

# **SASFAA Governance and Strategic Planning Committee Assessment**

**2006-2011 SASFAA Long-Range Plan**

**2006-2007**

**Southern Association of Student Financial  
Aid Administrators, Inc.**



**June 2007**

**Guy F. Gibbs, Chair  
2006-2007 SASFAA Past President**



June 8, 2007

**TO:** SASFAA Board of Director  
SASFAA Membership

**FROM:** Governance and Strategic Planning Committee

Guy F. Gibbs, Chair, Northern Virginia Community College  
Betty Whalen, Winthrop University  
Dee Talley, University of Alabama - Birmingham  
Tom Morehouse, Nelnet  
Michael Gantt, University of Georgia  
Jody Darby, North Metro Technical College

**SUBJECT:** Assessment of the 2006-2011 SASFAA Long-Range Plan

**The SASFAA Mission Statement,**

*“The Southern Association of Student Financial Aid administrators was founded in order to establish a community of members, who through the sharing of ideas and professional competencies and experiences would serve more ethically and effectively the diverse needs of students, parents, and institutions. The present and future existence of the Association continues to be based on this founding principle.*

*To facilitate this mission, the Association pledges to support professional communications in all areas concerned with the administration of student educational financing programs. The Association is committed to developing future leaders by actively involving its membership. To accomplish the goals set forth by the Association in a dynamic environment, the Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators offers personal and professional development opportunities and embraces sound principles and practices of aid administration.”*

**The SASFAA Vision Statement,**

*“The Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators is a dynamic organization serving practitioners, users and providers of student financial aid programs. This effort occurs in an environment of mutual response and support which encourages questions, discussion and shaping of ideas – thus promoting opportunities, equity and access in and to higher education.”*

**The charge given to the SASFAA Governance and Strategic Planning Committee (GASP) was to review the SASFAA 2006-2011 Long-Range Plan (Plan) and to ascertain to what extent the Board, state presidents and committee chairs/liaisons, acting on behalf of the membership, achieved their goals and objectives that they established for themselves in response to the Plan.**

**This assessment followed the four major sections identified in the Plan: Organizational Structure; Communication/Collaboration; Professional Development and Finances. Organizational Structure included By-Laws, Board of Directors, Committees, Leadership, Membership and Policies and Procedures. Communication/Collaboration also included a discussion on Legislative Relations.**

**The committee reviewed the goals and objectives established in the Plan and then evaluated the responses provided by the various Board members, state presidents and committee chairs/liaisons to determine how they met or did not meet their specific goals and objectives. This included a review of the activities conducted as well as an assessment as to whether or not goals and objectives were met.**

**The final activity of the GASP committee includes the recommendations that are necessary to meet fully the goals and objectives set forth in the Plan. Much progress was made in 2006-2007; however, the recommendations, if meet in future years, will enhance the profile of SASFAA within the financial aid community and better serve the membership.**

**The GASP committee appreciates the hard work of the Board, state presidents and committee chairs/liaison and the SASFAA members that gave of their expertise, time and energy to make this a better Association. Sincere thanks to each of you for your efforts. We are a better Association because of you.**

**2006-2007 Governance and Strategic Planning Committee Assessment  
SASFAA Long-Range Plan (2006-2011)**

***ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE***

**BY-LAWS**

**GOAL: The By-Laws will reflect the mission, vision and purpose of the Association and support the viability of the organization.**

**OBJECTIVE:**

- Review annually to ensure that the By-Laws continue to further the mission of the Association.

Activities:

The Committee met April 12, 2007 at the AASFAA conference and completed the annual review of the By-Laws.

Assessment:

The By-Laws are current and no changes were deemed necessary.

Recommendations:

Continue an annual review of the By-Laws.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**GOAL 1: The terms of office for elected officers will be of sufficient length to ensure continuity and to complete official business while providing opportunities for new leadership.**

**OBJECTIVE:**

- Review the terms and composition of office of elected officers at least once every five years.

Activities:

The Association engaged in no activities related to this objective in 2006-2007.

Assessment:

No assessment had been made at this and there had been no activity related to this objective/goal.

Recommendations:

The Board must make an assessment between 2006 and 2011.

**GOAL 2: The advice and assistance provided to the Board of Directors by committee chairs are such that the goals of the Association are readily accomplished, future leadership is developed, and Board activities remain fiscally responsible.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Assess the purpose and need of each committee when making committee chair/liason appointments.
- Committee goals and objectives should be developed annually to meet the goals of the SASFAA Long-Range Plan and incorporate recommendations from the most recent Governance and Planning (GASP) report.
- Consider whether all committee chairs should be in attendance at all Board of Directors meetings, keeping in mind the need to develop future leadership for the Association yet maintaining the ability to conduct business at reasonable cost.
- Select an appropriate mix of returning and new committee chairs to ensure that continuity of Association business and the development of future leadership.
- Ensure that committee chair appointments, to the extent possible, reflect inclusiveness.
- Review the Long-Range Plan annually to monitor progress toward goal attainment.
- Evaluate and update comprehensively the Plan every five years.

Activities:

The President used the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual to ensure that committee chairs/liason positions were needed. This included a review of the purpose of each committee and liason position. The President carefully reviewed the need for each committee when determining the Board structure for 2006-2007 and only included committees and committee chairs as necessary.

The President developed committee goals and objectives focusing on SASFAA Long-Range Plan and recommendations from GASP reports of previous years.

The President identified and pursued minority leaders to serve as committee chairs.

