



MAFAA Matters

A Newsletter for the Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators

May 2024

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President's Message

Amanda Cantú, 2023-24 MAFAA President

Hello MAFAA!

May is here! It's hard to believe that a year has passed and my time as your President is coming to an end. It has been a rewarding time, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have served. We had a productive year and many successes which could not have been possible without the members of my board and volunteers. I truly appreciate each one of you and the perspectives y'all brought in making MAFAA the best it could be. As I reflect on the last twelve months, I am proud of the strides we have made in strengthening this organization's financial future and being an organization that members value and are proud to be a part of. I look forward to the role next year's board will play in MAFAA's progress and growth under Pam Engebretson's leadership.

Spring Conference is upon us. In a typical year, we would have gathered during a time when the spring semester was winding down. Instead, we're left to deal with the mayhem that FAFSA Simplification has left in our wake. But remember "we are in this together" and despite everything else going on around us, we are going to have a great conference. Your Conference Planning Committee has worked hard all year to bring you quality sessions and opportunities to engage with colleagues. I look forward to seeing many of you there. For those unable to attend, you will be missed but know we will have the opportunity to gather again in the fall and throughout the upcoming membership year.

I want to thank all the committees and appointed positions for a job well done this year. Professional Development ended the year providing another great opportunity for professional development through the NASFAA Verification Credential. Over 90 members in attendance! Business Partners has been productive with organizing fun events for the Spring Conference and creating an avenue to connect with our members. Outreach has done a fantastic job connecting our prospective students with financial aid professionals to navigate the complexities of this year's FAFSA. Our Membership Coordinators and MAFAA IT have worked behind the scenes to ensure our members have access to information. I am grateful for the role our Site Selection Coordinators play in securing space to hold our events. And I can't forget about our Newsletter Editor who works hard to keep us all connected through stories and events. The work MAFAA does cannot get done without any of your efforts so thank you!

It's never too early to get involved with MAFAA. If you've been thinking about getting involved or want to learn more, come visit us at the Spring Conference exhibition area. My time spent with MAFAA has afforded me many opportunities for professional and personal growth and I can't wait to see what it can do for you.

Cheers to a wonderful year and a restful summer!

MAFAA Spring Conference is Here!

Molly Flesher-Sanderson, Co-Chair Conference Planning

We are just a few short days away from the 2024 Spring Conference at Madden's Resort. We know that you are ready for a chance to step away from your desk and collaborate with colleagues while taking in some fresh air and maybe a round of golf after work hours.



“Keeping It Simple”

When: 8 May 2024 to 10 May 2024

Where: Madden's on Gull Lake, Brainerd MN

Unlike most of this year so far, we are “Keeping It Simple” for our conference theme but the sessions will be chock full of conversation, brainstorming, and commiserating through topics related to FAFSA simplification and beyond. Check out the full agenda and get excited for what your fellow financial aid professionals will be sharing.

The charity this year is Ruff Start Rescue, out of Princeton, MN, an extraordinary foster-based nonprofit animal rescue. All raffle proceeds will go directly to Ruff Start, and there are multiple ways you can contribute: bring a gift basket or item to auction off, have cash handy to purchase raffle tickets, or participate in the donation drive. Check out the [flyer](#) for items you can bring and/or purchase online. Oh, and did I mention...? There will be dogs visiting us on Wednesday for some pets and playtime. All of which are available for adoption!

So put down that ISIR (if you even have one) and come ready to learn.

Whether you are new to golf, a golf enthusiast or just want to get out and enjoy the company of your MAFAA colleagues, please reach out to Carin Carstens. Carin will be lining up a 4-person best ball tournament on Thursday after the final session and before the banquet. Madden's has clubs available to rent or you can bring your own. Contact Carin at Carin.Carstens@myscholarnet.com

See you at Maddens!

Your 2024 MAFAA Conference Planning Committee:

Molly Flesher-Sanderson, Jennifer Swanson, Lindsay Adams Kagol, Dick Battig, Carin Carstens, Noupay Colberg, Tracy Drechsler, Sara Edwards, Jill Fiedler, Nicole Smith-Holt

MAFAA Election Results for 2024-25

By Pam Engebretson, President-elect

The Nominations and Elections Committee is thrilled to announce the results of our recent election and extend our sincere gratitude to everyone involved.

