

ILASFAA

Annual Conference



The Westin Chicago Lombard
Lombard, IL
March 9 – 11, 2026

Welcome to the

2026 ILASFAA Annual Conference!

Greetings, ILASFAA Conference Attendees...

Welcome to Lombard, Illinois — where, for the next few days, our world looks a little different... maybe even a little Stranger.

As we are gathering for this year's conference, I want to begin by saying thank you. Thank you for showing up, thank you for leaning in, and thank you for continuing to do the extraordinary work you do every day.

There is no denying it — this past year has stretched us. From constantly shifting regulations to implementing the complexities of the One Big Beautiful Bill, many of us have felt like our compass was spinning, our flashlights flickering, and the vines of confusion tightening around us at every turn. And yet... here you stand. Still fighting, still supporting your students, still pushing forward.

That is what makes the financial aid community so remarkable. Like the best teams facing the strangest of circumstances, we stick together. We share knowledge, we pass the light when someone's is growing dim, and we pull each other out when things get overwhelming. Together, we make the impossible a little more possible. Together, we rewrite the ending.

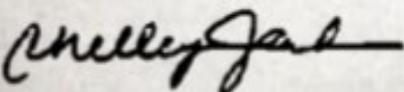
I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Executive Board, committee chairs, and volunteers. They are the real-life heroes behind the scenes — the ones who make sure the gates stay closed, the torches stay lit, and the path forward stays clear. This conference would not exist without them.

My hope for you over the next few days is simple: Learn something new. Connect with someone new. Refill your energy, your passion, and your sense of purpose. And most importantly — have an awesome conference experience.

And if you have never been involved with ILASFAA beyond attending... well, consider this your sign. Step out of the shadows. Join a committee. Volunteer. Share your voice. We want you on our team — and your involvement keeps our community strong enough to face whatever 'otherworldly' challenges come next.

Here's to a great conference... And remember in ILASFAA, no one walks through the Upside Down alone.

With gratitude,



Chelley Jackson
ILASFAA President 2025-2026



Welcome to the 2026 ILASFAA Annual Conference!

Mission

ILASFAA is a professional organization of student financial aid administrators representing institutions, supporters, and state agency personnel, engaged in or concerned with the ethical administration and/or support of student financial aid. Our mission is to provide quality training, professional development, networking opportunities, and effective communications for our membership. Our organization acts as an advocate for students, their families, and all post-secondary institutions.

To achieve the ILASFAA mission, four strategic areas have been identified:

- Training & Professional Development
- Networking & Communications
- Advocacy & Legislative Issues
- Association Infrastructure

Diversity Statement

ILASFAA fosters a transformative experience for its members that honors diversity and inclusion. We recognize a common unity that anchors and enlivens our commitment to inclusion and creates brave spaces for dialogue to happen. We provide quality training, promote professional development, offer networking opportunities and cultivate effective communication to all members. We hold ourselves accountable to this intentional vision through fostering an integrated community, and recognizing that each member of our organization brings their own unique perspectives, strengths and critical inquiries to serve our mission. We will continuously evaluate our commitment to diversity through conscious engagement within the communities we serve, and will promote a culture of diversity and inclusion by encouraging involvement and access.

Important Conference Details

LOST YOUR SIGNAL IN THE UPSIDE DOWN?

Use the Wi-Fi details below to reconnect to our dimension. Don't let Demogorgons (or dead zones) slow you down—lock in your connection and keep the adventure going.

Network: WestinMeetingRooms
Password: ilasfaa26

ILASFAA CONNECTION APP

Friends don't let friends miss out—so y'all better grab the **ILASFAA Connection app** (don't worry, it's totally free... no Demogorgons included). Once you download it, just search for the **2026 ILASFAA Annual Conference** and boom—you're in. No secret codes required. Stay in the loop, avoid getting lost in the Upside Down, and make the most of every moment at the conference. Because in this world... knowledge is power.

EXHIBITORS

Strange things are afoot! ILASFAA exhibitors will be in the house Monday and Tuesday throughout the conference. Step out of the Upside Down, tap into their expertise, and spark some next-level conversations.

New to ILASFAA—or Looking to Do More?

Be sure to check out **The Right Side Up: Finding Clarity and Opportunity in Your Career** on **Monday at 1:15 pm in Room IJ**. This session will break down how to get involved with ILASFAA through volunteering and committees. Discover how engagement can flip your perspective and help you step into the **Right Side Up** through learning, connection, and community.

MONDAY IS 80's WEAR

We invite everyone to show off their best 1980s-inspired outfits at the conference. Whether you're rocking neon colors, denim jackets, bold prints, or big accessories, we want to see your throwback style shine. Channel your inner 80s icon, or favorite Stranger Things character, and join us for a totally rad, nostalgic good time!

MONDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Get ready for an exciting evening! If you signed up to participate in the Stranger Things Scavenger Hunt, meet in the back of the ballroom at 7:30 PM with your teammates to begin your adventure into the Upside Down.

TUESDAY IS ILASFAA SPIRIT DAY!

Wear your ILASFAA spirit wear on Tuesday, March 10th. If you don't have any ILASFAA gear yet, check out our ILASFAA web-store or check out more information at the ILASFAA booth.

TUESDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

After the conference wraps up, you're free to enjoy dinner on your own. Whether you want to check out some local spots with new friends or kick back and relax with a meal on your own, it's totally up to you. After dinner we're inviting everyone to join in on Music Bingo with Game Night Live starting at 7:30 PM in the ballroom. Test your knowledge and have a little friendly competition with your fellow attendees. It's bound to be a good time!

WEDNESDAY IS SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY!

Don't forget to wear your school swag on Wednesday, March 11th! It's the last day of the conference, so it's the perfect time to show off your school spirit!

ILASFAA Conference Charity

ILASFAA's basket raffle is back to support a great cause, along with a 50/50 drawing! Get your tickets, try your luck, and you might just wrangle one of those amazing baskets or some cash! Cash only, please.

Raffle Ticket Prices

\$5 for 6 tickets

\$10 for 14 tickets

\$20 for 30 tickets

Tickets will be on sale throughout the conference, so be sure to grab yours! We'll announce the winners on Wednesday morning. Don't worry if you can't be there—you just need to give your ticket to a co-worker who'll be sticking around to pick up your prize for you.

Baskets will be located throughout the conference at the Vendors tables. Be sure to view them all. 50/50 raffle will be found at the ILASFAA table.

All proceeds from the ticket sales will go to **The Gloria J. Taylor Foundation**. The GJTF is dedicated to nurturing dignity, self-worth, and productive self-image in youth. They aid to provide comprehensive, caring services that emphasize educational support, self-awareness, and community unity. The GJTF believes that empowering young people today builds safe, thriving communities tomorrow. To learn more about the Gloria J. Taylor Foundation, please visit their website at <https://gjtf.org>.