The President and committee chairs utilized workshops and conferences as a way to identify future leaders.

During the transition meeting in June 2006 the President discussed with committee chairs the importance of selecting both new and returning members and to ensure diversity among its members.

The President appointed a committee chairperson, with the approval of the Board, to oversee the development of a leadership workshop. Monetary support was provided to hold the workshop.

The President invited each committee chair to all Board meetings held in 2006-2007.

The President and Board identified individuals to attend the NASFAA Leadership Workshop and provided monetary support through the SASFAA budget to send these individuals to Washington, DC for the leadership development workshop.

#### Assessment:

The SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual was used to review the purpose of each committee chair/liaison position and as a framework, along with the Long-Range Plan and GASP reports, in the development of goals and objectives. This information was then provided to the committee chairs/liaisons in the development of individual activities for each task. This process is done on an annual basis. The President also determined which committee chairs/liaisons were invited to Board meetings.

The President was successful in identifying and naming three (3) minority leaders to serve as committee chairs for the 2006-2007.

The President had the opportunity to observe SASFAA members in a number of different venues including last year's New Aid Officer Workshop, the annual conference and the Leadership Symposium. Visiting the state Association conferences also provided an opportunity to observe individuals working within their own state Association. Information gleaned from these visits gave the President additional insight that was helpful in identifying committee chairs and recommending their appointment by the Board.

The importance of selecting a mix of new and returning committee chairs was emphasized at transition meeting as incoming chairs were recognized. Committee chairs did an excellent job of mixing new and returning members to their respective committee. The composition of committees represented a cross-section of the SASFAA membership.

A Special Appointee to the Board for 2006-2007 was tasked with the development of a leadership workshop. Adequate funds were appropriated by the SASFAA Board to conduct the workshop. The nine state Associations were asked to assist, when necessary, in covering travel costs to the workshop. The workshop exceeded expectations and the evaluations showed that the participants gained a great deal of knowledge. The Leadership Symposium was held in Charlotte, NC from March 14-16.

The President, in conjunction with the Board, identified individuals to attend the NASFAA Leadership workshop held in Washington, DC. SASFAA sent five (5) individuals to the NASFAA Leadership Workshop held in March.

All committee chairs were invited to each Board meeting to obtain their input on a variety of subjects and not just the areas in which they were serving on the Board.

Recommendations:

In light of continuing developments within the profession it is important that the incoming president consider whether or not all committee chairs/liaisons should attend every Board meeting.

The Long-Range Plan must be evaluated and updated every five years. This process should begin no later than 2009 with a new plan to be approved and in place in 2011.

**COMMITTEES**

**GOAL: Committees should be of sufficient size and number and represent the diversity of the membership to accomplish the goals of the Association and to develop future leadership while being fiscally responsible.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Appoint committee members, to the extent possible, to reflect a practice of inclusiveness.
- Ensure that committees with broadly-defined responsibilities such as legislative relations, professional development, and annual conference include at least one representative from each state in the region. Discuss appointments with the current state presidents at the time of selection.
- Ensure that committees, unless otherwise specified in the By-Laws or by policy, function with the fewest number of members sufficient to accomplish the goals of that committee.
- Ensure that the committee chair, with approval of the Board of Directors, makes every effort to identify an appropriate mix of returning and new members to assure the continuity of committee business and development of future leadership.
- Pursue alternatives to on-site meetings whenever possible to keep costs at the most reasonable level. Such alternatives include conference calls, electronic mail and arranging committee meetings in conjunction with other meetings where some committee members would normally be in attendance.
- Require that each committee provides a written annual summary of its activities so this information may be included in the president's annual report.

Activities:

By attending each state association's conference and workshops, the President aggressively identified and pursued minority leaders to serve as committee chairs.

The President selected an appropriate mix of returning and new committee chairs to ensure the continuity of executive Board business and the development of future leadership.

The legislative relations, professional development, newsletter and annual conference committees included when possible, at least one representative from each state. The selection of committee members to ensure old and new members as well as diversity can be difficult since some committees have predetermined membership.

The President requested a written year-end report from each committee chair/liaison as well as those elected members of the Board. The state presidents were also encouraged to provide an overall assessment of their activities as Board members.

#### Assessment:

The President developed an effective committee structure and appointed qualified committee chairs. A total of three (3) minority leaders were selected to serve as committee chairs for the 2006-2007 year. Ensuring inclusiveness can be difficult due to the number of available positions and in attempting to keep a balance of other factors (e.g., state and school type representation).

Seven (7) returning and six (6) new committee chairs/liaisons were selected to serve for the 2006-2007 year.

Of the ten committee chairs, four (4) are from 4-year publics, two (2) are from 2-year publics, and four (4) represented lenders/vendors. Note that 4-year private schools are heavily represented by elected Board members (4). Of the 28 members of the SASFAA Board and committee chairs/liaisons, 17 are male and 11 are female. Of the 28, 7 represent ethnic minority groups.

Several committees including nominations and elections, legislative relations, membership, newsletter, professional development and annual conference included at least one representative from each state.

E-mails and teleconferencing when appropriate were used to reduce costs and minimized face-to-face meetings. The Association did an excellent job in minimizing costs by meeting at central locations (such as Charlotte and Nashville) and trying to tie meetings with state conferences. An excellent job was accomplished in managing travel costs and staying within the budget.

A written evaluation of the goals and objectives were received from the elected officers, state president and committee chairs/liaisons. The information was used for the President's annual report and by the GASP committee in their evaluation of the goals and objectives identified in the Long-Range Plan.