Congratulations to the Newly Elected MAFAA Executive Council Officers:

President-elect: Jesús Hernandez Mejia

Vice President: Brynn Juranek

Secretary: Monica Ehalt

Treasurer-elect: Brittany Tweed

Our association is incredibly fortunate to have such a talented group leading MAFAA forward. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's election process. Your contributions are essential to the continued success of MAFAA. Your participation matters!

A Word of Thanks from Dan Nelson

After 50 years at Bethel University, Dan Nelson is retiring at the end of June 2024. He offers many fond memories from his first 30 years in financial aid, including lots of executive council meetings, spring conference at Maddens (golf, rooming with Herald, playing bass in Marty and the P-Notes), and going to sessions and learning something! Dan writes, "I read the newsletter with interest, particularly for news of old friends who have made this your lifetime profession. Although my roles have changed since 2005 (Assistant to the President; VP for Admissions, Financial Aid and Retention; and now Chief Institutional Data & Research Officer), I've kept involved with financial aid issues, conducting a national survey (with Jeff Olson) of CCCU financial aid officers over the past 25 years."

Dan's retirement party will be at the Underground (student hangout by the Campus Store) at Bethel at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 20, 2024. All colleagues are invited!

MAFAA 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 7	Executive Council Meeting	Madden's Resort
MAY 8-10	MAFAA Spring Conference	Madden's Resort
MAY 8	NASFAA Credential: P J	Madden's Resort
JUN 16-19	NASFAA Conference	Milwaukee WI
JUN 26-27	MAFAA Board Transition Retreat	Madden's Resort
AUG 9	Executive Council Meeting	Teams
SEP 13	Executive Council Meeting	Teams
OCT 7-10	MASFAA Conference	Columbus OH
OCT 11	Executive Council Meeting	Teams
NOV 8	Executive Council Meeting	Teams
DEC 3-6	Federal Student Aid Training Conf	Virtual
DEC 12	Executive Council Meeting	In-Person site TBD

MINNESOTA
ASSOCIATION OF
FINANCIAL AID
ADMINISTRATORS

MAFAA Matters is published online four times per year. Submission deadline for the next issue will be in **July**. Please email contributions to MAFAA Matters Editor, Carol Swenson 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

PEOPLE and PLACES

Larry Rock (Concordia College-Moorhead) began his duties as Associate Director on January 22nd. Larry has over 20 years' experience in the Business Office at Concordia.

LaToya Taris-James (Minneapolis College) is the new Student Employment Coordinator. LaToya was previously with the Bonner Program at Augsburg University.

On March 4, welcome to **Claire Baber** (Crown College), their new-to-the-profession Financial Aid Counselor.

News from Normandale Community College: On April 1, **Doris Panora** joined the financial aid team as a Minnesota State Grant and Small Aid Programs Coordinator specializing in scholarships. Two new team members were added in recent months: **Fathia Mohamud**, former student ambassador, is a Part time Financial Aid support specialist position, and **Nolan Cook** transitioned from the Normandale Bookstore to a financial Aid support specialist position. Both are new MAFAA members. **Rachel Becker** was promoted from a financial aid support specialist position to a Minnesota State Grant and Small Aid Programs Coordinator, specializing in Work Study.

Tim O'Donnell has joined the Business Development team at Inceptia.

Beginning July 1, **Jeff Olson** (Bethel University) is transitioning to Chief Institutional Data and Research Officer, following his friend and mentor, Dan Nelson's, career path.

RETIREMENTS

After 50 years at Bethel University, **Dan Nelson** is retiring at the end of June 2024. See his personal note and invitation on the previous page.

Additional retirees will be highlighted in the Summer issue of MAFAA Matters

CONDOLENCES

Mike Doman (Ascendium Education) passed away unexpectedly on May 1, 2024. His [Celebration of Life](#) will be held May 9 from 4-6pm in Sartell, MN. Mike previously was in the Financial Aid Office at St. John's before moving to Great Lakes, now Ascendium, in 2001.

Editor's Note: I have had the extreme pleasure of calling Mike my friend and co-worker for more than a couple of decades. Rest in Peace, my friend. You will be missed greatly.

Let this be a reminder for us all to continue to **Live with Passion**.
