



Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

# THE INFORMER

*The Quarterly IASFAA Newsletter*

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## 2021-2022 Award Winners

We had a great time at IASFAA and were able to recognize some of our colleagues for their outstanding work to support IASFAA and the financial aid profession. Below are the 2021-2022 IASFAA award winners. Feel free to reach out to congratulate them!

Office of Student  
Financial Planning  
Drake University  
John E. Moore Award

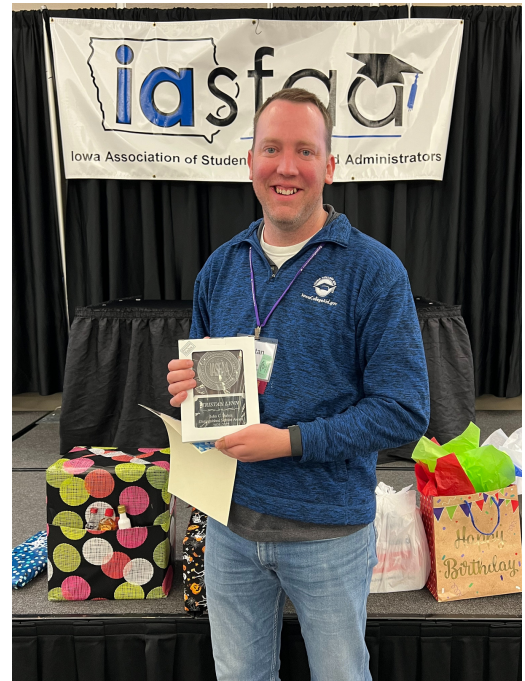


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# 2021-2022 Award Winners cont.



Chad Olson  
John Heisner Award



Tristan Lynn  
John C. Parker Award



Electronic Services Committee  
Chris Ditter and Mary Jacobsen  
Meritorious Service Award



Vanessa Wiest  
Outstanding New Professional

Not pictured:  
Heather Gaumer  
Outstanding Committee Member



# Encouraging Words to Small School Financial Aid Administrators

By Alice Bunjer

Grants, Work-study, Loans, Scholarships; Clock or Credit hours; Header, Trailer; Verification, PJ, SAP, R2T4, Enrollment Rosters; Net Price Calculators; State Aid, Federal Aid, Institutional Aid; Cohort Default Rates; VA Benefits; State Reports & Surveys, IPED's; End of the year closeouts; Auditors; COD, FAA Access, NSLDS.....OH, MY! These are among the terms that "hit" me when I started into the financial aid world.

If someone had told me that I would be working in financial aid - even 5 years ago, I would not have believed him or her! You see, I blindly stepped into financial aid without any foreknowledge of it. However, that happens sometimes, when you are involved in a small school setting.



My start in financial aid was in the fall of 2018, when I was hired to help out our Financial Aid Director – part-time. That part-time turned into full-time just one year later, when our Director moved onto a different ministry.

I work at Faith Baptist Bible College & Theological Seminary in Ankeny, IA. The college just celebrated its 100-year anniversary in 2021. We have a student population (including online students) of around 400, and have a financial aid office of...one! I suppose you could call us a "one-stop shop" even if it is not exactly what the term is supposed to mean!

Running an office of one, although not an easy task, I count it a privilege to have the opportunity to grasp the whole realm of financial aid. Overwhelming? Absolutely! Nevertheless, over time, and with the help of great organizations like IASFAA, MASFAA, and NASFAA, I am feeling more confident in my job every day.

I am grateful for the opportunities that these organizations give us to teach us how to do our jobs to the best of our abilities. So far, I have attended workshops and webinars through IASFAA. I have been able to take some of NASFAA's credentials. In addition, I try to take advantage of any other learning opportunities offered as time allows through all the organizations. However, because of Covid-19, most of those webinars and workshops have been virtual.

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# Encouraging Words cont.

IASFAA and MASFAA have both given scholarships to me in order to attend MASFAA's Leadership Symposium and "Not So" Summer Institute. Thankfully, these were in person! Not only did I learn a lot, but also I was able to connect with other people, learn from their experiences, ask questions, and even share email addresses in order to connect later. I still occasionally call someone from another school and ask them questions – just to make sure I am doing a verification or R2T4 correctly, for example. No one is there to "judge" you. We are all working toward the same goal – to meet the needs of our students.

So, if you are new to the financial aid world, or work at a smaller school and carry a lot of hats, I would encourage you to become a member of IASFAA and take advantage of all they have to offer you! Get involved as much as you can – we all have a lot to do. It will be worth the investment for you and your students!

