



*Traveling Through*



# Uncharted Territory

**SWASFAA | TASFAA**  
Conference 2023

**2023 TASFAA Annual Report**



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## TASFAA Mission Statement

The Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) advances student access to higher education by providing professional development for its diverse members, advocating for informed public policies, and facilitating forums on financial aid topics.



## TASFAA Vision Statement

TASFAA will serve as an exemplar for promoting student access and success in higher education while also providing excellent professional development opportunities for its members.

## TASFAA Board and Committee Chairs

President – Dede Gonzales (Texas State University)

Vice President – JoEllen Price (Houston Community College)

President Elect – Denise Welch (Panola College)

Past President – Robert Moreno (San Jacinto College)/Taryn Anderson (Baylor University)

Treasurer – Monica Smart (Hardin-Simmons University)

Secretary – Alexandra Hellinger (Alamo Colleges District)

## Members-At-Large

JoEllen Price (Houston Community College)

Chandra Gonzalez (South Texas College of Law)

Joseph Ruiz (Del Mar College)

Keith Hoelscher (Angelo State University)

Thomas Ratliff (Abilene Christian University)

Maria Serna (Texas A&M – Corpus Christi)/Dawn Coleman-Glenn (Texas A&M University)

Christy Miller (Wayland Baptist University)

Leandra Garcia (St. Mary's University)

## President's Letter

Hello TASFAA Members! I have been honored to serve as your TASFAA President the 2022-2023 year. What an amazing year! I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the TASFAA Board and Committee Chairs during this year and appreciate all the support they have given me! During the passing of the gavel at the 2022 Fall Conference, I listed the goals I had for TASFAA for the year.

2022-2023 Goals:

- (1) Continue to strengthen the transparency of TASFAA's financial operations
- (2) Work to ensure that procedures are in place and on the TASFAA website for each committee to ensure a smooth transition from year to year.
- (3) Continue to provide timely and relevant professional development and training opportunities for our members.
- (4) To stay informed on upcoming changes related to FAFSA Simplification and provide information to our members.
- (5) Continue to be a resource to educate legislators during the upcoming legislative session

For the first goal regarding the transparency of TASFAA's financial operations, we made progress in the following areas:

- Clarifying in the TASFAA Policies and Procedures the roles of the TASFAA Treasurer and the TASFAA Bookkeeper.
- Requested and received access to the TASAA QuickBooks account for the TASFAA Treasurer.
- Updated the process to record the Mack Adams Scholarships. We now record the expense in the scholarship account and the revenue for the registration fees to better understand the impact of the scholarships.



For the 2nd goal, I requested that all committee chairs post all relevant committee information/documents to the TASFAA website committee pages so that information will be available to future committee chairs. It's important to keep continuity of information and make sure the new chair has all the information available as they take over. TASFAA is a volunteer organization, and we want to make sure the transitions are as smooth as possible.

One of the foundations of TASFAA is to provide excellent professional development for its members. TASFAA continued to excel in that area this year with the Regional Training, New Aid Officers and New Aid Officers Basics workshops in addition to the first ever TASFAA/SWASFAA Joint Fall Conference with record registrations! There is additional information about this in the committee sections below.

We also worked to make sure we continued to be a resource for our state legislators this year. I sent a letter (drafted by the Legislative Issues Committee) regarding TASFAA's legislative goals to Commissioner Keller and several legislators. The letter and list of recipients was posted to the TASFAA website. I also met with Assistant Commissioner for External Relations, Amy Peterson, about the letter on Friday, 2/24/23.

