



THE INFORMER

The Quarterly IASFAA Newsletter

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COUNCIL!

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MEMBER VOICES

As we enter into another academic year, the Communications Committee is pleased to share the IASFAA Informer Quarterly Newsletter, Volume 16.

In this issue, you'll see the new faces on Executive Council and learn about each committee and how you can get involved. You will also have a chance to voice your opinion in what you think the theme should be for our annual spring conference!

Did You Know? IASFAA's New Institutional Membership is Here!

As of the 2024-2025 membership year, IASFAA has transitioned to an Institutional Membership model for Iowa colleges and universities. Memberships are now processed by institution or organization, rather than by individual staff members. Renewal applications can only be accessed by your organization's designated Key Contact, who manages membership on behalf of your institution. Associate Members can annually choose between individual or institutional membership options. Instructions are provided to guide you through this process each year. If you have any questions about your membership, feel free to contact Duane Polsdofer, Membership Chair, at duane.polsdofer@waldorf.edu.

Meet Your Executive Council



President

Sarah Freestone
Iowa State University



President-Elect

Kelsey Ryder
University of Iowa



Past President

Matt Falduto
Kirkwood Community College



Vice President

Karna Hofmeyer
Northwest Iowa Community College



Secretary

Isaac Ehlers
Iowa State University



Treasurer

Ryan Zantingh
Drake University



Treasurer-Elect

Abbie Steinberg
North Iowa Area Community College

Delegates-at-Large



Kylee Klommhaus
*Southwestern
Community College*



Tim Bakula
University of Northern Iowa



Erick Danielson
*ICAN-Iowa College
Access Network*



Get to Know IASFAA!

Being part of an IASFAA committee is more than just taking on a role—it's a fantastic opportunity to build lasting friendships and gain valuable professional insights. Your involvement not only contributes to the success of our initiatives but also helps you connect with like-minded professionals who share your passion for student financial aid.

We understand that everyone has different capacities, so the time commitment for each committee can vary. You can be as involved as your schedule allows—whether you have a few hours or more to contribute, your participation is valued and impactful.

In a couple of weeks, we'll be sending out a volunteer submission form for all committees. If you're eager to join us and make a meaningful difference, keep an eye out for this chance to get involved. Learn more about each committee below:

Awards

Chair: Mark Freed, mfreed@mtmercy.edu

Co-Chair: Jess Graham, jessica-graham@uiowa.edu

The Awards Committee collects nominations for the IASFAA Awards, orders plaques for the awards, and then has the honor of presenting these awards to IASFAA members at the conference!

Time Commitment: Very low! Involvement increases as we get closer to conference time.

Association Communications

Chair: Vanessa Wiest, vanessa-wiest@uiowa.edu

Co-Chair: Tatiana Ochoa, Tatiana-ochoa@uiowa.edu

The Communications Committee manages and enhances the content, design, and structure of key IASFAA publications, including the quarterly IASFAA Informer, the annual IASFAA by the Numbers, and our social media channels (Facebook, Instagram). We also support other IASFAA committees by leveraging these tools to amplify our collective goals, achievements, and successes.

Time Commitment: The committee meets monthly for 30-60 minutes. Members are expected to dedicate approximately 1-10 hours outside of meetings, depending on what they are working on.

Community Outreach

Chair: Krystal Crandall, crandall_k@iowacentral.edu

Co-Chair: Matthew Anderson, matthew-anderson@uiowa.edu

The Community Outreach Committee works on establishing IASFAA within our communities, by organizing events to advocate for Financial Aid like, Day on the Hill to meet with your representatives and partnering with ICAN to help students and families file the FAFSA.

Time Commitment: We meet once per month, so very low level of engagement, and a great introduction to volunteering for IASFAA.

Diversity

Chair: Taylor Beyal, taylor-beyal@uiowa.edu;

Co-Chair: Jen Kaiser, jkaiser@mtmercy.edu

The Diversity Committee coordinates at least one session at the IASFAA conference, and educates membership by recognizing heritage months, celebrations, holidays, etc. via the IASFAA listserv and social media.

Time Commitment: Low! We meet once typically every other month via Zoom.

