

NASAA

NEWSLETTER

FY23 | Q3

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The
Communications
Committee is
hosting a Recipe
Contest!

NASAA NEWSLETTER-CREATING A COMMUNITY

NASAA Members,

The Communications Committee is working hard to find ways to ensure you receive the information that you need as well as continue to create a community of family and friendships. So, we are kicking off our first recipe contest! Please send your favorite recipe with a picture to Shannon Lambert (shannon.lambert@veterans.idaho.gov). The Communications committee will review and vote to share all the submissions next edition!

Welcome to NASAA!

MEET THE NEW NASAA MEMBERS

Meet NASAA's Newest Members!

Lex Ann Roach, MAM



- Meet the newest member to the Nebraska SAA: Lex Ann Roach. Lex Ann began her career as the Nebraska SAA in October of 2022.
- Fun fact about Lex Ann is while attending the Broadway musical, Cabaret, she sat next to a man who babysat Bob Dylan!

Wendy Van Zeeland



- Wendy was hired on with the Idaho SAA late in December 2022 and immediately fell in love with the administrative support role.
- A self-affirmed cheese-head, Wendy moved to Idaho from Wisconsin, quickly proving that one never can have too much cheese!
- When Wendy isn't working, she enjoys spending time with her family riding ATVs, fishing, and generally enjoying all the beautiful sights in her newly adopted home state.

Lori Thompson



- Kimberly is NASAA's newest member, joining the Indiana SAA in May 2023 as its program director.
- Fun fact about this picture is it was taken during Kimberly's returning trip from Alaska. The photo was actually taken in Canada.

Lori Thompson



- Not new to NASAA, Lori returned to the Kansas SAA in April 2023 after a 3.5-year hiatus.
- When Lori isn't spending quality time with her husband and their close-knit family, she is in pursuit of the ultimate thrift - to keep or resell. As an avid picker, Lori has numerous outlets for her interest. To check out Lori's side gig, search FB for 'Lori's Loft'.

William B Graydon



- William joined the Florida SAA on March 31st, 2023 and feels very new to the SAA. William is looking forward to the NASAA conference in Vermont in late August as well as NTI later this year.
- Prior to joining the FL SAA, William was a School Certifying Official for approximately 11 years.



Meet the Professional Development Committee Chair

Gwen Hacker (KY-SAA)

What does the Professional Development Committee do and what are the committee goals?

The NASAA Professional Development Committee serves to provide training for SAA staff, monitor the professional development of NASAA members, plan and coordinate the annual National Training Institute (NTI), maintain the National Training Curriculum (NTC), and host the New Member Orientation at each NASAA conference.

How long have you been a member of NASAA, on the committee, and the Chair of this committee?

I have been a NASAA member since 2014, a NASAA Professional Development Committee member since 2020, and the chair since 2022.

What made you want to join this particular committee?

Uhh HA. I was sort of thrust into it?!? Kidding – ish. I enjoy working with new and current NASAA members, I like to make people feel welcome and I want to help provide the best education to our membership because I remember being a new NASAA member and the amount of information required for this position is overwhelming. Our committee is composed of NASAA members who are inherently helpful, extremely hardworking, intelligent, kind, and willing to serve on an active and busy committee. They are all truly the stars. I learned so much from this committee as a new member ten years ago and I only hope I am honoring their legacy.

What has been your biggest accomplishment as the Chair of this committee?

Planning and hosting what I am told was the largest National Training Institute (NTI) in NASAA history this past October in Arizona. We had 73 NASAA and VA graduates! It was awesome!

What would you say to encourage members to join your committee? How do they join?

Members of the Professional Development Committee are selected by appointment and members are chosen using several factors such as length of service in NASAA, and willingness and ability to serve as an NTI faculty member. There is representation from each NASAA region on this committee.

What is the time commitment to being the Chair of this committee?

This is a busy committee, so the Chair position is a commitment. Planning trainings for both winter and summer conferences with NASAA and VACO, conducting New Member Orientation, and planning and coordinating NTI each year keeps this committee always rolling. There is no down period, like all NASAA committees. High energy helps!

What would be the time commitment for members of the committee?

We have quarterly calls usually several a quarter, must be able to present at the annual National Training Institute each fall, must be willing to provide training updates when requested, and be willing to serve as someone in NASAA that membership can approach with training requests and feedback.

