

## Governing Documents: Statement of Principles



### Part 1: General Principles of NYSFAAA

1. The activities and functions of NYSFAAA all share the underlying goal of assisting our members, within the context of their regular occupational responsibilities, to:
  - o Ensure financial access to higher education to all the students of New York State, regardless of socio-economic status;
  - o Provide useful, accurate, and timely information to students and families about college financial issues;
  - o Provide technical assistance, financial counseling, and customer service tailored to the needs of individual students and their families;
  - o Encourage early awareness of college aid programs, financing opportunities and savings options; and
  - o Administer the programs and all other aspects of the profession with the highest level of efficiency, accuracy, ethics, and professional behavior.
2. The goals above will be achieved through a variety of NYSFAAA activities, including:
  - o Providing direct NYSFAAA scholarships to students within New York State and working cooperatively with other legitimate scholarship providers and services;
  - o Organizing, sponsoring, providing, and participating in professional and program administration training and mentoring to our members and to appropriate third-parties;
  - o Organizing, sponsoring, providing, and participating in informational and awareness activities targeted directly to students, prospective students, and their families; and
  - o Working actively with funding providers, regulators, legislators, and others to promote adequate funding, administrative simplicity, equitable program rules, and systematic integrity.

### Part 2: Professional Values of Aid Administrators:

1. Students and families are the ultimate focus of our profession. ♦ We are bound by a public trust to always interact with students in the highest ethical and professional context, and to deal with them honestly regardless of potentially conflicting business objectives.
2. Since students are our primary focus, we endeavor to coordinate and align the needs of our institutions and the regulatory agencies with the needs of students. ♦ It is possible to balance the realities of regulatory compliance and enrollment management with providing exceptional financial services to students and families. ♦ Our members value their roles as advocates for the needs of students within the confines of these processes.
3. Our members never charge a fee (or honoraria) for providing college financing information or for assisting students and families with the application process. ♦ These activities are not a ♦side-job♦, they are part of our professional responsibility. ♦(Reimbursement of travel expenses is not a ♦fee♦).
4. ♦Professional Judgment♦ is a serious responsibility that has been granted to assist us to meet our commitment to access. ♦ This responsibility should never be taken lightly, but neither should it be avoided. ♦ Our purpose is to provide a path for students to achieve their educational objectives, not to provide roadblocks. ♦ Thus, the first consideration in judgments should always be the best interests of the individual student.
5. Our Active Members respect the role of the Associate Members and their significant contributions to the achievement of our goals. ♦ We will never exploit these relationships for personal gain, gifts, or other personal benefits; nor will we engage in behaviors with any vendors that would give the public cause to question our ethics.

### Part 3: Professional Values of Associate Members:

1. Our Associate members understand that NYSFAAA is a professional organization designed to assist, improve, and advance the profession of collegiate financial aid administrators. ♦ Participation by Associate Members should be based upon shared values and goals for providing financial services to students and families, rather than solely upon opportunities to increase business revenue.
2. Business interests should not be at odds with ethical service to students and families. ♦ It is possible to do ♦good♦ while still doing ♦well♦ in business pursuits. ♦ Our Associate Members provide appropriate services to students, families and schools at reasonable prices and never engage in misleading or unethical business practices. ♦♦
3. Associate members value the position of the collegiate financial aid professional in providing comprehensive financial counsel to students and families. Hence, our Associate Members support the counseling role of the financial aid officer through their business activities, and will provide collegiate financial services directly to students/families ONLY as part of a cooperative effort with the financial aid office. ♦ Associate members will never circumvent the financial aid office or otherwise impair the office's ability to counsel students through the vendor's business or marketing practices. ♦
4. Our members never charge a fee for providing college financing information or for assisting students and families with the aid application process. ♦ Profiting from these activities is inconsistent with the values of NYSFAAA.

### Part 4: Aid Office Administration Philosophy

1. The primary purpose of the financial aid office is to provide financial assistance, advice, information, and education to students who can benefit from higher education but need financial services to be able to attend.
2. The financial aid office should publish/provide any and all information necessary for the student to have a clear understanding of his/her rights and responsibilities regarding financial aid.
3. The college or university should publish budgets annually indicating total student expenses including tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, and miscellaneous and personal expenses.
4. Financial aid should be offered only after financial need has been established by means of a consistent and reasonable need analysis system. ♦♦ The amount of need-based aid offered should not exceed the amount needed to meet the difference between the students' total educational expenses and his resources. ♦An equitable distribution of all financial aid funds should be predicated on established packaging philosophies and guidelines.
5. Parents are expected to assist their children with educational costs according to their means. Students are also expected to contribute from their own assets and earnings, from both summer work and work during the regular term (where appropriate). ♦ The amount and type of self-help assistance expected should be related to the circumstances of the individual student and family.
6. The financial aid office should review its awarding policies and procedures annually and adjust them to reflect changes in financial needs and expenses of the students.
7. Process and efficiency should never trump the needs of the individual student. ♦ Systems should always be designed to accommodate exceptional or unusual circumstances.
8. Since the amount of financial assistance awarded reflects the economic circumstances of the student and his family, the office should refrain from any public announcement of the amount of need-based aid offered and encourage others to respect the confidentiality of that information.
9. All documents, correspondence, and conversations between and among the aid applicant, his family, and the financial aid staff are confidential and entitled to the protection ordinarily arising from a counseling relationship.
10. Financial aid should be administered in such a manner that other interests, though important, are always balanced against the needs of the individual student.