

2025 ILASFAA Annual Conference

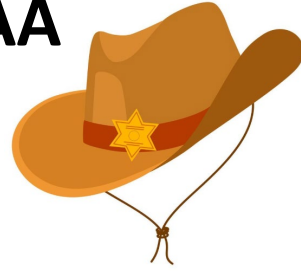


March 26-28, 2025

Embassy Suites by Hilton Hotel in East Peoria, IL



Welcome to the 2025 ILASFAA Annual Conference!



Hello Conference Attendees!

On behalf of the ILASFAA Board, I welcome you to the 2025 ILASFAA Annual Conference: Together Towards Tomorrow. It is a phrase that emphasizes the importance of working together to create a better community. It means we can achieve more when we work together. It means that we can overcome challenges, leverage opportunities, and shape our community by combining our efforts and resources. It is a reminder that we are all connected and that our actions have a positive impact on the financial aid community. Together Towards Tomorrow is a powerful message that inspires hope, unity and progress.

As we venture through the challenges of FAFSA Simplification and other uncharted territory, I hope this encourages each of us to look to our community, support each other through change, and take the opportunities to enrich the landscape of financial aid.

We also recognize the hard work and effort each of you has put into supporting not only our students and families across Illinois, but also your colleagues and the broader financial aid community. The sense of outreach and community within ILASFAA has flourished, serving as a testament to the strength and unity that stems from your hard work and mutual support. Thank you for being the backbone of this association and for all that you do to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Our conference committees have worked hard to create an engaging program that will support your professional and personal growth. I encourage you to fully engage in the sessions and connect with fellow financial aid professionals to share insights and experiences.

As we navigate the conference, I hope you find your place within ILASFAA and consider contributing your expertise to our association. Please take a moment to thank the conference program and facility committees for their dedication and make the most of the resources available in our program.

It has been my honor to serve as your ILASFAA president this past year. I've met some wonderful people in the ILASFAA community and have made many new friends. Thank you for entrusting me with this role, and I wish you a rewarding and enjoyable conference experience.

Warm regards,
Bambie Roy
ILASFAA President 2024-2025



Giving You the Lowdown... Yeehaw!

HOWDY, PARTNERS!

NEED TO SADDLE UP ONLINE?

Here's the Wi-Fi info to keep you connected. Don't let the digital tumbleweeds slow ya down - stay connected and enjoy the ride!

Network: Hilton Honors Meetings

Password: Embassy2025

ILASFAA CONNECTION APP

Y'all better grab the ILASFAA Connection app—it's free! This app's got everything you need to plan your day and jump into some great discussion groups. Once you've got it, just search for the 2025 ILASFAA Annual Conference and you're good to go. It's a handy way to stay in the loop and make the most of your time at the conference!

EXHIBITORS

ILASFAA Exhibitors will be in the house on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday throughout the conference. Make sure to swing by, tap into their expertise, and strike up some meaningful conversations.

FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

If this is your first time at an ILASFAA Conference, don't miss the Newcomers' Session on Wednesday, March 26 at 1:15 p.m. in the River E & F room. It's a great way to get your bearings and meet some friendly folks before the conference really gets rolling!

WRANGLE UP YOUR WESTERN WEAR!

Saddle up in your finest Western wear and join the fun throughout the conference! We'll be handin' out prizes for the best-dressed cowboys and cowgirls, so put on your boots, hats, and get ready for a rootin'-tootin' good time!

WEDNESDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

After dinner and the awards, come on down to the General Session room for an evening of fun, networking, and good ol' camaraderie! We've got a DJ, line dancing, a photo booth, and a cash bar ready to go. So, grab your ILASFAA friends, kick back, and have a blast! You won't want to miss it!

THURSDAY IS ILASFAA SPIRIT DAY! Wear your ILASFAA spirit wear on Thursday, March 27! If you don't have any ILASFAA gear yet, mosey on over to our ILASFAA web-store or check out more information at the ILASFAA booth.

THURSDAY EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

After the conference wraps up, you're free to enjoy dinner on your own. Whether you wanna check out some local spots or kick back and relax with a meal, it's totally up to you. Later on, we're inviting everyone to join in a lively trivia session. Test your knowledge and have a little friendly competition with your fellow attendees. It's bound to be a good time!

FRIDAY IS SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY!

Y'all, don't forget to wear your school swag on Friday, March 28! It's the last day of the conference, so it's the perfect time to show off your school spirit!



Giving You the Lowdown... Yeehaw!

CHARITY BASKET RAFFLE & 50/50 DRAWING

ILASFAA's basket raffle is back to support a great cause, along with a 50/50 drawing! Get your tickets, try your luck, and you might just wrangle one of those amazing baskets or some cash!

Raffle Ticket Prices

- \$1 for 1 ticket
- \$5 for 6 tickets
- \$10 for 15 tickets
- \$20 for 35 tickets

Note: Cash only, folks!

Tickets will be on sale throughout the conference, so be sure to grab yours! We'll announce the winners on Friday morning. Don't worry if you can't be there—you just need to give your ticket to a co-worker who'll be sticking around to pick up your prize for you.

All proceeds from the ticket sales will go to CASA Kane County, a non-profit organization that's all about advocating for kids who've been through tough times—abuse, neglect, and foster care. It's a great cause, so let's all pitch in and make a difference!

Don't forget to hitch your wagon to ILASFAA!



ILASFAA

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT
FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS

Serving Illinois Students Since 1969

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, visit us at ilasfaa.org, or send us an email at support@ilasfaa.org to stay in the loop and join the ride!



