



## Arriving earlier, digging deeper

*Preconference meetings provide opportunities for administrators and regulatory board members to share ideas*

Before the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly formally convened on Friday, November 6, there were opportunities for more than 70 administrative staff and members of regulatory boards and colleges to gather to share ideas and learn more about each other at two preconference meetings: the Administrators Forum and the Board Member Exchange.

### **Administrators Forum**

This year's annual meeting marked many transitions for the Administrators Forum, which has been meeting twice annually for many years. While there were five new attendees and one new member jurisdiction, there were also a few administrators who were attending their last forum because of their upcoming retirements. Leadership of the forum was also in transition, as Kate Zacher-Pate of Minnesota completed her term as chair.

As the 32 administrators in attendance introduced themselves and their jurisdictions, several common threads emerged. Many were dealing with sunseting, fund sweeps, and jumps in the number of complaints and disciplinary actions. In addition to the usual introductions and conversations about the day-to-day demands of social work regulation, administrators heard from several ASWB staff

members who provided detailed information about ASWB's exam services, the Public Protection Database, and the newly launched [members.aswb.org](http://members.aswb.org).

With Kim Frakes of Nevada stepping up as the new chair in 2016, administrators also spent some of their time discussing how the meeting operates. "The group itself came up with some really good ideas for the future of the forum," ASWB Director of Member Services Jennifer Henkel said. "Even though ASWB hosts the forum, it's their meeting."

Forum attendees are eager to make the most of their time together and establish more formal structure to the meetings going forward. Chairpersons will serve a maximum of three years (six meetings), and the group will focus on discussion topics selected in advance of upcoming forums. The group will also spend less time on introductions than in the past. "There are so many interesting topics," Henkel said. "They're going to be able to get into deeper discussions and really make the best use of their time."

### **Board Member Exchange**

Concurrent with the Administrators Forum, a group of 40 board members from dozens of

jurisdictions gathered elsewhere at the Riverside Hotel as part of the newly christened Board Member Exchange. This gathering was inaugurated at the 2015 Spring Education Meeting in Seattle as the Board Member Colloquium. The new name reflects a more interactive session, with both large-group and small-group conversations about a variety of topics.

Facilitated by Mark Gianino of Massachusetts and Barb Whitenect of New Brunswick, the Board Member Exchange gave social work regulators a chance to get to know one another and understand the challenges of regulating social work all over the U.S. and Canada. The spring session had resulted in a list of possible topics for discussion, and attendees in Ft. Lauderdale were given colored stickers to vote on that list, allowing several subjects to bubble to the top. Participants who had attended the spring session appreciated the chance to follow up on subjects that had been raised in the spring, when the gathering was shorter and there was less time for deeper discussions.

Late in the day, the group broke into smaller conversational groups to cover a range of issues, from the pros and cons of composite boards to planning for board leadership transitions. These smaller groups then reported back to the entire exchange, allowing all participants to hear about common concerns and new approaches to the issues. “Participants enjoyed time to delve into what their own jurisdiction is dealing with,” said ASWB Education and Training Senior Manager Jan Fitts. “They also like hearing how others are handling practice issues.”

Gianino and Whitenect’s facilitation of the daylong meeting received very high marks from participants in the evaluations. “They gave [attendees] time to discuss topics,” says Fitts, “but kept things moving so that we had time to address the key issues that came up.”

As this fall’s attendance indicates, the Board Member Exchange is becoming a valuable resource for social work regulators, giving them an opportunity to share concerns and ask questions of their colleagues from throughout ASWB’s membership.