In the January/February issue of association news, ASWB President Tim Brown shared with you his excitement about helping to lead ASWB through a formal strategic planning process in 2018 that will “guide us into a social work regulatory future filled with many new opportunities.”

In this issue, I will share how a serendipitous stop at an airport bookstore led me to a book and a philosophy that can amplify our strategic planning efforts when embraced and put into action.

As the newly elected Board of Directors and staff were beginning our year of work together, we also were engaged in hiring the consultant who will be our partner and collaborator through the strategic planning process. One of his first responsibilities was to develop a timeline of activities needed to develop our plan in time for it to be introduced at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The first strategic planning step with membership will take place at the 2018 Education Conference: a focus group session where we gather your input to begin the process of identifying the trends and issues that you predict will be important as we navigate the as-yet uncharted regulatory waters in our future.

Those of you who attended the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly will recall that I introduced the theme that would guide ASWB in 2018: “Anticipate!” I spoke of thinking ahead and bringing foresight into our conversations to inform creative solutions to anticipated and unanticipated problems. I said that the only way we can be prepared to respond in the present is if we are anticipating and imagining the future and gearing up to respond in creative, bold ways. … ways that make sense, manage risk, and align with our values, responsibilities, and relationships.

It was when I was leaving that meeting that serendipity—or synchronicity—led me to The Anticipatory Organization: Turn Disruption and Change into Opportunity and Advantage by Daniel Burrus. I knew this was a book that I had to read. Burrus is a well-known and well-respected strategist whose methodologies and innovative thinking have turned businesses around and, more importantly, taught business leaders how to anticipate a positive future. Two ideas that he wrote about will contribute perspective and, I believe, add power to our ongoing strategic thinking: “Understanding Hard Trends and Soft Trends” and “adopting a robust Futureview®.”
These concepts are important to the success of our strategic planning, and I will summarize them here.

**Hard Trends and Soft Trends**

Burrus describes an anticipatory organization as one that “applies the methodology of separating Hard Trends that *will* happen from Soft Trends that *might* happen to its innovation and decision-making processes (p. 167).” He explains that a **Hard Trend** is a future fact that provides certainty, i.e., it *will* happen. It is based on “measurable, tangible, and fully predictable facts, events, or objects (p. 174).” We cannot stop Hard Trends from happening, but we can *anticipate* how to see them coming. Burrus challenges us to identify and “pre-solve” the predictable problems indicated by Hard Trends and to keep our eyes open to creatively manage the future opportunities as well.

Burrus states that Hard Trends fall into three primary categories:

- **Technology:** Artificial intelligence, the use of the cloud, wearables for remote medical diagnostics, and social technologies are some examples of hard trends—not temporary fads—that will continue to grow in importance at exponential rates.

- **Demographics:** As 78 million U.S. baby boomers continue to age, predictable problems and as-yet unimagined opportunities will develop, according to Burrus. Millennials want to learn and work in different ways.

- **Government regulation:** Government regulation will expand in the future, not lessen, he predicts and gives as examples increasing regulation around cybersecurity, environmental protection, and the use of autonomous vehicles, drones, and recording wearables.

A **Soft Trend** is a future “maybe,” a thing that may happen based on plausible statistical information, assumptions, or “gut instinct.” But a Soft Trend is not a future fact by Burrus’s definition. According to him, we can often change or influence a Soft Trend, which is why it is risky to count on Soft Trends continuing. Interestingly, in 2017, Burrus wrote, “We can assume that Facebook will remain a major player in social media (p. 23).” Welcome, Mark Zuckerberg, to your current future!

Other examples of Soft Trends that Burrus points to include:

- The continuation of Bitcoin as the dominant cybercurrency (although any company’s success depends on leadership and vision).

- The rise and predicted growth of obesity in the United States. Burrus posits, however, that government, businesses, and individuals can focus on changing this trend rather than preparing to pay for the expense of future health complications from obesity.

