



## Contributors this Issue:

Amanda Cantú  
Molly Flesher-Sanderson  
Nichole Anderson  
Alyssa Gillette  
Katie Hendrickson  
Carol Swenson

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# MAFAA Matters

A Newsletter for the Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators

Fall 2023

## President's Message

Amanda Cantú, 2023-24 MAFAA President

Well, we made it to fall — a season of autumn leaves, hayrides, seasonal pumpkin flavored treats, bonfires, sweater weather and lots of Halloween events. For some, it's the best season of the year. For others, it's just one step closer to winter. Being a Texas gal, I'm still not quite used to the cold despite being in MN for over a decade (I can't believe it's been that long!) so I'm hoping this fall weather lingers as much as possible. I'm enjoying the fall weather with bonfires, my two seven-month-old Australian Shepards and fourteen-year-old Calico. They are LOVING this weather and are happy when mom works from home, more playtime outside.

I hope the start of your school year has gone well and that FAFSA Simplification hasn't fully taken over your lives. We've seemed to have gone back in time. Six years ago, we were overwhelmed with an earlier FAFSA completion date. Now, January 1 (speculation of course), we meet again. But we aren't strangers to change. We deal with change on a consistent basis. While this year's changes seem extravagant, our community continues to work together to ensure the transition from the old to the new is a successful one.

National Financial Aid Day was a couple of weeks ago, October 18. I hope every single one of you took a moment to reflect on the great work you do and the impact you have on our students' lives. Our job isn't always easy, and there are many who don't realize the extent of the work we do. Our job is often a thankless one, so THANK YOU.

In continuing the praise, a shout out to the Conference Planning Committee, Site Selection Coordinators, Business Partners, and presenters who made Fall Training a successful event. The venue was elegant, the views were beautiful, and the weather was gorgeous. Thank you to all the participants who took time out of their busy schedules to network and share ideas. Professional Development also had their first event of the year: FA 101 for New Professionals. This is just one of the many events being offered this year. Outreach also had success at the National College Fair. Ranging from eighth graders to seniors in high school, MAFAA volunteers spoke to over 150 students, parents and members from the education community about FAFSA changes and timelines. Outreach is working on scheduling FAFSA completion nights starting January 31, 2024. We need volunteers every year, but this year volunteers will be needed more than ever. Be on the lookout for volunteer opportunities near your communities.

I want to end by saying thank you to my board and the good work you continue to do. MAFAA is an organization that relies on its volunteers to keep the good work going. Without its volunteers, we cannot be successful. MAFAA will be holding elections for the 2024-2025 Executive Board in December. If you have been thinking about holding a position (President-Elect, Vice President, Treasurer-Elect, Secretary), this is your year. Please reach out to me or any other board member with questions. If you are looking to get your feet wet, we welcome you to serve on a committee. For more information about serving in a role, complete the volunteer form: <https://mafaa.org/Volunteer>.

## Fall Training Day a Success

Fall Training Day took place on October 10 at the Plymouth Community Center. There were 230 attendees in total, 7 of which were our amazing Business Partners.

In addition to our fabulous in-person presenters from MAFAA and MOHE, virtual presenters joined in from Florida, Georgia, and Washington D.C. to share their knowledge with MAFAA members. Overall, there were 75 different institutions represented.

A huge thank you to all who attended, presented, and helped make Fall Training Day possible. We couldn't do it without all of YOU! Presentations from the day are available on the MAFAA website.

Kindly,  
Your Conference Planning Committee

Molly Flesher-Sanderson, Co-chair  
Jennifer Swanson, Co-chair  
Lindsay Adams Kagol  
Dick Battig  
Tracy Drechsler

Jill Fiedler  
Nicole Smith-Holt  
Nouphay Colberg  
Carin Carstens



## MAFAA Goes to Indy for MASFAA



The 2023 MASFAA Annual Conference took place at The Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel at Keystone Crossing in the vibrant city of Indianapolis, Indiana, from October 22nd to 25th. A nice contingent of MAFAA folks attended the Midwest conference and a Minnesota dinner together allowed for some great conversations and comradery!

The conference kicked off early on Sunday with enlightening pre-conference sessions covering inclusive language, anxiety recognition, and a COA credential session. The conference officially convened later on Sunday afternoon with a feature presentation from NASFAA on the 2024-25 FAFSA.

Evening activities throughout the conference included a pizza party for all, Dueling Pianos, and an entertaining round of Radio Bingo. A successful silent auction raised \$10,000 for Foster Success.

Monday and Tuesday were full of engaging and diverse breakout and general sessions throughout the day, as well as ample opportunities to connect with the 30 associate members who helped sponsor the conference. The Awards Ceremony recognized the outstanding contributions of MASFAA members over the past year.

