

ASPA NEWS

ASSOCIATION of SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS

MANAGING CHANGE

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LETTER FROM ASPA'S CHAIR

*By MARY JANE HARRIS, CAPTE: PHYSICAL THERAPY;
CHAIR, ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Dear ASPA Members and Friends:

As I write this message, the 2004 holiday season is in full swing, though this newsletter will find its way to you early in 2005. So let me begin by saying I hope your holidays were joyful and that each of you had the opportunity to be with family and friends.

This month marks the middle of my term as Chair of the ASPA Board of Directors. I'd like to take this opportunity to comment about our accomplishments and activities over the last six months, which have been busy ones.

First, and foremost, many ASPA members and friends attended another successful meeting, held in Indianapolis in September. Feedback about the meeting was very positive. Activities at the meeting included:

- The Accreditation Showcase featuring ABET: The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
- A relatively brief formal business meeting
- Discussion of numerous issues facing the accreditation enterprise and higher education, especially as they might impact, or be impacted by, ASPA. Among the issues discussed were:
 - National issues that affect accreditation: reauthorization of the Higher Education Act; the value of accreditation; increasing development of professional doctorates; institutional change (growth of for-profit, multi-campus institutions, privatization of public institutions); implications of reports regarding the need for increased minority representation in health care
 - The pros and cons of developing ASPA policy statements on distance learning, student achievement, transfer of credit, public disclosure/confidentiality, number of accrediting agencies, diploma/accreditation mills
 - Principles to be used when reviewing policy and legislative proposals regarding accreditation proposed by the Recognition Issues Committee
- Professional development focused on standards revision

Second, ASPA was pleased to facilitate a meeting of representatives from the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP) and accreditors in the allied health arena. This meeting, which immediately preceded the Fall ASPA meeting, was an outgrowth of a previous Accreditation Summit sponsored by ASAHP in June. Both meetings provided a forum for discussion of issues relevant to accreditors and institutions/programs. Similar meetings are likely to continue in the future and are, in my opinion, consistent with at least one of ASPA's purposes outlined in the *Bylaws: 4. Facilitate collaboration among programs, institutions and accrediting organizations*. I was pleased that some of the ASAHP representatives also registered for the ASPA meeting and contributed to our discussions.

Third, the Board of Directors met in mid-October to plan for future activities of ASPA. In addition to planning for activities at the Spring 2005 meeting, the Board discussed the following:

- Proposed budget for FY2006 and the fee structure that will support the budget. This activity included a review of expenses projected to 2010.
- Locations for the Fall 2005 meeting. In consideration of the motion passed at the membership meeting in September, the Board asked that sites in Portland OR, Charleston SC and Denver CO be explored further.
- Mechanisms to increase membership, including a letter to be sent to eligible agencies and followed-up by calls from members of the Board. Additionally, the Board has asked the Membership Committee to 1) review the current procedures for admission to membership to see if they can be streamlined, 2) revisit the definition of "specialized and professional accreditors" for the purpose of determining whether some special purpose accreditors might be eligible for membership.
- Issues related to the Bylaws: are changes needed to improve ASPA's function? (see related article)
- Exploration of ways to improve planning and actions by altering timing of committee reports.

Fourth, Cynthia Davenport, other ASPA members, and/or I have attended several meetings that have had implications for specialized accreditation and ASPA, including:

- Several meetings sponsored by CHEA related to the proposed revision of the CHEA/COR Recognition Policy
- Several meetings sponsored by CHEA related to reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)
- The Fall meeting of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)
- A strategy meeting convened by ACE and CHEA at One DuPont Circle in anticipation of HEA reauthorization activities in 2005

Fifth, work on the Accreditation Profile Compendium Project is progressing. During Fall 2004, specialized accreditors submitted data using an on-line survey tool. Data will be imported into an Access database to generate profiles for each participating accrediting body. Participation rates for the project are good.

Sixth, work has begun on proposed revisions to the Compensation Survey, which is scheduled to be repeated next year.

And, last, but certainly not least, numerous committee meetings have been held by conference call or in person. Meetings of the Professional Development Committees, the Nominating Committee, the Membership Committee, the Recognition Issues Committee, and the specially appointed "Unmet Needs" task force have all kept ASPA busy.

