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# President's Message

Aaron Steffens, IASFAA President



By now I assume that you are done packaging, have a record class, under-spent the financial aid budget and have no computer software issues! Right???? Now that you are all asking what world I'm living in, it's obvious that I have caught your attention. One of my professor friends at Mount Mercy oftentimes shared the following words of wisdom at the lunch table, "Old professors never die, they just grade away." From those words of wisdom, I have adopted the following which is more relevant to many of us, "Financial aid officers never die, they just package away." So, by now you are asking where am I going with this, the final article of my presidency?

This is the absolute busiest time of the year for most of us. We are spending extra hours at work, logging in from home and making lists of things to do while we lie in bed unable to sleep. As we create those lists it is important to incorporate our mental and physical health into that list of tasks. Are we getting up from our desks regularly? Are we having lunch somewhere other than at our desks? Are we getting enough sleep? Are we working five or eight days a week? If you answered no to the first three questions and are trying to cram eight days into a seven-day week, STOP!!

It is imperative that you step away from your work periodically to clear your mind, get the blood flowing and reset your body. As an analogy, think of your body as an electric motor working hard on a hot summer day. If the motor gets too hot, the reset switch will trip and the motor shuts down. Only after the motor cools down, will it run again. The motor, by design, takes a break so that it is not ruined. Our bodies send us signals to tell us when we need to take a break, but we must use our common sense to both recognize those signs and abide by them. Most of us would agree that we recognize what those signs are, but many of us don't abide and continue to push our motors to the limit. Unlike the motor however, most of us don't have a reset switch if our motors fail. Therefore, we have to learn to adhere to the signs of overload. That means taking a break when feeling fatigued, eating healthy when our stomach growls and getting at least a little exercise!

If you need a short break from your office and can hold out until mid-April, please be sure to spend a couple of days with your IASFAA colleagues at the Embassy Suites on April 17-18. The Program Committee is promising another great conference packed with information and fun! This will give you a chance to take a break from the office and packaging, get some of the exercise I mentioned in the previous paragraph, visit with your colleagues across the state and eat. Yes, there will be plenty to eat and the healthy part is up to you.

And no, the office will not crash and burn if you are gone for two days in April! Somehow, somehow the packages manage to get out, the phone calls get returned, the work is done and another year goes by.

Yes, another year in IASFAA has also gone by. In closing, I would like to thank the membership for allowing me to lead this great association during the past year. This year has been challenging, rewarding, unpredictable and memorable. Please be sure to give Michele Dunne and the 2008-09 Executive Council your support in the upcoming year.

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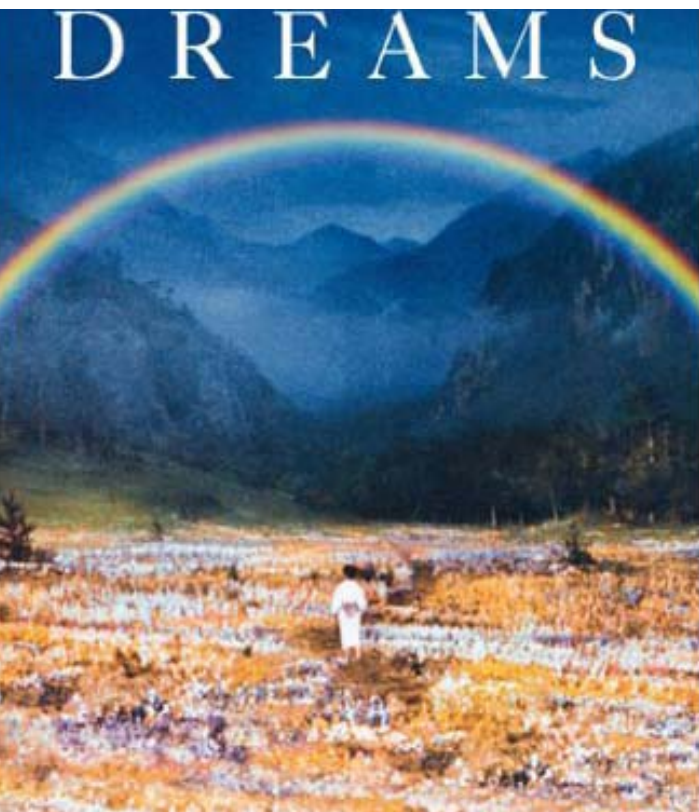
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# Financial Aid: Make Your Dreams Come True

