

ASPA NEWS

July 2009

ASSOCIATION of SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS

ASPA News is published
in January and July each year.

ASPA Chair's Remarks: July 2009

ASPA: Planning for the Future

Peter H. Vlasses, Executive Director, ACPE: Pharmacy

Planning for the future is an important task for any organization, and ASPA is no exception. On Sunday, March 29, 2009, ASPA members in attendance at the spring meeting in Washington, DC, convened to develop a proposed strategic plan renewal for the consideration of the organization's Board of Directors. Meeting throughout the day in a series of sessions, planning participants reflected on the organization's mission, motto, and purposes; framed aspirations; set forth strategic objectives; and recommended the consideration of a priority order among them. Paul L. Gaston, PhD, Trustees Professor, Kent State University and Past Chair of the ASPA Board, facilitated the session. Paul had surveyed ASPA members prior to the meeting for their ideas and concerns regarding ASPA's future and brought this information to the planning session.



The meeting participants focused on issues related to the five key elements of ASPA's mission:

- ❖ Providing a collaborative forum
- ❖ Providing a collective voice
- ❖ Representing its members on issues of educational quality
- ❖ Advancing the knowledge, skills, good practices, and ethical commitments of accreditors
- ❖ Communicating the value of accreditation as a means of enhancing educational quality

The strategic objectives proposed by the meeting participants are summarized as:

1. Maintain current succession plans for possible executive leadership change in the next several years and consider need for additional staff.
2. Continue and expand working relationships, with other accrediting bodies (including regional and national accreditors), with higher education

associations, with relevant government agencies, and with international allies.

3. Enhance the visibility and influence of ASPA as THE voice for specialized and professional accreditation and as one of the prominent voices for accreditation in general.
4. Frame prominent accreditation issues in accord with the interests and values of ASPA and its colleagues.
5. Provide additional support for ASPA operations, including a comprehensive communication plan, including expanded use of technology and a branding strategy.

On Monday, May 11, 2009, the ASPA Board of Directors met in Chicago and accepted these proposed strategic objectives as the basis of the revised three-year strategic plan. Specific goals for 2010 for each of the objectives were discussed and subsequently approved. Similarly, preliminary goals that would take longer than one year were identified for fiscal years 2011 and 2012. The FY 2010 ASPA goals adopted by the Board are:

- ❖ Complete a gap analysis of ASPA operations between the current ASPA and its aspirational goals.
- ❖ Continue to participate in meetings with the higher education associations to promote the importance of specialized and professional accreditation.
- ❖ Increase efforts to enhance and increase the visibility of ASPA by identifying and implementing strategies that can be undertaken by the membership.
- ❖ Assess lessons learned during negotiated rulemaking to implement the Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- ❖ Begin assessment of the impact of the new USDE Criteria for Recognition when released in late 2009.
- ❖ Redesign the website to strengthen communications with ASPA members and other significant constituencies.
- ❖ Develop a means for ASPA members to discuss the use of technology in the accreditation process.

I believe the members and Board of Directors have worked well together to lay a solid, strategic foundation for ASPA at this important time in the organization's history. The Board and I will work diligently to achieve all the strategic objectives and goals that have been established. When we do, I know ASPA will be a better and stronger organization, more able to serve the needs of specialized and professional accreditors. ■

Board Transitions

Spring is a time of transition and this is also true when it comes to the ASPA Board of Directors. During the Spring ASPA meeting, we said goodbye to two long time members of the ASPA Board of Directors, Brian Andrew and Mary Jane Harris.

Brian Andrew, Vice President and General Counsel of TLC Corporation, St. Louis, Missouri was the public member of the ASPA Board of Directors from July 1, 2003 - April 30, 2009 and the Treasurer and a member of the Executive Committee from July 1, 2005 - April 30, 2008. Brian who never met a stranger made many friends during his years with ASPA. He continues to be interested in service as a public member of specialized accreditation decision-making bodies.

Mary Jane Harris, Director of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE) was an accreditor member of the ASPA Board for six years, serving from July 1, 2003 - April 30, 2009. During that time, she served as Board Chair and member of the Executive Committee from July 1, 2004 - April 30, 2007 and as Board Vice-Chair and member of the Executive Committee from May 1, 2007 - April 30, 2009. Although her terms on the board are completed, Mary Jane plans to continue service to her colleagues through spearheading the Glossary project and in other ways that may emerge.

Although part of a transition is saying goodbye, the other part is saying hello. During the elections held on March 30, 2009, as part of the ASPA Spring meeting, two individuals were elected as new members of the ASPA Board, public member, Margaret (Marcy) Ruyl McTier, and accreditor member, Neil Harvison.

