LOOKING BACK---2020

-Social distancing and lockdown policies imposed across the nation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in converting the 2020 ASAHP Annual Conference to a virtual event in October that included major activities. The Leadership Development Program was postponed until 2021.

-The Association began the year with a major revision of the Strategic Plan in January. A series of five-year objectives will focus on the following areas: Communication, PR, and Marketing; Leadership Development; Education; Partnerships, Alliances, and Advocacy; and Research, Discovery, and Innovation.

-A highly popular webinar series, Clinical Education in the Time of COVID-19, was created that covered topics, such as liability insurance issues, telehealth requirements, meeting competencies needed to graduate, and using telehealth to do palpitations.

-An ASAHP Live Virtual Series also was developed to address important topics pertaining to Curriculum Innovations Related to COVID-19, and Models of Excellence for Enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

- Faculty members and staff at ASAHP member institutions and organizations were invited to join ASAHP’s member-only online community to discuss issues that involve networking with peers, and sharing events, news, and resources with the membership.

-ASAHP completed the ninth year of a partnership with the National Academy of Medicine in a Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education.

-An updated and more comprehensive Institutional Profile Survey was launched in Fall 2020.

-Maintained a contract with CertifiedBackground.com to offer criminal background check and immunization check services to member institutions.

-Produced 24 issues of the ASAHP UPDATE, 10 issues of the newsletter TRENDS, four issues of the Journal of Allied Health (JAH), an Annual Report, and added hundreds of items to ASAHP’s Newswire.

LOOKING AHEAD---2021

-The Association will continue its involvement with both the National Academy of Medicine in a Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education and events conducted by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) Council.

-As a means of strongly endorsing interprofessional education (IPE) and interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP), once again offer the Award for Institutional Excellence and Innovation in Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Health Care to recognize a member institution or industry member for outstanding achievement. Also, several institutions will be recognized as “Programs of Merit.”

-Maintain efforts to ensure that ASAHP’s voice will be heard on a wide range of government relations issues that include reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and funding for health professions and student programs.

-Seek maximum participation of member institutions in the annual comprehensive study called the Institutional Profile Survey.

-Offer additional programs in the ASAHP Live Virtual Series that feature discussions on the following topics: Curriculum Innovations Related to COVID-19; Leadership During Crisis & Advocacy; and Select Topics in Allied Health.

-Provide assistance to student leaders at member institutions as a means of enhancing their efforts to form chapters and develop pre-boarding and on-boarding training. A major aim is to enable students to go directly to work without extensive orientation at the workplace.

-Make available to members an “Advocacy Toolkit” that consists of a wide variety of resources aimed at enhancing skills needed to have a positive influence on health and education policy issues.

-Continue being involved with the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) to develop standards that define the expected competencies of a rehabilitation health worker.
Fifty original manuscripts were submitted to the Journal during the period September 1 - December 30, 2020. Unlike the usual challenges involved in previous years in finding enough reviewers to assess papers, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact. A typical response this past year to an invitation to review an article is that the individual to whom it is sent indicates that an overwhelming additional workload prevents accepting any further responsibilities.

Nonetheless, moving forward the Spring 2021 issue is being made ready for distribution. It will feature an article prepared by a team led by ASAHP Past President Richard E. Oliver and Julia To Dutka, Senior Advisor at CGFNS International, a nonprofit assessment organization dedicated to evaluating the academic and professional credentials of health workers worldwide.

In April 2019, these two organizations formed a partnership to respond to the World Health Organization’s Rehab 2030 (WHO, 2017), which emphasizes the need for global action by professional organizations, development agencies, and civil society to produce and maintain a sustainable workforce for rehabilitation under different healthcare models in different economies. The aforementioned paper that will appear in the Spring 2021 issue of the Journal sets forth the background and the rationale behind the Global Rehabilitation Health Worker Certification (GRHWC) initiative, and the steps taken over the past three years. The global certification system described in this manuscript provides a mechanism to validate rehabilitation knowledge and practice competence of individual health workers.

**CGFNS ITEM WRITERS**

ASAHP members are invited to be part of a visionary initiative that can improve the quality of rehabilitation care worldwide by contributing to an exam-based certification system by writing test questions to validate the knowledge and practice competencies of front-line health workers. Core components of this certification system consist of a pair of examinations set at two different levels – the Basic Level and the Certified Level for two populations of rehabilitation health personnel working in varying clinical settings worldwide.

Any ASAHP members interested in becoming part of this exciting and ground-breaking initiative are requested to reply to Richard Oliver at oliverr@health.missouri.edu who will provide additional information on what the task entails.

**ADVOCACY TOOLBOX**

As part of the Association’s Strategic Plan, ASAHP has begun developing resources to enhance members’ advocacy skills. A portion of the effort may involve modifying previously developed materials from other organizations to which ASAHP members belong. Some examples of topics that can be addressed by having an Advocacy Toolbox are: How to write a letter, How to make a phone call, Tips for good flyers, Tips for an elevator speech, How to build a relationship with a legislator, Testifying at committee hearings, Working with a lobbyist, Developing/writing an op-ed piece, and Using social media effectively for advocacy efforts.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

Over the last decade, national data have shown a rise in college student mental distress, a decline in flourishing, and an increase in demand at campus counseling centers. College and university efforts to support greater mental health and well-being already were increasing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past decade, several presidents, chancellors, and provosts appointed mental health task forces and produced public-facing task force reports.

A report from the American Council on Education analyzes and synthesizes 16 of those reports to surface general operating procedures and common themes across task force recommendations. Interviews and insights from 10 task force leaders also inform the considerations. The document can be obtained at https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Mental-Health-Task-Forces-in-Higher-Education.pdf.

**HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING**

The national interest in narrowing gaps in educational opportunity across socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups and in increasing educational attainment cannot be addressed without a strong federal effort. Pell grants, the primary form of federal investment in higher education, provide funding for low-income students to attend college. Increasing this funding is important, but not sufficient. Among other issues, this form of assistance does not solve funding and tuition differences across states.

A brief from the Urban Institute examines college affordability proposals and who would benefit from different plans, and how the distribution of benefits can change according to program design decisions. The brief can be obtained at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/103424/strengthening-the-federal-role-in-the-federal-state-partnership-for-funding-higher-education.pdf.