



Bits & Bytes

Newsletter of the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association

FEBRUARY 2021

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2021 Winter Conference Wrap-Up

A tremendous thank you to all of those who attended and participated in the 2021 Winter Conference. In a year full of changes and uncertainty, it was fantastic to keep our conference tradition despite the challenge of space and technology. We would like to thank the ISFAA leadership for securing the REMO platform so that we could all not just attend the conference, but also have a chance to see and mingle with our colleagues.

The Program Committee had an exceptional line up of speakers which provided us not only with technical knowledge but also answered our pressing questions on a myriad of topics such as Verification, Manual EFC calculation, and the Annual Student Loan Acknowledgement. They rejuvenated us with sessions such as Finding Motivation in Tough Times, Care and Feeding of your Career, and time set aside for networking. Sitting with colleagues in

the Sector meetings, Speed Topics, and Affirmative Action in Higher Education, we were able to discuss pressing topics within our profession. And in the Comparing and Searching for Private loans, Communication for Student Engagement and Professional Judgment sessions, we were able to discuss ways to retain students who are facing financial and personal stress during a time of a pandemic. Having updates from the Department of Education in the Town Hall session, NASFAA, ICHE, MASFAA and ISFAA leadership reminded us of how many hearts and minds are focused on the success of our students and that we all serve each other as a network of professionals making a difference in the lives of others.

A special thank you to the generous support of our Vendors, who contributed their time and finances to make this

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conference a success. As well, many thanks to the Sponsorship Committee, Pat Wilson Scholarship Committee, Program Committee, and all of our fabulous speakers and moderators that shared their expertise and time so generously. You may view session materials online at https://www.isfaa.org/isfaa_conferences.

We look forward to seeing you (in person) next year!

Best wishes from your ISFAA Site Committee,

Donette Cassman

Kristina Delbridge

Angie Snapp

Brandon Kuntz

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A Farewell from Our Past President

This is my last message to ISFAA members, affiliates, as president of our organization. I have been greatly honored to serve in this capacity over the last year and while it has been a difficult year in so many ways, it has also been rewarding for me. I know ISFAA is in great hands with Candice Sutliff as our new President, and the Executive Board.

During the past year we have been making the most out of an unusually strange year but we have made the most of it with holding one hour brown bag lunches to allow members to get together to talk about issues effecting all of us. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the College Goal

Sunday and both the Site and Program committees for making sure that this organization never miss a beat to either the students or members we serve.

When I became President in January of 2020, my theme for the year was Oh' the Places We Will Go a reference from the Dr. Seuss book, I honestly was hoping for more of an adventure than from the bedroom every morning to the kitchen table. While the year did not go anything as I had planned, I can honestly say that once I reflect back on the year, while challenging, it was not without some benefits. (We got to see our families more.)



Doug Hess

Continued on page 4

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I have been lucky to be in the profession long enough to be able to make several friends and to have a mentor or two along the way. A special thank you goes out to Brenda Hall from Indiana State University for taking a chance on a young student who was looking for a Federal Work Study position. Little did she or I know that was the first step in a long career in helping others? I may have moved on from that work study position, but I often think of those days and the experience I received. Thank you Brenda, for taking a chance on me and for setting me on a career that has allowed me, I hope, to help others achieve their goals and dreams.

I would also like to thank my PFW teammates for not only their support, and for keeping the office running in my absence, but for also being such an

outstanding and knowledgeable group of professionals.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Krissy Creager, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management & the Student Experience, for allowing me to serve ISFAA as President and Past President.

Finally, when I am hiring new teammates, I am looking for individuals who have the heart of a servant and teacher, as I feel strongly those are our two main areas in Financial Aid. I can say with confidence, that is what I have found in each of the ISFAA members that I know, you are teachers and servants, and this organizations future is in great hands.

Again, it has been a pleasure to serve ISFAA and I look forward to continued involvement during my year.