The Gloria J. Taylor Foundation

2025-26 ILASFAA Executive Board Members

CHELLEY JACKSON, President, Illinois State University

DAWN KAMPHAUS, President Elect, Parkland College

BAMBIE ROY, Past President, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

HEIDI SCHMIDT, Executive Vice President, Illinois State University

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LACI ENGELBRECHT, Vice President-Senior Public Institutions,
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AMANDA BELLINO, Vice President-Proprietary Institutions, DeVry University

MICHELLE STANLEY, Secretary, Southeastern Illinois College

NATHAN EATON, Treasurer, Illinois State University

KELLY OWENS, Past Treasurer, Elgin Community College

ERIN HARRISON, Treasurer Elect, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign

MARY GREENWOOD, Northern Regional Coordinator,
Waubensee Community College

LAUREN MARTIN, Chicago Regional Coordinator, DePaul University

AMBER RIVERS, Southern Regional Coordinator,
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

SAM NELSON, Ex-Officio, Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Meals

Monday, March 9th

- **Lunch** – Burger Bar Buffet
 - Grilled Burgers and Boneless Chicken Breast with Brioche Buns
 - Cheddar and Swiss Cheese, Lettuce, Tomatoes, Red Onions, Relish, Pickles, Grilled Onions, Ketchup, Mustard, Mayonnaise.
 - Creamy American Coleslaw, Classic Red Skin Potato Salad, French Fries
 - Cookies and Brownies

- **Dinner** – Plated Dinner
 - Garlic Rosemary Custom Cut of Chicken with Roasted Shallot Demi-Glace, Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes and Westin Vegetable Medley
 - Spinach Salad with Cucumbers, Strawberries, Feta and Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing
 - Dinner Rolls and Sweet Butter
 - Eli's Chocolate Chip Cheesecake with Whipped Cream and Strawberries

Tuesday, March 10th

- **Breakfast** – Hot Breakfast Buffet
 - Breakfast Pastries, Seasonal Fruit
 - Scrambled Eggs, Bacon and Pork Sausage, Hash Brown Potato Triangles, Orange Juice

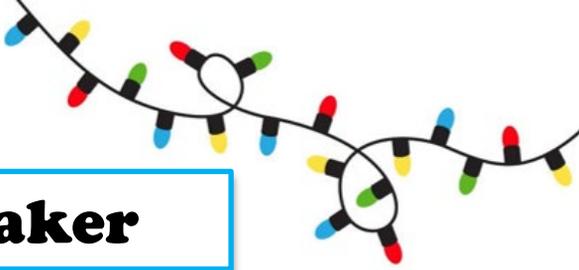
- **Lunch** – Italian Buffet
 - Deconstructed Caesar Salad with Croutons, Parmesan Cheese and Creamy Caesar Dressing
 - Italian Sausage with Peppers and Onions
 - Chicken Breast Piccata with Lemon, Capers and Parsley
 - Penne Pasta served with Marinara, Bolognese and Alfredo Sauce on the Side
 - Garlic Bread Sticks
 - Tiramisu

- **Dinner** - On Your Own
 - Please visit the ILASFAA website/app to view the restaurants within the area

Wednesday, March 11th

- **Brunch**
 - Seasonal Fruit
 - Scrambled Eggs and Apple Chicken Sausage
 - Crispy Cube Breakfast Potatoes with Caramelized Onions
 - Belgian Waffles with Maple Syrup and Butter
 - Hoffmeister Ham with Cornbread and Honey-Mustard Sauce
 - Assorted Dessert Bars
 - Orange Juice

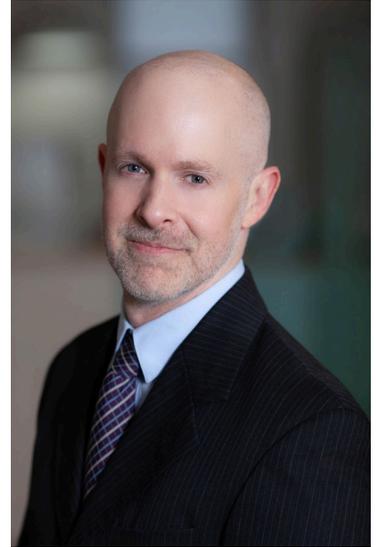




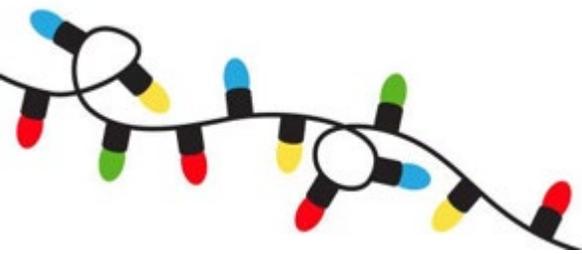
Keynote Speaker

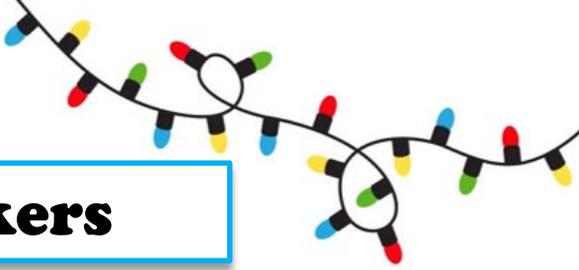
Zack Goodwin, Marquette University Keynote Speaker

Zack discovered a career in the financial aid profession by accident, as many of us do, but ultimately, it made sense that it was a perfect career fit. Growing up low-income, he was a recipient of significant financial aid to attend high school, and similarly, including the Pell Grant, to attend college. These educational experiences were life-changing and would have been out of reach without aid. He believes in the power of financial aid to help transform the lives of students of all backgrounds, and has loved being able to support this transformation while serving in a variety of roles over his thirty-year career.



In 2025, this power felt challenged by the wave of anti-diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility actions spreading nationally. Schools everywhere, including his own, were walking back funds intended to create equity by supporting minoritized students. In an effort to continue to support these students, he sought politically neutral means, such as examining economic impacts on different populations and considering professional judgment and our bread and butter for need-based aid: need analysis. Need analysis was a tool we could always rely on for creating equity...or was it? The more he explored it, the more he saw that it was often a tool that perpetuated inequity, rather than fostering it. If reframed, could it support aid programs that not only create equity, but are tools for social justice? Maybe it's time to turn need analysis upside down.





Guest Speakers

Rachel Rotunda, Director of Government Relations, NASFAA



Rachel contributes to NASFAA's policy and advocacy efforts, representing the association before congressional members and staff and working to enhance the advocacy capacity of its members. Prior to joining NASFAA, Rachel worked in higher education policy analysis and research in Washington, D.C., and began her career in higher education as a high school college advisor assisting low-income and first-generation students through the college application and financial aid process.



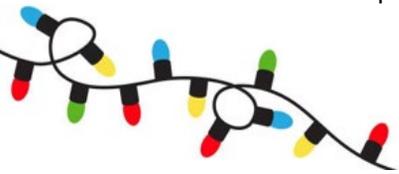
**Emily Haynam, University of Missouri
Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
(MASFAA)**

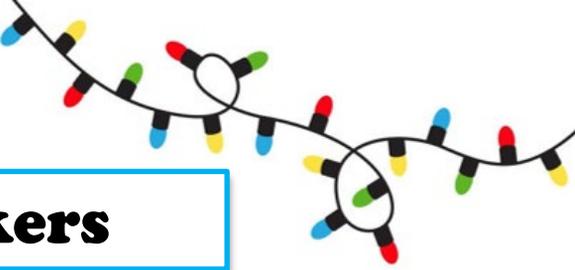
Emily Haynam (pronounced “Hey-numb”) is serving as MASFAA’s President. With nearly two decades in higher education—12 of those years dedicated to financial aid—Emily brings a wealth of experience, perspective, and passion to the profession. Before finding her true calling in student financial aid, she built her career in NCAA Division I athletics compliance. But after attending the MASFAA Summer Institute, she discovered something she couldn’t walk away from: the collegiality, mentorship, and community that define financial aid. That moment ignited a career of service, and she has since held numerous volunteer roles across three MASFAA states as well as on the regional board.