Following Burrus’s model, ASWB will be anticipating the Hard and Soft Trends facing both the regulatory community and the social work profession to inform and guide our strategic thinking and planning. The upcoming focus group is a starting point for capturing these trends.

**Futureview**

Burrus’s Futureview principle (a term he has trademarked) states: “How you view the future shapes your actions today, and your actions today will shape your future (p. 173).” Futureview is a powerful principle both for individuals and for organizations. Following the principle: If the prevailing Futureview is positive, then the organization’s stakeholders will reflect greater motivation, engagement, and involvement. Burrus theorizes that a negative Futureview results from looking at the future with “yesterday’s thinking” rather than understanding the Hard and Soft Trends of the future. He encourages readers to elevate their view of the future and share it with all stakeholders to “maintain alignment of purpose and a shared mindset (p. 103).”

**Putting The Anticipatory Organization in action**

The title of the book’s final chapter is “Direct Your Future or Someone Else Will.” Here Burrus encourages organizations to include

> “Knowledge increases in value when it’s shared….There’s power in sharing and cocreating. And that engenders trust” (Burrus, p. 153).
all stakeholders in the strategic thinking and planning process so that they are collaborating and "cocreating a future together."

It is in this spirit of cocreation that we are conducting the focus groups and involving members, ASWB staff, and stakeholders representing the other pillars of the social work profession—practice and education—to be part of ASWB’s strategic planning process. Everyone at the education conference for Thursday’s preconference meetings (May 17) will be included in the focus group activity. We will get under way at 8:30 a.m. Bring your ideas about our shared future. If you are not attending, I encourage you to send me a list of Hard and Soft Trends you see on the horizon, as well as your Futureview of ASWB. Your ideas and perspective are critical to helping “guide us into a social work regulatory future filled with many new opportunities.”

Futureview: Timeline for strategic planning

ASWB chose our strategic planning consultant, Paul D. Meyer from Tecker International, LLC, because his philosophy resonates with ASWB’s management approach/philosophy of **planning and thinking strategically** at all times so that our decisions are mission-focused, outcomes-driven, values-based, as well as future-oriented. He is collaborating with staff and Board members to engage our member boards and critical stakeholders in crafting a comprehensive strategic direction that answers two important questions:

- How will social work regulatory boards, the licensure process, and the social work regulatory community (including educators, students, practitioners, employers, and regulators) be affected because of the work of ASWB over the next three years?
- What impact will our shared view of the future that we create together have on ASWB?

Over the next eight months, ASWB will carry out a rigorous strategic planning process. The time frame and steps are outlined here:

- April – All-staff survey
- May – Member focus group at the education conference
- June – Stakeholder interviews
- July – Staff leadership team planning meeting
- August – ASWB Board of Directors planning session
- September/October – Strategic plan drafted and refined
- November – Strategic plan adopted by ASWB Board of Directors and presented to the Delegate Assembly

Stay tuned for updates!
Real tools for implementing Mobility

Technology has been part of the conversation about Mobility since ASWB first approached the subject in its current strategic plan, adopted in 2013. Social workers—like other professionals in social services, health care, and mental health—are working via technology to do tasks ranging from providing psychotherapy via web conferencing to completing case management via email.

This year, technology also provided a means of conversation for the ASWB Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee as they put together the 2018 Education Conference: Developing Tools for Social Work Mobility.

Committee members met in person twice, but the extensive planning required meant they relied on technology to help them stay on task. “When you have a yearlong task, it’s important that people know what’s going on all the time,” says Jan Fitts, ASWB education and training senior manager. That’s where online project management software comes in. Committee members frequently logged in to an online project management system that several ASWB committees and staff groups use to keep track of project deadlines, collaborate on documents, and follow conference milestones.

Throughout the planning process, the REAL Committee met regularly using web-based video conferencing software. Online meetings gave the committee a chance to engage in conversation and brainstorm about the conference. Using online collaboration tools “makes the process a lot more dynamic—we see each other, we build off each other, share screens, chat,” says Fitts.