2024-25 ILASFAA Executive Board Members



BAMBIE ROY, President, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

CHELLEY JACKSON, President-Elect, Illinois State University

ELYSE WELLER, Past-President, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

HEIDI SCHMIDT, Executive Vice President, Illinois State University

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KELLY OWENS, Treasurer, Elgin Community College

NATHAN EATON, Treasurer-Elect, Illinois State University

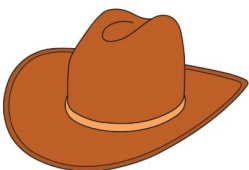
JEN STOUT, Past-Treasurer, Eastern Illinois University

LAUREN HACKETT, Northern Regional Coordinator, Oakton Community

CHRIS WISE, Chicago Regional Coordinator, University of Chicago

AMBER RIVERS, Southern Regional Coordinator, Southern Illinois University-
Carbondale

SAM NELSON, Ex-Officio, Illinois Student Assistance Commission



Meals/Snack Plans



Wednesday, March 26

- **Lunch** - Taco Bar Lunch Buffet
 - Seasoned Beef, Smoked Chicken, Flour Tortilla Shells, Spanish Rice, Refried Beans, Tortilla Chips & Salsa, Lettuce, Shredded Cheese, Pico De Gallo, Guacamole, Sour Cream, Churros
- **Dinner** - Back Yard BBQ Dinner Buffet
 - Salad Bar with 2 Dressings, Cole Slaw, Potato Salad, Brisket, BBQ Chicken Breast, Corn, Loaded Mashed Potatoes, Baked Beans, Corn Bread, Dessert Display

Thursday, March 27

- **Breakfast** - On Your Own
 - Guests at the Embassy Suites Hotel enjoy complimentary breakfast
- **Lunch** - Sunday Dinner Lunch Buffet
 - Salad Bar with 2 Dressings, Pasta and Fruit Salad, Tuscan Chicken, Pot Roast, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Rolls & Butter, Assorted Dessert Bar
- **Snack** - Ball Park Snacks
 - Cracker Jacks, Soft Pretzel Sticks & Pub Cheese, Mini Corn Dogs, Candy Bars
- **Dinner** - On Your Own
 - Please visit the ILASFAA website/app to view the restaurants within the area
 - *On Foot Like a True Outlaw! – Walking Distance 5-15 minutes*

Friday, March 28

- **Breakfast** - On Your Own
 - Guests at the Embassy Suites Hotel enjoy complimentary breakfast
- **Snack** - Grab & Go
 - Chocoholic: Mini Chocolate Bars, Chocolate Covered Pretzels, Cookies, Brownie Bites
 - Power Hour: Kashi Bars, Cliff Bars, Crudité Display, Fruit Display
 - Beverages: Body Armor, Water Station



Guest Speakers

Karen McCarthy – Vice President of Public Policy & Federal Relations, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

Karen McCarthy serves as vice president of public policy and federal relations at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), where she leads the association's federal advocacy strategy and public policy initiatives. As NASFAA's chief lobbyist and primary liaison to Congress and the U.S. Department of Education, Karen plays a central role in shaping national financial aid policy and legislative efforts.

Karen has held multiple leadership roles within NASFAA, where she has overseen public policy development, regulatory analysis, research initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. Her work has been instrumental in advancing federal student aid policy, simplifying the FAFSA process, and ensuring effective communication between policymakers and practitioners.

Her background also includes direct institutional experience in financial aid administration at Boston University and Miami University of Ohio. With a strong foundation in student advising, regulatory compliance, and technical training, Karen brings a comprehensive understanding of both policy and practice to her work.

A native of Massachusetts, she holds a master's degree from The Ohio State University and a bachelor's degree from Cornell University..

Amanda Fijal, Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA)

Amanda Fijal is the Assistant Vice President and Executive Director of Financial Aid at the University of Chicago. She has been in financial aid for 25 years, the last 15 years at University of Chicago. Amanda has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Master's in Higher Education Administration. She has served the Illinois and Midwest Associations of Student Financial Aid Administrators in a number of capacities, including ILASFAA President and Treasurer and MASFAA Treasurer, Conference Program Chair and Local Arrangements Co-Chair. Amanda is currently MASFAA Past - President. After work and MASFAA, she is settling into a new house and causing chaos in the neighborhood with her 100-pound bloodhound.



Guest Speakers

Manda Riley - Keynote Speaker

Manda Riley (she/her) is the founder of Ice Cream Social Work, where she brings a blend of high energy, humor, and expertise to professional development and team building. She's on a mission to make learning as fun as it is impactful—because who says you can't laugh and grow at the same time?

A social worker at heart, Manda spent years working in suicide prevention, mental health, stress reduction, compassion fatigue, and helping others find support when they need it most. For the past seven years, she's expanded her expertise into the wild world of financial aid, working as an advisor, scholarship coordinator, and adjunct faculty teaching financial literacy.

In 2021, she proudly earned "Outstanding New Professional of the Year" honors from both her state and regional associations. Manda is passionate about helping teams thrive through inclusive communication, holistic student advising, and PsychoGeometrics® - her signature workshop that strengthens team communication and collaboration.

If you're looking to level up your team (and have some laughs along the way), Manda would love to chat with you!

Outside of her work transforming teams, Manda proudly embraces her title as a self-care extraordinaire. Her favorite ways to recharge include snuggling with her beagle, Winston, binging podcasts and books, tending to her garden (with an unpredictable success rate), and planning her next travel adventure. Manda is deeply grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the 2025 ILASFAA Conference and is excited to connect with you!

Leaders from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

will provide insight into how they work together to continuously improve the higher education landscape in Illinois and blaze new trails for students and their families, leading to more access and opportunities. Following a review of important higher education initiatives, the panel will take questions from the audience.



Guest Speakers

Eric Zarnikow, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Eric Zarnikow is Executive Director of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, the state's college access and financial aid agency. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families – giving them access to the tools they need to make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state's scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers, including the state's flagship Monetary Award Program, ISAC can help students make those choices a reality.

Eric is a former Associate Administrator at the U.S. Small Business Administration, where he led the office of Capital Access, responsible for all the agency's programs and operations concerning financial assistance to small businesses, 800 employees and a \$90 billion loan and investment portfolio. Prior to his work with the SBA, Eric spent over 25 years in the private sector, including serving as Senior Vice President, Chief Risk Officer and Treasurer at ServiceMaster. Eric serves on several commissions and is a former trustee of The College Board. A certified public accountant, Eric received his bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and MBA from Drake University.

Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler is the Managing Director of Program Services and Compliance at the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), where she oversees the administration of ISAC's gift assistance programs. She joined ISAC in 2021 as the Director of Special Projects and Program Services, in which she led the agency's strategic planning efforts and new program development. Prior to her time at ISAC, she worked at the Chicago Urban League as the Executive Director of the Research and Policy Center and at Roosevelt University for the Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy and the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs. Her career has been spent developing research, programs, and policy in the following areas: criminal justice, education, fair and affordable housing, mental health, public health, substance use, and wealth/asset-building. Schmitz-Bechteler has her bachelor's degree in Administration and Organizational Leadership from Roosevelt University, her Master of Arts in Social Service Administration from University of Chicago, and her PhD in Social Work from University of Illinois at Chicago.

