



MAY 2022

# Bits & Bytes

Newsletter of the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association

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## Another College Goal Sunday Year in the Books

On February 27th the second and final College Goal Sunday for the 2021-22 school year took place at over 40 locations across Indiana. Two of the big milestones for the year included CGS locations growing once again to over 40 sites and the events moving back to in person after a pandemic prompting jump to virtual filing.

There were 660 FAFSA's filed at College Goal Sunday this year at a time when filing difficulty has become a national story, but some of the other event details may be even more impressive. 99% of survey respondents in the fall said they found the event helpful but that was even better in the spring where that percentage climbed to 100! Another item of note is that 89% of fall attendees were first timers for CGS, and that grew to 94% in the winter.

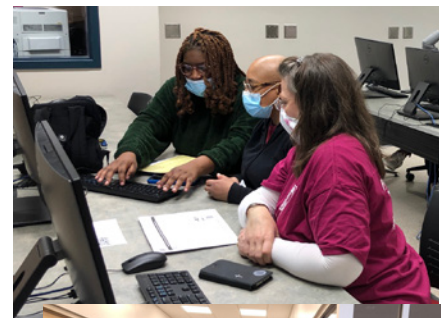
Distribution of FAFSA's had 338 filed in the Fall and 322 in the Winter, once again having a breakdown close to 50/50 as we've seen in previous years. Not surprisingly the percentage of 21st Century Scholars was also similar with 32% at the November CGS and 30% in February.

College Goal Sunday is only possible due to the donation of time and expertise by the amazing CGS volunteers and this was again shown with 288 people stepping up in the Fall and 264 in the Winter. The event leadership team can't

thank everyone enough for making this FAFSA filing opportunity across the entire state possible.

The final data point of note is the percentage of first-generation students at the CGS events. In November this was 42% and in February this increased to over half of those helped at 51%.

Thank you again to every volunteer and also to every counselor who posted promotional material and those who got the word out in many different ways! An undertaking of this size is only possible by a large team of incredible volunteers and ISFAA absolutely had that in the year College Goal Sunday returned to the computer labs!



## President's Perspective

Here we are after May 1, counting our Fall 2022 deposits and preparing for the class of 2026. What does that also mean for all of us? We are preparing to host students for orientation in the summer, continuing student packaging will begin, we are working on verifications, special circumstance appeals, dependency overrides, and anything else that comes across our desk. We are in our summer cycle of financial aid and hopefully headed towards good weather and lots of sun.

We don't get to take the summer off. And if we do, we always feel guilty because of all the work we know we are going to walk back into when we come back. We are short staffed, under resourced, underpaid, and sometimes unappreciated. But we still come to work. We still meet with students and do the very best we can to help students understand their financial aid and the impact it will make on affordability. We know that what we do is absolutely necessary and important to help students succeed in our colleges. We know that without our knowledge and interest in the field of financial aid, many students would not find the help they need to pay for college.

All that is to say, I hear you - I see you. I stand with you and recognize your hard work. We are being asked to do more with less and are always navigating changes in our field. But we are a strong community. We come together because we are all facing the same thing in one way or another. We find support with others doing the same job. And that is why ISFAA is so important to our career.

We offer training and support for all members to help them navigate their office the best they can. We have

friendships that have lasted a number of years because of our commonality. We support each other and lift each other up. This is why we have a professional organization. And I hope you feel the same.

With drastic changes to the FAFSA coming in the next few years, we will need to be supportive of each other, be willing to provide feedback, and work together to make sure our state has a strong handle on how the FAFSA will work with the Student Aid Index instead of an Expected Family Contribution.

I had the pleasure of being invited to attend the Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (WAFSAA) conference in Wisconsin Dells from April 13-15 as the Indiana MASFAA Representative. They had a great conference, and I brought back so many ideas. One of the sessions that stood out was about the Futures Act and FAFSA simplification. If you have not started to look at some of the changes coming down, I recommend doing so. There are so many ways the FAFSA will be simplified for the student, but it is looking like it will be a bit tougher on all of us. We need each other now more than ever and being connected with ISFAA will help us through the changes.

