

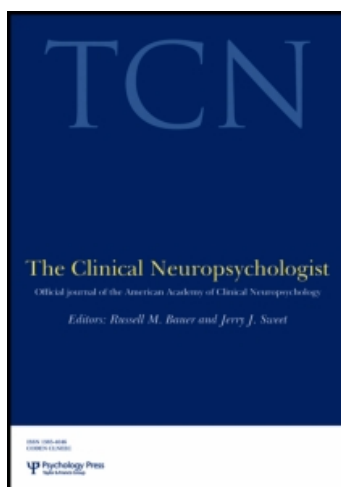
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President's Annual State of the Academy Report

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL STATE OF THE ACADEMY REPORT

Greg J. Lamberty

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Since 2004, Presidents of the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN) have provided the readership of *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* with the President's Annual State of the Academy Report. I have had the privilege of being on the Board of Directors since the first State Report and continue to marvel at the progress we have made. The reports have become longer, as has the list of those contributing. AACN's success is due to the efforts of many and we have too few opportunities to make these contributions known. I am personally indebted to our most recent past President, Jerry Sweet, for his guidance and encouragement during this most recent transition. His service and commitment to AACN is unparalleled and we continue to benefit from his enthusiastic support of the Academy.

In thinking about a theme for this report, I am reminded of a chance lunch meeting at INS several years ago. I was joined by a few colleagues, including a senior leader in the field. At the time I was an enthusiastic, newly minted AACN Board member and we were discussing professional issues when the topic of AACN came up. Not long into our discussion the senior colleague rather pointedly inquired, "I'd like to know exactly what it is that AACN does!" My recollection is that my response was not exactly persuasive (or coherent). I was not fully clear about the scope of AACN's activities then, but I am now. As AACN has expanded, we have done so with an eye toward offering our diplomate members, associate members, and the neuropsychology community at large as much "bang for the buck" as we possibly can. In these challenging economic times, it would appear that we chose wisely.

Before AACN began to aggressively look to expand benefits offered to its members it was often claimed that board certification through ABPP/CN was a ticket to increased referrals, forensic business, and professional self-esteem. All of those points can be debated and are difficult to prove. Thus, there was a clear need for AACN to provide added value to those who went through the board certification process, as a good feeling and the possibility of benefit was simply

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not enough. The following summary touches on some of the more tangible benefits of AACN membership.

THE AACN ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS

Instead of starting small with a lapel pin or a pad of logo-embazoned sticky notes, AACN decided to try its hand at a continuing education workshop program. A few one-day regional programs were offered and were received enthusiastically, but the association Bylaws called for a meeting, so all that was needed was a hapless volunteer to initiate that process. I offered my services and was encouraged (aka ordered) by AACN's long-time Executive Secretary, Linas Bieliauskas, to pattern our program format after the American Academy of Neurology's meeting, which has traditionally focused on high-quality continuing education workshops. The consensus of the board seemed to be something along the lines of "what the heck, it might work." The field of clinical neuropsychology obviously had two well-established meetings and the notion that AACN had something worthwhile and unique to offer seemed a bit risky and not at all assured of success. More than 7 years after the original meeting plans commenced, we have established a successful, highly anticipated, and valued workshop program at our annual conference that continues to experience impressive growth and acclaim.

A few details are worth noting for historical perspective. The first three workshop programs were held in Minneapolis, largely because that was where the meeting organizer resided, and this allowed for better coordination of efforts. Our fiscal expectations were low and our budget was even lower. The part of the enterprise that we never skimped on, however, was the talent. The inaugural workshops program consisted of nine offerings including a nine-credit ABCN preparation course offered by Linas Bieliauskas and Diane Howieson. This feature has been offered in all six programs. The next year's program grew to 17 workshops, and the past four programs have had 21 or 22 workshops from which to choose. A listing of all workshop presenters can be found on the AACN website (http://www.theaacn.org/continuing_education/workshops.php) and is a testimonial to the breadth of coverage and quality of presenters.

The first AACN meeting in Minneapolis drew 115 attendees, 56 of whom were AACN members and 59 of whom were not. The 6th Annual Conference and Workshops in Boston drew 682 attendees, with non-AACN members comprising more than 70% of the crowd. We can be very proud that at every meeting we have had more non-AACN members than members, which to us signifies the high quality of our workshops to the entire field. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of the attendance data was the fact that 25% of all attendees were either postdoctoral fellows or graduate students. Clearly, those preparing to enter our field have already identified the educational benefits of our workshop program. To say our annual meeting has turned out well would be an understatement; and not to acknowledge the efforts of Sandi Koffler and Angie Spearman from Hospitality Performance Network (HPN) would be a huge oversight. Sandi's judgment of venues, attention to meeting details, and securing of HPN's services to assist us with meeting planning have been responsible for the "look and feel" of our meeting and its clear appeal. Dozens of other volunteers and the AACN Board have put forth a tremendous

effort to make the conference and workshops program a success and we look forward to great programs in great locations in the future. Beyond this year's outstanding venue of the new Hard Rock Hotel in the San Diego gaslight district, our plans for future meetings include Chicago, Washington DC, Seattle, and Minneapolis. Finally, the cost of attendance for our meeting has consistently been lower than other neuropsychology meetings and we continue to focus on the value offered, both for AACN members and other attendees.

