**NABS Notes January 2016**

*The National Association of Blind Students --*

*A proud division of the National Federation of the Blind.*

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**NABS at Washington Seminar**

Despite the weather, NABS was able to hold its annual Winter meeting, which featured presentations from students, information about the KNFB Reader app, breakout sessions, state reports, an encouraging speech from President Riccobono, and much more. We were also able to still hold our annual NABS Café, where we auctioned off some great items. This year, we held the NABS Café in conjunction with an NFB reception which was held just beforehand, and we appreciate everyone who came out to both events. NABS was thrilled to provide students in need with funding to help them attend Washington Seminar, and this program was such a success that we hope we can do so in the future as well. If you could not attend Washington Seminar this year due to the weather or other causes, you were missed, and we’ll catch you at the next one!

**The NFB National Scholarship – APPLY TODAY!**

Are you legally blind?

Do you reside in the United States, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico?

Are you pursuing or planning to pursue a full-time, postsecondary course of study at a U.S. institution in the 2016 scholastic year?

Are you available to attend the entire NFB National Convention in Orlando, Florida from June 30-July 5, 2016?

Are you eager to meet Federation leaders and network with some of the brightest, most passionate mentors out there?

If you said yes to all of these questions, then we strongly encourage you to apply to our 2016 National Scholarship Program!

To recognize achievement by blind scholars, the National Federation of the Blind annually offers blind college students in the United States and Puerto Rico the opportunity to win one of thirty merit-based, national-level scholarships ranging in value of $3,000 to $12,000. All scholarships awarded are based on academic excellence, community service, and leadership.

Visit our website at [www.nfb.org/scholarships](http://www.nfb.org/scholarships) to begin your application!

Remember: applications, along with all necessary documents, must be submitted no later than March 31, 2016. Do not wait until the end of February to start gathering additional information and beginning the online form.

**The NFB National Scholarship: Upcoming Membership Call**

Are you interested in applying for an NFB national scholarship, but have some questions about forms, requirements, the application process, or the national NFB convention that scholarship winners attend? Then join NABS on February 28 at 7 PM eastern as we hear from a scholarship committee representative about all of the ins and outs of the scholarship application and program. Dial into the conference line to participate using the following information: phone number (605) 475-6700, access code 7869673. Come get all of your scholarship-related questions answered!

**Let Your Voice Be Heard: Release the Regs Petition**

It’s high time that all blind people have equal access to the Internet, and signing the NFB’s We the People petition will help us get closer to doing just that. In 2010, President Obama promised to ensure equal access for people with disabilities, by issuing regulations that will apply the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to the web. While these regulations wouldn’t change the web directly, they will give guidance to webpage developers on how to make their sites accessible for all. Visit the following URL to sign your name:

https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/direct-us-department-justice-promptly-release-ada-internet-regulations

Share with friends, family, and colleagues so that the Internet can be accessible to everyone!

NOTE: Once you sign the petition, your name will not be formally submitted until you receive an email confirmation. Go to the URL in the email to confirm your signature.

**Self-Advocacy in Higher Education Toolkit**

Equal access in higher education is an ongoing priority issue for the National Federation of the Blind. To better address blind students’ needs and to help prevent or mitigate access barriers, the NFB has created Version 1.0 of the Self-Advocacy in Higher Education Toolkit. You can view the toolkit here:

<https://nfb.org/self-advocacy-higher-education> ]

Please take time to review and share this toolkit, and provide your suggestions for additional content to Valerie Yingling, paralegal, at [vyingling@nfb.org](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/h/utp1lc3nxifo/?&cs=wh&v=b&to=vyingling@nfb.org). Your feedback is critical in helping to make this a toolkit that best meets the needs of blind college students.

**NABS Monthly Blog Update**

In the beginning of January, we released a blog about the holiday
celebrations we have at our NFB training centers. If you have not had
an opportunity to read this update yet, no worries. It is never too
late to have a little more holiday joy. You can check it out at
[http://nabslink.org/content/holiday-fun-our-home-away-homes](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fnabslink.org%2Fcontent%2Fholiday-fun-our-home-away-homes&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNHyT1s0LSwFAW3p_dara-3uI1V3lg) .

Stay tuned for our February post. If you have any blog ideas or articles
you would like to submit, you can email Bre Brown at bbrown@nfbtx.org . Stay tuned for the exciting blog updates that February is sure to hold!

**Help Needed: Blind Zoologist**

Hello NABS. I have been asked by a colleague to assist in an effort to find blind individuals who study or work in the fields of zoology or animal science. This is related to an effort to stop a school from discriminating against a blind student wishing to enter this field. They need to hear from blind people who have experience to demonstrate that blind individuals can work in these fields. If you or anybody you know has work experience in any of the following jobs, please contact me, Sean Whalen, at nabs.president@gmail.com so I can put you in touch. This is very important and has major implications for the field of study or a young blind individual. Please contact me at your earliest convenience if you know anybody who has worked, or if you yourself have worked in these fields:

Entomologist, Fish Culturist, Fishery Biologist, Herpetologist, Ichthyologist, Lepidopterist, Marine Biologist, Migratory Game Bird Biologist, Ornithologist, Protozoologist, and Wildlife Biologist (all these jobs fall under zoologist) or Animal Nutritionist, Animal Scientist, Beef Cattle Nutritionist, Dairy Scientist, Poultry Scientist, and Swine Genetics Researcher (all these jobs fall under animal scientist)

Thank you very much for your assistance!

