

# What's Up WyASFAA?

Wyoming Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

## The Twelve Days of Financial Aid

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Christmas my fed rules said to me...make sure you act responsi-bil-y

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Christmas the FAFSA said to me...don't forget to create your FSA ID

You get where I'm going with this, or rather trying to go with this. I had high hopes of making it through all 12 days of Christmas but found my brain was lagging from travel and knowledge from FSA this past week. Instead, you'll just have to settle for some random song titles throughout this.

FSA was in Atlanta this year and I'm fairly certain the 'Winter Wonderland' followed us. It was colder at one point in Atlanta than in Wyoming – something I was not prepared for! Anyway, as always there was information that I learned and I come back ready to tackle them and make sure we are doing things right. There are other items that make me think of new ideas that I'd love to implement within my office. Now the challenge lies with determining what I can actually accomplish. Heads' up team, brace yourselves. I was happy to see several of our Wyoming and neighboring state colleagues and hope you all had safe travels home.

As the year comes to an end I want to wish you all a wonderful holiday season. Since it "Tis the Season" I hope you all find some of your "favorite things" to enjoy.

~ Shannon Eskam



## The Season of Giving

While the conference doesn't fall during the holiday season, it's not too early to start thinking about our upcoming philanthropy project. This year our beneficiary will be SAFE Project in Laramie. According to their website [www.safeproject.org](http://www.safeproject.org) "Our mission is to advocate for and empower survivors of stalking, intimate partner, family and sexual violence. Our education and

awareness efforts are focused on prevention and improved community response." They are asking for donations of gift cards and cleaning projects this year. I know that many places offer great deals on gift cards this time of year. The list of preferred cards are: Walmart, Safeway, Shell, or general Visa. Keep an eye on your inbox for more information coming soon!

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### Special points of interest:

- Happy Holidays!
- Getting to know Deborah Karst
- What do you Meme, Holiday edition.
- 'Tis the Season

## Member News

**From LCCC:** Our Rediscover LCCC Scholarship program is off to a great start! We have 76 students receiving the scholarship and we are accepting around 20 more students for spring 2019 semester. This is a three-year pilot program for Wyoming adult learners that do not have a prior degree. We will kick off next year's application cycle at the end of March/early April. The scholarship covers tuition and fees for up to two years in specific programs. Learn more at <http://lccc.wy.edu/rediscover/>.

**From UW:** Christy Cunningham is leaving at the end of this week for another position here. She has been working in the aid office for 18 years and has been responsible for the Hathaway Scholarship along with other duties. She will be moving to athletics to administer financial aid to our athletes.

Have any great news to share about your office or institution? E-mail Shelby or Anna with updates for the upcoming newsletter. [shelbygarner@caspercollege.edu](mailto:shelbygarner@caspercollege.edu) or [amiller@caspercollege.edu](mailto:amiller@caspercollege.edu)



## Member Spotlight: Deborah Karst– Northwest College

### Position/primary FA duties:

Hathaway Scholarship Technician, administer the Hathaway Scholarship Program, WyIN Loan, Wyoming Overseas Tuition Benefit, as well as assisting students with basic financial aid questions.

### How long have you been in financial aid at your current institution? In total?

12.5 years. I was hired in 2006 when the Hathaway Scholarship Program was put into place, and have held that position ever since.

### How did you get into financial aid?

I was a work-study for the FA office during my last year of getting my degree.

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

*Favorite:* Knowing that a student's day is just a bit better and brighter because they have been awarded their financial aid package.....seeing the smiles and looks of relief.

*Least favorite* is dealing with the unhappy student, who just doesn't understand why they have lost eligibility for their financial aid.

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

Pretty much anything outside is an enjoyment for me; riding my motorcycle, kayaking, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing. Watching grandkids in their sports.

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

LIFE

### What is special about the place you grew up and why?

The view in Powell is great. Heart Mountain, the Beartooth and Big Horn mountain ranges are right in our back yard.

