



**NYSFAAA
STRATEGIC LONG RANGE PLAN
2014-2017**

Created by NYSFAAA Long Range Planning Committee
June 2013
Approved by Executive Council
August 15, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The financial aid profession has no shortage of challenges. Costs rise faster than resources. Public officials demand more accountability. The complexity of computer systems, technology, and student aid programs increase. The challenge facing NYSFAAA is the very survival of the organization. How it responds in the future will be crucial to its survival.

The environmental scan has been attached as an appendix to this document for those wishing to better understand the issues surrounding our industry today. We encourage everyone to take the time to read and digest this thoughtful document.

The committee thought it appropriate to start this document with re-stating the NYSFAAA mission:

“NYSFAAA is a charitable, volunteer association of financial aid professionals advocating for, and promoting equal access to post-secondary education for all students. NYSFAAA offers education, professional development, and networking opportunities for its members and for colleagues in related education, business, and governmental professions.”

Adopted February 5, 2007

Our thanks go out to the NYSFAAA members who served on the Long Range Planning Committee. They worked long and hard in creating this plan. Without their contribution of time, effort, dedication and enthusiasm, this plan would never have been developed.

Irvin Bodofsky
William Cheetham
Curtis Gaume
Wayne Harewood
Gina Soliz
John View
Rob Zasso

Anne Barton, Chair

Executive Summary

The NYSFAAA Long Range Plan Committee began its work by examining the underlying goals of our profession and our association. Although the environment is quite different from that of even a few years ago, the goals of the organization continue to serve it well, and are reaffirmed in this plan. For the purpose of guiding our discussions in developing this plan, the committee restated the goals in operational terms:

- Effectively inform policy makers and advocate for students
- Communicate with our constituent groups
- Develop strong effective leaders who focus, guide and direct
- Use resources well and, if possible, expand the pool of resources, i.e., money and member participation
- Increase membership and member participation, provide targeted mentoring
- Emphasize our ethical foundations
- Offer quality professional development opportunities

In the committee's deliberations we were constantly reminded of the challenges we face as an organization, as a profession, and as an overall part of the enterprise known as Higher Education. The significance of higher education to the overall economic development of the United States is of micro and macro proportions. In New York alone, remove a major university such as Cornell or SUNY Upstate Medical and what would the consequential impact be? On a national scale apply that equation to the University of Michigan or USC and the impact would be dire.

An environmental scan was conducted with an outlook of being global; yet local (New York). While we are a New York group, our reach, impact, and goals can and often are influenced by entities from outside our New York environment. We must remain true to our mission; yet be realistic enough to know it can be tested by outside consequences.

Our scan is by no means perfect or complete. It is substantive enough to give the NYSFAAA members and NYSFAAA leaders enough substance to make all of us think about where we want to be in three (3) years.

Communication & Technology

NYSFAAA must continue to recognize that communication is the key to continued success of our organization. Evaluating and improving communication between all levels of the organization are of equal importance to the success of NYSFAAA. Communication & technology must be fully utilized to provide a constant dialogue between NYSFAAA and its audience. Communication must also provide an appropriate and professional window for those outside our organization via our website.

1. It is critical that all forms of communication we utilize provide current information, and is constantly reviewed to make sure our message does not become stale. NYSFAAA must communicate in several different ways, using both traditional and new technologies. We must increase the use of new communication technologies, while maintaining traditional technologies, so members receive information in ways comfortable to them.
2. The Technology & Innovation Committee should continue to review and evaluate differing forms of communication & technology, as they continue to evolve, and work with the membership to identify the most successful communication options for member communications, training, and outreach activities.
3. The Technology & Innovation Committee should implement a training program on new tools of communication for NYSFAAA members. These lessons would include how to use these tools for our offices & NYSFAAA.
4. NYSFAAA needs to be recruiting members that are talented individuals in modern technology and communication for committees within the association.
5. The membership needs to be aware of when and where the NYSFAAA Executive Council is meeting. When possible, local members should be invited to attend Executive Council meetings. The membership should be aware of the agenda for each Council meeting. This provides them the opportunity to make their representative on Executive Council aware of their position on issues that will be discussed.
6. NYSFAAA needs a mechanism so the membership can be kept up to date on all activities of the Executive Council, committees, and the association's positions with regular updates and periodic reports to members using a variety of communications. (Empire Chat, Listserv)
7. The membership should have access to the strategic long range plan, and to the annual goals and objectives designed to support the plan.