Marcy Ruyl McTier was born in Middletown, Connecticut, but spent most of her early life in Memphis, Tennessee. In 1961 she graduated from Rhodes College in Memphis with a major in history and began teaching elementary education in Atlanta., Georgia. There she met and married Charles H. McTier, The McTier's have two grown children and one grandchild.

During most of her adult life, Marcy has been a community volunteer. She has served as a trustee of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, the Georgia Historical Society, Georgia State Botanical Garden, Georgia CASA and Atlanta's Visiting Nurse Health Association. She also served as a trustee of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and President of the Atlanta Symphony Associates. Her experience in accreditation activities came from her six year service as a public member of the accrediting board of the National Association of Schools of Music and a like tenure on the accrediting board of the National Association of Schools of Theater.

Marcy's hobbies include tennis, travel and gardening. Woodland gardens are a particular interest because of having a second home in western North Carolina.. There she is an inveterate rock hound. A few years ago she inherited her grandmother's large button collection. She now enjoys researching the history and artistry of antique buttons from many parts of the world.

Neil Harvison is the director of accreditation and academic affairs of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). Prior to joining AOTA in 2006, Neil was a hospital director at the Northern Westchester Hospital in New York for five years and the associate director of the Rehabilitation Center of the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York city for the previous ten years. Neil graduated with an undergraduate degree in occupational therapy from the University of Queensland in Australia. In addition, he holds a masters degree in developmental studies and a doctor of philosophy degree from the Steinhardt School of Education of New York University. Neil has held adjunct faculty appointments at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons and Mercy College.

Neil telecommutes from the home in northwest Connecticut that he shares with the three "women" in his life. In addition to his wife Beth, Neil has two daughters aged nine (Kate) and seven (Emma). His spare time is dominated by piano, ballet and soccer. When time allows, Neil likes to go running! ■



Spring 2010 Professional Development Session:

The Value of Accreditation as We Weather Difficult Economic Times

The Spring ASPA meeting will be held on March 28–30, 2010, in Chicago, IL. The professional development (ProD) topic being considered is an analysis of the current volatile economic climate and how it has impacted accrediting agencies and the programs and institutions they accredit. The session will also focus on ways to demonstrate the value of accreditation in tumultuous economic times.

The ASPA Spring Professional Development Subcommittee would like to express its appreciation to the ASPA members and others who attended the Spring 2009 ProD Session. There were many positive evaluations and considerable feedback regarding the use of technology. The Spring ProD team reviewed the evaluations prior to starting to work on the program for the 2010 ASPA Spring meeting. If you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding the proposed topic please contact Francis Gerbasi at fgerbasi@aana.com. ■

Another “hot” (and successful) ASPA Meeting

The ASPA Spring 2009 meeting was so hot it brought out the D.C. fire department! Okay, maybe the fire drill wasn't caused by ASPA's dynamite programming, but it was all part of the experience shared by the attendees at the L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington, DC.

Surrounded by cherry blossoms and tulip magnolias, ASPA attendees were focused on the future, spending day one of the meeting in strategic planning. The group effort, facilitated by former ASPA chair, Paul Gaston, resulted in a long list of potential goals and objectives for ASPA and the products of that work session will be invaluable to the Board of Directors as they plot the future directions of the organization.

The focus on the future continued on Day Two with a terrific opening session titled: “Brainstorming the Future: Doing What We Do BETTER.” This interactive session asked attendees to react to several provocative questions. It was led by ASPA Board members, Rodney Erickson, Executive Vice President and Provost, The Penn State University; Pauletta Brown Bracy, Associate Professor and Director of University Accreditation, North Carolina Central University; and Peter H. Vlases, Executive Director, Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. They asked folks to start with a “clean slate” and imagine what accreditation would look like in a “perfect world.” Some of

the interesting thoughts included the idea that site visitors would be “perfectly trained” professionals, not all-too-fallible volunteers; costs truly would be offset by efficiencies gained; and the system would be genuinely transparent.

There was much discussion about eliminating duplication among accrediting agencies and creating a system that is flexible and streamlined. And there was a lot of discussion about how to balance accreditation's “auditing” role with its consultative role and the ongoing issue of aspirational versus benchmark standards.

