



Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

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1996-97 SASFAA Annual Report

by Joel Harrell

The 1996-97 SASFAA year was exciting for a variety of reasons. One of the most significant aspects of this year was that it represented the first year of a five year plan which was approved by our association for the years 1996-2001. This plan provided a detailed blue print for our association and was most helpful as I developed goals for the year. Realizing that it was not my or the board's intention to accomplish all of these in the first year, I decided to focus on a few items which I thought were appropriate and critical for our association. These were:

- Development of a comprehensive financial management and operations guide for the association
- Ensure that the membership of the association represents the composition of financial aid professionals in the region and that all of these various constituencies are represented within committee and board structure
- Increase the level of communications with our membership
- Provide for the professional growth and competencies of members by offering workshops, seminars, meetings and other training opportunities to meet the needs of the membership

While many of the above goals are continuous in nature, several provided unique opportunities which were brought to closure during the year. These successes should not lead to complacency but rather should serve as a reminder that there is much remaining to be accomplished. Every member of the executive board, committee chairs, committee members, and our membership at large were extremely instrumental in whatever successes we have had this year. Because of their efforts, we are well on the way toward accomplishing all of the goals as outlined in our five year plan.

A more detailed description of the activities associated with each of the above goals will be provided later on in this report. However, listed below is a brief summary highlighting the work that was accomplished in each area.

- --One outcome of the SASFAA Long Range Plan was the establishment of a Task Force on Financial Management and Operations. Our association has reached half-million dollar level in terms of its operating budget. Therefore, I thought it extremely critical that we review and further develop our procedures and policies pertaining to the financial management of our association. **Randy Craig**, a former SASFAA treasurer provided leadership to this task force which published its final report in February of this year.
- --Membership Chair **Rosemary Stelma** along with SASFAA Treasurer **Jane Cooper** have worked extremely hard to ensure that our membership continues to grow and that it represents all of the various constituent

groups within our profession. We have also worked extremely hard to make certain that all groups/individuals have an opportunity to be represented on various committees, board, and task forces and that the activities of the association are diverse enough so that all can benefit. I personally made a special effort to ensure that we created opportunities for new leadership at the executive board and committee level.

- --One of our proudest accomplishments has been the development of the SASFAA Web Page. Past President **Karen Fooks** has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to this project which will allow us to do a better job of communicating information to not only our membership but the general public at large.
- --My last goal of providing for professional growth and competencies of members was accomplished through the annual conference and the New Aid Administrators Workshop. The annual conference offered a wide array of sessions and seminars designed to assist our members in these two areas. The week long SASFAA Summer Workshop for New Aid Administrators continues to be one of the premier training and professional growth activities within our profession.

While these times represent a summary view of the activities associated with my stated goals, in no way do they reflect the full scope. As you read through the remainder of this report you will see in more detail how each and every member of our executive board and committee chairs worked to make the accomplishment of these goals a reality.

Following are some of the highlights of this year:

PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITIES

As your president this year, I had the opportunity to visit with each of our nine state associations during either their Fall or Spring conference. While the demands of such a travel schedule were rigorous, the relationships that were renewed and/or developed overshadow any degrees of jet lag or airport boredom. I also had the opportunity to present testimony on your behalf at the U.S. Department of Education Reauthorization hearing that was held in Atlanta, GA in December of 1996.

As President of SASFAA, I hold a voting membership on the NASFAA Board of Directors and was able to represent SASFAA on several key issues. I also served on the NASFAA Finance Committee and had the opportunity to make certain that SASFAA's views were shared with this group. I am pleased to say that there was no dues increase for the two consecutive years that I have served on this committee.

Finally, one of the most challenging and yet enjoyable tasks for the SASFAA President is representing the association to different media groups and the general public at large. I am pleased to report that during our annual conference in Greensboro, we were able to participate in a radio talk show as well as receive numerous coverage through the print media. All of these activities have helped to make certain that SASFAA's visibility and credibility have been maintained at a superb level.