Electronic Services

Chair: Chris Ditter, chris.ditter@drake.edu

Co-Chair: Mary Jacobsen, mjacobse@iastate.edu

The purpose of Electronic Services committee is to provide technological support and services via the IASFAA website. The committee acts as a liaison between membership and the website provider (MemberClicks) to communicate all web requests. The committee has a chairperson and co-chair, but typically no additional members. This year our biggest initiative has been implementing Institutional Membership. We continue to work on this initiative as well as others that are presented to our committee.

Time Commitment: The time commitment varies based on the time of year and the needs of the association. Some weeks no time commitment is required; however, during busy times (such as conferences and new year start up) it could be 4-6 hours per week.

Exhibitor Relations

Chair: Kayli Sampson, kesamp@iastate.edu

Co-Chair: Sultan Karim, sultan.karim@kirkwood.edu

The Exhibitor Relations Committee of IASFAA acts as a liaison between the association and its exhibitors.

Time Commitment: Very low! Involvement increases as we get closer to conference time.

Membership

Chair: Duane Polsdofed, polsdofed@waldorf.edu,

Co-Chair: Alice Bunjer, bunjera@faith.edu

Tries to encourage IASFAA membership growth through various endeavors. A highlight from the past year: Converting both Regular and Associate membership over to an Institutional option has been a huge but gratifying activity!

Time Commitment: Would plan to meet with committee on an every other month basis and as needed.

Professional Development

Chair: Isaac Ehlers, imehlers@iastate.edu;

Co-Chair: Renae Armentrout, rarmentrout@coe.edu

The Professional Development Committee is dedicated to fostering the growth and development of financial aid professionals across Iowa. This committee is responsible for planning and organizing various educational opportunities, such as workshops, webinars, and conferences, aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals working within the field of student financial aid.

Time Commitment: The committee meets monthly, and typically spends 1-3 hours per month on various professional development events and activities.

Program

Chair: Vanessa Wiest, vanessa-wiest@uiowa.edu;

Co-Chair: Randi Boelkes, randi.boelkes@ascensus.com

The Program Committee organizes and executes a successful annual conference tailored to meet the professional needs of IASFAA members. Responsibilities include soliciting presentation proposals for both targeted interest and general sessions, securing a keynote speaker and special guests, partnering with a local charity, and arranging entertainment. A highlight for the upcoming Spring 2025 conference: We will need 10-20 of YOU to help us make this event a success! Be on the lookout for the call for volunteers! We hope to have our in-person planning meeting on site in December. More details to come!

Time Commitment: The committee meets monthly beginning in December, and then bi-weekly as we get closer to the conference for 45-60 minutes. We also have one in-person planning session. Members are expected to dedicate approximately 2-7 hours outside of meetings and are encouraged to attend the annual conference, though not required.

Site Coordinating

Chair: Randy Mashek, maskekr@nicc.edu,

Co-Chair: Kristi Fuller, kristi.fuller@drake.edu

The Site Committee researches and makes decisions on venues of where the annual conference of the association will take place. The chair and co-chair serve as members of the Program Committee to assist in the planning of the annual conference. This committee selects all conference meals to recommend a registration fee for the conference. During the conference the committee members make sure all technology is set up in the rooms for presentations, meals are served as planned/scheduled and works as the point of contact between IASFAA and hotel staff.

Time Commitment: 2-4/hours per month while planning. During the conference, the committee is on call the entire scheduled time.

2025 Spring IASFAA Conference

We've brainstormed five exciting conference theme ideas, and we want your input to determine which one will be the star of the show. Your feedback will shape the focus and vibe of our event, so make sure your voice is heard! Be sure to send this out to your teams so they can vote! All IASFAA members are allowed to vote!

