



## Message from the Chair

*Neil Harvison, Director of Accreditation and Academic Affairs, ACOTE (Occupational Therapy)*

The good thing about being an accreditor is that we can honestly say that life is never dull! Since our last newsletter, NACIQI published its paper in February 2012 on recommendations to the Secretary for reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). NACIQI's recommendations, along with the recommendations in the report from the American Council on Education's National Task Force on Institutional Accreditation (June 2012), highlight the important role of ASPA. Both of these influential committees have made recommendations that if implemented, will lead to major changes in accreditation in the United States. While both committees have focused exclusively on institutional accreditation in their reports, the recommendations directly impact professional and specialized accrediting agencies. ASPA has responded as the representative of the specialized and professional accreditation community through written and verbal comments on the NACIQI report, highlighting the potential unintended negative impact that many of the recommendations would have on our stakeholders.

As reported in the May e-letter, the ASPA Executive Committee had the opportunity to meet with the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) to discuss issues of mutual interest in May. This is the second year in which the groups have met during their spring meetings to share common concerns; identify areas for collaboration; and improve

communication. This meeting was very successful and has led to a number of joint projects. ASPA and C-RAC will form an ad hoc committee to identify concerns and recommendations leading up to the reauthorization of the HEA. In addition we have been invited to participate in the C-RAC Staff Retreat in summer 2013 where programming will be devoted to educating C-RAC staff on specialized and professional accreditation.

The ASPA Board also approved the appointment of a task force to evaluate the ASPA meeting structure with a view to improving quality and attendance. Items to be discussed include meeting location, length and style, and accommodating the needs of seasoned and new members. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the meetings are addressing the expectations of the members. I want to encourage you to provide feedback to the task group when requested as this will be essential in informing the recommendations.

I am looking forward to our Fall 2012 meeting in Minnesota. Feedback on the extended closed members' session in Arlington in March was very positive and we will repeat that format in September. To help facilitate the closed members' session, please email me ([nharvison@aota.org](mailto:nharvison@aota.org)) any topics or issues that you want to hear discussed. ▲

## Fall 2012 Program - Defining Transparency: the Accreditor's New Clothes

ASPA's **Fall Professional Development Program** will address transparency - a topic continuing to garner attention and debate in higher education, accreditation, and the public sector. As a concept, transparency can apply to several domains including: access to student outcome information that informs prospective student decision making; transparency in the accreditation review process and development of standards; and the degree of accreditation decision information that makes sense for public consumption. Attendees will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the various perspectives on the issues and to take away ideas to enhance their effectiveness.

Plan to attend this session on **Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> (1:00 pm - 5:00 pm)** and **Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup> (8:30 am - 12:00 pm)** at the Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis MN. Go to [www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings](http://www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings) for the registration form and agenda.

## Assessing a Meeting on Assessment - ASPA Spring 2012

*Kathleen Megivern, Vice Chair ASPA Board; Executive Director, CAAHEP (Allied Health)*



Ah, springtime in Washington! And even though the cherry blossoms were mostly gone by the time we arrived, the ASPA members who attended the Spring 2012 meeting thoroughly enjoyed

the gathering.

Conference evaluations reinforced what we already knew – it's the sharing among ASPA members that always ends up being the most valuable part of every meeting. Comments such as "I always learn something new about other accreditor's processes..." and "networking is always helpful..." were repeated over and over on the evaluation forms, both for the ASPA meeting and for the Professional Development sessions.

Folks found the Members' Only session to be the most valuable part of the ASPA meeting. As for the Professional

Development topic of assessment and the value of qualitative data, reviews were mixed (as always), but several commenters praised Martha Sharpe, both as a presenter and a facilitator. "Marty always does a great job of balancing the big ideas and the nuts and bolts – she gets both accreditation and assessment."

There also were several positive comments about the session on sharing of best practices. As one attendee said, "This session really highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of using rubrics as a qualitative review tool." Clearly there were no magic answers on this topic of assessment, but everyone seemed to agree that there was great value in sharing mutual problems and creative ideas.

Those who submitted evaluation forms had several ideas for future topics that we might cover but it's clear that no matter what the focus of the formal agenda there will always be great value in just being there and sharing. We hope to see you at the Fall meeting! ▲



## Message from the Executive Director

*Joseph Vibert*

Since January, we've made steady progress on several fronts. Improvements are ongoing for the public side of the website as well as the member portal and member directory. We've further developed and begun implementation of the strategic plan with activities identified that address its four areas of focus: communication, advocacy, education, and recognition.

ASPA's first webinar was held in May. A task force is being formed to implement a webinar series that will cover topics that include orientation for new staff, training for board/council/commission members and hot topics in the accreditation environment. We've also developed the first in a series of communication pieces that highlight the importance of specialized and professional accreditation.

**ASPA News July 2012**

One of the items of business at ASPA spring meetings is the election of members to the Board. In March, ASPA bid adieu to Marcy McTier who completed her term as Public Member and Tom Leonhardt who completed his term as Practitioner Member. We are very grateful for their service to ASPA. Neil Harvison was elected to a second term as Chair; Kathy Megivern completed her term as Vice-Chair and Pauletta Bracy was elected to that position. As well, two new Directors were elected: John Culbreth as Practitioner Member and Edmund Napieralski as Public Member.