Currently, Emily serves as Executive Director of Student Financial Aid at the University of Missouri, where she has led for six years. Prior to Mizzou, she advanced student success at The Ohio State University and Purdue Fort Wayne in financial aid, and at Youngstown State University, Saint Peter’s College, and the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference in athletics.

Emily is a proud alumna of The Ohio State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Journalism and competed as a two-sport student-athlete in basketball and soccer. She later completed her MBA at Saint Peter’s College, strengthening the leadership and strategic skills that continue to guide her today. Off campus, Emily is deeply rooted in her values of teamwork, family, and joy. She and her spouse of 10 years share their home with three very spoiled cats and she finds balance on the golf course, out on the water in a kayak, or gathered with friends around a fire pit.

Emily’s journey is a testament to the power of community, resilience, and passion for helping students. She believes in the transformative role of financial aid not just in opening doors, but in shaping futures—and she’s honored to help lead MASFAA forward.





Guest Speakers

Eric Zarnikow, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Eric Zarnikow is Executive Director of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the state's college access and financial aid agency. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families –giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state's scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, including the state's flagship Monetary Award Program, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality.

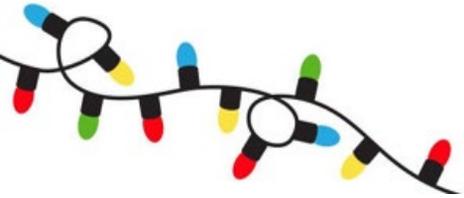
Eric is a former Associate Administrator at the U.S. Small Business Administration, where he led the office of Capital Access, responsible for all the agency's programs and operations concerning financial assistance to small businesses, 800 employees and a \$90 billion loan and investment portfolio. Prior to his work with the SBA, Eric spent over 25 years in the private sector, including serving as Senior Vice President, Chief Risk Officer and Treasurer at ServiceMaster. Eric serves on several commissions and is a former trustee of The College Board. A certified public accountant, Eric received his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and MBA from Drake University.

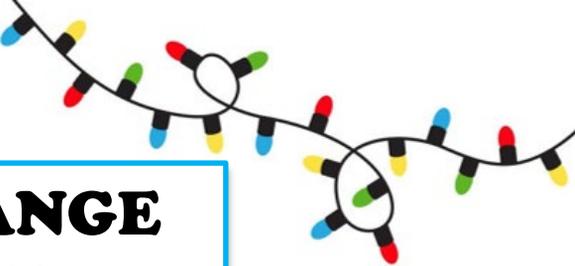
Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler is the Managing Director of Program Services and Compliance at the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), where she oversees the administration of ISAC's gift assistance programs. She joined ISAC in 2021 as the Director of Special Projects and Program Services, in which she led the agency's strategic planning efforts and new program development. Prior to her time at ISAC, she worked at the Chicago Urban League as the Executive Director of the Research and Policy Center and at Roosevelt University for the Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy and the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs. Her career has been spent developing research, programs, and policy in the following areas: criminal justice, education, fair and affordable housing, mental health, public health, substance use, and wealth/asset-building. Schmitz-Bechteler has her bachelor's degree in Administration and Organizational Leadership from Roosevelt University, her Master of Arts in Social Service Administration from University of Chicago, and her PhD in Social Work from University of Illinois at Chicago.

Katharine Gricevich, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Katharine Gricevich is the Director of Government Relations and legislative liaison for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). She previously worked as a legislative analyst for the Illinois General Assembly on education and local government issues.





MASFAA EXCHANGE PARTICIPANT

Brenda Burke , Kent State University MASFAA Exchange Participant

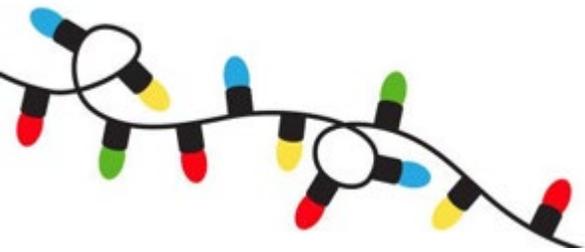
Brenda Burke serves as the Associate Vice President of Student Financial Aid at Kent State University. She has worked 39-years in the financial aid profession. Her background encompasses work and leadership experience in the proprietary, 2-year public, and 4- year public sectors at various institutions in Virginia, Utah, and Ohio.



Brenda is the President-elect of the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) , the former chair of the 2023 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) conference mentor task force, former president of the Virginia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (VASFAA), former vice president of the Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SASFAA), and instructor for both the SASFAA New Aid Officers workshop and the Rocky Mountain Association of Student Financial Aid Administrator's (RMASFAA) Summer Institute. She has volunteered and served on many state, regional, and national committees.

Brenda received her bachelor of business administration degree with a minor in math from Radford University and her master of higher education administration from Old Dominion University.

When Brenda is not doing all things related to financial aid and scholarships, she enjoys her time gardening, reading, taking day trips, and spending time with her dog Lola.



General Sessions

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Date, Time & Location/Room
<p>Eric Zarnikow, Executive Director; Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler, Managing Director, Program Services & Compliance; Katharine Gricevich, Director, Government Relations</p>	<p>ISAC Update ISAC is tuning in from the Upside Down to deliver a transmission on recent agency operations — decoding the strange signals we’ve intercepted, the challenges we have overcome and revealing what shadows (and opportunities) lie ahead on the road before us.</p>	<p>Tuesday 8:30 am – 9:30 am EF/Ballroom</p>
<p>Emily Haynam, University of Missouri</p>	<p>MASFAA Update Please join MASFAA President Emily Haynam from the University of Missouri as she gives the MASFAA update. This session will provide news and information about current and upcoming events.</p>	<p>Tuesday 11:00 am – 11:30 am EF/Ballroom</p>
<p>Zack Goodwin, Marquette University</p>	<p>Keynote Speaker – The 9th Episode Historically, progress toward social justice and access to higher education has been made together and hand-in-hand. But in the last year, a <i>Landslide</i> of challenges and trauma from the past has undone this progress. As financial aid professionals do when faced with such monsters, each of us is <i>The Trooper</i>, always <i>Running Up That Hill</i>. But what we are fighting is something much bigger than just monsters. Even if we vanquish them, the very financial aid system of need analysis in which we work is broken and needs to be vanquished, too. As financial aid professionals, we are faced with a pivotal choice – will we stand together to find ways to fight the broken system as <i>Heroes</i>, or go our <i>Separate Ways</i>? Attend, and choose.</p>	<p>Tuesday 12:45 pm – 1:45 pm EF/Ballroom</p>
<p>Rachel Rotunda (Virtual), NASFAA</p>	<p>NASFAA – Inside the Beltway/Federal Update This NASFAA Federal Update will provide an overview of the latest happenings in Washington, including a high-level landscape of the current political climate in D.C., focusing on federal financial aid policy and how it has impacted students and institutions in recent years. Topics include recent legislative and regulatory activity, reauthorization proposals, and predictions for how student aid funding will fare in upcoming budget negotiations. Movement within the Department of Education concerning negotiated rulemaking and updates from Federal Student Aid (FSA) will also be discussed. The session will also provide an overview of NASFAA-led projects, services, and advocacy efforts.</p>	<p>Wednesday 10 am – 11 am EF/Ballroom</p>



