

# ASPANA NEWS

JANUARY 2010

ASSOCIATION of SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS

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## ASPANA Chair's REMARKS:

### Implementing the Strategic Plan

Peter H. Vlases, Executive Director, ACPE: Pharmacy

*First, I want to wish all* readers of *ASPANA News* a happy and healthy 2010! As we start the new decade, I'm sure all of us are reflecting a bit on what the future holds. In the July 2009 issue of *ASPANA News*, I shared with you the strategic plan that ASPANA members developed to guide our organization's path to the future. In this issue, I want to emphasize that our strategic plan is not a document that sits on a shelf and collects dust. Much has already been begun or completed for some of the 2010 ASPANA strategic action goals.

**Goal:** *Redesign the website to strengthen communications with ASPANA members and other significant constituencies.*

The ASPANA website has been redesigned. Not only is the site more aesthetically appealing but important enhancements

**Goal:** *Develop a means for ASPANA members to discuss the use of technology in the accreditation process.*

In the fall of 2009, a Task Force made recommendations to the ASPANA Board of Directors on the institution of a BLOG (a.k.a. Weblog) system to supplement the ASPANA email communications via our Listserv. The recommendations came after the BLOG was pilot tested and desirable features were incorporated. The Board approved moving forward with the development of the BLOG for ASPANA members to communicate better not only on technology issues but also on categories or topics of interest to subgroups of the membership. At this point, only members of ASPANA will be able to post messages to specific categories of the BLOG. Stay tuned for a roll-out message which will be distributed via the ASPANA List.

**Goal:** *Complete a gap analysis of ASPANA operations between the current ASPANA and its aspirational goals.*

The study of ASPANA operations, current perceived opportunities for improvement, and the issues that will need to be considered with the transition in the future to new

leadership after the retirement of Cynthia Davenport, is underway. The Board has begun to discuss projected staff and office needs and the future location of the ASPANA office. The results of the gap analysis will be carefully considered versus financial capabilities of ASPANA. Appropriate improvements will be undertaken, in a cost-effective manner.

**Goal:** *Assess lessons learned during negotiated rulemaking to implement the Higher Education Opportunity Act.*

Monitoring and evaluating the USDE "NegReg" procedures has kept the External Recognition Issues Committee (ERIC) and Cynthia Davenport quite busy last fall. Meetings continue in January and February 2010. ERIC has communicated matters of interest to ASPANA members and will reflect on the entire process once all aspects have been completed.

The screenshot shows the ASPANA website homepage. At the top, there is a red header with the ASPANA logo and the text "ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Principles, Role & Function, ASPANA Members, and Membership Info. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains the text "THE ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS" followed by a paragraph describing the organization's mission and a section titled "Specialized & Professional Accreditation". The right column contains a sidebar with links for Meetings, Future Meeting Dates, ASPANA Governance, Board of Directors, ASPANA Bylaws, ASPANA Core Values, and Member Code of Good Practice. At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information and contact details.

have been introduced. The site has been reorganized so that items that visitors are looking for are easier to find. In addition, a Search function has been added to enable visitors to have quick access to desired information. The Member's Only section has been enhanced and will provide a chronological history of minutes from previous meetings and of Executive Director reports. The plan is to have this section be the official repository of historical ASPANA documents.

*As you can see*, the ASPANA strategic plan goals for 2010 are guiding board, staff, task force, and committee actions and important progress is being made. I will provide further updates in the future, including at the Spring meeting in Chicago, as these and other strategic goals are addressed. ■

# ASPA's ProD Through the Eyes of a New Participant

Jennifer S. Anderson Warwick, MA  
CAAHEP - Accreditation Review Committee for the  
Anesthesiologist Assistant

*The Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Program (CAAHEP) is an accrediting agency that accredits 20 different allied health professions that are represented by 16 Committees on Accreditation (CoA).*

**One thing I learned** early on with CAAHEP was the fact that each CoA is distinctly different and has its own way of achieving the same goal...recommending to CAAHEP accreditation for a program that deserves it. Each CoA recruits and trains site visitors, hosts accreditation and site visitor training workshops, requires self study reports, conducts site visits, and so on, but each CoA has its own way of doing it. This is the same impression I had when I attended my first Professional Development (ProD) session at the Fall 2009 ASPA meeting.

For many years Kathy Megivern, JD, CAE, Executive Director of CAAHEP and Vice-chair of ASPA, has been a strong proponent of CoA staff attending ASPA meetings; she says that everything she has learned about accreditation she learned at ASPA meetings. I was fortunate to receive one of five scholarships the CAAHEP Board offered to attend the Fall 2009 ProD session. I soon had the same impression I had at CAAHEP meetings years ago...there is no one way to do something. Even when accrediting agencies have different practices, yet, in a way, they all seem similar.