As with all technology, there have been glitches, but most have been resolved quickly without slowing down the group. “We’ve not missed a beat because of technical problems,” Fitts says.

As helpful as the powerful technological tools were to enhancing engagement, Fitts emphasizes that the willingness of committee members to dig into the Mobility topic was even more critical as ASWB brings this initiative to the implementation stage. The committee reviewed the previous two education conferences that focused on Mobility in 2015 and 2016 to make sure this year’s meeting would cover new territory. “This conference is about implementation,” says Fitts, “and we were looking for an integrated approach, where each session builds on the previous one.”
The 2015 conference, From Silos to Bridges, looked at examples of Mobility solutions from other professions, as well as the impact of technology on practice mobility. The 2016 conference focused on technology, geographic mobility, and social work regulation. With this year’s return to the Mobility initiative, the REAL Committee wanted to focus on how social work regulators can effect change. “We want to give people tools but do it in an intentional way,” Fitts says. “We’re not providing our members with a template but letting them build their own Mobility plans.”

Consequently, many of this year’s speakers are familiar faces to ASWB members. The roster of presenters draws from ASWB volunteers, ASWB staff, and other professionals in the fields of law, communications, and marketing who have expertise that regulators can draw on to implement Mobility. REAL Committee members will introduce and moderate the conference sessions. “[Committee] engagement has come about because they’ve invited the speakers and are meeting with them to plan the sessions,” says Fitts.

Working together, whether online or in person, the REAL Committee, the invited speakers, and ASWB staff have created a regulator-focused conference exclusively for ASWB members designed to equip them for the next step toward Mobility. “We’ve got to do the hard work of making a usable plan,” says Fitts.

About the tool kits

Sometimes a conference theme is a catchy way to approach familiar content. But this year’s REAL Committee looked to models for implementing change to present a series of clear, achievable steps that allow room for social work regulatory boards to implement Mobility. The conference sessions are arranged so that each step serves as a useful tool that regulators can use when they return to their jurisdictions to begin or continue designing their Mobility plan.

ASWB is also taking a different approach to conference materials. Just as the past two education conferences had their own websites, this year’s conference features the Mobility Tools website, where participants can view the agenda, get details about sessions, learn more about speakers, and even navigate Halifax. The agenda is color-coded and uses tool icons to guide attendees through the various steps. Those icons and colors will also appear on printed materials at the conference to make it easier for attendees to organize and customize a tool kit for their jurisdictions.
Much to celebrate during Social Work Month:

Proud to be licensed!

During Social Work Month (March), ASWB made available a picture frame with the phrase “Proud of my social work license” for use on Facebook profile photos, and 10,500 social workers used it on their Facebook page, resulting in 35,000 views of ASWB’s page.

Published!

As part of the celebration of Social Work Month, the New Social Worker magazine website published articles by ASWB President TIM BROWN and CEO MARY JO MONAHAN on the role of social work regulation and licensure in providing a foundation for client advocacy and social justice through its public protection mission.

Out and about!

In late February (a bit ahead of other activities) ASWB CEO MARY JO MONAHAN was a keynote speaker at the NASW-Idaho chapter’s Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD). Her two topics were "Social Workers. Leaders. Advocates. Champions" and "Protecting the Public Through Prudent Practice."


ASWB exhibited at the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and presented sessions to students and faculty on ASWB’s Path to Licensure program, which helps strengthen knowledge of professional regulation and its connection to public protection and social work values and ethics.

First class!

Congratulations to the first class to complete New Board Member Training (NBMT) in 2018. Held in March in Little Rock, Arkansas, NBMT trained 17 board members from 12 jurisdictions, including five members from Canadian provinces.

Condolences

ASWB sends condolences to ANGELINA-MARIE SANTOS CRUZ of Guam whose father died while she was attending ASWB New Board Member Training in Little Rock, Arkansas.
Happy 50th, NABSW!