FINANCE

The fiscal operations of SASFAA this year were overseen by Treasurer **Jane Cooper** (Mississippi Higher Education Assistance Corporation) and the Budget Committee Chair **Ron Gambill** (Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation). Both of these individuals have done a fantastic job of ensuring that our association has operated in a fiscally sound and prudent manner.

Ron was very instrumental in the development of this year's operating budget, outlining a plan for continued growth in our reserve fund, monitoring our expenditures in each budget category, and suggesting changes were appropriate.

This year's budget provided for revenues and expenses of \$295,000 each and a reserve fund of \$150,000. A goal of SASFAA's Executive Board has been to increase the reserve fund to cover the expenses associated with an annual conference and eventually cover operating expenses of the association for one year. The reserve fund balance as of May 1, 1997 is \$151,706.97.

Based on budget figures of May 1, 1997, actual revenues were 93.70% of budget (\$260,863.74 of \$295,000) and actual expenses were 64.86% of budget (\$190,364.73 of \$295,000). Anticipated revenue should exceed budget due to income from the 1997 New Aid Officers Workshop to be held in June.

SASFAA's reserve fund is comprised of eight Certificates of Deposit of varying amounts and lengths of maturity from 1997 to 2000.

SASFAA also increased its assets by purchasing a Compaq laptop computer and an Okidata laser printer for the Treasurer in August 1996. These items have greatly improved the Treasurer's ability to manage the association's resources as well as provide easy retrieval of information.

The biennial audit of the Treasurer's term from July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1997 will begin following the close of the accounting year. The results will be presented to the 1997-98 SASFAA Executive Board.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SASFAA Vice President **Betty Whalen** (Wingate University, NC) has provided leadership which has enabled the association to continue its quality with regards to professional development. To serve as a bridge between summer workshops and assist those who may have entered the profession after the previous summer workshop, a one-day new aid administrators' workshop was held in conjunction with the annual conference. Approximately 50 new aid administrators took advantage of this opportunity.

The 1997 SASFAA Summer Workshop is currently scheduled for June 22-27 on the campus of Millsaps College in Jackson, MS. **Greg Thornberg** (Jackson State Community College, TN) will serve as the curriculum coordinator. Having taught in two previous workshops and serving in this capacity for the 1996 workshop, Greg brings a wealth of ideas and skills to this position.

Ten instructors have been selected from various states and types of institutions. They are: **Barry Davis** (John Tyler Community College, VA), **Barry Simmons** (Virginia Commonwealth University), **Dick Smelser** (University of Tennessee), **Rose Mary Stelma** (East Carolina University, NC), **Charles Vinson** (Murray State University, KY), **Dorenda Adams** (Alabama State University), **Mary Jane Covington** (University of Mississippi-Medical Center), **Judy Deines** (Jefferson Community College SW Campus, KY), **Ellen Green** (Charleston Southern University, SC) and **Rance Jackson** (University of North Carolina at Charlotte).

SITE SELECTION

Dave Cecil (Transylvania University, KY) served as the site selection chair for the 1996-97 year. He was assisted in this activity by **Sandra McKee** (Methodist Hospital School of Nursing, Memphis, TN). Thanks to their efforts I am pleased to report on two major accomplishments. First, a contract has been negotiated for the SASFAA conference in the year 2000 with the Grand Casino and Hotel Resort in Biloxi, MS. It is our desire

to have this contract signed on behalf of SASFAA before this fiscal year ends. Given the association has not met in Mississippi in over twenty years, one of my personal goals was to ensure that we had finalized this process before the end of my term.

Dave and Sandra have also begun the process of soliciting proposals from state associations for the SASFAA Conference in 2001. Letters have gone out to all state associations with a stated goal of negotiating and signing a contract during the 1997-98 year.

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS/AWARDS

The SASFAA Nominations and Elections Committee is made up of the immediate past state presidents of each of the nine SASFAA states. The SASFAA Immediate Past President serves as chair of this committee. State representatives for this year's committee were **Don Rainer** (Alabama), **Al Pratt** (Florida), **Willie Williams** (Georgia), **Ron Duvall** (Kentucky), **Ann Hyneman** (Mississippi), **Dan Klock** (North Carolina), **Fred Hardin** (South Carolina), **Jane Pennington** (Tennessee), and **Michael Barree** (Virginia). The positions to be filled were President-Elect, Vice-President, and Treasurer.

