Message from the Chair
Laura Rasar King, Executive Director, Council on Education for Public Health

With the New Year upon us I’d like to bring you up to date on ASPA’s accomplishments and activities on behalf of its Members. In the latter half of 2015 we have continued to direct our efforts on the focus areas of the association’s strategic plan - advocacy, member services and relationship building.

The reauthorization of the Higher Education Act continues to be somewhere on the horizon. We met several times with Congressional staff to discuss our concerns related to the reauthorization, and emphasize the role of specialized and professional accreditation in service of the public good through competent practitioners in a diverse range of professions. We were pleased to have staff from the House and Senate participate on a panel at the ASPA Fall Conference in September in Washington, DC. We plan to have ongoing meetings with the people on the Hill and our stakeholders regarding the reauthorization and remain committed to positive and proactive messaging around the role and importance of specialized and professional accreditation in higher education.

At the Fall Conference (more information follows in this newsletter) we began a discussion with Members about potential leadership development activities that the Association could implement, and followed up with a survey to identify specifics. Members can expect to hear more about planned activities in 2016.

Also at the Fall Conference the Good Practice Task Force provided a progress update on work done in the development of resources for Members. We expect an outcomes report that describes the state of the art in outcomes assessment by programmatic accreditors to be available at the beginning of 2016 and a risk management resource to be completed shortly thereafter.

Other improvements to member services include: the engagement of a professional development consultant to assist with educational programming for the association conferences; a completely re-designed website to improve access to information for our various audiences and to ensure ease of use across different devices; and the compensation and benefits study had a much improved response rate this year and it is set up for annual implementation.

Our executive director continues to represent ASPA with a regular schedule of meetings with Members and stakeholders, reporting on recognition meetings and attending higher education conferences. ASPA is steadily gaining recognition as a key player in higher education policy. Just in the last six months ASPA was invited to participate at: the White House Convening on Innovation and Quality; a meeting with higher education officials in Mexico; and an international conference to be held in Berlin in 2016.

I am so proud of the progress that ASPA has made on behalf of its Members in 2015 and hope that you are too. I would like to thank the ASPA staff and all of the volunteers on the ASPA board, committees and task forces for their contributions to our success. Please feel free to reach out to me (lking@ceph.org) with any questions, comments or ideas as we plan for the year ahead. Happy New Year!

ASPA Spring Conference 2016
Consistency and Fairness in Accreditation

With the focus on accountability, accreditors must ensure consistency and fairness in their practices. We will examine the issues and discuss approaches to: ensuring consistency in accreditation reviews, while recognizing the distinct nature of each educational program; working with teams, review committees, and boards to establish fair and reproducible outcomes, including such issues as inter-rater reliability; employing decision-making processes that result in fair and reliable outcomes; and developing risk prevention practices, fixing internal systems and implementing damage control when bias arises.

Plan to attend this session April 4th and 5th at the Millennium Knickerbocker in Chicago. Go to www.aspa-usa.org for registration and the agenda.
September 2015 in Washington, DC

The ASPA Fall Conference 2015 was well attended and attendees gave positive reviews. Some highlights:

Pre-conference and Member Sessions

Sessions prior to the official conference start included: a forum for health accreditors to discuss issues with the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP) and the National Network of Health Career Programs in Two-Year Colleges (NN2); a discussion with Lumina Foundation about the revision and continued implementation of the Degree Qualifications Profile and expansion to include doctoral degrees; and a session on using partnerships to enhance global practice in international accreditation activities.

The Member session was devoted to an update on current issues in accreditation and higher education, a progress report from the Good Practice Task Force on development of member resources, and leadership development for ASPA Members.

Conference

The conference began officially with the opening reception on Sunday evening, followed by several presentations on Monday morning. Libby Nelson (Reporter, Vox) opened with commentary and observations about Higher Education in the Campaign Spotlight.

A panel of Congressional staff from the education committees talked about the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Andrew LaCasse (Education Policy Advisor, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions), Bryce McKibben (Policy Advisor, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions) and Emily Slack (Professional Staff Member, House Committee on Education and the Workforce) brought us up to date on policy direction from both sides of the House and Senate.

Monday morning ended with a session entitled Alternative Accreditation Processes: Providing Value to Institutions, presented by Karen J. Solomon (Vice President for Accreditation Relations, Higher Learning Commission) and Devarajan Venugopalan (Vice Provost, Academic Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). Attendees heard perspectives from a regional accreditor and an institutional representative on different pathways to accreditation.

Education Component

The professional development component of the conference – It’s All About Good Practice – covered a broad range of topics. Good practices were discussed in:

- stakeholder engagement and gaining necessary and valuable input for the accreditation process from development of standards and practices through identification of outcome indicators;
- complaints – how accreditors deal with an increasing volume of complaints;
- mergers, acquisitions, closures and teach-outs – how accreditors can be better prepared with processes to address the changing landscape of higher education mergers, acquisitions and closures; and
- dealing with the “unexpected” during site visits, decision making meetings, etc.

Thanks to the Fall Professional Development Committee for developing the program:

- Barbara Farkas, Senior Accreditation and Education Specialist Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs;
- Thomas Smalling, Executive Director, Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care;
- Jesmarie Johnson, Associate Director, Planning Accreditation Board; and
- Loretta Waldron, Director of Accreditation Services, Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant.