Jen Sassman, Program Committee

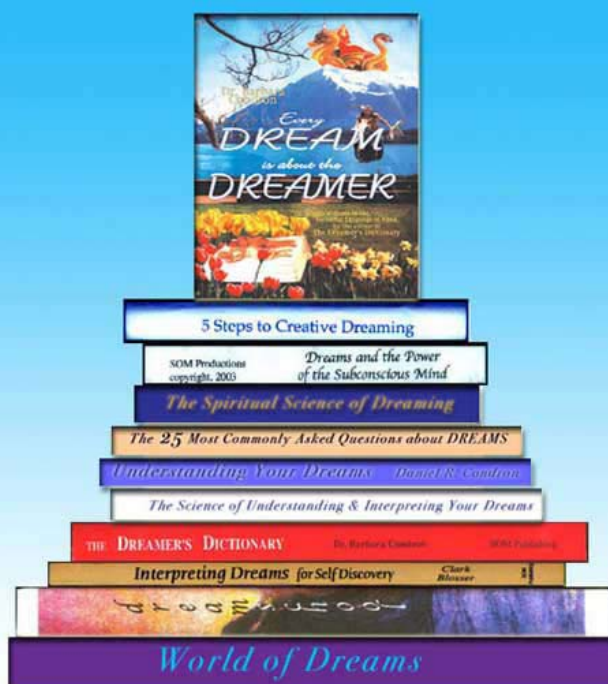
Stop daydreaming and prepare to make your dreams come true! We look forward to seeing you at the IASFAA Spring Conference on April 17-18 at the Embassy Suites on the River in Des Moines! Pack your comfy pj's, grab your favorite teddy and prepare to be inundated with so much great information you will not know which dream to fulfill first!

I know you have been counting the TEACH grants in your sleep just wondering how to make them a reality for your students. Or, maybe ACG and Smart Grants are still dancing in your head?! A representative from the Department of Education will be there with the latest updates.



Whether you are new to the profession or a seasoned veteran, there will be something to fulfill even your wildest dreams! Catch the Financial Aid 101 session, listen to a student perspective session or refresh your memory about the terms of loan forgiveness. Help alleviate possible shattered dreams by attending a session on financial literacy or student debt. Are you having nightmares about private loans? The National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, Inc. will help rid you of those night sweats. SAP and FFELP compliance are not the most recent strain of bed bugs, but rather policies you need in your financial aid dream world. Thursday plan to attend a slumber party with your sector colleagues and loosen your wallets for the silent auction. Think know about what you might contribute to the auction to help make someone else's dream come true!

There is also no need to wish on the stars, the registration desk will be open for a short time on Wednesday evening and IASFAA has arranged to cover your parking! The Site and Program committees have thought of it all to make your stay at the Embassy Suites a dream come true! Until then, sleep tight!



# And You Thought You Knew the Importance of PJs?!

Amy Gaffney, Associate Members Committee

IASFAA's Associate Member Relations Committee is pleased to have two Charity events associated with the upcoming Spring Conference in Des Moines.

The first event is the return of the notoriously successful live auction that has put IASFAA Conferences on the map. As you know, the auction is only as successful as the items provided by all of you. So bring your gifts, goodies, and giveaways to be auctioned off, and come prepared for fun and expensive IASFAA member bidding!

We are raising funds for ACCESS, the Assault Care Center Extending Service and Support, which is a harbor for all whom have experienced domestic and sexual violence, providing a safe environment for empowerment and exploration of personal strengths. ACCESS advocates for social change, partnering with other agencies to deliver education and professional training to end domestic and sexual violence. The Care Center is located in Ames.

