

# **SASFAA Annual Report**

2012-2013

Southern Association of Student Financial Aid  
Administrators, Inc.

May 2013



Prepared by Jeff Dennis  
SASFAA President, 2012-2013  
In Compliance with SASFAA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1

## **SASFAA Annual Report 2012-2013**

This annual report is a review of the activities of the officers, state presidents, and committees for 2012-2013. It also serves as the President's report to the SASFAA membership. This report summarizes the goals established by each of the officers and committee chairs, and will focus on highlights of their accomplishments. The entire Executive Board, including elected officer and committee chairs, should be commended for their achievements this year.

### **President**

The 2012-2013 SASFAA Board and committee chairs met to transition June 7-10, 2012. We did a team building exercise where we named food items we associated with special events. It was very enlightening to see that even though we come from various backgrounds and geographic areas, we are very similar in what we associate with the same event.

This set the tone for the remainder of the meeting, and for the year. We were very deliberate in that we wanted to bring back some of the previously cut items that were affected as a result of the loss of revenue in prior years. We brought back the option for the Conference Committee to meet face-to-face in the fall if needed. We also brought back a face-to-face meeting for the Professional Development Committee to train the trainers in preparation for the New Aid Officer's Workshop in the summer.

I would like to thank President-Elect Zita Barree and Past President Brad Barnett for assisting me with visiting the SASFAA state conferences. Zita represented SASFAA at the Tennessee and Virginia Conferences. Brad represented SASFAA at the Kentucky and Mississippi Conferences. I was able to attend conferences in South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.

My first official duty as your SASFAA President, following the June 2012 Transition Meeting, was to represent you at the NASFAA Conference in Chicago, IL. SASFAA was recognized with a Gold Star Award for its combined efforts with EASFAA and Tri-States Associations for visits to the Hill in Washington. The Leadership Committee of NASFAA was recognized in Chicago which was chaired by our own, Heather Boutell. I continued to represent you at all other NASFAA meetings throughout the year.

The Board, committee chairs, and other SASFAA members and volunteers accomplished a great deal this year. A summary of many of our accomplishments is included in the applicable sections below.

If you have questions about any of the activities conducted by SASFAA please do not hesitate to contact any member of the 2012-2013 SASFAA Board of Directors, but you may also reach me at 864-644-5521 or at [jdennis@swu.edu](mailto:jdennis@swu.edu).

### **Immediate Past President**

Brad Barnett (Virginia, 4-Year Public), as Immediate Past President, was responsible for Nominations and Elections, professional recognition and awards, and compilation of the Governance and Planning (GAP) report.

The Nominations and Elections Committee worked extremely hard to identify qualified candidates for SASFAA elected positions. After Board discussion and approval, I'm happy to say a full slate was provided for every office. Information was provided on the SASFAA listserv, SASFAA Nine News, and SASFAA Website informing the membership about the upcoming elections. Details about the online voting procedures, photos, bios and candidacy statements were also available on the website and SASFAA Nine News.

Online voting commenced 10 days prior to the annual conference. Candidates were Nathan Basford from Florida and Nancy Garmroth from South Carolina for the office of President-Elect, Marian Huffman Dill from Tennessee and Tabatha McAllister from South Carolina for the office of Vice-President, and Amy Moser from Georgia and Jennifer Priest from Kentucky for the office of Treasurer. After our initial election process prior to the annual conference had to be closed due to technical difficulties which damaged the integrity of the voting results, we conducted a subsequent election. Nathan Basford was elected President-Elect, Tabatha McAllister was elected Vice-President, and Amy Moser was elected Treasurer. I would like to thank all of the candidates who ran for office and sincerely appreciate their volunteerism and desire to serve the association and its members. We experienced this year a snag in our election process. Toward the end of the initial election process, we discovered that technical difficulties had damaged the integrity of the voting results. We regrouped and conducted a completely new election. Thanks to those involved for stepping up and making the second election run smoothly.

The following awards were presented at the annual conference:

- SASFAA Distinguished Service Award was presented to Brent Tener from Tennessee. Brent served the association as President in 2006-2007. He is also on the NASFAA Board of Directors this year as a Representative at Large. Brent deserves this recognition without a doubt. Congratulations Brent!!
- Lianne Masterson from North Carolina was presented the NASFAA State and Regional Leadership Award by NASFAA National Chair Ron Day.

The GAP committee held an in-person meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 2<sup>nd</sup> to compile the annual report. The GAP report is available for review on the SASFAA website.

It was a pleasure to present Brad with his service plaque at the conference for his stint as President-Elect, President and Past-President. He has served SASFAA well in other capacities over the years. He has served as Secretary, NAOW instructor, Conference Chair in 2007-2008 and I am sure many other areas.

