



WASFAA Highlights is a monthly electronic news update provided by the WASFAA President for the benefit of the WASFAA membership. The electronic publication will contain informational items pertaining to WASFAA activities and newsworthy items of interest to the WASFAA community. Past issues are archived on the WASFAA website at <http://www.wasfaa.org>. Additional information regarding any given issue may be obtained by emailing the current WASFAA President, Tami Sato, at tsato@scco.edu.

WASFAA Highlights for the Month of January, 2007 - (Vol. 2, No. 10)

- Thought I would get this issue of WASFAA Highlights out early so I could announce the results of our recent WASFAA elections that closed January 12. Many thanks to the 375 members who took the time to vote for the candidates and bylaws change. We had an excellent ballot and the results were pretty narrow. Here are your newly elected officers for 2007/2008: President-Elect – Pat Peppin (Mesa Community College); Vice President – Sandi Guidry (University of Nevada Reno); Secretary – Tracey Lehman (OR Institute of Technology) and Ethnic Diversity Representative-at-Large – Tamara Hornbuckle (University of AK-Fairbanks). If you get a chance, please join me in sending a congratulatory message to these new WASFAA leaders.
- The bylaws change was approved with 81% of voters approving the change to have the President-Elect take the responsibilities of maintaining and updating the association bylaws. The Executive Council believed that this would assist the President-Elect in preparing for their presidency. This position was formerly assigned to the immediate Past-President.
- NASFAA has just announced a call for volunteers. It is important for there to be WASFAA members on their committees. Meetings are held usually twice a year at the NASFAA offices in Washington, DC. All travel, lodging and related expenses are covered by NASFAA. If you have been active in participating in your state and regional associations, now is the time to volunteer for NASFAA. Click on the following link to the volunteer form and list of areas of interest and issues. <http://www.nasfaa.org/apps/forms/VolunteerForm/VolunteerForm.asp> The deadline date is April 13th.
- The headlines in the news media state that student loan interest has been slashed. This is through the College Student Relief Act, H.R. 5 that was just approved by the House. As Mark Kantrowitz says though, "Cutting the interest rate in half might have made for a good sound bite, but a closer look shows it to a very expensive with very little student-aid benefit." The interest rate reduction will not be for graduate and professional students and will not be applied to the Unsubsidized Stafford or the PLUS/GP PLUS loan programs. The interest rate for undergraduate, Subsidized Stafford loans will be reduced in small increments over five years. Did you know that the 3.4% interest rate will be only effective for six months and that the rate will go back up to 6.8% after January 1, 2012? This makes it a temporary benefit that will cost an estimated \$7 billion and will be paid for by permanent cuts in subsidies to the FFELP lenders that make federal student loans. President Bush opposes the bill and could veto the bill. As the WASFAA Federal Relations Chair has stated, we will be watching this bill when it moves to the Senate and may plan to advocate the importance of supporting an increase to the Pell Grant maximum instead as the best method to accomplish the goal of increasing student access

through the federal financial aid programs. Go to <http://edworkforce.house.gov> for details on the bill.

- WASFAA Training Co-Chairs, Bert Logan and Frances Campbell are working on bringing Spring Training events to all eight states in the WASFAA region. Hope you took some time to input your wants and needs in the quick survey sent out by the Research Committee. If not send your input directly to either loganb@lanecc.edu or fcampbell@simpletuition.com
- The Department of Education has decided to add a team of negotiators to cover general provisions such as consistent enrollment status definitions, defining independent study, nonstandard terms and non-term programs, cash management issues and other technical corrections. Two negotiators from the WASFAA region are Linda Michalowski from the CA Community Colleges and Stacey Ludwig from the Western Governors University.
- Your school will be providing students with the 1098-T forms before the end of this month. The form can be used for the IRS tax benefits for education like the Hope Credit, Lifetime Learning Credit and Tuition and Fees Deduction. You can get information from the IRS Publication 970 (Tax Benefits for Education). On page 72 there is a handy chart that provides answers to questions like what the annual limits are, what expenses qualify and what income ranges apply. Last years booklet was still up still but will probably be updated soon at www.irs.gov
- For those filling out travel reimbursement forms the standard mileage rate has been raised from 44.5 cents per mile in 2006 to 48.5 cents per mile. The IRS said the primary reason for the higher rate was the higher prices for vehicles and fuel during the year ending in October 2006.
- Most of the national, regional and state financial aid associations have included support for a humanitarian project a part of their annual conferences. This was discussed at the last NASFAA board meeting in Minneapolis. The MASFAA conference raised funds for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations. EASFAA raised funds for a camp for kids with cancer. Many vendors raffle funds for student scholarships in a raffle. At the NASFAA conference in Seattle \$90,000 was provided to colleges to award their students. CASFAA has collected conference bags back from those who choose to give them to school children. Last year 150 bags were sent to an elementary school affected by the Katrina hurricanes. Following this worth tradition, WASFAA will be sponsoring a humanitarian project at the 38th Annual Conference in Anaheim. The project is Rosie's Garage. In 1991, Rose Espinoza decided to help the kids in her neighborhood and started inviting children to her garage to help them with their homework. Today there are multiple facilities that provide one-to-one tutoring, rewards for improved school report cards, snacks and sometimes field trips to colleges or museums. Evaluations of the program have shown increases in writing and math levels. Rosie's Garage has received national recognition from the CBS Evening News as one of the Point of Light Volunteer Awards. You will have an opportunity to donate supplies or money to this project started by an ordinary woman who did something extraordinary to help the children in her disadvantaged neighborhood. Please make plans to attend the conference which will be held May 6-8, 2007. Conference information will be available soon at the WASFAA web site, www.wasfaa.org