**2012 ACRE Membership Meeting**

**June 26, 2012 – Washington, DC**

**Attendance:**Laurie Ford, Amy Scott, Bethany Billedeau, Sheila Mahon, Denise Sleeper, Vicki Ferrara, Melanie Jordan, Phil Chase, Adele Patrick, Renee Patrick, Dave Roberts, Noreen Gill, Bob Niemiec, Judi Goldston, Cee Gandolfo, Wendy Quarles, Debra Martin-Luecking, Maureen McGuire-Kuletz, and Debra Whitehead

**Call to Order:**

Cee welcomed all, reviewed agenda for the day, and apologized for those who did not get the final email with meeting details. Amy Scott volunteered to take minutes for the meeting. Introductions: Attendees asked to share good news with the group as they introduced themselves.

**ACRE Retrospective** (Debra Martin Luking & Laurie Ford, with input from Dave Roberts):

A brief history of ACRE was provided as follows:

Late 1970’s ACRE got its first start. Fred Menz played a key role in bringing folks together. Original name was AECRP. ACRE name came later. 10 members began spearheading and they were mostly doing job coaching, developed competencies from APSE, with an ACRE spin. It was a concern that it was difficult to assess competency without seeing someone work. Vacillated over this and decided that it was ok and decided “Let’s do something and get a national certificate going. Folks with most contact with clients have the least amount of training. The first year of Supported Employment got national notice. We need to renew a voice for CRPs.

The current TACE model is VR focused but also includes VR Partners. CRPs have been moved to the back burner. State agencies have become the top priority. Result is that ACRE is no longer dominated by RCEP/TACE centers but has a mixed membership of many educators and organizations in the professional development field. Excellent to have a broader range of people in ACRE in order to meet CRP training needs.

Competency model- working off APSE/ACRE competency and the protocol for curriculum review allows each organization to decide how to address competencies in training. Allows for creativity and individualized training approaches that meet the competency requirements. Competencies require either skill or knowledge. Two-tiered approach (basic & professional certificates) give staff continuing education options. Not many organizations offer the professional certificate but the ACRE website has names of some who do. ACRE needs to continue to offer Basic and Professional level certificates.

**Discussion:** do we know that achieving the certificate equates with increase in pay?

- NH State agencies moving toward requiring training.

- Is there evidence that it will an improve performance or pay?

- What’s the impact on services &outcomes? (Hagner did some work on staff training and outcomes a while back) Does it decrease in the amount of time for an individual getting a job?

- CSPD in the VR world was to develop more consistent credentials/education for VR staff.

**ACRE Business**

**Election Results:** Dale Verstegen elected Vice President and Vicki Ferrara elected treasurer. Wendy Quarles& Katie Cissell will step down from their VP role & treasurer roles. Thanks to them both for their loyal service and hard work. Cee Gandolfo & Martha Garber now enter their second year as President and Secretary.

**Minutes** from last year’s meeting were reviewed. **Vote to Approve 2011 meeting minutes with minor formatting edits –Passed Unanimously.**

**Budget Report**: Laurie reported for Katie: via email message: needs to transfer accounts for smooth transition. ACRE has $11,837. There are things we need to spend $ on, such as the website development and maintenance fee, and expenses for the annual meeting. We will still have some money left once this is done. ACRE Bank is in Menomonie, WI where we can bank remotely and change treasurer with ease. (attached)

**Membership Report**: 30 members of ACRE. VP will be charged with the new mission of helping increase ACRE membership. Options for membership: organizational an individual. Free individual membership for a year for someone who wants to come to the annual meeting to see what ACRE is about.

**ACTION ITEM**: the new Board will schedule its next/first meeting for this new group.

The Board meets monthly via conference call. Focus of the Board over this next year: Development of List serve, select a web design person and get the new Website developed, Develop revised ACRE Competencies based on the new APSE competencies. Strategic planning follow-up.

**Laura Owens**: Executive Director of APSE

Laura focused her talk on the new CESP (certified employment support professional) Certification. Currently piloting the new test around the country. Need to have 500 people take the test or complete this first year of testing. About 50 people from NH certified.