Is there anything else that you would like to share to expand on your role as the Chair or the committee's goals?

Our committee LOVES feedback and suggestions, and we are constantly looking for ways to modernize and improve training for NASAA membership. You do not have to be a Professional Development Committee member to come to us with your suggestions. We encourage it! Give us a holler!

Just for Fun

NASAA 75th Anniversary

S	E	A	L	L	I	B	I	G	T	L	T	G	Y
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Y	E	T	R	E	H	F	T	M	M	V	T	L	C
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AGREEMENT
SAA
GOVERNMENT
CONTRACT
APPRENTICESHIP
SEVENTY FIVE
COLMERY
FLIGHT
TRAINING
OVERSIGHT
CONGRESS
OUTREACH
COMMITTEE
VETERANS
LIAISON
FOREVER
LEGISLATIVE
GIBILL

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Website <https://nasaa-vetseducation.com/>

Blog www.nasaavetseducation.wordpress.com

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/NASAAVETSEducation>

LinkedIn <https://bit.ly/30QYnLo>

Storytellers Podcast <https://nasaastorytellers.buzzsprout.com>

Executive Board Updates

Greetings NASAA Members,

As we approach our 2023 NASAA Summer Business and Training Conference, it is hard to believe that it has been a year in this prestigious honor serving you as President. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you, because without you, we would not be where we are in successfully reshaping our partnership with VA. Make no mistake, we have come a long way, but there's still room for improvement on both sides in this partnership. We must continue to strive to eliminate unwelcome egos, incorrect self-understanding, interpretation of the laws, regulations and most importantly, approval concurrence dictatorship.

Director Joe Garcia invitation to NASAA's Leadership:

Director Garcia has pledged to NASAA the VA's commitment to partnership. NASAA received an invitation to attend and participate in the VA's one day online symposium to discuss issues and concerns regarding how NASAA and VA can strengthen our partnership. The invitation and participation will allow NASAA to have an opportunity to communicate directly with CELOs, ELRs and ECSS.

President Myers attendance at the Association of Veterans Education Certifying Official's (AVECO) Conference:



I recently attended the Association of Veterans Education Certifying Official's (AVECO) Conference located in Saint Louis, MO on July 9-13, 2023. AVECO asked if NASAA would present on who does what? (State licensing, SAA, and VA), catalog approval and risk-based survey. I conducted three presentations to AVECO members with 423 in person, and another 300 plus online logins.

FY23 Risk-Based Survey Assigned to NASAA:

Per Michael Marks, In FY23, the total number of Risk-Based Surveys assigned to NASAA was 1,308. As of June 30, 2023, NASAA has completed 981 RBSs. Completing 981 RBS equates to 75%.

Need help?

Some SAAs have been experiencing some unnecessary developmental and rejections of approval letters due to Patrick A. Dworakowski's Oversight Policy Advisory.

Per Janice Fisher, she has sent numerous communications to the CELOs regarding Dr. Dworakowski's Oversight Policy Advisory. According to Janice, ELRs are not to develop or reject approvals based on the sole purpose of Dr. Dworakowski's Oversight Policy Advisory. Dr. Dworakowski's Oversight Policy Advisory is only an example of what may be considered to verify program viability and not as a requirement for approval concurrence from ELRs.

If you have received an erroneous referral from Saint George Consultant Group, developmental or rejection of approval letters because of Dr. Dworakowski's Oversight Policy Advisory, please send these actions to me at fmyers@che.sc.gov.

Monthly Meeting:

President Myers and Mr. Michael Marks, Team Chief, Approval, Compliance & Liaison (223B)

Note: Michael Marks and I have dedicated a monthly meeting to discuss NASAA's ELR concerns. Members, please send your complaint(s) to your VPs and try to resolve the issue within your region. Inasmuch, I serve at your pleasure, you may send your complaint(s) directly to me if you do not want to send them to your regional VPs.

What is next?

§ 21.4155 Evaluations of State Approving Agency (SAA) performance. (a) Annual evaluations required. (1) VA shall conduct in conjunction with the SAAs an annual evaluation of each SAA. The evaluation shall be based on standards developed by VA with the SAAs.

