

President's Update – March 2017

Mike Johnson

Greetings WASFAA members!

February was a busy month for WASFAA, which seems appropriate since the April 30 end of the membership and service year will be here before we know it. We're trying to finish several things – including some big ones – that we've been working on for the last several months.

I had a great time with my Oregon colleagues at the **OASFAA Conference**. Conference Co-Chair Leslie Limper had talked me into doing a session based on Alex Knapp's 2012 *Forbes* article, "Five Leadership Lessons from James T. Kirk". I wore my Star Trek – The Original Series uniform (yes, I already owned it) and gave it a shot. One of the attendees even took a selfie with me (thanks Kara). In my WASFAA update, I found myself talking more about what WASFAA membership means than about specific events that are coming up. I think I'm becoming more philosophical as I get older.

WASFAA's team on the **NASFAA Regional Thought Force** that met in D.C. on February 6 found out that there is nationwide interest in continuing the conversations about a possible future alignment of state, regional, and national associations. I had thought that we might have more detailed discussions there – which would have let me provide a more detailed summary here – but as we got started it became clear that many participants were in the early stages of considering the idea. Next steps for our now much larger group will be to explore how operations, finances, and governance might look under a new model.

The WASFAA Executive Council met in Reno February 15 – 17. Thanks go to **Site Selection Chair Leonard Walker** for working closely with the Eldorado staff, and to that staff who went out of their way to make us feel welcome. This gathering served as a regular meeting of the 2016-17 EC and an orientation for the 2017-18 EC, so it allowed current officers and committee chairs to talk with their incoming counterparts about what to expect during their service year. While we had substantive discussions about a variety of topics, three related ones stood out for me: the need to go through the Policies & Procedures Manual to ensure that it's up-to-date, putting the finishing touches on our **2017-2020 Strategic Plan** which we hope to vote on during the April EC meeting, and possibly recommending an institutional membership model.

I'd like for you to start putting some serious thought into that last one. NASFAA membership is institutional, and several state and regional associations have gone this direction. Over the last several months, the EC has been evaluating different kinds of institutional membership models. Our discussions have made me think that such a model might encourage more financial aid administrators to serve on committees, run for office, and participate in training and professional development events. We hope to send a survey soon that asks for your thoughts on making this change. Your input will be an essential part of our ongoing discussions, so I hope that you'll all respond.

Don't forget to **register for the Annual Conference by March 9** to get the early registration rate of \$395 (plus the \$50 membership fee) and the group rate of \$169 per night (plus taxes) for sleeping rooms. You

can do that from the mini-site at <https://www.wasfaa.org/docs/conferences/2017/index.html>. As I always say, keep looking at the WASFAA home page and Facebook site for updates on sessions and other details.

Registration for the **Sister Dale Brown WASFAA Summer Institute** is now live! You can get to it from a link at <https://www.wasfaa.org/docs/training/summerinstitute/2017/index.html>. Again, mark your calendars for **June 5 – 9 at the University of Nevada-Reno**. The faculty met in Reno the day before the EC meeting began, which let them see the meeting rooms they'll be using. It takes a lot of planning and preparation each year to make this event happen. I can't express enough thanks to this year's group for all the hard work so far, and for all the hard work they'll keep doing for the next few months.

In March, I'll be attending the PACFAA Conference in Honolulu. I'll let you know how that went in my April (last!) monthly update. Until then, keep processing those 399s, getting those award letters out, and participating in WASFAA activities!