As you can see from the list above, many of the activities are on-going. It is the Board's expectation that outcomes of much of this preparatory work will be seen at ASPA's Spring 2005 meeting. Between now and then, in preparation for actions to be taken at that meeting, various committees and the Board will seek your input (or may have done so already) related to many of the activities noted above. Responding to the requests will enable your comments to be considered as the Board makes some important decisions on behalf of ASPA.

In addition, we will continue to address HEA reauthorization, revision of the CHEA recognition criteria, and other issues that may face ASPA members in the near future.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and productive New Year!

ASPA's Spring 2005 Professional Development Program – Managing Change

Change. It happens all the time. Sometimes change can be easily managed; other times it hits us like a sledgehammer. What can we do to use change in a positive way? How can we handle change that's being dictated outside our realm of control and comfort? For answers to these questions and more, we invite you to attend ASPA's Spring 2005 Professional Development Program on April 4-5 in Washington, DC.

The Spring Professional Development Committee has developed a program about change that embodies principles from the ASPA-member *Code of Good Practice* items four through six. We are pleased that **Nancy Axelrod** has agreed to lead our discussion about changes in higher education, public disclosure, governance, and how to manage all that change.

Nancy is the founding CEO of the National Center for Nonprofit Boards (now known as Board Source) and the former Vice President of Programs and Public Policy at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. In addition to her work as governance and planning consultant with associations, foundations, higher education institutions, and other national nonprofit organizations, she is on the faculty of AGB's Institute for Presidents and Board Chairs of Independent Colleges and Universities and the Center for Association Leadership, and a member of Independent Sector's Committee on Ethics and Accountability. She has written on governance, accountability, and institutional culture, and serves as a speaker and facilitator at many conferences, leadership forums, and board and staff retreats devoted to these topics.

The spring program will begin after lunch on Monday afternoon, April 4th and will include facilitated discussion sessions and a plenary panel. The focus for Monday afternoon is change in higher education — Emergence of For-Profit Education; Internationalization of Education; Distance Education and Campus Structure Changes. The Tuesday program will conclude at noon, April 5th and will feature facilitated discussion and breakout sessions.

The breakout sessions will focus on changes in governance — moving from Association-oriented to greater independence; and changing the structure or composition of the decision making body.

Reorganizing the Accreditation Process is another kind of change that will be covered on Tuesday morning. This part of the program will offer an opportunity for ASPA attendees to discuss process changes that may be required because both entities that "recognize" accreditors are currently calling for increased public disclosure.

The Spring Professional Development Committee is very excited about this program. We hope that you all will join us on April 4th and 5th at the Westin Grand in Washington, DC.

"Whosoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times." -Niccolo Machiavelli

Spring 2005 Schedules & Forms

ASPA's Spring 2005 meeting will start at 1 pm Sunday, April 3, 2005, and end at noon Tuesday. Schedules and registration forms are enclosed and are also available from the MEETINGS section of the ASPA web site: www.aspa-usa.org.

Meeting Sites Fall 2005 and 2006

Taking the lead from suggestions made by members at last fall's meeting, during October the ASPA Board reviewed preliminary information on more than a dozen cities and identified three to explore further as possibilities for future fall ASPA meetings. Based on responses to ASPA's meeting specs received from multiple hotels in each city, the choices narrowed to Portland, Oregon and Denver, Colorado.

The ASPA Executive Committee reviewed the two best contracts (from a hotel in each city) and was pleased to select The Benson Hotel in Portland, Oregon as the site of ASPA's Fall 2005 meeting. Portland was one of several cities mentioned in a motion passed unanimously by the members at the Fall 2004 meeting.

The other hotel - The Brown Palace Hotel in Denver Colorado - was willing to extend its same offer to ASPA for the Fall 2006 meeting making this a win-win negotiation all around.

Information about the two hotels is available at:
Fall 2005: www.bensonhotel.com
Fall 2006: www.brownpalace.com

"Sometimes there's a fine line between sympathy and outright congratulations."
Stephan Pastis,
Nov 12, 2004: *Pearls Before Swine*

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - PLANNING FOR CHANGE AND BEYOND: REPORTING AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

More people are using accreditation for more purposes than ever before. Congress, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), and CHEA all seem to be encouraging, if not requiring, accrediting bodies to provide more information about the accreditation process and actions to the public.