The VA Central Office and NASAA's leadership discussed the Joint Peer Review Group (JPRG) process. The discussion led to a revision that will be forthcoming regarding the removal of the Education Liaison Representatives (ELR) from evaluating the SAA's Annual Performance Evaluations (APE). The VA's rationale for this decision was because the ELRs should not represent VA as it relates to the SAA's APE. Inasmuch, the SAA's APE will be reviewed by two members that will represent JPRG. Currently, the JPRG consists of one representative from VA and NASAA. Moreover, there has not been an effective date provided from VA as to when the revision for the removal of the ELRs from evaluating the SAAs on their APEs.

Note: NASAA's leadership fully supports the forthcoming revision with the ELRs no longer evaluating the SAAs on their APE. Although the one-on-one JPRG process has worked over the last three SAA's APEs, NASAA will still advocate to return to the four-on-four JPRG process.

Again, I would like to say thanks to each member for what you do and most importantly, how you do it! I look forward in seeing you next month in helping me to celebrate NASAA's 75th Anniversary!

Sincerely,

President Myers

Legislative News

In case you missed the updates on social media, here is a list of bills currently being monitored. Please click on the hyperlink to review the bill information to include text and updates. The Legislative Committee will continue to send out the bill tracker as well for your reading pleasure.

House Bills

No Changes as of June 20, 2023

[HR1767](#) To Amend title 38 to provide that educational assistance paid under Department of Veterans Affairs educational assistance programs to an individual who pursued a program of course of education that was suspended or terminated for certain reasons shall not be charged against the entitlement of the individual and for other purposes.

[HR1669](#) Vet-Tec Authorization Act of 2023

[HR502](#) To amend title 38 to ensure that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs repays members of the Armed Forces for certain contributions made by such members towards Post-9/11 Educational Assistance and for other purposes.

[HR1682](#) Protecting Students from Worthless Degrees Act

[HR854](#) Captain James C. Edge Gold Star Spouse Equity Act

[HR984](#) Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

[HR1169](#) VA E-Notification Enhancement Act

[HR1798](#) Protect Military Dependents Act

[HR1799](#) Employ Vets Act

[HR1255](#) Sgt. Isaac Woodard, Jr. and Jgt. Joseph H. Maddox GI Bill Restoration Act of 2023

[HR393](#) Modern GI Bill Act

[HR395](#) Time of Service Act

[HR1078](#) Veteran education Empowerment Act

[HR1635](#) To amend Title 38, to increase the amount of survivor's and dependents' educational assistance provided to an eligible individual pursuing a program of education at institution in the Republic of the Philippines.

New Bills

HR 3601 Student Veteran Work Study Modernization Act

HR 3816 To amend Title 38 to ensure that veterans may attend pre-apprenticeship programs using certain educational assistance provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

HR 3981 To amend title 38 to improve the methods by which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs conducts oversight of certain educational institutions.

Senate Bills

S498 Veteran Education Empowerment Act

S1090 A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary, to a foreign institution of higher education and for other purposes.

S350 Fry Scholarship Enhancement Act of 2023

S1090 A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update the payment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for electronic fund transfer of educational assistance, administered by the Secretary to foreign institutions of higher education and for other purposes.

New Bills

S528 Understanding the True Cost of College Act 2023

S656 To amend title 38 to revise the rules for approval by the Secretary of VA of commercial driver education programs for the purposes of veterans' educational assistance.

S777 Veterans' COLA Act of 2023

S1266 Love Lives on Act of 2023

S1309 Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2023

S1678 Vet-Tec Authorization Act of 2023

What on YouTube

April 18, 2023, Subcommittee Meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVtgsZZd1WY>

Communication Committee Reminders

NASAA now has a Threads account, and they can find it here: https://www.threads.net/@nasaa_vetsed

That Communications Committee will be conducting NASAA Storytellers interviews at the Summer Conference in Vermont and if anyone is interested in being interviewed to go ahead and reach out to Lily: saals@vs.state.ga.us

If you have pictures from WAVES, AVECO or any SAA events, please email them to Lily; saals@vs.state.ga.us



Member Committees

IHL/NCD

Hello, NASAA family. Just a quick update from the IHL/NCD Committee. The committee and NASAA continue to be flexible to the ever-changing landscape of Veterans' education due to new laws, advisories, and complex issues that arise from our approval work. Some of the items that we have been working on either directly through the committee or a subgroup formed by NASAA leadership are the construction of the uniform application, risk-based survey enhancements, and alternate ways to approve secondary school programs of education. We continue to look for ways to address issues such as allowing for electronic catalogs to be part of approvals and navigating the complexity of the independent study/online learning environment. I wish I could tell you we had the magic wand that gave us the solution to many of these issues facing SAAs throughout the country, but unfortunately, we do not. However, I am confident we are making headway by exploring ideas that will possibly lead to best practices that can be tailored to fit each SAA. I know that NASAA is making progress in addressing some of these items through discussions with our VA partners and believe we will see the fruit of our labor by the time we all get together in Stowe. So long, farewell, adios for now, but remember a sympathetic ear and support from another SAA is only an email or phone call away.

