

ASPA NEWS

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALIZED & PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITORS

PUBLIC INFORMATION - FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE

July 2005

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CHAIR'S REMARKS

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

Dear ASPA Members and Friends:

As you already know, *tempus* really does *fugit* when you're busy. It is hard to believe that my first term as Chair of the ASPA Board of Directors is over -- a lot has happened during the year and it has kept all of us occupied with a myriad of activities. I chronicled many of them in my January 2005 message, so this message will focus on what has been going on since then.

I'm pleased to report that the Spring ASPA meeting was well-attended and very successful. The programming was excellent. We had very useful discussions about

- changes in the process for submission of petitions for recognition by the USDE
- updates on reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA)
- legal implications of electronic record retention
- possible changes in ASPA Bylaws

Nancy Axelrod facilitated the professional development session which focused on managing change. We also had a productive member business meeting and follow-up Board of Directors meeting. And, as usual, there were several opportunities for networking.

One of the outcomes of the meeting was the appointment of a Task Force to consider needed changes in the ASPA *Bylaws*. Patti Tice (ASHA: Speech-Language-Hearing) is chairing the Task Force. Other members are Carol Bobby (CACREP: Counseling), John McCarty (ARC-PA: Physician Assistant), and Brian Andrew (Board of Directors). The Task Force was charged to bring an interim report to the business meeting in the Fall and a final report to the Spring 2006 meeting.

Another outcome of the meeting was to direct the "Unmet Needs" Task Force to develop a plan for an education package for new accreditation chief staff officers and / or for accreditation staff. The Task Force will start with the plan for CSO's and will report to you at the Fall 2005 meeting.

Sue Graves (ACOTE: Occupational Therapy) chairs this Task Force; other members include Joanne Greathouse (JRCERT: Radiologic Technology), Kathy Megivern (CAAHEP: Allied Health), and Don Simmons (AVMA: Veterinary Medicine).

Keeping abreast of the events related to recognition by USDE and CHEA seems like a full-time job of late. The work of the Recognition Issues Committee appears endless. Representatives of the Committee have attended several meetings related to HEA reauthorization—especially as it relates to the issue of public information. And with the publication of the second draft of the proposed changes in *the CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures*, the Committee is working to develop a response by the August 1 deadline. In a related activity, Cynthia Davenport continues to provide us with timely and insightful reports on the meetings of the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and the CHEA Board of Directors.

The ASPA Board of Directors met in May to plan for the Fall 2005 meeting and for activities that will lead to the attainment of the 2006 Goals that were adopted at the Spring Meeting. The Professional Development Committee continues to plan activities to enhance the membership's knowledge and abilities. Plans for the Fall 2005 meeting are outlined elsewhere in *ASPA News*. Additionally, we have begun to plan, in conjunction with representatives from C-RAC, for a day long meeting with the Executive Directors of the regional accrediting bodies. This joint C-RAC/ASPA meeting has been scheduled as part of our Fall 2006 meeting in Denver.

I expect that with all there is to do, *tempus* will continue to *fugit*. In the meantime, I'd like to thank you for your confidence in my leadership over the past year as expressed in my reelection for another term. I look forward to serving you. If there is any way that I can do that better, please let me know.

SAYING FAREWELL TO T. STERLING

by CYNTHIA DAVENPORT

T. Sterling Wetzel said his official good-bys to ASPA on June 30, 2005. T. Sterling served two terms on the ASPA Board, from 1999 – 2005. He also served in the office of Treasurer and on the Executive Committee during his most recent three years. During this time, I came to value his no-nonsense approach as much as his sense of humor. Although summer keeps him busy as he umpires girls' softball games, he has promised to stay in touch.

WELCOME TO JANINE BERNARD

Janine Bernard was elected to the ASPA Board to fill the faculty member position. Janine is a Professor and Chair of the Counseling and Human Services Department at Syracuse University. Her area of specialty is clinical supervision and she has published widely in this area. Janine was recently featured as one of “four models for women in counselor education” produced by her national professional association. Janine has been active with CACREP as a member of accreditation visiting teams.

