

NJASFAA Strategic Plan 2010-2015

Introduction

NJASFAA's strategic long range planning first began in 2003- 2004, initiated at the request of Dave Sheridan, President. Michael J. Bennett chaired the Long Range Strategic Planning Committee and Susan Howard, Director of Financial Aid at Antioch New England College Graduate School in New Hampshire, was selected to oversee the process due to her involvement in several long-range strategic planning exercises, including EASF AA and other institutions. NJASFAA felt her leadership and experience would assist NJASFAA in developing their first Long Range Strategic Plan (LSRP).

The first LRSP was adopted in 2004 and was used to develop annual goals for many of the activities in which the Executive Council engaged during the past five years. As the first LRSP expired, the Board of Directors renewed its commitment to the long-range strategic planning process and requested a new five-year plan be developed. Catherine Boscher-Murphy and David Sheridan, both Past Presidents, agreed to head up the project.

An information gathering meeting was held with several NJASFAA Presidents (past, current, incoming) and other members of the NJASFAA community to identify the main areas that should become the focus of the new plan. A survey of the membership was conducted to solicit additional comments focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the association. The information from both the first meeting and the survey was collated and categorized. A LRSP Retreat was held in early May 2010 with a small group of NJASFAA members, including many from the first meeting. Once again, Susan Howard was asked to participate in the retreat as an objective expert.

The following Long Range Strategic Plan differs significantly from the first LSRP in that this plan provides a framework to guide each President and Executive Council as the annual goals and initiatives are developed over the next five years. The details of what areas will be addressed and how those areas will be incorporated into the work of the Council will be based on the annual Executive Council retreat and will be managed by each President and members of the Council.

Services

1. Provide high quality, relevant training and conferences to financial aid professionals (including all Financial Aid Office staff members) in the state, targeted to all levels - novice, intermediate and seasoned.
 - Continue to address needs of novice aid administrators via the biannual Novice Training
 - Expand training activities and services to address mid-level and seasoned administrators' needs
 - Expand training activities and services to include more leadership development options
 - Coordinate training efforts with other outside organizations (e.g. guaranty agencies, vendors, lenders)
 - utilize current expertise within other entities
 - share resources (time, space, personnel, etc.)
 - develop collaborative relationships with new entities
 - Encourage committees to develop conference sessions, specifically
 - Government Relations
 - Training
 - Multicultural Committee
2. Be mindful of services and activities offered by NASFAA, EASFAA, and the Department of Education in order to complement, not duplicate efforts.
 - Build on webinars offered by these organizations by scheduling follow-up in-person discussion meetings to process and interpret webinar content
3. Look for ways to engage professionals who are less active, while continuing to serve those members who are currently active and engaged.
 - Continue seeking a variety of venues statewide that are both convenient and affordable for trainings and meetings
 - Educate the community as to the specific reasons for continuing to hold conferences in Atlantic City (e.g. low costs of rooms allow most members to stay overnight, increasing participation, networking and camaraderie).
4. Offer services to students and parents by organizing and staffing College Goal Sunday each year.
 - Develop a back-up plan for funding in the event outside support for College Goal Sunday is withdrawn or reduced
 - Review locations annually to ensure the College Goal activity focuses on the target audience

Communication

1. Improve communication with current and potential members.
 - Using the website and list serve to maximum functionality
 - provide historical information
 - committee descriptions
 - committee reports and meeting minutes (required)
 - expand to include User's Guides for certain committees
 - Conference
 - Scholarship
 - Membership
 - Treasurer
 - Initiate in-person contacts, particularly to encourage participation in specific activities
 - Explore other avenues of contact
 - Review what is communicated, how, by whom and to whom
 - Review current website annually to ensure maximum functionality and minimal cost
2. Strive to serve *all* financial aid professionals in the state.
 - Provide trainings and other services that will address support staff needs, and encourage their supervisors to allow them to attend
 - Reach out repeatedly to all levels of aid administrators – don't give up when one attempt fails
 - Invite members of the leadership to make in-person visits to institutions with little or no past involvement to educate potential members on the various benefits of membership in NJASFAA
3. Explore ways to enhance NJASFAA's visibility with New Jersey's post-secondary institutions, high schools, legislators and others
 - Disseminate annual letter from NJASFAA President to College Presidents encouraging association support/participation by their staff
 - Provide more information on general federal and state financial aid-related topics
 - Bolster legislative advocacy (Federal and State)
 - Reestablish or create ties to other organizations such as NJACAC, EOF, NJ-NYACROA

Finances

1. Work to become financially self-sufficient through membership and conference fees and vendor support:
 - Continue to work with current vendors
 - Seek to engage new sources of support
 - Collection agencies, website vendors, technology companies, guarantors, etc.
 - Determine real cost of activities and services to NJASFAA (without outside funding and support)
 - Institute financial plan for investments
 - Consider alternative fee structure

2. Review current services and activities to ensure the NJASFAA mission is supported and the association works in an efficient and cost effective manner
 - Identify and prioritize essential services
 - Eliminate/redesign services and activities that are redundant or no longer necessary
 - Find ways for committees to work more efficiently, possibly by committees working together on specific goals

3. Explore using surplus funds (not reserves) to attract new members and provide services where a need is identified. Ideas to consider may include:
 - Offer a discounted membership to first-time participants
 - Provide enhancements to the website
 - Fund in-person outreach activities to potential members and potential leaders

4. Develop a plan of action to encourage contributions to the Scholarship Fund
 - Regular reporting to the membership on scholarship activities and fundraising efforts

Volunteerism

1. Continue to evaluate the effectiveness and need for all currently functioning committees and activities, in an effort to operate more efficiently
 - Educate members of each committee's purpose and potential time commitment involved for participation
 - Tap into talents of current members to accomplish specific activities (PR photos, fund raising, marketing)

2. Welcome and mentor new members and volunteers.
 - Recognize that "committee" typically means more than one or two people
 - Encourage committees to expand to 3 or more members, giving new volunteers a chance to learn and participate, where appropriate
 - Find new ways to reach out to invite participation
 - Target potential members

3. Develop and advertise network of 'subject experts' available for questions, advice

4. Ensure the membership database is up-to-date and accurate

Adopted 12/13/10