A few highlights and tangibles from the ProD session....

- ❖ Copies of Post Site Visit Questionnaires and Peer Evaluations. Some eerily similar to what CAAHEP has used for years.
- ❖ Incorporate a panel of experienced site visitors that share their tips on preparation for a site visit during a site visitor training workshop.
- ❖ Incorporate a component of the site visitor training workshop where the participants can simulate an actual site visit.
- ❖ Hold the site visitor training workshop separate from a conference to ensure attendees are refreshed and not over stimulated from several days of CE and meetings.
- ❖ An effective site visit team has the ability to weave several stories together to get the real story.
- ❖ Email a timeline to the site visit team captain with tasks and deadlines for each site visit.
- ❖ Accreditation staff hosts a conference call with the site visit team one week prior to the site visit to review concerns of the program.
- ❖ If possible, send a staff person on each site visit in addition to the site visit team. The staff person writes



the report, ensures consistent interpretation of Standards, and consults on policy. Also, the staff person can identify gaps in site visitor training.

- ❖ Refer to exit summation or exit report, not exit interview. (This was an ah hah! Sometimes the most obvious points are overlooked!)
- ❖ Approximately 10 accrediting agencies pay an honorarium to site visitors. (This is an area that several CAAHEP CoAs have discussed, but has not gone beyond that.)
- ❖ Provosts do care about attending opening and closing sessions and meeting the site visit team. (I thought the Dean level was sufficient.)
- ❖ "JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM." Program officials prefer to hear about the deficiencies in meeting the standards apart from a conversation about potential ways to improve the program. Recommendations for improvement are fine; however, focus on the real issues.
- ❖ Ask the program to include in the Self Study Report a list of changes made since the last comprehensive review, including the citations in the letter awarding accreditation and what the program did for the corrective actions.
- ❖ One accrediting agency schedules the site visit two years in advance, even before the notice of when the self study report is due!
- ❖ Conduct a customer service survey with ALL the constituents covering areas including: accreditation materials, accessibility of materials, accreditation staff members, accreditation site visit process, and value of the accreditation process.
- ❖ Send post site visit questionnaire results to the team after an accreditation action has been taken.
- ❖ Provide an annual report card to each site visitor.
- ❖ Create a checklist for site visitors.

This may have been my first ASPA meeting, but it will not be my last. It seems all accrediting agencies have their own unique way of achieving the same goal...awarding accreditation to those programs and schools that deserve it. Fortunately, one benefit of ASPA is learning from each other's trials and tribulations as we each strive to do our own work better! ■

# Autumn in St. Louis a Great Place to Be

By Kathleen Megivern, Executive Director, CAAHEP:  
Allied Health Education Programs

**With the Arch on one side** and beautiful Busch Stadium on the other, downtown St. Louis proved to be a terrific location for ASPA's Fall 2009 Meeting. The weather was gorgeous with terrific baseball weather for the Cardinals' home stand and blue skies for ASPA.

The Members Only session was valuable, as always. One question prompted some interesting discussion about how (or if) various agencies deal with anonymous complaints and the potential dangers of not doing so. As a result of that conversation, we'll be having a session at the Spring 2010 Meeting on legal issues and we've asked three attorneys with strong accreditation experience to address that question (among others).

Technology was one of the overriding themes of the Fall meeting and we had a chance to see some of it at its best and its worst! The Sunday afternoon session on Web 2.0 Technology was seriously hampered by the fact that the pre-

ordered internet connectivity was not available when needed in the meeting room. The presenters did a great job with what was available and attendees still found value in the session. Who knew we'd learn about DimDim, Flashmobs and the "Hammer Pants Dance"?!?!

The Monday morning session focused on International Accreditation and was both useful and interesting even for those attendees who do not currently accredit internationally. Panelists were selected to cover the spectrum, from one agency that is winding down its international activities to another that has jumped in with both feet and now operates an office overseas.

Of course we had the usual business meetings and lots of time to socialize at lunch and during the breaks and receptions. This networking time often turns out to be a highlight of ASPA meetings because we have so much to learn from and share with our colleagues.

The Meeting Evaluation forms make it clear that Fall 2009 was yet another successful meeting for ASPA. We look forward to being together again in Chicago in March. ■

AT THE REQUEST OF MEMBERS...

## Spring Meeting Includes Important Schedule Change

**On Sunday March 28**, the members of ASPA and the ASPA Board of Directors will meet in a closed, "Members Only" meeting from 1:00 - 3:30pm and then convene at 4:00pm for the annual members business meeting. Please note the change of the member business meeting to Sunday afternoon from Monday morning.

