



Message from the Chair

Neil Harvison, Director of Accreditation and Academic Affairs, ACOTE (Occupational Therapy)

Thanks again for a very successful meeting in Minnesota last September. It was all made possible through the hard work of our volunteer members who worked diligently on putting together a very informative and timely program. We are also in debt to our Executive Director, Joseph Vibert, for keeping everything on track and ensuring that all of our needs were met!

Since the meeting in September, it has been pretty quiet on the policy front in the lead-up to the November elections. As predicted, the Senate Health Education and Labor Committee (HELP) has been quick to pick up where they left off before the election with renewed calls for greater oversight and regulation of higher education, with a focus on the proprietary for-profit sector. This is unlikely to change with the recent announcement that Senator Harkin (D-IL) has been reappointed as chair of the committee. "I intend to move forward with bills to ensure that all Americans are able to achieve the promise of a quality education - beginning in early childhood, continuing through elementary and high school, and culminating with higher education," Harkin said in a statement when announcing his reappointment (Inside Higher Education, 12/20/2012).

As of yet we still do not know when the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) will happen but it appears that it may occur sooner than originally thought. It is important that we start preparing now so that our voice can be heard as members of Congress begin deliberations. ASPA's External

Recognition and Issues Committee (ERIC) members have continued to meet on a regular basis and have been charged to develop a document articulating our fundamental beliefs and concerns as Congress begins the debate on reauthorization. In addition, ASPA's Executive Director and members of the Board have been in ongoing discussions with other key stakeholders to ensure the concerns of the professional and specialized accreditation community is represented in their deliberations. Key groups include CHEA, the regional and national accreditors and the associations of universities and colleges. I am looking forward to continuing our discussions on the reauthorization at our April meeting in Chicago.

Behind the scenes a number of task groups have been working on behalf of the membership. One group has been focused on identifying ways to improve our member meetings and educational offerings. We hope to implement a number of the group's recommendations over the next year. One recommendation is to offer a session on Sunday morning that focuses on topics of interest to smaller groups. At the spring meeting in Chicago the focus of the Sunday morning session will be on "International Activities in Accreditation". The success of these focus groups will be dependent on member participation.

Thanks again to all of our members who serve on the various committees and task groups. It is your work that makes ASPA a success. I hope to see as many of you as possible in Chicago in April. ▲

Spring 2013 Professional Development Program – The Well Accreditor

Establishing and maintaining a well-run, effective and pro-active accrediting organization is essential in an environment that calls for ever increasing accountability. Agencies must balance several tasks that are ongoing and necessary for good accreditation practice. Good governance, strategic and succession planning and good volunteer relations are some of the functions that contribute to the health and success of an accrediting agency. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and take away ideas to enhance their effectiveness in the following areas: differentiating board and staff roles and responsibilities for decisions, policies, and processes; planning strategically to determine direction, resource needs and whether goals have been met; ensuring new leadership is planned for and ready; and recruiting and keeping loyal, quality volunteers.

Plan to attend this session on **Monday, April 8th (1:00 pm - 5:00 pm)** and **Tuesday, April 9th (8:30 am - 12:00 pm)** at the Millennium Knickerbocker, Chicago IL. Go to www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings for the registration form and agenda.

ASPA Fall Meeting 2012

Kathleen Megivern, Executive Director, CAAHEP (Allied Health)

The Fall 2012 ASPA meeting in Minneapolis focused on general accreditation and ASPA-specific issues. A featured speaker, Libby Nelson, a reporter from *Inside Higher Education*, gave an overview of what we might expect in “post-election” Washington, DC in the arena of higher education. With the uncertainty of how the election would come out, predicting any real change was a daunting task, but the meeting evaluations indicated that Libby’s presentation was well-received.

Also appreciated was a “Discussion of Current Issues in Accreditation” that was facilitated by Mary Jane Harris. The topics ranged from use of adjuncts and faculty overload to assessment procedures and whether moving to an electronic format for assessments would hurt response rates. Additional topics that were raised included the thorny question of “what you do with ‘bad’ site team members” and whether agencies are using templates for online submission of self-study reports. As always in sessions like this, the real value was in the sharing of “best practices” among members.



When planning the Fall meeting, the ASPA Board of Directors expanded the length of the Members’ Session. Judging from the meeting evaluation results, that was a very good decision indeed. By far, that session was the single highest rated portion of the Fall meeting. There was robust discussion on many items, including proposed changes in ASPA membership categories and papers on topics ranging from Transparency to Academic Freedom. Another added discussion forum was a “Town Hall”

session that yielded ideas about possible changes to ASPA meeting formats.

Of course, it wasn’t all work! The opening reception was highlighted by the presentation of the Cynthia A. Davenport Award to long-time ASPA member, Sam Hope (see next page). We took advantage of the Minneapolis location (where Cynthia Davenport is now living in retirement), to bring her back to do the presentation of the award named in her honor.

As is always the case, the evaluations indicate that, most of all, people really appreciated the networking opportunities. Two comments in particular captured the value: “The networking validated that everyone has similar challenges,” and “We all seem to have the same issues.”

The Professional Development program focused on transparency issues. As one evaluation said, “Transparency is a complex subject and the ASPA audience heard many perspectives.” The Keynote Speaker presented transparency as a “tool to establish trust” and noted how difficult it is to have information that is “obvious and understandable” when dealing with such complex issues. We heard about the range of policies among ASPA member agencies when it comes to public disclosure of student achievement and outcomes. What helps the consumer? Can there be too much disclosure? As one attendee summed it up, “[This topic was] most useful, we started to engage in a conversation that was compelling and extremely timely.” That’s what ASPA meetings are all about! ▲

Message from the Executive Director

Joseph Vibert

Since July, we’ve continued to address the four areas of focus of our strategic plan: communication, advocacy, education, and recognition. Our second webinar was held in November and covered orientation for new accreditation staff. We developed a position statement on public information and are well on the way to an updated version of our Code of Good Practice. The public and private areas of the website are regularly improved and updated, with new features to be implemented over the next few months...and, we’re gearing up to celebrate ASPA’s 20th anniversary in 2013!

