2017 ASAHP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Association’s 2017 Annual Conference will be held this week beginning on October 18 at the San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk in San Antonio, TX. The theme of this year’s conference is: ASAHP At 50 - Reflections On The Past, A Window To The Future Of Healthcare.

Along with a customary program that includes several plenary session presentations featuring top speakers and some 100 presentations at concurrent sessions and a poster session, the Awards Dinner on October 18 provides an occasion for attendees to view a video that commemorates the Association’s 50th anniversary from three different perspectives. This item also is augmented by a brochure that describes key events in ASAHP history. Copies will be distributed at the conference.

Several committees and task forces will meet as part of the conference program. These groups are instrumental in carrying out a wide range of activities to advance the five major goals of the organization’s Strategic Plan.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

ASAHP has a longstanding interest in the Higher Education Act (HEA), which among other essential functions, oversees federal aid. This important piece of legislation continues to await being reauthorized. A component that typically attracts much attention involves the topic of accreditation.

A bill to amend the HEA that was introduced in the U.S. House, the Innovation in Accreditation Act (H.R. 3869), would grant broad waivers to accreditors aimed at allowing them to bypass federal requirements in order to encourage innovation and to reduce administrative burdens. The proposed legislation would establish a process for accrediting agencies to ask the U.S. Department of Education to waive requirements under the law if accreditors can successfully demonstrate a waiver is necessary to “enable an institution of higher education or program accredited by the agency or association to implement innovative practices,” according to draft language from the bill.

JOURNAL OF ALLIED HEALTH

The Journal of Allied Health continues to be an attractive destination for authors to submit their manuscripts. Since October of last year, a record 139 manuscripts have been submitted as of today’s date. Approximately 20% of these documents are from other countries, with the latest arriving from Tunisia.

This number of articles means that as more of them are accepted for publication, a growing backlog continues to become even larger. As an alternative to increasing the size of each issue in the print version, another option will be pursued as a way of decreasing the amount of time between when a manuscript is accepted for publication and when it finally appears in print.

A proposal will be sent to a small group of authors to determine if they are willing to have their articles appear in the next issue, but strictly on an online basis. The title of and abstract for each paper will continue to be listed, however, in the print version of the issue.

Meanwhile, an ongoing challenge is to attempt to assign each submitted manuscript to three reviewers. Despite having a panel of 242 of them, depending on the topic of a manuscript, it occasionally proves to be difficult to locate reviewers who either already are not conducting an assessment or who have done so enough times in the past year to be given a temporary reprieve. Thus, newcomers to the ranks are most welcome, especially in the following areas of expertise: Interprofessional Education, Curriculum Design, Athletic Training, Dental Hygiene, Dietetics/Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Respiratory Therapy, and Clinical Laboratory Science. Please send responses to thomas@asahp.org.

HHS STRATEGIC PLAN

HIGHER EDUCATION’S FUTURE

In an effort to understand what the future will hold for higher education, Blackboard has released “Future Forward: The Next Twenty Years of Higher Education,” a series of interviews with American higher education leaders. These individuals were asked to reflect on the last 20 years of U.S. higher education and consider what the next 20 years might hold. Across the interviews, five themes repeatedly emerged:

-Our current system is unsustainable and ill-suited for a globally connected world that is constantly changing. For example, the nature of higher education would shift away from a degree-driven pursuit to lifelong learning associated with continuing education.

-Colleges and universities will have to change their current business model to continue to thrive, boost revenue, and drive enrollment. Several interviewees suggested that institutions will be forced to rethink their business model on some fundamental levels. For some, that meant critically evaluating the role of partnerships. For others, that meant finding ways to collaborate with other institutions to share academic programs and faculty.

-Data and the ability to transform that data into action will be the new lifeblood of the institution. Several interviewees raised concerns over assuring the privacy and security of student data, and over the possibility for data to be abused. Understanding data’s risk and limitations is of critical concern.

-The “sage on the stage” and the “doc in a box” aren’t sustainable; new technologies will allow faculty to shift their focus on the application of learning rather than the acquisition of knowledge. While none of the interviewees viewed technology as a silver bullet, several proposed that certain technologies could significantly alter the nature of learning, including the role of faculty and their relationship with students.

-The heart and soul of any institution is its people. Adopting new technologies is only a small piece of the puzzle. Institutions also must work with faculty and staff to change institutional culture. Several interviewees discussed the need to work with institutional stakeholders to help develop new pedagogical practices that will make the most effective use of any new technologies.

The report can be obtained at http://www.blackboard.com/resources/pdf/future_forward_the_next_20_years_higher_ed_rev.pdf.

IPE AND ACCREDITATION

Interprofessional education (IPE) and collaborative practice continue to gain momentum within the health sector. Recently, accreditors from multiple health professions have joined together to discuss their role and to set continuing education standards for IPE and guidance for interprofessional foundational education. Although models for IPE exist to guide the learning process from education to practice, there are few guides for the historic work of accreditors to promote interprofessional collaboration across education and practice.

An example is a model presented when members of the Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine came together in April 2016 with accreditors from different health professions to explore intersections of accreditation across the professions and throughout the continuum of health professions’ education. ASAHP Past President Richard Talbott represents the Association in the Global Forum and has done so since its inception in 2012. The continuum begins with entry into a field of study (i.e., foundational education) and extends through graduate training to lifelong continuing professional development.

One example for applying this model is in interprofessional education. Although interprofessional education may be a common goal of many health professions, this goal is generally addressed differently in educational programs and will be reflected in various ways within each profession’s accrediting body (or bodies). As professions and their accreditors evolve, there will be natural differences across the professions in where along the spectrum a given accreditor might fall. This model shows the many opportunities for inter-accreditor and inter-profession conversations that can aid in moving toward enhanced collaboration of the professions.

A challenge for educators and health care providers alike is judging where they reside along the accreditation innovation continuum. Both must consider many factors, such as the effect of ongoing educational reform, ever accelerating practice redesign, new practitioner roles, and new venues of practice.