The committee set the following goals:

- 1) Dual slate for every vacancy
- 2) As diverse a slate as possible in terms of state representation, gender, ethnicity, and sector while ensuring the strongest possible candidates in terms of experience and prior SASFAA and/or state association involvement
- 3) Review and modification of N & E policies and procedures as appropriate

The officers for 1997-98 (including those elected in 1996) are:

President **Carol Mowbray**, Northern Virginia Community College
President-Elect: **Susan Little**, University of Georgia
Immediate Past President: **Joel Harrell**, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga
Vice-President: **Mary Givhan**, Mississippi College
Secretary: **Vera Brooks**, Spelman College, GA
Treasurer: **Karen Gibson**, Chattanooga State Technical Community College, TN

I would also like to recognize and thank **Bob Godfrey** (University of South Carolina), **Ray Pranske** (St. Petersburg Junior College, FL), and **Ken Player** (South Carolina Student Loan Corporation) for their willingness to run for president-elect, vice-president and treasurer, respectively. I hope that each of these individuals will consider running for office again in the near future.

The Awards Committee voted to approve three retired/retiring members for Honorary Life Membership: **Larry Arnold** (former director of the Florida Office of Student Financial Assistance), **John Bannister** (former director of the University of South Carolina) and **Elinor Starr** (former director of Spaulding University, KY).

In addition, two individuals were recognized with the Distinguished Service Award: **Crusie Lucero** (Walters State Community College, TN) and **Jack Woodard** (Millsaps College, MS).

CONFERENCE

The 1997 Annual Conference was by all indications extremely successful. The conference was held in Greensboro, NC at the Holiday Inn Four Seasons Hotel and Convention Center. With a record attendance of 816, this year's conference will certainly go down in history as a precedent setting event.

Conference chair **Dolores Davis** (Hampton University) and her committee, **Larry Garrison** (Western Piedmont Community College, NC), **Janet Sain** (ECPI College of Technology, NC), **William B. Zahn** (UNC-Greensboro, NC), **Zita Barree** (Virginia Commonwealth University), **Margaret C. Black** (South Carolina State University), **Jane Cooper** (Mississippi Higher Education Assistance Corporation), **Ann Hyneman** (Millsaps College, MS), **Emily Johnston** (University of South Alabama), **Anthony P. Jones** (Tusculum College, TN), **Cruzita Lucero** (Walters State Community College, TN), **Susan G. Luhman** (Eastern Kentucky University), **Thomas L. Patterson** (DeVry Institute of Technology, GA), **Aldanzo L. Pratt** (Broward Community College, FL), and **Betty Whalen** (Wingate University, NC), did a superb job of making certain that the conference was well planned and received by all members attending. The theme for this year's conference focused on the issue of providing better quality customer services for students. A major highlight of the conference was the Tuesday evening banquet which featured student musical, drama, and theater talents from several colleges and universities within the immediate Greensboro area.

The conference opening session on Sunday was also very exciting with a beautiful opening ceremony of songs and a highly inspirational motivational speech by David Crocker, a former IBM executive. I can still feel the goose bumps on my arms!

As always, we were fortunate to have had a solid conference program which consisted of several technical updates from the Department of Education and other related officials as well as several sessions that dealt with personal growth and development and the idea of how we can provide better services to our customers.

LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS

The 1996-97 year has been a busy and exciting one for the SASFAA Legislative Relations Committee. Committee Chair **Molly Lawrence** (University of Alabama) and her committee have done an outstanding job of making certain that SASFAA's views were represented on all legislative issues. This was also the year in which the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act process officially started.

The committee was very instrumental in preparing and presenting testimony on behalf of SASFAA at the U.S. Department of Education's Regional Reauthorization Hearing in Atlanta, GA on December 6, 1996. Testimony was also presented on SASFAA's behalf at the NASFAA sponsored reauthorization hearing also in Atlanta in the fall.

The NASFAA Task Force on Reauthorization held a hearing in conjunction with the annual conference in Greensboro. The hearing was coordinated by the Legislative Relations Committee and members of the NASFAA Task Force were there to provide information as well as receive input.