We have plenty of opportunities to connect coming up. Planning continues for the Support Staff Workshop that will take place in November, and the Annual Conference will be here before you know it. Keep an eye out for updates about these events and please consider presenting to our organization at conference.

There are also many committees hard at work to help our communities. Counselor Workshops are being planned for the



**Lisa Bridgewater**

fall, College Goal Sunday is hard at work for 2022-23, and the Make It Real committee is finding dates and locations for events. The Conference Program committee is determining a keynote speaker for the conference, and the Strategic Planning committee is actively working on ideas for our organization's future. We look forward to bringing you information about all of these activities and more soon.

*All that is  
to say, I hear  
you - I see  
you. I stand  
with you and  
recognize your  
hard work.*



## Committee Spotlight – Governmental Relations

As the oldest state financial aid organization in the country, it is important that we, as an entity, remain vigilant and aware of conversations and decisions that may impact our community, including the students and families we serve. As such, the ISFAA Executive Committee has routinely supported the Governmental Relations Commission and committee to serve as the liaison with local, state, and/or federal agencies/organizations that directly affect financial aid, institutions and students. The committee make up is a deliberate mix of public, private, proprietary, two year and four year members as well as an associate member in order to ensure that we are best meeting the robust and varied needs of our organization, the state of Indiana and the families and students we serve.

As mentioned, we endeavor to be representative of all sectors and areas of concern. This allows us to tap into our institutional resources as well. For example, public state institutions usually have a team of governmental relations specialists that monitor federal and state topics. While private institutions participate in Independent Colleges of Indiana, ICI, to provide a collective voice for their campuses. As one current committee member so eloquently stated:

As a financial aid representative at a small, private college it's interesting to see how our processes, policies and interactions with students and departments differ from those of a larger, public institution. Because of the many hats we wear at a smaller school, combined with budget constraints, organizations such as ISFAA helps us stay connected with networking and training opportunities.

We strive to maintain relationships with Indiana's Congressional delegation, state legislators, their staffs and government agencies in order to advocate for financial aid at the state and federal level. In conjunction with our school partners and the Commission for Higher Education, we stand ready to provide data and statistics about proposed changes, putting actual outcomes, names and sometimes faces to legislation as well as being available at a moment's notice to testify or speak on proposals.

One example that encompasses many facets of our committee work is the proposal, passage, implementation and ongoing training surrounding House Bill 1348, otherwise known as credit completion. Committee members met with Commission staff and legislators throughout the proposal and eventual passage of this bill, followed by months

of meetings to evaluate how to implement the legislation, which was a drastic change to state aid administration. These meetings involved many whiteboard sessions to plan what adoption of the legislation would look like to students, institutions and the Commission. As many of you know that work has not stopped. The governmental relations committee continues to collaborate with Commission staff to provide webinar topics and trainings around credit completion and other state aid programs. Additionally, we anticipate similar needs around the federal methodology changes to update EFC to SAI.

Committee responsibilities also include; delivering a white paper for ISFAA's delegation to take to Capitol Hill each year, tracking legislation that may affect schools and the families we serve, provide written considerations and/or testimony on proposed legislation, and providing our larger membership ways to have their voices heard concerning the importance of federal and state financial aid. Current committee members are listed on the ISFAA website (<https://isfaa.memberclicks.net/leadership#govrelations>) and we encourage members to reach out.



**Registration is now open for the  
NASFAA 2022 National Conference  
taking place June 26-29th  
in Austin, Texas**

## Viewpoint: Training Committee

By: Gina Pirtle



Gina Pirtle

I have been in higher education since 2002 and transitioned into financial aid in 2004. I came into a financial aid office that had recently experienced major turnover and the department needed a lot of assistance and had even solicited help from another university. I was and I still am eager to learn and assist in whatever way I can. I was eventually promoted to the Director

of Financial Aid at that institution and now serve as a director for Indiana University Northwest since April 2018.