The Members Only Meeting starting at 1:00pm will be longer than usual to give ample time for members to raise topics and participate in an accreditation "policy briefing" and discussion. The member business meeting starting at 4:00pm is open to observers who have registered for the meeting. The annual board and committee elections and other official business will be conducted. Members will want to be present to discuss the proposed FY11 budget and dues (prior to board action on Monday morning). In addition, FY10 accomplishments and FY11 goals will be reviewed and reports from Committees and Officers, along with any other reports on member issues will also be received and discussed. At this time, members will also hear reports from other constituencies, and address any new business that may arise. Sunday will end with a reception, starting at 5:30pm. We hope to see all registered attendees at the reception.

The new schedule for the Spring meeting also includes a new time - 8:00am on Monday morning - for the business meeting of the ASPA Board of Directors. Having received input and heard member discussion on Sunday, the Board will take action to set the dues and adopt the budget for FY11. Appointments to committees will also be made at this time. Those who are not interested in observing this meeting are welcome to have another cup of coffee and start their day when the Monday morning program begins at 8:30am.

The change in schedule has been made in response to requests from members and comments submitted on meeting evaluation forms. The adjusted schedule is intended to allow members sufficient time to conduct business while also allowing others attending the meeting to plan to arrive at 4:00pm on Sunday and sleep a bit later on Monday morning. As noted on the overview meeting schedule, the professional development program will begin immediately after lunch on Monday. The schedule is enclosed with this mailing and is also available on the ASPA web site - [www.aspa-usa.org](http://www.aspa-usa.org) - click on meetings. ■

### Ready to Join ASPA Now?

Applications for membership in ASPA may be submitted on:

February 15      April 15  
August 1          October 1

See "MEMBER INFO" on the ASPA website and contact Cynthia Davenport for advice.

## A VIEW FROM THE FRONT:

# Accreditation as a Welcomed, Healthy Enterprise

By Pauletta Brown Bracy; Director, Office of University Accreditation, North Carolina Central University

**Accountability for its many purposes** undergirds the business of higher education. For the units dedicated to teaching and learning, accreditation becomes an affirmation of academic integrity and confirmation of institutional vitality. Specialized and professional accreditation is a welcomed and healthy enterprise. In its cyclic nature, it is an internal timeline for progress and growth.

Accreditation itself is progressive. Moving to systems which prioritize output measures over input measures has refined assessment and made it more meaningful. Shifting from the emphasis on teaching to student learning yet maintaining a balance has made it more sensible. Infusing more technological innovation in the processes has made it more efficient. Replacing quality assurance with continuous improvement has made it more viable for strategic planning. These changes have resulted in a more formative approach by the accreditors and yielded a more productive relationship with the institutions.

At North Carolina Central University (NCCU), accreditation is intricately connected to the institutional mission. It is a campus-wide commitment with the expectation that all programs for which accreditation exists will seek or maintain it and that schools and departments

include accreditation in their respective strategic plans. Much energy and time are devoted in the preparation stage. An office established to coordinate accreditation supports the programs in their efforts. Budget requests are submitted annually to cover expenses such as conference and/or workshop attendance, team visits, consultant visits, mock visits, requirements to address non-compliance, production and shipping of self-studies and reports, fees, and memberships. The director of the office reviews the standards, reads the self-studies and occasionally conducts mock interviews with faculty members, administrators, students, and others. Just prior to the team visits to campus, the director convenes briefings with the senior administrators who have received the self-studies and executive summaries. Typically, they inquire about any areas of potential concern for the teams. Few surprises, if any, occur during exit conferences.

From the experience at NCCU, we ponder ways in which the intuitional accreditation and specialized accreditation could be more aligned to reduce effort. But, we also recognize several aspects of specialized accreditation which we find gratifying:

- ❖ Collegiality and collaborative approaches
- ❖ Consistency of protocol
- ❖ Efforts to reduce costs
- ❖ Attention to matching teams and institutions
- ❖ Pre- and post-visit consultation
- ❖ Respect for institutional character and context.

