

## **2. Corporate Structure**

AASF AA was established in 1966 with the primary purpose of promoting the professional development of campus aid administrators and others involved in student financial aid programs, and assisting in the development and improvement of student aid programs.

The first annual meeting of the Association was held in Birmingham, Alabama, November 14-15, 1968 at the Tutwiler Hotel. The specific purposes of AASF AA are delineated in the Association's By-Laws, included as Attachment 2.2 to this Manual.

### **2.1 Articles of Incorporation**

The Association was duly incorporated in Shelby County under the laws of the State of Alabama on the 17th day of November, 1983 and is organized pursuant to the provisions of the Alabama Code. The full text of the Articles of Incorporation is included as Attachment 2.1 to this Manual.

### **2.2 By-Laws**

By-Laws provide specific guidance on operational matters. The complete text can be found as Attachment 2.2.

### **2.3 Association Purposes**

The purposes of the Association, as outlined in Article III of the Articles of Incorporation, are:

1. Promote the professional competency and association of student financial aid administrators in colleges and universities, governmental agencies, foundations, lending institutions, and others associated with private and community organizations concerned with the support and administration of student financial aid programs.
2. Assist educational institutions, foundations, lending institutions, governmental agencies, and private and community organizations to promote and develop effective programs, pertinent to student financial aid.
3. Facilitate communication between education institutions and sponsors of student financial aid funds through an exchange of ideas, information and experiences.
4. Promote such systematic studies, cooperative experiments, conferences, and other related activities as may be desirable or required to fulfill the purposes of this association.

## **2.4 Association Goals and Objectives**

The Association pledges to:

1. Support professional communications in all areas concerned with the administration of student educational financing programs.
2. Promote the development of future leaders by actively involving its membership.
3. Work to ensure representation of all major types of financial aid professionals in the state through its membership.
4. Enhance alliances between and among various sectors of the student financial aid community.
5. Apprise members of legislative issues affecting the profession, encourage involvement on issues, and advocate positions when reasonable consensus exists.
6. Help educate members about alternative methods to finance education and/or administer student financial aid programs.
7. Provide for the professional growth and competencies of members by offering workshops, seminars, meetings and other training opportunities to meet the needs of the membership.
8. Provide for and ensure the future financial stability of the Association through careful and regular financial planning and evaluation.
9. Maintain the By-Laws and policies and procedures to ensure they are accurate and complete, to further the mission of the Association and ensure its fiscal integrity.

The goals and objectives should be reviewed annually by a long-range planning committee or a similar body to ensure that the goals and objectives remain current.

## **2.5 Association Mission and Values\***

### **2.5.1 Mission Statement**

AASFAA's mission is to provide an association which promotes the professional growth and collaboration of its members, and address the needs of students, families, and institutions in matters related to financial and information resources.

## **2.5.2. Values of the Alabama Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators**

### **ASFAA values: Professionalism**

Each AASFAA member is expected to pursue personal and professional development. The growth of our Association depends on the growth of our members. Excellence is our common goal and professionalism is our standard.

### **AASFAA values: Integrity**

As financial aid administrators, we have fiscal responsibilities as stewards of public, local, institutional and private funds. We must fulfill this responsibility in a legal, ethical and trustworthy manner. As AASFAA members, we expect and encourage excellence and quality in all our professional endeavors.

### **AASFAA values: Diversity**

As our society grows more diverse, creating an environment of inclusiveness and respect is more important than ever. Each individual offers a perspective from which all can gain knowledge and skills, and should encourage all members of the profession to listen to, understand and learn from each other.

## **2.6 Statement of Ethical Principles**

The primary goal of the financial aid professional is to assist students in pursuing higher education opportunities. In the process of working to achieve this goal, the financial aid professional should exhibit certain standards and conduct appropriate to the profession. With this in mind, AASFAA has adopted the following ethical principles that serve as acceptable standards of conduct.

The Financial Aid Professional shall:

1. Practice honesty and integrity in the profession and in our lives.
2. Respect and honor students' and their families' financial confidentiality.
3. Provide the highest quality of services to students and not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, ethnicity, disability, economic status or sexual orientation.
4. Build and maintain a sense of community that fosters mutual trust, cooperation and respect.