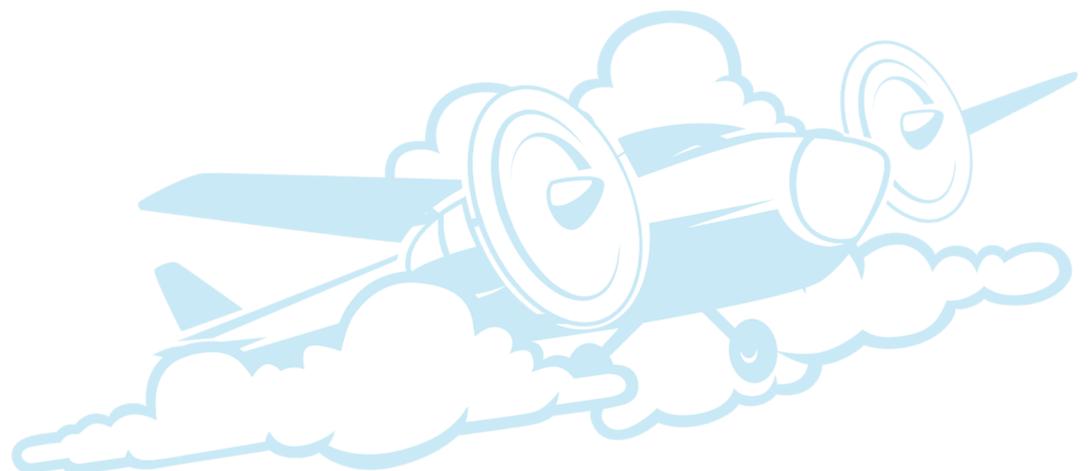
Finally, we updated the TASFAA Policies and Procedures to include the responsibility for ensuring quorum at annual business meeting.

This has been an amazing year and I thank everyone for their support! I am so grateful for the hard work of the Board, Committee Chairs and Committee Members this year! TASFAA could not be successful without you! TASFAA is a wonderful organization and resource for financial aid administrators and I look forward to continuing to serve TASFAA in the future!

Sincerely,

Dede Gonzales

TASFAA President 2022-2023



## Community Service

The charity selected this year for community service was Honor Flight. Honor Flight Network is a national nonprofit organization comprised of independent hubs working together to achieve the Honor Flight mission. In furtherance of this common goal, we have the enormous privilege of showing our nation's veterans the appreciation and honor they deserve.

Participation in an Honor Flight trip gives veterans the opportunity to share this momentous occasion with other comrades, remember the fallen, and share their stories and experiences with other veterans.

During the fall conference we raised \$4,197 for Honor Flight!



## Fall Conference

**Chairs:** Dawn Coleman-Glenn (Texas A&M University) & Zarita Barton (Lone Star College)

**Vice Chair:** JoEllen Price (San Jacinto College)

**Committee Member:** Rebecaa Cortez (University of Texas at Austin), Alberto Hernandez (Texas A&M – Corpus Christi), Lou Murray (Earnest), Rebakah Filson (Sam Houston State University), Nora Cargo (Texas A&M University), Leah Grassi (Texas State University), Heather Tapia (ScholarNet), Sergio Gonzalez (Sallie Mae), Rebecaa Dyess (Texas Women’s University), Jeffery Scott (Texas Women’s University), Randy Wayman (Oracle America)



This conference was the first joint TASFAA and SWASFA conference! The TASFAA conference committee along with the SWASFA conference committee members (Marla Bush & Erin Woolridge) put on an amazing conference! The theme of the conference was Traveling Through Uncharted Territory which fit wonderfully with this crazy year as we all struggled to understand and implement FAFSA Simplification. It was uncharted territory for all of us! The conference was held at the Hyatt Regency DFW from October 4 – 6, 2023. There were 4 pre-conference NASFAA Credentialing sessions. We had 578 registrations for the conference (441 from Texas and 137 outside of Texas). The keynote speaker was Kelli Vrla.

## Awards and Scholarships

**Chairs:** Molly Garrett (Tyler Junior College)

**Committee Member:** Shelley Franks (Tyler Junior College), Becky Hair (Howard Payne University), Cynthia Chavez (Baylor University), Yvonne Vera (San Jacinto College District), Christina Montecillo (Texas Tech University), Delia Gomez (Texas A&M University – San Antonio), Kasi Broussard (Panola College)



During the 2023 year, the committee established the transition from service year lapel pins to service year plaques. The committee was able to reestablish the awarding of the ATLE-TASFAA Scholarship to one of our deserving TASFAA members.

