



Message from the Chair

Neil Harvison, Chief Academic and Scientific Affairs Officer, ACOTE (Occupational Therapy)

As many of you will remember, I had to miss a big portion of our fall meeting in Baltimore to attend the Negotiated Rulemaking session on the proposed revisions to the gainful employment regulations. The appointment of the ASPA nominee to the Negotiated Rulemaking Committee reflects the work undertaken to advance ASPA's strategic initiative to advocate on the role of specialized and professional accreditation. This nomination would not have been achieved without the work of our Executive Director, Joseph Vibert, and a group of dedicated volunteer members who have worked tirelessly to deliver the "message" to congressional offices, higher education associations and government agencies.

Over the last year ASPA representatives have been invited to participate in the following:

- US Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) hearing – Panelist to provide testimony in preparation for reauthorization of the Higher Education Act;
- Council for Higher Education Accreditation: Accreditation Advocacy Campaign Faculty and Accreditation Task Force – Member;
- Lumina Foundation convening on revisions to the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) – Participants;

- Council for Higher Education Accreditation/Presidents' Forum Commission on Quality Assurance and Alternative Higher Education – Members;
- USDE Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on Gainful Employment – Non-Federal Negotiator; and
- 2013 Council for Higher Education Accreditation Award Selection Committee – Member.

While our advocacy efforts have demonstrated significant outcomes, we must continue to build on our success as we prepare for the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The numerous Senate and House Committee hearings have made it clear that higher education is in the spotlight and many of the key leaders in government and the foundations see accreditation as a key component in addressing their goals. Too often these leaders have seen accreditation as a "one size fits all" model and it is important that we advocate for the unique contribution and role of programmatic accreditation.

On a separate note, I would like to thank all of our members who "volunteered" to run for the various vacant leadership positions and the members who have indicated their willingness to be appointed to work groups and committees. The success of our association is dependent upon the work of our volunteers and it is much appreciated. ▲

Spring Conference 2014 – Educational Program

Effective Accreditation Systems and Explaining Value to the Public

As guarantors of quality in higher education, programmatic accreditors: hold programs to standards for quality and performance improvement; analyze their own processes to guide improvement of accreditation activities; support educational programs to achieve success in the accreditation and self-improvement processes; and communicate to stakeholders the value of the process.

This program will address how accreditors improve their processes, how they can help programs to prepare for accreditation reviews and maintain compliance with standards, and how accreditors can get the message to the public about the value of accreditation.

Attendees will have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the various perspectives on the issues and to take away ideas to enhance the effectiveness of their accreditation operations.

Plan to attend this session on **Monday, March 31st** (1:00 - 5:00 pm) and **Tuesday, April 1st** (8:30 am - 12:00 pm) at the Millennium Knickerbocker, Chicago IL. Click [upcoming-meetings](#) for the registration form and agenda.

ASPA Fall Meeting 2013

Pauletta Brown Bracy, Director Office of University Accreditation, North Carolina Central University, ASPA Vice Chair

The fall conference in Baltimore offered attendees a variety of sessions including an update on the Higher Education Act reauthorization, a discussion about liability issues, and an engaging professional development program - all not to be eclipsed by the very special twentieth anniversary celebration.

Libby A. Nelson of POLITICO Pro discussed federal policy and accreditation. She reminded the audience of the current status quo on Capitol Hill: continuing philosophical clashes, an aggressive regulatory agenda, ongoing NACIQI enforcement, and reauthorization that remains "on the horizon". She emphasized that both roles of accreditation - indicator of quality and gateway to Title IV - along with the concern that accreditors are not open to innovation - are under federal scrutiny.

In an overview of risk management for non-profit accrediting organizations, Elise Scanlon, Principal of the Elise Scanlon Law Group, contended that although accreditation is a specialized field, rules and best practices for non-profit board governance still apply for preventive risk management. She suggested that insurance is necessary, and requires careful review and consideration. Scanlon noted several areas of potential liability: conflict of interest; fiduciary duties of confidentiality, loyalty, care, and obedience; the doctrine of apparent authority; and due process.

The Professional Development Program focused on innovation in higher education and implications for accreditors who seek meaningful ways to manage the new developments and ensure continued quality assurance.