While I have been a member of ISFAA for many years, only recently have I become an active member. It is rather difficult to actively participate in any professional organization when you are under resourced. However, I did take advantage of some conference opportunities and trainings during that time.

Since my tenure at IU Northwest, I have been able to participate in the ISFAA sponsored NASFAA credential trainings along with the IU Northwest staff. It has been exciting to receive a credential in subjects you've actually performed your entire career. The staff and I traveled the state of Indiana to receive credential training whenever and wherever available. The staff had not experienced any formal training in many years. It was refreshing to meet other financial aid staff throughout the state to socialize, network and train.

Once I had earned several credentials, I wanted to participate in facilitating trainings as well, so I signed up to be a part of the training committee. I was excited to attempt this and host a training at IU Northwest. Then everything changed due to COVID. ISFAA rebounded and I eventually facilitated my first training virtually. Vinny Vincent-Dunn, the training committee chair attended. He loved it. The rest was history.

While making my mark as a member of the training committee, I was convinced to participate even more in ISFAA as a delegate-at-large. In doing so, I have learned a lot of effort goes into making the organization meaningful to its members. While we know someone somewhere is working for ISFAA, I've witnessed up close and personal, all the details that are necessary for this professional organization to remain relevant, energetic and fiscally sustainable.

Some of ISFAA's relevance and energy transcends on the training committee. I love that the training committee has different types of facilitators. No two are alike. We vary in types of institutions we represent, in styles of presentation and in experience. Therefore, it keeps the trainings interesting. The training environment brings us together as ISFAA members to socialize, network and ultimately to learn aspects of our profession that we can take back to our respective institutions to effectively serve students. The knowledge gained not only fulfills the members of ISFAA, but it also makes Indiana a stronger force in the financial aid arena.

### ISFAA.org Website Tip:

Make sure you're receiving emails from the ISFAA Listserv. Simply go to your profile on [ISFAA.org](https://www.isfaa.org) and check out "My Features/E-lists" and make sure you are subscribed.

My Community	My Profile	Connections	My Features	Inbox
E-lists				
E-list Name	Subscribed	Email Delivery		
Membership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

# THANK YOU CGS VOLUNTEERS



Abbey Neeb	Bennett Gallivan	Christa Clark	Dorama
Abir Lamssafri	Beth Kemper	Christian Blome	Dr. Houston M Logsdon II
Alex Samuel	Bethany Gross	Christopher Greer	Dr. Verleash Joned
Alex Williams	Bill Wozniak	Christy Tollett	Ed Ertel
Alexa Murray	Bonnie Devers	Cindi	Elaine Parrish
Alexandra Szymanski	Brad Monts	Cindy Hutcherson	Elaine Yednak
Alison Wilson	Brian Mcdonie	Claire Nagel	Elizabeth Castillo
Allison Strange	Britt Walsh	Claudia Saenz	Elizabeth Murray
Allyson Mckelvey	Brittany Collins	Clint Kugler	Elizabeth Nicodemus
Amanda Gowin	Brittany L May	Connie Sivertson	Elvia Solis
Amber Blakeman	Brittney	Cory Like	Emily Hutsell
Amber Sullivan	Calvin Hopple	Cory Martens	Enidza Deynes
Amy Parraga	Cammi	Cyndi Lang	Erin Pierce
Angela Lane	Candice Sutliff	Cynthia Perez	Esthela O'Neill
Angelina Mcdonald	Cari Knuth	Danielle Runda	Ezalea Allen
Angie Martin	Carley	Danny Enciso	Fred Jackson
Angie Snapp	Carol Lynn Whitesel	Dara Bishop	Funbi Oladimeji
Anita Reed	Carolyn Weaver	David Reseigh	Gabrielle Madison
Anita Smith	Carrie Bishop	Dawn Lawless	Garnet Tipton
Ann	Carrie Kline	Debbie Harding	Gary Carter
Anne Taylor	Celeste Garcia	Deborah J Woods	Gary Rigley
Annette Hoopingarner	Chanda L Rodski	Denise Ndukwu	Gina Pirtle
Antoinette Welch	Charlette Sauders	Derek Schapiro	Glenn Vann
Anuar Velazquez	Charmaine O'Quinn	Derry G Ebert	Heather Buhr
April Mckinney	Charmaine Wardell	Desmond Delgado	Heather Cooper
Aprill Woods	Chelsea Mooror	Dianne Pedroza	Heather Frye
Barbie Martin	Chelsi Stallings	Dominic Schillizzi	Heather Lisco
Ben Westrick	Chris Maggart	Donna Bevington	Ian Line