Janine's husband/colleague of 30 years is Harold (Dick) Hackney. Janine and Dick enjoy their professional couple status although she says it is hard to put a boundary between work and home. Gardening helps! Their grown son lives in L.A. attempting to find entry into post-production in the film industry. Janine also has two stepchildren who live in New England.

ASPA WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS

During the Spring 2005 meeting, the ASPA Board of Directors accepted two new groups into membership supporting the recommendation of the ASPA Membership committee which had reviewed the applications for membership.

- Joseph J. Zerby is Accreditation Programs Administrator of the Global Accreditation Center for Project Management (GACPM), located in Newtown Square, PA. Website: www.pmi.org
- Shonagh Aylsworth is Executive Director of the Planning Accreditation Board, now located in Chicago, IL. Website: http://showcase.netins.net/web/pab_fi66/index.htm

The current members of ASPA welcomed both groups and look forward to getting to know them. As time and schedules permit, you can expect to hear from Joseph and Shonagh during an Accreditation Showcase at a future ASPA meeting.

CALL FOR AGENDA ITEMS

It is not too late to suggest an issue or topic that you'd like to see added to the agenda for the Fall 2005 Member Business meeting. Review the overview schedule enclosed with this mailing. If you have suggestions, please contact a member of the ASPA Board or the ASPA office during July.

TWO PATHWAYS TO ASPA MEMBERSHIP

Membership is important to ASPA and to its current members. The application process should screen and provide assurance of a potential member's commitment to the ASPA-member *Code of Good Practice*, but should not present a barrier to membership. At the Spring 2005 meeting, the Board and Members supported the recommendation of the Membership Committee to establish two pathways to membership. One pathway is for use by groups which have already been screened because they are "recognized" by either the US Department of Education's (USDE) process or by the process used by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The second pathway will be used by any specialized accreditor applicant that does not have either USDE or CHEA recognition. Pathway two applications will include more information about the organization and a brief narrative statement that shows how the applicant meets the seven main sections of the *Code of Good Practice*.

Information about these two pathways to membership is available on the ASPA web site: www.aspa-usa.org. If the time is right for your organization to join ASPA, applications for review at the Fall 2005 meeting are due by August 1, while applications for review at the Spring 2006 meeting are due by February 15. Contact the ASPA office if you have questions.

REAUTHORIZATION ON PORTLAND AGENDA

The accrediting community has good reason to continue tracking Legislative efforts to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. To date, the consideration of this legislation may be compared to a routine cross-country flight: hours of tedium punctuated by moments of terror. By the time of the Fall 2005 ASPA meeting, signals may be clearer—or not. In either case, those at the meeting can expect a briefing on Monday, September 12.

That briefing will endeavor to consider not only actions that have (or have not) taken place but the tenor of the debate.

In the meantime, if members have insights they wish to suggest be weighed in this briefing, they may direct them to ASPA Vice Chairperson Paul Gaston at pgaston@kent.edu.

FALL 2005 MEETING IN PORTLAND

Enclosed with this mailing you will find an overview schedule of the ASPA Fall 2005 meeting. The meeting starts at 1:00pm on Sunday, September 11 with Sharing and Learning which will focus on a number of issues facing accreditors. Topics will range from ways to monitor programs or institutions between site visits, to impending changes of concern to non-profits, to a rapid fire How do You do "This" session. There will be time for those at the meeting to raise their own topics in addition to the ones listed.

Monday will begin with a closed members only session, and move into a short open Member Business meeting, but most of the morning will focus on Current Concerns. Following an update on the status of reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), the focus will shift to funding and other resource challenges. The perspectives of the states, accreditors and institutions will all be represented as we join together to discuss "Ensuring Quality in the Face of Dwindling Resources." Monday will end with a short Board of Directors meeting; a reception will give you another chance to network with your peers.

Starting after lunch on Monday and continuing until noon on Tuesday, the ASPA Professional Development Committee will present a very timely program on Public Information and Confidentiality. (See related article.) You won't want to miss the Tuesday morning session which should be practical, informative, and yes - even fun.