Katharine Gricevich, Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)

Katharine Gricevich is the Director of Government Relations and legislative liaison for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC). She previously worked as a legislative analyst for the Illinois General Assembly on education and local government issues.

General Sessions

Presenter	Session Title and Description	Date, Time & Location
<p>Karen McCarthy, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)</p>	<p>NASFAA - Inside the Beltway/Federal Update Grab your hat and boots and join Karen McCarthy from NASFAA as she rides into town to deliver a comprehensive update on the latest federal policy developments impacting financial aid. In this in-person session, Karen will round up the most important legislative and regulatory changes coming out of Capitol Hill and the U.S. Department of Education. Whether you're a seasoned trailblazer or a newcomer to the world of financial aid policy, this session will help you navigate the shifting landscape and prepare for what's ahead. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of the curve in the ever-changing world of federal financial aid!</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 26 2:30 – 4:00 PM River E & F</p>
<p>Manda Riley Keynote Speaker</p>	<p>Mental Health: It's Like WiFi-When It's Down, Everything's a Struggle Have you ever caught yourself saying, 'I'm fine'... but in reality, your next snack (or cup of coffee) is the only thing standing between you and a meltdown? This session is for you. Together, we will celebrate small victories (like finally responding to that email without overthinking it!), and explore why it's everyone's responsibility—no matter your job title—to help create a workplace culture that fosters mental wellness. Forget the clichés of hot baths and smelling essential oils (though we love those too!)—this session is all about practical, actionable strategies to improve your mental health, refresh your energy, and make work more enjoyable - one small victory at a time!</p>	<p>Thursday, March 27 9:00 – 10:00 AM River E & F</p>
<p>Eric Zarnikow, Executive Director; Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler, Managing Director, Program Services & Compliance; Katharine Gricevich, Director, Government Relations</p>	<p>ISAC Update ISAC's trail bosses will give an update on agency activities and provide valuable insight into what you can expect to see on the road ahead.</p>	<p>Thursday, March 27 10:30 – 11:30 AM River E & F</p>



General Sessions

Presenter	Session Title and Description	Date, Time & Location
Amanda Fijal, Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA)	MASFAA Update Please join MASFAA Past President Amanda Fijal, from the University of Chicago, as she gives the MASFAA update. This session will provide news and information about current and upcoming events.	Thursday, March 27 11:30 – 11:45 AM River E & F
John Mitchell, Deputy Chief Financial Products Officer	The Illinois State Treasurers Office: Helping students and their families plan for college Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs has created programs that begin from the moment a child is born through their retirement. The session will share tools and resources that support students with how they pay for continued education, teach students how to manage money responsibly to build a safety net, show students options for student borrowing, and emphasize that it is never too late to start saving through a 529 account. The office has nationally recognized Bright Directions and Bright Start programs along with initiatives such as the First Steps program for new parents. Additionally, the IL ABLE program supports students with disabilities and preserves their ability to save without losing their federal benefits. Treasurer Frerichs is also working on a new program, the Student Empowerment Fund, to offer Illinois students additional educational loan options.	Friday, March 28 9:45 – 10:15 AM River E & F
Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) & Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)	Illinois Higher Education Panel Leaders from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) will provide insight into how they work together to continuously improve the higher education landscape in Illinois and blaze new trails for students and their families, leading to more access and opportunities. Following a review of important higher education initiatives, the panel will take questions from the audience.	Friday, March 28 10:30 – 11:45 AM River E & F



Welcome Newcomers!

Newcomers' Session

Wednesday, March 26
1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.
River E & F

Meet & Greet with ILASFAA Board Members

If this is your first time at an ILASFAA conference, we've got a special session just for you!

Join us for an overview of ILASFAA, our committees, and how you can get involved.

Current members of the ILASFAA Board will introduce themselves and be available to answer any questions you may have.

Saddle up and come meet the crew!



Wednesday, March 26 Agenda

Time	Session	Location
8:00 am – 1:00 pm	Exhibitor Set-Up	
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Registration Open	
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Pre-Conference NASFAA Credentials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification • Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) 	River G River H
11:00 am – 4:15 pm	Exhibit Area Open	
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President’s Welcome – Bambi Roy • Charity Introduction • Lunch 	River E & F
12:45 pm – 1:00 pm	Vendor Introductions	River E & F
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace • Excel Tips and Tricks: Using Functions and Pivot Tables • Equitable Access: Navigating Barriers for Undocumented Students in Illinois • Enrollment Reporting-How to Survive & Prepare for an Audit • A Review of New ISAC Programs • New Member Session 	River I & J River H Fon Du Lac A, B, C Fon Du Lac D, E, F River G River E & F
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Snack Break & Vendor Time	
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NASFAA Inside the Beltway – Karen McCarthy (In-person with Q&A) 	River E & F
4:15 pm – 5:15 pm	Sector Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Colleges • Senior Public Institutions • Private Colleges • Health Professions • Proprietary Institutions • Exhibitors 	River E & F River E & F River I & J Fon Du Lac A, B, C Fon Du Lac D, E, F Hotel Bar
5:15 pm – 6:30 pm	Vendor Meet & Greet / Happy Hour	Hotel Bar
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Buffet Dinner - Awards	River E & F
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Entertainment – DJ /Line Dancing / Photo Booth	River G, H, I, J



Thursday, March 27 Agenda

Time	Session	Location
7:00 am – 9:00 am	Hotel Breakfast for Those Staying at the Hotel	
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Registration Desk Open	
9:00 am – 4:15 pm	Exhibit Area Open	
9:00 am – 10:00 am	General Session - Keynote Speaker <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health: It's Like Wi-Fi – When It's Down, Everything's a Struggle – Manda Riley 	River E & F
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Snack Break & Vendor Time	Vendor Area
10:30 am – 11:30 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAC Update - Eric Zarnikow, Stephanie Schmitz-Bechteler & Katharine Gricevich 	River E & F
11:30 am – 11:45 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MASFAA Update - Amanda Fijal 	River E & F
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch & Business Meeting	River E & F
12:45 pm – 1:00 pm	Vendor Introductions	River E & F
1:15 pm – 2:15 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Icon: Get Ready For A Program Review • Implementation Realities of Ability to Benefit, the Illinois State Plan • Please Stop Yelling at Me: Navigating Tough Talks and Angry Phone Calls • Trends on Financial Aid Application Completion & What They Tell Us • The ISAC Payment Trail, from Claim Requests to Close Out 	River G River H River I & J Fon Du Lac A, B, C Fon Du Lac D, E, F
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Interest Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Icon: Fantastic Financial Aid Experiences - Improving Customer Service in the Financial Aid Office • R2T4 Panel • The Advocacy Advantage: Interactive Introduction to the ILASFAA Legislative Toolkit • New Professional Employee Expectations • Secondary Confirmation, SAVE, and Citizenship Scarier than the Oregon Trail 	River I & J River G Fon Du Lac A, B, C Fon Du Lac D, E, F River H