ASWB delivered good wishes to the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) in a proclamation honoring the association for celebrating its 50th year in 2018. Immediate Past President M. JENISE COMER of Missouri and Director at Large JOYCE BELL (MD) made the presentation at the association’s annual conference in San Diego, California. ASWB recognized NABSW’s proud history and groundbreaking initiatives to advance social justice and culturally relevant social work practice, among other contributions. ASWB has been proud to be a valued collaborator with NABSW since 1996.

ASWB placed two ads in the annual conference souvenir journal and JENISE and JOYCE presented a workshop “ASWB Fulfills the Dream of Competent Practice for African Americans” and raffled two exam guides to workshop attendees.

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It’s a blast!

New building update: While preparing to put in the sewer lines, contractors at ASWB’s new headquarters site ran into 800 linear feet of solid rock that had to be removed before pipe could be laid. Blasting equipment appeared on the site in short order, and the job was done over two days with fire marshals on site to ensure safety.

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Committees begin a new year

Volunteers from 41 jurisdictions, including seven provinces, will populate the 2018 committees and task forces

ASWB committees do much of the heavy lifting at ASWB. Four of these workhorses are standing committees, meaning that their existence is mandated in the ASWB bylaws: Finance, Bylaws and Resolutions, Nominating, and Examination. The Board of Directors is the fifth standing committee, elected by and representative of ASWB’s governing body, the delegate assembly. The other committees include Regulation and Standards, Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL), and Continuing Competence. Those appointed to serve in 2018 can be viewed here.

The members of the ASWB Board and the Nominating Committee, ASWB’s two elected committees, have diversity at their core: the bylaws instruct the Nominating Committee to “use its best efforts to reflect diversity on both the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee.” But the reflection of diversity infuses all of ASWB’s committees and task forces. Although the type of diversity is not defined in the bylaws, committee appointments reflect geographic and ethnic diversity, as well as practice diversity in the Examination Committee.

Beyond being the bedrock of social justice and part of the social workers’ code of ethics, diversity broadens perspectives, deepening the conversation about the association activities and the charges.

The Membership Task Force met in April, in Herndon, Virginia. From left: Richard Silver (QC), chair, ASWB President Tim Brown (TX), Janice James (KY), Treasurer Mel Harrington (SD), and Director at Large Robert Payne (ID).
that the committees are asked to consider each year. Differing opinions and experiences add richness and help ensure that the work of the committees has the benefit of thoughtful discussion.

The ASWB president appoints members to ASWB committees each year guided by the bylaws and with the input and approval of the other members of the Board of Directors. Although committee service is generally one year, the president can choose to reappoint members to the same committee to provide continuity. Committee chairs have usually served at least one term on the committees they are asked to chair. Recommendations for appointments start with committee interest forms received each year from membership. Recommendations are also sought from current volunteers and staff to the committees through a survey sent at the end of the service year.

After the ASWB Board approves the appointments, ASWB’s Volunteer Engagement and Outreach department sends letters on behalf of the president to appointees to invite the volunteers’ participation. The president contacts those approved to serve as committee chairs. Service on each committee has different time commitments. Committee members may be asked to participate in numerous conference calls throughout the year as well as attend one or more in-person meetings to complete the committee’s charge. Attendance at committee meetings is fully funded.

Appointments to most committees follow this process. However, the Examination Committee is filled using different protocols, because members are selected from the pool of item writers and are not customarily social work regulators. The term for members of the Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee, which plans the association’s annual education conference, is based on the conference year not a calendar year. Committee members have the opportunity to collaborate on important work of the association in support of the strategic plan. Because committee work is part of the ASWB governance structure, experience on ASWB committees is an important element that the Nominating Committee considers when choosing candidates for leadership positions within the organization.

Volunteers needed for 2019!