If possible, plan now to add an extra day to your trip so you'll have time to experience this part of the Pacific Northwest. This mailing includes what you need to make being in Portland as easy as One - Two - Three - Four. One: Book your room at the Benson Hotel. Two: Call your favorite airline for flights. Three: Send your registration form and check to the ASPA Management office. And four: Don't forget that August 8 is the deadline for registrations. See you in Portland.

NOTE:

Schedules and registration forms are also available in the MEETINGS section of the ASPA web site: www.aspa-usa.org.

ELECTRONIC RECORDS AND ACCREDITATION

By *LUCIEN CAPONE III, UNIVERSITY COUNSEL, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO*

As accreditors move inexorably towards greater digitization of records, a number of legal considerations arise that are unique to the electronic environment. These include information security, electronic records retention, litigation and copyright. This article will briefly discuss these issues, primarily to raise your awareness level. More detail can be found in the paper I presented on this topic at the spring 2005 ASPA meeting. That paper is available at the ASPA web site at <http://www.aspa-usa.org/resources/capone.doc> or go to www.aspa-usa.org; click on RESOURCES and scroll down.

Information Security

Accreditors constantly come into possession of confidential information such as student and personnel records, health information (or "PHI" in HIPAA parlance), proprietary data, and information that might embarrass a program if made public. Much of this material is transmitted, as well as stored, electronically. Guarding against accidental loss or theft of that information is of paramount importance. Technical safeguards including passwords, encryption, and automatic logoff must be implemented to ensure that confidential data is not accidentally transmitted to or viewed by the wrong person, and to guard against hacking. The more sensitive the data, the higher the legal standard will be.

Records Retention

Each accrediting body needs a written records retention policy and guidelines that expressly address maintenance of electronic records including e-mail messages, word processing documents, spreadsheets, databases, etc. To the extent that self-studies, team reports, and the like are submitted in electronic format, those records must either be stored electronically or printed out and filed. How long a document must be kept is determined by reference to federal and state law requirements (e.g. section 602.15 of the U.S. Department of Education's regulations governing recognition of accrediting agencies), current operational needs, and historical/archival value (in that order).

Litigation Holds

Destruction of relevant documents in the face of pending or threatened litigation, even if done in accordance with a valid records retention schedule,

may subject you, your organization and your lawyer to contempt of court proceedings or even to charges of criminal obstruction of justice. As soon as you receive a serious threat of litigation you must ensure that anyone in possession of relevant documents keeps those documents until the threat has passed or until the litigation is over. Obviously, your lawyer should be your guide.

Copyright

Copyright issues abound in accreditation activities. For example, when you receive self-study materials there is probably a great deal of copyright protected material included such as photographs, journal articles, promotional and catalog materials, etc. If you make additional copies of those materials or if you make a digital copy, you are technically usurping the copyright owner's exclusive rights. Fortunately, the courts recognize that there is an implied license to use copyright protected material where (1) a person (the licensee) requests the creation of a work, (2) the creator (the licensor) makes the particular work and delivers it to the licensee who requested it, and (3) the licensor intends that the licensee copy and distribute his work.

Based on this, anything in the materials that was created for the purpose of the self-study will be subject to an implied license to copy and distribute those materials as necessary to carry out the accreditation function. But there are two important caveats. First, the self-study is a collection of materials, some of which were created for the purpose of the self-study and some that were created for an entirely different purpose, but have been submitted solely to document compliance with the accreditor's standards. This latter category is the most problematic because the institution may not own the copyright to those previously created materials. For example, if a faculty member's journal article is included, in all likelihood the faculty member or the publisher may actually own the copyright. Therefore, it is important that the accrediting body obtain some assurance from the program that it has permission to use that work in the self-study. Also, do not post those materials to a website unless that site is password protected.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of electronic records requires consultation with persons having technical expertise in digital data management. I also strongly encourage you to have your attorney review your records management policy, and to consult with him or her as soon as you receive any threat of litigation.