CESP process is led by Pat Keul with help from the Employment Support Professional Certification Council (ESPCC) to oversee the process. APSE is seeking council members to help. ACRE members interested are welcome. Follow-Up: Let Laura (lowens@apse.org) know if you’d like to be on ESPCC.

APSE wants to work with ACRE to promote credentialing. Test being offered 2 days at this National APSE Conference. APSE is looking to partner with local APSEs, TACE Centers, ACRE members, etc. to host these Tests around the country.

**Discussion:** What does one need to do to bring the test to your region? APSE is trying to work with groups of people within region. Need $4000 for base, and then fly Pat out to administer the test. Good if she can do 2 or 3 tests within time frame. Test is $189/person, which does not include the $4000. Laura is willing to talk to and negotiate if they are able to get 50-100 people to take the test. Big cost to get the test scored. Want to do regional test site. Online testing cost prohibitive right now.

**Other issues:**

\* Won’t work to offer 1 test in large states due travel cost, so multiple test locations will be needed.

\* Would be helpful to know exam schedule so we can let folks know.

\* Could save on travel using local proctors(need 2 per test site). ACRE members can proctor.

\* APSE needs 5 test sites per year to break even. Currently in debt but it is year 1.

\* Online testing is more costly because folks must go to a secure learning site. Still looking into it.

\* We are not fully accredited at this point.

\* There are not enough questions for 2ndexam. Folks who didn’t pass must wait for new exam.

\* Specific benefits questions may be difficult. Reframing questions.

\* This year, only 5 people have not passed.

\* Cee suggested they pull out tests of trainers who took the test to ID problem questions and to ask people taking the test to indicate how they prepared for it.

\* 75% of the people who passed the NH test were ACRE trained.

\* Test will be difficult for anyone not working in this field.

\* APSE is looking for VR & DD groups to get on board.

\* Hoping eventually that employers and parents/family/consumers will ask “are you certified”?

\* APSE tells folks to prep by taking: ACRE, College of Employment Services or Dale Deleo trainings.

\* After the test, you get a summary report of your test scores by category not the correct answers.

\* ACRE trainers MUST BE CAREFUL not to guarantee that ACRE trainings = pass score on APSE test.

\* ACRE members need to understand & be able to explain the certification. **Follow-up:** APSE will share Pat’s PPT & webinar to help us explain CESP.

\* APSE will be doing surveys to find out what benefit people have experienced with CESP.

\* Pat is available to come to states or do webinars to talk with providers/state agencies about CESP.

\* Recertification is 3 years. Pat will coordinate that process.

**Lunch**

**Follow-up discussion to Laura’s visit & discussion of CESP**

1. If you want your state to discuss CESP value to state agencies & CRPs, if you are thinking of bringing in Pat, consider bringing in someone to provide the state’s perspective of doing it. Denise Sleeper of NH is able to talk about how NH is using CESP. Pat Kuel can provide an overview of CESP and could do a webinar or call on this but your state may view it as a “hard sales pitch”. Consider webinar with a state spokesperson to help your state think through the benefits of CESP. Move conversation from fiscal to the philosophy. NH this fits with the philosophy and aligns with their beliefs. Denise would happily be voice for NH

2. Many ACRE members voiced concern with the idea that CESP was initially presented as a possible money-maker for APSE. APSE developed CESP for 2 reasons. First, there was a need for an organization to develop competencies and a test, but APSE already had competencies and was well positioned to take on this challenge. The other reason was that fiscal but the driving force was not fiscal.

3. We need to work with APSE on how to have CESP not cost so much to sponsoring states/agencies. We could proctor exams and save travel costs ($4K).

4. How is APSE thinking about ongoing professional development for people who take and pass the test, and need to do the 3-year re-certification. Possibly use ACRE training for courses that count toward the requirement.

5. Some ACRE members are cautious about supporting CESP since there are many aspects of the model that are undeveloped or unpolished. Many members fear loss of credibility if CESP ends up not working because it is not done well.

**ACTION ITEM**: The Board members will develop a letter to Laura to follow-up with questions concerning fees, and next steps for APSE/ACRE relationship. What’s CESP fees cover.

