

ASPA Newsletter - July 1997

Issue Theme: *"Happy 4th Birthday, ASPA!!!!"*

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Name the Newsletter

ASPA is having a contest to name its new newsletter which will be published twice each year, in June/July and December/January. The newsletter will be broadly distributed to audiences with an interest in education and accreditation

ASPA's chair and executive director will select the winning entry. If your entry wins, you will receive a prize of \$100 to use to treat your staff to lunch on ASPA. Submit your entry, with your registration for the fall meeting, to the ASPA office **by August 7, 1997**.

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Looking Ahead to Tucson

Did you know??? The next ASPA meeting will be September 7-8-9, 1997 at Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona.

ASPA welcomes guests at its meetings and, to facilitate the lively exchange of ideas from varied sources, conducts most of its business in open sessions. All meetings held on Monday, September 8, 1997 will be open. Members and guests are especially encouraged to attend the Board of Directors meeting. Issues of relevance to both the board and membership (i.e., the financial report) will be discussed during the board meeting and won't be repeated during the membership meeting.

Chair, Carol Bobby has promised that meeting attendees will have a little bit of free time at the end of a busy Monday. If she meets her goal of adjourning the meeting by 4:30pm, there should be time for some golf or tennis or a little spa-time before you meet a few of your colleagues for an "on-your-own" dinner.

In addition to five major restaurants and lounges, Ventana Canyon Resort boasts a popular lakeside nightclub, a nationally known 18-hole PGA Fazio golf course, ten lighted tennis courts, a croquet green, two swimming pools and jacuzzis, health club, spa, nature trail, par course and nearby mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding. Contact the hotel for prices of specific activities. The ASPA group room rate of \$85/night is available three days before and after the meeting, subject to availability. Call hotel reservations at: 800-234-5117 or (520) 299-2020 prior to the room release date of August 7, 1997.

And - to take advantage of ASPA's **\$50.00 "early bird" discount**, send the enclosed meeting registration form, with your check made payable to ASPA, to the office before August 7, 1997.

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My Birthday Card to ASPA

By Carol L. Bobby, ASPA Chair

In May, I had the pleasure of being invited to speak with the member agency representatives of the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada (AAAC) about the types of issues that specialized and professional accreditors in the United States are facing. The AAAC, as a newly formed national organization, indicated to me that they were interested in how ASPA assists its members with these issues. They were interested in learning from both our successes and our continuing concerns.

In preparing for my meeting with the AAAC, I decided to give myself the luxury of just sitting still for an hour to think about ASPA and our accomplishments. What I began to realize during this hour astonished me. First of all, I realized that I was being asked to attend a lot of meetings and accept speaking engagements as a result of my role as ASPA's chair. Although I pride myself on being knowledgeable about accreditation, I knew it was having the ASPA credential behind my name that caused people to call me and not the fact that I have 11 years of accreditation experience behind my name. The AAAC meeting was but one example of this. I have also represented ASPA at conferences or meetings of the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education, the Association for Assessment in Higher Education, the CHEA-NASULGC initiative on enhancing the usefulness of specialized accreditation, the Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation (CLEAR), and the UCSF and Pew-supported Task Force on Health Professions Education Accreditation. *In short, ASPA has been asked to be an active player on many fronts.*

Continuing down this path of thought, I asked myself why we were being recognized on so many fronts. I realized that the quality of our documents and our semi-annual meetings spoke well on our behalf. ASPA member agencies have proven themselves to be thoughtful and deliberate thinkers who are able to critically analyze accreditation issues and the impact of change. From our *Bylaws* to the ASPA Member *Code of Good Practice*, we have carefully expressed our belief that accreditation is a positive and cooperative endeavor that benefits the US system of higher education. Our meetings have also been substantive. This past year we have explored issues surrounding distance education and outcomes assessment. We have been able to attract high level speakers on these issues and both our members and guests have profited. *In summary, we have spoken thoughtfully and placed professional development as a high priority and this has been noticed.*

The ASPA membership has also endorsed several initiatives which have furthered our credibility as a strong and united voice for the specialized and professional accrediting community. The mailing of over 6,000 letters to presidents and provosts of colleges and universities to tell them about the ASPA Member *Code of Good Practice* is one of the initiatives we should be most proud of. The letter was well received and has served as an important referent for many academic administrators of ASPA's willingness to sit at the table as equal participants in the quest for quality in higher education. ASPA also was asked and agreed to work with several regional accrediting associations on outlining the design for successful collaborative site visits. This initiative will result in a document that can be used by accreditors and institutions alike. In addition, ASPA has actively reviewed documents pertinent to the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act, while keeping abreast of comments being supplied by other interested educational agencies, such as CHEA. Finally, our executive director, Cynthia Davenport was specifically invited to participate in a Triad meeting hosted by the US Department of Education and has been very active in editing documents to the benefit of specialized accreditation. *In other words, we take thoughtful action in expressing our views.*

Closer to the homefront, did you realize that this past year alone ASPA also...