For more information on ACCESS, go to <http://www.assaultcarecenter.org>

The second event is something new for an IASFAA Conference but very important. We are asking you to remember the importance of PJs and be generous. No, not generosity in professional judgment cases with your students. We are asking for new children's pajamas that can accompany our check donation to ACCESS. For

many of us, some of childhood's best memories took place when we were wearing pajamas... snuggled in a warm bed, watching Saturday morning cartoons, or playing with toys. We think that children who visit the Assault Care Center could use something cozy and comfy to wear during less than ideal circumstances.

The Care Center has told us that they can use pajamas of any size: babies, 5-year-olds, 10-year-olds and beyond (as well as everything in between). Boys and girls, men and women. Pick out something cute or something cool...and know that everything you bring will be loved.

Thank you in advance for your auction items, your expensive participation in the auction, and your PJs. Rest assured that your efforts will help make dreams a little brighter for those who need it most.



## Facts About Domestic Violence

- An estimated minimum of 3.3 million children witness domestic violence each year (National Woman Abuse Prevention Project).
- From January 1990 - September 1999, 119 Iowans were killed due to domestic violence (Iowa General's Office).
- Every 9 seconds a woman is battered in the United States (Family Violence Prevention Fund).
- Domestic Violence is considered one of the foremost causes of serious injury to women ages 15 to 44 (Office of the Surgeon General).

# Parents Regret Late Start to College Saving

- Michelle Richardson, Vice President, Sallie Mae

More than 60 percent of parents of incoming college freshmen began discussions about the best way to pay for college after the student entered high school, and 32 percent said the thing they would do differently would be to begin saving for college earlier. These are some of the key findings of the 2007 Survey of Parents of College-Bound Freshmen released Jan. 29, 2008 by Sallie Mae.

The 2007 Sallie Mae Survey of Parents of College-Bound Freshmen, conducted by Aspen Media and Market Research and formerly known as the AMS College-Bound Freshman Survey, polled 400 adult “heads of households” in homes where one or more family members began college as a freshman in fall of 2007. It found that more than half (56 percent) of parents believe that college is not affordable, a trend that persisted across low-, middle- and high-income categories. Despite this finding, 82 percent of all respondents believed that a college education is worth the cost.

These findings come as students who plan to attend college next fall begin to apply for financial aid. As of Jan. 1, families may submit their Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2008-09 academic year. The FAFSA is required to qualify for federal financial assistance for college, as well as some state and institutional aid. The survey revealed that while 80 percent of parents have submitted a FAFSA, 10 percent have not submitted one and do not intend to do so. That may be a costly decision, as much financial aid is available to only those who apply.

While the vast majority of parents surveyed (81 percent) discussed tuition payment with their students at least twice during the summer before it was due, 11 percent never discussed the tuition bill.

The study demonstrated that paying for college is a family affair, with expectations of shared responsibility. Almost three-quarters (73 percent) of survey respondents think paying for college is the responsibility of both the parent and the student. In addition, location of school was identified by 34 percent of respondents as the top priority when their student was applying for college (the most frequently selected choice) while “cost of school” was the top concern of 15 percent of respondents (the fourth most popular choice).

Among other findings, the 2007 Survey of Parents of College-Bound Freshmen revealed:

- The college payment option most frequently used by respondents was cash/savings (54 percent), followed by federal loans such as Stafford or PLUS (40 percent). Twenty percent of all respondents reported using private loans.
- Over all income groups, 68 percent of respondents say their student will work during the school year, but 70 percent of that group said their student would work to 20 hours per week or less.
- Cash-strapped lower-income students are more likely to work during school than their higher-income peers. Eighty-seven percent of parents in the lowest income group reported their students would work compared to 59 percent of those in the highest income group.

