

Lee Andes, 2008-09

I had the privilege of taking leadership of NASSGAP immediately following the fall 2008 conference. As some of you may recall, that was when the market crashed and began the recession. My most vivid memory of that New Orleans conference was of me panicking when I realized I had forgotten the president's gift for outgoing president Cargill. Imagine trying to find an appropriate gift, with an inscription, in a new city, and you need it in two days. An inauspicious beginning for one who would presume to lead, but a couple of trolley rides and missed sessions later it worked out.

The next month was when President Obama won the election. Kind of cool sending a congratulations letter on behalf of NASSGAP; you know... one president to another. This would be the last year that NASSGAP would have a full spring conference, but as the impact of the recession settled in we realized that our spring attendance was likely to implode. To protect NASSGAP, we renegotiated our contract with the Washington Court Hotel and combined the spring Executive meeting to coincide. I'll always be grateful to Ms. Cash for her flexibility and accommodation. Attendance was low (29 attendees while we had originally budgeted for 47) but we still had a successful meeting.

Most of my term was spent scrambling to help NASSGAP prepare for and ride out the recession financially. Along the way, we managed to find time to continue to work with various people in DC. NASSGAP supported the proposed Grants for Access & Persistence with some caveats/concerns, advocated for extension of and state agency administration for the Challenge Grant, prioritized continued funding for LEAP, advised caution as the FFEL Program phase-out was considered, and conducted a simplification survey to determine which questions on the FAFSA were needed by the states. A very busy year but my term ended perfectly on a Florida beach at the fall 2009 conference after handing the gavel over to Lois Hollis.