

WASFAA 2022 Spring Conference Session Detail

Wednesday, April 13

Is Your School Ready for a Federal Program Review?

Presented by Tim Opgenorth, Trisha Springstead

When the U.S. Department of Education (ED) selects a school for a Federal Program Review, generally the institution only has two weeks to provide all the initial documents and recipient list(s). If your institution is not prepared, it will be challenging to provide all the requested documents in the timeline provided. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has had the pleasure of being selected for two Federal Program Reviews in a span of 28 months. That your institution can prepare and be ready for that dreaded phone call, two UWM staff will share a list of items normally requested, the recipient list template, a general timeline of the process and general advice and guidance based upon their experiences. Federal Program Reviews are mentally draining, this session is not for the faint of heart.

College Confidence: What America knows about paying for college

Presented by Jill Gosse

Every year, college-bound families ask themselves "How will we pay for college?" and for many, this subject is filled with confusion and stress. Join us as we discuss Sallie Mae's new research study, College Confidence: What America Knows About Paying for College. We'll examine how much families really know about financial aid, the FAFSA®, scholarships, and student loans; and evaluate perceptions and common misconceptions about college financing. Finally, we'll highlight possible solutions to help families prepare for this vital part of getting a college education.

How to Engage Your Students Better than TikTok

Presented by Kevin McNamara

With calls, emails, texts, letters, and tweets, you might wonder how students still miss your messages. Students are overstimulated and if you want your message to be heard, you have to think like a social media company. Here, you will find the tools you need to engage your students on their terms and make your message heard.

FAFSA Veteran Eligibility and Financial Aid

Presented by Maggie Zablinski & Nicole Schumacher

Going over military separation form to determine veteran status on the FAFSA. How our office works with students whose financial aid offer may be affected by veteran's benefits. Guided Q/A session on best practices.

Subconscious Sabotage: Understanding How Your Implicit Bias is Impacting You

Presentation by Lo Klink

Implicit bias encompasses the views or stereotypes affecting people's actions and decisions outside of their conscious awareness. These preferences impact socialization, interpreting unfamiliar information, and decision-making. Everyone has implicit bias, but not everyone is aware of how their biases impact how they move through life. Join Lo Klink to learn about some common areas that our biases show up in our lives and resources to help lessen these impacts.

Thursday, April 14

Functioning Effectively in a Hybrid World

Presented by Robert Smith

Although extant research has suggested financial aid-related materials may be difficult to read for prospective student audiences, no studies have focused on the difficulty of a student debt letter. Such a gap in the literature may be understandable considering the relatively short period of time in which debt letters have been written and disseminated to student audiences. As a result, we'll be presenting their preliminary study results that seek to understand how difficult debt letters are to read, how long they are, how semantically-diverse these letters are, and what are some best practices we can glean from this research to make future improvements.

What's in a Debt Letter?

Presented by Karla Weber Wandel,

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MASFAA Book Club

Presented by Craig Slaughter

Futures Act/FAFSA Simplification

Presented by Susan Teerink & Robert Bode

Embedded within FAFSA Simplification and the FUTURES Act are the biggest changes to financial aid administration in the last 30 years. This session will be a deep dive into these two pieces of legislation examining the changes each law requires. We will also discuss the current status of ED's implementation of these changes, and how the FAFSA will change over the next few years.

FAFSA Completion Taskforce

Presentation by Cheryl Rapp, Vicky Somers, Connie Hutchison

Find out more about the FAFSA Completion Taskforce, who's part of this taskforce and what they've done over the past year. Learn about their partnership with UW Madison students who created TikToks for our committee as part of their Financial Capability course in the school of human ecology. Come hear about their partnerships with DPI, the Wisconsin School Counselors Association and College Goal Wisconsin with the goal to spread the word about the importance of completing the FAFSA. Learn how they will collaborate on the Equitable Recovery Grant Program focused on FAFSA Completion with the Wisconsin Coalition on Student Debt.

Friday, April 15

Serving a Diverse Student Body Beyond Financial Aid

Presented by Joselyn Diaz-Valdes, Pa Houa Xiong & MollyJo Bautch

As financial aid administrators, our work goes beyond the everyday questions about FAFSA, verification and financial aid offers. To best support our students, we need to also develop an understanding of the diverse students that we serve. This session will primarily discuss HMong and Latinx American students in higher education, share best practices and cultural appreciation through our holistic approach to serving students. Attendees will gain a better understanding of HMong and Latinx culture, while getting ideas for outreach and community building efforts that go beyond typical financial aid.

Financial Aid Communication Framework

Presented by Karla Weber Wandel

Since the beginning, the process of applying for and receiving financial aid has been an incredibly complex process involving multiple stakeholders (students, institutions, parents, counselors) and levels of information (federal, state, institutional, personal). Moreover, first-generation students, low-income, and students of Color are most likely to struggle within the financial aid application and awarding process, further marginalizing these students. Our team intends to provide a conceptual framework for institutional financial aid administrators to apply to their financial aid communication and identify where institutions can simplify and consolidate this process. As a result, we hope to help organize financial aid communication in a way that both institutions and students can understand, allowing communication to become clearer and provide students with information and resources in a timely manner that demystifies the financial aid application and awarding process.

SAI Research

Presented by Dr. Nick Hellman and Helen Faith

In the fall of 2021, the Office of Student Financial Aid at UW-Madison and the Student Success Through Applied Research (SSTAR) Lab estimated our likely outcomes of the federal methodology changes included in the upcoming Student Aid Index that will replace the EFC for dependent undergraduates beginning in the 2024-25 award year. While approximately 25% of FAFSA filers were Pell-eligible under the current EFC formula, we anticipate that 32% will be Pell-eligible under SAI. We also anticipate most students will see relatively small changes in the amount of Pell awards received. We will invite attendees to join us in a discussion of the implications the SAI formula will have for our packaging philosophies and institutional aid programs.

Wisconsin Policy Forum

Presented by Jason Stein

Student Financial Aid: This project looks at how growth in financial aid has stalled at the state level over the past decade and slowed and even fallen in some ways at the federal level. These trends have left aid levels in Wisconsin below those of most other states, led to rising levels of unmet student need, and potentially contributed to the state's challenges in meeting its need for skilled workers. The report will look at trends across public and private institutions in Wisconsin - both two-year and four-year - and highlight potential solutions.