The Professional Development segment of the Spring meeting continued the emphasis on the future with its topic of “**How Technology Can Create Value and Achieve Efficiencies Over Time.**” This ProD session opened with a marvelous (and mind-boggling) overview of all aspects of technology by Ed Meachen, CIO, University of Wisconsin System (see related article). The meeting also included board and member business meetings where new members were elected or appointed to the Board or to standing committees, and two well-attended receptions. Kudos go to the ProD committee for organizing an opportunity for attendees to meet a number of accreditation software vendors. ■

Why Technology is Useful



The Spring 2009 ASPA professional development session explored issues associated with the theme, “how technology can create value and achieve efficiencies over time.” Dr. Edward Meachen, Chief Information Officer at the University of Wisconsin System Administration, acted as moderator and keynote speaker for the March 30-31 program. Dr. Meachen's keynote, “Why is Technology Useful,” examined three subjects: applications that might prove useful to ASPA members, how to create a business Case for acquiring a technology application, and some formal processes for selecting the right technology application.

Dr. Meachen's “high level” keynote set the framework for two highly interactive discussions. In the first discussion, seven ASPA members shared some of the technologies their organizations use to add value or enhance efficiencies. ASPA members shared how they utilize virtual meetings and webinars, how they set up blogs and wikis and use other social networking tools, how they use databases and SharePoint, and how some of the larger agencies have implemented enterprise accreditation systems.

The second discussion, “How to Develop and Implement Applications,” featured Claire Dixon-Lee (CAHIM), Frank Gerbasi (COA-NA), and Mary Jane Harris (CAPTE). Each discussed how they acquired and developed enterprise accreditation systems for their agencies. They recounted the challenges, the hidden costs, and, ultimately, the efficiencies and value they derived from their systems. Audience participation was so lively and engaging that a consensus of the audience decided to continue the discussion rather than breaking it off for the last scheduled session.

Some of the audience “takeaways” from the last discussion session included an appreciation for the complexities and cost of acquiring and developing enterprise systems. One ASPA organization that had developed its own enterprise accreditation system offered to make the system freely available to other organizations. Another participant volunteered to set up a blog to continue the technology conversation following the conference. Many in the audience expressed the need to develop structured conversations to continue to learn how very small as well as very large ASPA organizations were creatively using technology tools to solve business problems.

The post-conference assessment indicated that participants were pleased with this professional development opportunity. They indicated that technology is one of those issues they need to periodically revisit and they liked the idea of ASPA members sharing their experiences with emerging technologies. ■

ASPA Professional Development Program - Fall 2009

The Alpha and Omega of On-Site Reviews: Preparing and Evaluating

The Fall 2009 professional development program will focus on two important parts of accreditation site visits - how to prepare for site visits by reviewing the self-study and how to evaluate them once they have ended.

Review of the self-study and how teams prepare for the on-site visit will be the focus of the Monday afternoon program on September 14. The program will open with three point - counterpoint panels. Each panel will be composed of an educator who serves as self-study reviewer and an accreditation staff member from the same profession. Following round table discussion and report out, attendees will be able to learn about electronic site visit formats from staff at ACPE: Pharmacy and CODA: Dentistry.

The Tuesday morning program will focus on post site-visit evaluation. ASPA Board member, Rodney Erickson, Vice President and Provost, The Pennsylvania State University, will discuss his experience with a wide range of team exit reports. Wendy Duncan, Dean, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, St. Louis, MO, will then discuss evaluation tools used for post-visit evaluations to start a discussion that will continue with a panel of your fellow accreditors and in round table discussion. The goal of this session is to help those in attendance go home with stronger, more effective evaluation instruments.

For more information, see the separate agenda enclosed with this mailing and posted to the MEETINGS section of the ASPA web site: www.aspa-usa.org. ■

Fall 2009 Meeting Highlights

Web 2.0 Technology: Collaboration Across Time Zones

The meeting will open on Sunday afternoon with a panel of librarians from Washington University in St. Louis who will explain and demonstrate some of the Web 2.0 tools available to you for little or no cost. They will focus on technologies that enable teamwork no matter where the team members are located. Tom Leonhardt, member of the ASPA Board and Director, Scarborough-Phillips Library at St. Edwards University in Austin, TX will facilitate this interactive session designed to continue the discussion begun at the Spring 2009 meeting.

International Accreditation: How are accreditors responding?

Members of ASPA have asked for an opportunity to talk with each other about plans to accredit, or not accredit, internationally. Many accreditors are receiving an increasing number of requests for accreditation from educational programs outside of the United States and Canada and need to develop a policy and strategy for responding to those requests.