- reviewed and revised its Five Year Planning document and *Bylaws*
- held elections that successfully continued ASPA's mandate for a diverse board
- revised its membership criteria to be more inclusive
- completed a funding and compensation survey on its members' behalf
- finished another successful financial audit
- obtained its 501(c)(3) tax status (hooray!!!)
- hosted the first ever ASPA debate team
- voted to seek affiliate status with CHEA; and
- published the first ASPA newsletter (which you are now reading!)

The bottom line here is that ASPA is not a stagnant entity, but is one that is responsive to our changing needs and can take care of necessary business.

If I could come up with all of these successes at the end of one hour of contemplation, just think

what I could come up with if I had gone through all of the ASPA minutes! As I realized that it has been just four years since I filed the ASPA *Articles of Incorporation* in a dingy government building in DC, I felt such a surge of pride in what we ASPA members have accomplished in that short time period. But it is the recognition we have begun to see this past year that indicates the importance of our foundational documents and our subsequent actions. We are fortunate to have the support of a very professional executive director, Cynthia Davenport, to move us forward as we continue to grow and prosper. *So as I wish ASPA a very happy 4th birthday, let me tip my hat to all of you and to Cynthia for the hard work and dedication that has brought us to this point.*

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March Meeting Highlights

The ASPA Board and Membership met in Washington, DC on March 7, 1997. The Washington location drew a number of guests, some who attended an ASPA meeting for the first time. Some meeting highlights follow. The ASPA board and members will receive meeting minutes in a separate mailing; others may request a copy by contacting the ASPA office.)

- **Elections:** In addition to the ASPA members who were elected to positions on standing committees (see meeting minutes for details), three new members of the Board of Directors were elected to serve in the following categories. ASPA welcomes them and expresses deep appreciation to the Board members who have completed their terms of service. **Walter M. Bortz**, Vice President for Administrative and Information Services, The George Washington University replaces **George M. Dennison**, President, The University of Montana, in the CEO/CAO category.
- **Mary E. Diez**, Professor of Education and Director, Master of Arts Program at Alverno College, Milwaukee, WI replaces **Kenneth Moll** who retired from the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, University of Iowa, in the faculty or academic administrator category. New public member, **Carl Goldschmidt**, retired, professor emeritus, Michigan State University, replaces **Ronald J. St.Onge**, Attorney at Law, St. Onge, Steward, Johnson & Reens, Stamford, CT.
- **Task Force (TF) Reports:** The Audiences TF is working on a communications plan and also plans to address some of the "myths" that surround specialized accreditation. The HEA '97 TF presented a process and schedule for submitting comments to Congress on issues to be addressed during the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Following the meeting, a letter was sent to Representative Bud McKeon and Senator James Jeffords, leaders of the House and Senate committees spearheading reauthorization efforts. The comments were also posted to the University of Wisconsin, Oskosh, world wide web site. You can find the site at <http://www.uwosh.edu/hea.html>.
- **Bylaws and Strategic Plan:** Both documents were revised to more accurately reflect the current state of ASPA business. (ASPA Board and Members will receive the new *Bylaws*

in a separate mailing; others may request a copy by contacting the ASPA office.)

- **Membership:** Adherence to the ASPA Member *Code of Good Practice* is the foundation on which membership in ASPA rests. The new standing Committee on Membership, chaired by **Elaine Cuklanz**, JRCNMT, recommended, and the Board approved, two categories of membership. Applicants for **Category I** membership will show evidence of prior recognition by COPA or CORPA or current recognition by the US Department of Education and their intent to follow the *Code*; applicants for **Category II** membership will offer a more specific demonstration of their adherence to the *Code*, as well as materials about the organization and its accreditation activities. Membership application materials are available from the ASPA office.
- **Finances:** ASPA is financially stable and has a healthy reserve. For this reason, the Board held dues at the same level for another year. A budget, which includes a planned deficit intended to draw down the level of reserves during the upcoming fiscal year, was adopted. Congratulations to treasurer **Kayem Dunn**, FIDER, on her election to a second term on the Board of Directors.
- **Structured Sharing: Sam Hope**, Arts Accreditation, made a brief presentation and facilitated a lively discussion on: "Conducting Accreditation Reviews to Produce Positive Attitudes in Presidents and Provosts: How to Make a Big Difference with Minimal Resources." Thanks, Sam, for combining theory with very practical tips on this timely topic.

The Friday Board/Membership meetings were sandwiched between two days which were also very full. Task forces and committees met to discuss their reports and plan next steps. ASPA's accomplishments are directly linked to the dedication of the chairs and members of these groups. Thanks so much to each of you. The day concluded with a special facilitated discussion on the Task Force on Health Professions Education Accreditation, led by Sherril Gelmon, who refers with pride to her role as the founding chair of ASPA.

The Professional Development Committee, chaired by **Laura Messenger**, Psychology, planned a full day of professional development on the topic: "Outcomes: Here Today - Here Tomorrow." In the morning, Karen W. Kershenstein, US Department of Education, and Barbara Cambridge, American Association of Higher Education's Assessment Forum, spoke about "Linking Outcomes to Good Accreditation Practice." In the afternoon, three groups of ASPA-member "Accreditors in Action" shared specific materials and examples of the use of outcomes in standards, self-studies, and on-site. Feedback indicated that this was a successful, interactive day. Congratulations, ProD Committee, for another well-planned day.