Our experiences have ultimately always been beneficial and we expect to continue these endeavors for the benefit of all of our constituencies. ■

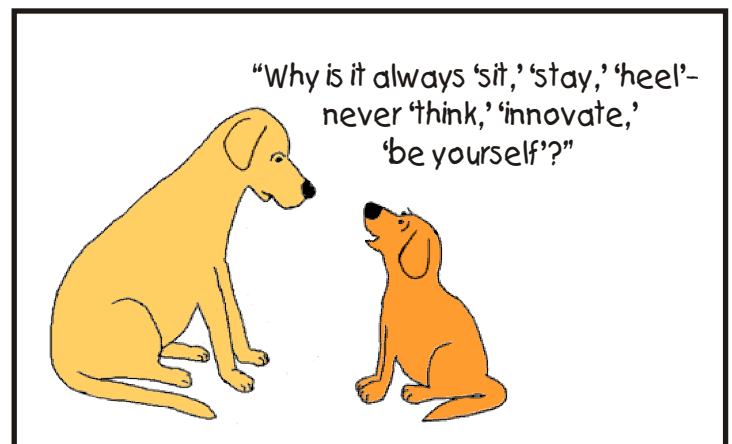
## SPRING 2010 ASPA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION:

# The Value of Accreditation during Challenging Economic Times

**Concerned about the economy's effect** on your agency? Are you hearing from administrators that accreditation costs too much and takes too much time? Are any of your programs questioning the value of their accreditation? If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, then this session is for you. Its focus will be on the impact of the economy on accrediting agencies and ways to make the best use of your resources, especially in challenging economic times. You'll have opportunities to develop alternative approaches to managing resources and costs associated with economic challenges, network with your peers to get ideas that meet your needs and go home with strategies to better communicate the value of accreditation to your programs and other stakeholders. Kevin O'Connor, a certified speaking professional and a faculty member of the American College of Physician Executives, Loyola University of Chicago will facilitate.

Questions about the program may be directed to the planning team, headed by Frank Gerbasi, COA-NA: Nurse Anesthesia - [fgerbasi@aana.com](mailto:fgerbasi@aana.com) or to the ASPA office - [aspa@aspa-usa.org](mailto:aspa@aspa-usa.org).

This program starts after lunch on Monday, March 29th and ends at noon on Tuesday, March 30th. **Please mark your calendars and register to attend!** ■



# Continuous Quality: Far From a "Sideline"

By Paul Gaston, Trustees Professor, Kent State University

*The third quarter* is under way. The play has ended. And there is a player still on the ground. No, he's standing now, being helped to the sidelines. The camera finds him on the bench. And the announcer says, "He's being worked on by the athletic trainers."



For many of us this is the public face of a complex and multi-faceted discipline that prepares professionals to work at many levels to improve athlete conditioning, to reduce the frequency of injury, to address issues as they occur on the field of play, and to assist in the process of recovery.

For ASPA members, this is a discipline with high standards that have been articulated and are

maintained by a relatively new colleague organization, the **Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE)**. Patsy House, the current executive director of the Commission, is also its first. Since the Commission's founding in 2006, she has coordinated its oversight of 366 accredited programs from headquarters in Round Rock, Texas.

Thanks to a recent strategic planning session, the Commission is now operating with a more clearly articulated mission, namely, "To provide premier accreditation services to institutions that offer Athletic Training programs, verify that all CAATE accredited programs meet standards for professional athletic training education, and support continuous improvement in the quality of athletic training education."

As is the case with most ASPA members, accreditation in athletic training builds on a self-study that tracks explicit criteria and engages "stakeholders in the quality and effectiveness of that Athletic Training Educational Program." The next step is an on-site visit by peer evaluators who audit the program's self-study and review its pursuit of the standards.

Once the site visit report review is complete and the institution has provided a response, the Commission reaches a final accreditation decision. For programs awarded accreditation, the relationship continues with the expectation of an annual report.

At present, the Commission does not host an annual meeting, but does offer educational workshops on athletic training accreditation.

The Commission operates with eleven members, who represent CAATE accredited programs as well as the

American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine. There is also an administrator and public member on the Commission and liaison representatives from the Board of Certification, Inc., and the National Athletic Training Association. The Commission meets twice a year.

Having been a member of ASPA for just over a year, executive director House describes the value of the Association as "priceless." In particular, she finds the professional development portion of the meetings helpful in "informing and in some respects shaping the direction and the growth of the CAATE."

"We also value the diversity of the ASPA membership, particularly in terms of the disciplines, organization size, and history of the members."

And there's also an important intangible. New to the world of accreditation, executive director House attended her first ASPA meeting after only three months on the job. Her reaction? "A sigh of relief."

She discovered what ASPA members often find in their work with one another: "There are others like me, with similar challenges and opportunities for accrediting bodies and those we service." ■

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## New Member - MEAC joins ASPA



### *The Midwifery Education*

**Accreditation Council** became ASPA's newest member at the Fall 2009 meeting in St. Louis when the ASPA Board of Directors accepted the recommendation of the ASPA

Membership Committee. Midwifery schools and programs accredited by MEAC prepare midwives for national certification as Certified Professional

Midwives (CPMs). To date, MEAC has accredited eleven midwifery schools / programs. In addition to the work in accreditation, MEAC also approves Continuing Education Programs attended by professional midwives to maintain and upgrade their skills and knowledge for practice.