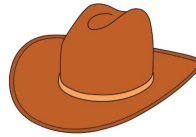
Thursday, March 27 Agenda

Time	Session	Location
3:45 pm – 4:15 pm	Snack Break & Vendor Time	Vendor Area
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm	System Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campus Solutions / Peoplesoft• Banner• Colleague• CAMS Enterprise• PowerFAIDS / Jenzabar	River E & F
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Dinner on your Own	
8:00 pm	Entertainment - Trivia	River E & F



Friday, March 28 Agenda

Time	Session	Location
7:00 am – 9:00 am	Hotel Breakfast for Those Staying at the Hotel	
8:00 am – 9:00 am	Registration Open	
8:30 am – 9:30 am	Interest Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask an ISAC Member Panel (Open Q&A) • Managing a Cross-Generational Staff • Study Abroad: Wrangling, Roping, and Herding • Undocumented Students • Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) 	River G River I & J Fon Du Lac A, B, C River H Fon Du Lac D, E, F
9:00 am – 11:15 am	Exhibit Area Open	
9:45 am – 10:15 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Illinois State Treasurers Office: Helping students and their families plan for college. 	River E & F
10:15 am – 10:30 am	Snack Break & Vendor Time	
10:30 am – 11:45 am	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illinois Higher Education Panel - ICCB / IBHE / ISAC 	River E & F
11:45 am – 12:00 pm	Closing Ceremony <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing of the Gavel – Bambie Roy • Remarks by the New President & Sneak Peek of the ILASFAA 2026 Conference – Chelley Jackson • Grab & Go Snacks 	River E & F



Wednesday, March 26, 8:30 – 11:00 AM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Alexiss Underwood, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Kathleen (Katy) Smith, Waubensee Community College	NASFAA Credential – Verification Learn the principles and processes of verifying student FAFSA data, including when verification is required, which data elements need verification, acceptable documentation, and how to handle corrections and disbursements, all to ensure accurate eligibility for federal student aid.	River G
Maureen ‘Mo’ Amos, Northeastern Illinois University; Crystal Weir, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	NASFAA Credential – Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Learn the standards for SAP, including both quantitative and qualitative measurements, the frequency of evaluations, financial aid warning and probation, and SAP appeal processes, all to ensure your school's SAP program meets federal requirements.	River H



Wednesday, March 26, 1:15 – 2:15 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Amanda Starwalt, Eastern Illinois University	<p>The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace</p> <p>Creating a positive and engaged workplace starts with understanding how people feel valued. In this session, we will explore the <i>5 Languages of Appreciation</i> as outlined by Gary Chapman and Paul White, defining each language and its impact on workplace relationships. Participants will learn how to identify which appreciation languages best resonate with individual co-workers, allowing for more meaningful and effective recognition. Additionally, we will develop a <i>Motivation By Appreciation (MBA) Inventory</i> to assist in implementing this model at work. By the end of the session, attendees will have practical strategies to foster a culture of appreciation, strengthen team dynamics, and boost overall morale.</p>	River I & J
Jeff Pierpont, College Raptor	<p>Excel Tips and Tricks: Using Functions and Pivot Tables</p> <p>This presentation will discuss and demonstrate beginning- to intermediate-level Excel tools and functions that will help financial aid professionals' clean data, organize information, and develop useful reports. Items to be covered include the CONCATENATE function (merge data fields), VLOOKUP function (find and insert data from different tabs or spreadsheets), IF functions (create logical calculations or identifiers), and Pivot Tables (generated reporting tables with filters). The presentation will include both a slide deck with detailed instructions and actual demonstrations in Excel. Questions and collaboration are strongly encouraged.</p>	River H
Ana Moya, Illinois Student Assistance Commission	<p>Equitable Access: Navigating Barriers for Undocumented Students in Illinois</p> <p>Undocumented students face continuous barriers to higher education. In Illinois, there are resources to ease the challenges of being ineligible for federal aid as well as understanding the college-going process. In this session, we will examine how to best support undocumented students, look at the current state of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and emphasize how Illinois provides opportunities when it comes to equitable access to education for undocumented students.</p>	Fon Du Lac A, B, C



Wednesday, March 26, 1:15 – 2:15 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Angela Snow, Carl Sandburg College & President-Elect of the Illinois Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (IACRAO)	Enrollment Reporting - How to Survive and Prepare for an Audit Angela Snow, will present on how she keeps Sandburg compliant with timely updates and reviews of enrollment information reported to the National Student Clearinghouse. Angela will pull from her vast experience in enrollment reporting to share best practices to avoid those dreaded audit findings.	Fon Du Lac D, E, F
Kim Eck & Sherry Schonauer, Illinois Student Assistance Commission	A Review of New ISAC Programs Come saddle up as we round up ISAC's newest gift assistance and loan repayment programs and walk you through how things are progressing on each program trail. Following a review of the programs and how they can benefit your students, we'll focus on wrangling all of your questions.	River G
Crystal Weir, University of Illinois Champaign- Urbana; Lauren Martin, DePaul University	New Member Session Saddle up and join us for a warm Western welcome to ILASFAA! This breakout session is designed especially for new members to get acquainted with the association, connect with fellow financial aid trailblazers, and learn how to make the most of their ILASFAA journey. We'll lasso up key resources, round up leadership opportunities, and help you navigate the professional development frontier. Whether you're new to financial aid or just new to ILASFAA, this session will ensure you ride off with valuable connections and insights. So, grab your hat and boots—it's time to giddy up and get involved!	River E & F



Wednesday, March 26, 4:15 – 5:15 PM

Sector Meetings

Come meet with ILASFAA colleagues within your sector to network and discuss common financial aid issues you are experiencing at your institutions.