5. Treat students and their families with sensitivity and fairness and continually strive to make decisions that are consistent and equitable.
6. Promote personal and professional development and continuing educational opportunities.
7. Provide access to financial resources and remove any hindrances that may exist for those wishing to pursue postsecondary education.
8. Maintain the highest level of ethical behavior without vested interests or personal bias.
9. Strive to meet the financial need of students.
10. Promote the free expression of ideas and opinions, and foster respect for diverse viewpoints within the profession.
11. Recognize the issues affecting students and advocate their interests at the institutional, state, private, local and federal levels.
12. Commit to excellence as a common goal and maintain the highest level of professionalism as a standard.

This Statement of Ethical Principles was adopted by the AASFAA Executive Board on August 10, 2007.

## **2.7 AASFAA Code of Ethical Conduct\***

The following Code of Ethical Conduct is applicable to all entities that desire either to support AASFAA activities as an administrator, exhibitor or contributor at an AASFAA conference or workshop, or advertise in an AASFAA publication.

We believe that the adoption of this code will clarify our relationship with the entities that support our efforts in a manner that is consistent with our AASFAA Statement of Ethical Principles in avoiding any appearance of conflict of interest, as well as being consistent with AASFAA's obligations as a tax-exempt educational organization pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Each form of relationship is discussed separately below.

### **2.7.1 Administrators**

Association administrators must agree to the rules and procedures outlined below. An administrator who does not agree to these rules and procedures will be considered in violation of the Code of Ethical Conduct, and at the discretion of the AASF AA Board of Directors, could have his or her membership revoked.

- Adhere to generally accepted standards of moral, ethical and professional behavior.
- Refrain from soliciting or accepting anything of other than nominal value (i.e. less than \$10 fair market value) from any entity.
- Disclose evidence of academic credentials (i.e. education at an institution accredited by a regional or national accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Department of Education), professional memberships, and professional certifications, as necessary, to demonstrate competency in student financial aid or student personnel administration.
- Refrain from taking any actions for their personal benefit.
- Refrain from taking any actions they believe are contrary to law, regulation, or the best interests of the students and parents they serve.
- Ensure that the information they provide is accurate, unbiased, and does not reflect any preference arising from actual or potential personal gain.
- Be objective in making decisions and advising their institutions regarding relationships with any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid.
- Disclose to their institution, in such manner as their institution may prescribe, any involvement with or interest in any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid.

### **2.7.2 Exhibitors**

Prospective exhibitors must agree to the rules and procedures outlined below. A prospective exhibitor who does not agree to these rules and procedures will not be permitted to exhibit, and an exhibitor who violates any of these rules must promptly cease any such action, and, at the discretion of AASF AA, may be required to remove his or her exhibit.

- Gifts or giveaways must be of nominal value (i.e. less than \$10 fair market value).
- All prize drawings, including scholarships, are prohibited. Exhibitors may not offer program or workshop participants the opportunity to sign up for or enroll in any contests or to receive gifts or giveaways at a later time in excess of the stated nominal value.
- Exhibitors are expected not to organize, sponsor or conduct any social activities that conflict with program or workshop activities.
- Exhibitors may organize, sponsor or conduct non-social events, such as focus, advisory or user groups.

### **2.7.3 Support for conferences and workshops**

Contributors will be acknowledged in the conference and workshop programs and at appropriate points throughout the year via a listing in alphabetical order by tiers and by organization name. Organizations will continue to have the opportunity to make charitable contributions in support of the general activities of the Association, the Annual Conference or any other AASF AA activity, and that support will be properly recognized and substantiated in accordance with Internal Revenue Service requirements. However, contributors must agree to abide by the following rules and procedures in conjunction with conferences and workshops:

- Contributors are expected not to organize, sponsor or conduct any social activities directed towards conference or workshop attendees during sessions or meetings.
- Contributors may organize, sponsor or conduct non-social events, such as focus, advisory or user groups.

### **2.7.4 Advertisers**

There is no change in AASF AA policies respecting advertising in AASF AA publications and on AASF AA's website, provided all such advertising is consistent with Internal Revenue Service requirements.

### **2.7.5 The AASFAA Scholarship Program**

Because the AASFAA Scholarship Program is funded through general income support that avoids any inference or appearance of conflicts of interest, the general scholarship program will continue.

\*Adopted by the AASFAA Executive Board on August 10, 2007