Monday, March 9th



Time	Session	Location/Room
8:00 am – 11:30 am	Exhibitor Set-Up	
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Registration Open	
8:30 am – 11:00 am	Pre-Conference NASFAA Credentials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packaging & Aid Notification • Cost of Attendance 	GH IJ
11:30 am – 5:00 pm	Exhibit Area Open	
11:30 am – 1:00 pm	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President’s Welcome – Chelley Jackson • Vendor Introductions • Lunch 	EF/Ballroom
1:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reframing Self-Care: Building a Lifestyle That Empowers You to Serve Others • PLUS Loans: Entering the Upside Down • AI in Financial Aid: What Works, What Doesn’t, & What Comes Next • The RightSide Up: Finding Clarity & Opportunity in Your Career 	GH AB CD IJ
2:15 pm – 2:45 pm	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
2:45 pm – 3:45 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAC: Program Overview • Financial Aid Jeopardy • The Upside Down of Federal PLUS: Secrets from the Lender List Lab • R2T4 Panel • Illinois State Treasurers Office: Helping Students & Families Plan for College 	IJ GH EF/Ballroom CD AB
3:45 pm – 4:00 pm	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Birds of a Feather (by Role) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors, Managers, and/or People Leaders • Counseling/Front Line Service • Scholarships • Compliance/Training • Fiscal/Data and Systems • Loan Coordinators 	GH IJ A B C D
5:45 pm – 7:00 pm	General Session: Dinner & Awards	EF/Ballroom
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm	Scavenger Hunt, Games & Cash Bar	EF/Ballroom

Tuesday, March 10th



Time	Session	Location/Room
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration Desk Open	
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Breakfast	
9:00 am – 4:15 pm	Exhibitor Area Open	
8:30 am – 9:30 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illinois Student Assistance Commission 	EF/Ballroom
9:30 am – 9:45 am	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
9:45 am – 10:45 am	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beyond Loans & Limits: Financial Aid Administration in the Upside Down Through the Portal: FAFSA Simplification Then and Now Cultivating the Next Generation of Leaders That Was Due When? The Importance of an Operational Calendar Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs 	EF/Ballroom GH IJ AB CD
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
11:00 am – 11:30 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASFAA Update – Emily Haynam (University of Missouri) 	EF/Ballroom
11:30 am – 12:45 pm	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch Business Meeting Vendor Introductions 	EF/Ballroom
12:45 pm – 1:45 pm	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The 9th Episode” Keynote Speaker Zack Goodwin, Marquette University 	EF/Ballroom
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strange Happenings: How to be a Positive Parent or Guardian through the Financial Aid Process Staff Churn: Dealing w/Planned & Unexpected Staff Turnover StudentCents – Fraud Education and Prevention ISAC: Financial Aid Completion Initiative Financial Aid Data and Dashboards 	GH AB IJ CD EF/Ballroom

Tuesday, March 10th



Time	Session	Location/Room
3:00 pm – 3:15 pm	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
3:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Interest Sessions	
	• Using Data to Build an Equity-Minded Aid Program	AB
	• Unlock the Curiosity Door to the Alternative Application: A Review of the 2026-27 Alternative Application Process	CD
	• P&P - More Fun than D&D!	GH
	• You Want Me to Talk to Who? Advocacy & You	IJ
4:15 pm – 4:30 pm	Break / Exhibitor Visit	
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	System Meetings	
	• Campus Solutions / PeopleSoft	IJ
	• Banner	CD
	• Colleague	EF/Ballroom
	• Homegrown/Other Not Listed	GH
	• PowerFAIDS / Jenzabar	AB
5:30 pm	Dinner on your Own	
7:30 pm	Evening Entertainment –Music Bingo with Game Night Live & Cash Bar	EF/Ballroom

Wednesday, March 11th



Time	Session	Location/Room
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration Desk Open	
	Sector Meeting	
	• Senior Public Institutions	GH
8:30 am – 9:30 am	• Private Institutions	IJ
	• Community Colleges	CD
	• Health Professions	A
	• Proprietary Institutions	B
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Brunch Buffet/Break	EF/Ballroom
10:00 am – 11:00 am	General Session	
	• NASFAA Inside the Beltway (Virtual): Rachel Rotunda	EF/Ballroom
11:15 am - 12:00 pm	General Session	
	• Raffle Winners	EF/Ballroom
	• Passing the Gavel	
	• Sneak Peak to ILASFAA 2027 Conference	

Monday, March 9th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
<p>Jill Wohrley, Illinois Valley Community College</p> <p>Laci Engelbrecht, University of Illinois- Springfield</p>	<p>Pre-Conference NASFAA Credential – Packaging & Aid Notification</p> <p>You will learn the guidelines schools follow to combine various types of Title IV and non-Title IV aid from federal, state, institutional, and private entities, to create award packages designed to help meet the financial need of college students. In addition to knowing about program definitions and the guidelines for packaging and notifying students about their aid, you also will understand the concept of overawards, and how to prevent and resolve them, as well as aid appeal policies and procedures.</p>
<p>Janet Haynes, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign</p> <p>Sherry Schonauer, ISAC</p>	<p>Pre-Conference NASFAA Credential – Cost of Attendance</p> <p>Learn the principles and purposes of the student budget construction process, how to build student budgets, the various allowable budget components and restrictions for certain categories of students.</p>
<p>Dada Ibrahimovic, ISAC</p>	<p>Reframing Self-Care: Building a Lifestyle That Empowers You to Serve Others</p> <p>College access professionals play a vital role in guiding students through one of the most transformative periods of their lives. However, the work often comes with high demands, exposure to secondary trauma from students’ challenges, and the risk of burnout. These stressors can make it difficult to maintain balance and sustain the energy needed to continue making a difference. In this session, we’ll explore why self-care is essential for college access professionals and how to build a lifestyle that supports both your personal and professional well-being.</p>
<p>Nathan Eaton, Illinois State University</p>	<p>PLUS Loans: Entering the Upside Down</p> <p>This Birds of a Feather session will be open discussion for attendees to discuss how their institutions are approaching the PLUS Loan Changes. Please bring questions and discussion topics with you, this is an open discussion session, no formal presentation will be given.</p>
<p>Eddie Salazar, Peach</p>	<p>AI in Financial Aid: What Works, What Doesn’t, and What Comes Next</p> <p>Artificial intelligence is rapidly making its way into financial aid offices, but not all AI tools are created equal. In this session, we’ll explore how financial aid professionals are using AI today, where generic AI tools fall short, and why purpose-built, regulation-informed AI is critical for navigating complex student scenarios. We’ll discuss the importance of data security, FERPA considerations, and regulatory grounding, and invite participants to share their own experiences, questions, and concerns about adopting AI responsibly in financial aid operations.</p>

