

# *Alicia Keaton*

## **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

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Dynamic and dedicated professional with over 30 years of progressive experience in higher education administration, specializing in financial aid and enrollment management. Known for a proactive approach, innovative problem-solving, and delivering results that align with institutional objectives. Demonstrates expertise in compliance, financial stewardship, and leveraging data-driven insights to foster student success. Skilled in cultivating cross-functional partnerships and guiding large teams with diplomacy, collaboration, and strong leadership to support university-wide goals.

## **CORE COMPETENCIES**

- **Strategic Leadership & Vision:** Driving impactful change across large-scale university operations.
- **Data-Informed Decision-Making:** Leveraging data for insights to guide policy and strategy.
- **Cross-Functional Collaboration:** Building alliances across departments for integrated outcomes.
- **Compliance Expertise:** Ensuring strict adherence to federal, state, and institutional guidelines.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Streamlining processes for maximum effectiveness and cost-saving.
- **Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution:** Handling complex challenges with diplomacy.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

#### **Interim Associate Vice President, Enrollment Planning and Management**

2023 - Present

- Oversee strategic planning and execution for Undergraduate Admissions, Student Financial Assistance, and University Registrar departments, guiding a team of over 120 staff members.
- Oversight of operational budgets exceeding \$15M, with a focus on both financial stewardship and impactful outcomes.
- Achieved FTIC enrollment goals for two consecutive years: 8,200 students for 2023-24 and an anticipated 8,800 students for 2024-25, sustaining academic rigor with an average weighted GPA of 4.2 and SAT scores above 1330.
- Successfully managed and maintained an enrollment of over 69,000 students and a SCH production of 750,000, directly supporting the university's revenue and academic growth metrics.
- In collaboration with the Registrar Office and others, contributed to the graduation of over 15,000 students in the 2023-24 academic year, helping advance UCF's mission to increase its educated workforce and community impact.
- Secured \$2 million recurring institutional funding to enhance customer service operations, outsourcing phone support for Undergraduate Admissions, Student Financial Assistance, and Registrar services, significantly improving response times and overall student satisfaction.
- Collaborated cross-departmentally to implement the FAFSA Simplification Act, utilizing external IT support for a seamless transition and compliance with federal updates in financial aid requirements.
- Introduced a financial aid leveraging tool through Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) to optimize merit- and need-based aid allocations, sustaining both yield and retention rates for the

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undergraduate student population.

- Participated in the rollout of Ad Astra Analytics and a centralized scheduling initiative, bringing data-driven decision-making into the core of campus planning and academic operations.

## **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

### **Director, Office of Student Financial Assistance**

2013 – 2022

- Directed the administration of \$600 million in financial aid, supporting over 80% of UCF's student population and ensuring rigorous compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies.
- Led a dedicated team of 45 full-time staff members, enhancing professional development opportunities and cultivating an environment focused on student-centered financial aid service delivery.
- Collaborated closely with institutional leadership and external stakeholders to streamline scholarship processes, improving disbursement efficiency and supporting UCF's strategic goals for student access and success.
- Managed the distribution of \$130 million in CARES/HEERF emergency grant funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, guaranteeing timely and compliant aid disbursement to affected students.
- Chaired the UCF Scholarship Committee, strategically allocating scholarship funds to maximize impact on student retention and progression.
- Forged partnerships with UCF's leadership, state financial aid organizations, and key external stakeholders to drive collaborative best practices in financial aid administration, ensuring alignment with emerging regulatory requirements.
- Demonstrated strong financial stewardship through effective budget management and program oversight, consistently achieving cost savings and operational efficiencies.
- Established an innovative year-round training program for staff development, including the creation of an online financial aid training module to onboard and train new hires efficiently.