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients

**TASFAA Hall of Fame:** Karen Krause (University of Texas at Arlington)

**Trailblazer Award:** Lawana Haynes (San Jacinto College)

**Carolyn Jones Teaching and Mentoring Award:** Arianna Gray (Collin College)

**Financial Aid Star Award:** Christen Williams (St. Mary's University)

**Financial Aid Support Award:** Stevie Guardiola (St. Mary's University)

**Diversity and Inclusion Award:** Casey Wells (Tyler Junior College)

**TASFAA Committee of the Year Award:** Regional Training

**ATLE-TASFAA Education Scholarship:** Melissa Bohnsack (Texas A&M University)

## Years of Service

**10 Years of Service:** Jesus Alcala (Alamo Colleges District)

Ashley Brooks (Alamo Colleges District)

Lisa Cervantes (Alamo Colleges District)

Yesenia Reyes (Alamo Colleges District)

Matthew Wells (Alamo Colleges District)

Farrah Lokey (Angelo State University)

Sue Hendrix (Covenant School of Nursing)

Guadalupe Escorza (El Paso Community College)

Jesus Portillo (El Paso Community College)

Youmi Shin (El Paso Community College)

Davin Escalante (Houston Community College System)

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients (continued)

**10 Years of Service:** Debra Bulgrien (LeTourneau University)  
Pauletta Robertson (LeTourneau University)  
Joy Thomas (Prairie View A&M University)  
Rachel Casey (South Plains College)  
Christina Nutall (South Texas College of Law - Houston)  
Javier Jimenez (Texas A&M International University)  
Margaret Daniel (Texas A&M University - Central Texas)  
Saundra Johnson (Texas A&M University - Kingsville)  
Sulema Martinez (Texas A&M University - Kingsville)  
Kerri Waller (Texas Christian University)  
Johann Martinez (Texas State Technical College)  
Dottie Barton (University of Houston)  
Beatriz Alvarado (University of Houston-Downtown)  
Crystal Reeves (University of Texas Medical Branch - Galveston)  
Tina Luong (UT Southwestern Medical Center)

**15 Years of Service:** Gaston Aguirre-Martinez (El Paso Community College)  
Traci Armes (University of Texas - Austin)  
Rebecca Bradley (Texas State University)  
Kasi Broussard (Panola College)  
Cemondria Bush (Dallas College)  
Jill Cagle Dallas (Baptist University)  
Maria Calderon (Prairie View A&M University)  
Chris Campbell (Inceptia)  
Daniel Campos (University of Texas at San Antonio)  
Ana Chavez (Collin County Community College)  
Patricia Collins (Sam Houston State University)  
Shelisskia Douggans (University of Texas - Austin)  
Denise Eliserio (Texas State Technical College)  
Hanna El-Saad (Houston Community College System)  
Elizabeth Estrada (El Paso Community College)  
Robert Fishkind (Texas A&M University)

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients (continued)

**15 Years of Service:** Linda Foster (Midwestern State University)  
John Foxworthy (University of Texas - Dallas)  
Joshua Hernandez (Texas Tech University)  
Tina Holzer (Blinn College)  
Lena Hooker (TTU Health Sciences Center - Lubbock)  
Shelley Jones (Trinity Valley Community College)  
Tracy Jones (Lone Star College)  
Zachary Krueger (University of Mary Hardin-Baylor)  
Kristal Luna (Sam Houston State University)  
Carla Martinez (University of Houston)  
Cynthia Martinez (Southwest Texas Junior College)  
Sophia McGee (Houston Community College System)  
Elizabeth Mechalske (Texas Christian University)  
Tammy Mitchum (Stephen F. Austin State University)  
Christy Montecillo (Texas Tech University)  
Afsha Najeeb (Houston Community College System)  
Eduardo Nerio (University of Texas - Austin)  
Juan Nicanor (Lone Star College)  
Jennifer Obenhaus (Texas State University)  
Braunshay Pertile (Southern Methodist University)  
Lorena Pescador (El Paso Community College)  
Irene Rodriguez (South Texas College)  
Luis Rodriguez (Texas A&M University)  
Lynn Scales (Lamar State College-Orange)  
T'Juanna Simmons (Dallas College)  
Amanda Smith (Clarendon College)  
Angelia Spencer (Frank Phillips College)  
Shonta Sumlin (Lone Star College)  
Vicky Tran (Dallas College)  
Dahlia Velarde (West Coast University)  
Stephani White (Dallas College)