Members and member board staff interested in serving on a committee in 2019 are encouraged to submit a committee interest form. Because committee size is limited and because diversity is such an important component of the appointment process, not everyone who submits a form will be selected to serve. Interested volunteers who are not selected are advised to resubmit each year that they are willing to serve to provide notice of their availability. Information about ASWB’s committees can be viewed on the members section of the website. Pages dedicated to each committee list the committee charges, anticipated time commitment, and member strengths sought.
Government: The Ultimate Equalizer

Regulatory boards and their governance structures have been under significant political and legal scrutiny of late. The need for state-based licensure of the professions, occupations, and trades (globally referred to as professions) has been challenged, causing the regulatory community to articulate the need for government involvement. Licensure of the professions has also been challenged under economic arguments that allege that government involvement acts as a barrier to economic growth through the enforcement of unnecessary and, perhaps, arbitrary barriers to professional practice.

Scholars are also pressing the alleged inequities arguably caused by the involvement of government in regulation of the professions. Inequity, as opposed to inequality, can be defined as unfair, avoidable differences caused by poor governance. The ultimate questions to be asked are:

- Why is government involved?
- Is government regulation doing what it is supposed to be doing?

Start with why

In spite of criticism levied at politicians, government is the ultimate equalizer. Government provides for accountability and transparency. In the light of day, duly elected legislators enact laws that are signed into effect by the executive branch of government. Laws relating to regulation of the professions contain standards and criteria intended to be uniformly applied to all applicants. Government determines that regulation of the professions is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of society as a whole. As such, licensure is mandatory and failure to acquire the government credential may result in administrative and/or criminal prosecution.

Licensure eligibility criteria for many professions include the “three E’s”—Education, Examination, and Experience. Standardization of the three E’s through accreditation of educational programs, uniform examinations, and the criteria and recognition of supervisors defines a standard to be applied to applicants for licensure. State board members appointed by the executive branch act as agents of the state and are delegated with the authority to enforce this legislation.

Uniform application of the laws is ensured through a series of checks and balances involving the state and federal constitutions, as well as state laws, ethics policies, and general oversight by all branches of government—legislative,
executive, and judicial. Enacted laws allow for an application of governmentally established criteria to be applied to all applicants. Reliance upon the expertise of professional and “public” members of the board provides for decisions based upon a cross section of diverse perspectives, including those within the profession. Disgruntled applicants have a mechanism to challenge board action (or inaction) through internal administrative appeals and, if necessary, appeals to the judiciary. Disparate application of the laws creates grounds for challenges.

In addition to the issuance and renewal of licensure under standardized conditions, boards are authorized to enforce the laws through an administrative process. Such enforcement protects and benefits society as a whole. Administrative complaints are filed, investigated, and administratively prosecuted at no cost to the complainant. Additionally, adjudications benefit society by ensuring that licensees qualify for licensure and maintain some level of competence throughout the lifetime of their license. Furthermore, unlicensed persons may be prosecuted, again facilitating benefits to the public.

Then how

The administrative system provides “due process” rights to licensees based upon their property interest in a governmentally issued license. Pursuant to such rights, licensees are entitled to notice and the opportunity to be heard prior to an adverse action taken by government. While each set of circumstances may be unique, enforcement must also be uniformly applied pursuant to the language of the statute as supplemented through the promulgation of rules/regulation. Again, a disgruntled licensee in an enforcement proceeding has the right to internal appeals and, if necessary, appeals to the judiciary. Judicial oversight provides an important check and balance to administrative decision-making and ensures uniform application of legal principles.

Government involvement in the regulation of the professions also removes the unspoken—and potentially arbitrary—application of self-imposed criteria in the private sector. These criteria may act as barriers to such certification and employment opportunities and, importantly, may not be subject to judicial enforcement but for specified protected classes of persons.