Community Colleges

River E & F

Senior Public Institutions

River E & F

Private Colleges

River I & J

Health Professionals

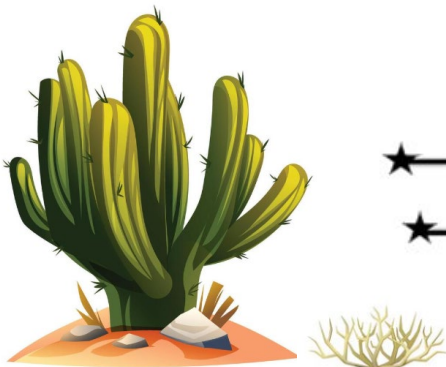
Fon Du Lac A, B, C

Proprietary Institutions

Fon Du Lac D, E, F

Exhibitors

Hotel Bar



Thursday, March 27, 1:15 – 2:15 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Tammy Harrison, Blue Icon Consulting	Blue Icon: Get Ready For A Program Review If it hasn't happened already, you likely will be involved in a federal program review at some point during your career in financial aid. Effectively preparing for the review will help your school successfully navigate the experience. Join this session to learn how to prepare, what the reviewers will evaluate, the notification process, and what to expect during and after the review.	River G
Angela Gerberding, Illinois Community College Board; Kyle Rindfleisch & Maci Feucht, Illinois Central College; Alison Mills & Patty Mendoza, Lincoln Land Community College	Implementation Realities of Ability to Benefit, the Illinois State Plan Ability to Benefit, the Illinois State Plan, has many advantages for students, but it's not widely embraced across the state. This session features a panel of Adult Education and Financial Aid representatives from two community colleges that are grappling with the feasibility of ATB implementation at their institutions. Common concerns around organizational fit, institutional buy in, and student verification processes will be discussed as well as insights on how to bring players to the table and what types of conversations to have across functional teams. Come listen in on their thoughts and conversations about the ways in which ATB is an ideal fit and ways in which it is a difficult sell. Audience members should bring additional questions of interest to their home institution.	River H
Manda Riley, Keynote Speaker	Please Stop Yelling at Me: Navigating Tough Talks & Angry Phone Calls As financial aid professionals, how can we feel more comfortable handling challenging conversations with students and families - especially when emotions run high? What about when those tough talks happen over the phone? This session blends firsthand experiences from a social worker turned financial aid advisor, offering practical tips to help you approach sensitive situations with confidence and compassion.	River I & J



Thursday, March 27, 1:15 – 2:15 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Manuel Talavera, Illinois Student Assistance Commission	<p>Trends on Financial Aid Application Completion & What They Tell Us</p> <p>Let's explore the data together! If you are interested in learning how we compare to other states across the country in FAFSA completion, this session is for you! We will discuss and analyze completion data trends for Illinois students. We will also discuss the ISAC resources and support services for students, families, and practitioners. We will also include a reflective discussion and conversation to discuss the challenges students are currently facing and best practices to further support them.</p>	Fon Du Lac A, B, C
Kim Eck & Sherry Schonauer, Illinois Student Assistance Commission	<p>The ISAC Payment Trail, from Claim Requests to Close Out</p> <p>Join ISAC staff for a trail ride down the payment processing path, stopping along the way to review the how-tos of payment claim requests, adjustments, the offset process, reconciliation and year-end close out. We'll discuss how each step is important to the journey, why it's important not to "hold up" the process, risks along the way, and how to successfully reach your destination at the end of the fiscal year.</p>	Fon Du Lac D, E, F



Thursday, March 27, 2:30 – 3:30 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Tammy Harrison, Blue Icon Consulting	Blue Icon: Fantastic Financial Aid Experiences. Improving Customer Service in the Aid Office Customer service in the financial aid office can be challenging, but it is critical to student access and success. Join this session to learn why good service is paramount for aid offices, what students want and expect throughout the process, tips for improving customer service in your aid office. The presenter(s) will share and discuss survey data Blue Icon gathered from thousands of students and offer practical advice for how schools might improve communication and transparency about financial aid while adding humanity to the process.	River I & J
Maureen ‘Mo’ Amos, Northeastern Illinois University, Nathan Eaton, Illinois State University; Consuela Phillips, MASFAA; Janet Haynes, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana	R2T4 Panel Hold onto your hats, partners! The world of Return of Title IV (R2T4) can feel like the untamed frontier, but our panel of seasoned financial aid wranglers is here to help you navigate the terrain. Join us for a lively discussion covering the latest regulations, best practices, and common pitfalls when handling R2T4 calculations and compliance. Whether you’re a greenhorn or a seasoned cowboy, you’ll leave with the tools and know-how to corral those tricky cases and stay on the right side of the law. So, saddle up and get ready to ride through the R2T4 landscape with confidence!	River G
Kathleen (Katy) Smith, Waubesa Community College; Michah Brantley, Illinois State University; Davon Maxey, University of St. Francis	The Advocacy Advantage: Interactive Introduction to the ILASFAA Legislative Toolkit The 2024 Leadership Academy presents an introduction to legislative advocacy via an interactive and action-inspiring session where participants will become acquainted with the newly published ILASFAA Legislative Toolkit and other resources available to help them launch advocacy initiatives at their own institutions.	Fon Du Lac A, B, C



Thursday, March 27, 2:30 – 3:30 PM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
Michelle Trame, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana; Karen LeVeque- Szawara, DePaul University; Dawn Kamphaus, Parkland College	Navigating Your First Year: Realistic Expectations and Practical Advice for New Employees Starting a new job can be both exciting and challenging. This session is designed to help new employees set realistic expectations and navigate their first year with confidence. We'll cover essential topics such as understanding workplace culture, effective communication, managing workload, and building professional relationships. Attendees will gain practical advice from experienced professionals, learn how to handle common challenges, and discover strategies for personal and professional growth. Join us to ensure a smooth and successful transition into your new role!	Fon Du Lac D, E, F
Heidi Schmidt, Illinois State University	Secondary Confirmation, SAVE, and Citizenship Scarier than the Oregon Trail Hop in our Covered Wagon and we will navigate these rough waters together. No need to fear snake bites or dysentery in this session. Instead, we will work together to review what Secondary Confirmation is, troubleshoot some potential fixes for students, navigate through the SAVE system, and work through some examples for better understanding. You will gain knowledge and confidence in this process and be able to help students cross the finish line.	River H