Monday, March 9th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
ILASFAA Membership & Engagement Committee	<p>The Right Side Up: Finding Clarity and Opportunity in Your Career</p> <p>Working in financial aid can sometimes feel like navigating the Upside Down—policies shifting, challenges popping up out of nowhere, and a constant sense that you’re juggling forces from another dimension. In this interactive session, we’ll demystify what it really takes to get involved—whether that means volunteering for the first time, joining a committee, participating in events, or providing your feedback! We’ll help you flip the perspective and step into the Right Side Up, by focusing on learning, community, and connection through engagement with ILASFAA.</p> <p>Explore how you can use ILASFAA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Navigate your journey by understanding pathways to participation and leadership• Build your own “Hawkins crew” of mentors, allies, and professional support• Learn more about the Stranger Things this conference has to offer• No walkie-talkies required! You will have the chance to network with others, engage in some friendly competition, and maybe even win a prize <p>ILASFAA can be a powerful resource in any stage of your journey—connecting you with community, leadership pathways, and professional development that can help you level up.</p>
Hannah Castellanos, ISAC	<p>ISAC Operational Update and Program News Description</p> <p>Sometimes the world of financial aid feels a little topsy-turvy! Join Hannah Castellanos from ISAC for this session to help make sense of what is shifting. This session will include a high-level operational update on ISAC program statuses, timely program news, and important reminders to help institutions navigate the year with clarity and confidence.</p>
Mark Riggs, Monogram Student Lending	<p>Financial Aid Jeopardy</p> <p>“Get ready to buzz in! Financial Aid Jeopardy is a fast-paced, interactive session designed to test your knowledge and spark some laughs. Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to the field, you'll enjoy this engaging refresher packed with useful insights. Categories include FAFSA, Verification, Student Loans, Potpourri, and more. Attendees will be split into teams to compete for bragging rights — and maybe even a prize. Come join the fun and see if your team can take home the win!”</p>

Monday, March 9th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
<p>Katie Mueller, RevITek Christina Rose, College Ave</p> <p>Nathan Eaton, Illinois State University Marlon Jones, University of St. Francis Laura Rogers, The University of Chicago Elyse Weller, Southern Illinois University</p>	<p>The Upside Down of Federal PLUS: Secrets from the Lender List Lab Something strange is happening in the world of student lending. The familiar rules are shifting, and schools everywhere are discovering that their Lender Lists may hold more power than they realized. In this session, a brave panel of financial aid veterans will guide you through the mysterious corridors of compliance, criteria, and communication—helping you navigate the ever-changing landscape without getting lost in the fog. From the shadowy corners of regulatory updates to the eerie glow of transparency and trust, our experts will share real-world tactics to keep your institution grounded while others vanish into confusion. You'll also hear from industry insiders who will lift the curtain on the myths surrounding credit and underwriting—revealing what's real, what's rumor, and what's hiding just beneath the surface. Join us if you dare to explore the unknown, uncover hidden insights, and bring balance to your own financial aid dimension.</p>
<p>Stacey Schilling, Beck School of Practical Nursing Maureen Amos, Northeastern Illinois University Courtney Ruffatti, Illinois State University Nancy Perryman, Saint Francis Medical Center College of Nursing; Jason Ramsey, Southern Illinois University</p>	<p>R2T4 Panel Join a scrappy crew of Hawkins-worthy financial aid pros as they swap battle stories, best practices, and hard-won wisdom about navigating the mysteries and monsters of Return of Title IV processing.</p>
<p>Chloe Lilliston and Maggie Owen, Office of the Illinois State Treasurer</p>	<p>Illinois State Treasurers Office: Helping Students & Families Plan for College Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs has created programs that begin from the moment a child is born through their retirement. The session will share tools and resources that support students with how they pay for continued education, teach students how to manage money responsibly to build a safety net, show students options for student borrowing, and emphasize that it is never too late to start saving through a 529 account. The office has nationally recognized Bright Directions and Bright Start programs along with initiatives such as the First Steps program for new parents. Additionally, the IL ABLE program supports students with disabilities and preserves their ability to save without losing their federal benefits. Treasurer Frerichs is also working on a new program, the Student Empowerment Fund, to offer Illinois students additional educational loan options.</p>

Monday, March 9th

Session Descriptions



Birds of a Feather (by Role)

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Come meet with ILASFAA colleagues within your sector to network and discuss common financial aid issues you are experiencing at your institutions.

Directors, Managers, and/or People Leaders – Room GH

For directors and financial aid leaders, the landscape can feel as unpredictable as the Upside Down. Policy shifts, staffing challenges, and rising student needs demand leadership that is steady, strategic, and adaptable. This session brings together experienced voices to explore how leaders can guide their teams through change, strengthen office culture, and make confident decisions under pressure. We'll discuss approaches to crisis management, staff development, and long-term planning while balancing compliance and student service. Attendees will leave with practical leadership tools and a renewed framework for navigating complexity, protecting their teams, and keeping their mission firmly grounded in student success.

Counseling/Front Line Service – Room IJ

Working financial aid front lines can feel like standing between students and the Upside Down. Every day brings urgent questions, emotional moments, and complicated systems that need a calm, steady guide. This session dives into the realities of front-line financial counseling, where professionals act as translators, problem-solvers, and protectors of student success. We'll share strategies for navigating high-stress interactions, decoding complex aid situations, and building trust when families feel overwhelmed. Attendees will leave with practical tools to strengthen communication, prevent burnout, and stay grounded while facing the unexpected. Because when the chaos hits, students need their own team of everyday heroes at the desk.

Scholarships – Room A

The scholarship universe can feel like the Upside Down: mysterious, overwhelming, and full of paths most people never see. This session helps participants map the terrain and uncover real opportunities hiding in plain sight. We'll explore where to find legitimate scholarships, how to organize applications, and what selection committees are really looking for. Attendees will leave with a practical game plan to help students break through the noise, avoid common traps, and unlock funding that makes college more possible. No supernatural powers required, just the right strategy.

Monday, March 9th

Session Descriptions



Birds of a Feather (by Role)

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Come meet with ILASFAA colleagues within your sector to network and discuss common financial aid issues you are experiencing at your institutions.

Compliance/Training – Room B

Financial aid regulations can feel like a hidden dimension filled with shifting rules, fine print, and high stakes. This session focuses on strengthening training practices and reinforcing compliance knowledge so teams can navigate federal and state requirements with confidence. We'll break down key updates, highlight common risk areas, and share practical approaches to building a culture of accountability and continuous learning. Attendees will leave with strategies to keep staff informed, audit-ready, and aligned, ensuring their office stays grounded in compliance even when the regulatory landscape feels unpredictable.

Fiscal/Data and Systems – Room C

Every great operation has a control room, and in financial aid, fiscal accuracy, clean data, and reliable systems keep the lights on. This session explores the infrastructure that powers compliant, efficient aid delivery. We'll dig into best practices for fiscal oversight, data integrity, and system management, along with strategies for troubleshooting when processes start to flicker. Attendees will gain practical insights into strengthening internal controls, improving reporting, and building resilient systems that support their office in any environment. Because when the backend runs smoothly, the entire mission stays on track.

Loan Coordinators – Room D

Loan coordinators operate at the crossroads of policy, precision, and student impact, where one crossed wire can send the whole signal scrambling. This session focuses on the evolving world of loan processing, from regulatory updates to operational best practices that keep everything transmitting clearly. We'll examine strategies for managing complex borrower situations, maintaining compliance, and streamlining workflows without losing the human connection students rely on. Attendees will leave with practical tools to strengthen accuracy, improve efficiency, and confidently guide borrowers through a system that can feel as strange as the Upside Down.