#### Recommendations:

The Board should consider alternatives to on-site meetings whenever possible to keep costs at the most reasonable level. Such alternatives might include conference calls, electronic mail and

arranging committee meetings in conjunction with other events where some committee members would normally be in attendance.

## **LEADERSHIP**

**GOAL: Members who possess leadership aspirations and capabilities will be identified and developed for significant involvement within the Association.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Identify and finance one individual annually, other than the President-Elect or Treasurer, to attend the NASFAA Leadership Conference if never attended previously.
- Finance, when needed, the SASFAA portion of the NASFAA inter-regional visitation program.
- Provide recognition of state and regional leaders.
- Establish a SASFAA leadership workshop for developing state member officers and leaders which may be held at a state conference or the SASFAA annual conference.
- Provide a forum at the SASFAA conference for recognition of any state project(s) submitted to NASFAA.
- Provide a scholarship to award to a need-based student in order to recognize the leadership contributions of the SASFAA President to the Association. The scholarship will be awarded at the conclusion of the Past-President year.
- The SASFAA Executive Committee will solicit a listing from each state president of potential leaders and provide an opportunity for them to meet during SASFAA visits to the state meetings.

### Activities:

The Board identified individuals to attend the NASFAA Leadership Workshop in March and provided monetary support through the SASFAA budget to send those individuals to the workshop.

The Board approved the appointment of a special appointee to the Board for 2006-2007 to oversee the development of a leadership workshop. The Board provided the monetary support needed for the workshop. Periodic opportunities for experienced aid administrators to grow in leadership, management, and other advanced functions as aid administrators was offered during the year.

The President, through the Board, solicited a list from each state president of potential leaders from their respective Associations and was encouraged to provide an opportunity for those identified to meet with the SASFAA leadership during SASFAA visits to state conferences.

The Board provided a need-based scholarship to the institution of the immediate Past President of SASFAA to recognize his/her contributions to the Association. The scholarship will be presented to the immediate Past President upon completion of his term of office. The check for \$1,000 will be presented in June 2007.

SASF AA coordinated a number of sessions at the annual conference designed for the more experienced aid administrator. A Research Symposium was held as a pre-conference workshop and designed to serve the needs of the more experienced professional. SASF AA continues to sponsor the mid-level workshop with the Southwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SWASF AA).

Assessment:

The President worked with the Board to identify individuals other than the President-Elect, Vice President and Treasurer to attend the NASF AA Leadership Workshop. SASF AA sent five (5) individuals by paying their expenses to attend the workshop held in Washington, DC, in March.

The SASF AA leadership workshop developed by a special appointee to the Board was an excellent training activity. Evaluations indicated that the participants gained a great deal of knowledge and exceeded expectations. The Leadership Symposium was held in Charlotte, NC from March 14-16.

The Research Symposium, held as a pre-conference workshop, provided excellent training for the more experienced aid administrator professional.

Providing a \$1,000 scholarship to SASF AA's immediate Past President upon completion of his term of office is an excellent way to recognize his contributions to the Association.

Recommendations:

Continue the development of potential leaders of the Association through workshops, symposiums, conference sessions, etc.

Increase the scholarship given to the immediate Past President's institution in recognition of his/her service to the Association to \$2,000.

**MEMBERSHIP**

**GOAL: The membership of the Association should represent the composition of financial aid professionals in the region.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Seek to increase membership.
- Undertake a review of the membership categories for appropriateness at least once every five years.
- Conduct a survey at least once every five years to determine membership needs that is scheduled two years before the effective date of the next 5-year long-range plan.
- Increase membership involvement in activities of the Association.
- Monitor the persistence rate of members and analyze the reasons for discontinuing membership.

- Incorporate ideas which surface from membership survey.
- Provide mentoring opportunities for new members.
- Provide membership services so the needs and interests of all sectors are addressed fairly and equitably.

#### Activities:

The chair gathered membership data for the past 2-4 years and entered the data into a spreadsheet to make comparisons and to identify areas of growth and decline. The year-end data will be reviewed for overall membership growth or decline and provided to the Board. The chair also reviewed the list of “non-specified” members and identified categories that may need to be added to the membership form. The chair also determined ways to market SASFAA to newly identified categories or under-represented areas, if applicable.

The committee provided mentoring opportunities for the participation and growth of new members at the annual conference and through New Aid Office and Mid-Level Workshops.

The friendly membership competition was promoted in 2006-2007 at the regional and state levels. Emails were provided to the committee members with the current totals to be communicated with their state association. Members often requested current statistics to be provided in state association newsletters and for Board reports.

#### Assessment:

As of April 2007, all states are above the 2005-2006 totals except for two, Virginia (-25) and North Carolina (-80). The decline in North Carolina may be explained by the fact that the 2006 conference was held in Greensboro, North Carolina. Research is still being done to compare the institution type statistics.

The friendly membership competition received good support from the membership.

The Association has provided excellent mentoring opportunities through the NAOW experiences and activities at the annual conference. There was excellent involvement across the Board from SASFAA members.

In researching state Association dues, it was found that some states have multiple member categories. Most still required a membership fee for each category, even if the category was classified as “non-voting.” The majority of state Associations have individual membership. Other membership types identified included: institutional, regular, associate, voting, retired and student.

#### Recommendations:

Undertake a review of the membership categories for appropriateness at least once every five years. This objective was deferred but should be reviewed and acted upon during the 2006-2011 Long-Range Plan period.