## **UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**

### **Senior Associate Director, Office for Student Financial Affairs**

2011 – 2013

- Managed a 24-member team responsible for verification, awarding, outreach, and advising functions across satellite campuses, including medical, dental, law, veterinary, pharmacy, and health professions schools.
- Led the verification process for 7,200 student files each year, ensuring precision in federal compliance while delivering timely service to students.
- Oversaw financial aid for more than 800 study-abroad participants each semester, maintaining compliance with federal and institutional policies for international funding and program eligibility.
- Supervised the financial aid office's role in New Student and Family Orientation, providing essential financial literacy and support to 6,400+ incoming freshmen annually.
- Established the Financial Literacy Center, equipping students with critical skills in budgeting, credit management, and identity protection, contributing to the financial well-being of the student body.
- Directed the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) appeals process, with 1,500 appeals reviewed annually, ensuring fair and compliant decisions for students facing academic challenges.
- Led the communications team in developing student-facing materials, including print

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publications, web content, and instructional videos, ensuring clarity and accessibility in financial aid communications.

- Managed the Florida Opportunity Scholars Program with a \$15 million budget, overseeing recipient selection, renewal processes, and five-year budget projections to sustain the program's impact.

## **WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Associate Director, Office of Student Financial Aid**

2005 – 2011

- Directed the Client Services Unit, managing all customer service functions and supervising a team of 2 Assistant Directors and 18 Financial Aid Officers.
- Transitioned the financial aid call center to an external vendor, improving customer service delivery and reducing wait times without disruption.
- Revamped the financial aid website, introducing tutorial videos to aid student navigation and information access.
- Instituted a year-round training program for staff focused on the Ellucian Banner system and financial aid fundamentals, ensuring high levels of competency and service excellence.

### **Assistant Director, Office of Student Financial Aid**

2000 - 2005

- Led various operational programs and projects within the department, focusing on service improvements and compliance with federal standards.
- Supervised the Client Services and Operations units, managed a Federal Program Review for Title IV Return of Title IV funds, ensuring all calculations were done correctly and all funds returned to the Department of Education.
- Ensured accurate Title IV fund calculations.
- Acted as a key implementation leader for Ellucian Banner Financial Aid system, training staff during the launch and ensuring a smooth transition.

### **Financial Aid Officer I/Financial Aid Technician**

1993 - 2000

- Counseled and advised students daily regarding their financial aid eligibility.
- Accurately completed the verification review process as well as loan certifications/originations for students daily.
- Managed a weekly schedule of client service duties for other financial aid officers.
- Served as liaison for a TRIO program known as Project 350.
- Assisted in the coordination of releasing "financial" holds for students for the purpose of registration thereby increasing retention of our student body.
- Trained and supervised student "peer counselors" workers with answering general financial aid inquiries from students at the front counter as well as incoming telephone calls.
- Provided financial aid workshops for high school students, incoming freshman, transfer students, and parents.

## **EDUCATION**

**Wayne State University**

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Master of Business Administration – Management, 1996

## **Michigan State University**

Bachelor of Science – Social Science, 1991

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- **AACRAO SEM:** American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers – Strategic Enrollment Management (2023 – Present)
- **SACRAO:** Southern Association of Collegiate Registrar and Admissions Officers (2023 – Present)
- **FACRAO:** Florida Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (2023 – Present)
- **NASFAA:** National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (1993 – Present)
- **SASFAA:** Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (2011 – Present)
- **FASFAA:** Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (2011- Present)
- **COSUAA:** Coalition of State University Aid Administrators (2013 – 2023)
- **CollegeBoard:** (2023 – Present)

## **PROFESSIONAL AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES**

- NASFAA Conference Program Taskforce Chair – 2025
- Diversity Leadership Program Committee – NASFAA, 2021-2024
- Conference Committees – NASFAA (2020, 2023, 2024); SASFAA (2021); FASFAA (2023)
- COSUAA Steering Committee – 2021-2022
- Strategic Planning & Student Support Initiatives – UCF (Retention Intervention Team, Knights Emergency Fund, Seal of Excelencia, Graduation Success Team)
- ECMC Student Advisory Council
- UCF First Generation Student Advisory Board