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients (continued)

**15 Years of Service:** Caleb Willis (Navarro College)

Rolph Zehntner (University of Texas - El Paso)

**20 Years of Service:** Monica Comeaux (University of Houston-Downtown)

Marcus Cooper (Texas A&M University)

Jason Edens (Austin Community College)

Maria Escalera (Tarrant County College)

Julie Finn (College Ave Student Loans)

Delia Gomez (Texas A&M University- San Antonio)

Penny Griffin (Southern Methodist University)

Keith Hoelscher (Angelo State University)

Hayley Jordan (Austin College)

Lacey Kinkelaar (Sam Houston State University)

Linda Kuhn (Austin Community College)

Jennifer Lozano-Lowe (University of Texas at San Antonio)

Lisa Martin (Baylor University)

Meghann Nash (Galveston College)

Angela Oubda (Austin Community College)

Denise Pickett (Texas A&M University- San Antonio)

Gina Salinas (Texas Southmost College)

Sheila Stedham (Lone Star College)

Stacy Tieu (Tarrant County College)

Matt Wakeman (Rice University)

Eloisa Ybarra (University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley)

**25 Years of Service:** Jason Briseno (Austin Community College)

Cheryl Cagle (Trinity University)

Rebecca Cano (South Texas College)

Ron Crumedy (Galveston College)

Laura Elizondo (Texas A&M International University)

Nedra Goodrich (Texas Tech University)

Lisa Goodwin (University of North Texas)

Barbara Hudson (Dallas Baptist University)

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients (continued)

**25 Years of Service:** Gail Hutson (Amarillo College)

Valerie Jimenez (McLennan Community College)  
Troyling Johnson (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)  
Minerva Knabe (Grayson College)  
Rhonda Lancaster (Baylor University)  
Patty Landeros (Wayland Baptist University)  
Rickey Lasly Jr. (Angelo State University)  
Debbie Malone (LeTourneau University)  
Gabriela Martinez (University of Houston-Downtown)  
ShaDana Mingo (Texas College)  
Tammy Minton (Dallas College)  
Federico Pena Jr (Texas State Technical College)  
Tracy Watkins (LeTourneau University)  
Donna Watson (Texas A&M University)  
Angela Whitlock (Sam Houston State University).

**30 Years of Service:** Mary Bledsoe (Tarrant County College)

Sarah Dorsey (University of Texas - Dallas)  
LaTasha Goudeau (University of Houston-Downtown)  
Alisa Haywood (Houston Community College System)  
Susana Hernandez (University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley)  
Elsa Lopez (El Paso Community College)  
Ines Lopez (El Paso Community College)  
Silvia Pena (University of Texas - El Paso)  
Ed Turney (University of North Texas)  
Norma Urias (El Paso Community College)  
Alene Williams (Lone Star College)  
Leah Williams (Texas State Technical College)

**35 Years of Service:** Ron Brown (University of Mary Hardin-Baylor)

Imelda Buentello (Austin Community College)  
Diana Daniels (Colleging)  
Walter Diaz (Southern Careers Institute)

## 2022 - 2023 Award Recipients (continued)

**35 Years of Service:** Kathy Dixon (Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA))

Veronica Dominguez (University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley)

Delisa Falks (Texas A&M University)

Donnie Purvis (Midwestern State University)

Thomas Ratliff (Abilene Christian University)

