

Celena Tulloss, FAAC®

Certified Financial Aid Administrator

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY:

Dedicated higher education professional with over twenty years of progressive experience in leading teams, administering student financial aid and supporting enrollment goals. Strong record of leadership, communication skills, public speaking, and collaboration with faculty, staff, senior administration, and various outside agencies and organizations. Superior level of competency and knowledge of federal and state regulations to ensure institutional compliance. Focus on customer service, student success, and student access.

EDUCATION:

M.A. in Educational Leadership and Administration

B.S. in History and Political Science

Union College

Barbourville, KY

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE:

Director of Scholarship Integration and Operations

2023 - Present

University Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

The University of Utah

Salt Lake City, UT

- Leads comprehensive planning, management, and coordination of institutional and external scholarships, including waivers and other gift aid/benefits
- Implements efficiencies in integration of policies and practices affecting scholarships and financial aid.
- Monitors compliance with federal, state, and institutional regulatory and policy guidelines to ensure effective operations.
- Serves key role in the university's effort to attract and maintain a qualified and diverse student body.

Director

2021 - 2023

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN

- Serve as the Chief Financial Aid Officer
- Member of the Enrollment Management Leadership Team
- Provide direction and strategic planning for the University's financial aid strategy
- Responsible for the administration and operation of the University's Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Supervise and provide leadership to 30 non-exempt and professional staff
- Responsible for departmental budget totaling \$1.67 million and Financial Aid budget totaling over \$285 million, including federal and state programs, institutional grants and scholarships

Senior Associate/Deputy Director

2012 - 2020

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN

- Serve as the official liaison and training officer for Financial Aid to the University "One Stop"
- Serve as the chief operating officer for the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Present to university staff/faculty and education professionals about topics including but not

limited to the Satisfactory Academic Progress process, Federal Student Aid program reviews, and university awarding policies

- Build partnerships with various university stakeholders to promote best practices for student retention of financial aid and university compliance
- NCAA Division I and Southeastern Conference (SEC) financial aid compliance and administration in coordination with Associate Athletic Director for Compliance
- Managed the implementation of a new document imaging system for the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, including the design of workflows to increase efficiency and improve award processing time
- Continued duties and responsibilities of the Associate Director position

Associate Director

2008 – 2012

Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville, TN

- Responsible for daily operations and compliance of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Member of numerous University Committees: SIS Student Information System Committee, Transfer Taskforce, Financial Aid Appeals Committee, Advising Committee, Athletic Eligibility Committee
- Participated in all strategic planning activities of the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Worked closely with Admissions, Academics and Enrollment Management to meet deadlines and goals
- Monitored state and federal policy changes to update Financial Aid Policies and Procedures
- Conducted campus and community informational sessions and “Financial Aid Nights”
- Managed all Federal Title IV and Tennessee state grant accounts, totaling over \$175 million
- Successfully managed the transition from the Federal Family Educational Loan Program to the Federal Direct Loan Program
- Assisted in the annual review of the UTK financial aid packaging philosophy
- Served as the primary audit resource for the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Served as the primary Financial Aid contact for the transition to the Banner Student Information System and monitored ongoing upgrades
- Explored and researched automation available to replace manual processes
- Trained new staff and offered continual training opportunities for existing staff members
- Handled all escalated student complaints and customer service issues

Executive Director of Financial Aid

2007 – 2008

Office of Financial Aid

Lincoln Memorial University

Harrogate, TN

- Responsible for the disbursement authorization and reconciliation of federal loans at the DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine, totaling \$6.8 million
- Served as the NCAA Title IX Coordinator for the University, helped ensure gender equity in athletics and campus-wide
- Continued duties and responsibilities of the Director of Financial Aid position

Director of Financial Aid

2004 – 2007

Office of Financial Aid

Lincoln Memorial University

Harrogate, TN

- Served as the Chief Financial Aid Officer
- Responsible for the administration and operation of the University’s Office of Financial Aid
- Conducted campus and community informational sessions and “Financial Aid Nights”
- Member or Chair of numerous College Committees: Enrollment Management, Datatel Student

Information System “CORE” Committee, Student Awards Committee (Chair), Financial Aid Appeals Committee (Chair)

- Participated in all strategic planning activities of the University
- Authored and monitored the Financial Aid strategic plans and assessment plans
- Responsible for departmental budget totaling \$205,000.00 and Financial Aid budget totaling over \$35 million, including federal and state programs, institutional grants and scholarships
- Supervised six and one half professional staff members, two administrative staff members and 3-4 student employees
- Authored and continually edited the Financial Aid Handbook including development of policies and procedures
- Provided Financial Aid awarding and disbursement tracking and reporting
- Maintained a Stafford Loan default rate less than 3% annually
- Maintained Financial Aid audit records for all students

Assistant Director

2003 – 2004

Office of Financial Aid

Lincoln Memorial University

Harrogate, TN

- Assisted the Director in all supervisory and reporting roles
- Awarded and authorized disbursement of federal, state and institutional grants and loans
- Completed the Federal Verification process using tax information for aid applicants
- Represented the Office of Financial Aid at campus and community functions
- Attended all applicable professional development conferences and trainings available
- Coordinated the daily operations of the Financial Aid Office during the vacancy of the position of director of financial aid

Adult Service Specialist

2001 – 2003

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program

Bell-Whitley Community Action Agency

Pineville, KY

- Awarded and administered federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant funds
- Determined program eligibility and qualified funding
- Worked closely with University Financial Aid Offices to determine aid amounts and remaining need
- Served as a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) preparer
- Marketed and promoted the WIA program educational offerings to the public at large
- Served as the program representative at community and inter-office events
- Advised displaced workers, On-The-Job Training participants and educational assistance clients

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INVOLVEMENT:

Tennessee Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA)

- Past-president, July 2015 – June 2016
- President, July 2014 – June 2015
 - Represented Tennessee financial aid professionals as board member of the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC)
 - Served as the primary contact for higher education financing legislative concerns
 - Presided at all TASFAA board meetings and conferences
- President-elect, July 2013 – June 2014
- Public Four-Year Sector Representative and Conference Committee Chair July 2011 – June 2013
- TASFAA New Aid Officer Workshop Training Instructor, April 2017; April 2013
- TASFAA Fall Training NASFAA Credential Instructor, Application Process, October 2016

Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (SASFAA)

- Association Governance Committee Chair, July 2023 – Present
- Past-president, July 2022 – June 2023
- President, July 2020 – June 2022
 - Elected for two consecutive terms
 - Served as the primary contact for higher education financing legislative concerns
 - Presided at all SASFAA board meetings and conferences
- President-elect, July 2019 – June 2020
- Vice-president, July 2017 – 2019
- Chair, Electronic Services Committee, July 2016 – June 2017
- Member, Site Selection Committee, July 2016 – June 2023
- New Aid Officer Workshop Faculty, Summer 2016
- Executive Board, Tennessee State President, July 2014 – June 2015
- Member, Conference Committee, July 2017 – present; July 2009 – June 2010

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

- Member, Policy Rapid Response Network Taskforce, October 2020 – Present
- Executive Board Member, SASFAA Regional Representative, July 2022 – June 2023
- Chair, Federal Work-Study Taskforce, December 2022 – Present
- Presenter and Committee, Leadership & Legislative Conference, CFAA Forum, February 2023
- Board Observer, two terms, July 2020 – June 2022
- Member, Conference Local Arrangements Committee, July 2013 – June 2014