THE AACN WEBSITE

An increasing amount of AACN information and Academy business is being posted on the AACN website (www.theAACN.org) on a regular basis with several features and functionalities being added over the past year. In addition to the annual State Reports, an increasing amount of archival and historical information can be found. Over the past year the "About AACN" section has expanded and includes a pictorial homage to the founders of AACN, contributed by Corky Boake. Archival information about the AACN Board, papers and policies relevant to the field, the membership directory, and a new section on committees and advocacy have been added or updated.

The AACN website also serves as a portal for an increasing number of continuing education opportunities. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* enters its second year of offering CE credits for reading selected articles and taking brief quizzes. The site allows readers to get credit for reading AACN/Oxford Workshop series books and awards certificates through the website. An upcoming collaborative book series with AACN and Psychology Press will also soon be offering an additional opportunity to secure online CE credits.

AACN members and annual conference attendees are increasingly benefiting from the convenience of online dues payment and securing CE certificates for credits earned at the workshops. Our webmaster Ken Dugas has worked diligently with us to provide increasing functionality through the website and of course, all website features are easily accessed by AACN members, as well as interested members of the neuropsychology community and general public. While all manner of confusing statistics are available regarding "hits" and website visits, the Member Directory continues to be the most frequently visited section of the site, suggesting that colleagues and the public are availing themselves of the rich potential referral information provided for each AACN diplomate. Aside from charges for the CE quizzes, all features of the website are free and fully accessible for AACN members.

THE CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST

Since 2003 *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* has been the official journal of the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology. While *TCN* has been a prominent journal in our field for many years, it has enjoyed remarkable growth since becoming the official AACN journal. Growth has been both literal and figurative, with *TCN* increasing the number of submissions received, articles published, pages, issues per year, subscribers, and access. For the first time since *TCN* became the

official AACN journal, all members and affiliates now have online access to the current volume and online prepublication articles in *iFirst*.

The editors of *TCN*, Rus Bauer and Jerry Sweet, would like to extend thanks to Robert Heilbrunner for his service as Book Review Editor for the past 5 years (2004–2008). He will be succeeded by Kira Armstrong. Earlier in 2008, Manfred Greiffenstein took over as Forensic Applications Section Editor. As always, the editors are grateful for all editorial board members and reviewers who donate their time and talents to the review process. The success of *TCN* obviously reflects positively on its leadership, but also on AACN, given our strong partnership. In 2009 the number of *TCN* issues will increase to eight, and the number of pages published annually will also increase. Special issues on Advocacy and the recently completed International Conference on Behavioral Health and TBI are scheduled for publication in the upcoming year.

The quality of manuscript submissions continues to be very high and it remains difficult to keep pace with demand, so it is likely that competition for publication in *TCN* will increase. The state of *TCN* is probably best reflected in its impact factor (1.716 for 2007), which has more than doubled since 2002. Finally, in June the AACN Board of Directors voted to extend our contract with Psychology Press and *TCN* through 2011. Despite the increasing value in your *TCN* subscription, AACN members and affiliate members will not experience an increase in the cost of the journal over this period of time.

AACN/OXFORD WORKSHOP SERIES

The AACN/Oxford Workshop Series volumes began publication in 2007 and immediately became among the OUP's top-selling neuropsychology titles. Sales of the workshop volumes at all of the neuropsychology meetings have been brisk. This year, the BRAIN group's volume, *Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology*, and Robb Mapou's *Adult Learning Disabilities and ADHD: Research-Informed Assessment*, have both gotten off to very strong starts. The series has achieved unanimous critical acclaim up to this point and is becoming established as an important information source for clinical practitioners in our field. Upcoming volumes include offerings on the business of neuropsychology by Mark Barisa, the neuropsychology of epilepsy and epilepsy surgery by Greg Lee, and testing "untestable" children by Karen Wills. Future offerings promise to provide guidance and value to the neuropsychology public. To this end, AACN members can receive a substantial discount on the Workshop Series books through the AACN website, as well as accessing the aforementioned CE quizzes and workshop PowerPoint presentations.