**Editor's Note:** When asked for a photo, Deb stated "sorry, no picture...I stay out of camera range and no, I don't have one for work either :)" Per her request, we have chosen a different photo for her. Enjoy!



## Upcoming Dates

The WyASFAA Annual Conference will be here before you know it! Mark your calendar for April 25-26th 2019 to join us on the Casper College campus as we present: "Route 66: Guiding Students to the Finish Line".

If you would like to be part of the planning for this event, please contact one of the committee members: Scott McFarland, Shannon Eskam, or Nicole Castillon for more information.

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Wyoming had a small but mighty representation in Fargo for the annual RMAASFAA conference this year. Here are a couple photos of the gang...



If you know of any upcoming dates that we need to be aware of, please submit them to Shelby or Anna.

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## Ten Second Topics

**News From FSA:** So far this year 10% of the FAFSAs filed for the 19/20 academic year have been filed using the new mobile app! It was reported at the FSA conference at the end of November that the app has been downloaded over 250,000 times.

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**More news from FSA:** ED announced at the opening session of the FSA conference that they will revert to accepting signed copies of tax returns to

verify tax information beginning in the 19/20 year. They have also said that aid offices can accept signed statements of non-filing rather than the IRS-issued Verification of Non-filing form. Effective dates have not yet been released. ED promises that more information will be released in an upcoming Dear Colleague Letter.

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Have a topic you'd like to see here? E-mail Shelby or Anna and we'll get it in the next issue!



## What Do You Meme?

Christmas Break is almost upon us, something tells me that most everyone can relate to this month's memes! Remember, anyone can participate in "What do you meme?" Send your (work-appropriate) submissions to Shelby or Anna and we'll include one or two each month. Enjoy:



Submitted by Shelby



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*WyASFAA is a professional organization dedicated to assisting the nearly 40,000 students enrolled in Wyoming's institutions of higher education, their parents, and the schools and agencies that work collaboratively in disseminating information and administering the various financial aid programs available to Wyoming's students.*

## Final Thoughts

I was recently listening to the radio while getting ready for work and they had a segment where a young lady had called in to the station to ask for some advice. It seems she had been in an argument during Thanksgiving with other members of her family about the fairness of her having to purchase gifts for all of her nieces and nephews when she, herself was single and a recent college graduate. Her sister was also on the line and argued that she needed to “suck it up” because purchasing gifts for all the children was “tradition” and now that the youngest sister is an adult, she was required to participate—regardless of the fact that she didn’t have any children of her own. The show had several listeners call in and offer their opinions on the subject. I rolled my eyes listening to some, and found myself agreeing with others. The final caller made the best point through the whole thing: she said that the family shouldn’t be focusing on the gifts, they should be focusing on the time they spend together because that’s what the holiday is about.

I had originally sat down to write about beating stress during the holidays, but after listening to this program, it really made me think. From the middle of November until Christmas I always worry and fret about what I’m going to get people for Christmas, how am I going to afford everything, etc. and I feel my stress levels go higher and higher. The thing I always seem to forget is that the time with my loved ones is precious. I look back on Christmas when I was a kid and while I remember a handful of gifts; I remember spending time with my cousins, aunts, uncles, and grandparents more. I remember going to Grandma and Grandpa’s house setting off fireworks for the New Year, I remember spending Christmas Eve at Mimi and Papa’s house sitting in the living room upstairs while one of the grown ups took their turn reading *The Night Before Christmas* to us while we all waited patiently to hear Santa’s bells jingle outside...and later becoming the one who read to the younger kids myself. These are the traditions that people should be more focused on. Material gifts come and go, the memories will last a lifetime.

So here is my advice for surviving the holiday season: enjoy the little things. Take the kids on a movie date; bake cookies together; decorate the tree together; heck, maybe even start a new tradition. In the end, it shouldn’t be about the what, but rather the who or the why. I hope you all have a wonderful, low-stress holiday!