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**To:** Joseph Vibert  
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**News from the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors**

**Accreditation News**

Many expect that the new **Administration and Congress** will bring regulatory relief to accreditors and higher education. Here's some of the news since December:

Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have voted to eliminate the **teacher-preparation regulations**, and the legislation is expected to be signed by the President.

The U.S. Department of Education has given colleges an extension to July 1 to submit appeals regarding data that is connected to the enforcement of **gainful-employment regulations** - a key component of the previous administration's crackdown on for-profit colleges. Programs that fail the department's gainful-employment test risk losing access to federal student aid. The speculation is that these regulations will be withdrawn.

In January, Jerry Falwell Jr., president of Liberty University announced that he had been asked by the President to lead a **task force** that would deal primarily with deregulation. The scope of the task force's responsibilities have not yet been made public.

The Education Department clarified a key piece of the **distance-education regulations**, indicating that the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA), under which more than 1,300 colleges have already been approved to offer online courses across state lines, would satisfy the regulations.

And about some accreditors that have frequently been in the news: the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools has had its recognition terminated by the Secretary of Education, and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior

**Upcoming Events**



**Spring Conference**

April 2 - 4, 2017 in Chicago  
*Sessions will include:*

- Orientation to ASPA
- Recognition Roundtable
- Accreditation in a Virtual Environment
- Annual Business Meetings
- Where's the Data?
- Handling Complaints
- Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative
- Professional Development:

**Program Outcomes and Communicating the Value of Accreditation**

- Identifying program and student achievement outcomes that are relevant to the profession
- Establishing expected levels of achievement and communicating supporting rationales to communities of interest
- Determining next steps when programs do not

Colleges has been recommended for renewal of recognition by both the ED staff and NACIQI.

ASPA will continue to monitor and keep its members apprised of the latest issues.

achieve prescribed thresholds

- Communicating good outcomes achieved through accreditation

Full Program and Registration

## Association Updates

### Strategic Activities

ASPA's strategic plan focuses on advocacy, member services/education, and relationship building. Some of our recent activities:

#### NACIQI Meeting February 2017

ASPA was part of a panel to inform NACIQI on how accreditors consider outcome measures as part of their quality reviews, to share related initiatives, and provide other pertinent information. ASPA Chair, Laura Rasar King (CEPH) provided information from our [2016 outcomes report](#) and described accreditation practices that assist programs with compliance.



Above: Laura Rasar King (left) at the NACIQI meeting.

#### CHEA Conference

ASPA made a panel presentation on the value that specialized and professional accreditation brings to institutions at the CHEA Conference in January 2017. Panel participants included Board members Barry Eckert (LIU), Crystal Calarusse (NASPAA), Earl (Gip) Seaver (Academy Solutions), Greg Boyer (ACPE) and Joseph Vibert (ASPA ED).

#### Policy Work Group

The ASPA Board has appointed a work group to develop a position paper to elaborate what desired regulation and law should entail for programmatic accreditation, in anticipation of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Work will begin in April on this project.

## Save the Date

### Fall Conference 2017

September 10-12 in Arlington  
*Professional Development:*

#### Leading the Standards Revision Process

How does an accrediting agency plan for a potentially multi-year process, establish strong rationales for revisions, and ensure compliance among programs that may perceive or face challenges in adapting to new standards?

Our program will address:

- Demonstrating validity and reliability in standards
- Ensuring evidence-based approaches to data collection in the standards revision process
- Effectively planning, managing resources, and leveraging technology
- Communicating goals and employing effective communication strategies before, during, and after the revision process
- Implementing new standards—from coaching programs to enforcing compliance

Make sure to **mark your calendars** and stay tuned for more information about the fall conference in subsequent issues of the ASPA Newsletter.

## About ASPA



The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors provides a collaborative forum and a collective voice for the community of 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.

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