Review the membership structure at least once every five years to determine if membership should be individual, institutional or on some other basis. This objective was deferred but should be reviewed and acted upon during the 2006-2011 Long-Range Plan period.

In 2006-2007 the persistence rate of members and an analysis of the reasons for discontinuing membership were not completed. It is recommended that consideration be given to determining if this information can be obtained from archived records and that a survey instrument be mailed to those that discontinued their membership and their reasons for doing so.

Ensure that a general membership survey is conducted no later than 2009 and recommendations from the survey be incorporated into the operational plan of the Association.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**GOAL 1: Policies and procedures are accurate and complete in order to provide consistent Associational direction.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Establish a procedure to ensure that the policies and procedures are accurate and complete and that the Association complies with them. The review should include an analysis of the minutes of each Board Meeting to be sure policy/procedures approvals have been incorporated.
- Require that officers and committee chairs review and update policies and procedures under their purview.
- Recommendations for policies and procedures changes shall be approved by the SASFAA Board of Directors.
- The Secretary shall incorporate policies and procedures as they are approved to the Policy and Procedures Manual.

### **Activities:**

The Past President communicated procedures for officers and committee chairs/liasons to evaluate the policies and procedures of the Association. This process resulted in ensuring the completeness and compliance of establish policies and procedures.

The Past President announced at the 2006 summer Board meeting that officers and committee chairs are responsible for reviewing and recommending changes/updates to the policies and procedures of the Association. Officers and committee chairs will review annually and report any needed changes/updates to the full Board for their action.

Each Board member and committee chairs/liasons was asked to continually review the Association's policies and procedures and suggest changes, as needed, to improve the efficiency of SASFAA and ensure financial integrity.

The Past President ensured that any recommendations for changes to policy and procedures will be presented to the SASFAA Board for approval.

Assessment:

The Past President has done a good job working with appropriate persons to identify problems related to the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual. He has and ensured that the most current manual is available on the SASFAA Web site. No other action is deemed necessary at this time.

The President has done a good job reviewing the minutes to ensure that the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual has been consistently and correctly updated. Minutes, approved by the Board, have been placed on the SAFSAA Web site.

The President has done a good job monitoring the activities of the Association for compliance with policies and procedures.

A changes to the policies and procedures were adopted by the Board and the added/updated in the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual.

Recommendations:

The SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual shall be updated and updates posted to the SASFAA Web site upon approval by the Board. The Web site shall be updated in a timely fashion.

**GOAL 2: Maintain the records of the Association.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Establish procedures to maintain and archive the records of the Association at the close of each fiscal year.
- Review periodically the methods for maintaining accessibility, retrieval, security and the location for archival of records.
- Ensure the accessibility and continuity of the Association's records

Activities:

The Secretary and Chair of Electronic Services and others reviewed electronic files to assure that they were located in an appropriate electronic storage.

Records of the Association have been stored on the hard drive of Secretary's desktop and laptop computers as well as two flash drives. The minutes of the Board meetings, By-Laws changes and updates to the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual have been posted to the SASFAA Web site and archived by the service provider.

SASFAA documents held by the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation were inventoried in 2005-2006 and scanned to CD's in 2006-2007. Additional efforts were made to obtain paper documents that were not found at the Corporation's offices and not currently archived with the service provider.

All current records of the Association were maintained to include appropriate records of receipts and expenditures. This information was available to prepare the annual year-end financial statements as of June 30, 2007.

#### Assessment:

Last year's Special Appointee's request for historical records met with some success; however it was determined that some records held by previous secretaries and others might not have been found at the Corporation and contact is on-going to obtain any additional records that should be archived. It is anticipated that the communication with past secretaries will yield some additional minutes, reports and documents.

All available archived files have been scanned onto CD's. The cost of scanning to date is \$711. When the additional documents are received by the Secretary they will need to be scanned as well; however, it is expected that this will be a minimum expense to the Association.

The 2005-2006 Special Appointee that chaired the archive committee will provide to the President and incoming President-Elect recommendations concerning continued archival of records. The appointee feels that with all available archived files scanned into CD's, there is no reason to store materials on the SASFAA Web site. Because these are accessed so infrequently it is suggested that a procedure be added to the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual which details with who is responsible for gathering all minutes, officer and committee reports, and any other items deemed appropriate by the Board and send them to be scanned at the end of the year. A specific listing of who would keep the CD's and on what computer they would be loaded.

#### Recommendations:

A clarification of the responsibilities of the Secretary and the Electronic Services Chair is necessary with respect to posting to the SASFAA Web site. The Secretary, as well as the Treasurer, should have the capability to post to the Web site (through the service provider, if required).

It is recommended that the Board explore other options that will allow Board members to update information on the Web site rather than waiting on ATAC to do the postings. It sometimes take ATAC a while to get items posted and/or updated.

It is recommended that a procedure be included in the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual that details who is responsible for gathering all minutes, reports and other items deemed appropriate by the Board. This person should be identified as the individual charged with having the materials scanned.

It is recommended that documents be scanned to CD yearly.

It is recommended that a list of who would keep the CD's and on whose computer they would be maintained be established.

## **COMMUNICATION/COLLABORATION**

**GOAL 1: Facilitate alliances between and among various sectors and members of the financial aid community.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Work with all sectors of the region's financial aid community to ensure representation and participation in all Association programs and activities.
- Serve as a link with and between various sectors of the Association, and as a link between the state Associations and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

### **Activities:**

The President encouraged the Board and committee chairs/liaisons to participate in regional activities and promote such activities as leadership development, new aid officer and mid-level training as well as the annual conference.