On behalf of SASFAA, and personally, I thank him for what he has done for SASFAA.

### **Vice President**

Mike Reynolds (Alabama, 4-Year Public), Vice President, was responsible for the professional advancement (i.e. training) activities of the Association. The majority of Mike's work, and the work of the Professional Development Committee, will occur in June at the SASFAA New Aid Officer's Workshop.

The week long New Aid Officer Workshop will be held from June 16-21 on the campus of Auburn University. As of the writing of this report, 89 participants are registered for this event. There were 131 participants last year when the event was held in June on the campus of North Carolina Central University in Durham.

Eleven SASFAA members were selected as faculty and represented a cross-section of the membership and institution types. Three SASFAA members from the lender community were selected to assist the Vice President, Curriculum Coordinator, and Local Arrangements Coordinator, with on-site activities and functions at the workshop. Assistance during the week will also be provided by a U.S. Department of Education training officer.

### **President-Elect**

Zita Barree (Virginia, 4-Year Private) served as the SASFAA President-Elect. Her responsibilities during the year included:

- Conducted an orientation session for the state presidents-elect prior to the February SASFAA Conference.
- Made preparations for the 2013-14 year.

In preparation for 2013-2014, Zita became more familiar with the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual, was involved in many future planning discussions with me and other members of the Board, promoted the 2014 SASFAA conference at this year's conference in Atlanta, promoted volunteerism, updated the SASFAA volunteer form, selected committee chairs, and assisted committee chairs in selecting members to serve on their committees. Zita has selected an excellent Board for 2013-2014 and will lead us in the next year appropriately and effectively.

### **Secretary**

Sharon Oliver (North Carolina, 4-Year Public) completed the first year of her two-year term as SASFAA Secretary. Her responsibilities and accomplishments for the year included:

- Reviewed the Policy and Procedures Manual for corrections and made necessary revisions throughout the year.
- Worked extensively on the maintenance of records.
- Sent sympathy and congratulation cards to SASFAA members and others as needed.
- Sent reminders about Board members birthdays.
- Prepared all Board minutes and posted these to the SASFAA web site.
- Compiled and assimilated all reports for Board meetings and disseminated the compiled reports electronically before each meeting.

Sharon kept our records current and made changes to the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual during the year. I appreciate her service this year as SASFAA Secretary.

### **Treasurer**

Nancy Garmroth (South Carolina – 2-Year Public) completed the second year of her two-year term as SASFAA Treasurer. Her responsibilities and accomplishments included:

- Posted budget reports to the web.
- Ensured that Pay-Pal can continue to be used to pay membership fees, conference fees, professional development fees and sponsorship payments.
- Worked with the CPA firm to successfully file the 990 and 990-T for the past fiscal year.
- Paid all bills in a timely manner
- Utilized QuickBooks on the web to allow the Budget Chair and President to have anytime access to budget information or fund information.
- Dealt with the transition of moving our website and database from ATAC to Wild Apricot. Transition is usually challenging and it was here as expected.

Nancy continued a timeline for providing budget line updates to Board members and committee chairs who had responsibility for specific lines of the SASFAA budget. The job of the Treasurer is a voluntary one and crucial to the long-term fiscal stability of the association. The hours that are required to perform all of the necessary duties are numerous, especially at peak processing times. Nancy performed her duties accurately and timely. It was my pleasure to recognize her at the SASFAA Conference in Atlanta with a plaque honoring her service.

### **State Presidents**

The state presidents had essentially two goals as they served on the SASFAA Board. These goals included:

- To become an integrated part of the SASFAA Board with vested interest in the leadership and activities of SASFAA.
- To actively report to and involve the nine state's respective membership in the activities and concerns of SASFAA.

The State Presidents represented not only their respective states well, but also always kept the best interests of SASFAA in the forefront. They were very active this year by attending Board meetings in-person, and via conference call, to represent their members within SASFAA and actively communicate issues and concerns to the President and the Board. If for some reason a State President was unable to attend a meeting, they appropriately designated another individual on the board to represent their state. The State Presidents served with enthusiasm, humor, and a deep sense of connectedness.

The state presidents updated the board on issues in their state, were actively involved notifying their respective memberships of SASFAA events and activities, and were also very active in budget decisions made on behalf of SASFAA.

The state presidents did provide direction and recommendations on the Board's activities for the year. The state presidents also shared best practices. The group reported that sharing the information on state issues, such as budgeting and conference activities was useful to them and their state associations.

I sincerely appreciate the involvement and support of the State President this year. It has been an honor working with them, and visiting with many of them at their state conferences.