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On the Tucson Agenda

The September 8, 1997 meeting to be held in Tucson is already jam-packed. The ~4 page draft agenda will be sent to the ASPA board and members; others may contact the ASPA office for a copy. Here are a few meeting highlights. If you have other topics to suggest, please contact the office as quickly as possible.

- **Education Commission of the States' Report:** The newly released report, "Refashioning Accountability: Toward a Coordinated System of Quality Assurance for Higher Education," will be discussed. ASPA will distribute this report to the ASPA Board and Members; see related item for information on how to purchase the report.
- **CHEA Conference:** "Enhancing the Usefulness of Specialized/Professional Accreditation," was held in Chicago on June 26-28, 1997. We will discuss the conference report and any subsequent activities.
- **Working Together Joint Committee:** As a result of a forum co-hosted by ASPA and Middle States Association in August 1996, a Joint Committee was formed. The effort of three specialized and three regional accrediting associations has led to a document that will be ready for distribution and discussion this fall. **Marilyn Fay**, JRCERT, **Jay Levrio**, CPME, and **Karen Moynahan**, Arts, have served the membership well on this committee. The participating regional associations are Middle States, New England and North Central.
- **Membership:** The Board and Membership will continue discussion of "what it means to be an ASPA member." Membership may be extended to one or more applicant(s). An ad hoc TF will present the results of its research on recruitment issues.
- **Projects and Priorities:** Reports from Task Forces and Standing Committees will allow planning for future activities and allocation of resources. Plan to help ASPA discuss and set wise priorities.
- **Reports:** ASPA members will again receive activity updates and liaison reports from the US Department of Education, CHEA, and other national and international groups with an interest in accreditation and education.
- **Special Guest:** "Remember When.... Accreditation History with Fred Harclerod" will be a session filled with stories and lively discussion. You may want to review Fred's March 1997 article. Conversation will continue during the reception immediately following.
- **Professional Development:** The Professional Development Committee's fall topic is: "Accreditation Problem Solving- Changing Wrongs into Rights." The full-day session will be structured around four hypothetical case studies. The studies will be fun and also serve as a focal point for interactive discussion of the Self-Study, On-Site Review, Report and Decision.

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ASPA Goes to Meetings

- **Triad Meeting:** Early in April, the US Department of Education hosted an invitational meeting for roughly 45 accreditors, state representatives and staff from the IPOS, IPEDS and PEPS sections of the Department of Education to discuss "ways to strengthen mutually supportive relationships" among these three constituencies. ASPA Executive Director, Cynthia Davenport, represented specialized accreditation on the accreditation panel, along with Jean Avnet Morse, Middle States Association of Colleges and School (MSA), and Steve Parker, Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS).
- **CHEA-Council for Higher Education Accreditation:** Following the May 12 meeting of the CHEA Board, the Task Force on Recognition held its first meeting. The second meeting was held on June 30-July 1. ASPA member, **Mac Detmer**, is chairing this task force for CHEA. ASPA Chair, **Carol Bobby**, is also a member of the task force. By the September ASPA meeting, the TF expects to have information on its direction and progress.

In late June, CHEA hosted an invitational conference in Chicago. The conference was planned by a committee that included ASPA members, **Milton Blood**, AACSB, **George Peterson**, ABET, **Arthur Wise**, NCATE. The specialized accreditors attending the conference, which grew out of conversations with NASULCG about the usefulness of specialized accreditation, included both ASPA member and non-member accreditors. The conference report and preliminary information about follow-up steps should be available for discussion at the September ASPA meeting.

- **Education Commission of the States:** In March, ASPA members were told about a second accountability meeting hosted by ECS. The report on a proposed new system of accountability is now available and will be discussed in September. To purchase a copy of the report, contact ECS at 303/299-3692; ask for Report No.PS-97-1; cost is \$12.50 plus p&h of \$4.25. The ASPA board and members will receive the report in a separate mailing.

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Upcoming Events

- **Middle States Annual Conference:** MSA will hold its 1997 Accreditation and Quality Assurance Conference in Philadelphia on December 8-9, 1997. MSA expects about 400 CEOs and senior administrators to attend this conference. On December 8, ASPA Executive Director, Cynthia Davenport, will be part of a panel, along with CHEA

President, Judith Eaton, and a representative of a regional accreditation association. The panel's topic is: "Transcending Our Limits: National Cooperation and Regional Accreditation."

- **Chicago and Washington Area Accreditors:** Both regional groups met on May 16, 1997. All local-area accreditors are welcome at these informal sessions which serve as a forum to discuss topics of mutual interest. Mark your calendars - the next WAA meeting will be on Friday, August 22, while the next CAA meeting will be on Friday, September 26.
- **Department of Education's NACIQI Meeting:** The tentative dates of November 19-21 have been reserved for the next meeting of NACIQI. The dates will be confirmed this fall after new appointments to the committee have been made.

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