions please contact me, I'm here for **you!** I'll bring those thoughts and suggestions forward – maybe we'll start something new or make a change to a current offering. Email your thoughts and suggestions to **Kelli.Macha@umpqua.edu**



I recently sent out a message asking for any news from your office, any promotions or additions to your office, retirement news, etc. Unfortunately I only received 2 responses and one was to say she didn't belong to the community college group – maybe we should recheck that email group for starters! This is a fantastic group of people, please join us, and take advantage of the training and professional development opportunities. Let us hear from you and definitely keep up the amazing work that you do; students, institutions and communities appreciate you!!



LEARNING MATTERS: CONSIDER A CREDENTIAL

*By Susan Shogren, CPLP®
NASFAA Assessment and Training Project Coordinator*

In the July 2014 issue of the OASFAA Newsletter, I shared the following quote from Astrophysicist and author, Neil deGrasse Tyson: “For me, I am driven by two main philosophies: know more today about the world than I knew yesterday and lessen the suffering of others. You'd be surprised how far that gets you.”

Today, I still believe these two philosophies drive those of us who work in financial aid, too. We know a lot. And the more we know, the more we realize there is to know. And just when we think we know it all, the rules of the game change and it's time to learn again! Why do we do this work? I believe most of us would say: To help students. To lessen the suffering of others. To change lives.

Ever since I stumbled my way in to working in financial aid over 25 years ago, I've been fascinated by how the people I work with and the colleagues I meet at conferences learned all they need to know. Even after several years in this profession, I still didn't feel like an expert on the thousands of regulations that tell us what we can, can't, should, could, may, might or must do. It was several more years before I felt I was ready to profess to any level of expertise—and that was only in the specific programs I'd focused on so far; there was still so much more to learn. Most of us would agree that it takes significant training, years of experience and a well-rounded perspective to excel in this arena.

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One way to continue to learn about federal financial aid is to enroll in one of the growing number of graduate programs in higher education administration, student affairs administration or educational leadership. Maybe you're not ready to make quite that level of commitment of time and money? Another way is to pursue one or more of [NASFAA's credentials](#) in Title IV student financial aid administration. For those of you who might be wondering, NASFAA is the national version of OASFAA, serving nearly 20,000 financial aid professionals at around 3,000 colleges, universities and career schools across the country—but you don't have to be a member of NASFAA to pursue one of these credentials. A professional credential shows you've sufficiently mastered the learning content in a specific subject area. If you've already specialized in that area, you'll have an easier time passing the credential test. As you prepare for the exam, you might even learn a few more nuances you didn't know before. If you don't have much experience in a subject area yet, the training materials will help you learn what you need to know.

There are 16 different topics to choose from:

- Application Process
- Student Eligibility
- Cost of Attendance
- Need Analysis: Federal and Institutional Methodology
- Verification
- Federal Pell Grant and IASG
- Campus-Based Programs
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grants
- Direct Loan Program
- Packaging and Notification of Awards (new)
- Return of Title IV Funds
- Satisfactory Academic Progress
- Consumer Information
- Cash Management
- Administrative Capability
- Professional Judgment (new)

To earn each credential, you'll pass an online exam designed to test your knowledge and your ability to apply what you know. You'll answer multiple-choice and scenario-based questions that have been carefully written and thoroughly evaluated for accuracy and reliability. If you achieve a passing score—which varies from one topic to another, based on difficulty level—you'll earn the credential and your name will be added to the [Credential Earners Honor Roll](#).

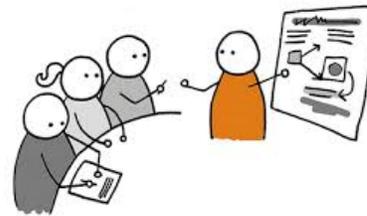
Whatever your experience level in each subject area, you can choose a path toward earning a credential that works best for you.

Do you have at least five years of comprehensive experience and an exceptional understanding of federal financial aid regulations? Send in your resume and we'll let you know whether you've got the "green light" to take exams in any or all topics. Pre-tests are available to help you confirm when you're ready for the exam.

Would you prefer to study independently? Self-Study Guides are available for every topic. Each guide is divided up into three to five lessons—including a wide variety of learning exercises—and is designed to help you prepare for the exam in that subject area.

Would you rather take an online course? Courses are six- to eight-weeks in length, and several courses are offered each year. Video-enhanced lectures and live online chat create a highly-interactive learning experience. You'll also get to know financial aid professionals from other schools across the country and learn from

each other about the unique challenges different schools encounter and various approaches to federal financial aid administration.



Would you rather sign up for a more intensive learning experience away from the office? Look for workshops, institutes and boot camps offered by regional and state financial aid associations using NASFAA's approved curriculum. For example, [WASFAA's Sister Dale Brown Summer Institute](#) is being held at Portland State University this year between June 19-24, 2016 (helpful hint: register before May 13, 2016). Currently, if you attend an approved boot camp taught by credentialed instructors, you can earn professional credentials for a limited time afterwards, and at no extra charge.