### **Conference Committee**

The 50th SASFAA Annual Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Ravinia in Atlanta, Georgia February 10<sup>th</sup>- 13<sup>th</sup>. The conference theme was "Celebrating Yesterday's Achievements, Shaping Tomorrow's Aspirations" and Paul Mittelhammer (Georgia, Guaranty Agency) served as chair of the committee. His committee included individuals from all nine of the SASFAA states.

The conference committee was also supported by a host of Georgia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (GASFAA) members that provided general assistance. The Local Arrangements Committee did a fantastic job hosting SASFAA in Atlanta.

The following is a brief summary of the 2013 Conference:

#### Sunday:

- A State President-Elects' Workshop was led by President-Elect Zita Barree.
- The Conference opening session included a Georgia welcome from Philip Hawkins GASFAA President, and Dr. Lisa Rossbacher, President of Southern Polytechnic State University.
- The Presentation of Colors was done by the University of North Georgia's ROTC, which was followed by the singing of America the Beautiful by the Spelman College Glee Club.
- Charles Tegen, NACUBO National Chair, brought greetings to SASFAA.
- Recognized those states that achieved their attendance goal for Atlanta set back one year earlier in Greensboro. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina met their goals. Mississippi won the drawing among the five for a \$500 contribution to their association. No funds were used from SASFAA to provide the contribution.
- Additional songs were performed by the Spelman College Glee Club.
- Dr. Sandy Jap from Emory University provided a very motivational opening keynote address entitled "Tightening the Net: Better Messaging for Financial Aid in 2013."
- A President's Reception was held following the opening session, which provided an opportunity for SASFAA members to connect and reconnect and the Atlanta Institute of Music performed during the reception.

#### Monday:

- General session conducted on NASFAA Policy Agenda led by Justin Draeger.
- During the luncheon NASFAA President Justin Draeger presented a Washington Update and NASFAA National Chair, Ron Day provided the NASFAA Update.
- Ron Day, NASFAA Chair, presented the NASFAA Regional Leadership Award to Lianne Masterson from Blue Ridge Community College.

- Dewey Knight recognized the 40 conference vendors, which included 11 first time sponsors.
- The day was full of information concurrent sessions, state meetings, and a night capped off with a SASFAA favorite...bingo!

Tuesday:

- General Session on Verification was presented by Mike Roberts and Dave Bartnicki from the Department of Education.
- Pre-banquet music was performed by the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble and following the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary banquet the Georgia Perimeter College Jazz Band performed.
- We had 13 Past-Presidents at the banquet.
- Brad Barnett presented the SASFAA Distinguished Service Award to Brent Tener from Vanderbilt.

Wednesday:

- Wrap up the Annual Business Meeting.
- Gary Mann of the Conference Committee presented a check to the conference charity, Chris Kids in the amount of \$2,000.00.
- I passed the ceremonial gavel to Zita Barree, President-Elect and Amy Berrier, 2014 Conference Chair provided information about next year's conference in Jacksonville.
- Federal Update general session was conducted by Jeff Baker from the Department of Education.

Other highlights from the conference included:

- The agenda consisted of 49 concurrent sessions, in addition to the before mentioned general sessions.
- David Bartnicki and Mike Roberts worked an "Ask a Fed" table in the vendor area throughout much of the conference.
- The attendance at the conference was 579 as compared to 503 for the prior year. This conference had the highest attendance since 2008 in Crystal City, VA. We also had 205 first-time attendees at this conference which was very unusual.
- We had artwork on display during the conference from Emory University, Savannah College of Art & Design, Spelman College and the University of Central Florida.
- We had two NASFAA Inter-regional guests from RNASFAA. Deb Byers (President-Elect of RNASFAA) and Mary Sommers (Rep. at Large on NASFAA Board of Directors) came and observed our conference.

Overall, the committee did an amazing job providing a conference with session content that matched the theme, the speakers were motivational and educational, attendance was up, vendor/sponsorship participation was up, donations to the charity were impressive, and there were many positive comments about the conference.

I would like to thank Paul, the Conference Committee, Local Arrangements Committee, Vendor/Sponsors, the speakers, and the moderators for making this such a great event.

### **2020 Committee**

The 2020 Committee was chaired by Em McNair (Georgia, 4-Year Private). Accomplishments and Highlights:

- Provided a board report at each board meeting.
- Held conference calls with the 2020 Committee.
- Developed interest sessions on diverse topics for presentation at the annual SASFAA conference.
- Selected the opening keynote speaker for the conference, Dr. Sandy Jap.
- Submitted a proposal to the Executive Board requesting a name change to the committee. It was approved to change the name of the committee to Global Issues Committee effective July 1, 2013.