MACTE PROFILE: A NEW ACCREDITING AGENCY FOR MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION

By PAUL GASTON, PROVOST, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

When Anne George welcomed twelve children to America's first Montessori school in 1911, accreditation was hardly an issue. Fifty years later, however, there were at no fewer than eleven professional societies attempting to keep watch over the dramatic growth of Montessori teacher education programs in the United States.

In 1970, the American Montessori Society decided to take the lead in assuring more effective quality control. Nearly a decade later, it received a federal mandate to mobilize a comprehensive approach to accreditation. The AMS responded by creating an autonomous agency to monitor teacher education programs, but the effort in 1987 to secure federal recognition met opposition from Montessori educators not involved in the agency's creation. The ensuing federal rebuff prompted a return to the drawing table by a broader and more representative planning group: the Association for Accreditation of Montessori Teacher Education. In February 1991, the first accreditation handbook was complete, and in 1997, the accrediting commission became completely autonomous from its parent organization.

Today, the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) is one of three associations with federal authorization to accredit teacher education. NCATE and TEAC are the others. However, unlike its peer associations, the MACTE Commission accredits both programs within higher education institutions and those that are free-standing.

It might be said that the development of accreditation within the Montessori community has reflected the values of its distinctive educational philosophy. The movement towards common evaluative standards began with an appreciation for the great diversity of approaches within Montessori teacher education and now emphasizes the alignment between distinctive mission and performance over conformity to predetermined constants.

Thus far, a quick summary of an ASPA member's "roots" - but what makes MACTE distinctive is its role in managing and celebrating the diversity within an educational community that is enthusiastically supported by knowledgeable constituents but barely understood by many. Hence, this profile should offer also a brief reminder as to the origins and principles of Montessori education itself.

Not a "method," exactly, but an approach to childhood education that respects and supports the child's innate enthusiasm for learning, "Montessori" education appropriately esteems one of the twentieth century's most notable individuals: Italy's first female physician, a pioneer in special education and day care as well as early childhood education.

Today, building on the insights of Dr. Montessori and a century's worth of experience, Montessori educators continue to exert a profound influence on education. The emphasis on beginning education early through stimulating day care, the importance of scaled and appealing educational environments, the appreciation for children's appetites as learners, an understanding of learning as autonomous to a significant degree, a thoughtful and generous approach to offering both opportunities and limits, and the essential importance of interaction between school and community - these widely appreciated values are now hardly exclusive to Montessori educators, but they are nonetheless attributable in no small part to the insights of Dr. Montessori and her successors. And the model offered by Montessori programs in more than 80 countries, with over 5,000 Montessori programs in both private and public schools in the United States alone, remains highly influential.

Today, the MACTE Commission seeks to support Montessori teacher education by developing and articulating standards for accreditation, by evaluating and recognizing compliance with such standards, by offering resources to support quality improvement, and by serving as "a unifying body in the field of Montessori teacher education."

With its headquarters in Racine, Wisconsin, and a lean staff consisting of an executive director, an accreditation services coordinator, an accountant/bookkeeper, and an administrative assistant, the MACTE Commission continues to "honor diversity and encourage collaboration among its constituents." Dr. Montessori doubtless would approve.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE...

Send your comments on CHEA's Committee on Recognition Draft Two of the *CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures* to CHEA at recognition@chea.org no later than August 1, 2005. You may also respond by fax [202-955-6129] or regular mail: CHEA; One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 510; Washington, DC 20036-1135.

INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION: CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

by DON SIMMONS, AVMA: VETERINARY MEDICINE

International educational programs are more and more interested in seeking accreditation from United States accreditors. Reasons for this growing interest vary from a desire to benchmark with what is seen as the “best accreditation system in the world” to the desire to enroll American citizens in US accredited programs.

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), Council on Education (COE), the accreditor for the professional doctorate [DVM, VMD] in veterinary medicine, has been accrediting programs outside the US for many years using the same standards as used for US programs. The COE has always shared its accreditation process with Canadian veterinary medical colleges. In the early 1970’s the Council accredited a European college and in the past six years five other foreign colleges have been accredited. We are currently in active process with six additional colleges and have serious inquiries from another six. The accrediting committee for veterinary technicians (Committee for Veterinary Technician Education and Activities) recently accredited its first program in Canada.