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teachers and
servants,
and this
organizations
future is in
great hands.”

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Students Must Complete College Scholar Success Program in 2020-2021

Ensuring students in Indiana's early college promise program, [21st Century Scholars](#), have the support needed on their journey from seventh or eighth grade all the way through college graduation is almost as critical as funding the program itself.

That's why the Indiana General Assembly in 2018 tasked the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE) and the state's colleges and universities with expanding the Scholar Success Program into the college space.



The Scholar Success Program was designed to help prepare high schoolers in the 21st Century Scholars program for the rigors of college, by requiring certain steps along the way—such as creating a graduation plan, visiting a college and completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), among other activities.



INDIANA COMMISSION for
HIGHER EDUCATION

Students who matriculated to an eligible higher education institution after August 31, 2019 are now expected to complete the College Scholar Success Program (CSSP). The Commission convened a group of college personnel, community and business partners and alumni to offer guidance on the requirements. The council analyzed Scholar performance data, reviewed best-practice research (e.g., [AAC&U's High-Impact Educational Practices](#), [Gallup-Purdue Index](#)) and actively solicited input from its higher education partners.

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The results pointed to the College Scholar Success Program having a strong central focus on college performance, college engagement and career preparation:

- **College performance** borrows from activities that were already required of all college-aged Scholars, including credit hour completion, maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress and filing the FAFSA by the April 15 deadline.
- **College engagement** helps to ease a student's transition from high school to college, keeps them connected to campus and builds self-efficacy and advocacy skills.
- **Career preparation** allows a student to build employability skills, strengthen connections between academic and applied learning and smooths the transition from education into employment.

In addition, one important piece that became evident was the important of Scholars having a mentor or champion—someone who provides support and guidance to help ensure the Scholar is not only successful in

college, but also graduates and steps into the beginnings of a meaningful career.

Following the development of the College Scholar Success Program, ICHE set to build out the student portal within the ScholarTrack system. This portal—only available to 21st Century Scholars from the high school graduating class of 2019 and later—was implemented in fall of 2019.

Throughout the 2019-2020 academic year, nearly 30 campuses around the state participated in a pilot program to provide feedback on the CSSP, including the user-friendliness of the system and best practices for helping students complete the activities. While the program was officially in effect during this award year, students' scholarships were not affected based on their activity completion due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting disruption to students' educations.

While those challenges still exist during the 2020-2021 academic year,

students are fully subject to completion of activities from this point forward and failure to meet the requirements of the CSSP from this point forward will lead to scholarship loss.

To combat the loss of scholarship due to a failure to complete the required CSSP steps, the Commission has created a robust communication plan to reach out to students throughout the academic year to provide prompts and reminders to both complete the activities and track them within the ScholarTrack system. Even more crucial than ever is the partnership with the state's institutions and community partners to provide additional hands-on support to promote student completion.

For more information on the College Scholar Success Program, visit learnmoreindiana.org. Reach out to Jarod Wilson at jwilson@che.in.gov if you're interested in discussing the CSSP, want to receive training in the program or the ScholarTrack system or to set up a presentation.



Executive Committee Member Focus

Jennifer Reeves



Jennifer Reeves

1) Please tell Bits and Bytes about your current position at IU – Bloomington

I am currently an Associate Director over Scholarships and Grants which includes external/departmental scholarships, state aid, federal work study and institutional grants. All of this keeps me very busy, which I love!

2) How did you get your start in Financial Aid?

I started at IU Bloomington as support staff in our appeals area in February 2014. I was promoted in July 2015 to Senior Assistant Director and then to my current position in June 2018. Before my financial aid positions, I worked in banking at a local community bank in Bloomington. Unfortunately, a bank merger forced me to look for a different career. I have dealt with money in some sort of fashion my whole career!

3) Tell us about your current role(s) with ISFAA and being on executive committee

I was voted in as Treasurer Elect in November. I am still learning what my responsibilities will be, but I am looking forward to the new challenge.