The President emphasized how Board and committee chairs/liaisons can serve as links between the state, regional and national Associations.

### **Assessment:**

All Board members and committee chairs/liaisons did a good job ensuring representation and participation of the membership on committees.

SASF AA was represented well by either the President or President-Elect attending each state meeting during the year. In addition, the President, President-Elect and Past-President represented SASF AA at NASF AA Board meetings throughout the year. The President-Elect provided excellent reports of the activities of the NASF AA Board to the SASF AA Board and submitted articles for the SASF AA newsletter to be posted to the SASF AA Web site.

### **Recommendations:**

None

**GOAL 2: Disseminate quality information to enhance communications among members in a timely and cost-efficient manner.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Improve frequency and quality of communication with members.
- Address a full range of issues, ranging from policies to daily operations.
- Provide the SASF AA president's annual report to the membership in accordance with Section 1, Article 7 of the By-Laws.

- Use technologies to improve communications with the membership.
- Employ marketing/communications strategies to focus information to various segments of the membership.
- Develop outreach materials to market SASFAA effectively to various constituencies.
- Develop a volunteer process and communicate it clearly. Consider creating “SASFAA Kits” on committee structure, programs, services, etc.

#### Activities:

The President provided a written annual report on the year's activities. The report was presented at the June Board meeting and posted to the SASFAA Web site. The President, through the Board, addressed a full range of issues, ranging from policies to daily operations and communicated with the membership through postings to the SASFAA listserv and the SASFAA newsletter.

The Newsletter Editor emailed newsletter reminders to the SASFAA Board, committee chairs and membership to solicit articles for the newsletter; state newsletter chairs were asked to submit an article from their newsletter; and established a movers and shakers section in the newsletter.

The Membership Committee was tasked with looking at developing an introduction to SASFAA brochure. This included ascertaining the message, format and information that should be included and who would receive this brochure and when. This was a recommendation brought forward from a previous GAP report. No action occurred during 2006-2007.

The Board and committee chairs used new and emerging technologies (i.e., internet, etc.) as a more timely and cost-efficient means of communicating with the membership.

The Legislative Relations Committee provided legislative alerts to membership and provided a monthly digest of information relevant to financial aid.

#### Assessment:

The President submitted an annual report on the year's activities to Association members, provided that report to the Board and posted to the SASFAA Web site.

The use of new and emerging technologies (i.e., internet, etc.) as a more timely and cost-efficient means of communicating with the membership worked successfully. The Membership Committee did not formally discuss the need for a SASFAA membership brochure.

The GASP committee was unable to find the legislative alerts and monthly digest of information relevant to financial aid provided by the Legislative Relations Committee to the membership.

#### Recommendations:

Post the President’s annual report to the SASFAA Web site and notify the membership through the SASFAA listserv no later than June 30.

Identify and incorporate new technologies as a means of effectively communicating with the membership that may result in cost-savings to the Association.

Decide whether or not a membership brochure is needed and move forward and develop a brochure if found necessary and if approved by the Board. This has been a recommendation for several years and no action has yet been taken. A decision should be made whether to move forward or whether to delete this objective.

Legislative alerts and monthly digest of information should be posted to the SASFAA Web site.

## **LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS**

**GOAL: Apprise members of legislative issues affecting the profession, educate members of alternative approaches, encourage involvement on issues and advocate positions when reasonable consensus exists.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Promote the SASFAA region's role in the higher education community.
- Increase SASFAA members' awareness of the potential affect on outcome of legislative issues, proposals and actions.

### **Activities:**

The committee provided legislative alerts to the membership. A monthly digest of information relevant to financial aid was provided via the listserv.

The committee provided suggested text for letters that were written by the President regarding such issues as HERA and others.

The committee reminded the membership of opportunities to respond to NPRM's and to participate in the HERA hearings.

### **Assessment:**

The committee did an excellent job providing SASFAA members with timely updates regarding current legislative issues through messages sent over the SASFAA listserv and articles posted in the SASFAA newsletter.

The committee was tasked with the revision of the SASFAA Legislative Guide. This activity was not completed.

### **Recommendations:**

The objective, "Promote the SASFAA region's role in the higher education community," was not specifically addressed in the activities of the committee in 2006-2007. It is recommended that

previous documents created to promote awareness of the impact of financial aid be updated and provided to the membership. Refer to handouts developed for the Leadership and Strategic Planning Summit held on November 11-12, 2005.

Legislative alerts are to be announced via the listserv; however, these same alerts shall be posted to the SASFAA Web site for continued review by the membership.

The SASFAA Web site does not contain information related to current legislative committee activities. Any alert, letter on behalf of the Association, etc., should be posted to the Web site for membership review.

The SASFAA Legislative Guide was last revised in 2003. This guide needs to be updated after each congressional election.

The Conference Committee should provide a session at the annual conference on communicating with their legislative representatives.

The committee should work with NASFAA staff to prepare for Hill visits since the annual conference will be held in Arlington (Crystal City), Virginia and will provide easy of access to Capitol Hill.

