



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](mailto:tsato@scco.edu).

### **WASFAA Highlights for the Month of October, 2006 - (Vol. 2, No. 7)**

- For the WASFAA President, October is "super conference" month. I've attended the state conferences in Alaska, Arizona and Washington. Steve Herndon attended the state conference in Idaho because of an overlap in dates. What a great way to meet the founders, sages, movers and shakers and prospective new leaders in our region. Besides giving the WASFAA update and presenting some sessions these visits provide an opportunity to get new ideas and hear some great speakers. Our state presidents have been having the same opportunity with the WASFAA state presidents exchange project.
- Here's a new trend I just heard about. Some of our nations 1,200 community colleges are gearing up for a wave of baby boomers who may be returning to college for credentials and training for second careers or volunteer positions.
- I went to a session at WFAA presented by Marianna Deeken on the FSA Assessment, self-evaluation tools that can be found at <http://ifap.ed.gov> under "tools for schools" or through the school portal at <http://fsa4schools.ed.gov> under "resources & training". You can use these to be prepared for an audit or train new staff. There are 17 modules that have been redesigned and updated. There are checklists, activities, Q & A's and hyperlinks to regulations and the FSA Handbook. Marianna suggests completing a module that relates to an audit finding or selecting a few a year to make sure you are doing things in compliance.
- To support HERA 2006 changes, the U.S. Department of Education has listed the accrediting agencies that they recognize as having it in their scope to certify distance learning programs. You can check this at [http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation\\_pg11.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg11.html)
- Don Black and Sandra Guidry report that the JRSMLI had a record 37 participants with wonderful weather, amazing facilities and faculty that did an outstanding job. You'll read more about this exciting event in a future newsletter and articles from the scholarship winners: Lupe Reyna from Chemeketa Community College and Helen Faith from Western States Chiropractic College.

Here's a list of the faculty members that came from colleges all over the WASFAA region.

Brad Honious – Gateway Community College

Wendy Olson – Whitworth College

Kate Peterson – Oregon State University

Colin Randolph – College of Southern Idaho

Wayne Sparks – Washington State University

- There is a new higher education BLOG that has some interesting reading. You can go to <http://www.higheredwatch.org> The updates from Washington DC and education issues include dialogues from others. You can even submit your own comments.
- At the RMAFAA Conference, Jeff Baker gave a 60-slide presentation on the ACG Grants and the National SMART programs. That's a lot of details for two new programs in a reauthorization process where one of the goals is simplification. The Secretary states that institutions are responsible for implementing the new programs, within the guidance provided but also recognizes that there have been many challenges with the short lead time. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, ED released DCL GEN-06-18 which provides guidance to schools on how to define an academic year when awarding ACG/SMART. The document describes how schools should evaluate both the credit hour and weeks of instruction components of the academic year. It also provides clarification on awarding the National SMART Grant to fourth-year students. You can go to <http://ifap.ed.gov/dpccletters/GEN0618.html> to access this information. Even after walking through some samples, it seems to be an area of great complication. Times like this, feel blessed to work at a graduate student only college. The IFAP web site has a Frequently Asked Questions section for ACG/SMART or you can E-mail your question directly by going to [HERAQUESTION@ED.GOV](mailto:HERAQUESTION@ED.GOV)
- How about some good news? The College Board's annual "Trends in College Pricing" report found that the price of college went up only somewhat faster than the cost of everything else. The rise at public 4-year colleges was 2.4% when you account for inflation, which represents the lowest in six years. At private 4-year colleges, published tuition and fees rose 5.9% to an average \$22,218. Accounting for financial aid, their net price is \$13,200. Did you know that public 2-year colleges educate nearly one-half of U.S. college students? Community colleges remain at bargain prices compared to other schools and the College Board estimates their average net annual cost actually declined this year. Read the report at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- The current FFELP consolidation forms expired on Halloween but ED has stated that the current forms can be used until the revised forms are approved. My trick-or-treaters count went from zero to two this year.