## Announcements

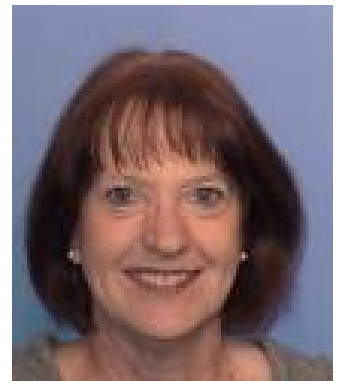


**Brandi L Miller** celebrated 20 years at **Drake University** on November 1, 2020. She says, "Coming to Drake University and hiring Pam Smith and Suman Rose are two of the best decisions I have made professionally to date. Being an active part of IASFAA is another. Being an active member of IASFAA has been instrumental to me staying in the profession for as long as I have. I have both Drake University and IASFAA to thank for the last 20 years of personal and professional growth and development."



# Announcements, cont.

**Kim Diercks**, Financial Aid Counselor/Loan Processor, is phasing into retirement after 36 years at **Wartburg College**. She will be part-time until her retirement January 2023.



Kim Diercks



Gina Meyer

**Gina Meyer**, Loan Manager and Systems Coordinator, started in the Financial Aid Office at **Wartburg College**. She started November 15, 2021!

**Laura Albert** started as Senior Financial Aid Counselor at **Wartburg College** in April 2020.



Laura Albert

**Suman Rose** joined **Drake University** on August 02, 2021, as a Financial Aid Coordinator. Suman was born in India, and she came to California when she was 15 years old. Even though no one in her family knew a word of English, and all 6 of them moved into a 1-bedroom apartment, they were all very happy! Especially her because she got the opportunity to get great education, she had been craving her entire life in India. She quickly learned English, had exceptional teachers, and made great friends. She got her bachelor's degree in Sociology from UC Berkeley. Her absolute favorite part of the job has been answering any questions students may have and getting to know them better so she can better assist them.



**Brandi Miller (Drake)** welcomed a new grandson. From Brandi: "He is number 9 for Kenan and I. His name is Malachi Emery Wilson-Miller. He was born August 8, 2021. He weighed 6lbs 7 oz and was 19 inches."



Suman Rose

# Announcements, cont.

We wanted to share pictures from our FAFSA tabling event. This was held near Halloween (hence the costumes). Pictured (left to right) are **Sydney Johnson, Alison Kramer, and Jess Graham** from the **University of Iowa**.



Hello, IASFAA friends!

The highlight of our holidays was our wedding ceremony on January 1st amidst the first big snow storm of the winter! With our kids and a couple of others in attendance, we tied the knot in a very meaningful ceremony in our home with Chad Olson as our officiant. And in true pandemic-fashion, family and friends were able to join us from afar via Zoom.

We were just giddy enough to go outside to take a few pictures in the snow while everyone else watched from the warmth of the house.

More pics are on Shelly's Facebook page so if you're not already her friend, send her a request with her new last name of Adams.

Happy New Year from **Gary and Shelly Adams!**



# Member Voices

We asked about your best/favorite holiday memory and/or a New Year resolution .

**Kelsey Ryder** shared: One of my goals for this year is to finish working on my 2018 and 2020 photo albums (2019 is done haha) before our new baby comes in April and we are only taking pictures of her!

**Mary Jacobsen** shared: My favorite holiday memory this year was the surprise visit from my brother and his wife from Ohio. We were spending Christmas Eve at my dad's house with my sisters and their families but since my brother lives out of state he can't always get home for Christmas. When we walked into my dad's house, there sat my brother! It took several seconds for it to register and I'm sure I looked completely dumbfounded while I tried to figure out if I had forgotten he would be there or if I just didn't know. My parents worked together to fly them home and decided to keep it a secret from us sisters. Well played, mom and dad, well played. Best surprise ever!

## A Note of Thanks

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for the amazing support I've received during this very difficult time in my life. I must say that I have struggled with writing this thank you, not because I don't appreciate all of you for the amazing outpouring of cards, texts, emails and prayers that I received, rather it is due to the grief of acknowledging the reality of my circumstances that can be unbearable to face. But I must face it, especially when there are so many of you who have cared enough to reach out to share in my grief and comfort me during this time. Please know that your words and support have helped.

I have always felt that IASFAA is so much more than an organization of people there to support each other when dealing with federal regulations. We are a family - there to help each other through all of life's ups and downs, and mere words will never be able to express my gratitude for all of you who have been so kind to me lately.

My son was a beautiful person whom I will think about every day of my life. I wanted to share a picture of Justin I took while Shelly and I were there to see him and the grandkids last May. Julian, my grandson, is getting a ride on his daddy's back.

Thank you again, take care, and be good to each other.

Gary