## *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*

**GOAL: The professional growth and competencies of members are addressed by offering workshops, seminars, meetings and other training opportunities.**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Determine the training/professional development needs of members, recognizing categorical distinctions among members such as experience, institutional type, constituencies served and level of responsibility.
- Improve and enhance the annual conference on the basis of evaluation of the previous conference, current issues and educational trends and perceived needs of members.
- Present a conference program with sessions possessing both vitality and relevance for members.
- Provide a varied agenda addressing the need for legislative, regulatory, public policy and operational expertise, as well as the need for competencies in management and human relations.
- Foster collaborative training/professional development opportunities between state members, other regional Associations and NASFAA.
- Invite/plan interactions and discussions with other higher education Associations such as SACUBO, SACRAO, COHEO, and EFC, etc.
- Recognize, encourage, and support the development of informal networking strategies for sharing information and locating job opportunities.
- Encourage worthy and thought-provoking research, publications and presentations by members.
- Recognize and provide opportunities for pre- and post-conference professional development experiences.
- Continue to provide an annual, comprehensive training workshop to provide new aid administrators with the basic framework of knowledge to administer student financial assistance programs.
- Identify experienced members to serve as faculty for planning and conducting professional development programs of the Association.
- Choose training sites which are accessible, affordable, and educationally suitable (or enhance the educational experience).
- Offer opportunities specifically for experienced aid administrators to grown in leadership and management

### **Activities:**

A conference transitional meeting was held in Greensboro following the 2006 Annual Conference in advance of preparation for the 2007 conference held in Nashville.

Three Pre-Conference Workshops were held. These included a seminar on Research, a New Aid Officers' Workshop, and the Presidents-Elect Workshop.

Conference sessions were determined using a matrix (one axis professional ability; 2<sup>nd</sup> axis was type of institution) to develop sessions offered at the annual conference. This method was used to ensure sessions being offered met the needs of SASFAA's diverse membership.

The Conference Committee initiated Jam Sessions to provide a smaller forum for members to discuss current "hot" topics.

The Association sent five members to the NASFAA Leadership Workshop.

SASFAA sponsored its first Leadership Symposium. Three persons from each state were selected to attend. A total of 25 SASFAA members participated.

The annual New Aid Officers Workshop will take place June 17-22 at Furman University.

The annual Mid-Level Conference will be presented in cooperation with SWASFAA June 18-20 in Dallas.

Activity has begun on the development of a Master Conference Manual.

#### Assessment:

##### Annual Conference/Pre-Conference Workshops

More than 900 SASFAA members attended the 2007 Annual Conference in Nashville, TN. This represents the largest single gathering of members each year. Members were encouraged to attend pre-conference sessions, general sessions which provided regulatory updates as well as professional growth, and concurrent sessions which covered topics essential to the administration of financial aid.

The Pre-Conference Research Seminar was specifically designed to provide a higher level of training to experienced aid administrators. The New Aid Officers' Workshop continues SASFAA's tradition of providing excellent training to newcomers. The Presidents-Elect Workshop provided leadership training to incoming state presidents and serves to enhance the service of each state president on the SASFAA Board.

Sessions offered at the Annual Conference benefited individuals, institutions, state agencies, lending and secondary markets.

Diversity sessions were offered; however, low attendance still seems to be a problem.

SASFAA members who attended the conference and submitted evaluations provide the following insight into the success of the conference and pre-conference workshops:

- 87% confirmed that the Annual Conference was well publicized.
- 89% of evaluations indicated that interest sessions were either good or excellent.

- 87% of conferees who evaluated the Jam Sessions indicated they were good or excellent.
- 97% indicated that the conference met their professional needs.
- 92% of participants in the pre conference workshop on research indicated the conference was either good or excellent.
- 90% of participants in the new aid officers' workshop rated it as good or excellent.

The GASP Committee believes the topics offered at the annual conference were indeed relevant to the needs of the members.

### Leadership Symposium

Both the content and format were highly rated by the participants. 86% of the evaluations recommended this type of workshop be held either annually or at least every two (2) years.

### New Aid Officers' Workshop/Mid-Level Workshop

The New Aid Officers' Workshop continues to be an excellent source of training for new aid administrators. With a comprehensive curriculum and experienced aid officers serving as instructors, participants have consistently rated this workshop as meeting their expectations and providing a sound base for their professional success.

As SWASFAA is the host for the 2007 Mid-Level Workshop, there appears to have been some logistical issues arising within the two Associations relating to the development of this workshop. Although these issues were ultimately resolved this should be a concern addressed by the President and Vice President as SASFAA will host the 2008 workshop.

### Master Conference Manual

Assessment cannot be provided as no documentation is available.

### Recommendations:

#### Annual Conference/Pre-Conference Workshops

Continue the practice of a conference transitional meeting immediately following the annual conference to allow for immediate assessment and the potential impact of this assessment on the conference to be held the following year.

Continue the "track" sessions at the annual conference to ensure a good cross-sectional offering to address the various needs of the Association. The conference matrix appears to be an excellent tool in determining the focus of sessions.

Present a major general session using diversity as the theme but eliminate the concurrent sessions which focus on diversity. Use a social function, such as the President's Reception, to provide a positive and entertaining, yet educational diversity activity.

Attempt, once again, to bring in students to share their success stories as related to receiving financial aid.

Continue the use of a pre-conference workshop designed to challenge the experienced aid administrators.

### Leadership Symposium

Recommend SASFAA offer this type of symposium on a regular basis, perhaps every two years and be held in various areas of the region.

### New Aid Officers Workshop/Mid-Level Workshop

A significant portion of the activities related to Professional Development have not occurred at the time of the review by the GASP Committee. It is recommended that evaluations and other pertinent information relative to the 2007 NAOW and Mid-Level Workshop which are planned for June 2007 be presented to the 2007-08 GASP Committee for review and assessment.