Elaine Robinson (Texas Wesleyan University)

Michael Scott (Texas Christian University)

Rob Smith (ELM Resources)

Trina Smith-Patterson (Tarrant County College)

Elizabeth Soles (Houston Community College System)

**40 Years of Service:** Sandi Abshier (Texas State Technical College)

Cathy Horn (Concordia University Texas)

William Mack (University of Texas - Dallas)

Cathleen Wright (Texas Lutheran University)

Kathy Wright (Tarleton State University)

**45 Years of Service:** Jackie Adler (Texas State Technical College)

## Site Selection

**Chair:** Ed Kerestly (Angelo State University)

**Vice Chair:** Nora Cargo (Texas A&M University)

**Committee Members:** Robert Clarke (University of Texas – Dallas)

The committee established a regular meeting schedule throughout the year. It began by reviewing information provided by past committee chairs to inform committee activities. The committee worked closely with the president, board, event planning committees and the sponsor relations chair to determine the needs/interests in future event sites. With this input in mind, along with site recommendations received, initial research was done to narrow the sites to consider. RFPs were made to select sites and responses were received to determine on-site visits to finalize recommendations to the Board. The committee provided recommendations for 2024 New Aid Officers Workshop (NAOW) and the Annual Conference to the Board. NAOW for 2024 will be held at Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine and the Annual Conference will be held at the Hilton Houston Post Oak by the Galleria. Contracts for both were signed.

# New Aid Officers Workshop (NAOW) Site Selection

## Hotel Comparisons

	Great Wolf Lodge	Embassy Suites	Sheraton Hotel
<i>Location</i>	Grapevine	San Marcos	Georgetown
<i>Room Rate</i>	\$135 per night plus \$9.99 resort fee	\$165 per night	\$199 per night
<i>Dates</i>	April 16-19	April 4-7	April 16-19
<i>Food Min</i>	\$8,000	\$12,000	\$25,000
<i>Space Rental</i>	\$0	\$4000 Space Rental	\$0

## Site Committee Recommendation

Return to Great Wolf Lodge for  
April 2024 NAOW



# Fall Conference Site Selection

## Site Selection Process

- Reviewed information provide by past committee chairs
- Discussions Fall Conference Committee chairs, Sponsor Relations chairs, President and President-elect to better understand needs and interests for conference site.
- Received recommendation of potential hotels in Houston area.
- Reviewed 12 potential hotels based on basic conference requirements—i.e. number of rooms, meeting space capacity.
- Narrowed to 5 hotels to submit RFP (Request for Price/Proposal)
- Narrowed options to 3 hotels—Hilton Post Oak by the Galleria, Omni Hotel—Galleria, Royal Sonesta
- Conducted on-site visit to these 3 hotels.



Site Committee  
Recommendation

THE HILTON POST OAK  
BY THE GALLERIA

## Governance & Compliance

**Chair:** Rebecaa Bradley (Texas State University)

**Vice Chair:** Melet Leafgreen (University of Texas Southwestern Medical School)

**Committee Members:** Cristen Alicea (University of the Incarnate Word)



The committee was responsible for reviewing the governing documents and offering edits to the Board. The committee complied changes from the previous year that had not been finalized and finalized & published then. The committee was able to get lost historical updates gathered to have a more current polices and procedures document. The committee made multiple P&P updates throughout the year, as approved by the Board. We also made Constitutions & Bylaws updates as approved the Board & membership. The committee updated the committee log with all activity and uploaded tracking and progress documents to the committee files section of the TASFAA website.

## Early Awareness

**Chair:** Jerica Douglas (Texas A&M University)

**Vice Chair:** Chandra Gonzales (South Texas College of Law Houston)

**Committee Members:** Ana Chavez (Collin College), Jennifer Miller (University of Texas at El Paso)



This year the committee created an infographic that was sent out to the TASFAA community that contained information related to the FAFSA delays. The committee also created a document that outlined FAFSA changes in relation to FAFSA Simplification. This document was sent out to all 20 regions. In addition, the committee updated the Early Awareness presentation to include the FAFSA Simplification changes and made the presentation available in the toolkit. The committee is also currently working on a sample presentation for high school students to be used by TASFAA members on HS FAFSA nights.