**Round Robins: Wendy invited all members to present: Something New & Exciting, as well as Something Challenging. Round Robin Highlights:**

* Challenge finding qualified CRPs to work with deaf, blind and deaf/blind clients for VR. Please share any ideas.
* Region 3 (GWU) providing ACRE training model of: 2 day in person with supplement of online training, 5 – 90 minute modules. Average about 150 people for in person and 30 for online. Now requiring people wanting to attend to have a letter of recommendation from boss, and a letter from applicant sating why he/she wants to take the course. Always have a wait list.
* Alaska VR wants ACRE cert for all of providers. Offering a hybrid classes, in-person & online combo. Because it’s now required, getting some staff who are not enthusiastic. Meeting unique challenges of employment in Alaska.
* Challenges: With retirement of many training staff, may need to bring in consultants
* Challenges: Most people taking 20 hour course for employment support because people don’t value the 40 hr. certificate or need the Job Development portion.
* NH piloted a curriculum for brain injury. Required ACRE training as a pre-requisite. Goal to build additional tracks for Autism & MH.
* Challenges: follow through with Certificate. Fieldwork completion is challenging for some.
* Question: How do you do it online to passive folks who are difficult to engage?
* TACE 8 and CTAT- Generational differences.
* Many groups exploring more Internet approaches. Challenge of learning how to teach in a whole different way.
* New Training (Wendy) on how to use apps on how to use technology for direct care providers. Group discussed the option of making this training available as an ACRE webinar.
* Georgia’s program online now is online, self-paced. Max of 15 students per year.
* Good News in RI: DD organizations prioritizing employment (not necessarily employment first). Bad news: Agencies Budgets were cut &losing staff in droves. Suffering brain drain with people leaving or retiring. Having to rebuild and there isn’t any training money.
* RI - Looking to institute a job-coaching curriculum. VR Policy that job coaches need to be certified, but the type was not specific. ACRE ok.
* OK - training is mandated. Changes in VR & DD due to changes in leadership. Have done a lot of advanced and disability specific training.
* Minnesota – Good news regarding Employment first, MN is taking a community building approach to vs. Employment First. Getting together with stakeholder groups to explore ways to approach employment. Having a conference and moving toward community development. End result of their involvement in design of model is they are now asking for help (training) to get staff up to speed on the how to of employment. They are creating the demand for training.
* UNT – Good news, relationship with VR has just entered into a new contract with VR. 4 online courses developed for VR. Stimulus money gone and so now CRPs will be paying for training.

Development of training through CMS is moving people into competitive employment. Hope to see DD get involved with funding.

* TACE 2/UB – SETI program coming to an end this month. RFP is out. Not sure if they will pursue it given some concerns over intellectual property. Amy joining TACE staff.

**Committee Reports:**

**Strategic Planning Committee Report**. (Laurie Ford) See handout, recommendations pg 2.

 - Suggestion - ACRE hold Quarterly meetings via conference call or webinar. Follow-up: Board will discuss and plan first call. (Report attached)

**Competency Committee Report** (Judi Goldston) Group has been assigned the duty of comparing APSE revised competencies to ACRE’s, and updating ACRE competencies. Divided into groups and assigned each domain to review. Some discrepancies between the new and ours. APSE are more supported employment (SE) specific but ACRE’s have broader perspective. APSE competencies are more general, and ACRE more specific. ACRE must be in order for curriculum review to happen.

Question: Does ACRE need to match APSE? Should we organize into domains?

Will continue working on refining ACRE’s to make it a good tool. Some concern about what a review would mean re: re-certification of existing ACRE curricula.

**Curriculum Review Committee Report**(Melanie Jordan)This group is waiting for the competency review work to be done and for the revised competencies. The group joined the competency committee to help with the APSE/ACRE comparison. Once competencies are final, this group will finalize the procedure for curriculum review. Need to make it a more consistent and objective process. Re-certification will require showing updates to the curriculum. Will also need to show what trainers have chanced and their credentials. Curriculum Review team will need to gro. Hoping to have about 6-8 members to make the work less burdensome on all.