Molly and her committee also made extensive use of the SASFAA-L and SASFAA-EXEC-L listserves to solicit member and board input into draft responses and to post the final response to all subscribers. Molly was able to forward up-to-the-minute legislative alerts when key legislative votes were upcoming.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

This has been one of the most exciting areas of activity for me personally over the last 12 months. As the first SASFAA President to have the opportunity to respond to the recently approved SASFAA Long Range Plan, I had several items that I wanted to make certain were addressed. First, we needed to make certain that we made some progress in addressing issues identified in the plan. Secondly, while a structure for monitoring the plan had been approved, it was important to make certain that the process was implemented and functional. Finally, at the end of the first year it was critical for us to have some successes as well as start the process of continuous long term implementation of the plan.

GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

As previously indicated, it was critical that we develop and implement a mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of our long range plan. The Governance and Planning Committee was established as the committee responsible for this task.

The committee is chaired by the SASFAA Immediate Past President. **Karen Fooks** (University of Florida) SASFAA's current Immediate Past President served in this capacity for this year. There are four other committee members, two of whom must have previously served on the SASFAA Executive Board and two of whom have not. Each member (other than the chair) is appointed for two years with staggered appointments except for the 1996-97 year when two members were appointed for two years and two members for one year. The incoming President is responsible for appointing individuals to the vacant positions. The four committee members for 1996-97 were **Loretta Franklin** (DeVry Institute of Technology, GA), **Mary Givhan** (Mississippi College), **Ginger Klock** (North Carolina School of the Arts), and **Curtis Whalen** (University of North Carolina-Charlotte).

The committee held three meetings, November, at the annual conference in February, and again in May. The first two meetings discussed how compliance with the Long Range Plan should be evaluated, making subcommittee assignments for this assessment, and discussing the general outlines for the format of the final report. The May meeting was held to complete the evaluation of SASFAA's activities as they relate to the plan and preparation of an initial draft of the report. The final report will be presented to the SASFAA Executive Board at its year end meeting in June 1997.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

This task force was established to address several key fiscal issues that were identified in the long range plan. Committee Chair **Randy Craig** (ECMC, VA), and his committee members **Jane Cooper** (Mississippi Higher Education Assistance Corporation), **Dave Cecil** (Transylvania University, KY), **Ron Gambill** (Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation), **Billie Jo Hamilton** (University of Tennessee-Memphis), **H.S. 'Buddy' Johnston** (Radford University, VA) and **Carol Mowbray** (Northern Virginia Community College) worked hard on this project and are to be commended for their contributions to this activity.

The committee was charged with the task of producing a document that could be used by future SASFAA Executive Boards and Treasurers as a guide to managing the financial affairs of the association. After several meetings, conference calls and hours of writing and rewriting, a final document was presented to the SASFAA Board at its February 15, 1997 meeting. This document, the SASFAA Guide to Financial Management, provides an extensive documentation to the practices, policies and procedures that should be followed in managing the financial resources of the association in a prudent and sound manner.

The association is truly appreciative of the efforts of this group in addressing these issues. I am certain that the guide will be extremely helpful to boards and officers in the future.

MEMBERSHIP

Rose Mary Stelma, Membership Chair, has done a magnificent job of restoring and updating the 1995-96 membership data base as well as creating and maintaining the current year's records. Currently, membership records are maintained on the chair's laptop as FileMaker Pro records, with a backup diskette. These records are reconciled with the SASFAA Treasurer's database. Membership information is also available through SASFAA home page.

The 1996-97 membership directory is on schedule to be mailed before the end of the fiscal year. The chair has explored the possibility of producing the directory in a loose leaf format and will be presenting information on this option to the SASFAA Executive Board at its June 1997 meeting.