This Monday morning panel session, facilitated by new ASPA board member Neil Harvison, ACOTE: Occupational Therapy, will help those of us who are “newbies” learn from

our experienced colleagues. Panelists will address questions such as: What unexpected issues did you face when entering international accreditation and how did you deal with them? What resource(s) were most helpful as you got started in international accreditation? What one key piece of wisdom would you offer to anyone potentially entering the international accreditation arena for the first time? ■

Fall Meeting “To Do” list...

Submit Agenda Items by July 30

ASPA's annual business, including elections, is routinely conducted during the Spring meetings, leaving more time at the Fall meetings to consider member requests for topics to be placed on the agenda for the Members Only meeting (1:00pm on Sunday, September 13) or the Member Business meeting (10:30am on Monday, September 14). Please contact the ASPA office or a member of the Executive Committee if you have a topic to suggest.

Book your sleeping room prior to August 15

Contact The Millenium Hotel St. Louis at 314-241-9500 to book a room in the group block for the ASPA Fall Meeting. If the hotel has rooms available, the group rate of \$129 plus tax is available three days before and after the meeting dates. If you prefer to book your room on line, a link to a designated booking site will be posted on the ASPA web site - click on MEETINGS.

Register with ASPA prior to August 15

Members, non-members, and anyone who is not a specialized accreditor may register for the Fall 2009 ASPA meeting. If you need a registration form different from the one enclosed with this mailing, please see the forms posted to the ASPA web site. If you have questions, please contact the ASPA office for additional information.

Make Your Travel Arrangements

Travel to St. Louis should be very cost effective for most members of ASPA. In early July, direct flights could be booked from the DC area to St. Louis for under \$250 round trip and flights from Chicago were in the vicinity of \$150 round trip. Amtrak is another cost-effective option for some members, with tickets now about \$100 round trip between Chicago and St. Louis. Whether you decide to drive, take the train, or fly, make your travel plans as soon as possible to take advantage of these cost-effective options. ■

ASPA Web Re-design is Underway

Perhaps by the time you receive this issue of ASPA News a new and improved ASPA web site will be ready for prime time at www.aspa-usa.org. The re-design will make the site easier to use. Rather than giving step-by-step instructions, the ASPA office (and others) will now be able to send a specific URL to help other users go directly to posted information. Use of a “document naming protocol” will also make it easier to post documents in the future. As time permits, past issues of Board and Member minutes and other resource documents will be added to the “Members Only” part of the site. ■

ASPA Welcomes Five New Members

In the January 2008 newsletter we welcomed three new members and two returning members to ASPA. That brought our membership total to 56. Since that time we have added five new members bringing our membership total to 61. These new members are in many ways a microcosm of ASPA itself—diverse in size, mission and age, but all of them recognize the value of, and are committed to, this collective voice for specialized and professional accreditation. Welcome aboard!!



Athletic Training Education: The Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Athletic Training (JRC-AT) was incorporated in Texas in October 1991. The JRC-AT

was a Committee on Accreditation under the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP); effective June 30, 2006, the JRC-AT became independent from CAAHEP and changed its name to the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE).

The CAATE is the agency responsible for the accreditation of 360 professional (entry-level) Athletic Training educational programs.

The mission of the CAATE is to provide comprehensive accreditation services to institutions that offer Athletic Training degree programs and verify that all CAATE-accredited programs meet the acceptable educational standards for professional (entry-level) athletic training education.



Early Childhood Education: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is a long-standing member of ASPA, and now we are delighted to welcome a related organization's accreditation arm.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) sponsors the Commission on Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA). NAEYC is one of 21 "specialty professional association members" of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) that have issued Standards.

While NCATE accredits baccalaureate degree programs for early childhood educators, ECADA accredits associate degree programs in colleges and universities that demonstrate evidence of meeting the NAEYC professional preparation standards. There currently are 166 associate degree programs in 36 different states that are enrolled in the system. Fifty one of those programs have received national accreditation. The accreditation system opened to public application in April 2006.



Forensic Science Education: The mission of the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) is to maintain and to enhance the quality of forensic science education through a formal evaluation and recognition of college-level academic programs. The primary function of the Commission is to develop and to maintain standards and to administer an accreditation program that recognizes and distinguishes high quality undergraduate and graduate forensic science programs.

An assessment of forensic sciences published in 1999 by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), entitled *Forensic Science: Review of Status and Needs*, described the educational and training needs of the forensic science community as "immense." Among the recommendations contained in the report was the establishment of an accreditation system.

The Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) was established and FEPAC awarded its first accreditation in February 2004. FEPAC currently has 25 accredited programs, both graduate and undergraduate.



