The Benefits of CAFAA

HOLLY DAUGHERTY - COMMUNICATION CHAIR

They say, 'It's not what you know, but who you know?'
In my first year of serving on the CAFAA Board and also working in Financial Aid I feel that this saying has begun to ring more true each week.

Within six short months of working in Financial Aid, I attended my first CAFAA Conference in 2022. That same year, I volunteered to serve as the Association's Historian and now Communications Chair. Crazy right?! Truth be told I have always been a part of some sort of "extracurricular activity" from Girl Scouts in elementary school, to marching band, and a professional co-ed fraternity Delta Sigma Pi in college. So, for me it was an easy decision to get involved. I knew that this would connect me to other Financial Aid Administrators and help me better understand all that Financial Aid encompasses. Which as it turns out happens to be A LOT. Another six months later I can say that my membership has given back to me tenfold. The connections I have made and the knowledge I am gaining have become invaluable.

A CAFAA membership holds so many great opportunities from; networking events and professional development training; to industry insight and fantastic tools/resources like the our online Financial Aid Toolkit. In the year to come, CAFAA will continue to rebound from the impacts of the pandemic and the Board will work to revamp the Association to provide even more of these wonderful opportunities to our members.

If you haven't taken advantage of these opportunities or might be questioning the benefit of your participation. I encourage you to reach out to any of our Board Members to learn about what this Association can do for you, your staff, your institution, and the state as a whole.
Who is Who at the State
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

If you glance at the mission for the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) along with their vision that "All Coloradans will have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities." There is no wonder that it seems like there is always something new happening within the state.

Some of these programs have made it possible for in-state students to obtain a post-secondary education at no cost to them.

To help us better navigate these programs and their associated policies our partners at CDHE have provided us with a list of contacts to use when we have questions or need some additional clarification.

- Financial Aid - Gayle Godfrey, FinAid@dhe.state.co.us
- Dependent Tuition Assistance Program (DTAP) - Gayle Godfrey, DTAP.Mailbox@dhe.state.co.us
- Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) - Gayle Godfrey, PSEP.Mailbox@dhe.state.co.us
- Foster Youth Financial Aid - Kennedy Evans/Roxanne Lang, FosterFinAid@dhe.state.co.us
- Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA)- DeAnna Castañeda, CASFA@dhe.state.co.us
- Educator Stipends (HB22-1220) - April Gonzales, Educator.Stipends@dhe.state.co.us
- Educator Loan Forgiveness - April Gonzales, EdLoanForgiveness@dhe.state.co.us
- Early Childhood Education (ECE) Funding Opportunities - Nanci Goldberg, Nanci.Goldberg@dhe.state.co.us
- Behavioral Health Initiatives & Path4Ward – Jack Wolflink, Jack.Wolflink@dhe.state.co.us
  o Secondary (back-up) Peter Fritz, Peter.Fritz@dhe.state.co.us
- Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI) - Kolby Knupp, Cosi.info@dhe.state.co.us
CAFAA Honor Roll Awards
HOLLY DAUGHERTY - HISTORIAN & COMMUNICATION CHAIR

It is not too early to begin thinking about your nominations for this year's CAFAA Honor Roll.

Each year, prior to the beginning of the CAFAA conference in May, we ask our members to recognize the outstanding contributions of your peers. Nominations should be made on the basis of a person’s achievement and outstanding contributions to the financial aid community, their institution, the State and their commitment to CAFAA. These achievements may include: contribution and commitment to the profession, outstanding customer service, efficiency, creativity, forward thinking, and dedication to access.

The Board will call for formal nominations in March. Honor Roll Awards chosen by member nomination include:

- Thomas Monahan Rookie of the Year
  - Recognizes a CAFAA member with 12-24 months experience in the industry at a Postsecondary institution.

- Postsecondary Institution Professional of the Year
  - Recognizes a CAFAA member with at least four years’ experience in the industry at a Postsecondary institution.

- Non-Post Secondary Institution Professional of the Year
  - Recognizes a CAFAA member with at least two years' experience in the financial aid profession. They must be employed by an agency or business (other than a school) associated with the financial aid industry.

- Distinguished Support Staff Member of the Year
  - This award recognizes a non-professional administrative staff member with at least one year experience in a financial aid office. This person must have made significant contributions to their office.

Nominations will be reviewed by the CAFAA Board during the quarterly meeting in April. Honor Roll Awards will be presented during the annual conference in May. Recipients will receive a plaque to commemorate their achievements and will be listed on the CAFAA website. During the conference the Board will also honor the the recipients of the President’s Service Award, exiting President and Board Members, CAFAA's Lifetime Members, and the newly created Leadership Pipeline and DEI scholarship.
Institution Spotlight

FORT LEWIS COLLEGE - JED GILDEN, DIRECTOR

Fort Lewis College has been busy over the last year with prepping for all the new FAFSA changes, partnering with University of Colorado Anschutz to bring a nursing program to the Southwest Colorado, and just became the newest Reisher Partner School in Colorado.