Finally, societal benefits of a regulatory scheme are often overlooked under the roar of political and economic righteousness. Those with a zeal toward deregulation of the professions must consider the effects that the absence of government involvement has on the public, which is inclusive of consumers/patients, applicants, licensees, respondents, academics, politicians, and others who benefit from government uniformity through regulation. Elimination of government from the regulatory equation allows for imbalance and inequities not necessarily subject to correction through administrative and judicial scrutiny. Inequities can be remedied.
Five social workers recently met the challenge of moving from the item writing program to serving on the Examination Committee. The five newcomers, along with two emeritus committee members who rejoined the committee for 2018, participated in the year’s first committee meeting in Reston, Virginia, March 23–25, 2018. The Bachelors exam committee welcomed Jessica Davis of Illinois and welcomed back Shannon Bender-Bell of British Columbia, who previously served on the committee between 2007 and 2010. Jil Meadows of North Carolina joined the Masters exam committee, and Leana Torres of Arizona returned; Torres previously served on the committee from 2010 until 2012. The Clinical exam committee added three new members: Amanda Eagle of Florida, Joseph Harper of Illinois, and Lauren Henriquez-Bentiné of New York.

“We really appreciate your jumping into the exam committee,” Dwight Hymans, ASWB chief operating officer, told the new committee members. “This is a very different side of the exam development program.” He added, “If you listen to some of the long-timers who’ve been on the exam committee…, I think what you’ll find is that they have really appreciated getting to know a lot of professionals from all over. I hope you’ll find this to be a beneficial experience, and not just a hard-working experience.”

“The exam committee process is critical,” said Lavina Harless, ASWB director of examination development, welcoming the new volunteers. “It’s the part where we have social workers from diverse backgrounds sitting together in a room and making decisions about test questions. There’s no other piece of exam development that’s quite as robust in terms of having that subject matter expertise.” Before the returning committee members arrived in Reston, Harless led the new members in an orientation program to give them a broad overview of the exam program along with the details they needed to get started in their new role reviewing items.

The Exam Committee spent two-and-a-half days working in pairs and groups, using a consensus model to revise when necessary and then approve items for pretest. Pretest items are included as unscored exam items embedded in the examinations where they will collect psychometric data before going live as scored items. At this
meeting, the committee, which generally meets four times per year, sent 251 individual items to pretest. During the same meeting, form reviewers met to complete a review of exams to be released in July.

“This year’s class of new committee members got off to a great start,” said Harless. “They made excellent contributions to their committee subgroups, doing the important work of approving test items for use. We’re confident that this diverse group of talented, committed social workers will continue to keep the ASWB examination program strong.”

Meet the new committee members

Jessica Davis lives in Chicago and works as the clinical coordinator of a nonprofit substance use disorder treatment provider. She has a background in community mental health, substance use disorder treatment, management, and administration. She holds an MSW and a BSW from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Davis became an item writer in 2016, submitting her application because she was curious about how exam items are created. Now that she has joined the Examination Committee, Davis says, “I’m looking forward to learning and contributing. I’m excited to be able to see the bigger picture and be a part of the process.”

Amanda Eagle lives in Land O’ Lakes, Florida, where she provides education and substance abuse assessments in a traffic safety school. She also maintains a small private practice working with at-risk youth. She has worked with children and families in crisis, quality assurance and improvement, psychoeducation, and child welfare. Eagle holds a BSW from Florida A & M University, an MSW from University of South Florida, and a doctorate of education from Nova Southeastern University.

Eagle appreciates the importance of the ASWB exam and wants to be a part of its creation. “When I learned I could be a part of the process, I was immediately drawn to it,” she said.

Joe Harper lives in New Athens, Illinois, and serves as the hospital administrator of Chester Mental Health Center, a maximum-security forensic psychiatric hospital in Chester, Illinois. He also serves as an adjunct faculty member of the graduate social work program at the University of Southern California. He has presented on the topic of services to offenders and co-authored publications in the field of forensic social work practice. Harper graduated with an MSW from the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis.