One of the first challenges for an accrediting organization that wishes to initiate international accreditation is to gain acceptance for the process from the various stakeholders (e.g., associations, the practicing profession, licensing bodies, etc.). Several selling points could be used: a documented shortage of practitioners in the profession; globalization of the profession and the importance of common knowledge and practice standards; and developing a greater understanding of similarities and differences in education. Another important point to consider is the danger that some legislative body may enact laws that supersede accreditation as a means to open trade (which could include professionals) if the profession, through its accreditor(s), does not act to open global doors.

Accrediting organizations that become active in the international arena should see rewards for their professions. Where appropriate, the country wherein the program seeking accreditation resides should mutually recognize graduates of similar US accredited programs and admit them to licensure/practice without requirements beyond those required of graduates from that country. Other worthwhile benefits can include global recognition of the

accreditor and the profession, sharing common educational philosophies and common expected outcomes, building global good will, and interacting with global colleagues. Council on Education (COE) staff has made many international presentations on the accreditation of veterinary education programs. This sharing of common practices builds trust and strengthens the COE processes as well as those processes of the foreign accreditors

The capacity of an accrediting organization to expand into the international community must also be considered. Once the accreditation process is opened globally, a rapidly growing interest could require fairly quick changes to the number of potential site visit team members, office support staff, and other resources. Don’t forget to consider these things as part of setting fees for your accreditation services. With appropriate financial charges, expansion of the necessary resources can be accomplished.

Like AVMA, you will probably believe that it is important to maintain the same standards used to accredit US programs if you move into the international accreditation arena. If the standards were lowered, the value of accreditation would be lowered not only for those being accredited and also for graduates of US programs who would then possess a less valuable credential (diploma, certificate, etc.). Making allowances for special cultural differences among nations should not affect the quality of the program assessment. A program that does not fully comply with the standards for accreditation should not be accredited. Restrictions based on some cultural differences or political realities can be considered and established. For example, you may wish to decline to work with programs in a country that sanctions discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, etc., or which has governmental instability and unrest.

Language has not been a challenge for us, even though two COE accredited programs are not taught in English. The colleges readily translate important documents into English and all discussions are conducted in English. However, the COE has the right to employ an interpreter if necessary.

The COE is exploring mutual recognition of accreditation. Instead of accrediting individual programs, efficiency could be gained by recognizing selected foreign accreditors and their accreditation. Any shared or cooperative recognition process must be developed based on mutual respect and trust of the accreditation systems used in other countries / continents. Clear documentation of expectations will be an essential part of any successful arrangement.

The rewards of international accreditation are cumulative. The discussions of common challenges and finding solutions for them have contributed to building a stronger veterinary profession both in the US and in foreign countries. The US veterinary profession now comments positively on the effectiveness of foreign accreditation when compared to the certification process used for graduates of non-accredited colleges. Veterinary practices are hiring soundly educated veterinarians no matter where they were educated. Also valuable to the Association and the profession is building friendships with organizations and colleges with like-minded values and goals. Our international accreditation activities have played a pivotal role in helping the AVMA to “think and act globally.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – PLANNING FOR SPRING 2006

The wealth of outstanding professional development sessions presented during the last several ASPA meetings certainly constitutes a “hard act to follow” for the Professional Development (ProD) Committee as we look toward Spring 2006! The committee is looking at some “outside the box” ideas for sessions to be offered at the Spring 2006 meeting, and is soliciting your feedback.

In addition to a timely session focusing on a current aspect of accreditation, the ProD Committee is tentatively planning to offer an “Accreditation 101” program. “Accreditation 101” would be designed for all levels of staff members who are new to accreditation. It would explore the history of accreditation and recognition, the different types of accreditation, current constituents and other topics you may suggest. The ProD Committee has plans to offer “Accreditation 101” both in Chicago in 2006 and in Washington, DC in 2007 and encourages accrediting agencies to bring new staff members as well as those who would like to “get up to speed” quickly on some of the background and overall issues in our field.