**Website Committee Report** (Cee Gandolfo) ACRE needs a new and improved website. The current one is the original. We’re looking to develop a Drouple website. This will allows us to control the content. We will only need help on technical issues. 3 Proposals have been submitted to take on the task of Website development. Two of these are private orgs or individuals, and the 3rd is San Diego State University. We have a long history with SDSU who have managed our site for no cost but in exchange for the membership fee. Action Item: Website committee is seeing approval to move forward with selection of the contractor to develop the site.

A motion was made (D Whitehead) and seconded (L Ford) to authorize the committee to select a vendor to develop the site.

**Discussion:** The group discussed rates of pay, indirect rates, possibility of finding a more competitive bid. Cee is sending the specs for what is needed, to those who wanted to get a copy. Any last proposals must be in ASAP as committee must make a decision soon and begin the work.

**The motion passed unanimously.**

Bethany B will join the workgroup as she has experience with websites.

**Action Item:** All members were asked and encouraged to join a work group. In particular website and curriculum review groups will need members.

**SWAG Swap**: Before the end of the meeting a fun SWAG SWAP was lead by Wendy. Cee explained what SWAG (**S**tuff **W**e **A**ll **G**et) means.

Adjourned at 3:45

Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Scott

**ACRE Treasurer’s Report June 21, 2012**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Amount** |
| Account Savings Balance |  $35.54 |
| Account Checking Balance | $8951.81 |
| UW Next Distribution from dues  | $2600.25 |
| Outstanding dues |  $250.00 |
| **Total**  | **$11837.60** |
|  |  |
| YTD dividend (incl. in checking) | $3.73 |

**ACRE Strategic Planning**

**Report to the Membership - June 2012**

**Strategic planning committee members** include: Martha Garber, convener; Cecilia Gandolfo; Laurie Ford; Dale Verstegen; Gayann Brandenburg; Denise Sleeper; Deborah Luecking; and Wendy Quarles.

**CHARGE:** The Committee was given a list of recommendations, generated for consideration by the general membership at the 2011 annual meeting. The list was organized by topic to facilitate group consideration.

The committee met 7 times to work on the following:

1. Strategic planning:
	1. Stronger identity for ACRE: who are we? What do we do?
		1. How far do we go? Training beyond employment services, i.e. Management services?
		2. Does ACRE have role nationally?
			1. Should ACRE be involved with policy? Think about public policy- write position papers on: Employment First, Sub Minimum wage
			2. Employment network qualifications
		3. What relationships should we investigate?
			1. College of Employment Services SSA EN requirements
			2. APSE
			3. CSAVR
			4. RSA
		4. Should ACRE retain its separate identity or seek to join another like organization such as NCRE?
	2. Membership expansion
		1. What are our expectations of our membership? Should we include more responsibilities for membership within the by-laws? Fold requirement of cash and service; mentoring process for new trainers; clearly state our purpose for training employment services; training for members/quality training/certificates for trainers.
		2. Recruit new members into ACRE (folks with new ideas) building internal
		3. Increase committee activity during the year
		4. Outreach to current membership: communication, updates, resources & collaborations
		5. Outreach to current membership for increased involvement
		6. Host quarterly membership phone calls to create momentum and provide updates
		7. Better define Benefits of ACRE
		8. Reach out to the members who were not at the meeting
		9. Determine who is missing from the ACRE table and invite them to join
	3. APSE
		1. Keep updated on APSE certificate process
		2. Assure interaction with APSE regarding the certification exam and provide input to APSE for the development of the process (insure that ACRE info is relevant and acted upon by APSE)
		3. Define ACRE’s role in the APSE certification process
		4. Influencing or combining forces with APSE on certification process
	4. TRAINING
		1. Create an option for self directed education
		2. Collaborate on a succession planning curriculum
		3. Develop distance learning committee
		4. Pursue advanced or professional level training-not necessarily 40 hours—STRAT
		5. Certify shorter advanced training options
	5. Create a process for determining annual budget and spending plan for ACRE money and determine need for fundraising.
2. CURRICULA REVIEW
	1. Need to simplify and explain process for submitting training curriculum for certification for new members- CURR REVIEW & WEB
	2. Identify guidelines for professional level courses
	3. New Curriculum Committee: Tyler Paris, David Hagner, Melanie Jordan, Liz Fussell with Gayann advising them
	4. Post competencies for management/leadership
3. WEBSITE
	1. Make ACRE the place to share materials with members
	2. Make the names of ACRE certified curricula available
	3. Define the benefits for ACRE membership on the website and publicize ACRE
	4. Website: look for other resources for website development