Thursday, March 27, 4:00 – 5:00 PM

System Meetings

Campus Solutions / PeopleSoft

Fon Du Lac D, E, F

Banner

River E & F

Colleague

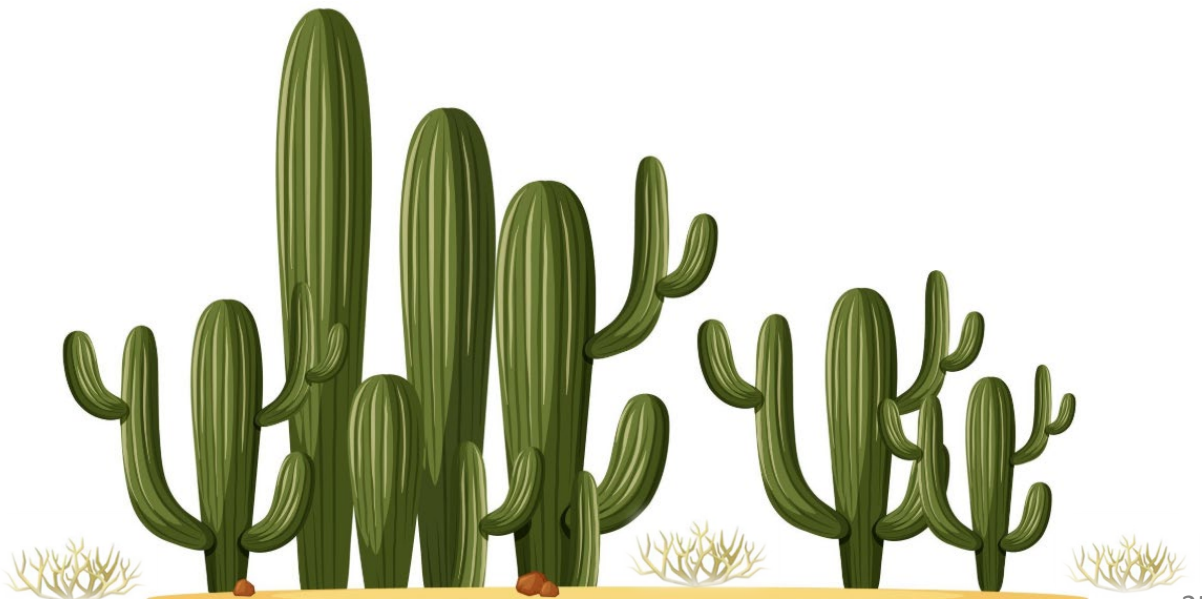
River I & J

CAMS Enterprise

Fon Du Lac A, B, C

PowerFAIDS/Jenzabar

River H



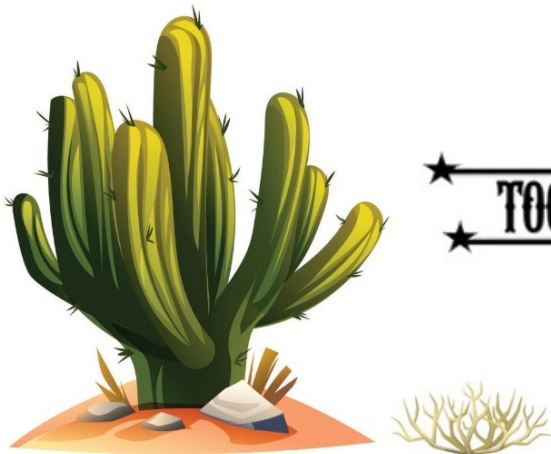
Friday, March 28, 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
<p>Illinois Student Assistance Commission</p>	<p>Ask an ISAC Member Panel (Open Q&A) Got questions about state grants, ISAC policies, or financial aid regulations? Well, partner, you’ve come to the right place! Pull up a seat at the campfire and join our Ask-a-Member panel, where seasoned ISAC wranglers will be on hand to lasso your toughest questions. Whether you're looking for guidance on MAP, AIM HIGH, or other ISAC programs, this open discussion will give you the chance to get the answers you need straight from the experts. So, dust off your boots, bring your curiosity, and get ready to rustle up some knowledge!</p>	<p>River G</p>
<p>Tim Marten, Millikin University; Laci Engelbrecht, University of Illinois – Springfield; Jennifer Schultz, Sauk Valley Community College; Chelley Jackson, Illinois State University; Heather Bode, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana</p>	<p>Managing a Cross-Generational Staff Managing a team is a lot like driving cattle across the open range—each member has their own pace, strengths, and needs. In this session, we’ll explore strategies for supervising staff from different generations, backgrounds, and motivations, ensuring everyone stays on the same trail toward success. Learn how to adapt your leadership style, foster collaboration, and keep your team engaged, whether they’re fresh out of the corral or seasoned ranch hands. Saddle up for practical insights, real-world examples, and tools to help you round up a strong, motivated, and high-performing team!</p>	<p>River I & J</p>
<p>Miranda King & Caroline Zermeno, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana</p>	<p>Study Abroad: Wrangling, Roping, and Herding We will discuss the collaborative efforts our office and the study abroad offices on our campus have made to process financial aid an organized, efficient, and coordinated manner for their study abroad education. Our different methods of collecting information will be highlighted, and we will talk about how both past and present procedures have led us to where we are now and how we operate on a regular basis for successful program implementation.</p>	<p>Fon Du Lac A, B, C</p>



Friday, March 28, 8:30 – 9:30 AM

Presenter	Session Title & Description	Location
<p>Eric Ruiz, Elmhurst University; Erika Guzman, University of St. Francis</p>	<p>Undocumented Students Take a moment to learn how to help undocumented students navigate the college process. There are assumptions that there isn't any financial aid to help undocumented students but there is, this session would be able to help understand what undocumented students have and don't have access to. This session will also help financial aid offices understand how to be when someone comes out to them and what they can do to help these students.</p>	<p>River H</p>
<p>Jay Hoffman, Veterans Education Specialist, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA)</p>	<p>Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Update on the current situation in state and federal veterans' education benefits, including recent changes in both state and federal law.</p>	<p>Fon Du Lac D, E, F</p>



Lifetime Achievement Awards

2023-2024	2022-2023	2020-2021	2019-2020	2017-2018	2015-2016	2007-2008
	Sue Swisher	Janet Ozuna Ida Brown	Paula Luff	Dan Mann	Mark Holysz	Orlo Austin