An analysis of the 1996-97 membership shows:

Alabama	95
Florida	166
Georgia	170
Kentucky	76
Mississippi	59
North Carolina	212
South Carolina	115
Tennessee	152
Virginia	113
Honorary Life	15
Other States	90
Total	1,263

NEWSLETTER

One of the most difficult responsibilities in any volunteer association is that of producing a newsletter. This case is certainly no different with SASFAA. Newsletter chair **Judy Case** (Copiah Lincoln Community College, MS) and Assistant Newsletter chair **Zita Barree** (Virginia Commonwealth University) have done an outstanding job of producing a document that we can all be proud of.

To date three editions of the newsletter have been published this year with a final summer edition scheduled soon. Over 1300 copies of each edition are mailed to our membership and other constituent groups.

BUDGET

Ron Gambill, Budget Committee Chair (Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation) has once again done an outstanding job of working with this area. During the year, the Budget Committee worked in conjunction with the long range planning process to establish more definitive policies and procedures as it relates to the budget and fiscal stability of SASFAA.

The original goal of at least 50% of the SASFAA budget being in a reserve fund has been achieved. A checkbook review and cash accounting was conducted at the SASFAA annual conference in Greensboro. I am happy to report that the Treasurer's books balanced to the penny! All cash received at the conference was matched with the receipts and balanced exactly. A final checkbook review will be conducted at the June 1997 Board meeting.

SPONSORSHIP

Under the leadership of **Aldanzo L. Pratt** (Education First, formerly of Broward Community College), and assisted by **Susan Luhman** (Eastern Kentucky University) and **Louise Rothlein**, the SASFAA tradition of assuring that our sponsorship was most successful has been maintained. We continue to have strong support from our vendors and sponsors during the 1996-97 year. To date, our total sponsorship revenue, including advertising, has surpassed \$80,000. More revenue is anticipated from the Summer Workshop and Directory invoicing.

This year's annual conference had fifty-four organizations who contributed their support with fifty-two of these being exhibitors. SASFAA showed its appreciation to the vendors and sponsors by hosting a reception in their honor.

A special thanks goes to Al, Susan, and Louise for their work in making this a banner year.

AGENCY LIAISONS

Tony Hollin (Educational Funding of the South, TN) served as the Lender Liaison this year and was charged with keeping the board apprised of all federal and state legislative and regulatory changes impacting the lending community, establishing a network for soliciting lender concerns and issues about SASFAA policies, and working closely with the vendor/sponsor chair concerning policies and procedures that impact lenders as vendors and sponsors. **Ron Gambill** as Guaranty/State Agency Liaison provided the guaranty agency assessment of lending issues and the state perspective on SSIG and other state scholarship and grant concerns.

Bob Bennett (Pickett and Hatcher Educational Foundation, GA) acts as our Foundations Liaison. Bob alerted us to tax issues and other concerns that may impact private giving. He also serves as SASFAA's archivist and Pickett and Hatcher continues to provide invaluable service to SASFAA by microfilming and storing all of SASFAA's records. We sincerely appreciate this perspective that Bob brings to the board and the work that is done by Pickett and Hatcher on SASFAA's behalf.

A special thanks goes to **Barbara Gray** and **Leo "Skip" Pou** (U.S. Department of Education) for their support of SASFAA during the year. The numerous "Federal Updates" at our state conferences as well as Executive Board meetings, have been an invaluable resource to our associations. I particularly appreciate their participation on the SASFAA-L list and providing us with correct and updated information.

PAST PRESIDENT

Karen Fooks, Immediate Past President (University of Florida) has provided outstanding support to our association during the 1996-97 year. The SASFAA listserve, which she personally established at her institution and continues to support, has been an invaluable resource to SASFAA.

SASFAA-L was created in the spring of 1996 and currently has approximately 300 subscribers, both members and non-members. While the activity on the list has not been at the desired level, Karen has continued to

maintain this service for our association.

Karen has also been the driving force behind the creation and maintenance of the SASFAA web site. While still in its infancy, the web site is envisioned to eventually be a source where members and non-members alike can access the associational information including by-laws, policies and procedures, conference and workshop information, newsletters and board members, etc.

The site currently contains all of the approved 1996-97 Executive Board minutes, 1996-97 newsletters, a searchable membership database, information about the annual conference and summer workshop, by-laws, policies and procedures, long range plan, information about the elected officers, training calendars by both state and date, and the treasurer's report. In addition, the site has links to state association web sites and listserves.