PSYCHOLOGY PRESS BOOK SERIES

The Board of Directors signed a contract with Psychology Press for a new book series to be edited by Joel Morgan and Jerry Sweet. As with the other cooperative publishing ventures, online continuing education credits will be offered and will be accessible through the AACN website. The first book from this series has recently been published and is entitled *The Neuropsychology of Malingering*

Casebook, edited by Joel Morgan and Jerry Sweet. An editorial board consisting of AACN members will soon be established. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with this new Psychology Press series and expect that it will bring value to AACN members and associate members as well as reflect positively on the Academy.

AACN LISTSERVES

Perhaps the most visible and regularly used benefits for AACN members are the listserves that are offered as a perk of membership. The first list, AACN-list@umich.edu, is exclusively for use by AACN members, while the second list, AACN-CD@umich.edu, is the clinical discussions (CD) list. All affiliate members in good standing are eligible to be a part of the CD list, while AACN members in good standing can subscribe to both lists. In February of 2007, Rob Davis took over as the AACN list administrator from Bob Ivnik, who was the original administrator through the Mayo Clinic system and established the list as a go-to resource for AACN members. The current listserv is hosted by the University of Michigan and benefits from a searchable archive. The AACN clinical discussion list has grown from 390 members to 613 (a 36% increase), while the list for AACN members increased by 19% (from 379 initially to the current 469). In the current fast-paced practice world, access to hundreds of knowledgeable colleagues is a very highly valued service to those participating in the lists. FAQs about the AACN lists are available on the website.

AACN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The AACN Board of Directors is drawn from the membership and consists of 15 highly dedicated and knowledgeable people. It is difficult to convey adequately the degree of appreciation for the amount of effort expended by these individuals. Neuropsychologists from all realms of academic and clinical practice are represented and all share a commitment to serving the profession through their efforts within AACN. At the winter meeting of the BOD in February, Richard Kaplan, Manfred Greiffenstein, and David Williamson ended their terms and Kira Armstrong, Paul Kaufmann, and Aaron Nelson began theirs.

A large part of the effort expended by BOD members involves a much broader spectrum of activities in which AACN has become involved. I will not review these activities in detail, but would like to highlight a particular set of initiatives that I think are vitally important for the field of clinical neuropsychology. Last year, the State Report noted fledgling efforts toward establishing a grants program that would support outcome studies that examine the utility of neuropsychological assessment services. The board enthusiastically endorsed the notion of an outcomes studies grant program as well as an outcome studies research consortium. We are in the process of establishing a charitable foundation to support these activities and much of the other legwork for soliciting funds and setting up a network of neuropsychologists and sites that will implement outcomes research projects. Kira Armstrong has been instrumental in establishing our research consortium, with the assistance of Greg Lee, Paul Moberg, and Ted Peck. Lauren Dawson has

spearheaded efforts aimed at fund-raising to establish a basis for the grants program and has been aided by Bob Bilder, Neil Pliskin, Ted Peck, D. J. Williamson, Mark Barisa, and Michael Cirillo. We expect that news about this program will be forthcoming in the early part of the year and hope to make a push for funding these very important initiatives. It is clearly difficult in times like these to consider extra giving. However, in this case your generosity will hopefully be applied to improving the viability of our practices for years to come.

A second major initiative that has been undertaken in recent times is a revision of the AACN Bylaws. The original Bylaws call for revision approximately every 10 years and we are past this point. Bob Bilder is chairing efforts to revise the Bylaws and has been ably assisted by Leslie Rosenstein, Paul Kaufmann, Aaron Nelson, and Kira Armstrong. The amount of work to be done in revising the Bylaws is testimonial to the fact that AACN has changed markedly since its early days. We expect to present portions of the Bylaws changes at the business meeting at the AACN Annual Conference and Workshops in San Diego.

MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL STATUS

A major factor that has placed AACN in good stead relative to the other ABPP Academies is the fact that our membership has steadily grown over the course of our time as an Academy. At the time this State Report was written, AACN had examined and passed the 655 members, and 32 candidates awaited their oral examination in early November. Therefore, we will certainly award our 700th diplomate within the next year, continuing to make us the most active of ABPP's many Academies in terms of number of individuals examined and passed. Another very encouraging indicator of the value of *associate* membership is the fact that in the past year the number of associate members increased to 209, which is a greater than 260% increase from the previous years' numbers. We hope that those availing themselves of associate member benefits will eventually choose to complete the board certification process and thus strengthen the Academy and our field to an even greater extent.

Finally, the financial status of AACN has remained quite strong given the ascendancy of the Annual Conference and a number of CE-related web-based initiatives. We do not anticipate significant increases in dues and hope that our fiscal responsibility continues to assure AACN's ability to bring so many benefits to its members and associate members. We hope and assume that the foregoing examples of "what exactly it is that AACN does" are among the reasons that neuropsychologists continue to be drawn to our process. As is typically asserted in another president's State Address, the foregoing makes it easy to conclude that, "the state of our academy is strong!"

See you at the Hard Rock Hotel in San Diego in June.