



## The power of networking

*Administrators Forum and Board Member Exchange offered more than 70 participants the chance to connect*

The day before the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly began, more than 70 administrators and volunteer regulators learned that boundaries are important, even in preconference meetings. The Administrators Forum and the Board Member Exchange (BMX) were in separate meeting rooms at the US Grant Hotel in San Diego, California. The rooms' entrances were separated by a hallway, but the two rooms shared an air wall (a folding wall that can divide a large ballroom into smaller rooms). Air walls are flexible, but not as sound-proof as fixed walls, the groups found.

The pre-meeting music in the Board Member Exchange (cued up by co-facilitator Barb Whitenect of New Brunswick) bled a bit into the Administrators Forum meeting room, and the BMX participants could hear the administrators' laughter from time to time. Fortunately, however, there were very few "boundary violations" between the two groups as the day went on.

Co-facilitator Mark Gianino of Massachusetts joined Whitenect as the two reprised their roles from the fall 2015 BMX. Again, their session featured an offbeat icebreaker. Participants had to list things that everyone at their table had in common. The overwhelming favorite was one table where

everyone knew how to drive a tractor. Following introductions, the board members attending were able to select from among eight different table topics to discuss issues facing their boards. The format featured three rounds of discussions so that participants could circulate among the tables to dig deep into the topics. Table groups discussed supervision, continuing competency, board and staff relations, exemptions in regulation, jurisprudence exams, public awareness campaigns, social work practice mobility, and composite boards.

In the afternoon, two staff members spoke with attendees about ASWB programs and services. Jennifer Henkel, director of member services, joined the BMX to discuss ASWB's Model Social Work Practice Act and Bobbie Hartman, marketing and publications manager, gave the group a tour of ASWB's new website for the mobility initiative, [www.movingsocialwork.org](http://www.movingsocialwork.org).

As with previous BMX sessions, attendees appreciated the chance to talk with their fellow regulators about the challenges of social work regulation. Evaluations from the meeting included praise for Gianino and Whitenect, who kept the session moving while still allowing for detailed conversations.

“There’s enough structure [to the BMX] to keep us on track,” says Greg Winkler of Wisconsin, “but it’s highly adaptable and inclusive.”

On the other side of the air wall, the administrators moved through a packed agenda of their own, led by forum chair Kim Frakes of Nevada. In addition to the informative introductions and updates from attending jurisdictions, the administrators heard from several ASWB departments:

- Dan Sheehan, information technology manager, gave a thorough review of the Public Protection Database, a system that stores and reports on disciplinary actions against licensed social workers. PPD is a key service to ASWB members, Sheehan pointed out. Not only can it flag applicants who may have a history of sanctions, but it can also help social work boards in the United States with reporting to the National Practitioners Databank, a federal system that tracks disciplinary actions about health care and behavioral health professionals.
- Lavina Harless, director of examination development, gave the administrators an overview of the exam development process, with a special emphasis on the practice analysis that is just finishing up. New blueprints will be published in 2017, with new exams online in 2018.

- Tanya Carpenter, director of examination administration, talked with administrators about the work of the Candidate Services Center, which continues to handle a record number of phone calls, despite an online exam registration rate that exceeds 70 percent.

Similar to survey responses about the BMX, reviews of the Administrators Forum were favorable. “Learned a lot,” said one respondent, “and brought a lot of information back with me to review.”

Both the Board Member Exchange and the Administrators Forum will meet again in April, when the association holds its 2017 Association Education Meeting in Henderson, Nevada.