The survey also asked parents questions about financial aid preferences and on-campus services. Among the highlights:

- Parents want information from the financial aid office delivered early in the student’s academic career. Forty-eight percent believe the optimum time to receive payment information is when the student first expresses interest in college (29 percent said “when the student is accepted”).
- Parents prefer regular mail versus email or telephone. When receiving college payment information, 71 percent of those surveyed said the U.S. Postal Service is their option of choice, followed by e-mail (16 percent).
- Parents want the college financial aid office to provide a realistic idea of the total cost of attending four years of college. The largest group of survey respondents – 39 percent – said an “honest assessment of total costs over four years” was the most helpful information that a school could give to families.
- Parents believe information from a financial aid office is reliable. Sixty-four percent of respondents said the communications they receive about college affordability from the aid office were accurate and 60 percent said those messages were consistent.

Key findings of the 2007 Survey of Parents of College-Bound Freshmen are available at [www.salliemae.com/about/news\\_info/publications/2007-parent-survey.htm](http://www.salliemae.com/about/news_info/publications/2007-parent-survey.htm)

**While 82% of parents surveyed believe that a college education is worth the cost, more than half of believe that college is not affordable.**

## The Availability of Federal Student Loans

- Mindy Kaplan Eline, NASFAA

Washington, D.C. (March 12, 2008) – The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is confident that federal student loans will be available to families and students this coming academic year. Alarming reports about disruptions in the credit markets that are affecting student loans have many families worried that student loans won't be available this fall. However, financial aid administrators, schools, federal lawmakers, the U.S. Department of Education, and student loan providers are all working together to ensure that no student is denied access to federal student loans.

Despite some troubling reports, low-cost federal student loans are still available. To date, NASFAA is not aware of any student being denied a federal student loan due to market conditions. Even in instances where student loan providers have suspended participation in the federal loan programs, other loan providers have stepped in to fill in. Should conditions worsen to the point where they could affect the availability of federal student loans, NASFAA has received assurances that federal lawmakers, the U.S. Department of Education, and other federal agencies will take appropriate actions to ensure an uninterrupted supply of low-cost federal student loans to students and families.

News reports often blur the line between federal and private student loans, but understanding the difference between the two is crucial. The vast majority of student borrowers use federal student loans. Federal student loans - like Perkins, Stafford, and PLUS loans – are backed by the federal government. Federal

student loans are not dependent on borrowers' credit scores; the repayment terms and conditions are specified by federal law, and are usually better than private loans. Interest rates and fees on federal student loans will not increase.

A far smaller group of students rely on private student loans or other forms of consumer financing like home equity loans. These students turn to private loans if they cannot cover their cost of attendance with federal, state, and institutional financial aid – including federal loans. Like other consumer loans affected by the subprime mortgage meltdown, private student loans will be costlier for some borrowers at some institutions this academic year. However, students and parents should only use private education loans as a last resort. Before borrowing private loans, students should exhaust all the federal, state and institutional financial aid available to them.

To ensure a smooth financial transition into college this next academic year, NASFAA advises students and families to apply for financial aid early by using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students should work closely with their school's financial aid office to complete the financial aid process – including applying for federal student loans - as early as possible. Students and parents with any questions or doubts about the availability of student loans or other forms of financial aid should always contact their financial aid office for specific information.

**Do you have an idea for an article or information to share in the next newsletter?**

**We want to know!**

Please email Joan Meyer, Newsletter Editor,  
at [meyerj@lajames.net](mailto:meyerj@lajames.net).

We hope to feature your articles in our next newsletter!

## State Legislation on Illegal Immigration Can Have Far-Reaching Affects

- Justin Draeger, Assistant Director of Communications, NASFAA

Washington, D.C. (February 2008) – The question on how to secure our borders and what to do with the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants who cross them every year is both daunting and divisive. After months of wrangling, arguing, and politicking, the U.S. Congress could not even put together a comprehensive immigration bill to be considered by the president.

The Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would provide a legal path of residency for children of illegal immigrants who complete three years of college or serve in the military, also hasn't escaped the controversy. When NASFAA came out in support of the DREAM Act last October, members sent both dissenting and supportive comments. Late last year, in a show of bipartisan support, Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Chuck Hagel (R-NE), and Richard Lugar (R-IN), re-introduced the DREAM Act as a new stand-alone bill.

