



May 8, 2015

Dear Members of the Executive Council and the Board on Professional Standards,

During our Joint Meeting this past January in New York, many problematic aspects of governance and psychoanalytic education were vigorously discussed. Participants experienced first-hand the challenge of integrating different points of view about the complex internal situation that besets APsaA. We were asked to provide a focused framework for discussion that could result in organizational change.

We are writing now to tell you how far we have gotten with that task. We have developed a set of proposals that we think will help move APsaA forward. We think they offer a foundation and frame for change that could relieve our Association of decades of acrimony and internal conflict and permit a focus on the much larger challenges that face our profession.

Our aim in this communication is to be as concise and clear as we can. We offer our ideas to you for your consideration and understand there are details that will need to be clarified going forward.

Please review this set of ideas before the June meetings. Given the importance of the organizational challenges that face APsaA, we want to make adequate time for productive thought and discussion a priority.

Discussion of these proposals will begin during the first Joint Meeting, which immediately precedes the Wednesday afternoon Board on Professional Standards meeting. There will be further discussion at the Board on Professional Standards meeting itself, at the Executive Council Meeting, and, finally, at the second Joint Meeting immediately following the Thursday morning Executive Council meeting.

The essentials of our proposals are: the externalization of the regulatory functions of the Board on Professional Standards, the creation of a Department of Psychoanalytic Education to facilitate psychoanalytic education through promotion of contact and consultation between APsaA institutes, and development of the Executive Council's ability to oversee the Association's functions and govern effectively.

To achieve these goals, we propose the following actions:

1. IPA standards following the Eitingon model will be the baseline standard for education in APsaA institutes. The Association will remain a Regional Association of the IPA.

Institutes that want to adhere to requirements beyond the IPA baseline standard can do so.

2. The process of externalizing the certification examination, which will be given by the new American Board of Psychoanalysis (ABP), will continue and be completed by January 2016. Since IPA standards do not require certification for Training Analyst appointment, the decision whether to require it will become a decision of each local institute. After changes in APsaA bylaws regarding any requirement for certification, the APsaA Committee on Certification will sunset. Those institutes wishing to maintain certification for Training Analyst appointment will thereafter use the ABP.

3. A new Department of Psychoanalytic Education (DPE) will be created to conduct the non-regulatory functions of our existing Board on Professional Standards. It will focus on education and consultation between local institutes through non-regulatory committees similar to those that are now part of our Board on Professional Standards plus any additional committees that will advance the mission of the DPE.

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4. An Institute Requirements and Review Committee (IRRC) will be developed to review applications of non-APsaA institutes interested in becoming an APsaA institute. The IRRC will establish and revise as indicated procedures for review of each application focusing on whether the educational program of that institute is “substantially equivalent” to the IPA standards held by APsaA institutes. Similar to the Membership Requirements and Review Committee (MRRC), the IRRC will be a committee of the Executive Council.

5. The APsaA Department of Psychoanalytic Education will function on behalf of all existing APsaA institutes and those institutes that join APsaA in the future through the IRRC. Any APsaA institute that elects to adhere to standards in addition to the APsaA baseline standard and chooses to participate in an external entity following such standards could do so without alteration of its standing within APsaA as an APsaA institute.

6. The Executive Council will begin a process of self-assessment regarding its functioning; e.g., the nature of Councilors’ roles and responsibilities and the Executive Council’s mechanisms for overseeing all aspects of the Association’s mission. Utilizing a professional nonprofit consultant of the Council’s choosing who has expertise in best practices of Boards of Directors of nonprofit membership organizations, the process can begin in January 2016. The final process will be developed by Councilors in collaboration with their consultant. We have envisioned a process in which the consultant observes the Executive Council meeting and begins to meet with groups of Councilors to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Executive Council and discuss potential changes in Council that will facilitate its ability to fulfill its responsibilities. The role of the Executive Committee in relation to the Executive Council will be part of this assessment and consultation. The Executive Council will inform the membership about its deliberations and any proposed changes that may require bylaw amendment.

After discussion at the Board on Professional Standards and the Executive Council and when there is approval of these proposals or variations acceptable to all, a package for gradual and comprehensive change will be put forth to the Executive Council, the Board on Professional Standards, and to the membership.

We would like to offer a final thought about these proposals. As you might imagine, these ideas were not easily arrived at during our ongoing discussions and retreats in the past year. However, all of us began focusing on listening, discussing and arriving at consensus regarding what would benefit the Association. We stopped thinking about winning or losing or getting every change we might have wanted. This was a difficult process but it might be our best recommendation for achieving real change.

We look forward to your responses to this set of proposals and to productive discussion in June. We hope the discussion will move us forward toward a shared vision of organizational change and progress that will benefit our Association and our profession.

Respectfully,

The Executive Committee

Mark Smaller, President
Harriet Wolfe, President-elect
Ralph Fishkin, Secretary
Bill Myerson, Treasurer
Lee Ascherman, Chair, Board on Professional Standards
Betsy Brett, Secretary, Board on Professional Standards
Peter Kotcher, Executive Council Guest