

Communicating Financial Aid Effectively: Transparency, Impact, and Collaboration

OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID | Mini Conference

October 21, 2025

Agenda

- Why We're Here
- My Role
- Website Overview
- Dispatch & What Works
- Goals for 2025-26
- Collaboration Highlights & How You Can Help





Why We're Here: Transparency supports trust — trust supports enrollment.

- Clear, consistent communication builds trust and credibility
- Having a dedicated comms role in financial aid is rare and invaluable
- At Iowa, our work aligns with institutional brand standards to enhance clarity and credibility



Financial Aid Competency Framework

LAWS, REGULATIONS & COMPLIANCE

- Financial aid legislative and regulatory knowledge
- Ethical compliance with Title IV program requirements
- Correlation of multiple sources of aid
- Advocacy in public policy

CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Communication skills
 Cultural competence
- Advising
- Public speakingFinancial literacy
- Flexibility
- Empathy and respect

• Personal responsibility

TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH & DATA

Digital communication

Electronic processing

to find efficiencies

without sacrificing

inform decisions and

improve outcomes

quality service

Apply data to

enhancements

Leveraging technology

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Professional growth and development
- Collaboration
- Teamwork
- Developing skills for oneself and others

COMMITMENT TO COLLEGE ACCESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

- Impact of aid on student success
- Awareness of systemic barriers
- Cultural humility and inclusivity
- Clear, accessible communication
- Student-centered advocacy
- Ongoing learning and reflection

Use research to guide policy and practice Translate data insights into service

LEADERSHIP

- Strategic thinking
- Planning
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Compromise
- Change management
- Emotional intelligence
- Program management
- Stewardship

BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

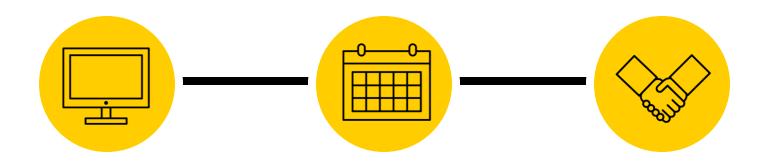
- Institutional context
- Enrollment Management
- Interdepartmental
- practices
- Collaboration
- t Relationship-building
 - Exposure
 - Risk assessment
 - Advocacy
 - Models of governance
 - Models of accreditation



NASFAA.ORG/COMPETENCIES



My Role



Digital/Print Strategy:

Website, Dispatch,
Financial Aid
Forms/Handouts,
Analytics

Marketing Campaigns:

FAFSA Renewal for current students, paid Carver Scholarship Promotion

Campus Partnerships

Connections strengthen outreach, align messaging across departments, and ensure students receive clear, consistent financial aid information wherever they engage on campus.



OSFA Website - Our Digital Front Door

Then (prior to site launch)

- 250+ pages, multiple clicks deep
- Confusing navigation
- Inconsistent tone
- Not viewed as a trusted resource

Now (launched July 2024)

- ~60 pages, most one click deep
- Streamlined, student-centered content
- Hidden pages triggered by To Do List
- Annual updates before FAFSA opens, cost is finalized by BOR, & when aid offers go out



Website Snapshot (last 28 days)

Performance

17K views • 7K users • Avg time 56s

Most visitors find what they need within one to two clicks.

Top Pages

Home Page – 4,475 views (25% of total)

Applying for Aid -2,215 views (13%)

Contact Us – 1,829 views (10%)

Scholarships – 1,301 views (7%)

Cost – 1,269 views (7%)



Office of Student Financial Aid

File the 2026-27 FAFSA

Q SEARCH

Types of Aid V Cost V Applying for Aid V Eligibility V Understanding Your Offer Receiving Aid

Financial Wellness V

Contact Us V





Dispatch Campaigns

2024-25 Snapshot

- FAFSA Renewal Final Notice 1/28/25
 - 17872 students; 10,022 (56.08%) open rate
 - 7213 parents; 5,036 (69.82%) open rate
- Aid Offer Mailing Follow-up Notice
 3/13/25
 - 15,587 incoming students;
 13,160 (84.43%) open rate
- Aid Offer Notice 3/10 thru 7/31
 - 15,177 current students; 10,795 (71.13%) open rate

What Works

- Clear subject lines. Students respond best when the purpose of the email is immediately obvious.
- Action-forward content. Every message should point to a specific next step not just inform, but guide.
- Segmentation and personalization.
 Targeting messages to specific groups, like parents or first-year students, increases relevance and engagement.



My Focus for the Year Ahead

Content & Impact

Simplified language, action-forward tone on webpages and dispatch communications, holistic service operations review to better inform timing of email notices

Transparency & Governance

Improved clarity for confusing topics (Federal Work-Study and Satisfactory Academic Progress), Grad PLUS and Parent PLUS loan revisions based on federal changes

Collaboration & Connection

Continue building trust by strengthening cross-campus partnerships and expanding communications support to financial aid colleagues in the graduate and professional programs



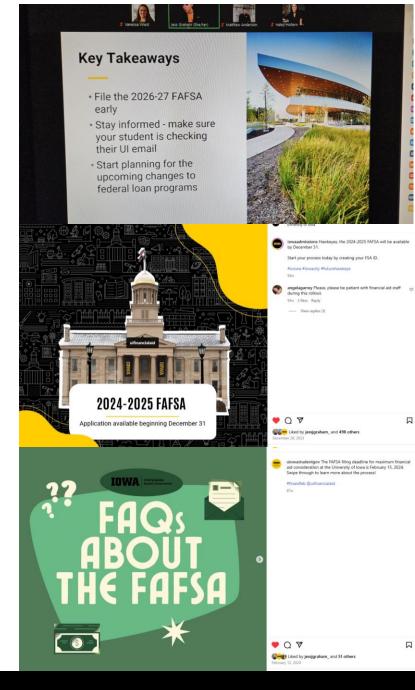
Collaborations

Spring 2024 examples

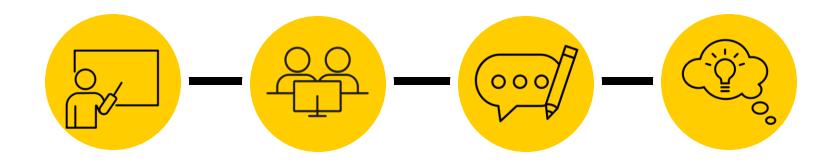
- Admissions Instagram Collab: FAFSA is Open!
- Undergraduate StudentGovernment Instagram Collab:FAQs about the FAFSA

Fall 2025 examples

- Parent & Family Programs:Website article & Parentfocused Webinar
- CLAS: newsletter & website listicle



How Can You Help?



Share accurate information

Use official OSFA links

Loop us in early

Send feedback or ideas





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Thank you

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