# THANK YOU CGS VOLUNTEERS

Idriss Guerziz	Jill Neidlinger	Justin Robinson	Kelly Manning
Ilesha Billups	Jinely Pineda-Martinez	Kahra	Kelly Taylor
Imani	Joel Short	Karen	Kelsey Flynn
Jackee Eib-Nelson	John Lowe	Karen Iglio	Kim Heldt
Jakob Breunig	John Tooley	Karen Matthews	Kimberly Dickerson
Jarret Whitehead	Johnathon Myers	Karen Nelson Heavin	Kimberly Lewis
Jasmine Thomas	José Medina	Karen Pierce	Kimberly Simsfagan
Jaxon	Josephine Gomez	Karen Riddle	Kimberly Thalmann
Jazmine Clifton	Josephine M. Blockson	Kari Bordner	Kindi Kugler
Jc Barnett	Journie	Karina Palos	Kirsten Reynolds
Jenny Hallard	Juanita Price	Kathrine Kurosky	Kristen Japundza
Jessica Mejia-Abrajan	Julian Garcilazo	Kathy Hollander	Kristy Rock
Jessica Metz	Julie Wade	Kathy Miller	Kristyn Slesseman
Jessica Pitstick	Julie Wonderlin	Kayleigh Francis	Laveta Hughes
Jessica Underwood	Juliette Kniola	Keisha White	Lea Dunbar
Jhordan Lee	Juno Farnsworth	Kellam Venosky	Legunia Rogers





# THANK YOU CGS VOLUNTEERS

Lentine M Stewart

Lisa Bridgewater

Lisa Laflin

Liseth Galindo

Lora Zoll

Lorie

Lynn Roberson

Madison Pershing

Marcy

Margie Harvey

Maria Gutierrez

Maria Quiroz-Southwood

Maria Rios

Mariola Hernandez

Marissa Millman

Mark

Mark Frank

Martina Stokes

Marty Case

Mary Champion

Mary Haynie

Mary King

Mary Nucciarone

Matt Biergans

Matt Krieg

Mckalah Mitchell

Megan Hughes

Megan Rains

Melinda Middleton

Melissa Dwight

Melissa J Belcher

Melissa Pace

Melissa Pruitt

Meredith Dittfield

Michael Montgomery

Michael W. McClure

Michelle Ashcraft

Mike Kreicker

Mike Szakaly

Monica Vargas

Monique Anderson

Monique Ware

Morgan Mccombs

Nate Bickel

Nayeli Belmares

Nickie Roberts

Nicole Nickless

Nicole Trice

Nicole Vaughn

Niki Hockenberry

Nikki Cardinal

Nina Loesch





# THANK YOU CGS VOLUNTEERS

Patt McCafferty  
Paul Friebus  
Quinton Skibinski  
Rachel  
Rachel Mchenry  
Rachel Meyer  
Reagan Ayala  
Reanne May  
Regan Hooker  
Ria Sanford  
Richard A Nash  
Riley Keller  
Robert  
Robert Sommers

Robin Close  
Rolene Eddy  
Roman Robic  
Sara Monday  
Sarah Newsom  
Sarah Soper  
Sarah Storms  
Sarah Wandless  
Shawnie Johnson  
Shederick Whipple  
Sofia  
Stan Law  
Stan Werne  
Stephanie Vondersaar