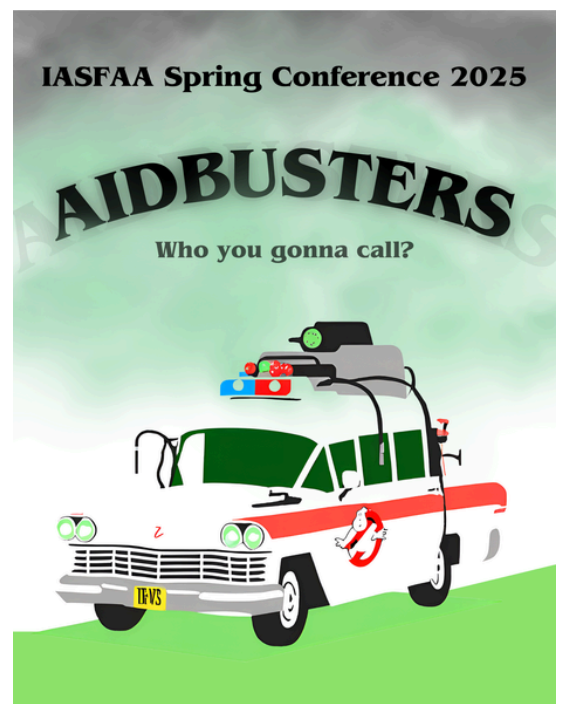
How to Participate:

1. Review the Themes: Take a look at the five theme ideas below.
2. Rank the Themes: Rank from most to least favorite, using [THIS SURVEY](#).
3. Submit Your Rankings: Submit your [rank survey](#) by September 30.

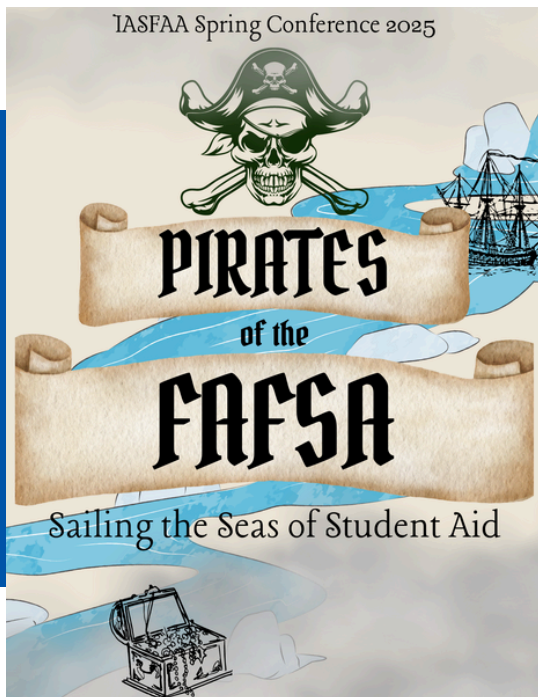
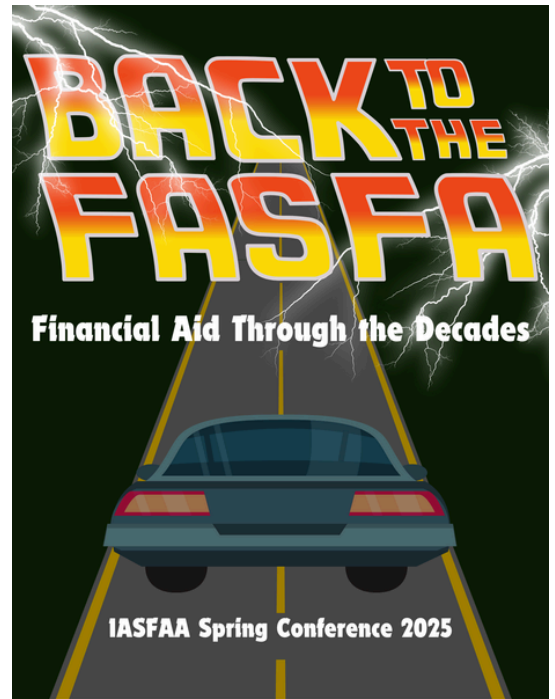


Inspired by Fast & Furious, this high-octane theme could represent the fast-paced world of financial aid and the importance of speeding up the process to better serve students.

A Ghostbusters theme, perfect for addressing common financial aid myths and challenges, with sessions on "busting" commonly asked questions in the process.