**State Updates**

All updates are printed below as they were received from their senders.

**Connecticut:**

We just recently held our first conference call for 2016. Topics

 discussed were events at Washington Seminar, fundraising with

 different supermarkets, how to get more people involved with the

 student devision, and how we can improve on using social media to

 remind people that we will be holding our conferences.

**Kansas:**

The Kansas Association of Blind students was proud to send four students to Washington Seminar, despite the rescheduled flights and weather. At Washington Seminar, we sold various flavors of nuts that are made in Wichita, and it was very successful. The Kansas Student Division is the home of 5 of the AIM HE Act letter testimonials, and we are happy to be growing our numbers, advocating for accessibility for blind students, and becoming a thriving student division.

**Maryland:**

Greetings from the snow-covered state of Maryland! We in the Maryland Association of Blind Students continue to form

 lasting friendships, recruit new members into the movement, and carry

 on the work of the Federation in various ways. On January 9, the MDABS

 Board conducted our annual retreat, in which we set goals and

 brainstormed ideas for the year ahead. We've decided that we want to

 recruit at least 10 new members by the end of the year, and our

 Membership/Communications Committee is already hard at work making

 sure we reach that goal. We're also working on a number of fundraising

 ideas, from a trivia night to a craft show to a talent competition, as

 well as a spring seminar on a to-be-determined topic. Finally, we had

 a strong student presence at our affiliate's Day in Annapolis, showing

 our state legislators that students too are passionate about our

 legislative priorities. Stay tuned to NABS Notes for more exciting

 news from Maryland. Do you want to get involved in MDABS's work? If

 so, please email mdabs@nfbmd.org. We'll be glad to help you get

 involved!

**Massachusetts:**

MASSABS had our 5th consecutive quarterly social at Border Cafe with 14 in attendance, beating last year's winter social by 4. This is particularly impressive considering the weather and the fact that many schools were not in session yet. We discussed legislative updates, upcoming state convention, scholarships, and elections.

 Speaking of convention, we are actively preparing our state convention agenda, registration should be up shortly. Our convention is February 26-28 in downtown Boston. Anyone and everyone is welcome. There will be a student seminar, business meeting, and yearly update during general session by the students, karaoke night, pizza and trivia night, and so much more.

**Nevada:**

Hello fellow Federationists! Some exciting community relations projects are finally coming to fruition. Down in our Las-Vegas group of students, we have held several events within the community, in order to increase our presence, and increase the retention of our membership. The most notable one is our, soon to be annual, ice-skating event–that is, we collaborate with a local ice rink, and invite out loads of people to come out and have fun.

 In our Northern Nevada group, we have been working diligently to receive official recognition from the University of Nevada. According to the University, recognition is eminent. When we receive this recognition, we will have opportunities to network with officials at the local and state level, interact with administrators at the University, and create an integrated environment within our chapter.

**North Carolina:**

NCABS was able to send two students to Washington Seminar, and we hope to send more next year when the weather is hopefully not an obstacle! On January 30 in Raleigh, NCABS, the Parents Division in North Carolina, and the Envisioning Youth Empowerment Retreat staff all collaborated to put on a seminar all about IEPs. We hope to do more informational sessions like this in the future so that blind parents and students are aware of their rights in the school system.

**Pennsylvania:**

PABS is thrilled to have sent 6 students to Washington Seminar from all across the state! We also collected 6 AIM HE Act testimonials ranging from a variety of institutions. PABS is working to increase its active membership, its social media presence, and are planning a student seminar for the spring. We are excited to move forward with these initiatives!

**January NABS Board Meeting Minutes**

Disclaimer: These meeting minutes were recorded prior to Washington Seminar. They were abbreviated on account of the previously planned board meeting to be held at Washington Seminar. Unfortunately, due to weather, that meeting did not occur.

National Association of Blind Students

Board Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2016

Meeting called to order at 8:30p.m.

Members Present:

Sean Whalen (President)

Candice Chapman (1st Vice President)

Bre Brown (2nd Vice President)

Kathryn Webster (Secretary/Treasurer)

Hindley Williams (Board Member 1)

James Garret Mooney (Board Member 2)

Chris Nusbaum (Board member 3)

Michael Ausbun (Board Member 4)

Treasurer’s Report:

Checking account: $4,413.58

Savings Account: $2,165.95

Committee Reports

Communications:Holiday blog went out at the beginning of the month. We continue to increase our social media presence. Please get your states to send Hindley state updates.

Fundraising: We raised $240 at the AppleBees breakfast fundraiser! We are awaiting news on the Chiptole fundraiser…stay tuned!

We are funding 25 students to attend Washington Seminar, with the help from national’s match.

Legislative: Final collection of letters for equal access to education. Please get collect as many from your states.

Sign the whitehouse.gov petition regarding Internet regulations.

Membership: Membership call for the month of February regarding scholarships.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, concerns or suggestions. The NABS Board works for you, and we want to know how we’re doing! Thanks for reading, and we’ll be back in February.

The National Federation of the Blind knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back.