4) You have been involved with financial aid for 6 years. Do you have a memory about a student(s) you helped that stands out in your mind that shows the good work that FA folks do?

Our FA office in Bloomington, is mainly a processing office as we have a “one stop shop” with Student Central, who has the main responsibility of communicating with students. However, our office does a lot of outreach with many low-income families to help them navigate the complex world of financial aid. These outreach events are probably one of my favorite responsibilities because you can sense their relief that there is a way to make college a reality. I think any student that we help, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Continued on page 8

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5) Please tell us about any other leadership roles you've had involving financial aid

This is really my first jump into a leadership role within ISFAA. I have had a slow start in this area but looking forward to other opportunities that may come my way after this.

6) You joined ISFAA in 2014. Please share your thoughts about the organization after 6 years as a member...

ISFAA is a great resource for all financial aid professionals. Take advantage of all they have to offer.

7) What is your favorite thing about your profession?

My favorite thing about our profession is just the simple concept of helping people. A lot of students and parents can stress over the financial burden of attending college - just simplifying the process and seeing that they are relieved of some of that burden makes me happy.

8) Do you have a least favorite thing about your profession?

My least favorite thing is probably all of those pesky regulations. I understand that they are a necessary evil but sometimes it can make solving problems harder.

9) Do you have any thought or message that you would like to pass along to the other ISFAA members?

Definitely take advantage of all the resources that ISFAA offers. Also, there are plenty of opportunities for FA professionals to volunteer for ISFAA. Get out there and get involved!



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President's Perspective

When I was asked to write this article, my mind went spinning in 50,000 directions. What is a topic that is of interest to all ISFAA members? What would interest everyone within a financial aid office whether you are the director, or an entry level staff position. I think everyone within a financial aid office would be interested in ISFAA's continued success. Obviously 2020 was a different year for everyone but it was also a different year for our ISFAA organization. One of the items that we normally do is send out a volunteer survey. Unfortunately, due to timing and everything else happening in the world we were not able to send this last fall. When I began putting together the leadership team for 2021, I thought to myself that ISFAA needs to do better at getting more people involved. If we want to stay pertinent in our members' world, we need to get our members more involved. This thought process is what led to my idea of starting a Brown Bag Lunch Series to inform members about what various committees do, current/future plans for the committee and to answer any questions/get feedback from our members.

Did you know volunteering within ISFAA could be good for you?

1. Volunteering connects you with others – Do you sometimes feel lonely or isolated in your job? Do you have a very small office or are you the only one in your office that handles certain tasks? Volunteering in ISFAA can be the start of widening your professional circle, this is a way to meet new people that you already have something in common with. Are you new to the state of Indiana or the world of financial aid?

Volunteering is an easy way to meet new people and broaden your support network.

2. Volunteering builds self-confidence and self-esteem – Although the road to completion can sometimes take time, completing a task on a committee creates a sense of accomplishment. Volunteering will also give you a sense of pride and identity, this in turn helps to boost your self-confidence further by taking you out of your natural comfort zone and environment. For me Conference Program Chair was probably the position that took me most out of my comfort zone. I had never done anything like planning a conference before and to top it off I had never been on the committee before. In the end everything worked out well, I had a lot of support from the committee and past program committee members. At the conference it was nice to sit back and see everyone enjoy themselves.

3. Volunteering can be important for your mental health – Volunteering can help counter act the effects of stress and anxiety. One thing that I have found whether it be attending an executive board meeting or meeting as a committee, your day job sneaks into most conversations during the meetings. Not that our meetings are therapy sessions, but it can help by hearing issues at other schools and how they deal with them. It quickly makes you realize that most issues you might be stressing about are not isolated to a single school. Most people working in financial aid are dealing with the same issues/problems just on varying scales.



Candice Sutliff

“Volunteering
has helped
me build on
communication,
teamwork,
problem solving,
planning and
organizational
skills.”