APP/OJT

The APP/OJT Committee had a very productive meeting in May 2023! We discussed how VA's change to require Enrollment Manager with few exceptions will affect employers, especially those with few trainees or governmental agency employees unable to utilize ID.me. Additionally, we discussed the Uniform Application, VA possibly researching incentivization options for private/for-profit vs. public/non-profit employers seeking approval, deemed approved Registered Apprenticeships, and DOL notifications to SAAs of newly approved Registered APP.

Friendly reminder: The SAA application process for Registered Apprenticeships is streamlined and should be the same in every state. Please "stick to the script!"

We invite everyone to attend our committee meeting at the Summer Conference. We are always looking to welcome new members, so please let us know if you are interested or have any questions. See you in Vermont!

Cooperative Agreement

Greetings NASAA colleagues! All reports indicate that it has been a busy summer on every front and mine has been no different. While serving as a medic, teaching my kids smithing, and unexpectedly finding myself caring for a half-dozen horses, I have attended numerous meeting with other NASAA members and our VA partners. NASAA members are working closely with our VA partners on RBS, uniform application, and many other topics. I try to follow along to ensure that our interests are met. The time attention, and care that our colleagues invest into their respective projects is astounding, and I want to give my sincerest thanks to everyone who chooses to make that investment.

I am once again pleased to report that Cooperative Agreement negotiations are progressing well, if somewhat delayed, and are nearing their conclusion. Communication between NASAA and VA continues to be positive, with both parties working to hammer out the final details of an agreement that will be mutually advantageous. These efforts are challenging as we are working in a period of immense and near constant change. The implementation of Enrollment Manager and other software solutions, growing pains associated with deploying a dedicated training team, and fielding newly mandated processes is consuming a lot of our VA partners' time and mental bandwidth. In short, much like ourselves, the folks at the VA are busy. Yet, they still come to the table, hear our concerns, and take counsel where they are able to do so. However, they are not always able to act upon our concerns.

The VA has been moving toward an ELR pool for some time now. For those who were paying attention and knew what they were seeing, this change was apparent as early as FY20. This has been a great concern for many of NASAA's members, myself included.

The VA's Approval Compliance and Liaison (AC&L) team has by and large made this change in their operational structure successfully, but not without some difficulties. Close working relationships with our ELRs has been perceived as the cornerstone for many States' professional engagement with the VA. Losing these close relationships has been and is challenging for many of us. Given availability and demands upon current staffing, successes demonstrated by improved unit performance numbers, and unambiguous statements by VACO, it seems unlikely that we will see a move back to the previous AC&L structure that included an ELR assigned to each State. The ELR pool is here to stay. This change leaves some gaps that NASAA and the VA will need to work together to bridge. We will need to determine with whom quarterly meetings are to be conducted, where and how to submit reporting, and what other details have been lost in

the shuffle. On our end, discussions over particular institutions or approval issues will need a bit more care and forethought in order to communicate clearly with AC&L staff who may not have intimate knowledge of the specifics of certain schools or of an SAA's idiosyncrasies. On the VA's end, AC&L staff will need to become much more closely aligned in how they conduct business. To these ends, NASAA has assisted with the production of vastly improved ELR job aids that VA is working to deploy by the start of FY24. Both parties are working in several different venues, including the Agreement itself, to ease stress and ensure that our workload is made up of tasks that are meaningful and necessary with minimal time and effort wasted.

Continuing in partnership, with the needs and value of both parties recognized, is how we move forward during these changing times. Neither party can progress unilaterally and the FY24 Base Agreement, as it is progressing, reflects that fact. Although I still feel some trepidation over the last few unresolved issues, I am excited to share the final negotiation results this summer. At the least, am confident that my NASAA colleagues will be able to leave their torches and pitchforks at home. The partnership between NASAA and the VA is, right now, the best that I have personally ever seen it. NASAA's members are benefiting from these strengthened ties, with more on the horizon.