Tuesday, March 10th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
Michelle Trame, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Dawn Kamphaus, Parkland College Emily Haynam, University of Missouri	Beyond Loans and Limits: Financial Aid Administration in the Upside Down This panel will discuss how financial aid offices are preparing for campus wide changes related to OB3. Panelists will share how they are assessing impacts to current processes, staffing, training, and systems, including adjustments to packaging policies and preparations for potential increases in alternative loan borrowing. The conversation will also cover approaches to educating campus leadership and students, managing information requests from stakeholders, and communicating OB3 implications through websites and targeted outreach. Attendees will gain practical insights for navigating operational challenges and supporting their campus communities during this period of change.
Salma Uribe and Ana Moya, ISAC	Through the Portal: FAFSA Simplification Then and Now Through the Portal: FAFSA Simplification Then and Now” takes a look back at how the simplification process began and what the 2024–25 year looked like during its most challenging moments. The session will highlight some of the shifts, delays, and questions that shaped the experience for students and practitioners. It will then move into what people are noticing now, including general trends, common concerns, and the kinds of conversations happening with families today. The goal is to offer a space to reflect on how things have changed over time and what the field seems to be experiencing at this stage.
Kate Brabandt, College Aid Services, LLC	Cultivating the Next Generation of Leaders In times of uncertainty and upheaval, the ability to manage change effectively becomes crucial for individuals and organizations alike. This session aims to equip attendees with valuable insights, practical strategies, and a positive mindset to navigate through challenging transitions with resilience and adaptability. Through interactive discussions and experiential exercises, participants will gain the tools they need to thrive amidst change and uncertainty.
Tammy Harrison, Blue Icon	That Was Due When? The Importance of an Operational Calendar We've all been there: a missed deadline, bills being sent without notice, not knowing when grades will post so we can run SAP. But developing an operational calendar for financial aid-related functions can help you stay on top of these things like a boss. Learn the benefits of having an operational calendar, and discuss what to include and who to involve when creating your own.
Enrique Cabrera, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs	Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs This presentation highlights how the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs steps forward when challenges feel overwhelming — ensuring no Veteran faces their “Upside Down” alone.

Tuesday, March 10th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
Tim Marten, Millikin University	Strange Happenings: How to be a Positive Parent or Guardian through the Financial Aid Process Being a parent/guardian of a student applying to college and going through the financial aid process is strange. This session would focus on the do's and don't's of supporting a friend or family member through the process as a financial aid expert.
Tammy Harrison, Blue Icon	Staff Churn: Dealing with Planned and Unexpected Staff Turnover Staff churn is real. Planned exists, such as retirement, usually enable you to put together a transition plan and transfer knowledge prior to the departure. Unfortunately, other separations are unplanned due to a variety of reasons and can create disruptions without tools and resources in place. This training will explore reasons why people leave an institution and how the financial aid office can reduce and mitigate the negative impact of unplanned exits. We'll discuss best practices, techniques, and tasks you need to deal with turnover, onboarding, and training to support the office through the transition and help the new staff be successful.
Patrick McMeen, Colleen Zachman, Emily Irons, Charla Buchanan, CEFCU	StudentCents – Fraud Education and Prevention For years, CEFCU has led the charge in educating older adults about financial scams through targeted awareness seminars. However, the landscape of fraud is rapidly evolving—and so is its target audience. Today, one of the most vulnerable demographics is the 18–24-year-old age group, many of whom are served by ILASFAA members.
Nicole Boyd and Olivia Sanchez, ISAC	Financial Aid Completion Initiative This session will provide an update on financial aid completion in the State of Illinois and for an overview of the Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative, the free resource available only to high schools to help identify students who have and have not completed a financial aid application. Attendees will learn how to view your financial aid application completion data, opt-out form submissions, and tips for troubleshooting common issues.
Emily Haynam, University of Missouri	Financial Aid Data and Dashboards This session explores the financial aid data points that actually matter for day-to-day operations and long-term strategy. We'll cut through the noise to focus on the metrics financial aid administrators should be tracking—and why—across packaging, enrollment, compliance, and student outcomes. Participants will gain practical tips for building clear, actionable dashboards that tell a story, not just display numbers. Walk away with ideas for turning data into informed, strategic decisions that support both students and institutional goals.

Tuesday, March 10th

Session Descriptions



Presenter	Session Title & Description
Zack Goodwin, Marquette University	Using Data to Build an Equity-Minded Aid Program With the advent of many OB3 provisions, Pell Grant eligibility has been scaled back. Loan eligibility has been restricted. These changes may mean increased financial burdens for students and families. As much as schools with institutional aid programs may want to help, funds are not unlimited. How can they allocate aid in ways that ensure the students most in need receive it, beyond simply reviewing the federal need calculation? Here we will discuss considerations and some simple processes for making these determinations in order to build an aid program that targets the goals of student access, persistence, completion and future success
Krystal Sanchez, ISAC	Unlock the Curiosity Door to the Alternative Application: A Review of the 2026-27 Alternative Application Process “Why are you keeping this curiosity door locked?” — Dustin Henderson. Come learn about the changes built into the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid for the 2026-27 award year and discuss common student eligibility questions related to the application process.
Kate Brabandt, College Aid Services, LLC	P&P - More Fun than D&D! This session will cover developing and maintaining your school's Policies and Procedures (P&P) manual, including suggestions, feedback, resources, and planning of this document. We will dive into the requirements and provide recommendations for making your manual a reliable resource for your campus staff.
Katy Smith, Waubensee Community College Pat Ackerman, College of DuPage	You Want Me to Talk to Who? Advocacy & You Have you been wanting to reach out to someone on behalf of your students? Or maybe you have your representative's phone number on speed dial. Either way, we invite you to join us in conversation and collaboration as we talk about advocacy: what it is, who to talk to, what to talk about, and more. Our students, institutions, and profession need a voice more now than ever before. Let's build our advocacy toolkit together!
	System Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campus Solutions/PeopleSoft• Banner• Colleague• Homegrown/Other Not listed• PowerFAIDS/Jenzabar

Wednesday, March 11th

Session Descriptions



Sector Meetings 8:30 am – 9:30 am

Come meet with ILASFAA colleagues within your sector to network and discuss common financial aid issues you are experiencing at your institutions.

Sector	Location
Senior Public Institutions	Room: GH
Private Institutions	Room: IJ
Community Colleges	Room: CD
Health Professions	Room: A
Proprietary Institutions	Room: B

Lifetime Achievement Awards

2022-2023	2020-2021	2019-2020	2017-2018	2015-2016	2007-2008
Sue Swisher	Janet Ozuna Ida Brown	Paula Luff	Dan Mann	Mark Holysz	Orlo Austin

New Professional Awards

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2024-2025	Davon Maxey	2006-2007	Tim Wendt
2023-2024	Amber Rivers & Roberta Ferguson	2005-2006	Aimee Jimenez
	Alexis Alvarez	2004-2005	Marcia Wells
2022-2023	Krystle Riggle	2003-2004	Karen Belling
2021-2022	Melissa Sersland	2000-2001	Rhonda Cors
2020-2021	Daniel Matamoros	1999-2000	Michelle Stipp
2019-2020	Aesha Engeldinger	1998-1999	David Peterson
2014-2015	Andrew Viscariello	1997-1998	Lori Hall
2012-2013	Alex DeLonis	1996-1997	Pam Maciulewicz
2011-2012	Dawn Good	1995-1996	April Helm
2009-2010	Janelle Wade	1994-1995	Gary Rogers
2008-2009	Mary Brown	1993-1994	Brian Terry
2007-2008	Jamie Petersen	1992-1993	Marie Gumler
		1990-1991	Samuel Nelson

Following years not awarded:
2018-19, 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16,
2010-11, 2002-03, 2001-02, 1991-92