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The following are the recommendations of th**e** committee:

***Identity & Role*:** ACRE plays a unique role, which no other organization currently fills. With the increased acceptance of ACRE training, APSE certification process and VR agencies requiring CRP providers to be qualified, ACRE’s role becomes more vital to the production of qualified community providers of employment services.

* ACRE’s role has not changed, but we need to develop a more clear and concise way of explaining the role
* ACRE role in public policy should be limited to the areas of training & quality services.
* With the new APSE competencies & certification, we should review our employment competencies before moving forward on management or other curriculum.

Some possible suggestions for clarifying ACRE's role included:

* ACRE is a community of practice for rehabilitation educators. It promotes quality services through training of community providers. We certify curriculum.
* ACRE: Promoting Standards of Excellence for Employment Professionals
* ACRE: Promoting Quality Standards for Employment
* Review current ACRE identity statement on the website & revise to be more concise.

***Focus on membership recruitment & development*** The committee believes these steps may help to distinguish ACRE from APSE and increase our appeal and credibility with professional trainers in the field.

* Delegate to the Vice President the function of membership recruitment and engagement. Use website and list serve.
* Expand the Governing Board to include committee chairs such as the competency committee, curriculum review, website, and strategic planning to expand membership involvement. The size of Board would depend on the # of committees.
* Hold quarterly membership meetings by teleconference in order to expand membership involvement and enhance the value of membership. Possibly highlight the work of a member, new training technique or train the trainer events.
* Publish annual meeting calendar on the website.
* Involve membership to:
	+ Re-define the basic certificate;
	+ better define the professional certificate which might consider specialty areas such as mental health, autism and transition; and,
	+ Develop additional areas such as leadership and management.
* Actively use the ACRE list serve to increase communication with membership. The list serve would be used to send out committee reports; discuss training ideas and opportunities; etc..

***Need for strategic relationships*:** ACRE should remain a separate entity and focus on developing more intentional relationships with other entities, which have similar interests.

* Social Security Administration (SSA): Make formal contact with SSA in order to:

1) support SSA requirement of maintaining qualifications for employment networks continue to include “completion of a certification or accreditation from a national rehabilitation or employment services accrediting body that establishes qualification to provide or arrange for the provision of employment services to individuals with disabilities;” 2) explore ways to connect EN applicants and providers with ACRE approved employment training; and, 3) work with SSA to support quality employment for individuals with significant disabilities & employment services.

* College Of Direct Support (CDS): The committee discussed the College Of Employment Service (<http://directcourseonline.com/employmentservices/>), the College Of Behavior Health, and the College Of Personal Assistance. Each is developing courses that may be helpful to individuals providing employment services and may be potential ACRE members. As they are in the development stage, no further action is suggested at this time.
* RSA: Meet with the incoming RSA commissioner once the position is filled.
* NCRE: meet with leadership to confirm our mutual commitment to: 1) quality service delivery personnel; 2) recruitment of personnel (Staff completing ACRE training programs, may then be encouraged to pursue more college/grad school, thus ACRE training can be a stepping stone for staff). Suggest that it be taken to the board to implement.
* APSE: Some basic agreements have been made with APSE, such as training based on the same competencies. (There is no official preparation course for the new APSE certification exam.) Formalize these agreements and include in ACRE marketing. Propose a joint meeting with APSE/ACRE around the ACRE meeting to begin to formalize agreements.

The committee believes there is additional work that needs to be accomplished with regard to strategic planning and recommends the continuation of the committee.

**Next meeting:** July 23 at 3:00 noon eastern Time (2 CT, 1 MT, & noon PT) pending the need.