MEAC is listed in the FY2010 Membership Directory as well as on the ASPA web site - see Midwifery at: [http://www.aspa-usa.org/member\\_fields\\_aspa.asp](http://www.aspa-usa.org/member_fields_aspa.asp).

MEAC's Executive Director is Jo Anne Myers-Ciecko. When she submitted the membership application, Jo Anne said "We are delighted to have finally reached this point!" Jo Anne looks forward to interacting with the other ASPA members at future meetings, perhaps starting this spring. ■

# WELCOME!

## Spring 2010 - Don't Miss Monday Morning

### Accreditors Look to the Future

*How will accrediting organizations* “do business” in the future? How will self studies be conducted and reported? What will site visits look like? How will accreditation standards be developed? What will be the appropriate balance between quality assurance (compliance) and quality advancement



(improvement)? If the pace of day-to-day life makes it hard to focus on these and other future-related questions, you may want to join forces with your peers and colleagues. Together, you can “think forward” to consider the pros and cons of a wide-range of possibilities and topics of interest to specialized accreditors. Three members of the ASPA Board (Bracy, Harvison and Vlases) will set a framework and act as a reactor panel as the results of round-table discussions are reported out. Their goal is to keep the focus on the future. Ideally, you will each depart with a vision you can implement in this new decade. Clearly they will need your help in order to meet this goal...! ■

### Legal Issues in Accreditation

*What keeps you awake* at night once your accreditation decision-making meeting is over? When you are in the midst of an on-site review and an obviously disgruntled individual asks for a moment of your time, how do you respond? An anonymous complaint arrived in yesterday's mail. It raises issues that, if true, would be a serious violation of the standards. How do you proceed? A program you accredit is in trouble. What, if anything, can your accrediting body do to protect students? And, when all is said and done, is there really anything that accreditors can do that offers any protection from law suits?

Three accreditation attorneys who are each long-time friends of ASPA will address these and other issues as part of the Spring ASPA meeting. Lucien “Skip” Capone III (University Counsel, University of North Carolina Greensboro), Doug Carlson (partner, Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP), and John Przepyszny (partner, Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP), will address current issues of concern to accreditors. Come ready to engage in a lively Q&A on topics such as those above and other issues as time permits. ■

Fall 2010 - Save the Date!

### Challenges in Multi-Campus Accreditation and Distance Education



Challenges in multi-campus accreditation and distance education are the topics for this fall's professional development (ProD) program at the Fall 2010 ASPA Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio on September 12-14. The first half of the program on Monday afternoon will explore definitions and approaches to multi-campus accreditation while the second half on Tuesday morning will focus on ensuring efficiency and consistency in accrediting multi-campus programs.

Responses to the Fall 2010 Professional Development Survey are informing program development. The committee thanks all who participated! They may be back to some of you for further information.

Comments or suggestions about the program can be directed to co-chair Greg Boyer, ACPE: Pharmacy, - [gboyer@acpe-accredit.org](mailto:gboyer@acpe-accredit.org) - who will share them with the other members of the Fall ProD Team. ■

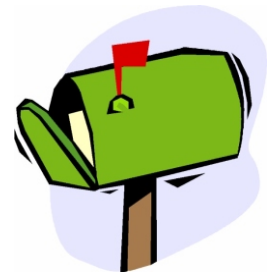
### Call for Agenda Items

*Contact the ASPA office* or a member of the board of directors by mid-February to request that a topic be added to the Spring 2010 meeting agenda.

*Elections:* Materials for the Spring 2010 elections will be mailed to ASPA members prior to the meeting. Elections will be held during the member business meeting on Sunday, March 28, 2010. Note the change in time and please plan to attend. Your vote counts. ■

### How to Contact ASPA

Cynthia A. Davenport  
Executive Director, ASPA  
1020 W. Byron Street; Ste 8G  
Chicago, IL 60613-2987  
Phone: (773) 525-2160  
Fax: (773) 525-2162  
E-mail: [aspa@aspa-usa.org](mailto:aspa@aspa-usa.org)  
Web: [www.aspa-usa.org](http://www.aspa-usa.org)



Current and back issues of *ASPA News* are posted to the ASPA web site: [www.aspa-usa.org](http://www.aspa-usa.org). A few additional copies may be available upon request. The Spring 2010 meeting registration forms are also available on-line.