

HISTORY OF AASFAA

In August 1967, a small group of financial aid professionals met in Flagstaff to discuss the possibility of creating a unified financial aid application to ease the burden of dealing with multiple financial aid forms for financial aid offices and high school counselors. There was much agreement on pursuing this objective and plans were put in motion to produce a High School Counselors Guide. Another outcome was the realization that Arizona could benefit from a permanent organization to meet similar needs and problems.

In August 1968, at another meeting in Flagstaff, the Arizona Association of Financial Aid Officers was established. Joseph E. Bednorz of Northern Arizona University was selected to be the first President. The first Constitution and Bylaws were adopted in March 1969. Also in 1969, AAFAO petitioned the newly formed Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators for admission to the organization.

In November 1970, the first Association newsletter was established and was called the AAFAO Bulletin. The editor was Jack Foreman and Hank Kutak and Merle West assisted him.

In 1971-72, Richard Wooten became the first Arizonan to serve as WASFAA President.

The first WASFAA Conference hosted by AAFAO was in 1975, in Phoenix under the leadership of Les Knoll and Merle Lange.

By 1976, the Association had changed its name to the Arizona Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and had adopted the logo of the outline of the State of Arizona with the Lamp of Knowledge as a centerpiece.

The WASFAA Conference returned to Arizona in 1982 and AASFAA provided another warm western reception, this time under the direction of Vince Roig.

Iris Roach, the first woman to serve as an AASFAA President, in 1982-83 ushered in an era of increased participation by the private trade and technical sector.

The decade of the 1980's saw AASFAA grow from a small group of dedicated professionals to a large, efficient and effective professional organization. AASFAA continued to provide services and meet the needs that were responsible for its creation. The Association has shown time and time again that it has the talent, expertise and commitment to provide leadership in the field of financial assistance.

In 1991, WASFAA was once more the guest of AASFAA for its annual conference. The leadership of Paul Barberini provided for a successful event.

In 1992, after many years of research and hard work, AASFAA was incorporated due to the diligence and commitment of Dan Lupin. Annual association meetings began this year.

In July 1992, AASFAA entered its twenty-fifth year of service to the profession. Members celebrated the past and looked forward to the future.

In July of 1993, AASFAA was the recipient of a state award from the National Association of

Student Financial Aid Administrators. The "NASFAA State Award for Service to Students, Parents or Families", which recognized AASFAA's video, "Cash for College", was disbursed to all high school counselors as well as being telecast on statewide television as an early awareness and outreach campaign. The award recognized the culmination of a three-year effort of Dan Melosi, Diana Mateer, and Dave Briney.

In 1995, AASFAA and the Arizona Commission for Postsecondary Education joined forces to coordinate College Goal Sunday, a statewide program that provides free information and assistance to Arizona students and families applying for college financial aid.

In February 1999, AASFAA went live on the Internet at www.aasfaa.org and in 2000 the association continued working towards innovation and change.

In fall 2000, the John Medley Financial Aid Advocacy Award was renamed and awarded to honor AASFAA friend and colleague who passed away suddenly in December 1999. The award was presented to John's family at the fall 2000 AASFAA/NAFAA joint conference in Laughlin, Nevada.

During 2001-2002, the number of conference scholarships was increased to members and updates to the bylaws were approved by the membership.

In November of 2002, AASFAA President, Pat Peppin created an Ad Hoc committee to automate the Tribal Funding Application Process. The project created a common electronic FNA application (Tribal funding application) that all Arizona tribes, schools and students could utilize. The tribal funding application process had traditionally been a very labor intensive and paper intensive process for students, schools, and tribes in Arizona. In 2006, AASFAA was recognized by NASFAA as the winner for service to other constituencies for the Automation of the Tribal Funding Application Process.

In March 2018, membership was polled to collect options for a new logo for AASFAA. After a vote by all active members, a new logo was chosen, one created by Nicholas Dehaan from University of Phoenix. AASFAA adopted this new logo effective immediately and began the process of updating the logo on all Association materials.

Old logo



New logo



In February 2019, President Rebekah Hoppel Salcedo passed away suddenly. The Board of Directors appointed Vice President Shaundra Coleman to the presidency, where she served a three-month term. Rebekah's passing was a great shock to her institution (The University of Arizona), AASFAA, and the larger financial aid community. Rebekah was a strong advocate for education and access, as well as staff promotion and growth. The Board created the Rebekah Hoppel Salcedo Rising Star award in her honor, to recognize rising leaders within AASFAA. The first recipients were awarded at the May 2022 conference in Laveen, AZ.