Prospective students often know that accreditation is important but they don't necessarily know why and may not understand what accreditation means. Students may believe that it is no longer sufficient to know that a particular school or program is accredited. They are searching for information that will help them determine whether it is worth investing their time and money in attending that particular school or program. In addition, they want to know how the school or program rates compared to other similar programs, its strengths and weaknesses and how its graduates do in the marketplace. They desire assurance that they are making a good choice.

Even if greater public disclosure is not required as part of recognition, accreditors need to address issues such as:

- I. What information should accrediting agencies make public?
- II. How should that information be made available?
- III. How can accrediting agencies balance their responsibility to programs / institutions with their responsibility to students?
- IV. What information can accrediting agencies provide that will help improve education in the United States?

Mark your calendars for September 12-13, 2005 and plan to join ASPA in Portland, Oregon to participate in this timely program. While we can't predict whether reauthorization of the Higher Education Act will be completed by September, it is likely that CHEA will have adopted its revised recognition policy by then. Join your colleagues as we discuss the implementation of changed or new requirements and focus on the many aspects of disclosure.

MORE ASPA ACTIVITIES

*** Standards Revision: Everybody Does It:** Reviews were excellent for the Fall Professional Development session, held on Tuesday, September 14, 2004. The program included panels of accreditors who addressed 1) the standards revision process and 2) implementation of new or revised standards. Small groups discussed case studies that focused on "nitty gritty" issues faced by all accreditors as standards are revised and implemented. Facilitator, Frank J. Sabatine, Ball State University, assisted the committee in developing this very practical program. (Note: Members of the Professional Development committees are listed in the ASPA Membership Directory.)

*** Proposed Accreditation Research:** David J. Werner, Chancellor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, asked for ASPA member volunteers to assist with a project that is intended to evaluate accreditation standards and decisions. During 2005, Werner will study the degree to which requirements extraneous to student learning outcomes may be reflected in the standards or accrediting decisions. Werner will be looking for trends rather than idiosyncratic or one-time experiences. An update on the research project will be available at the Spring 2005 meeting.

*** Accreditation Profile Compendium Project:** ASPA's "profile" project will result in a user-friendly database for specialized accreditors. The user will be able to review summary information or a cumulative report of text responses across participating accrediting bodies. Following extensive work with a small pool of ASPA members, database expert, Elizabeth Hanke, Datwise, Inc., identified an on-line survey company that met our needs. E-mail messages containing a unique user-ID were distributed to both member and non-member specialized accreditors. Following several follow-up contacts, the data collection phase was completed in December 2004. Next, data collected through the Web Surveyor survey will be imported into an Access database. A copy of the database with a number of basic, pre-designed reports, will be distributed to all project participants in Spring 2005. Additional information will be available at the Spring 2005 meeting.

THE ASPA BYLAWS: DO THEY MEET ASPA'S NEEDS??

By MARY JANE HARRIS, CAPTE: PHYSICAL THERAPY;
CHAIR, ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As noted in my Chair's message, among the topics that the ASPA Board of Directors has been discussing over the past six months is the issue of whether the current bylaws still meet ASPA's needs, especially as we move forward with the process, begun in Scottsdale, of charting ASPA's next ten years. As part of the self-reflection that began in Scottsdale, it seems appropriate to consider this issue as well.

To that end, the Board of Directors has scheduled time during the Spring ASPA meeting in April for a hearing about the current bylaws. We would like the membership to address the following four basic questions:

1. Do the bylaws reflect ASPA as it currently functions?
2. Do the bylaws meet ASPA's current needs? Will they meet ASPA's future needs?
3. Do the bylaws foster efficient and effective function?
4. What suggestions do you have for change?

By way of "priming the pump" for future discussions, let me provide you with a peek at my responses to these questions.

To question 1, I would answer "No." Here's just one example: The second paragraph of ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP, Section 1 Voting Members says: "Each charter member of the Association and additional voting members thereafter shall be recognized by the Association's Committee on Recognition for the evaluation and accreditation of postsecondary institutions or programs. The Committee on Recognition, once it is established, shall approve and publish a statement of scope for each member's accrediting activities." As you know, the Committee on Recognition has never been established, so I would argue that this paragraph should be revised to reflect current practice.