Continue to provide outstanding training by experienced aid administrators at the NAOW at accessible and affordable sites.

Site(s) for the NAOW should be selected and confirmed for 2-3 future years. If at all possible, a member of the financial aid staff at selected sites should be involved as a "site coordinator" to assure smooth planning and to facilitate the week's activities.

GASP encourages the NAOW instructors to develop distribution lists of their class members to provide pertinent information as well as professional encouragement and networking assistance.

GASP recommends a review of the current relationship with SWASFAA for the presentation of a Mid-Level Conference.

### Master Conference Manual

GASP believes that the Master Conference Manual would be a great asset to the Association and recommends its completion during the 2007-08 year.

### Other

Continue the practice of designating a minimum of five (5) SASFAA representatives to attend the NASFAA Leadership Workshop.

In accordance with the Long Range Plan, GASP committee recommends that the Board investigate and initiate interactions and discussions with other higher education Associations.

In accordance with the Long Range Plan, GASP recommends that the Board study new ways to encourage worthy and thought-provoking research and publication.

## *FINANCES*

### **GOAL 1: Fiscal integrity will be ensured.**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Adhere to the practices outlined in the SAFSAA Guide to Financial Management.
- Review the SASFAA Guide to Financial Management annually to ensure the continuity of sound financial practices.

#### Activities:

SASFAA Policy and Procedures changes were submitted to Electronic Services by the Treasurer to be posted to the SASFAA Web site.

The Treasurer maintained adequate and appropriate records of receipts and expenditures.

- Submitted financial reports to the Board at each meeting and the annual business meeting.
- Prepared an annual year-end financial statement as of June 30.
- Set up master accounts and obtained credit for the Association as appropriate
- Received and disbursed monies of the Association.

The Treasurer filed IRS form 990 for the fiscal year by the prescribed deadline, currently October 15, and all financial reports in a proper and timely manner.

The Treasurer arranged, in coordination with the Finance and Budget Chair for an annual independent audit of the financial records.

#### Assessment:

The Treasurer did an excellent review of the SASFAA Guide to Financial Management and SASFAA Policy and Procedures throughout the year and when necessary and made recommendations for changes to the Board.

All necessary documentation and records for the 2005-2006 year have been sent by the Treasurer to the Budget and Finance Chair for his committee's review.

All necessary reports and paperwork were sent to the Association's financial reviewer by the Treasurer for preparation of the 990. The financial reviewer had a discussion with the President and Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee about issues with advertising revenue and tax liability. Because of potential liabilities, an independent firm was hired to assist in preparing the 990 and the required 990T based upon taxable income.

The Treasurer is prepared to give all receipt and expenditure records to next year's Budget and Finance Chair for review.

Recommendations:

Recommend continuation of the use of a CPA firm to assist with the completion of the 990 and 990T. Using an outside company for preparation of the 990 and 990T has allowed the Association to stay current with non-profit requirements for filing taxes.

Recommend that the Vendor/Sponsor Chair be appointed as a member of the budget committee.

Recommend that that quarterly budget statement be posted on the SASFAA Web site. Other statements and records that need to be posted by the Treasurer should be done directly with the service provider, rather than through the Electronic Services Chair, or directly to the Web site by the Treasurer, without going through the service provider.

**GOAL 2: The future financial stability of the Association is provided through careful and regular planning and evaluation.**

OBJECTIVES:

- Determine the appropriateness of fees assessed for dues, the annual conference, workshops and ancillary services including vendors, at least once every five years.
- Provide for the establishment, maintenance, investment, and monitoring of a sufficient Associational reserve fund.
- Monitor, review and revise, as necessary, the Association's investment strategy for positioning the Association's finances
- Review routinely all risks and liabilities affecting cash management and contractual obligations.
- Determine the appropriate cash balance to be brought forward annually.
- Evaluate establishment of an educational foundation to fund scholarship or grant opportunities for professional development.
- Incorporate the financial impact of vendor sponsorship in the budget planning process annually.

Activities:

The Treasurer performed an evaluation of the financial impact of vendor sponsorship.

The Treasurer routinely reviewed the risks and liabilities affecting cash management and contractual obligations and then determined the appropriate cash balance to be brought forward for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Treasurer and Budget and Finance committee determined the appropriateness of fees assessed for dues, the annual conference, workshops and ancillary services including vendors. This task shall be performed at least once every five years.

The Treasurer and Budget and Finance committee provided for the establishment, maintenance, investment, and monitoring of a sufficient associational reserve fund

### Assessment:

The Treasurer reviewed and recommended, with assistance from the Finance and Budget chair, the standard advertising rates as well as any discounts offered to sponsors.

The Treasurer's meeting with the Budget and Finance Chair and the President to determine fee appropriateness when determining the budget resulted in an increase to the NAOW fees by \$25.

The Treasurer has received a copy of all contracts signed during the year.

For cash management, the Treasurer worked on the appropriate cash amount to bring forward to the next fiscal year during budget discussions. To avoid excess cash and increase reserves, the Treasurer purchased several Certificates of Deposit following the recommendation of the Budget and Finance Chair and Board approval.

The newer sponsors are sometimes confused over SASFAA's use of the term "sponsorship." The term "exhibit fee" is more universally understood, particularly among vendors not involved in the student loan industry.

