

Spring



2026



## Upcoming Events

### **SDASFAA 2026 Spring Conference**

Deadwood, SD  
April 28-30, 2026

### **RMASFAA Summer Institute**

Wichita, KS  
June 7-11, 2026

### **NASFAA 2026 National Conference**

National Harbor, MD  
June 29-July 2

### **RMASFAA 2026 Conference**

Fargo, ND  
October 11-14, 2026

## Happy Spring!

Spring brings with it a variety of unique traditions and superstitions from around the world, many of them charming and delightfully quirky. In Bulgaria, people celebrate the arrival of spring by exchanging martenitsa which are red and white yarn bracelets believed to bring health and good luck. In Japan, the beloved tradition of hanami invites families and friends to gather beneath blooming cherry blossoms to appreciate the brief, beautiful season of flowers. Ireland once held to the superstition that spotting a single magpie in spring could bring bad luck, but seeing two meant good fortune was on the way. And in parts of Germany, decorated eggs are hung on trees to symbolize new life and the fresh start spring offers. These traditions remind us that no matter where we live, the season inspires hope, renewal, and a touch of whimsy.

## Interested in getting more involved with SDASFAA?

We'd love to have you! Volunteering is a great way to connect with colleagues, learn new skills, and help keep our association strong. We're looking for members to serve on our various committees and if you're willing to lend a hand, please take a moment to complete the [\*\*Committee Volunteer Form\*\*](#). You surely won't regret it and your participation truly makes a difference!

# SDASFAA Spring Conference

Welcome, Detectives!

You're officially cleared and ready to join us for a conference filled with clues, connections, and a few surprises along the way! It's almost conference time in South Dakota, and our associate members and sponsors can't wait to meet you at The Lodge at Deadwood as we work together to uncover the case of student success.



We're excited to see you soon and invite you to stop by our booths to gather valuable "clues" that will help your students and families navigate the path to higher education with ease. We have plenty of helpful information to share—and of course, lots of goodies waiting for you!

Sponsors: Citizens Bank, College Ave, Earnest Student Loans, ISL Education Lending, KHESLC – Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation, Mapping Your Future, Sallie Mae, ScholarNet



## NASFAA's 2026 Leadership & Legislative Conference Shyan Smith, SDSU

I recently had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. as part of the Association Pathway. Beyond the sessions, the week was full of memorable experiences. I was able to go on a guided bus tour of D.C. which was a fun way to take in the city's history while forming new friendships with financial aid professionals from many different states.

One of the most impactful moments of the trip was visiting Capitol Hill, where I met with staff from Senator Mike Rounds and Senator John Thune's offices to emphasize the importance of strong, reliable federal aid programs for the students we serve. It was truly a wonderful opportunity, and I felt deeply grateful for the chance to represent SDASFAA. It strengthened my commitment to the work we do and the impact we make across the profession.

## Meet Our New SDASFAA President-Elect!



Pictured are SDASFAA's Past-President Tracey Buisker (left), President Tirzah Knight (center), and President-Elect Kim Nida (right)

Kim Nida has pretty much seen it all in her three decades of experience in financial aid! Although she didn't start as a Financial Aid work-study student, her work-study position connected her with the right people and landed her a temp job in the Financial Aid Office. Little did she know it would turn out to be such a fulfilling and rewarding career path.

Throughout her career she has had a hand in just about every process however her current position responsibilities include Professional Judgement, R2T4, loan certification, and summer financial aid.

She enjoys helping students and families make sense of a complicated process and feels proud knowing she's helping them reach their goals. She also loves working alongside colleagues at every level whether it be at the campus, state, or regional level.

To Kim, SDASFAA is a family, and that is her favorite part about the association. "We support each other professionally in the ever-changing world of federal regulations and often personally too – some of my best friends are my colleagues across the state and even former work-study students," Kim stated. In the President role, Kim is excited to serve this profession and our state to keep forging ahead for our students.

Kim's wise words that she frequently tells her two daughters are "work hard, have fun," and "be confident, courageous, and compassionate." When Kim isn't working, she enjoys reading, hiking, walking, working out, sports, and crocheting. Kim has a heart of gold and loves to brighten people's day by sending them cards out of the blue. Something you might not know about Kim is that she is an identical twin!

Thank you, Kim, for serving our association! We're so lucky to have you serve as our new President-Elect!