## Regional Training

**Chair:** Chandra Gonzalez (South Texas College of Law – Houston)

**Committee Members:** Alicia Davis (Sul Ross College), Arianna Grey (Collin College), Cody Buczyrna (Texas A&M University), Caroline Hernandez (Austin Community College), Craig Poleman (SoFi), Ed Kerestly (Angelo State University), Michelle Enriquez (Citizens Bank), Leandra Garcia (St Mary’s University), LaShanda Parkhurst (Stephen F. Austin University), Lucreasha Mixon (San Jacinto College), Renee Walker (Texas A&M – Commerce), Rick Lasly (Angelo State University), Natalie Sandoval (Sul Roll College), Sergio Gonzales (Sallie Mae)

The Regional Training Committee created one day training events for the various regions across Texas, which included a NASFAA training credential. The regions covered were Dallas/Fort Worth, Lubbock, Austin, Brownsville (Valley region), Houston and El Paso. These training events were free to TASFAA members.

## Training

**Chairs:** Sarah Gordon (Texas A&M University) & Deanna Holder (Texas A&M University)

**Vice Chair:** Melissa Jones (Mary Hardin-Baylor)

**Committee Members:** Jerica Douglas (Texas A&M University), Dawn Coleman-Glenn (Texas A&M University), Andreina Villareal (San Jacinto College)

The Training Committee plans, organizes and presents a robust training program to individuals new to the financial aid arena. They host training events twice per year, once in the spring and again in the fall, just prior to the conference.

The spring training was held at Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine. There were over 90 participants for the two-and-a-half-day overview of financial aid. At the event they also introduced many of the upcoming changes that the Department of Education was implementing for both the 2324 and 2425 aid years. In the fall training event, they covered many of the same topics in the one and a half day intensive training. More than 80 participants from both TASFAA and SWASFAA participated in the fall training.

This year the committee had an unprecedented number of committee members unexpectedly unable to serve in person at various times. Despite this hardship, they were able to deliver the same high quality, enthusiastic training experience as in years past.

## Nomination & Elections

**Chair:** Jason Edens (Austin Community College)

**Vice Chair:** Harold Whitis (Alamo Colleges)

**Committee:** Eileen Eiden (Austin Community College)

The Nominations & Elections committee solicits nominations for open Board positions from the membership and presents back to the membership a slate of candidates eligible to participate in elections for that year. The committee administers the yearly election process and confers the results to the current Board and membership.

The online form to nominate persons for 2023-24 President-Elect and four Board Member At-Large positions was opened on March 2 with a deadline of April 1. An email was sent to the current membership on March 2. A reminder email was sent to the current membership on March 17 reminding them of the April 1 deadline. Another reminder email was sent to the membership on March 24 reminding them of the April 1 deadline. On March 24, it was decided that an insufficient number of nominations had been received and that the deadline needed to be extended to April 15. On March 29, an email was sent to the membership informing them of the extended deadline. The nomination form for 2023-24 Board positions closed on April 15. Four nominations were received for President-Elect. Thirteen nominations were received for Member-At-Large. In April 2023, emails were sent to all of the accepted nominees asking them to complete an online Google form to accept or to decline their nomination and to provide biographical/professional information about themselves to be posted to the TASFAA website. After receiving a response from every nominee, two nominees remained for President-Elect and ten nominees remained for Member-At-Large. The current Board was sent an email on May 12 a list of remaining candidates eligible to participate in elections. The slate of candidates participating in Board elections was posted to the TASFAA web site on May 26, and an email was sent to all active members on the same day. Some previously approved nominees were eliminated by the Committee in June after the nominees informed the Committee of a change in their employment. The final candidates for President-Elect were: Danchees “D” Ingram and Joseph Ruiz. The final candidates for Member At-Large were Zarita Barton, Robert Clarke, Mary Escobar, Chandra Gonzalez, Lawana Haynes, Marcel Jagne-Shaw, Jackie Kelley, Odell “Trey” Kelley, and Tonya Richardson-Dean.