4. Volunteering can be important for your career - In an increasingly competitive job market, volunteering experience can be incredibly useful. It shows potential employers that you can take initiative and that you're willing to give your own time to help an organization. Personally, I think volunteering has helped me build on communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning and organizational skills. These are all skills needed when volunteering but more importantly they are needed to be successful in a career in financial aid.

Hopefully I have made you think a little bit about why it would be good for you to volunteer in ISFAA. As you consider taking the plunge, I would ask you to think about what you are passionate about? For instance, if you don't like balancing your checkbook, I would encourage you to stay away from the Treasurer position. However, if you like writing maybe you get involved in the Newsletter Committee to give you an opportunity to do something you enjoy. The second thing I would encourage you to think about would be the amount of time you are able to commit. For instance, if you would like to be president of ISFAA you need to consider this is a three-year commitment. If your schedule does not allow this type of commitment, I would encourage you to look at volunteering on various committees. Volunteering on a committee is very flexible, you would have the opportunity to continue each year but if things have changed in your schedule it is not a problem to step down. If you are questioning a position/committee commitment, I would like to encourage you to reach out to any of the committee chairs or members of the executive board with your questions. In closing, I would like to remind you that an organization is only as strong as the team around it, ISFAA needs your help to continue to be successful. Please watch for communications about the Brown Bag Lunch Series for volunteer opportunities and more information about our committees.

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Committee Spotlight – ISFAA’s Make It Real

Do you know any teenagers who have it all together? Do they know what kind of work they want to do, how much education they need for that work, how much they will earn, and how to budget their net income to cover all of their bills??? Of course, not!!! Many adults still struggle with that!!! **ISFAA** can help those teenagers with this award-winning program!!!

Make It Real! is geared to high school sophomores, although at some schools all of the students participate. It’s a fast-paced, interactive experience where they receive a randomly-assigned family status, type of work, the required education level, and net income. Then they go around to each of the tables – like shopping – and find out how much it will cost them for housing, food, transportation, student loans,

child care, entertainment, clothes, and personal expenses. We even have a Wheel of Fortune for those unexpected wins and losses in life! And who is helping them at the tables? **ISFAA** volunteers from nearby colleges and universities!

In this workshop, students are not allowed to spend more money than they have!!! Sometimes, they have to return to a table and select a less expensive option, like when they discover that a fancy sports car isn’t very practical for a family of 5. We tell them, “That’s how you make it real!” And many students comment on how expensive it is to have children!

During the wrap-up, we tell them that the CHOICES they make in high school can help them get into a college where they will get the education they need

for the job they want. If they don’t know yet what direction they’ll go after high school, we encourage them to keep their options open by doing their best in high school. (The high school counselors love this program!) And, of course, we mention that college financial aid is available!

The point isn’t about how much money they have, it’s all about the CHOICES they make along the way that help them meet their goals – choices that help them make it real.

Because schools have been all over the map in terms of being open or closed during the pandemic (and their plans keep changing), it has been difficult for us to conduct Make It Real! sessions. Here’s hoping that will change soon and we will all be back to having events like this in person!



Coming Soon
2021 NASFAA Annual Conference

Date: June 28th -29th , 2021

Location: National Harbor, MD

Register at:

<https://www.nasfaa.org/conference>

College Goal Sunday Almost Here!

The second and final College Goal Sunday of the 2020-21 school year will take place virtually on March 7th! This will be the second consecutive College Goal Sunday that will take place online, following our first move to that setting last October. ISFAA volunteers will be busy as these FAFSA experts help Hoosiers file this important form.

Our first event of the year helped over 300 as attendees received assistance from more than 100 ISFAA volunteers. With FAFSA filing down nationally, our push to alert Hoosiers of this free opportunity to get answers from the experts is in full swing.