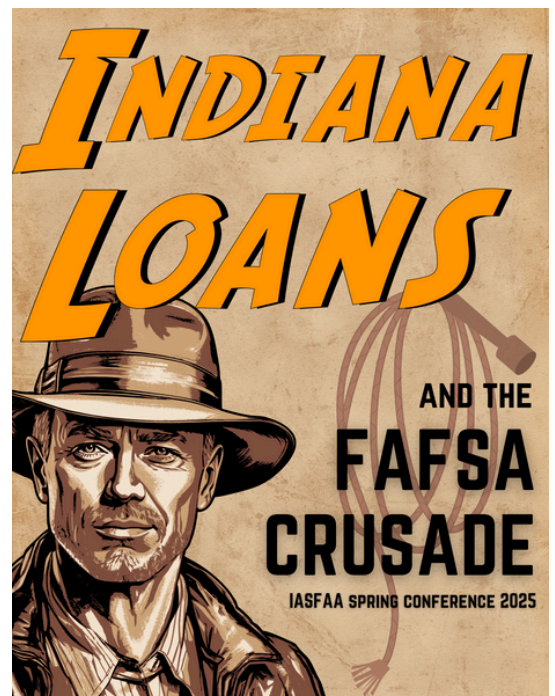


This Back to the Future theme that plays on the evolution of financial aid policies and how the field has changed over time, with a nostalgic twist.



Inspired by Pirates of the Caribbean, this keeps the adventurous spirit while emphasizing the journey through the unpredictable waters of financial aid, with a focus on helping students find their "treasure" of financial support!

Modeled after Indiana Jones, this adventurous theme could tackle the challenges and obstacles in navigating students financial aid, with a focus on discovering solutions.



What's new with the IASFAA crew?

- At Buena Vista, **Nohely Garcia Salgado** joined as the newest Financial Aid Counselor.
- **Monogram Student Lending** is fully staffed with great colleagues to serve students!
- **Dawn Fleming** started in April as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid as well as the School Certifying Official for Northeast Iowa Community College. Dawn is also a veteran!
- The University of Iowa recently hired **Cole Blankenheim** as the Loan and Work Study Specialist. **Jordan Nichting** was hired as a Financial Aid Advisor on the Financial Wellness and Outreach team.

Member Voices



My wife and I welcomed a baby girl, Vivian Pearl Lynn, on July 19. The Lynn family is very smitten with their new addition.

-Tristan Lynn

Better Together: How to support your financial aid office during this season of change

In May, IASFAA Member Sara Sroka from the University of Dubuque hosted a session with Betsy Henkel from WASFAA at the Midwest Admission Counselor Conference. The session was well attended. ICAN and Iowa Bureau of College Aid hosted a session on FAFSA as well.





Congratulations to Dawn Smith on 40 years in Financial Aid!

Dawn Smith celebrated her 40th Workiversary in Financial Aid on June 21. We celebrated her, open house style, with desk decorating, donuts, and some stories from over the years. Dawn has contributed so much to our department, but my favorite thing she is known for is being the BEST BAKER in all the land! Thank you, Dawn Smith for your 40 years of service! You are the BEST and we are SO LUCKY to have you!

-Sarah Freestone

Pictured here are Patti Kendall, Dawn Smith, Chad Olson, and Julie Arnold (left to right). Together they hold over 136.7 years of financial aid experience. They shared some of their favorite memories:

Patti Kendall: "I think some of the best office group times were our Christmas parties at the Roland Legion. There were not many people that missed those parties! Or maybe when we were located over in Pearson during the Beardshear remodel and someone had the great idea to grill hamburgers and hotdogs for an office lunch but ended up in trouble because the grill was placed in front of the building fresh air intake. Or maybe when we used to stuff award letters up in the fourth floor attic and everyone was up there just making it fun even when it wasn't. There are just too many fun times to count!"

Dawn Smith: [40 years] - "I truly do love my job here and all the awesome people I get to work with! I've made so many friends along the way and I swear half the people on my FB list are former students and coworkers!"

Chad Olson: "Personally, the best memory is when I see people who have had worked in our office as full-time or student employees go on to do great things in the financial aid profession, either here at ISU or at other institutions. Number two is when we're able to help students afford college when it seems like it's not an option. That's what we're here for!"

What did you or your office do over the summer?



While we didn't go to every single one of them, we did find quite a few of the Herkys this summer. These are a few of our favorites!
-Vanessa Wiest

Above: Our office/team helped Orientation Services by providing a Financial Aid presentation throughout the summer. This is always enjoyed by staff members - mostly because they get to channel their inner Britney Spears with special mics.

Below: Our advising team had a retreat over the summer and one of our activities was to complete a scavenger hunt!
-Jess Graham