Harper became an item writer in 2015 because he found the exam intriguing. “How does this exam get developed?” he wondered. “How many versions are there?” Now that he is serving as part of the Exam Committee, he enjoys the opportunity to engage in tasks different from his day-to-day work.

Lauren Henriquez-Bentiné lives in New York City and works in two school-based health clinics in the Bronx, serving a population made up of mostly immigrants in middle and high school. Her previous experience includes working as a case manager in an HIV program and in two outpatient health clinics. Henriquez-Bentiné holds a BASW from Lehman College and an MSW from Fordham University.

As a resident of a community made up largely of people of color,
Henriquez-Bentiné aspires to bring an urban perspective to the work of the Exam Committee. “This is a different hat: I’m using social work skills while thinking in a different way,” she said. In reflecting on her first meeting, Henriquez-Bentiné said she was happy to be a part of the item development process. “There are so many checks and balances in place,” she said, “and the team has such a wide breadth of experience in the field, both of which are crucial to having culturally competent exams.”

**Jil Meadows** lives in Asheville, North Carolina, and works as a counselor at her alma mater, Warren Wilson College. She holds a BA in English from that school and an MSW from Smith College School for Social Work. She began her career more than 30 years ago in medical settings and then moved into the area of therapeutic foster care. In her current clinical work, she incorporates neuroscience, positive psychology, and a sense of humor.

Meadows saw becoming an item writer in 2009 as a natural fit because writing was a strong point. “It’s exciting to use that strength and also contribute to the field of social work.” Now that she’s part of the Exam Committee, Meadows says she finds the intricacies of the process challenging. “It is like putting a puzzle together.” She’s impressed by how much work goes into each item as it progresses through each step of the process. And she is exhilarated by working among a group with a very broad knowledge base. “I felt as if I were in a room full of experts—oh, right, I was!”
Things to do in Halifax

(D) = Discount available with conference badge

Arts

Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (D) was founded in 1908 and is Atlantic Canada’s largest art museum.

Neptune Theatre, a professional regional theatre, matches storytelling with the pop sound of ABBA in Mamma Mia!

Outdoor

Halifax Public Gardens is a 16-acre downtown refuge that surrounds visitors with a Victorian aesthetic.

McNab’s Island attracts birders, hikers, and history enthusiasts with its wildlife, trails, and the historic Fort McNab.

Several tour operators in the Halifax area offer surfing, sea kayaking, and guided hikes.

History and Museums

Africville Museum re-creates the church at the center of an African Nova Scotian community destroyed in the 1960s to allow for industrial development.

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 (D) shares the experiences of newcomers to Canada, many of whom arrived at Pier 21.

Halifax Citadel National Historic Site (D) is a star-shaped fort that helped protect Halifax Harbour from 1749 to 1906.

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on Halifax’s waterfront lets visitors immerse themselves in Nova Scotia’s rich maritime heritage.

Museum of Natural History encourages exploration of Nova Scotia’s land and sea.
Peggy’s Cove Lighthouse is one of Canada’s best-known lighthouses, located an hour’s drive outside of Halifax.

**Shopping**

Fisherman’s Cove, a restored fishing village, offers a beach, seafood, history, and shopping.

Halifax Seaport Farmers’ Market is North America’s longest continuously operating farmers’ market, now hosting more than 250 vendors.

Historic Properties, located near the hotel, is a redeveloped warehouse now offering shopping and dining.

Hydrostone Market, named for the concrete blocks used in the neighborhood’s landscaping, is a Parks Canada Federal Heritage Site that currently boasts shops and restaurants.

NovaScotian Crystal preserves the European crystal tradition as Canada’s only creator of mouth-blown, hand-cut crystal.