Right after the July 4 holiday, the committee e-mailed a survey asking ASPA members to rank their top three topics of interest for the Spring 2006 ASPA meeting and also to indicate the degree of interest in an “Accreditation 101” offering. If you did not receive the survey and wish to respond, please contact committee co-chair, Gretchen Warner at: warner@macte.org. Your views will help us plan sessions that truly meet your professional development needs.

FALL 2006: C-RAC AND ASPA TO MEET IN DENVER

Mark your calendars for 8:30am on Sunday, September 10, 2006. The Council for Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) will join ASPA for a full day of joint programming. This joint venture, the first since Fall 2000, will kick off ASPA’s regular Fall 2006 meeting to be held at The Brown Palace Hotel in Denver, Colorado.

Representatives from C-RAC and ASPA have identified four general topics for the meeting.

1. Federal Issues in Accreditation
2. What’s New Since Draft Two - Impact of Changes in the CHEA Recognition Process
3. Changing Standards and Processes: A Threat or Assistance to Cooperation?
4. Impact of the Legal Environment in Which Accreditors Function

Additional information will be available during 2006, but please make a note now that you may need to arrive in Denver on Saturday, September 9, in order to participate in all of the joint session. ASPA will conduct its regular business and programming on Monday and Tuesday; the meeting will adjourn at noon on Tuesday.

DO YOU KNOW?

ASPA’s Motto – Enhancing quality in higher education through specialized and professional accreditation.

ASPA’s Mission – ASPA provides a collaborative forum and a Collective voice for the community of U.S. agencies that assess the quality of specialized and professional higher education programs and schools. ASPA represents its members on issues of Educational quality facing institutions of higher education, governments, students, and the public. ASPA also advances the knowledge, skills, good practices, and ethical commitments of accreditors, and communicates the value of accreditation as a means of enhancing educational quality. (Adopted: March 2003)

ASPA’s Code – Click on CODE OF ETHICS to check out the ASPA member *Code of Good Practice* at www.aspa-usa.org. The 51 members of ASPA have all endorsed the ASPA-member *Code* which serves as the cornerstone of membership. Click on MEMBER FIELDS to see the current list of members.

FALL 2005 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Help without Harm: Finding the Balance between Public Information and Confidentiality

Information sharing, requests for information, confidentiality, privacy, "need to know" are all terms that accreditors are hearing more and more, especially with the impending updates of the criteria used for recognition of accrediting organizations. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation's Committee on Recognition has been reviewing the *CHEA Recognition Policy and Procedures* and has recently released Draft Two. Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act is in progress. Both CHEA and the US House are calling for a different kind and amount of public information. What does this demand for different reporting requirements mean for accreditors, and for institutions and programs subject to accreditation? When is there enough information and when is there too much? Who is liable if litigation results from releasing required information that has a real or perceived negative impact on a program or institution? How do small and specialty programs deal with information that may make it hard to attract candidates to the programs? What is good practice in information sharing? What information do potential students, parents, employers, and the press really need to know?

How do you help students and parents find the information they really need? What are the most common queries you receive from current or former students, faculty and the press – and what answers do you give to them? Work with your colleagues to develop a useful information resource tool as groups discuss how to provide information, decline inappropriate requests, and make referrals to other sources of information.

The Fall 2005 ASPA Professional Development Workshop will begin after lunch on Monday, September 12 and conclude at noon on Tuesday. Join your accreditation peers for a stimulating and practical discussion of the questions inherent in this topic.

With acknowledgment of ASPA, any issue of ASPA News may be reproduced in whole or in part in the interest of education or good accreditation practice. Current and back issues are posted to the ASPA web site: www.aspa-usa.org. A few additional copies may be available upon request.

THE WORLD IS FLAT: GLOBALIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL & SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION

This workshop will be presented by The Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE) on Saturday, September 10, 2005 at The Benson Hotel in Portland, Oregon, immediately preceding the Fall 2005 ASPA Meeting.

This program requires a separate registration fee, payable to CQAIE. See enclosed brochure for workshop details.

Contact CQAIE:

Tel: 202-293-6104

E-mail: CQAIE@cqaie.org



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