## Nomination & Elections

(continued)

The online voting form for TASFAA Board elections was opened on July 25 and was planned to close on Aug 8. An email was sent to all member institution voting contacts with a link to the voting form and a link to the TASFAA web page that contained the information about each candidate. The week prior to opening elections, the committee began working to ensure that each member institution had a voting contact in MemberClicks and that the voting contact at each member institution was accurate. The Committee emailed all TASFAA members on August 4 making them aware of the voting timeline. The same email also informed all members that an email with a link to the online voting form was sent to all the voting contacts on July 25. The email asked anyone who believed themselves to be the voting contact for their school but who did not receive the July 25 email to contact the Committee for the purpose of researching and updating MemberClicks accordingly. The Committee continued to work from August 4-15 to rectify any inconsistent voting contacts in the database to allow member schools to cast votes. The deadline for casting votes was extended from August 8 to August 15 to achieve a quorum. There were 132 member institutions when voting closed on August 15, and 72 (55%) of the member institutions voted. The Committee Chair emailed the election results to the President, President-Elect, and Secretary on August 16. The President-Elect contacted each elected candidate to inform them of their election. The Committee updated the TASFAA website on August 18 to reflect the officers elected for 2023-24 and sent an email to all TASFAA members directing them to the website for the election results. The candidate elected as President-Elect was: Danchees “D” Ingram. The candidates elected as Members At-Large were: Chandra Gonzalez, Zarita Barton, Odell “Trey” Kelley, and Tonya Richardson-Dean.

## Legislative Issues

**Chair:** Christopher Murr (Texas State University)

**Vice Chair:** Danchees Ingram (UT Southwestern Medical School)

**Committee:** Delisa Falks (Texas A&M University), Jimmy Parker (Panhandle-Plains Higher Education Foundation), Scott Lapinski (UT Permian Basin), Thomas Ratliff (Abilene Christian

The Legislative Issues Committee will work with the U.S. Congress, U.S. Department of Education, Texas Legislature, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and other entities to communicate the opinions of the Association on any legislation or other issues that may affect the Association or profession.

The Legislative Issues Committee drafted, for the president, a letter outlining the Association's state legislative goals to be sent to state legislators and other appropriate parties. For the above-referenced letter, the committee provided the president with office addresses for: 1) Texas senators and representatives serving on the Legislature's higher education committees; 2) Texas legislators who filed financial aid-related bills during the session; and 3) the THECB commissioner. Additionally, and as part of its member education efforts, members received workflows of the bill process in both the Texas House and Senate as well as the Legislative Process in Texas document. Beginning mid-January, and approximately every two weeks throughout the State's session of the Legislature, the committee provided members with an updated list of financial aid and financial aid-related bills in the Texas Legislature. During the State's session of the Legislature, the Legislative Issues Committee forwarded hearing notices for the Texas Senate and House committee/subcommittee on higher education.

Association members were well informed regarding the Texas legislative process and the status of financial aid and related bills in this year's session of the Texas Legislature.



SWASFAA/TASFAA Conference  
and NAOB 2023



The following pages contain a copy of the letter drafted for the President, which was sent to Commissioner Keller, members of the Senate Committee on Education, Subcommittee on Higher Education, and the House Committee on Higher Education.



# Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

## Board of Directors 2022-2023

### President

Dede Gonzales  
Texas State University

### Vice President

JoEllen Price  
Houston Community College

### President-Elect

Denise Welch  
Panola College

### Past-President

Robert Merino

### Treasurer

Monica Smart  
Hardin-Simmons University

### Secretary

Alexandra Heflinger  
Alamo Colleges District

### Members-At-Large

JoEllen Price  
Houston Community College  
Chandra Gonzales  
South Texas College of Law  
Joseph Ruiz  
Del Mar College  
Keith Hoelscher  
Angelo State University  
Thomas Ratliff  
Abilene Christian University  
Maria Berna  
Texas A&M – Corpus Christi  
Christy Miller  
Wayland Baptist  
University  
Leandra Garola  
St. Mary's University

January 29, 2023

Dr. Harrison Keller  
Commissioner of Higher Education  
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
PO Box 12788  
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Reducing Inefficiencies to Better Allocate Financial Aid for Student Success

Dear Commissioner Keller:

On behalf of the Texas Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA), we thank you for your continued support of Texas students and their pursuit of higher education. TASFAA is an organization of over 130 Texas colleges and universities with more than 2,200 professionals committed to advancing access to postsecondary education as well as advocating for informed public policies regarding student financial aid programs.

We write to share with you our below legislative goals to eliminate inefficiencies in state financial aid programs that, if not addressed, will continue to impose barriers to students accessing a higher education. Our interest is to determine whether our four goals are in alignment with those of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). We would welcome, at your earliest convenience, an opportunity to meet with you to discuss these goals and those of the THECB.

## Goals:

- I. Align State Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements for financial aid eligibility with Federal standards.
- II. Align the State's Selective Service registration requirements for financial aid eligibility with new Federal standards.
- III. Align State requirements regarding financial aid eligibility and convictions with new Federal standards.
- IV. Align the State's Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) program with the TEXAS Grant to permit the use of Federal Pell Grant funds to cover the required TEOG match. Thus, allowing institutional funds to assist a greater number of financially-deserving students.

## Goal I

Align the State's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policies with the Federal policies. Both Federal and State student financial aid programs require recipients to be making SAP toward earning their postsecondary credentials or degrees. However, the misalignment between Federal and State SAP standards creates confusion and a potential barrier to a students' ability to progress toward their credential/degree—e.g., different minimum Grade Point Averages: Federal = 2.0 GPA; and State = defers to institutional minimum after year one and a 2.5 GPA after year two.

**Recommendation:** It is imperative that State SAP policies align with those of the Federal government, thus, enabling all students to have one SAP policy to follow to graduation.

## Goal II

In the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Congress eliminated the requirement that students be registered with Selective Service ~~in order to~~ receive Title IV financial aid. This change creates a significant difference between Federal law and State law as State law still requires students to file for Selective Service ~~in order to~~ receive State financial aid. As a result, students face an increased challenge in navigating the different Selective Service standards when applying for and receiving State and Federal financial assistance.

**Recommendation:** Conform the State Selective Service requirement with the Federal requirement so all students can be eligible for State supported financial aid.

## Goal III

The Federal government has eliminated convictions as a barrier to students receiving financial aid. However, this change has not occurred with respect to State student financial aid programs. This nonalignment increases the potential for confusion during the financial aid application process for students and further limits their access to postsecondary education as well as their ultimate ability to better contribute to the Texas workforce.

**Recommendation:** Conform the State requirement with the Federal requirement so all students can be eligible for State supported financial aid.

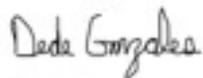
## Goal IV

Currently, the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant (TEOG) and TEXAS Grant programs require institutions to make up any difference between a student's grant amount and the cost of their tuition and fees. However, the TEXAS Grant, which is limited to four-year institutions, is allowed to use Federal Pell Grant funds to help cover this difference. Community colleges, which participate in the TEOG program, are not allowed to use Pell Grant funds in this manner and must instead use institutional monies. This difference places the State's community colleges at a significant disadvantage.

**Recommendation:** Amend the relevant statute to allow community colleges to use Federal Pell Grant funds to help cover the difference between their students' TEOG award amount and their cost of tuition and fees. Thus, better aligning this state program with the TEXAS Grant program.

We very much appreciate your time in reading our Association's legislative goals. We look forward to meeting with you to address these important matters. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Dede L. Gonzales  
President  
president@tasfaa.org



Thank you to everyone who helped make this year a success!