To question 2, I would answer "No" as well. An example: I think the membership needs to be more involved in the decisions made about ASPA's current and future needs. The current bylaws require the

Board to consult with the membership about important issues, but the 1998 revision of the bylaws placed considerable power in the hands of the Board. I would argue that the earlier bylaw changes went too far in this direction and that we should make a correction.

I would also answer "No" to question 3. Although I could provide several examples, here's just one. The practice of electing officers every year is, in my opinion, burdensome on the nominating committee. More importantly, I would argue that it makes continuity of decision-making, transfer of information and long-term planning much more difficult.

To question 4, I would respond with a variety of suggested changes, some of which you might infer from my comments above.

So, I ask each of you to review the current bylaws carefully (the bylaws are posted on the ASPA website: www.aspa-usa.org). Come to the spring meeting prepared to provide input about the bylaws and to help the Board take steps to move ASPA forward. Let's have a lively discussion.

READY? SET? VOTE!

Plan now to attend the ASPA Member Business meeting on Monday morning, April 4, 2005 and cast your vote for the future leaders of ASPA. The ASPA Committee on Nominations is nearing closure on the slate of candidates for election and appointment. Many of you submitted nominees and others agreed to be nominated and will serve if elected. In an organization as small as ASPA, your willingness to participate in both roles is critically important. So here's a special **thank you** to you all. The slate of candidates, with biographical information, will be distributed to all members of ASPA prior to the Spring meeting.

CONSISTENT FRAMEWORK FOR ASPA MEETINGS

ASPA held its Fall 2004 meeting at The Westin Indianapolis on September 12-14. The meeting began at 4:00pm on Sunday and ended at 4:00pm on Tuesday. The Board reviewed comments from members and agreed that consistent start and end times will be more conducive to making travel plans well in advance of each meeting. Please note that future ASPA meetings will begin about noon on Sunday and end at noon on Tuesday.

ASPA WELCOMES APSAA

The American Psychoanalytic Association is the newest member of ASPA. The ASPA Board of Directors accepted APsAA into membership at the Fall 2004 meeting in Indianapolis. APsAA's website is located at: www.apsa.org.

APsAA says:

Psychoanalysis includes three elements. It is a systematized body of knowledge about psychological development and functioning. It is a method of treatment that aims at a full expression, exploration, and understanding of the human mind and offers the possibility of self-understanding, emotional growth, and lasting change. It is also a method of research designed to advance our understanding of the human mind.

Principles and standards for psychoanalytic education were first established in 1938 to insure that all constituent Institutes of the American Psychoanalytic Association maintain the highest quality of psychoanalytic education. The Association accredits 29 training institutes nationwide, and is developing 3 new training facilities in areas not yet served by a psychoanalytic institute.

The institutes are re-accredited every seven years and the new training facilities are visited by teams from the Association regularly throughout their development.

Executive Director, Dean K. Stein, says he is looking forward to getting to know his ASPA colleagues. You may welcome Mr. Stein to the community of ASPA members by contacting him at: deankstein@apsa.org

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Mark your calendars now with these dates for ASPA's future meetings:

- Fall 2005 - September 11-13 - Portland, Oregon
- Spring 2006 - March 26-28 - Chicago, Illinois
- Fall 2006 - September 10-12 - Denver, Colorado
- Spring 2007 - March 25-27 - Washington, DC

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CHERRY BLOSSOMS AND ASPA

The 2005 festival - from March 26 - April 10 - marks the 93rd celebration of the original gift of 3,000 cherry trees from the city of Tokyo to the people of Washington, DC in 1912.

Check the official cherry blossom web site at www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org to find information about special activities that will occur during the time that ASPA is also DC.

MEMBERS STANDING TOGETHER

If your specialized / professional accrediting body is not yet a member of ASPA, please consider adding your voice to those of the current members of ASPA during 2005. ASPA's current accomplishments and goals will be reviewed during the Spring 2005 meeting. The Board encourages non-member accreditors to request a copy. ASPA's web site contains information about the application process, the ASPA-member *Code of Good Practice* and the definitions that establish eligibility for membership. Go to: www.aspa-usa.org and click on the "membership info" button. All prospective members must show that they meet the definitions and have adopted the *Code*.

Applications to be reviewed at the Spring meeting are due by February 15. Applications to be reviewed at the Fall meeting are due by August 15. Contact the ASPA Office (773/ 525-2160) if you have questions about your eligibility or the application process.



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