I want to thank Em and her committee for all of the work they accomplished this year.

### **Electronic Services Committee**

Jane Moore (Virginia, 4-Year Public) served as chair for the Electronic Services Committee. The goal of her committee was to support SASFAA's mission by providing a mechanism for disseminating information to the membership through the SASFAA website.

This year the Electronic Services committee had two additional major tasks, which are outlined in the list of accomplishments below:

- Development of the annual Conference website.
- Updated conference website to include all session power points submitted.
- Updated the New Aid Officer website and registration form for the summer 2013 NAOW.
- Updated banner ads to be inclusive of all paying sponsors which submitted a banner ad.
- Updated website with latest version of the SASFAA Policy & Procedure Manual.
- Worked on the conversion from ATAC to Wild Apricot. This has had conversion pains but hopefully we are almost through the painful section and will enjoy the benefits of a new database and website.

I appreciate Jane's dedication towards being a top notch chair. With all we had going on under this committee this year, I knew we needed continuity in this position, and Jane was definitely that person.

### **Budget and Finance Committee**

The Budget and Finance Committee, Marian Huffman Dill (Tennessee, 4-Year Private), and her committee charge was to see that the association remained financially sound in order to accomplish our mission, establish a community of members who share ideas and professional

competencies and experiences, and serve the diverse needs of students, parents and institutions. The financial stability of the Association is provided through careful and regular planning and evaluation.

The Chair, along with the President and the Board of Directors established an operational budget for 2012-2013 and managed the association's reserve funds. These reserve funds have been established to protect SASFAA in the event that the association is unable to meet its contractual obligations.

During this year we changed the Guide to Financial Management to establish three types of funds for SASFAA. The first one is an operating fund to have an objective of daily liquidity and attempt to maintain 15% to 25% of total assets in the fund not to be less than \$100,000. The second type fund is short-term investments to have an objective of replenishing the operating fund and to provide additional liquidity and attempt to maintain 30% to 45% of total assets in this fund. The short-term investments might be comprised of CDs and short duration bonds. The third type fund is long-term investments to have an objective of investing in instruments that are more than 36 months in length and attempt to maintain 30% to 45% of total assets in this fund.

Activities conducted by the Budget and Finance Committee included:

- Completed an annual review of the financial records, which detailed the positive work of our Treasurer.
- Maintained the SASFAA Contract spreadsheet to review ongoing liability and to monitor hotel deposit amounts and due dates.
- Prepared annual SASFAA budget for adoption by the SASFAA Board.
- Researched different investing opportunities and presented them to the Board.
- Reviewed the Guide to Financial Management and suggested changes that were adopted by the Board.
- Worked with the Treasurer and President to adjust budget line items as necessary.

Marian has done an exceptional job in her role as chair of the Budget/Finance Committee for the past three years.

### **Legislative Relations Committee**

Amy Berrier (North Carolina, 4-Year Public) was the chair of the Legislative Relations Committee. Amy has done an exceptional job in this capacity.

This committee was charged with reviewing proposed federal legislation affecting the administration of financial aid, keeping the SASFAA membership updated on pending legislation, making recommendations to the Board as to possible positions that the Board might take related to legislation. Additionally, the committee's charge included keeping its eye on the lending community and agency issues, and reporting to the Board on any issues we should address as an association. Accomplishments this year included:

- Participated in several NASFAA legislative conference calls.

- Committee contained representation from all nine states.
- Notified SASFAA members via listserv alerts of federal legislative issues.
- Posted articles to SASFAA Nine News.
- Assisted in coordinating the EASFAA/Tri-States/SASFAA/MASFAA joint legislative event in February 2013. The February event was a coordinated Hill visit, where teams of members from the associations met with Congressional members and/or legislative staff in their respective offices. This was the second joint regional event of this nature, and the feedback we received from it was very positive. Individuals participating with SASFAA affiliations include Brenda Burke, Nathan Basford, Lisa Mitchem, Philip Hawkins, Amy Berrier, Zita Barree, Bridget Ellis, Rachel Cavenaugh, Sandy Neel, and myself.

Amy is to be commended for her work to educate our members and/or call attention to important issues, and I sincerely appreciate her dedication to the work she does for our members and students.

### **Membership Committee**

Deborah Clark (Georgia, 2-Year Public) served this year as chair of the Membership Committee. She worked with the state presidents to encourage financial aid professionals to join SASFAA. As of the date of this report, SASFAA has 1112 that have paid membership since July 1st this year.