8. NYSFAAA should continue our strong and admirable record of outreach to students, with programs such as College Goal New York, a web site with high-quality information, brochures, public service announcements, and other communications. We should communicate to families & the public about complex issues in a format that is in easy to understand terms.

9. NYSFAAA must provide written communications on financial aid issues to agencies that evaluate current regulations, and formally respond to Notices of Proposed Rulemaking. We should lead and support efforts to improve interagency cooperation and communications.

10. NYSFAAA must maintain the cooperation and communication between our Sister Organizations (NASFAA, EASFAA, SUNYFAP, etc.). We should provide invitations to these groups to attend our annual conference and Executive Council meetings. We should encourage ongoing communication between these organizations. We should seek their input on issues of common concern.

**EACH YEAR - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO
SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE**

Fiscal Stability

To assure that NYSFAAA can continue its mission of providing training for its members, conduct outreach to students, parents and other professional associations supporting student financial aid, and continue its advocacy role for student aid programs at the federal and state levels the Association needs to be fiscally solvent. NYSFAAA can no longer continue to thrive with just membership dues and annual conference profits as its primary source of revenue. NYSFAAA needs to look to outside sources of revenue to support its outreach activities and increase its fund reserve.

1. The Budget Committee needs to continue providing an annual balanced budget for Executive Council consideration prior to the summer retreat.
2. The reestablished Development Committee should explore new revenue sources for NYSFAAA by examining the current model of financial support and consider changes within or new models that may be appropriate.
3. The Development Committee should explore funding opportunities through grant writing that fulfills the mission of NYSFAAA, namely; training its members, outreach for students and others, better communication techniques and advocacy for student aid programs.
4. The Professional Development Committee should offer training opportunities in grant identification and grant writing to interested NYSFAAA members.
5. The Development Committee should assist conference committees in finding non-lending vendors to exhibit at our annual conference.
6. The Development Committee should create a list of foundations that share NYSFAAA goals and submit applications to these foundations to request sponsorship.
7. The Development Committee should explore gaining financial support from higher education vendor partners by sponsoring NYSFAAA member training activities.
8. NYSFAAA should establish an investment committee which would report to the Treasurer. This committee would monitor the Association's investments on a quarterly basis. The committee would make recommendations to the executive council if significant changes to the to the portfolio are deemed prudent.
9. NYSFAAA should see that audits are conducted in a timely manner.
10. The NYSFAAA Executive Council needs to continue to be diligent in the management of the Association's resources in the conducting its business.
11. NYSFAAA should be vigilant to assure that the practices we use to solicit vendor support are consistent with our mission and within all pertinent legal guidelines.

**EACH YEAR - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO
SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE**

Advocacy and Public Policy

NYSFAAA must continue to be dedicated to our stated mission. Advocacy efforts must always recognize the needs of all our members, at every level of higher education. We possess the greatest “hands on” knowledge resource for the development of student financial aid policy and delivery. We need to continue to market our knowledge base and willingness to share it. Our ultimate goal should be working together with those who establish policy, interpret policy, implement and evaluate policy, to create policies with the best potential outcomes for our students.

1. NYSFAAA Region 4 has the unique responsibility of having our state’s capitol within their region. NYSFAAA should empower region 4 to be a primary go to region for Advocacy in the capital district. This responsibility provides unique opportunities to partner with NYSFAAA statewide, regions, and other associations to advocate for financial aid issues at the highest level.
2. NYSFAAA is made up of members from large and small colleges/universities. Some of our smaller schools and regions depend on NYSFAAA to support their advocacy efforts, and we need to continue to be aware of and support those who need us.
3. NYSFAAA needs to capitalize on the opportunity advocacy provides to enlist volunteers to plan and participate in advocacy activities; regionally and statewide.
4. Advocacy activities are critical for providing association credibility and exposure.
5. An annual leadership review of important issues should guide the annual advocacy planning process.
6. As we approach the next re-authorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, NYSFAAA needs to stay connected with the NASFAA Re-authorization Task Force, and keep an open dialogue with our membership on issues important to them.
7. NYSFAAA should continue the tradition of having an “advocacy” Council Meeting in Albany, NY. The purpose of the meeting would be to spend one-half day reviewing the ‘talking points’ for NYSFAAA and the next day using those talking points in scheduled visits to the Assembly and Senate.
8. NYSFAAA has a wealth of experienced retired administrators who remain involved and available to serve. We must capitalize on this vast resource as we develop our advocacy agenda.
9. NYSFAAA needs to make sure we keep a well-balanced representation of experienced and developing members on our advocacy planning committee to maximize idea development and opportunities for mentoring future leaders.

