

Date	Time	Agenda Item	Session Title	Session Description
Sunday, 10/25/26	6:30 PM - 9:00 PM	Dinner	Dinner - Conference Committee	
Monday, 10/26/26	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast - Conference Committee	
Monday, 10/26/26	8:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Exhibitor Setup	Exhibitor Setup	
Monday, 10/26/26	9:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Registration	Conference Registration Open	
Monday, 10/26/26	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM		Beverages available	Beverages available
Monday, 10/26/26	9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	Exhibitor Area Open	Exhibitor Area Open	
Monday, 10/26/26	11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	General Session 1	Conference Kickoff: PASFAA President's Welcome/Business Meeting	
Monday, 10/26/26	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	General Session 2	PASFAA Committee-ment: Becoming a Rock Star Committee Chair	Great committees don't happen by accident—they happen because of strong leadership. Whether you're a new chair or looking to take your committee to the next level, this session will explore practical strategies for setting a vision, facilitating productive meetings, engaging volunteers, delegating effectively, and keeping projects on track. Through real-world examples, interactive discussion, and a few lessons borrowed from the world of rock and roll, you'll leave with tools and ideas to help your committee perform at its best. Inspired by the belief that great committees don't just perform—they perform together.
Monday, 10/26/26	12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Lunch	Monday Lunch Buffet & EASFAA Update	
Monday, 10/26/26	1:30 PM - 4:15 PM	Exhibitor Area Open	Exhibitor Area Open	
Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	Concurrent Session Block 1		
Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	1	PA State Grant/RTSS Academic Progress Reviews	
Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	2	Leadership	

Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	3	AI in Financial Aid - What Works, What Doesn't, and What Comes Next	Artificial intelligence is rapidly making its way into financial aid offices, but not all AI tools are created equal. In this session, we'll explore how financial aid professionals are using AI today, where generic AI tools fall short, and why purpose-built, regulation-informed AI is critical for navigating complex student scenarios. We'll discuss the importance of data security, FERPA considerations, and regulatory grounding, and invite participants to share their own experiences, questions, and concerns about adopting AI responsibly in financial aid operations.
Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	4	Beyond the Content: Lessons Learned from Five Years of College Student Financial Wellness	The University of Pittsburgh Financial Wellness Center was launched during the 2020–2021 academic year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past five years, our team has learned that traditional financial literacy topics alone are often insufficient to address the real financial challenges students face.
Monday, 10/26/26	1:45 PM - 2:35 PM	5	Montessori Pedagogy in Higher Ed: Communications with students	Finding yourself repeating things over and over? Dealing with students and families with big feelings? Congratulations! You're halfway to early childhood education! I'm a former Montessori Toddler guide who has found Montessori pedagogy immensely helpful. Let's talk.
Monday, 10/26/26	2:35 PM - 3:00 PM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!
Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	Concurrent Session Block 2		
Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	1	Clock Hour Programs (Packaging, R2T4s, attendance, etc)	
Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	2	The Red Flag Game (Verification)	Conflicting information is a serious red flag! Join this interactive, game-style session where participants work in teams to review real-world inspired financial aid files and identify potential red flags across verification, professional judgment, and conflicting information scenarios. Attendees will decide whether each file is clean, needs follow-up, or presents a compliance concern, then we will break down the regulatory guidance and best practices behind each decision. This session focuses on building consistency in file review, strengthening documentation, and increasing confidence in spotting issues early while keeping it engaging, practical, and a little competitive.

Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	3	On the Bridge: Steering Social Media with Intention	Financial aid offices sit at the center of some of the most urgent, emotional, and misunderstood conversations on campus. On the Bridge: Steering Social Media with Intent helps administrators shift from reactive posting to purposeful communication that clarifies processes, reduces misinformation, and supports students at scale. Rather than treating social media as an extra task, this session shows how to use it as a high-impact service tool—one that improves outreach, reduces call volume, and reinforces compliance-friendly messaging.
Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	4	Cohort Default Rates in a Post-COVID Era: What's Changed and What's Next	The return of federal student loan repayment has created a new reality for Cohort Default Rates (CDRs). Years of COVID-era payment pauses, flexibilities, and temporary relief measures significantly changed borrower repayment behavior and resulted in artificially low default rates. This session will examine what has changed in the post-pandemic environment, what institutions should expect as the 2024 cohort and beyond begin to emerge, and proactive strategies schools can implement now to reduce default risk and support student borrowers.
Monday, 10/26/26	3:00 PM - 3:50 PM	5	Beyond Burnout: Reclaiming Energy in Financial Aid	Financial aid offices are fast-paced, high-pressure environments. Between constant regulation changes, busy seasons, and supporting students through stressful situations, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and burned out. This interactive session will take a real look at what burnout actually looks like in financial aid and why it happens. We'll talk through practical, realistic ways to manage stress, recognize the warning signs early, and build habits that help you stay grounded during peak times. We'll also explore simple ways teams and leaders can create a more supportive and sustainable work environment. Participants will walk away with strategies they can actually use right away to feel more balanced and supported in their day-to-day work.