Other Accomplishments by the Membership Committee this year are:

- Development of a SASFAA Membership brochure.

Of our total membership numbers:

- 80% of the membership are school representatives
- 7% are lender/servicer/guarantor members
- 13% were government employees, consultants or otherwise not specified

### **Communications & Outreach**

Amanda Sharp (Alabama, 4-Year Public) served this year as chair of the Communications and Outreach Committee this year. The objective of this committee was to disseminate information of interest to the financial aid community and post articles to the newly created SASFAA Nine News throughout the year.

The following is a summary of activities for the year:

- Developed a schedule for Board members to provide articles for SASFAA Nine News:
  - August – President, Membership
  - September – Site Selection, Electronic Services, Alabama
  - October – Legislative Relations, 2020, Florida
  - November – Past President, President Elect, Secretary, Georgia
  - December – Conference, Vendor Sponsor
  - January – Past President, Conference, Secretary
  - February – Past President, Conference, Secretary, Kentucky

- March – Communications & Outreach, Vendor Sponsor, Mississippi
- April – Vice President, Treasurer, North Carolina
- May - Vice President, President Elect, South Carolina
- June – Vice President, Tennessee
- July – Budget/Finance, Virginia
- Notified the SASFAA membership of the new SASFAA Nine News and encouraged them to register to receive updates as new articles are posted.
- Posted articles to SASFAA Nine News presented to her by SASFAA Board members.
- Posted to SASFAA Nine News articles from NASFAA that was given to the regions for inclusion in “newsletters.”

SASFAA Nine News is still a work in progress. Thanks to Amanda for the job she has done this year with the blog.

### **Site Selection Committee**

The purpose of the Site Selection Committee was to identify sites that will provide a suitable physical environment for conferences, committee meetings, Executive Board meetings and professional development workshops. Tracy Misner (Florida, Proprietary) chaired this committee.

Major accomplishments of the Site Selection committee included:

- Completed contract negotiations for June 2013 Transitional Board meeting at the Clearwater Beach Marriott Suites in Clearwater, Florida.
- Completed contract negotiations for the annual Conference site for the following:
  - 2015 – Peabody Hotel in Memphis Tennessee
- Worked with the Crowne Plaza Ravinia in Atlanta, GA to hold a successful 2013 Annual Conference.
- Worked with the Great Wolf Lodge in Concord, NC to hold our November 2012 Executive Board meeting.

Tracy has been an amazing asset to the site selection process to represent and protect the interests of SASFAA while negotiating with the Crowne Plaza Ravinia in Atlanta, the Great Wolf Lodge in Concord, the Clearwater Marriott in Florida, and the Peabody Hotel in Memphis. She did a great job identifying viable, more affordable, options for the association.

### **Vendor/Sponsors Committee**

Dewey Knight (Mississippi, 4-Year Public) chaired the Vendor/Sponsor Committee for 2012-2013 and did an amazing job.

Listed below are the Committee’s accomplishments:

- The Chair consulted with the Budget & Finance Committee regarding the anticipated revenue and expenses associated with our sponsors.
- Provided recommendations to the Board for sponsorship levels.

- Coordinated the logistics for our sponsors at the Annual Conference, including the Vendor Appreciation Reception.
- The Chair sought out non-traditional companies to vend at the Annual Conference.
- Secured 40 sponsors for the Annual Conference, including 11 first time companies.
- Secured the drayage company used at the Annual Conference.
- Chair publicly thanked each sponsor during one of the general session meal functions at the conference.

Dewey should be commended for all his hard work on sponsorship this year. Once again, his efforts allowed SASFAA to exceed sponsorship revenue goals for the year. The vendor/sponsors respect Dewey highly and it is because of that respect that we are in our current position with having a strong number of exhibitors at our conferences.

### **Summary**

This was just a brief summary of the activities of the SASFAA Board. SASFAA is a very strong organization and I am excited about all that was accomplished this year. The “downturn” years are behind us and momentum moving forward is in the future. SASFAA is in good hands next year with Zita Barree as President and the Board she has in place.

It has truly been an honor to serve as the President this year. I have tried to support SASFAA personally through these past 4 years serving as Treasurer, President-Elect, and President. I hope that I am leaving office with the knowledge that the membership knows I gave as much as I could give to the association. I also want to thank my wife, Sheryl, for the many hours she has spent the past 4 years working conference registrations and this past year with hospitality at meetings. This year, in particular, I sincerely appreciate everyone who volunteered when asked and worked so hard to help put SASFAA in the position we are today. I will look back with fond memories of this year, the people who served on the 2012-2013 Board, and all that we accomplished for the membership. I look forward to continuing my service as Past-President.