Stephen Wolma  
Sue Allmon  
Susan Mayberry  
Sylvia Phillips  
Tabitha Kingsbury  
Tammi  
Tammy Herschberger  
Tammy Robbins Robbins  
Tammy Runyan  
Tanika House  
Tara Williams  
Taylor Davis-Redman  
Te'Aire Storm  
Tene N/A Jones

Timothy Ross  
Tina Filbert  
Tracy Adams  
Tressie Dunbar  
Treva Stith  
Tsianina McCain  
Tyra Baker  
Valeria Alvarez  
Vicki Strack  
Vickie Montgomery  
Virginia "Ginny" Washington  
Yolanda Solís  
Zachary Cullum  
Zachary Reel





## 21st Century Scholars – Enrollment Updates



Across the country enrollment in some form of postsecondary education, whether that is a two- or four-year degree or a shorter-term credential, have continued to decline. Indiana is not immune to this trend. Indiana's college-going rate has been steadily declining since 2015 with a rate of 65% down to 61% in 2018 and 59% in 2019. The challenges of the pandemic will likely cause additional impact.

The 21st Century Scholars program continues to be a bright spot in the face of enrollment declines with Scholars nearly 30 percentage points more likely to pursue postsecondary education than the statewide average (81 percent compared to 53 percent). However, enrollment continues to be one of the biggest challenges with less than 40% of eligible students enroll in the program by the 8th grade deadline during the 2020-21 school year.

To help enroll more students in the 21st Century Scholarship program, the Commission is streamlining the application so that students will no longer have to provide tax information effectively reducing the application by 30% and removing what counselors have identified as the biggest barrier to Scholar enrollment. The Commission will leverage existing partnerships with the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana Department of Revenue (IDOR) to verify income eligibility for the program. All income applications are already verified by IDOR, so asking families to provide income information has become an unnecessary step. We hope that by removing this obstacle, more families will be able to take advantage of this opportunity.

For more information on the 21st Century Scholars program, check out [Indiana's Promise: A Report on the 21st Century Scholars Program](#).

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## Executive Committee Member Focus

### Megan Watson



Megan Watson

#### 1. Please tell Bits and Bytes about your current position at IUPUI

I wear a lot of different hats in our office, which is something I love about my position. I am currently an Assistant Director at IUPUI. Specifically, I supervise staff that work in our processing area. I oversee our verification process, conduct staff training, review and write policies and procedures, and assist with ensuring compliance. While I do all of those things, I also help provide support for our front office and enrollment management goals.

#### 2. How did you get your start in Financial Aid?

I remember coming into the financial aid office as a high school senior not knowing how I was going to afford to go to school. As a first generation college student, my parents had no idea how to help me or the resources to contribute towards my education. I walked into the financial aid office feeling very overwhelmed, but determined to achieve my goals. After that, I decided to get a job working full-time at a place that would help pay for my tuition, which led to my job with Sallie Mae. After a year at Sallie Mae I applied for a job at IUPUI in the financial aid office and never left!

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

Currently, I am serving ISFAA in the President-Elect role and chair of the Strategic Planning committee. I am working on

Continued on page 11

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building upon some of the strategic initiatives our leaders before me have come up with as well as planning for my year as president! As part of the board I contribute ideas and assist with making important decisions for our association.

**4. You have been involved with financial aid for 16 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?**

I was working with a student who was facing homelessness. We worked together to get them the financial aid they needed and connect them with campus resources to help secure food, and an apartment. When the student was approaching graduation, they sent me an email and thanked me for helping them through the difficult time in their life and achieving their goals. This particular student stands out because I know it is not easy for someone to talk about personal struggles and homelessness. It takes building trust for them to open up and continue to be open with someone they feel comfortable coming to when they need assistance.

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

I have volunteered for many committees within our association. For the last several years I've been a co-chair for our Leadership Symposium and Support Staff workshop. Within my institution I've been a team leader and oversee our training and development. Recently I also became a Blue Icon Independent Consultant, which has allowed me the opportunity to work with different schools in different capacities.