To keep learning is to keep growing. Whatever approach you take—formal education and training, or learning as you go—continue to pursue excellence. The work we do as financial aid professionals isn't easy, but it's worth it. Keep on learning, so you can continue to make a difference in the lives of the students you serve.

Crossword

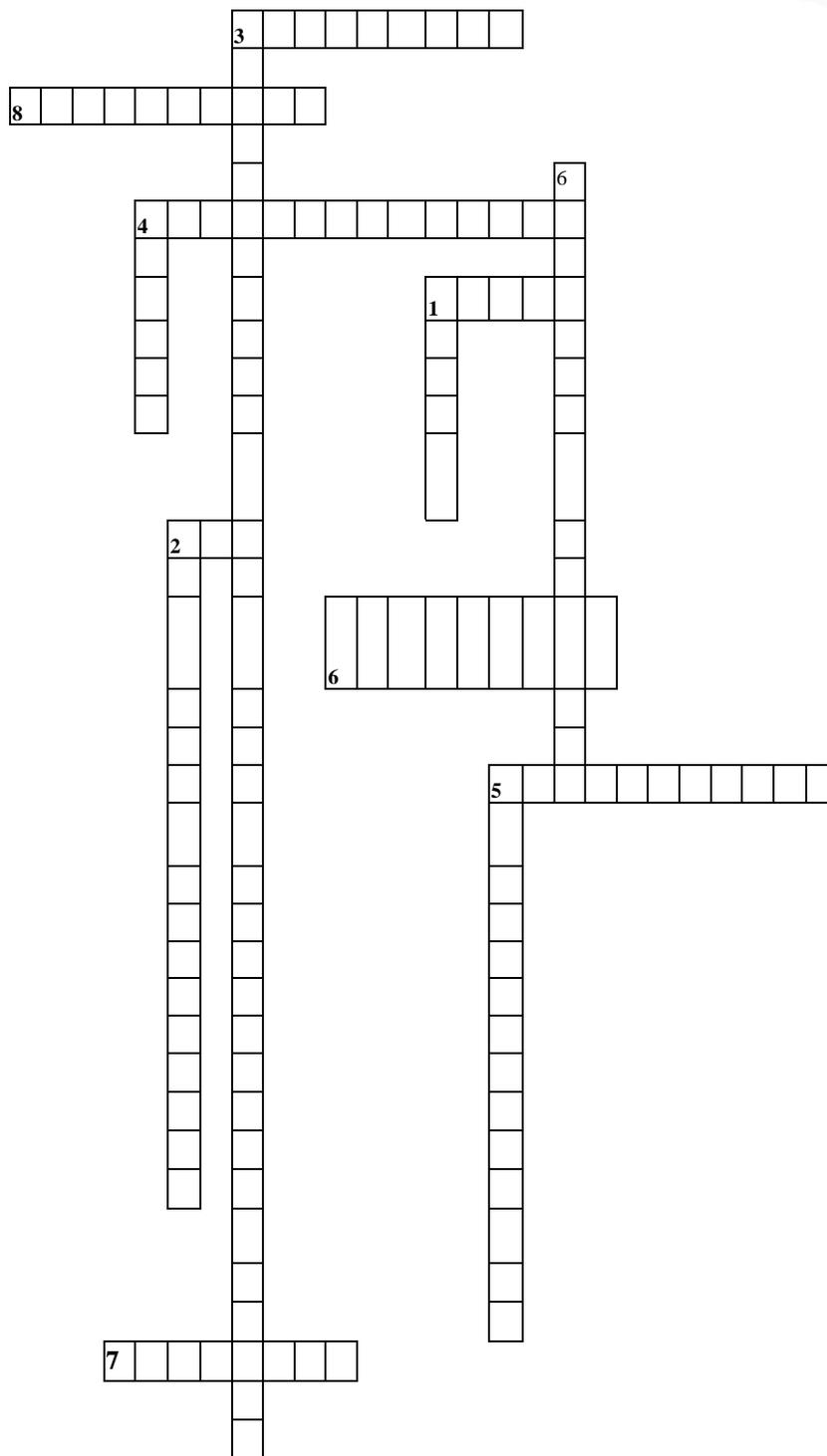


Across

1. OASFAA Annual Conference Meat
2. Abbreviation for programs of study that specialize in skilled trades.
3. When a student exceeds financial need for grants.
4. A new state grant for graduating high school seniors who start community college
5. Type of scholarship where a student is eligible to receive it a following year if criteria continues to be met.
6. The number of counties in Oregon.
7. A city in Oregon that pronounces its name different from the local tribe.
8. State-tree

Down

1. Part of the student budget.
2. Estimated student budget.
3. OSAC is the acronym for this state agency.
4. A river in south east Oregon.
5. State animal.
6. Current OASFAA President



Crossword key located on Page 14.



Crossword Key

Across

- OASFAA Annual Conference Meat
- Abbreviation for programs of study that specialized in skilled trades.
- When a student exceeds financial need for grants.
- A new state grant for graduating high school seniors who start community college within in 6 months of graduation.
- Type of scholarship where a student is eligible to receive it a following year if criteria continues to be met.
- The number of counties in Oregon.
- A city in Oregon that pronounces its name different from the local tribe.
- State tree

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Down

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