New Professional Awards

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2023-2024	Amber Rivers & Roberta Ferguson	2006-2007	Tim Wendt
2022-2023	Alexis Alvarez	2005-2006	Aimee Jimenez
2021-2022	Krystle Riggle	2004-2005	Marcia Wells
2020-2021	Melissa Sersland	2003-2004	Karen Belling
2019-2020	Daniel Matamoros	2002-2003	(Not Awarded)
2018-2019	(Not Awarded)	2001-2002	(Not Awarded)
2017-2018	(Not Awarded)	2000-2001	Rhonda Cors
2016-2017	(Not Awarded)	1999-2000	Michelle Stipp
2015-2016	(Not Awarded)	1998-1999	David Peterson
2014-2015	Aesha Engeldinger	1997-1998	Lori Hall
2013-2014	Andrew Viscariello	1996-1997	Pam Maciulewicz
2012-2013	Alex DeLonis	1995-1996	April Helm
2011-2012	Dawn Good	1994-1995	Gary Rogers
2010-2011	(Not Awarded)	1993-1994	Brian Terry
2009-2010	Janelle Wade	1992-1993	Marie Gumler
2008-2009	Mary Brown	1991-1992	(Not Awarded)
2007-2008	Jamie Petersen	1990-1991	Samuel Nelson

Sustained Service Award

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2023-2024	Dan Wellman	2004-2005	Karen LeVeque-Szawara, Janet Ozuna
2022-2023	(Not Awarded)	2003-2004	Eric Weems, Kathy Facenda, Jack Lyons
2021-2022	Debbie Forrester	2002-2003	Nancy Calvert, Cheryl Warmann
2020-2021	(Not Awarded)	2001-2002	Janeen Decharinte, Tena Jones
2019-2020	(Not Awarded)	2000-2001	Joanna Dill, Colby Sellers
2018-2019	Marcus SanMarino, Nancy Perryman	1999-2000	Bob Anderson, Howard Florine
2017-2018	Michelle Ortiz Wortel, Marchello Johnson	1998-1999	Ann Acton, Dan Mann
2016-2017	Ruth Pusich, Michelle Cornell, Samuel Nelson	1997-1998	Sally Floyd, Gary Rold, Herschel Wallace
2015-2016	Jamie Petersen, Sherry Summary	1996-1997	Dick Nelli, Donna Sobie, Mary Ann Watkins
2014-2015	Amanda Fijal, Karen Belling, Cheryl Howerton	1995-1996	Francois Hajduk, William Bushaw, Marsha Weiss
2013-2014	Salinda "Jo" Branson	1994-1995	Pamela Britton, Jone Zieren
2012-2013	Kim Eck, Michelle Stipp	1993-1994	Bruce Foote, Donna Peltz
2011-2012	(Not Awarded)	1992-1993	Richard Steudel, Pamela Wagener, Katherine Edmunds
2010-2011	Paula Luff	1991-1992	James Heeren, David Sprenkle, Loretta Franklin
2009-2010	Joanna Dye	1990-1991	John Flynn, Robert Clement, Charles Deacon Jones
2008-2009	Michelle Trame, Mary Shaw		
2007-2008	Jana Albrecht, Maureen Amos, Janet Ingargiola		
2006-2007	Mark Holysz, Terri Hare, Doug Carlson		
2005-2006	Sue Swisher, John Jennetten		



Meritorious Service Award

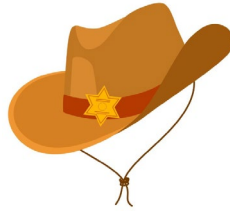
Year	Recipient
2023-2024	Bambie Roy
2022-2023	Chelley Jackson
2021-2022	Nathan Eaton Janet Ingargiola Chelley Jackson
2020-2021	(Not Awarded)
2019-2020	Nicole Jennings, Dawn Kamphaus, Bambi Roy
2018-2019	Karen LeVeque-Szawara
2017-2018	Katherine Gricevich
2016-2017	(Not Awarded)
2015-2016	Kim Eck
2014-2015	Susan Swisher
2013-2014	Jamie Malone
2012-2013	Paula Luff
2011-2012	Michelle Trame
2010-2011	Pam Lytel, Mary Shaw, Walter O'Neill
2009-2010	(Not Awarded)
2008-2009	Nancy Calvert
2007-2008	Chris Petersen
2006-2007	Bruce Foote

Year	Recipient
2005-2006	Larry Matejka
2004-2005	J. Robert Barr
2003-2004	Bill Bushaw
2002-2003	(Not Awarded)
2001-2002	(Not Awarded)
2000-2001	(Not Awarded)
1999-2000	Dan Mann
1998-1999	Dallas Martin
1997-1998	Vicki Shipley
1996-1997	Rebecca Waltrip
1995-1996	Senator Paul Simon
1994-1995	Donna Sobie
1993-1994	Sally Floyd
1992-1993	Ann Acton
1991-1992	Orio Austin
1990-1991	Pamela Britton



President's Award

Year	Recipient	Year	Recipient
2023-2024	Nathan Eaton	2001-2002	Nancy Calvert
2022-2023	Salinda Jo Branson	2000-2001	Michelle Trame
2021-2022	Kelly Owens	1999-2000	Lori Hall
2020-2021	Elyse Weller	1998-1999	Bob Anderson
2019-2020	Mary Shaw	1997-1998	Donna Peltz
2018-2019	Kim Eck	1996-1997	Sharon Sweeney
2017-2018	Aesha Engeldinger	1995-1996	Joanna Dill
2016-2017	Marcus Szymanoski	1994-1995	Dan Mann
2015-2016	Pam Lytel	1993-1994	Donna Sobie
2014-2015	Samuel Nelson	1992-1993	Howard Florine
2013-2014	Jamie Petersen	1991-1992	Herschel Wallace
2012-2013	Marchello Johnson	1990-1991	Jone Zieren
2011-2012	Cheryl Howerton	1989-1990	Francois Hajduk
2010-2011	Mark Holysz	1988-1999	Rich Stuedel
2009-2010	Jana Albrecht	1987-1988	John Flynn
2008-2009	Mary Shaw	1986-1987	Nancy Donley
2007-2008	Michelle Trame	1985-1986	John Jennetten
2006-2007	Janet Ingargiola	1984-1985	Greg Miller
2005-2006	Donna Sobie	1983-1984	B. Ann Hageman
2004-2005	Susan Swisher	1982-1983	Dennis Wentworth
2003-2004	Terri Hare	1981-1982	Steve Bellin
2002-2003	(Not Awarded)		



Thank You for Your Service!