Monday, 10/26/26	3:50 PM - 4:00 PM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!
Monday, 10/26/26	4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	General Session 3	OB3: Adjusted Loan Amounts for Less Than Full Time Annual Enrollment	Don't call it loan proration. That still exists. But there is a new wrinkle being introduced as part of OB3 that arrived this Fall -- adjustments to Direct loan amounts for annualized less than full time enrollment. This is a new paradigm, and there is complexity here. Come join us as we take a look at some examples, and review the rules (as best we know them now).
Monday, 10/26/26	5:00 PM - 5:30 PM	Break	Check into hotel rooms and head to the President's reception next!	
Monday, 10/26/26	5:30 PM - 7:00 PM	President's Reception	President's Reception	Come one, come all! We would like to celebrate the long year we've had!
Monday, 10/26/26	7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Dinner on your own	Business Partners Hosting Dinner Outings	Sign up for a restaurant and Business Partner host so you don't have to eat alone! It is a fun way to meet people without any stress! Each person pays on their own and transportation will be provided via Uber/Lyft.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Breakfast and FAMS System Roundtables	Breakfast and Financial Aid Management System Roundtables	Grab your breakfast and sit with your other colleagues who use the same financial aid management systems as you! We will have tables for schools that use Banner, Colleague, PowerFAIDS, Peoplesoft, and Workday. Join others to talk through the most recent financial aid changes with OB3 to compare notes.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Conference Registration Open	Conference Registration Open	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	8:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Exhibitor Area Open	Exhibitor Area Open	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	General Session 4	The Trust Gap: What Cost Confusion Means for Financial Aid Leaders	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	9:30 AM - 10:00 AM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!

Tuesday, 10/27/26	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	General Session 5	State Higher Education Policy Updates	Join PDE colleagues us for a review and discussion of recent higher education policy changes and implementation across Pennsylvania in 2025-26 and 2026-27. New policy topics will include the PA FAFSA Completion Requirement; an overview of the State Board of Higher Education's newly passed Strategic Plan; an overview of PA Workforce Pell 2026-27 program determination process and next steps. Implementation and recurring updates for existing policies will include Transparency in Costs and Financial Aid related to Act 69, with a focus on learnings from the 2025/26 academic year. Relevant updates on federal financial aid policy including new student loan provisions may be included with ample time for sharing and Question and Answer with department colleagues.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:00 AM - 11:15 AM	Break	Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	Concurrent Session Block 3		
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	1	Judgment Day: Tackling Professional Judgment with Confidence	This presentation will provide financial aid professionals with practical guidance on exercising Professional Judgment authority in compliance with federal regulations and discuss different institutional policies that can be considered. Attendees will review common PJ scenarios, documentation best practices, and recent regulatory updates if applicable. Participants will leave with strategies and tools to support consistent, student-centered decision-making.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	2	Transactional vs. Transformational Customer Service	Exploring how to elevate the customer service we provide to our students

Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	3	Navigating Federal Loan Changes: Evolving Borrower Needs	Federal loan reform has reshaped borrowing options for parents and graduate students, creating new challenges for institutions across the academic cycle. This session brings schools and lenders together to focus on forward-looking preparation as campuses transition from fall billing into spring enrollment and financing periods. School panelists will share strategies for implementing loan reform and communicating changes in federal loan limits, private loan readiness, and implications for admissions yield. Lender representatives will offer insights into how the industry is adapting to increased reliance on private student loans and evolving borrower demand. Attendees will leave with practical tools and communication strategies to support borrowers, strengthen enrollment outcomes, and navigate the changing loan landscape in the terms ahead.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	4	Why Personality and Leadership Styles Matter for Communication, Difficult Conversations, and your Mental Health	This session briefly reviews some of the popular personality and leadership assessments (DiSC, Myers-Briggs, Enneagram) and provides discussion to help you understand yourself and your team and why you work together the way you do. We will discuss practical scenarios and give you tips you can implement to enhance communication and improve your workplace culture.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	11:15 AM - 12:05 PM	5	Supporting Student Veterans: Benefits, Insights, and Best Practices	Veterans bring unique strengths—and unique challenges—when transitioning from military service to higher education. This session equips financial aid professionals with the tools to support veterans (and future veterans) effectively. Learn five key things veterans want you to know, explore strategies for building trust and collaboration, and gain a clear understanding of the education benefits available to veterans. Walk away with practical insights and actionable steps to help those who served succeed in the classroom and beyond.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	12:05 PM - 12:15 PM	Break	Transition to the President's Hall for our program and lunch!	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	12:15 PM - 12:35 PM	General Session 6	PHEAA CEO Update	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	12:35 PM - 2:00 PM	Lunch and General Session 7	Membership Luncheon, Welcome Past PASFAA Presidents, and Awards	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Past Presidents and Award Winners - Pictures	Photos for Past Presidents and Award Winners	For Past Presidents and award winners, please plan to have your pictures taken!