Another \$5,000 in scholarship money will be offered to those attending College Goal Sunday March 7th. Once



a student files the FAFSA, they will receive instructions how to be entered in the scholarship drawing for one of five \$1,000 scholarships.

Improvements from what we learned in our first virtual experience are being made and preparation continues for the big event. Volunteer sign up has been strong as always, but there can never be enough event promotion. Please, if you haven't already, follow Indiana College Goal Sunday's social media pages to keep up with the latest information and share posts to spread the word as far and wide as possible. The Facebook page is [Facebook.com/IndianaCollegeGoalSunday](https://www.facebook.com/IndianaCollegeGoalSunday) and our Twitter page is [Twitter.com/CGS_Indiana](https://twitter.com/CGS_Indiana).

Don't hesitate to be a last minute volunteer if you like and let everyone you possibly can know about the big event at 2pm March 7th!

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A BIG Thank you to our College Goal Sunday Volunteers from the October 25th, 2020 Event. We hope to see you again on March 7th, 2021!

Aja Armstead	Christine Ellis	Elaine Yednak	Joel Short
Alex Samuel	Cindi Sabo	Emily Hoover	John Wells
Alexandra Szymanski	Cindy Gil	Erica Blackburn	Jose Medina
Allison Staley	Claudia Saenz	Erin Simon	Julie Wade
Amy Parraga	Cory Like	Fred Jackson	Julie Wonderlin
Angela Lane	Cory Martens	Gina Pirtle	Kelsey Richey
Angela Reshad	Cyndi Lang	Ginny Washington	Kim Cloud
Angie Snapp	Daniel Herr	Heather Cooper	Kim Heldt
Anita Reed	Dawn Lawless	Heather Frye	Kimberly Lewis
Bill Wozniak	Dawn Suggs	Hilary Hillenbrand	Kimberly Dickerson
Brittany Collins	Deborah Jones	Ian Whitfield	Kimberly Thalmann
Candice Sutliff	Donette Cassman	Jacqueline Kennedy-Fletcher	Kirsten Reynolds
Carrie Bishop	Donna Bevington	JoAnne Alvarez	Kristy Rock
Casey Trela	Dr. Verleaish Jones		

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Thank you Volunteers! - Continued

Kristyn Sleeseman	Melissa Dwight	Rachel McHenry	Tabitha Kingsbury
Kurt Harris	Melissa Pace	Rachel Meyer	Tamara Runyan
Kylie Thomison	Meredith Dittfield	Rachel Page	Tanika House
Latisha Lewis	Michael McClure	Ria Sanford	Taylor Gross
Lisa Bridgewater	Morgan McCombs	Robert Sommers	Tene Jones
Lisa Brinkley	Nate Bickel	Rolene Eddy	Terri Vasquez
Lorie Williams	Nicole Dunlop	Sally Ponce	Tim Ross
Lynn Roberson	Nicole Lodewyk	Sarah Wandless	Tracy Adams
Marty Case	Nicole Vaughn	Silquia Otero	Travis Fisher
Mary Gutierrez	Niki Hockenberry	Stacey Jamili	Wesley Corrie
Matt Perry	Nikki Cardinal	Stan Werne	Yolanda Solis
Matthew Krieg	Owen Thomson	Stehen Wolma	Zachary Cullum
McKalah Mitchell	Pamela Meek	Sue Allmon	
Melinda Middleton	Phillip Waddles	Susan Mayberry	

Volunteer for our March 7th event at: <http://volunteerindianacgs.org/>



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Comings and Goings

...and other tidbits of association news

Sue Allmon

Comings

Two folks have joined the Division of Financial Aid team at Purdue University. Let's give a warm ISFAA welcome to **Misty Hein**, who will be working in the scholarship area and **Russell Tragesser** who will be working with Professional and Distance program students.

