



ASWB Exam Committee adds four newcomers with varied backgrounds

Anticipation, nerves, and excitement were on hand for the first Exam Committee meeting of 2016

Four examination item writers have stepped up in 2016 to serve on the ASWB Examination Committee. The committee met for the first time March 31-April 3, 2016, in Reston, Virginia. Karen Slovak of Ohio joined the Bachelors exam committee this year and Michelle Piper of Alabama and Charu Stokes-Williams of Hawaii joined the Masters exam committee. The Clinical exam committee welcomed Luz Alquicira of Texas. All four have been item writers since 2013.

As item writers, all of the new committee members were familiar with the ASWB examination program, but the committee review process was new to them. The

meeting started out quietly, as the newcomers got a feel for their new role of reviewing items instead of writing them, but the returning members put everyone at ease. The discussions got more and more animated as the day progressed, and energy and excitement were flowing as the committee members reviewed items submitted for the social work licensing exams.

The meeting started with introductions of all the examination committee members, and everyone was excited to hear that one of the new members, Charu Stokes-Williams, had traveled all the way from Hawaii to join the group. As the meeting continued, each committee started coming



Attending their first Exam Committee meeting (from left): Karen Slovak (OH), Bachelors Committee; Luz Alquicira (TX), Clinical Committee; and Charu Stokes-Williams (HI) and Michelle Piper (AL), Masters Committee.

together as a team, and the new committee members became more comfortable with flow of the work.

Exam Committee members are selected from established item writers using a variety of criteria, including demonstrated success with item writing, geographic location, and the demographic needs of the program. Terms are for one year and can be renewed for two more years after the initial year. This format allows the group to develop relationships, which was apparent at the meeting as the committee members got to know each other.

The Exam Committee typically meets four times a year in different locations, often in the metro D.C. area, because of travel considerations. This year's meetings are scheduled for June, August, and October; the August meeting will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, concurrently with the ASWB Board of Directors meeting.

Meet the new committee members

Bachelors exam committee

Karen Slovak lives in the Akron area of Ohio and is an associate professor of social work at Malone University. She previously taught at Miami University of Ohio, Ohio University Athens, and Youngstown State University. Slovak holds a clinical license and received her B.A. from Bowling Green State University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University.

Masters exam committee

Michelle Piper has a clinical license and currently works at a state psychology facility in Alabama where she does individual and group therapy. She also works on educating others about mental illness.

Charu Stokes-Williams has an MSW from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in social work from Boston College. Stokes-Williams holds a clinical license and is a social worker on active duty in the U.S. Air Force, stationed at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. She has been there about eight months, and says she loves her new location. She handles drug and alcohol abuse prevention programs and provides clinical supervision. Her clients are primarily active duty military personnel.

When asked about the most rewarding part of her job, Stokes-Williams said, "I know that what I am doing is something I would never had imagined even five years ago. Because I serve in the military as a social worker, the most rewarding part is knowing that I am serving a population that I grew up in and am familiar with." Stokes-Williams, who calls herself a "military brat," grew up with a father who served in the Marine Corps. "I feel like in some small way, because I am serving this population, I am helping military members who may not have gotten the help when my dad was in," Stokes-Williams continued. "I

know that it's not easy for them; they sacrifice a lot, and I don't want them to feel that they don't get the help or support."

Clinical exam committee

Luz Alquicira holds a clinical license and works with offenders in prisons and in private practice. She does individual, group, and family therapy with them. She also co-facilitates a sex offender treatment program. She is a Texas resident but a California native, and she still considers California her home.