Sustained Service Award

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2023-2024	Dan Wellman	2002-2003	Nancy Calvert, Cheryl Warmann
2021-2022	Debbie Forrester		
2018-2019	Marcus SanMarino, Nancy Perryman	2001-2002	Janeen Decharinte, Tena Jones
2017-2018	Michelle Ortiz Wortel, Marchello Johnson	2000-2001	Joanna Dill, Colby Sellers
2016-2017	Ruth Pusich, Michelle Cornell, Samuel Nelson	1999-2000	Bob Anderson, Howard Florine
2015-2016	Jamie Petersen, Sherry Summary	1998-1999	Ann Acton, Dan Mann
2014-2015	Amanda Fijal, Karen Belling, Cheryl Howerton	1997-1998	Sally Floyd, Gary Rold, Herschel Wallace
2013-2014	Salinda "Jo" Branson	1996-1997	Dick Nelli, Donna Sobie, Mary Ann Watkins
2012-2013	Kim Eck, Michelle Stipp	1995-1996	Francois Hajduk, William Bushaw, Marsha Weiss
2010-2011	Paula Luff		
2009-2010	Joanna Dye		
2008-2009	Michelle Trame, Mary Shaw	1994-1995	Pamela Britton, Jone Zieren
2007-2008	Jana Albrecht, Maureen Amos, Janet Ingargiola	1993-1994	Bruce Foote, Donna Peltz
2006-2007	Mark Holysz, Terri Hare, Doug Carlson	1992-1993	Richard Steudel, Pamela Wagener, Katherine Edmunds
2005-2006	Sue Swisher, John Jennetten	1991-1992	James Heeren, David Sprenkle, Loretta Franklin
2004-2005	Karen LeVeque-Szawara, Janet Ozuna	1990-1991	John Flynn, Robert Clement,
2003-2004	Eric Weems, Kathy Facenda, Jack Lyons		Charles Deacon Jones

Following years not awarded:
2022-23, 2020-21,
2019-20, 2011-12



Meritorious Service Award

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2024-2025	Alexiss Underwood	2008-2009	Nancy Calvert
2023-2024	Bambi Roy	2007-2008	Chris Petersen
2022-2023	Chelley Jackson	2006-2007	Bruce Foote
	Nathan Eaton	2005-2006	Larry Matejka
2021-2022	Janet Ingargiola	2004-2005	J. Robert Barr
	Chelley Jackson	2003-2004	Bill Bushaw
	Nicole Jennings,	1999-2000	Dan Mann
2019-2020	Dawn Kamphaus,	1998-1999	Dallas Martin
	Bambi Roy	1997-1998	Vicki Shipley
2018-2019	Karen LeVeque-Szawara	1996-1997	Rebecca Waltrip
2017-2018	Katherine Gricevich	1995-1996	Senator Paul Simon
2015-2016	Kim Eck	1994-1995	Donna Sobie
2014-2015	Susan Swisher	1993-1994	Sally Floyd
2013-2014	Jamie Malone	1992-1993	Ann Acton
2012-2013	Paula Luff	1991-1992	Orio Austin
2011-2012	Michelle Trame	1990-1991	Pamela Britton
	Pam Lytel,		
2010-2011	Mary Shaw,		
	Walter O'Neill		

Following years not awarded:
2022-21, 2016-17, 2009-10,
2002-03, 2001-02, 2000-01



President's Award

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2024-2025	Heidi Schmidt	2001-2002	Nancy Calvert
2023-2024	Nathan Eaton	2000-2001	Michelle Trame
2022-2023	Salinda Jo Branson	1999-2000	Lori Hall
2021-2022	Kelly Owens	1998-1999	Bob Anderson
2020-2021	Elyse Weller	1997-1998	Donna Peltz
2019-2020	Mary Shaw	1996-1997	Sharon Sweeney
2018-2019	Kim Eck	1995-1996	Joanna Dill
2017-2018	Aesha Engeldinger	1994-1995	Dan Mann
2016-2017	Marcus Szymanoski	1993-1994	Donna Sobie
2015-2016	Pam Lytel	1992-1993	Howard Florine
2014-2015	Samuel Nelson	1991-1992	Herschel Wallace
2013-2014	Jamie Petersen	1990-1991	Jone Zieren
2012-2013	Marchello Johnson	1989-1990	Francois Hajduk
2011-2012	Cheryl Howerton	1988-1999	Rich Stuedel
2010-2011	Mark Holysz	1987-1988	John Flynn
2009-2010	Jana Albrecht	1986-1987	Nancy Donley
2008-2009	Mary Shaw	1985-1986	John Jenetten
2007-2008	Michelle Trame	1984-1985	Greg Miller
2006-2007	Janet Ingargiola	1983-1984	B. Ann Hageman
2005-2006	Donna Sobie	1982-1983	Dennis Wentworth
2004-2005	Susan Swisher	1981-1982	Steve Bellin
2003-2004	Terri Hare		



Thank You for Your Service!

Awards & Recognition

Bambie Roy, Chair

Chelley Jackson
Dawn Kamphaus
Elyse Weller

Conference Facilities

Michelle Stipp, Co-Chair

Christina Rose, Co-Chair

Lindsay Anderson
Meghan Chrum
Marion Jones
Garth Klos
Jenna Roecker
Angela Salazar
Heidi Schmidt
Jennifer Stout

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Sonya Hicks, Co-Chair

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Janet Haynes
Ella Lawrence
Vurina Lee
Cara Lehman
Tania Mendoza
Hayle Mickelson
Stacey Schilling
Heidi Schmidt
Sherry Schonauer

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Dawn Kamphaus
Mary Shaw

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Nancy Perryman, Co-Chair

Johnell Agee
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Katy Smith

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Elyse Weller, Co-Chair

Laci Engelbrecht
Caitlin Hinrichs
Dawn Kamphaus
Laura Rogers
Bambie Roy
Courtney Ruffatti
Stacey Schilling
Katy Smith
Crystal Weir

Event Registration

Jenny Stout, Chair

Michaela Cordes
Cara Lehman
Michelle Stanley

Finance

Dawn Kamphaus, Chair

Erin Countryman
Nathan Eaton
Chelley Jackson
Kelly Owens
Bambie Roy



Thank You for Your Service!

Governance

Bambie Roy, Chair

Dawn Kamphaus
Mary Shaw
Michelle Stipp
Elyse Weller

ISAC Formula, Operations & Rules

Michelle Trame, Chair

Maureen Amos
Robert Bielmeier
Kathryn Curl
Janeen Decharinte
Mary Greenwood
Karen LeVeque-Szawara
Nancy Perryman
Jamie Peterson
Kyle Rindfleisch
Sherry Schonauer
Scott Seibring
Susan Swisher
Elyse Weller

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Mary Shaw, Co-Chair

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John Cage
Sarah Dulay
Aesha Engeldinger
Roberta Ferguson
Kari Frye
Katherine Gricevich
Danielle Long
Samantha McCarron
Patrick McMeen
Jason Ramsey
Ethan Richter
Daniela Rios
Bambie Roy
Tiffany Sharp
Katy Smith
Amanda Starwalt

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Laura Rogers, Co-Chair

Amanda Bellino
Robert Bielmeier
Heather Bode
Bethany Carmien Onwodi
Diana Daily
Laci Engelbrecht
Roberta Ferguson
Mary Greenwood
Lauren Martin
Katie Mueller
Amber Rivers
Stacey Schilling
Crystal Weir
Elyse Weller

Nominations & Elections

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Chelley Jackson
Dawn Kamphaus
Michelle Trame
Elyse Weller

Sustainable Funding

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Kathleen Smith, Co-Chair

Training and Professional Development

Alexiss Underwood, Co-Chair

Sherry Schonauer, Co-Chair

Hannah Castellanos
Katie Glascott
Timothy Marten



2026-27 ILASFAA Executive Board Members

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Kelly Owens, President Elect, Elgin Community College