IU South Bend has a new financial aid counselor! Here is his introduction: Hello! My name is **Zach Snider** and I recently have been hired on as a Financial Aid Counselor for Indiana University South Bend! I graduated from IUSB in the Spring of 2020 with a Bachelor degree in Secondary Education and minors in History and Political Science. I look forward to learning more about financial aid and helping serve the students of our university!

Tabitha Kingsbury joined the staff at Indiana University South Bend as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships. Tabitha is an alumni and earned her BA in Spanish and MS in Educational Leadership. She has worked at the campus for nine years within various roles of student services, admissions, and retention. She began her new endeavor in financial aid this past Fall. Tabitha says, "I know Financial Aid has a vital role in students' success. I am happy to serve the students in navigating financial aid and discovering scholarships to support their academic and career goals!"

Continued on page 17

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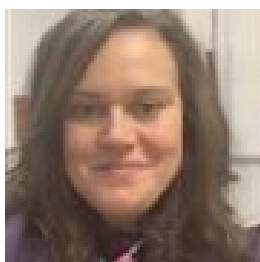


Transitions

Colby Shank joined Ivy Tech's Systems Office in September as Assistant VP for Student Financial Aid. As Association Commissioner for Student Financial Aid at the Indiana Commission of Higher Education for more than 10 years, he led the Commissions' Student Financial Aid and Information Technology Teams which developed ScholarTrack.IN.gov and created the Commission's Financial Aid Support Center. Carrie Bishop reports "He's a great fit at Ivy Tech!"

Nicole Trice became Ivy Tech's Director of Financial Aid Processing in February 2020, right before we all began working remotely. She has mastered the art of virtually training new processing staff. She previously served as Associate Director of Financial Aid for Purdue Fort Wayne. Her major pastime for several years has been coaching and playing softball. Along with her husband, Lorin, and son Jaylin, Nicole now enjoys watching daughters Karyn and Payten play on their own softball teams.

We are pleased to announce that **Amanda Fishman** has accepted the Assistant Director of Student Financial Services for IU McKinney School of Law.



Amanda Fishman

Amanda has served IUPUI for the past nine years and most recently as an Assistant Director in Client Services. In Client Services, she has helped to streamline student services and

strengthen collaborations with our campus partners. Her abilities to advocate and determine the best solutions for students has proven beneficial to supporting student success. In addition, Amanda has managed staff in continuing education, navigating numerous financial aid regulation changes.

Amanda began her duties on the Grad Professional Team on November 30th. Please join us in congratulating Amanda Fishman!



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**Lauren Greider**

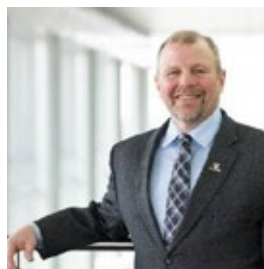
Promotions

The Division of Enrollment Management is excited to announce a new leader for the Office of Student Financial Services. **Lauren Greider**, Director of Financial Aid at Indiana University Southeast, has accepted the position of Executive Director, Student Financial Services effective October 5, 2020.

**Yolanda Solis**

Anniversaries

Congratulations to **Yolanda Solis**, Financial Aid and Scholarships at IU Northwest for 35 Years of service.

**Marvin Smith**

Goings

Marvin Smith, Executive Director, Student Financial Services, has accepted the position of Executive Director for UCLA Financial Aid and Scholarships. In his new role, Marvin will help lead efforts to support UCLA's enrollment goals by strategically deploying financial

aid resources to increase access and support student success. His appointment began August 3, 2020.