Translating didactic knowledge to practice in the fields of education and veterinary medicine was the focus of the first panel. Deborah Eldridge, formerly of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation, described a new partnership model in clinical practice that involves "co-construction", an arrangement in which all partners are engaged in developing experiences for students. According to David Granstrom of the American Veterinary Medical Association, education programs are based on principles to equip students with the skills necessary to secure a license to practice. The clinical is used to develop entry-level competence. Establishing the relationship in this translation, Granstrom summarized that didactic is the science and clinical is the art.

The second panel addressed simulation as an instructional strategy in the accreditation process. In athletic training, according to Micki

Cuppitt of the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training, the debriefing following simulation activity is very important. Suzanne M. Wright and Mary Elizabeth Cheatham of the Department of Nurse Anesthesia of Virginia Commonwealth University demonstrated that simulation is the bridge between didactic and clinical education. Darrell W. Pepper, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, University of Nevada, noted concerns with simulation: training, access to hardware and software, and user friendliness. Gary Kitley and Gary Northam of the Aviation Accreditation Board International described the methodology in teaching air traffic control, flight education, and integration.

Massive open online courses (MOOCs) was the recurring topic of the third panel on innovation in distance education. Brain Voss, Chief Information Officer at the University of Maryland, listed issues for institutions coping with the surge in online applications:

intellectual property, capacity to deliver the courses, developing e-learning strategies, fitting courses into established degree programs, student identity, and the credit hour. Kristen Force, Council on Education for Public Health, became interested in MOOCs because an accredited program has them. She took two courses and concluded that MOOCs are appropriate for supplemental, non-credit professional development. Tom Sanchez, Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning at Virginia Tech University, shared his experience in creating and delivering a MOOC. He observed that in determining the quality of MOOCs, greater emphasis is on production

versus content. The academy's perspective was offered by S. David Vaillancourt, Vice President of Academic Affairs at the College of Health Care Professions. Faculty need direction from accreditors and administration on managing the changing environment. He asserted that programmatic accreditors have the opportunity to take the lead in defining appropriate credit for MOOCs as the key issue is student learning outcomes; delivery is the easiest part.

The last panel examined prior learning and competency-based education issues. Leah Mathews of the Distance Education and Training Council noted that accreditors must be proactive and adapt processes to address change. Accreditation standards will have to accommodate MOOCs and competency-based education. Judith Wertheim, Vice President for Higher Education Services of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, spoke about prior learning assessment and competency-based education, stressing that student learning outcomes are what matter most. ▲



Message from the Executive Director

Joseph Vibert

Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed Crystal Calarusse as the newest board member representing Chief Staff Officers (see below for Crystal's biography). We extend our sincere thanks to Ulric Chung for his service on the Board and several ASPA committees – he has moved on to other opportunities. We'd also like to extend good wishes to Sam Hope as he begins his retirement – Sam was instrumental in ASPA's start-up and has served and supported the association for approximately 20 years.

As noted by our Chair, we have been busy communicating our message about programmatic accreditation to lawmakers as they prepare for reauthorization of the Higher Education Act in 2014. The "Reference Information on Accreditation" section of the website has much of the information that we shared. A task force will start work in January to further define our positions.

Last fall we celebrated our 20th anniversary with recognition of the significant work that has been done to date by volunteers and staff. That work must continue, and I look forward to working with members and the Board to improve services and enhance the voice of specialized and professional accreditation. ▲

Welcome new Board Member

Crystal Calarusse is the Chief Accreditation Officer at NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration).



She oversees quality assurance for graduate degrees in public service and is currently responsible for the global expansion of NASPAA's services. She has written white papers and book chapters on various accreditation topics; cultural competency and sustainability issues are areas of personal interest. Previously, as Academic Director she managed the

NASPAA Standards 2009 initiative, which introduced to NASPAA competency-based educational assessment based on public service values and transparency.

ASPA has played an important role in Crystal's professional development as an accreditor and she has been attending ASPA meetings for over seven years. She was elected to the Nominations Committee and was appointed by the Board to task forces for developing a transparency statement and other strategic initiatives. She currently serves on the External Recognition Issues Committee.