Military Transition Assistance

The military transition process is not only for service members transitioning to college campuses. The transition process includes transitioning from service member to the civilian workforce or from transitioning from student veteran to the civilian workforce. According to a recent military-transition.org survey, half of surveyed veterans indicate that their transition to the civilian workforce was more difficult than expected and agree that their transition was confusing. Individuals with an increased risk of a problematic transition included service members in the Army, female service members, enlisted service members, individuals with only a high school diploma, and individuals with more than 4 but less than 20 years of service. To prepare for the transition process, schools or places of employment can encourage transitioning service members to establish post-uniform priorities, identify marketable skills, and translate their skills for civilian employers.

Professional Development

The Professional Development Committee has been working on scheduling trainings for the upcoming Summer Conference in Stowe, Vermont and we are excited to meet any new members who will be attending the New Member Orientation in Stowe as well! The dates for the 2023 National Training Institute have been set for October 23-27th with the location in San Antonio, TX!

Audit

The Audit Committee is expected to review NASAA's financial for the current fiscal year.

Flight

Hello NASAA Members! Feeling thankful for the contributions of members of the Flight Committee and support from Executive Board. Since our last report out in February and our last April meeting, the Committee focused on the compliance requirements of those IHLs who contract with an approved NCD vocational flight school in partnership of offering a degree program of study with flight component. Using Liberty University in

Virginia as a case study analysis, the Committee reviewed the history of the initial approval in 2015, areas of non-compliance, and the impact to SAAs on the outcome of continued approval of Liberty University.

Other topics coming up in Fourth Quarter are Risk-Based Surveys (RBS) with IHLs in-house flight degree programs and NCD stand-alone vocational flight schools. For those members who have completed their first RBS surveys with flight, we will share our experiences and use the opportunity to talk about improvements in process and best practices.

The Committee is also looking forward to the long-awaited revised Job Aide for flight (formerly the ELR Checklist) to include fine tuning in NCD vocational flight approval requirements under 3672 and a more streamlined process for in-house IHL/flight and contracted flight programs.

An invite has been extended to VA leadership to the Flight Committee Meeting in Stowe, Vermont on Monday, August 28 for a deeper discussion on the provisions of 3672 and NCD vocational flight schools.

Committee is scheduled to meet on July 19 before Summer Meeting in Vermont.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee continues to monitor and promote the NASAA 2023 legislative agenda.

Constitution and Bylaws

The committee is excited about the upcoming amendment proposals we will be sharing with the membership in July, prior to our Summer 2023 Annual Business and Training Meeting in Stowe, Vt. As we continue to grow, NASAA must continue to think innovatively and ensure that our Constitution and Bylaws anticipate the growth and future needs of the organization. I'm so proud of the work my committee has completed this year.

Unfortunately, this will be my last year serving as Judge Advocate and Chair of the Constitution and Bylaws committee, as I will not be seeking reelection for the 2023-2024 membership year. If you are interested, I encourage you to nominate yourself during nominations, and feel free to reach out to me for any insight. I also encourage our members to join the committee as a member. It is an opportunity to become familiar with the constitution and bylaws that govern our organization and is a great way to get involved for anyone who is looking for a smaller NASAA commitment. Please feel free to reach out to me at everetted.jackson@maryland.gov.

Automation and Technology

The Automation & Technology Committee is focused on collaborating with the VA to and requirements pertaining to technology. They are also reviewing options to migrate and expand the NASAA website.

Honors and Awards

Honors, Awards, Membership, and Alumni Committee has joined the Conference Planning, Communications, and History & Archives Committees in preparation for the jubilee. Among the projects we are working on; we are working together to design the 75th Anniversary Coin, Work Anniversary Pins, and NASAA Lapel Pins. A Link went live for Summer Certificate of Appreciation Nominations on 6/28/23. All submissions are requested to be in by 8/7/2023. Along with other committees, we always need membership photos and request all share as able.

Defining the criteria for Honorary Lifetime Membership selection continues to be a challenge. We have agreed that better tracking of members' contributions over the years is needed. We have not figured out the continuity piece or system to record the varied and numerous data points necessary.

Archives & History

The Archives & History Committee continues to be focused on helping our 75th NASAA Anniversary.

Thank you committee members for your dedicated efforts!

Check out the Committees page of the [NASAA website](#) to learn more about and join a committee.