Additionally, we are currently implementing a new software program, Workday, that will replace Banner. This is a joint project with Adams State University and Western State University. This project has allowed us an unusual opportunity to collaborate closely to share best practices and of course struggles of trying to juggle it all. Check out the links below to learn more about all of these exciting new changes.

Nursing Program-Multidisciplinary Program | Ft. Lewis Reisher Scholarship

Annual CAFAA Membership Renewal Now Open

THE CAFAA BOARD

Remember, CAFAA membership renewals are due! Account Administrators please renew the membership for your whole institution, as our secondary members will not have this access.

Please be sure to:
- Review and update your institution’s roster of members
  - Remove those no longer at your institution
  - Update contact information and current positions as needed
- Payment of membership dues will be processed by credit card
  - If credit card payment is not an option for your institution please reach out to Kristine Bureau, CAFAA Treasurer

If you know of someone who is interested in joining please have them visit the CAFAA website to learn more and join online.
FAFSA Completion Rate

BY VERONICA VALLES, 4-YEAR PRIVATE SECTOR REP & COMMUNICATION CHAIR

It is that time of the year, isn’t it! This the time high school students and their parents are trying to learn how to navigate the financial aid world.

Of course, October marked the beginning of the 2023-2024 season, but there is an issue here in Colorado. For the 2022 school year, Colorado ranked 44th in the nation in getting high school seniors complete their FAFSA, with about 46% of seniors completing a FAFSA, compared to about 57% nationally. Our state falls below the national average, and state officials estimate that about $30 million in funds will be left behind as a result of students not completing their FAFSA.

We all know that the FAFSA can be confusing and complicated for many families. So, the State of Colorado recently passed a new legislation to create a list of resources available and require schools to notify students about financial aid opportunities. They are also evaluating other options, including making the FAFSA a requirement for all high school seniors. You can find the entire report here: Financial Aid Application Working Group Report.

Some school districts and cities are also hosting FAFSA completion nights designed to assist students and their parents complete their FAFSA. Last September I had the opportunity to present for the City of Brighton about Tuition Costs and Financial Aid. There were about 30 attendees from 27J School District who came to the College and Career Readiness Kickoff Event. I also attended two FAFSA nights hosted by the City of Brighton where families had the opportunity to ask questions while completing their FAFSA.

Other western states that also rank at the bottom are taking steps to help students. And, with all the changes coming up in 2024-2025, right now is the time to brainstorm some ideas to increase the FAFSA completion rate in our state next year. So, what can you and/or your institution do to promote the FAFSA completion? Let’s envision a Colorado where students and families have a great number of resources to navigate the financial aid world, including access to financial aid experts like us.
EVENTS, UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

To have your event or announcement included please email hdaugherty@coloradomesa.edu

Time Warp
We have over 900 photos to identify and you can still help by filling out the online form. More photos will be added soon!
https://forms.gle/2rpar6QkNJMUN3Wd

Silent Auction Items Needed
The Conference Committee is in the process of gathering donations for our annual philanthropic silent auction. If you have items to donate or would like to help in requesting donations, please contact Mike Pearce - michael.pearce@cccs.edu or Karen Tran - karen.tran@rrcc.edu.

We Need Your Input
We are needing you, the members, to tell us what informational sessions you would find most valuable at our annual conference. Please take a moment to complete this brief survey.
https://forms.gle/b7GoZ5baXEgpzJNw5

We will be calling for presentation descriptions from possible presenters in February with final topics being selected by March.

RMASFAA Conference is Coming...
Colorado needs your presence at the 2023 RMASFAA conference, and we hope to see many of you next year. If you are interested in helping coordinate this conference, please reach out to:
- Jill Robertson: jirobert@mines.edu
- Joe Donlay: joe.donlay@colostate.edu

Upcoming Events:

Online CAFAA Membership Renewal Begins
JAN

Conference Registration & Call for Conference Presenters Opens
FEB

Quarterly CAFAA Board Meeting
FEB 17

Final Call for CAFAA Presenters
MARCH 15

Quarterly CAFAA Board Meeting
APRIL 7

CAFAA Spring Conference
Steamboat Springs, CO
MAY 3-5
Members


Membership renewals will open January, 2023
Be sure to update your institution/organization's roster to include all active members.

We Want to Hear From You

Our Communications Committee is working hard on getting you up to date information. We will be updating our social media channels, website and blogs in the near future. If you have an idea for content we would love to hear from you:

- Holly Daugherty, Chair: hdaugherty@coloradomesa.edu
- Veronica Valles, Chair: vvalles@regis.edu

Newsletter updates, including spotlight sections and upcoming events, must be submitted no later than the 15th of each month to be included in the following monthly newsletter.