

Hello CASFAA colleagues,

A whole semester has passed since we last sent an update to the CASFAA membership and what a busy few months it has been! This is the time of year where, even if it never feels like quite enough time, we stop to reflect, relax and re-energize. What better time to send a brief update on CASFAA activity.

## **Board Updates**

Firstly, I would like to welcome the newest member to the CASFAA Board. Charita Benning from Concordia University joined the Board as the Regional Representative for Quebec in November and was able to participate in her first Board meeting on December 10, 2009. Charita replaces Nikki Silver who began a parental leave earlier this fall.

The CASFAA Board was able to meet 3 times this fall: September 22<sup>nd</sup> (by teleconference), October 19-20 (in Ottawa) and December 10 (by teleconference). The fall's meetings were focused largely on service issues and the transition from Resolve Corporation to Davis and Henderson in addition to items related to the roll-out of the new federal grant programs and the "sunsetting" of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF). Minutes for each meeting and the 2009 AGM are available from the CASFAA website. In October, the Board had the opportunity to meet with Barbara Glover from HRSDC, in addition to Gary Evans from AUCC and Andrew Parkin from the CMSF.

While the October meeting was the Board's only scheduled face-to-face meeting this year, we will meet by teleconference at least 2 more times in the new year in advance of the 2010 Conference and AGM June 6-8 in Fredericton. The Board continues to work closely with HRSDC on service issues and is more than happy to advocate on any issue that is national in scope. Please don't hesitate to contact your Regional Representative or any Board member regarding items that you feel can be addressed by CASFAA.

I'm also very pleased to announce the availability of the following items from the CASFAA website:

- 2009/10 Policy Positions  
Note that this year's policy positions have been updated to reflect recent policy changes and that a new recommendation regarding dependent children has been added.
- The 2009 Out-of-Province Summary  
Note that the summary is available from the "Financial Aid Resources" section in the password protected side of the CASFAA website.

## **House of Commons Pre-Budget Submission**

I am so excited to announce what I feel is a major coup. CASFAA was invited to present our 2009 pre-budget submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance on October 5<sup>th</sup> in Summerside PEI. Past-President and current Vice-President for Conference Services, Shelley Clayton, endured a particularly fierce Atlantic storm during the 5 hour drive to PEI in order to present. By all accounts the presentation was very well received and I think we can all take a significant measure of pride in just how far CASFAA has come as an organization with respect to establishing its voice at the national level.

### **National Advisory Group on Student Financial Assistance (NAGSFA)**

As mentioned earlier, NAGSFA met on October 14<sup>th</sup> in Mississauga. The meeting was chaired by myself and Barbara Glover in addition to Joanne Premak and Shelley Clayton who were also present and able to represent CASFAA's voice. Other groups in attendance included: CASA, CFS, NEADS, ACCC, AUCC, CAUT, NACC CMSF and ICCSFA. Items discussed included a review of the 2008 federal budget implementation, pre-budget submissions from the various groups in attendance, and an exercise focused on "student aid in 10 years." We anticipate another NAGSFA meeting in the spring and the Board is currently discussing items that we would like to see presented for discussion at NAGSFA. Of particular interest is the possibility of broad-based research initiatives focused on PSE access and persistence. As always, the Board would be interested in hearing from the CASFAA membership on any items that you feel may be appropriate for this forum.

### **US Loan Reform**

Surprisingly, one of the hottest topics north of the 49<sup>th</sup> this year has been the loan reforms going-on with our good neighbors to the south. While not all CASFAA members participate in the US Loan program, for those of us that do, the changes that are being discussed present the potential for sweeping change with respect to the administration of US Federal Aid and an extremely aggressive implementation timeline. At the Board level we've been doing our best to keep you apprised of the latest developments. We also have the good fortune of having lobbied successfully for a Canadian representative on the Foreign School Rulemaking committee which is being fulfilled by Judy Stymest from McGill University.

For those of you who have been following the latest developments with US Loan reform, you will know that we are expecting new information, including training information, to be made available in January. As always, we will forward any information on this front to the CASFAA membership as quickly as possible.

### **CASFAA 2010 Conference and AGM**

As mentioned earlier, the 2010 CASFAA Conference and AGM is scheduled for June 6-8 at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. Shelley Clayton and Renea Sleep have been hard at work with their conference planning team to develop what is shaping-up to be a fabulous conference. As those of you who have attended CASFAA conferences in the Atlantic region in the past will know, they know how to do a conference right Down East!

More conference information including session information and a call for presentations will be circulated early in the New Year. The planning committee can be contacted by e-mail at: [casfaa10@unb.ca](mailto:casfaa10@unb.ca)

On behalf of the CASFAA Board, I want to send my very best wishes for the holiday season and in the New Year.

Best regards,



Joshua Mitchell  
CASFAA President, 2009-10