Funeral Service Education: The American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE) serves as the national academic accreditation agency for college and university programs in Funeral Service and Mortuary Science Education. ABFSE is the sole accrediting agency recognized by the US Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation in this field. They have 56 accredited programs or institutions located in 31 states and the District of Columbia. 44 are public, 13 are private. Most of the programs award an associate degree (51), with 6 offering a baccalaureate degree.



Interpreter Education: The Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) is one of our youngest new members. It was founded in 2006 to promote professionalism in the field of sign language interpreter education through the process of accreditation.

This goal is reflected in CCIE's mission which is to promote professionalism in the field of interpreter education through: the accreditation of professional preparation programs; the development and revision of interpreter education standards; the encouragement of excellence in program development; a national and international dialogue on the preservation and advancement of standards in the field of interpreter and higher education; and the application of the knowledge, skills, and ethics of the profession.

The first two programs have recently received CCIE accreditation: the University of New Hampshire and Georgia Perimeter College. ■

Higher Education Law and Regulation: A Refresher Course

Prepared for ASPA by Karen P. Moynahan,
NASAD, NASD, NASM, NAST

The Higher Education Act of 1965 represents laws governing higher education. This Act has been reauthorized (amended) several times during the last 40 years, most recently with the approval of the Higher Education Opportunity Act signed into law on August 14, 2008. The “official” title of the HEOA of 2008 is the Higher Education Opportunity Act of (August 14) 2008, P.L. 110-135 122 STAT. 3078. P.L. indicates “Public Law”. 110-135 indicates the 135th bill of the 110th Congress. 122 STAT. 3078 refers to Volume #122 of the U.S. Statute at Large beginning on page number 3078.

Negotiated rulemaking sessions are conducted by US Department of Education (ED) staff members for the purpose of gathering public comment as they consider and write rules (regulations) for implementation of the laws. There are several important points of note regarding regulations: 1) regulations are not laws, 2) regulations are written by ED staff members, 3) ED staff members can

Accept comment from the public and modify regulation language, 4) ED staff members have the final say regarding regulation wording, and 5) the regulations are in draft form until the final version is published in the *Federal Register*. For the most recent round of negotiated rulemaking for accreditation, final regulations are not expected until

**“regulations serve the law
but do not replace it.”**

November 2009. Regulations may be found in the *Code of Federal Regulations*, typically depicted in a form such as 34C.F.R.602.16. 34 represents the number of the Title. C.F.R stands for *Code of Federal Regulations*. 602.16 is the section of the regulations that deals with accreditation and preaccreditation standards.

Differentiating between law (what agencies must adhere to) and regulation (rules for implementation of law) is important. It is important to remember that the regulations serve the law but do not replace it. When preparing petitions for recognition by the Secretary of Education, it is the law that accrediting agencies are bound to address even though in typical applications we are asked to structure our petitions on the regulations. The most recent request outlined in the Department's June 5, 2009 “Dear Colleague” letter is a rare exception. Because the regulations are not final, accreditors are being asked to address the law.

These distinctions are important because in recent years many accreditors have expressed concerns about the rules for implementation, and the implementation itself, which tended to exceed the law and its intent. In response, during 2008 the Congress prohibited USDE regulation in a number of areas. As accreditors, it is our duty to know and understand the law associated with higher education, and to know how and why regulations are used. It is also important for all of us – i.e., for the broad-based accreditation community – to stand together to ensure the Department takes actions and makes decisions that remain within the boundaries of the law. ■



The Millennium Hotel St. Louis is located in the heart of downtown adjacent to the World-famous Gateway Arch and just two blocks from Busch Stadium.

Did you know that St. Louis boasts more free major visitor attractions than anywhere else in the United States? In nearby Forest Park, one of the largest city parks in the nation, you can visit St. Louis' major museums like the Art Museum and the Missouri History Museum, as well as the Science Center and Planetarium and one of the finest and largest zoos in the world for free.

Laclede's Landing, a vibrant entertainment district just north of the hotel, features preserved historic brick and iron façade buildings along cobblestone streets housing some of St. Louis' best restaurants and nightclubs. Laclede's Landing is also the site of the city's only downtown casino. Nearby Union Station features more than 100 unique shops and restaurants. And here's a few more attractions you might be interested in visiting.

Gateway Arch – 1 block NE
Old Cathedral – 1 block NE
President Casino – 3 blocks N
Anheuser Busch Brewery – 2 miles S

REGISTER TODAY!

Check the ASPA website, www.aspa-usa.org for additional Fall Meeting registration forms, as well as the online link to book your hotel room. ■

 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; web: www.aspa-usa.org