I look forward to working with the Board and the Members in our efforts to improve member services and to enhance the voice of specialized and professional accreditation. ▲

## Welcome new Board Members

**Edmund Napieralski** is a professor emeritus of English at King's College (PA). Until 2004, he served as the college's associate vice president for academic affairs and professor of English. Prior to his appointment as associate vice president, Ed held positions as honors program director and as the core curriculum and assessment coordinator.



He has over 10 years of experience as an accreditation evaluation team member with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. He recently completed six years as the public member for CEPH, the Council on Education for Public Health.

Ed holds a bachelor's degree in English from Canisius College and a PhD in English from Loyola University of Chicago. He has published and presented extensively on student outcomes, student assessment and drama and poetry studies.

Ed lives in Shavertown, PA with his wife Evelyn. They have three children and three grandchildren.

**John Culbreth** is a professor and coordinator of the doctoral program in the Department of Counseling at The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Jack received his doctorate from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 1996, and has held teaching positions at The Pennsylvania State University and The University of Virginia.



Jack's clinical experience includes work in treatment settings as a mental health counselor, chemical dependency treatment counselor, substance abuse prevention counselor, and in the school setting as a student assistance program coordinator and intervention counselor. He maintains a small private practice in Mooresville, NC, his hometown.

Jack was a member of the CACREP Board of Directors, and served as the Board chair for three years. He has also served as a member of the Governing Council for the American Counseling Association. Jack holds a North Carolina license as a professional counselor and supervisor, a North Carolina license as a chemical addiction specialist and certified clinical supervisor, and is a Nationally Certified Counselor with Master Addiction Counselor and Approved Clinical Supervisor specialty certifications. ▲

## Register Now

### ASPA Fall Meeting 2012 - Preliminary Program

September 9 - 11, 2012

Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis, MN

#### Pre-meetings

##### Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

8:30 am – 10:30 am (by invitation)

ASAHP/NN2/CAAHEP breakfast meeting

10:45 am – 11:45 am (open)

A discussion of interest to health accreditors: the Interprofessional Education Collaborative has developed core competencies for interprofessional practice and several accreditation agencies have incorporated interprofessional education into their standards. How should student learning outcomes be assessed?

#### ASPA Business Meetings

##### Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Member session (closed)

Members are invited to send requests for agenda items and discussion topics to the ASPA office or to any of the members of the Board by August 5, 2012.

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm - Reception (open)

Cynthia A. Davenport Award presentation

##### Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>

8:30 am – 9:30 am - Presentation (open)

US Election Outcome and Future of Higher Education

9:45 am – 10:45 am - Presentation (open)

Current Issues in Accreditation

11:00 am – 12:00 pm - Board Town Hall meeting (open)

#### Professional Development Program

*Defining Transparency: the Accreditor's New Clothes*

See page 1 for program description.

##### Monday September 10<sup>th</sup>

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (open)

5:15 pm – 6:45 pm - Reception (open)

##### Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

8:30 am – 12:00 pm (open)

Go to [www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings](http://www.aspa-usa.org/upcoming-meetings) for registration forms and schedules.

## Become a Member

*...the authoritative voice of specialized and professional accreditation...*

The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors is the only organization in the U.S. that promotes the importance of specialized and professional accreditation. We provide a collaborative forum and a collective voice for the community of approximately 60 member agencies that assess the quality of specialized and professional higher education programs and schools.

Some of the many benefits of membership in ASPA include:

### **Networking and peer interaction**

Membership encourages the exchange of ideas so that members may learn from other accreditors to improve their performance. It provides a forum for focused discussion and analysis with members across the country, as well as a mechanism to promote common action.

### **Professional development and continuing education**

Our twice yearly meetings allow members to stay informed of important trends and developments in accreditation and provide educational sessions that showcase best practices.



### **Representation and advocacy**

The association reinforces the importance of specialized accreditation by serving as a unified, national voice. It is the only association that solely represents specialized accreditation to broader communities. The association addresses accreditation issues in educational, governmental (including Federal legislation), and public policy contexts and communicates with the public about accreditation.

### **Enhancement of the credibility and image of accreditation**

Members agree to abide by the *ASPA-Member Code of Good Practice* that describes a high standard of professionalism that embraces the importance of focusing on educational quality, maintaining a respectful relationship between the accreditor and the institution under review, and requiring a thorough and effective orientation, training and development program for all personnel.

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

## Save the Date – ASPA Spring Meeting 2013

April 7 - 9, 2013 – Millennium Knickerbocker, Chicago, IL

### **Professional Development Program – Evidence Informed Decision Making**

It's all about the data these days....and hopefully the data are meaningful:

- Are accreditors and programs invested in using evidence to inform decisions?
- What data do accreditors collect from programs and why?
- What goes into and what comes out of trend data?
- How are accrediting agencies using data to make effective decisions?
- How are accreditors and programs using data to improve processes and outcomes?

This program will provide plenty of food for thought with perspectives provided by accreditors and programs.

Be sure to mark your calendar!

**Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors**  
3304 North Broadway Street, #214 • Chicago IL 60657  
t: 773.857.7900 • [www.aspa-usa.org](http://www.aspa-usa.org)