The final day of the conference featured a federal update from the Department of Education, followed by the ceremonial passing of the gavel from Craig Slaughter to Amanda Fijal. **Mark your calendars for the 2024 MASFAA Conference October 7-10 in Columbus, Ohio.**



MAFAA members at the Minnesota state dinner held at the MASFAA conference.  
 Front: Carol Swenson, Kari Ellering, Kris Parker, Brittany Tweed, Tracy Drechsler, Amanda Cantú,  
 Monica Ehalt, Kim Jenkins, Anne Dahlen  
 Back: Dick Battig, Mike Mutziger, Ali Facklam, Deb Gossman, Brian Dassel, Pam Engebretson



## More MAFAA at MASFAA in Indy – October 2023



Dick Battig was bestowed the coveted President's Award, presented by MASFAA President, Craig Slaughter. Dick has served MASFAA for years as its site selection co-coordinator. Dick's plaque is inscribed in part: "...in Recognition of your Outstanding Contributions to MASFAA as Site Selection Co-Chair and for your Generous and Sustained Support to the Association for 48 years."

***Congratulations, Dick!!***



Dick Battig and Craig Slaughter



Kari, Ali, Monica, Brittany



Ali and Carol



Anne, Carol, Carrie Short (OH), Brittany, Ali



Kim, Anne, Pam, Kris, Carol

## Professional Development Hosts FinAid 101 Workshop

By Nichole Anderson, Professional Development Co-chair

The Professional Development committee led the FinAid 101 training for new professionals on October 17. Aimed for financial aid professionals with less than five years of experience in the aid office, the day included a session on Resources for New Financial Aid Professionals and an important opportunity to network with fellow new and more experienced financial aid professionals. The event, held in person at South Central College campus in Faribault, concluded with an overview of pertinent financial aid topics and a review of the MAFAA organization.

On-site organizer of the event was Jennifer Williams, South Central College – Faribault and the presenters were Nichole Andersen, University of Minnesota Twin Cities & Molly Flesher-Sanderson, University of St. Thomas. The follow-up to this 101 event is FinAid 102, scheduled virtually for November 16.



Members of the Professional Development Committee are Nichole Andersen, chair, Bao Vue, Monica Ehalt, Jennifer Williams, and Olivia Hodge.





## National Financial Aid Day Celebrated October 18

Financial Aid Day (FAD) is a special day that is set aside to celebrate and recognize the contribution of financial aid professionals across the United States for helping students realize their college dreams. FAD is celebrated on the **third Wednesday in October**. On FAD colleagues are encouraged to do something special — have an office party, a potluck, a toast, etc. — to celebrate financial aid administrators' contributions to the profession. On October 18 this year, a couple of Minnesota Financial Aid offices shared their celebrations.



### Crown College

Becky Witmer, Dawn Mikesell, Alyssa Gillette, Kate Carnivale



### Minnesota State University, Mankato

Front row – Craig Sanderson, Jesús Hernandez Mejia, Rachel Sherlock

Middle row – Annie Froehlich, Katie Hendrickson, Anna Sunderman, MSU's Mascot Stomper, Mallory Lysne,

Melissa Rath, Vicki Kopischke, Kathy Prom, Cathy Smith

Back row – Michael Haskins, Julie Haskins, Cheryl Shumski, Joy Gohr, Andrea Martin, Doug Hendley

## MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

MAFAA Matters is published online four times per year. Submission deadline for the next issue is **January**. Please email contributions to MAFAA Matters Editor, Carol Swenson [cswenson@ascendiumeducation.org](mailto:cswenson@ascendiumeducation.org)

### MAFAA's Statement of Purpose

*The Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators (MAFAA) is an association of professionals committed to the principle that no one should be denied access to higher education for financial reasons. MAFAA is dedicated to working with students, educators, policy makers, and others to ensure that adequate programs of financial assistance are available to every student attending a Minnesota institution of higher education.*

## Living With Passion

**Honey Yang** started on October 23<sup>rd</sup> as a new Office Assistant at Minneapolis College. Honey started as a student employee in the Financial Aid Office in 2015 and has since graduated and held other permanent positions including a One Stop Enrollment Specialist.

**Stuart Perry**, Executive Director of Financial Aid, College of Saint Benedict & St. John's University, is retiring early in 2024.

**Mary Tobias** (Hamline University) moved into her new role as Assistant Director at St. Catherine University.

**Paul Terrio** (Saint Mary's University of Minnesota) has moved on from the financial aid community.

**Jesus` Hernandez Mejia** transitioned from Gustavus to become the Associate Director of Financial Aid at MSU-Mankato

## MAFAA 2023-24 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOV 9	Executive Council Meeting	Virtual
NOV 16	Fin Aid 102 Event	Virtual
NOV 29-DEC 1	FSA Training Conference	<a href="#">Virtual info here</a>
DEC 5	FAFSA Simplification Training	Virtual
DEC 8	Executive Council Meeting	Axel's Roseville
JAN 12	Executive Council Meeting	Virtual
JAN 25	Fin Aid for Other Professionals	Dakota County Tech College
FEB TBA	NASFAA Credential: Verification	Virtual
FEB 16	Executive Council Meeting	Virtual
MAR 8	Executive Council Meeting	In-person - TBA
APR 10	Hot Topics MAFAA Event	St Cloud State University
MAY 8-10	MAFAA Spring Training	Madden's Resort
MAY 8	NASFAA Credential: PJ	Madden's Resort
JUN 16-19	NASFAA Conference	Milwaukee WI

— Live with Passion —