

In early March, four members of the AK-PA Board attended the annual State Leadership Conference hosted by APA.

- Denise Dillard – President
- Karen Ferguson -President Elect
- Christine Sam - Interim Executive Director and Public Education Campaign Coordinator
- Robert Lane - Federal Advocacy Coordinator

The State Leadership Conference is APA's venue for learning about cutting edge trends in the field of psychology. Many sessions focus on state psychological boards and how to keep boards and membership engaged and vibrant. State psychological associations meet with legislative representatives of the state and request support for legislative actions which support psychology.

The theme of this years conference was "The Power of Advocacy." Through political advocacy, psychologists have successfully fought for involvement in Medicare and mental health parity. However, did you know the average amount of political giving across psychologists is lower than podiatrists?

In addition to encouraging AK-PA members to increase their political giving, I'd also like to encourage more of AK-PA's members to act in response to Legislative Alerts sent out by Robert Lane. See Robert Lane's SLC summary in order to learn what we discussed with Senator Lisa Murkowski, Congressman Don Young, and staffers of Senator Mark Begich at SLC.

Please also see Karen Ferguson's summary for some ideas she came away with to develop a more active and vibrant board which is one of AK-PA's current priorities. Please also see Christine Sam's summary for Public Education Campaign and Executive Director information.

In terms of cutting edge trends in the field of psychology, several speakers talked about health care reform. Online social media was also a focus of one plenary and how to leverage Twitter, FaceBook, YouTube and other social media channels for advocacy were covered.

As always, I found SLC renewing and exciting and I look forward to continuing to serve AK-PA in the upcoming year as President.

Denise Dillard

This was my first time attending SLC and I felt very inspired about how to work on developing a more "active, vibrant" board and increase membership for AKPA. The changes in our Executive Director position as well as potential burnout amongst board members peaked my interest in these areas.

Here are some ideas I came away with;

1. The President, Executive Director, or President Elect could interview board members to understand their experience of the board. Questions about what will keep them on the board, what will drive them away, what would they like to do more of, less of could be posed. It would be fun to draft up a set of questions that really helps us understand what being on the board means and can mean as a fulfilling activity in serving the field.
2. Interview others -- non-board members, non- AKPA members -- to get better perspective on views of the board and again, what would make them want to be a part of it.
3. Get list of all licensed clinicians and do outreach calls -- maybe in board pairs to understand what folks want from a professional organization. Or do a gathering by invitation and present the benefits of joining AK-PA and the board.
4. Educate others about the association more at CE events -- give out brochures, have members wear a pin etc...
5. Draft a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for board members -- this assumes we know what these are, so maybe a step back first to define these well.
6. Create board books -- a set of materials you get when you come on the board -- bylaws, roles and responsibilities, calendar etc.
7. Make treasurer job easier and make secretary more integral. Define treasurer as oversight and give support. Create training for treasurer -- how to learn fiduciary responsibilities. Create a finance committee so the treasurer coordinates but shares duties.
8. Board training for us to understand roles of board vs. ed and how to use meetings and time in between meetings to produce results. Consultation with the Foraker Group may be helpful.
9. Put in P& P a mandated savings so that boards can't spend out reserves.
10. The concept -- THE BUDGET IS THE STRATEGIC PLAN -- so what does this tell us about our priorities -- are they where we want them to be?
11. Frequency of meetings and use of committees -- do we have the most effective structure?
12. Pipe line of leaders -- a leaders forum that serves the purpose of also getting people in line for board positions.
13. Other symposium -- women's symposium, lectures/ panels on innovative practices (very inspiring and worth CE credit), teaching social networking tools -- Jaedon can lead us!

Thanks for the opportunity to attend and represent AKPA as part of the team!

Karen Ferguson, Ph.D.

Public Education Campaign SLC Summary

The agenda for the Public Education Coordinators had two major topics:

1. The joint venture between APA and the YMCA to promote healthy lifestyles for families and individuals. As part of the partnership PECs and other Psychologists are providing free workshops at local Y's on a variety of Mind/Body topics including a workshop specifically designed for Families with overweight children. All presentations are available at APA's practice website.
2. Working with media. This portion of the agenda covered a wide variety of media outlets from the traditional newspaper radio and television to electronic media including social network sites. The focus was on helping us better understand a variety of media outlets, and recognize the ways in which they might be helpful in public education.

Executive Director SLC Summary

AS a new Executive Director (ED), I found the ED meetings very illuminating. Perhaps the most surprising for me was to learn that in most State Associations it is the EDs who take care of the day to day running of the Association. This is quite different from the model AK-PA has operated under up to now. I mostly listened as ED's talked about topics such as ; how to keep board members involved, how to recruit board members, how to generate revenues, how to manage CE events, issues of risk management, and other topics.

Most of the EDs were either a full time employee of their State Associations in the case of the larger states, or in the case of smaller states worked full time as an ED on a contractual basis for a variety of non-profits. As a group they represented many years of experience.

Chris Sam

The State Leadership Conference (SLC) has been described as a premier advocacy training event and that proved true again this year. In addition to the keynote speeches and the plenary sessions held for all, as the Federal Advocacy Coordinator (FAC) I have a number of required meetings that are specifically aimed at increasing effectiveness in advocating for causes that benefit our clients and our profession. APA uses a three-legged stool metaphor to guide their advocacy efforts; the legs being lobbying, grass-roots efforts and political giving. Psychologist generally have done well with the first two legs, but we lag in political giving at least on the national level and place near the bottom of the list of health care providers. In this respect, I encourage all AKPA members to consider joining or contributing to the Association for the Advancement of Psychology (AAP) which is the PAC connected to APA's Practice Organization. Here is the link for more information about joining, <http://www.aapnet.org/join.htm>. We are told that if all APA practice assessment payers would join AAP, psychologist would go from near the bottom to near the top of the list of political giving. Money does not buy vote, but it can by recognition and access. Right before attending SLC I learned that AAP had just attended a \$1,000.00 per plate luncheon for Senator Murkowski - contributing to AAP has come back to specifically benefit Alaskan psychologists.

The advocacy workshops include an opportunity for all those planning on going on the Hill visits to meet and discuss issues related to the message we are intending to carry. This allows us to meet as the Alaskan delegation and discuss a strategy for our meetings. We carried a four-point message that included:

1. Extending the restoration of psychologist medicare reimbursement cut by CMS;
2. Make psychologist eligible for Medicare "psychotherapy + E&M codes;"
3. Add psychologist to Medicare "physician" definition;
4. Pass health care reform that integrates psychological services in primary care, prevention and benefit packages.

This year we met with Senator Murkowski and Representative Young and their aides as well as senior aides from Senator Begich's office. We were well received by all three offices and we appreciated meeting with Senator Murkowski and Representative Young in person. In Senator Murkowski's case she spent a good half hour with us and when I hear stories from other states it seems most delegations are lucky to get 10 minutes. Representative Young made room to meet with us for 15 or 20 minutes even though a mistake had not put us on his schedule. In all three meetings we had time to present our issues and have conversations with them about the practice of psychology in Alaska.

While at SLC I was also able to attend a workshop discussing "bringing the power of advocacy to the state level." I was reminded that one of the benefits of having a relatively small state association is that we have no choice but to integrate federal and state advocacy efforts. AKPA seems to be ahead of some states in this regard! We have a lobbyist and a small grass roots network of people willing to write emails. We could perhaps be more organized with political giving. But in general, it appears AKPA has done well in bringing APA's effectiveness in lobbying to use at the state level.

Robert Lane