**6. You joined ISFAA in 2012. Please share your thoughts about the organization after 10 years as a member...**

ISFAA members are the best! We have a community of individuals that are always willing to answer a question, bounce ideas around, volunteer, and even be a mentor. We have an awesome group of individuals on our governmental relations committee that have worked diligently with our partners at the Indiana Commission of Higher Education to

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create a partnership and allow financial aid professionals to have a voice when they create important policies for our state aid programs.

So many active members got their start in our organization because they had someone to “rope” them in or encourage them to volunteer. At this point, I’m sure we’ve heard about the “Great Resignation” and the challenges that staff are facing in their offices. ISFAA is a great resource to lean into for help and support as we navigate this challenging time. So I challenge you to “rope” a colleague into volunteering for a committee and getting involved. Let’s see if we can provide some support and fulfillment to the next generation of financial aid professionals.

### 7. What is your favorite thing about your profession?

There is always something new to learn! Just when we think we’ve got it, along comes a new challenge that needs conquering.

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

This time of year, it’s seeing students that missed deadlines to submit appeals or documentation and are struggling to pay their balances so they can enroll in the next semester.

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

Get involved! Submitting the volunteer form is the hardest part. We need new volunteers to continue to do the great work that our association is doing. I’ll be sending out the volunteer form for next year, in the coming months. If you’re unsure how you might be able to contribute feel free to reach out and ask questions. There is something for everyone!

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# Comings and Goings

...and other tidbits of association news .....

Sue Allmon

## Comings

**Diona Tatum** joined the IU South Bend campus in February, 2022 as a Financial Aid Counselor. She writes: *I am a 2019 IUPUI Graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business with a major in Finance. I am learning something new every day and loving the knowledge I gain along with challenges I have faced. Speaking of challenges, I recently celebrated my first year of marriage with my lovely husband who was my first ever boyfriend at the age 14. We bought our first home last year and a new puppy this year. Hoping for children in the future! Life changes and challenges are what makes my life interesting and always keeps me on my toes! I am grateful for it all!*

**Abigail Rotzien** also joined the IU South Bend campus in February, 2022 as a Financial Aid Counselor. She recently graduated from Purdue University with a degree in financial counseling.

## Transitions

**Richard Nash** has remotely returned to Hanover College to assist with running their financial aid systems and a few other things remotely while continuing to live in the Franklin area.



**Rachel McHenry**, formerly of INvestEd has accepted the Financial Aid Director position with Ivy Tech Community College – Kokomo.

## Goings

**Danielle Hayden**, Assistant Director, Packaging and Funds Management for Purdue University is leaving Purdue and the state of Indiana. Danielle has accepted the Senior Associate Dean and Director of Financial Aid position at Carleton College in Northfield, MN. A huge loss for us, but a big gain for Minnesota. Never fear, we shall be seeing her at MASFAA events! I asked Danielle for advice she would give to someone joining the financial aid community she said “pursue association work and networking opportunities. My ISFAA family has been a huge part of my professional and personal life and without pursuing volunteer opportunities, I wouldn’t have those lifelong friendships.”

Please congratulate **Diane Cloud** on her retirement coming up at the end of June. She’s worked for 13 years as the Financial Aid Assistant at Ivy Tech Community College Richmond Campus. Diane began working in Financial Aid after she retired from teaching Intermediate school mathematics at Centerville-Abington Community Schools.

**Vinny Vincent-Dunn** has accepted a position with Reach University, an online school based out of California. He is setting up their financial aid office/system for 2023-24. But he has not left us yet! Vinny continues to work part-time for Franklin until they are able to hire a new Director.





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## Upcoming Trainings

### **Student Eligibility: Wednesday, June 8, 2022**

Time/Location: 10 a.m. –Noon (EST) @ Franklin College

To register, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StudentAidEligibility>

Registration will close Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 5pm.

### **Direct Loans: Wednesday, June 15, 2022**

Time/Location: 10 a.m. –4 p.m. (EST) @ Franklin College

To register, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FederalDirectLoans>

Registration will close Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 5pm.



#### **Bits and Bytes**

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