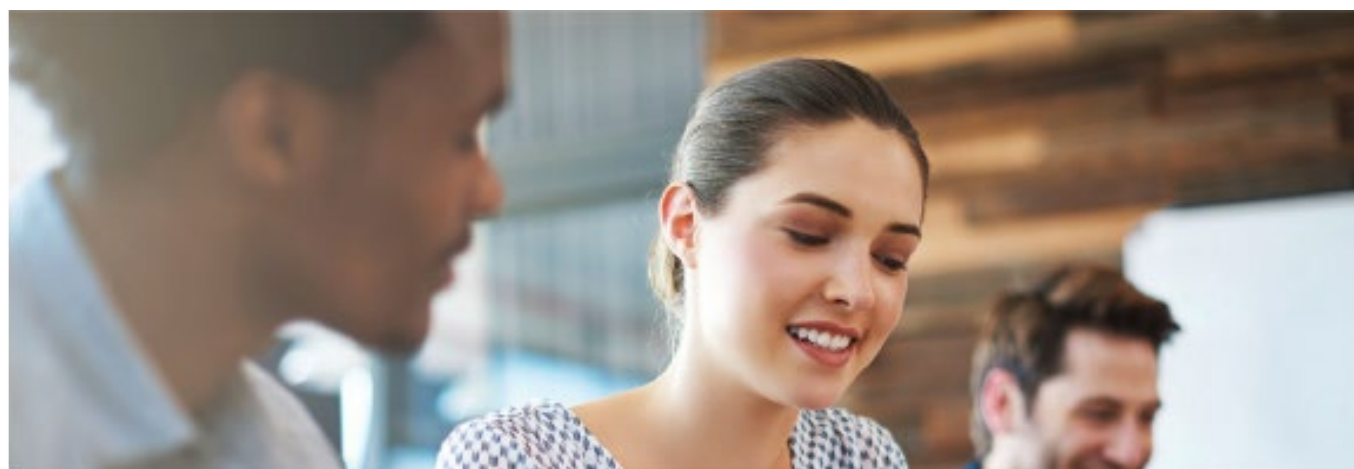
Retirements

The following persons have retired from Purdue University. **Trudi Horner**, **Judy Kuykendall** and **Sherry Banes** all just recently retired. Per Heidi Carl, combined they had about 100 years of experience working for the Division of Financial Aid. Heidi says, *"While we miss them all greatly, we are excited for them in their next phase of life. Hopefully they are all on to fun adventures!"*

Ben Burton retired from Ivy Tech Community College in July 2020. Darn he got to miss out on the CARES Act!

Kim Cloud retired from Ivy Tech Community College in January 2021.

Continued on page 19



WE BELIEVE IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY – OR TOO LATE – FOR STUDENTS TO FIND THEIR WAY TO SUCCESS.

That's why we've created a holistic set of tools to ensure no student or borrower gets lost along the way.

WhichWay, our financial education platform, takes a proactive approach to student success by teaching students the life skills they need to prepare them to take on the world.

Borrower Connect, our default prevention service, helps borrowers who have fallen off track to get back in good standing by giving them the information and confidence they need for successful repayment.

Visit www.studentconnections.org or email contact@studentconnections.org to learn more about how you can help your students on their path to success.

STUDENT CONNECTIONS.

**Ken Nieman**

Retirements - continued

Congratulations! **Ken Nieman**, Assistant Director of Student Financial Services for IU McKinney School of Law. Retires!

Ken prior to coming to IUPUI 5 years ago was the Director of Financial Aid at Anderson University. At his virtual retirement party December

14, 2021 IUPUI Law students, “expressed” their appreciation for how Ken has been there for them. We heard from the current and former Dean of the Law School, faculty members & staff saying it was so wonderful to work with Ken and they were so grateful for his commitment and service.

Ken also served as the ISFAA President, and worked on several committees.

So, from the IUPUI Financial Aid staff, we are lifted by Ken’s goodness and have been touched by his kindness. Ken, thank you for being a great colleague who has shared his expertise, knowledge and support.

Our wish to you and your family for a wonderful retirement, to travel and celebrate life!

Just remember us here on campus and stop in and see us when things get back to normal!

Good News Announcements

Vicki Strack, FA Coordinator, Ivy Tech Terre Haute, earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Adult and Career Education from Indiana State University in December 2020 – Congratulations Vicki!



Bits and Bytes

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