**EACH YEAR - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO
SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE**

Training and Leadership Development

Training and leadership development is an integral part of NYSFAAA. It is one of the key components to sustainability. NYSFAAA training is two-fold, one is novice and the other is professional development for all members. NYSFAAA training is inclusive of all levels of higher education offerings at all the institutions of our member's (undergraduate, graduate, professional, public, private and for profit). NYSFAAA training is inclusive of all members or potential members of our association regardless of race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or mental or physical disability. NYSFAAA training and leadership development is inclusive of all members of our association regardless of their membership level (active, associate, affiliate and retired).

1. NYSFAAA's specific niche on what training to provide has changed over the past several years, with changes in the training offerings of NASFAA and the establishment of solid federal training. NYSFAAA needs to continue to annually evaluate the training needs of the membership, and be ready to be a flexible training resource.
2. Executive council should seek potential leaders from the regions to put on state wide committees.
3. NYSFAAA must be ready to support training needs that develop at the national, regional, and state levels. The TLD Committee should be actively working with NASFAA and EASFAA to develop training activities.
4. The TLD committee should use available technology to ascertain what training is needed and how to deliver said training. The TLD committee will need to evaluate and understand the effectiveness of training provided electronically versus in person, to make sure we provide the best potential for success.
5. NYSFAAA should always enlist members to serve as committee members, presenters, and site facilitators to maximize opportunities for professional involvement and development.
6. The annual conference will continue to be our largest annual training event. We must continue to provide a strong conference program and post the program to our membership as soon as possible.
7. Novice training should continue to be the main training vehicle for our new colleagues.
8. Novice graduates should be actively recruited to serve on a committee upon graduation.
9. Webinars should be continued as a vehicle for training, but the regions should offer regular in- person training for their members.

10. NYSFAAA should add intermediate training options that encourage attendees to seek positions as directors.

**EACH YEAR - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO
SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE**

Outreach

NYSFAAA's mission is to advocate for students and to promote equal access to post-secondary education. To be successful in our mission, we must encourage active membership among financial aid professionals, associate membership among colleagues in fields related to financial aid, and welcome members who were once directly involved in financial aid administration but who are now retired. With a strong and active membership, NYSFAAA can provide resources to students, families, and high school counselors by participating in College Goal New York, high school nights, and other early awareness initiatives.

1. The Membership Committee should continue to send invitations to prospective members and send annual reminders to current members to encourage membership renewal.
2. Affiliate Membership can be promoted amongst graduate students who plan to pursue careers in Higher Education, to high school counselors, and to our colleagues in admissions, EOP/HEOP, bursar/business offices, student affairs, and career services.
3. The entire NYSFAAA membership, the Mentoring Committee, and NYSFAAA leadership (such as Executive Council) must mentor new members to make them feel welcomed and included.
4. NYSFAAA will continue to add value to membership by offering frequent training opportunities (both in-person and through various means of technology) and by holding regional and statewide meetings.
5. Executive Council and Regional leaders should invite all members to participate on committees and to serve in leadership roles (as defined by the NYSFAAA P & P Manual), both at the regional and statewide levels. No one should be excluded or feel discouraged to attend meetings, volunteer at events, or serve on committees.
6. The entire NYSFAAA membership can present financial aid information to students at targeted events and programs (such as financial aid nights, state or county fairs, College Goal New York events, and other Early Awareness events). If new grant funding is secured, the Early Awareness Committee can play an active role in getting the message out to young students and their families that college is an option for anyone who works hard and aims high, regardless of their financial background.
7. The Government Relations Committee (state and federal) should serve as liaisons between NYSFAAA and state and federal elected officials. This committee should support advocacy efforts by participating in Higher Education Legislative Days, promote letter-writing and other comments on legislative proposals affecting financial aid, write white papers or articles about policy issues, and regularly update the

NYSFAAA membership on financial aid issues, policies, and events which may need NYSFAAA members to serve as experts or spokespersons.

8. The School Outreach Committee should continue to hold Counselor Workshops and participate in the HESC Guidance Expos. NYSFAAA members can help plan the workshops and serve as presenters.

9. College Goal New York events should continue to be held, particularly in targeted areas across the state where there is a history of high financial need and a disproportionately small number of FAFSA on the Web submissions. To be successful, these CGNY events must be staffed by NYSFAAA volunteers.