Kumble Subbaswamy resigned from the Board in July – he became Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and we wish him well. The Board appointed Earl (Gip) Seaver, Deputy Provost, Northern Illinois University as interim replacement. See the next page for Gip’s biography. As ever, I look forward to working with the Members and the Board to improve member services, to enhance the voice of specialized and professional accreditation, and to prepare for and contribute to the next reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. ▲

Welcome new Board Member

Earl Seaver serves as Deputy Provost at Northern Illinois University. He has primary responsibility for overseeing all aspects of implementing the strategic plans of the Division of Academic and



Student Affairs and for coordinating outside searches to fill senior level administrative positions. He also assists in special projects and initiatives related to the areas of budget, facilities, personnel, academic planning, curriculum, enrollment, and outreach. He is a former Chair of the Department of

Communicative Disorders in NIU's College of Health and Human Sciences. He served as Chair of the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology and Chair of the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology, both of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Dr. Seaver received his bachelors and masters degrees in Speech-Language Pathology from Western Michigan University and his Ph.D. in Speech Sciences from the University of Iowa. He is a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association. He has been awarded the Honors of the Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Samuel Hope receives ASPA Award

The Cynthia A. Davenport Award is presented to a member or friend of ASPA to honor contributions that have promoted the importance of specialized and professional accreditation to the quality of higher education. Samuel Hope, our 2012 recipient, is Executive Director of the National Association of Schools of Music, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Theatre, the National Association of Schools of Dance, and the Higher Education Arts Data Services. Sam has been an accreditation executive director since 1975 and has served and supported ASPA for approximately 20 years. He helped develop the Bylaws, Code of Good



Practice and other documents for the creation of ASPA and is a signatory on the 1993 articles of incorporation. Sam is a member of the External Recognition Issues Committee (ERIC) of ASPA, a group that analyzes the environment and proposes responses and positions. We are thankful for his continuous intensive volunteer participation and his efforts to connect the work of ASPA to other sectors of accreditation and higher education. ▲

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ASPA Spring Meeting 2013

April 7 - 9, 2013

Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, Chicago

Register Now!

Preliminary Program

Pre-meeting

Sunday, April 7th

8:30 am – 10:30 am

International Activities in Accreditation (by invitation)

Business Meetings

Sunday, April 7th

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Member session (closed)

Members are invited to send requests for agenda items and discussion topics to the ASPA office or to any of the members of the Board by March 1, 2013.

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm - Reception (open)

Monday, April 8th

8:30 am – 10:00 am - Discussion - Issues in Accreditation (open)

10:15 am – 10:45 am – Members Meeting (open)
Elections of Board and Officers

11:00 am – 12:00 pm - Board Meeting (open)
Budget approval, committee appointments

Professional Development Program

The Well Accreditor

(See page 1 for program description.)

Monday, April 8th

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (open)

5:15 pm – 6:45 pm - Reception (open)

Tuesday, April 9th

8:30 am – 12:00 pm (open)

Go to www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings for registration forms and schedules.

Become a Member

...the authoritative voice of specialized and professional accreditation...

The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors provides a collaborative forum and a collective voice for the community of approximately 60 member agencies that assess the quality of specialized and professional higher education programs and schools in the United States. We are the only organization that promotes the importance of specialized and professional accreditation.



Some of the many benefits of membership in ASPA include:

- **A unified and common voice** for issues of importance to specialized accreditation and higher education nationally.
- **Networking and peer interaction** in conference settings; participating in a community of specialized accreditors; sharing best practices in carrying out accreditation work; benchmarking to improve performance.
- **Professional development** for volunteers, staff and educators and opportunities to learn from other accreditors.
- **Current information** on pertinent issues and important developments.
- **Advocacy** to broader communities including higher education, government, regional and national accreditors, and recognition bodies.
- **Enhancement of the credibility and image of accreditation** through endorsement of the ASPA-Member Code of Good Practice that embraces a high standard of professionalism and integrity in the conduct of accreditation operations and promotes the development of educational quality and respect for institutional autonomy.

Member services include regular newsletters to the broad community and e-letters within the membership; development of position papers on issues and good practices; in person and written representation on specialized accreditation on legislation and recognition issues to stakeholders; a proprietary database of member profiles and organization structure; a periodic compensation survey; and access to a private listserv to gather information within the membership.

Visit www.aspa-usa.org for more information and to apply for membership. ▲

Save the Date – ASPA Fall Meeting 2013

September 8 -10, 2013 – Baltimore, MD

ASPA is 20 years old

Join us as we celebrate two decades of accomplishment and prepare for 20 more!

Professional Development Program - Education Delivery Models: Encouraging Innovation; Assuring Quality

Technology, innovation and creativity abound in the delivery of education. Accreditors are challenged to keep abreast of developments and identify strategies and processes that allow for assessment of all forms of educational delivery. Preliminary topics identified for discussion include MOOCS, experiential placements, simulation, distance education and reviewing multiple locations. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the various perspectives on the issues and to take away ideas to enhance their effectiveness.

Be sure to mark your calendar!

Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors
3304 North Broadway Street, #214 • Chicago IL 60657
773.857.7900 • www.aspa-usa.org