**Tours**

Murphy’s The Cable Wharf offers a variety of experiences, ranging from tugboat tours and historic cruises to tall ship sailing. (Use code ASWB2018 and receive a 10 percent discount.)
These are some reflections on cultural humility, which Jennifer Henkel mentioned in her article “Race! ‘Outside’ of Therapy–Racial Sensitivity” in the January/February 2018 edition of association news (Vol. 28, No. 1). Like Jennifer, I devoted many years to working with families in their homes. I am now retired from teaching social work at Augsburg University in Minnesota. During retirement, I have proudly maintained my license, and I’ve had the chance to study, write, and train on virtue ethics. Lately, I’ve focused on cultural humility as a virtue.

I have found that thinking about cultural humility as a virtue is fruitful in a life-long journey toward cultural competence. First, it’s useful to remember that virtues are good habits that we consciously develop over time. Virtues relevant to social work include courage, compassion, integrity, practical wisdom, love of learning, openness to others, and humility. No single virtue is sufficient or the key to excellent practice, but rather we need to cultivate a constellation of virtues that we can tap when facing a particular challenge or ethical dilemma. We learn virtues and foster their growth in relationships with others, especially with those who exemplify virtuous social work. As virtues become reliable strengths of character that benefit others, society, and ourselves, they lead to a meaningful and fulfilling life. They arise out of whole-hearted motivation to be good and do the best we can, and they usually result in ethical actions. Thus, we can be held accountable to act in accordance with virtues that we have committed ourselves to develop.

In her timely article, Jennifer points out that accountability is an important value to ASWB, and the training in which she and other ASWB leaders participated was “intended to teach community awareness related to cultural humility.” So, what is cultural humility and how might we know it if we saw it in ourselves or others?

DISCLAIMER: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of ASWB.
Cultural humility can be seen as a virtue with interrelated features such as an accurate assessment of our limitations as well as strengths, awareness of our biases and our own cultural background with all of its complexities and influences on us, acknowledgement of mistakes we have made and how we could be wrong again, respectful curiosity and eagerness to learn about others’ cultural backgrounds, recognition of disparities in power and access to privileges, and openness to entering into empowering partnerships with others. Among the behaviors that indicate growth of cultural humility (drawn from studies in psychology and philosophy as well as social work), the following may apply to regulators of social work practice or licensing board members:

- Willingness to examine one’s own biases and prejudices (Foranda et al., 2016; NASW, 2015; Tangney, 2009);
- Accurate, balanced assessment of the strengths and vulnerabilities of one’s own culture;
- Ability to acknowledge mistakes, imperfections, limitations, or gaps in knowledge combined with the willingness to accept corrective feedback and act on it (Tangney, 2009; Watkins et al., 2016);
- Ability to reach out to others whose cultures or intersecting social identities may be different (Fowers & Davidov, 2005; NASW, 2015);
- Curiosity about world at large, not excessive obsession with self (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

While reflecting on how regulators of social work practice or licensing board members might find cultural humility useful in their work, I recall the importance of identifying exemplars when we are striving to develop any virtue. For me, one exemplar of cultural humility is a certain public member of the social work board I served on. Routinely, this public member would humbly defer to the expertise of professional members, eagerly listen and concentrate on learning, and, with this open mind and centered heart, ceaselessly and powerfully hold us all accountable to protect people who use social work services or who are in contact with social workers involuntarily. This public member would not let us forget how the most vulnerable and disenfranchised people in our community deserve culturally competent and ethical services. If licensees’ services fell below standards, it was our job to make sure their clients had recourse to the board for investigation and resolution of complaints. Such exemplars often model cultural humility by counterexample; that is, they are neither self-effacing nor arrogant, neither self-absorbed nor insolent, neither self-denigrating nor grandiose. Rather they are open to others and deeply grateful for diversity in our world, focused on sharing power and forming partnerships for the common good. They remind us to ask ourselves what we have missed, where we might be wrong, and how to aim for the highest moral principles.

From the editor: “Discussions of diversity, inclusivity, race, and inquiry” will run in association news through 2018. We welcome your comments and encourage your participation. Please tie your commentary to regulation and our audience of board members and administrators. Submissions will be published in future issues. Please send your comments to: jwood@aswb.org.