



*October 2017*

**D**id you know that the third Wednesday of every October is National Financial Aid Day? In 2011, Rep. Timothy Bishop (D-N.Y.), took to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives to [pay tribute](#) to “the role financial aid professionals across the United States play in helping students realize their dream of attaining a college education.” Bishop said, “Without such dedicated administrators, an untold number of students from diverse financial backgrounds would not be able to continue their pursuit of higher education due to a lack of necessary information and counseling.” So, on **October 18**, give yourselves and each other a high five, a two thumbs up, and a big pat on the back for being often unsung heroes, a rare breed who are committed to student success and who delight in seeing students walk across the stage at graduation. Let’s celebrate us and our hard work, our dedication, our contributions and our accomplishments, since only we really know what it takes to do the job we do. **Thank you!**

## **Happy National Financial Aid Day 2017 WyASFAA!**

Please welcome **Brandi Payne Cervera** to WyASFAA and to Wyoming as the new financial aid director at Laramie County Community College! She comes to us from Montana with lots of financial aid experience. We’re delighted to have you in our state, Brandi! Welcome Brandi at: [bcervera@lccc.wy.edu](mailto:bcervera@lccc.wy.edu).

After working at UW and in financial aid since 1991, **Kathy Bobbitt** has decided to retire. Her last day is October 31, Halloween! Send Kathy good luck wishes in her next adventure at [bobbitt1@uwyo.edu](mailto:bobbitt1@uwyo.edu)!

**October is FAFSA month!** Now that we’re a year into the *Early FAFSA* concept, how is your school informing students and getting them to complete applications early? **Start a WyASFAA conversation!** Send your ideas either as a reply to all in this email or directly to [susan.stephenson@ewc.wy.edu](mailto:susan.stephenson@ewc.wy.edu) to distribute to the group!

Some new items to keep in mind for **2018-2019**:

- Data transferred from the IRS DRT will NOT display to applicant or parent.
- Two new Comment Codes, 401 and 402, indicate possible income discrepancies between info transferred from IRS DRT and other income info.
- A new IRS Request Flag with a value of 07 indicates that the applicant or parent filed an amended tax return, but the income and tax info transferred from the IRS DRT will not include changes on the amendment, resulting in additional documentation and potential corrections for the aid administrator.



**State pictures at the RNASFAA conference** will be on Sunday evening, October 15. We will be loading buses to go to *Keeper of the Plains*, a 44-foot tall, steel sculpture standing at the point where the Big and Little Arkansas rivers merge in downtown Wichita. This land between the two rivers is sacred ground to the Native American people. After pictures will be dinner and entertainment at Mosley Street Melodrama. Hope to see you there!

If there are items you would like to see in next month’s newsletter, please let Susan Stephenson know by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month: [susan.stephenson@ewc.wy.edu](mailto:susan.stephenson@ewc.wy.edu).

Now onto our third **school spotlight!**



# University of Wyoming

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**Year established:** 1886

**Financial Aid Staff:**

Laura Barton, *Financial Aid Specialist* (scholarships)  
David Bluemel, *Information Specialist* (scholarships)  
Kathy Bobbitt, *Financial Aid Director* (Director; federal aid and scholarships)  
Christy Cunningham, *Financial Aid Specialist, Scholarships* (Hathaway)  
Carrie Gose, *Associate Director, Scholarships & Tech* (scholarships)  
Monique Henley, *Financial Aid Specialist* (Federal Work-Study)  
Denise Jarell, *Associate Director, Federal Programs/VA* (federal aid and VA)  
Laurie Jaskolski, *Assistant Director, Outreach* (SAP, consortiums and outreach)  
Jessica Leahy, *Financial Aid Specialist* (loans)  
Debra Littlejohn, *Associate Director, Scholarships* (scholarships)  
Barbara Marino, *GEAR UP Financial Aid Specialist* (GEAR UP and verification)  
Sara Morris, *Financial Aid Specialist, Veterans* (VA)  
Sara Muhsman, *Financial Aid Specialist* (GAs, loans)  
Russ Oliver, *Information Specialist* (IT)  
Steve Scott, *Information Specialist* (IT)  
Pam Schuster, *Athletics Financial Aid Coordinator* (athletics)  
Daniel Strong, *Financial Aid Specialist* (scholarships)  
Corina Trujillo, *Financial Aid Specialist* (loans)

**Tell us a bit about your school:**

The University of Wyoming is well known for being the land-grant, flagship university for the state of Wyoming. UW has approximately 13,000 students and over 200 programs of study, including undergraduate, graduate and professional studies. The SFA Office distributes approximately \$110 million annually to over 10,000 students.

**What is a favorite event or activity at your school?**

Move-in day in the fall, Homecoming, sports events, cultural events—you name it, UW has it!

**As the FA Director, what do you like about your institution?**

The University of Wyoming is changing and changing fast. Our new administration has provided new energy on campus and significant changes are happening, but we will always keep the old traditions that make UW what it is. It is an exciting time here in Laramie!

**What is the best (or worst!) thing about working in your Financial Aid Office?**

Our staff is great with many years of experience behind them and our pig-out days are the best!

**Are there any unique or unusual facts/stories/legends about your school or in its history?**

- Wyoming is the only state in the union that is home to just one four-year postgraduate university: the University of Wyoming. The next closest states are Alaska and Delaware with five.
- The university was founded in March 1886, four years before the territory was admitted as the 44th state, and opened in September 1887.

- The University of Wyoming is unusual in that its location within the state is written into the state's constitution.
- White Hall, on the University of Wyoming's campus in Laramie, is the tallest building in the state.
- The state's oldest bar is Buckhorn Bar and Parlor in Laramie. It was established all the way back in 1900, just ten years after Wyoming became a state.

**Sadly for WyASFAA and UW, you will be retiring soon. How long have you been in financial aid and what adventures do you have planned for your retirement? Any advice you'd like to share with up-and-comers to financial aid from your years of experience?**

*Kathy responds:* I have worked in the UW Financial Aid Office for nearly 28 years beginning as a summer intern while finishing my accounting degree here at UW. My husband and I are so fortunate to have four grown daughters who have blessed us with seven fantastic grandchildren who we will be spending a lot of time with. We also plan on some travel—especially in the western U.S.—and will spend a lot more time enjoying camping in the summer months. But... the plan I look forward to the most is to sit and drink coffee every cold winter morning in front of the fire knowing I do not have to get out and brave the cold Wyoming winter!

My best advice for everyone is to remember why we are here (even on the rough days) ... to help students succeed.

**This month's member highlight is UW's Associate Director of Scholarships, *Debra Littlesun*!**



**How long have you been in financial aid?**

I have been at UW for six years and in financial aid for 16 years. I started in financial aid as a Work-Study student.

**What is your favorite/least favorite thing about your job?**

*Favorite:* Seeing students succeed, graduate and become successful in their field. *Least favorite:* Two weeks before and after the first day of school.

**What are your hobbies, talents and/or quirks?**

I enjoy working out, running, and spending time with friends and family.

**What is something you wish you knew more about?**

Gardening.

**What is something you think everyone should do at least once in their lives and why?**

Have a garden, to see the beauty of watching things grow.

**When asked about Debra, Director Kathy Bobbitt had this to say:**

*Debra has been great about being flexible with her duties. This year she has taken on appeals, both financial and cost of attendance. Through this process she has gained a lot of knowledge on the calculation of Expected Family Contribution, as well as the Cost of Attendance. Debra is also a great resource for our multi-cultural students, including the Native American students. She was recently named by President Nichols to serve on the Native American Advisory Committee.*