Crystal holds a Master of Public Policy degree and a Certificate in Ecological Economics from the University of Maryland, College Park. She has a passion for theatre and is a proud mom to two young children. ▲

ASPA Spring Conference 2014

March 30 – April 1, 2014

Millennium Knickerbocker, Chicago IL

Preliminary Program

Pre-meetings

Members are requested to indicate their interest in attending these sessions.

Sunday, March 30th

8:30 am - 10:00 am - **How can accreditors address Interprofessional Education?**

10:15 am - 11:00 am - **Conversation with CHEA**

11:00 am - 12:00 pm - **International Activities in Accreditation**

Business Meetings

Sunday, March 30th

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

Members are invited to send requests for discussion topics to the ASPA office or to any of the members of the Board by February 7, 2014.

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm - **Reception** (open to all attendees)

Award Presentations

Monday, March 31st

Sessions are open to all attendees.

8:30 am - 10:00 am - **Innovation in Education**

10:15 am - 11:00 am - **Annual Members' Meeting**

11:15 am - 12:00 pm - **Board Meeting**

Educational Program

Sessions and reception are open to all attendees.

Effective Accreditation Systems and Explaining Value to the Public

(See page 1 for program description.)

Monday, March 31st

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

5:15 pm - 6:45 pm - **Reception**

Tuesday, April 1st

8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Go to 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 provides a collaborative forum and a collective voice for the community of approximately 60 member accreditors that assess the quality of programmatic higher education programs and schools in the United States. We are the only organization that promotes the importance of specialized and professional accreditation.

Some of the benefits of full membership in ASPA include:

- **A unified and common voice** for issues of importance to programmatic accreditation and higher education nationally.
- **Networking and peer interaction** in conference settings; participating in a community of programmatic accreditors; sharing good practices in carrying out accreditation work and improving performance.
- **Professional development** for volunteers, staff and educators and opportunities to learn from other accreditors.
- **Current information** on important issues and developments.



- **Advocacy** to broader communities including higher education, government, institutional accreditors, and recognition bodies.
- **Enhancement of the credibility and image of accreditation** through endorsement of the ASPA-Member Code of Good Practice that embraces a high standard of professionalism and integrity in the conduct of accreditation operations and promotes quality in education and respect for institutional autonomy.
- **Member services** include regular newsletters to the broad community and e-letters within the membership; development of position papers on issues and good practices; in person and written representation on programmatic accreditation on legislation and recognition issues to stakeholders; a proprietary database of member profiles and organization structure; a periodic compensation survey; and access to a private listserv to gather and share information within the membership.

ASPA also welcomes **organizational** and **individual affiliate members**:

- **organizations** with an interest in education and quality assurance that do not meet the criteria for full membership as programmatic accreditors, e.g., professional associations, continuing education providers, regional accreditors, national institutional accreditors, vendors.
- **individuals** interested in the mission and purposes of ASPA, such as persons serving as accreditation directors within institutions, faculty, staff of professional associations, peer reviewers, education consultants, curriculum designers, deans, program directors.

Visit www.aspa-usa.org for more information and to apply for membership. ▲

Save the Date - ASPA Fall Conference 2014 September 7 - 9, 2014 – Arlington, VA ***Innovation in Higher Education – Competency-based Education and Prior Learning Assessment: Why Should We Care?***

The buzzword in higher education is innovation – innovation in a system that has been slow or unwilling to adapt to new technologies and methods, or to find creative solutions to pervasive problems. The press inundates us with information about the cost of education and barriers to access for students – with traditional institutions and accreditors seen as the obstructing forces in allowing students to enter the workforce quickly with demonstrated competent skills at a reasonable expense.

Innovative institutions are shifting from the traditional credit hour focus to a competency-based education model, where the focus is on student mastery of competencies rather than on seat time. Others are assessing and giving credit for prior learning. Are accreditors keeping pace with these innovations or are we mired in our traditions?

Attendees will learn about various issues related to Competency-based Education and Prior Learning Assessment, and how accreditors are assessing these models. Additionally, attendees will gain ideas for enhancing the effectiveness of their accreditation operations. **Be sure to mark your calendar and plan to join us in Arlington!**

Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors
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