

2024 NASFAA Conference First-Time Attendee Task Force Final Report

August 1, 2024

Prepared by Katy Weisenburger, Task Force Chair

The NASFAA Conference First-Time Attendee Task Force Steering Committee was formed by NASFAA staff and the task force Chair, taking into consideration the type of institution, region, gender, and ethnicity of those who completed a volunteer form.

In previous years, this task force was called the Conference Mentor Task Force because it focused more on building community through conference mentors and first-time attendees. NASFAA changed its name and the goals for the 2024 NASFAA National Conference. This year, the task force was focused on two goals: connecting mentors with mentees and providing a space for **all** first-time attendees to network and feel welcomed at the conference. To that end, the task force developed the agenda for the First Time Attendees Kick-off Networking Event, communicated valuable information to first-time attendees, and hosted the First-Time Attendee Networking Event at the 2024 NASFAA National Conference in beautiful Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

- Chair: Katy Weisenburger, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Steering Committee Members:
 - Elizabeth Amador, University of New Mexico
 - Lucy Candal-Fernandez, Montclair State University
 - Angel Harmon, Kenyon College
 - Daisha Holmes, Johnson County Community College
 - Tina Jara, Nevada State University
 - Matthew Kearney, Southeast Missouri State University
 - Vandeen Mckenzie, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
 - Ben Montecillo, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
 - Brittany Tweed, Metropolitan State University
- NASFAA Staff Liaisons: Sarah Austin, Kochie Vaughan
- NASFAA Communities Manager: Tim Maggio
- Conference Mentors:
 - David Alexander
 - Cristen Alicea
 - Joan Bailey
 - Lisa Bridgewater
 - Heather Boutell
 - Ashlea Buntin
 - Brenda Burke
 - Lindsey Campbell
 - Kelly Carrell
 - Kemmoree Duncombe

- Calette Fagan-Murdock
- Jayme Jarrett
- Kristina Klemens
- Sandra Neel
- Nicole LaGrandeur
- Howard Leslie
- Charles Mayfield
- Maureen Mcrae-Goldberg
- Kevin McCrary
- Vikki Mcneil
- Cristi Millard
- Emily Osborn
- Jacqueline Outlaw
- Wendi Owens
- Consuela Perez
- James Rose
- Chad Sartini
- Janell Valdez
- Natalie Wong

The Task Force held virtual meetings on the following dates:

- March 25, 2024 (Katy, Kochie and Sarah only)
- April 16, 2024
- April 30, 2024
- May 14, 2024
- May 28, 2024
- June 11, 2024 (task force and conference mentors)

The task force also communicated via email and Slack with each other, mentors, and first-time attendees.

Communication

Information on how to sign up for a mentor was posted twice in *Today's News* and was included in the conference registration questions. In *Today's News*, a Q&A with Katy Weisenburger, Task Force Chair, was featured on May 22, 2024. Conference mentors could volunteer via an online form posted in *Today's News* on May 16, 2024. First-time attendees who signed up before June 11, 2024, were assigned a mentor before the conference. First-time attendees who showed up to the networking event and indicated an interest in being assigned a mentor were accommodated at that time. A First-Time Attendees Slack channel was created to provide additional networking opportunities. The First-Time Attendees webpage on the NASFAA Conference website was available with activities and room information for the entire conference.

Conference Mentor Program

Forty conference mentors and 53 first-time attendees were matched before the conference. NASFAA provided a list of mentors along with those first-time attendees to the task force. Mentors and mentees were matched based on region, school type, and administrative software, among other factors. Each mentor had one to two mentees and was provided an introductory email template to send to their mentees. Mentors were instructed to reach out to their

mentees by June 12, 2024. Several more first-time attendees requested mentors at the networking reception and were immediately matched with a mentor.

For mentees and mentors who were matched in advance of the conference, NASFAA offered to provide mentors with gift cards for lunch on Sunday, June 16. Mentors could receive a Visa gift card (\$15 per person) for themselves and their mentors if they chose to meet for lunch. This came as a suggestion from the 2023 conference because mentors/mentees were unable to eat before the networking event and seemed to use the desserts at the reception as their lunches. Additionally, with the networking event's focus no longer being on the mentor/mentee meet-up (instead networking for **all** first-time attendees) the task force wanted a designated time mentors and mentees could meet before the networking event. Nine mentors and 10 mentees utilized the lunch meet-up opportunity.

Networking Event

The First-Time Attendees' Kick-Off Networking Event was held on Sunday, June 16, 2024, from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in S102 ABCDE of the Baird Center in beautiful Milwaukee, Wisconsin. An assortment of desserts and light refreshments were served during the event. Katy Weisenburger, Helen Faith, Justin Draeger, and Beth Maglione welcomed the first-time attendees. Two activities energized the crowd and caused a lot of laughter.

The agenda for the event was as follows:

12:00-12:30pm	Steering Committee members arrive
12:20-12:40pm	Task Force members and First-Time attendees arrive
12:30-12:40pm	Dessert, refreshments, and networking
12:40-12:54pm	Welcome message (Katy, Helen, Justin, Beth)
12:54-1:25pm	Activities: Rock-Paper-Scissors and Colleague Connection
1:25-1:28 pm	Prizes/giveaway
1:28-1:32 pm	Closing remarks
1:35-1:45 pm	Mentor/Mentee meeting time (if have not met ahead of time)

*Please note: this schedule was modified as needed during the event.

Task Force Suggestions/Feedback:

- Keep the prizes locked away or clearly label them as prizes, as attendees took prizes off the table before the event started.
- Consider allowing more time for this event. People seem to enjoy the event!
- The convention center made a huge difference! The room was exactly how we wanted it.
- Consider having space designated for first-time attendees to connect throughout the conference (like the first-time attendee lounge that was discussed)
- Sarah, Kochie, and Tim do a great job of supporting this Task Force! We appreciate them!!