CHELLEY JACKSON, Past President, Illinois State University

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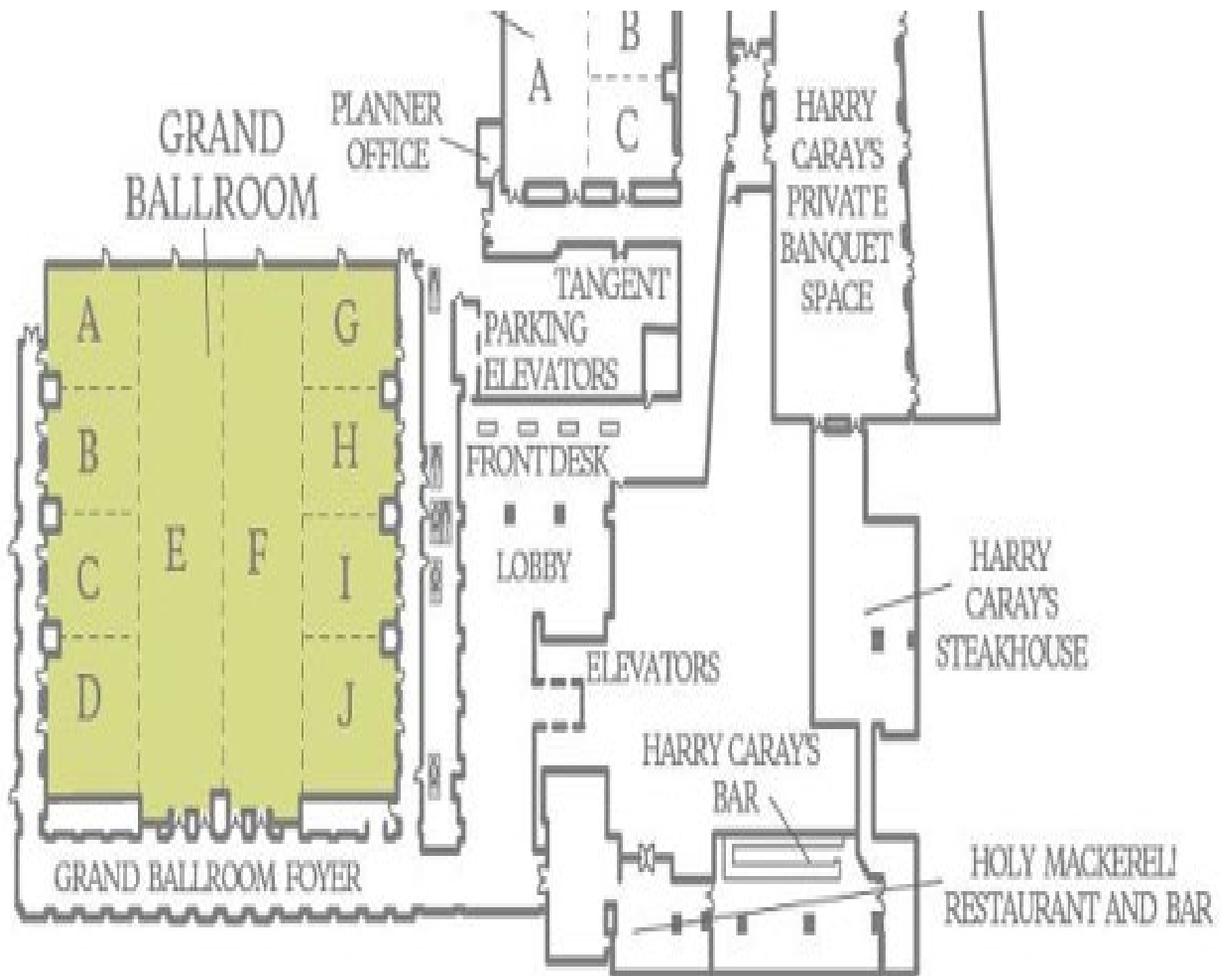
LAUREN MARTIN, Chicago Regional Coordinator, DePaul University

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SAM NELSON, Ex-Officio, Illinois Student Assistance Commission



2026 ILASFAA Conference Map



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- ▶ No origination and no repayment fee
- ▶ .50% rate reduction with automatic payments*
- ▶ No payments while in school (must be enrolled at least half-time)
- ▶ Six month grace period before payments begin after graduation
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- ▶ Cosigner release option after 48 consecutive, on-time payments

Student Eligibility & Loan Limits

- Undergraduate Limits: borrow between \$1,000 and \$20,000 annually; \$80,000 over school career
- **New for the 2026-2027 Academic Year:** Graduate Program Application and Private Student Loans
- Must be a U.S. citizen/national or eligible non-citizen
- Must be enrolled at least half-time
- Must be a member of (or eligible for membership at) CEFCU — check eligibility at cefcu.com/join

Application Options

- Online applications at cefcu.com/student
- Or, call **1.800.633.7077, ext. 33474**

To qualify without a cosigner, students need**:

- Established credit history with trade lines other than student loans
- Minimum FICO of 660 and minimum income of \$36,000 a year
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*If at any time automatic payments are stopped or the loan is not in the repayment period, the rate discount will not be applied.

**If a student does not meet these requirements, they will need a cosigner that has two years of credit history with trade lines other than student loans; a minimum FICO of 660; have a minimum income of \$36,000 a year; a DTI ratio calculation on all open trade lines listed on Credit Bureau Report not to exceed 45%; be the age of majority at the time of application based on their state or permanent residence; and a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Final approval based on creditworthiness and CEFCU account standing.

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For additional questions, please contact your campus representative:

CHRISTINA ROSE, *Head of Campus Development - Midwest & Mountain Region*
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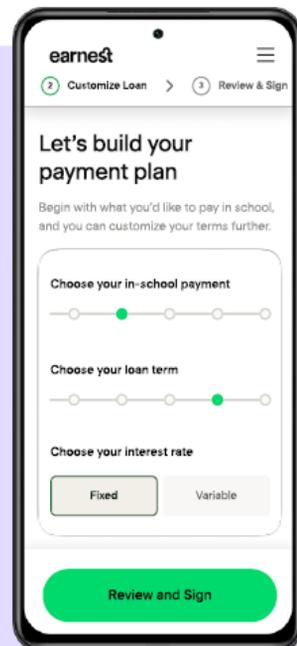
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Maximum loan amount: \$95,000



Interest Rates

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Max interest rate: 16.00%
Average interest rate: 8.44%



Loan Types

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Graduate
Parent
Line of Credit
Refinance



Repayment

Deferred
Immediate
Interest only
\$50 payment while in school
Repayment terms up to 15 years



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- ✓ Cosigner release
- ✓ Skip A Pay
- ✓ Free Changed account
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The logo for Ascendium features the word "Ascendium" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. A small orange arrow points upwards and to the right from the top of the letter 'i'.The logo for ISL Education Lending features a blue circular icon with a stylized building facade. To the right of the icon, the letters "ISL" are written in a large, blue, serif font. Below "ISL", the words "EDUCATION LENDING" are written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text "Programs from Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation" is written in a very small, blue, sans-serif font.

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The logo for Ascent features a blue circular icon with stylized diagonal lines in blue and orange. To the right of the icon, the word "Ascent" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.The logo for First Carolina Bank features a blue icon of a classical building facade with three columns.

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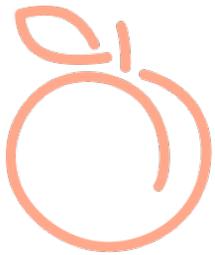
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