Future plans include the ability to register for conferences and workshops on-line, the ability to correct membership information on-line and SASFAA responses to legislation and regulations.

Perhaps the most important role that Karen has had for me personally this year has been that of unofficial adviser, friend and confidant. Her valuable insight and historical perspectives have not only served me well personally, but the association as a whole. The manner in which she has shared information, resources, and "plain common sense" advice has served me well. To coin a popular but so true cliché, "I could not have done it without her".

PRESIDENT-ELECT

The SASFAA President-Elect performs several critical functions on behalf of the association. **Carol Mowbray** (Northern Virginia Community College) has done an outstanding job of serving in this capacity for the 1996-97 year.

The President-Elect's primary role is that of "ambassador" and shares responsibility for state visits with the president. While this travel schedule is brutal, these visits are helpful to the states in providing a broader perspective on issues and increasing SASFAA's visibility to those who might not be able to attend the annual meeting. More importantly, these visits are vital to the president-elect as it gives that person the opportunity to meet new people, put names to faces, observe future leaders in action and help select active, committed individuals to serve as committee members and chairs.

Another important role for the president-elect is to serve as a member of the NASFAA Board of Directors and to report on board activities to the SASFAA Executive Board. Carol's insight and analysis of the issues at hand were most appreciated and helped the NASFAA Board deal with many timely issues.

In an attempt to move forward as soon as possible in addressing issues identified in the long range plan, Carol has already started working on one of her major activities for the 1997-98 year. During the February 1997 Executive Board meeting, a task force was established to create a new policies and procedures manual with a special emphasis placed on associational communications. I appreciate Carol's willingness to start on this project and look forward to its completion during the 1997-98 year.

I also appreciate the advice and support that Carol has provided to me personally during my presidency. Knowing that she was always willing to listen and make suggestions was a valuable support mechanism.

SECRETARY

Vera Brooks (Spelman College, GA) has done an outstanding job this year of recording and mailing the minutes from our Executive Board meetings. This is truly one of the more unrecognized and under-appreciated positions on the board. While there were no by-law changes for the 1996-97 year, several items were added or updated in our Policies and Procedures Manual.

The SASFAA secretary is also responsible for preparing and mailing of all meeting agendas, solicitation of documents for our archives, reprinting of stationary, and producing our P & P manuals for all new board members.

STATE ACTIVITIES

The nine state presidents play a critical role in the success of our association. Each brings a different perspective to the table and because the state presidency is often the first opportunity these individuals have had to serve SASFAA, it provides an excellent training ground for new leadership. The 1996-97 state presidents are : **Debbie Marcus** (Bessemer State Technical College, AL), **Marvin Reid** (Macon College, GA), **Thurman Mitchell** (Hinds Community College, MS), **Jacqueline Bell** (University of South Carolina, SC), **Lisa Tumer** (Longwood College, VA), **Rick Wilder** (University of Florida, FL), **Tim Rhodes** (Morehead State University, KY), **Bill Cox** (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, NC) and **David Gelinis** (University of the South, TN).

It has been an extreme privilege for me to have had the opportunity to work with each of these individuals. Their support, advice, and guidance have been of tremendous value to me personally as well as our association. Their participation on the SASFAA Board has provided wonderful opportunities for interaction as well as professional and associational growth.

SUMMARY

One of the great benefits of having served on your behalf during this year has been the wonderful colleagues, friends and supporters that I have had the opportunity to interact with. I can truly say that "our people" are special. As I bring this year to an end I realize that there are many other items which I could have addressed but unfortunately time did not permit.

I would also like to personally thank each of you as board members for the support that your have provided during this year. A special thanks also goes to my boss, Associate Provost William Aiken and the entire staff of the student aid office at The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Without the support of these folks, none of what was accomplished on my part would have happened. Let me say thanks again to my wife Sandra, and John, Chris and Kim for allowing me to share my time with SASFAA for they are the ones who have had to make the real sacrifice!

It has been a genuine pleasure to have served and I look forward to SASFAA's continued growth and prosperity under Carol's leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel V. Harrell
President



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