Because the federal government has failed to effectively address illegal immigration, many states have developed their own laws, which vary in how to deal with both illegal immigrants and their children's access to higher education. But Marcia Weston, NASFAA's director for college access marketing, asks higher education advocates to closely examine those state laws to see who will be affected by them before forming an opinion.

"We don't want to throw the baby out with the bathwater," says Weston. "No matter what your opinion on higher education access for children of illegal immigrants may be, there are state legislative initiatives underway that would benefit

far greater numbers of students than just children of illegal immigrants."

Weston points to Colorado State Senator Paula Sandoval's recently introduced education bill as an example. Currently, Colorado students prove their residency based on their parents' residency. Proving parental residency requires students to fill out a mountain of forms, said Sandoval in an interview with NASFAA, such as their parent's income tax forms, driver's licenses, and more—all of which have to be examined by school administrators.

Sandoval's bill would allow U.S. citizens who have attended high school in Colorado for at least three years automatic in-state tuition rates without having to prove their parent's legal residency. "This bill makes it easier for students and easier for college administrators," explained Sandoval.

Even though Sandoval's bill only applies to U.S. citizens, some oppose the bill because it doesn't require students to reveal their parents' legal status. But Sandoval contends it shouldn't matter because the target of her bill focuses only on U.S. citizens, irrespective of their parents' legal status.

Weston says it's important to move this debate beyond illegal immigration. "This bill would do an immeasurable amount of good for other underserved populations," says Weston. Besides children of illegal immigrants, youth from foster care, who are homeless, or who are estranged from their parents would benefit from this bill.

Sandoval also feels that the bill is much bigger than just the illegal immigration debate. Her point has been well received; both of the major Colorado newspapers



have come out in favor of her bill. The bill is also supported by several colleges and universities, who see it as a benefit to students and the schools because it reduces the amount of administrative effort needed to confirm residency. Even some usual opponents of bills that benefit children of illegal immigrants have remained silent on the bill, not coming out in support, but not opposing either.

Weston believes Colorado may be just one example of how legislation that can positively affect a wide variety of needy students can get lost in other debates.

"We have to be careful that we're not inadvertently denying access to thousands of underserved students by getting caught up in complicated debates that are really just side notes to much larger issues," said Weston.

## Creating a “Lender Neutral List”

- Haley Chitty, Assistant Director for Communications, NASFAA

Washington, D.C. (January 2008) – In the wake of last year’s investigations into relationships between lenders and financial aid offices, many aid offices are looking for ways to provide students and parents with a list of possible student loan providers without emphasizing one lender over another.

These “lender neutral lists” can provide students and parents with the information they need without creating any real or perceived conflicts of interests in the financial aid office.

Creating a lender neutral list online is fairly simple.

Cathy Simoneaux, the director of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid at Loyola University in New Orleans, worked with her information technology department to update Loyola’s FFELP lender Web page so that each time someone visits Loyola’s FFELP information Web page ([www.loyno.edu/financialaid/FFELP.php](http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/FFELP.php)), the order of the lender lists are rearranged. This simple solution allows Loyola to recommend some lenders without showing a preference for any one lender.

Creating a lender neutral list in print can be a bit more challenging.

Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of [FinAid.org](http://FinAid.org), suggests that if a paper list is used, institutions can list the lenders in alphabetical order and include a disclaimer to that effect, making it clear that lenders at the top of the list are not necessarily better or preferred over others on the list.

Another solution, offered by Christopher Penn, producer of Student Loan Network’s Financial Aid Podcast, involves printing single copies of the list from a Web page that randomly reorganizes the list. This method could be used for financial aid office foot traffic when copies are only needed on occasion. In cases of volume printing, Penn suggests printing a series of lists in different orders (e.g., A-Z, Z-A, and a couple other variations). In both cases, it might be a good idea to include a disclaimer explaining the process used to create a lender neutral list.