Post Conference

A session on Interprofessional Education gave attendees an opportunity to hear about the activities and the lessons learned of the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education and the Interprofessional Education Collaborative, and to discuss how to advance the agenda related to interprofessional accreditation.
Our Volunteers

ASPA has several committees that contribute to the association's success. Sincere appreciation is extended for their time and contributions:

Membership Committee

- Frank Gerbasi, Executive Director, Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs
- Shonagh Merits, Executive Director, Planning Accreditation Board
- Mary Ann Taccona, Associate Executive Director, Education and Accreditation, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics

Nominations Committee

- Sue Graves, Assistant Director of Accreditation, American Occupational Therapy Association
- Patti Tice, Director of Accreditation, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
- Jan M. Winn, Executive Director, Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology

Spring Professional Development Committee

- Margaret Schulte, President & CEO, Commission on Accreditation Healthcare Management Education
- Mary B. Gregoire, Executive Director, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics
- Benjamin Murray, Director of Accreditation Services, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
- Karen Martens Brandt, Director of Education & Research, American Veterinary Medical Association

External Recognition Issues Committee

- Robert B. Hash, Assistant LCME Secretary, Liaison Committee on Medical Education
- Laura Rasar King, Executive Director, Council on Education for Public Health
- Crystal Calarusse, Chief Accreditation Officer, Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration
- Charles W. Hickman, Managing Director, Constituent Relations, ABET
- Neil Harvison, Chief Officer, Academic and Scientific Affairs, American Occupational Therapy Association
- Sherin Tooks, Director, Commission on Dental Accreditation
- Mark S. McKenzie, Executive Director, Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- John E. McCarty, Executive Director, Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant
- Jo Ann Regan, Vice President of Education, Council on Social Work Education

ASPA Spring Conference 2016

Preliminary Program
April 3 - 5, 2016
Millennium Knickerbocker
163 East Walton Place • Chicago IL, 60611

Business meetings will be held Sunday afternoon (April 3) to allow for additional programming.

Pre-sessions
Sunday, April 3rd
8:30 am - 9:30 am
Title IV and Accreditor Responsibilities
9:45 am - 10:30 am
Meeting Workforce Needs through Holistic Review
10:45 am - 11:45 am - New Member Orientation
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm - Member Session
Members are invited to send discussion topics to the ASPA office by March 5, 2016.

Conference
Sunday, April 3rd
4:15 pm - 4:45 pm - Annual Members’ Meeting
elections, service awards
4:45 pm - 5:15 pm - Board Meeting
budget, dues, committee appointments
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm - Opening Reception
award presentation

Monday, April 4th
8:30 am - 9:30 am - Presidential Candidates and Education Expectations
9:45 am - 10:45 am - Succession Planning
11:00 am - 12:00 pm - Appeals: Good Practice and Risk Management

Education Component
Consistency and Fairness in Accreditation
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm - See page 1 for program description.
5:15 pm - 6:45 pm - Reception

Tuesday, April 5th
8:30 am - 12:00 pm - Consistency and Fairness in Accreditation continues

Go to www.aspa-usa.org for registration and full program.
**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 accreditors that assess the quality of programmatic 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 benefits of full membership in ASPA include:

- **A unified and common voice** for issues of importance to programmatic accreditation and higher education nationally.
- **Networking and peer interaction** in conference settings; participating in a community of programmatic accreditors; sharing good practices in carrying out accreditation work and improving performance.
- **Professional development** for volunteers, staff and educators and opportunities to learn from other accreditors.
- **Current information** on important issues and developments.
- **Advocacy** to our broader communities in higher education, government, institutional 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 quality in education 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 programmatic 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 e-list to gather and share information within the membership.

**ASPA also welcomes Organizational and Individual Affiliate Members**

- **Organizations** with an interest in education and quality assurance that do not meet the criteria for full membership as programmatic accreditors, e.g., professional associations, continuing education providers, regional accreditors, institutional accreditors, and vendors.
- **Individuals** interested in the mission and purposes of ASPA, such as persons serving as accreditation directors within institutions, faculty, staff of professional associations, peer reviewers, education consultants, curriculum designers, deans, and program directors.

Visit [www.aspa-usa.org](http://www.aspa-usa.org) for more information and to apply for membership.

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**Mark your calendars**

**ASPA Fall Conference 2016**

September 11 - 13, 2016 – Arlington, VA

**Stakeholder Relations in Accreditation**

We will discuss good practices for accrediting agency relationships with the profession, the public, accredited programs, and decision-making bodies:

- Staff relations with the profession and the public;
- Staff relations with programs, including providing technical assistance and advice;
- Managing the standards revision process; and
- Negotiating the roles of accreditors within changing regulatory frameworks or recognition processes.

Registration and program information will be available on the ASPA website in late spring 2016.

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**Stay tuned...Outcomes - Getting to the Core of Programmatic Education and Accreditation**

ASPA has been developing a paper on practices in outcomes assessment among programmatic accreditors – which will be of interest to other accreditors and stakeholders. The paper will be released early in 2016 and presented at the CHEA Conference in January. Thanks to Good Practice Task Force members:

- Crystal Calarusse, Chief Accreditation Officer, Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, NASPAA;
- Eric Brichto, Director & Counsel, Accreditation Operations, Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education; and
- Jo Ann Regan, Vice President of Education, Council on Social Work Education.