10. NYSFAAA leadership should create a list serve of financial aid directors and communicate with them regularly to build camaraderie and seek their assistance in recruiting new members.

**EACH YEAR - GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO
SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE**

EVALUATION PROCESS FOR LRP

In accordance with the NYSFAAA Policies and Procedures Manual, it is the responsibility of the Governance Committee to conduct an annual review of the NYSFAAA Long Range Plan and report to the Executive Council on progress made on plan recommendations.

Appendix A

Environmental Scan

The purpose of this scan is to outline the issues in postsecondary education, government, technology, and American society/culture that may impact NYSFAAA members, their employers, or the students they serve over the next few years.

Student loan debt:

While certainly not a new issue to financial aid administrators, the public seems to have recently "discovered" the problem of student debt. The aggregate debt in 2013 for an undergraduate: \$35,200 – Federal and private loans. (Fidelity Investments 5/21/13)

Federal Budget & Fiscal Challenges:

The "Fiscal Cliff" has not been resolved and has forced sequestration of funding for federal student aid programs, as well as impacting students and families through other decreased expenditures on federal programs. NYSFAAA must advocate for what is best for all our students and families

NY Budget:

NY has done a better job than any other state in the nation in terms of support for the state grant program for New York State residents (TAP). Continued expansion to support new populations or new initiatives is needed in the near term in order to address changing demographics and needs. NYSFAAA has played a key role and its TAP reform white paper is a plan that needs legislative action.

The Demographics Are Changing:

Diverse students are expected to constitute nearly half of the graduates of public high schools by the year 2020. At the same time this is occurring, the overall number of traditional age students graduating from high school is decreasing in the Northeast. This will have an impact on enrollment trends and institutional finances.

Changes in Pensions and Funding of Retirement:

This calls into question the whole model of paying for college. If more families have none of their own disposable income for college; the expectation is that colleges will give more. NYSFAAA cannot solve these issues; it can play a significant role in bringing the issues forward to policy makers.

Retirement of Senior Financial Aid Professionals:

In New York and across the country, significant numbers of aid professionals will retire. They take with them a rich history and knowledge. While we encourage retirees to stay actively involved in NYSAAA, new professionals will need to be trained to take their place and this presents a challenge and an opportunity.

Communication and Technology:

Social media, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other venues have provided people a level of connection and information that could only be dreamed of even a decade ago. NYSFAAA should explore the most effective ways to teach its members about new technologies, and how to integrate new technologies into member communications, training, and outreach activities.

College Costs and Post-Graduation Employment:

All sectors of higher education are under federal scrutiny with respect to costs of a degree/certificate. The end result is usually pegged to a job at the end of graduation. The data proves that a college graduate earns more than a non-graduate and significantly more than a High School graduate. NYSFAAA must partner with regional and national associations to tell the other side of the story. An educated population will produce a diverse and strong nation.

Oversight of Higher Education:

Relevant to College costs and other administrative issues, all of higher education has been subjected to new regulations that are extremely burdensome. Our colleagues in the for-profit arena are under the most pressure; yet public and private universities now fall under regulations that seem unnecessary. NYSFAAA must work to undo these burdensome rules.

Use of Temporary Staff and/or Outsource Functions:

As noted in this environmental scan, college budgets continue to come under severe pressure in the near term. Institutional administrators are searching for ways to reduce costs. The use of temporary staff, or outsourcing of various administrative functions, will be one tool that some will consider. NYSFAAA should point out the value of long term employees. Audit concerns need to be addressed and temp help errors runs higher than regular employees. This has membership implications.

Online Education:

The phenomenon of Massive Open-ended On-Line Courses (MOOCS) highlights the continued pressure to reduce the costs of postsecondary education. Online courses present unique eligibility and funding challenges to financial aid administrators.

NYSFAAA should see this as an opportunity to lead in the development of guidelines for this special area.

Transparency, Accountability, and Reporting:

Higher education is being challenged on issues of retention and graduation rates; the Shopping Sheet is but one example. Demands for increased reporting and accountability will not diminish in the near term. NYSFAAA must consider how it can support efforts to explain complex issues to the public and to policy makers in easily understood terms.

Re-engineering Federal Student Aid:

The current Title IV Federal student aid programs are now over 50 years old. The next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act may see radical changes in programs. As the experts in student financial aid, NYSFAAA has a critical stake in the outcome of any deliberations that take place. NYSFAAA must educate its members on the legislative process, and create an influential voice in any and all debates on this topic.