Awards & Recognition

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Dawn Burch
Dawn Kamphaus
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Lindsay Anderson
Naomi Barr
Michah Brantley
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Eric Brewer
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Michaela Cordes
Cara Lehman

Finance

Chelley Jackson

Governance

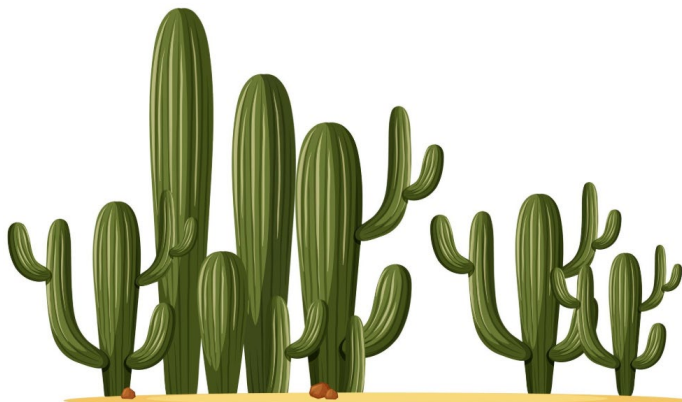
Elyse Weller

Dawn Kamphaus
Mary Shaw

Leadership Academy

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Maureen Amos
Heather Bode
Kim Eck
Mary Greenwood
Chelley Jackson
Christina Rose
Bambie Roy
Michelle Stipp
Elyse Weller



Thank You for Your Service!

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Salinda Branson

Jenna Bujarski

Kathryn Curl

Janeen Decharinte

Mary Greenwood

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Amanda Starwalt

Andrea Velazquez Duran

Dustin Zimmerman

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Roberta Ferguson

Lauren Hackett

Dawn Kamphaus

Hillary Kunz

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Amber Rivers

Mary Shaw

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Katy Smith



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Waubensee Community College

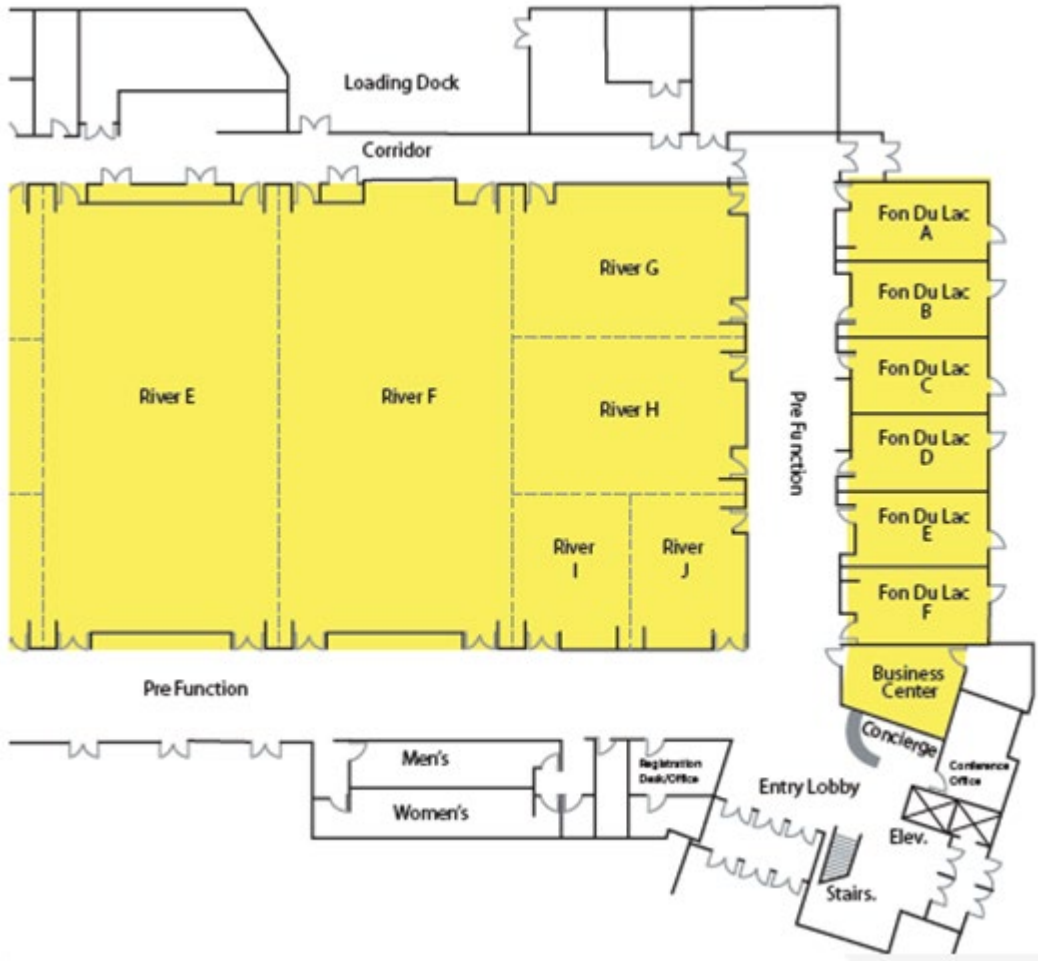
LAUREN MARTIN, Chicago Regional Coordinator, DePaul University

AMBER RIVERS, Southern Regional Coordinator,
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

SAM NELSON, Ex-Officio, Illinois Student Assistance Commission

2025 ILASFAA Conference Map

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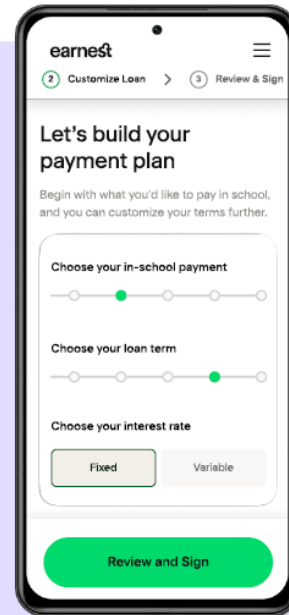
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