Tuesday, 10/27/26	2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	General Session 8	PA Grant and Special Programs Update	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:15 PM - 5:00 PM	Exhibitor Area Open	Exhibitor Area Open	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	The Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center has a great refreshment break area with fountain sodas, coffee, hot tea, and fun snacks! We are pleased to offer these throughout the days of the conference!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	Concurrent Session Block 4		
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	1	Pennsylvania National Guard EAP/MFEP Benefits for Servicemembers	Discussion about the Pennsylvania National Guard Educational Assistance Program and Military Family Education Program changes and updates.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	2	Audit findings related to 7/1/26 changes: Issues from One Big Beautiful Bill and Issues from the new R2T4 rules	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	3	Importance of Updating Policies and Procedures	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	4	Permission to Create: How Creativity is an Essential Skill – Yes, Even in Financial Aid!	Financial aid professionals navigate complex regulations, counsel students through life-altering decisions, and solve problems no policy manual fully covers — every single day. That is creativity. They just haven't been calling it that. Permission to Create invites financial aid professionals to tap into their creative side — not as a frivolous detour from “real” work, but as a restorative practice that sustains energy, generates new ideas, and reconnects participants with a part of themselves that gets crowded out in compliance-heavy environments. This session gives participants repeatable self-care tools they can carry long after the conference ends.

Tuesday, 10/27/26	3:30 PM - 4:20 PM	5	More Than a Paycheck: Transforming Student Employment into Real Office Impact	More Than a Paycheck: Transforming Student Employment into Real Office Impact shares how the Financial Aid Office at the University of Pittsburgh transformed student employment from a simple check-in role into a meaningful part of daily office operations. Through mentorship, clear expectations, and intentional training, work study students became active contributors supporting projects, office workflows, and student services. This presentation will highlight lessons learned, challenges faced, and practical strategies for building a student employment program that benefits both the office and the students themselves.
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	Concurrent Session Block 5		
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	1	Reuniting the PASSHE Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	2	Reuniting the State Related Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	3	Reuniting the Institutional Support Services Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	4	Reuniting the Graduate/Professional Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	5	Reuniting the Health Sciences and Career Technology Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	6	Reuniting the Private Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	4:25 PM - 5:15 PM	7	Reuniting the Public Two-Year Sector Family!	Birds of a feather session with others from your sector within PASFAA!
Tuesday, 10/27/26	6:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Dinner	Dinner Buffet	
Tuesday, 10/27/26	7:30 PM - 10:00 PM	Entertainment	Game Night and Dessert! Including "Escape from Default Island: An Interactive Adventure for Financial Aid Professionals"	In addition to corn hole and other games available for you to play with friends after dinner, we will have "Escape from Default Island" for all of us to work together and play! We need some fun--we've all been working so hard and need a minute for play! Stranded on Default Island, your mission is clear: work together, solve puzzles and escape before time runs out! This immersive escape room experience blends fun and friendly competition with practical learning about federal student loan default. Are you ready to escape?
Wednesday, 10/28/26	7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Breakfast	Breakfast	

Wednesday, 10/28/26	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	General Session 9	Fraud in Financial Aid	Fraud has been a growing issue in higher education, we will discuss trends, tools, and changes from ED to help you protect your institution from fraudsters.
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Exhibitor Area Open	Exhibitor Area Open	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	Concurrent Session Block 6		
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	1	Loan Repayment Counseling	Loan Repayment Changes and Strategies
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	2	Change Management	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	3	PA Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP) CIP Code Updates and Grow PA Grant Program Overview	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	4	Designing an Aid Strategy, Not Just Packaging Students	This is where directors can really differentiate: a. Aligning aid awarding with enrollment, retention, and equity goals b. Tradeoffs between leveraging aid vs. access c. When to deviate from traditional packaging models d. Using data to justify strategy shifts to leadership 👉 Bonus: show before/after outcomes from a strategy change.

Wednesday, 10/28/26	9:15 AM - 10:05 AM	5	Building Trust Through Financial Aid Counseling	Financial aid counseling is often one of the most important conversations students and families have during the college decision process. With changing FAFSA regulations, increasing college costs, and growing concerns about student debt, families are looking for more than just a breakdown of numbers , they want guidance and reassurance. Many families do not know what questions to ask or even where to begin. Being able to identify concerns, guide the conversation, and explain information in a clear and approachable way is critical to helping families feel informed and supported. This session will focus on practical strategies for leading effective financial aid conversations while helping students and families better understand affordability, financing options, and the long-term impact of borrowing. Through real-life examples and common counseling scenarios, attendees will explore ways to simplify complex aid information, navigate difficult conversations with empathy, and build trust during high-stress situations.
Wednesday, 10/28/26	10:05 AM - 10:30 AM	Break	Snack and Beverage Break/Visit the Business Partners/Check out the charity baskets at the Business Partner tables!	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	General Session 10	Inside the Beltway/Federal Update	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	PASFAA Closing Business Meeting, and Charity Basket Raffle	PASFAA Closing Business Meeting/Passing of the Gavel, and Charity Basket Raffle Winners Announced	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	12:30 PM - 1:00 PM	Exhibitor Area Breakdown	Exhibitor Area Breakdown	
Wednesday, 10/28/26	12:30 PM - 2:00 PM	PASFAA Executive Council Meeting	PASFAA Executive Council Meeting	