For those who feel like these solutions do not provide a completely neutral list, Kantrowitz offers some facetious advice on the [FinAid-L](http://FinAid-L) list serv:

“Put [the list] in a Scrabble layout, where they intersect. Or throw in extra letters to fill out the grid, and you have a word search puzzle – make the students do a little work to pick a lender!”

## Mapping Your Future Website Redesign

Mapping Your Future® currently is planning a complete website redesign, which will include major changes to the site, how processes work, how you link to Mapping Your Future, and the steps your students follow to complete Online Student Loan Counseling.

The redesign, scheduled for implementation during the evening of March 28, is being done in conjunction with a move to their new web domain — [MappingYourFuture.org](http://MappingYourFuture.org) — and will change the website’s file structure and navigation.

Mapping Your Future staff members have provided schools with an overview of the changes that will occur to the functionality, navigation, and processes — and changes they will need to make to their own websites at [mapping-your-future.org/downloads/02-2008OSLCENews.html](http://mapping-your-future.org/downloads/02-2008OSLCENews.html).

If you have questions, contact Mapping Your Future at [feedback@mappingyourfuture.org](mailto:feedback@mappingyourfuture.org).

## Welcome

Laurie Sanders recently joined AIB College of Business as Associate Director of Financial Aid.

Christine McGee recently joined Graceland University as the Director of Financial Aid.

## Job Changes

Todd Brown, formerly with Clarke College, recently joined the Iowa College Student Aid Commission under the Program Administration Department.

Heather Andersen, formerly with ICAN, recently joined the Iowa College Student Aid Commission as a Communication Specialist.

Tracy Havener, formerly with Nelnet recently joined the Iowa College Student Aid Commission as a Communication Specialist.

## Promotions

Bethany Rinderknecht has been promoted to Director of Financial Aid at Mount Mercy College.

## Babies

Merlyn Kathol, Associate Director of Financial Aid at Western Iowa Tech, and his wife welcomed baby Austin Kathol on February 3, 2008. Austin weighed 8lbs. 1oz. Big brother Tony is very proud to have Austin home.

## Farewells

Regina Erickson, former Associate Director of Financial Aid at AIB College of Business is currently working part-time at AIB until the birth of her baby later this month. After the baby is born, she plans to focus on being a new mom.

## Engagements

Clare Campbell, Associate Director of Financial Aid at St. Ambrose University, and her fiance, Ryan Holladay, are getting married on April 19, 2008.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Lois Mulbrook, Director of Financial Aid at Hawkeye Community College, who has recently been appointed to serve as the Vice President for MASFAA!



## Federal and State Issues Committee

### Spring IASFAA Legislative Event

The IASFAA Federal and State Issues Committee held the spring Legislative Event on Tuesday, January 29th at the Hoover Building on the grounds of the State Capitol. As discussed last year, the 2008 event was held by IASFAA (the event had been held in conjunction with IACAC in the past) and featured a financial aid theme. The event featured an overview of the governor's initiatives presented by Lt. Governor Patty Judge, as well as a legislative panel consisting of Senator Paul McKinley, Representative Lisa Hedens, Representative Mike May, and the Governor's Legislative Liaison Emily Hajek. Keith Greiner and Julie Leeper gave an overview on the legislative process and provided tips on communicating with legislators.

Once again, we experienced harsh winter weather on our legislative event date. Initially, 44 registrants were signed up for the event. With the blizzard-like weather, 27 registrants were in attendance. Attendants were very pleased with the event this year, and provided great feedback to enhance the event next year.

### IASFAA Federal Position Paper

An IASFAA Federal Position Paper has also been developed by the Federal and State Issues Committee, with the assistance of the IASFAA Executive Council. This paper requests support on several concepts to strengthen federal student aid. The paper will be used by the future president of IASFAA when visiting federal legislators at the spring NASFAA Leadership Conference. The Position Paper will also be posted to the IASFAA website for use, with a corresponding email to be sent to the membership to notify them of its posting. Please feel free to also utilize these points if you decide to develop your own visual aid for conversation with federal legislators.