### Recommendations:

Continue, as necessary, building the reserves of the Association. "The Association shall maintain a reserve fund balance of no less than the most recent operating budget. Such funds may be comprised of both savings and investments, provided the funds are not intermingled with the Association's checking account."

As SASFAA's assets continue to grow, thought should be given to what is the highest level of reserve needed. When that goal is met all excess money could go to the SASFAA Foundation, or back to the membership. This might lead to the exploration of other investment instruments.

Review revenue sources, structure and nomenclature.

Recommend the establishment of a task force to review membership dues structure and amounts, exhibit fees, structure and amount, advertising revenue and other attendant issues with respect to lender/guarantor relations and in light of recent developments related to the lending community and their relationship to the financial aid community/associations.

Recommend use of the terminology "exhibit fee" and establish an exhibit fee structure with removal of all references to sponsorship, including terms and fees.

Continue with the establishment of the SASFAA Foundation, with earnings earmarked through policy, procedures and processes for expenditure. Policy and procedural documents should include processes to return endowment corpus to either operational or reserve use if necessary.

Develop budget formulation guidelines for committee chairs in advance of transition conference.

- A Budget formulation template using Excel should be established for use by committee chairs
- Expenditure history of three previous years should be provided to each committee chair for review and analysis in formulating budget request.

## **Summary of Recommendations 2006-2007 GASP Committee**

### ***Organizational Structure***

#### **By- Laws**

Continue an annual review of the By-Laws.

#### **Board of Directors**

##### **Goal 1:**

The Board must make an assessment between 2006 and 2011.

##### **Goal 2:**

In light of continuing developments within the profession it is important that the incoming president consider whether or not all committee chairs/liaisons should attend every Board meeting.

The Long-Range Plan must be evaluated and updated every five years. This process should begin no later than 2009 with a new plan to be approved and in place in 2011.

#### **Committees**

The Board should consider alternatives to on-site meetings whenever possible to keep costs at the most reasonable level. Such alternatives might include conference calls, electronic mail and arrangement committee meetings in conjunction with other events where some committee members would normally be in attendance.

#### **Leadership**

Continue the development of potential leaders of the Association through workshops, symposiums, conference sessions, etc.

Increase the scholarship given to the immediate Past President's institution in recognition of his/her service to the Association to \$2,000.

#### **Membership**

Undertake a review of the membership categories for appropriateness at least once every five years. This objective was deferred but should be reviewed and acted upon during the 2006-2011 Long-Range Plan period.

Review the membership structure at least once every five years to determine if membership should be individual, institutional or on some other basis. This objective was deferred but should be reviewed and acted upon during the 2006-2011 Long-Range Plan period.

In 2006-2007 the persistence rate of members and an analysis of the reasons for discontinuing membership were not completed. It is recommended that consideration be given to determining if this information can be obtained from archived records and that a survey instrument be mailed to those that discontinued their membership and their reasons for doing so.

Ensure that a general membership survey is conducted no later than 2009 and recommendations from the survey be incorporated into the operational plan of the Association.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **Goal 1:**

The SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual shall be updated and updates posted to the SASFAA Web site upon approval by the Board. The Web site shall be updated in a timely fashion.

#### **Goal 2:**

A clarification of the responsibilities of the Secretary and the Electronic Services Chair is necessary with respect to posting to the SASFAA Web site. The Secretary, as well as the Treasurer, should have the capability to post to the Web site (through the service provider, if required).

It is recommended that the Board explore other options that will allow Board members to update information on the Web site rather than waiting on ATAC to do the postings. It sometimes take ATAC a while to get items posted and/or updated.

It is recommended that a procedure be included in the SASFAA Policy and Procedures Manual that details who is responsible for gathering all minutes, reports and other items deemed appropriate by the Board. This person should be identified as the individual charged with having the materials scanned.

It is recommended that documents be scanned to CD yearly.

It is recommended that a list of who would keep the CD's and on whose computer they would be maintained be established.

## ***Communication/Collaboration***

### **General**

#### **Goal 1:**

None

Goal 2:

Post the President's annual report to the SASFAA Web site and notify the membership through the SASFAA listserv no later than June 30.

Identify and incorporate new technologies as a means of effectively communicating with the membership that may result in cost-savings to the Association.

Decide whether or not a membership brochure is needed and move forward and develop a brochure if found necessary and if approved by the Board. This has been a recommendation for several years and no action has yet been taken. A decision should be made whether to move forward or whether to delete this objective.

Legislative alerts and monthly digest of information should be posted to the SASFAA Web site.

**Legislative Relations**

The objective, "Promote the SASFAA region's role in the higher education community," was not specifically addressed in the activities of the committee in 2006-2007. It is recommended that previous documents created to promote awareness of the impact of financial aid be updated and provided to the membership. Refer to handouts developed for the Leadership and Strategic Planning Summit held on November 11-12, 2005.

Legislative alerts are to be announced via the listserv; however, these same alerts shall be posted to the SASFAA Web site for continued review by the membership.

The SASFAA Web site does not contain information related to current legislative committee activities. Any alert, letter on behalf of the Association, etc., should be posted to the Web site for membership review.

The SASFAA Legislative Guide was last revised in 2003. This guide needs to be updated after each congressional election.

The Conference Committee should provide a session at the annual conference on communicating with their legislative representatives.

The committee should work with NASFAA staff to prepare for Hill visits since the annual conference will be held in Arlington (Crystal City), Virginia and will provide easy of access to Capitol Hill.

## *Professional Development*

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