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Martin A. Loaiza
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Christine Pellegrino,
Student Representative
University of Phoenix

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Member at Large –
Central

Geovana Colosio,
Member at Large – SW

Jennifer Walker,
Member at Large - NAU

Welcome to the Arizona Counselors Association

“It is an honor and a privilege to serve as President of this prestigious organization. Unfortunately, my appointment came after the sudden resignation of our past President Carolyn Bender due to health related issues.

As the President elect, I was able to work closely with Carolyn and understand the amount of work and commitment necessary to lead such an organization.

I’m committed to working tirelessly with the rest of the AzCA leadership to uphold the mission; promote the development of the individual professional counselors, advance the counseling profession, and to promote the profession and practice of counseling to improve the quality of life for Arizona’s citizens.

This task won’t be easy, but I’m confident that with the support of the leadership and our members we will succeed.

This will be a work in progress and you will notice the changes and improvements as time goes by. I know that we have many members who possess a variety of knowledge, skills and areas of expertise and I really look forward to hearing from you.

I encourage you to express your feedback, ideas, and your needs as a member of AzCA or as a treatment provider.”

Please feel free to contact me at;
PO Box 7168
Yuma, AZ 85366-7168
(928) 580-8008
Casiyuman@hotmail.com

Sincerely,

**Martin A. Loaiza, LISAC
President**



Congratulations to Chris and Callie for this well-earned recognition!

We are very proud of their achievement. As a counseling community, look to Chris and Callie for continued leadership in the years to come.

Chris and Callie have behaved in a way that exemplifies outstanding graduate students. They have seized opportunity and fully met the accompanying responsibilities.

Their collaboration and professionalism highlight their unique education, which allows students the opportunity to develop specialized skill with team learning and performance.

Without a doubt, these women have used this opportunity to extend their learning far beyond the classroom.

They have positioned themselves to be leaders in the counseling profession.



WACES Student of the Year Award Presented to AzCA Student Reps

Submitted by: Scott Baker, PhD
AzCA Faculty Rep from the
University of Phoenix

Christine Pellegrino and Callie Dahlgren are the current AzCA Student Representatives from the CACREP-accredited Masters of Science in Counseling program at The University of Phoenix, Phoenix Campus.

In November, 2008, Chris and Callie were presented with the Student of the Year Award from the Western Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (WACES). This highly competitive, regional award brings prestige to the AzCA and is evidence of the excellence of counselor education in Arizona.

WACES (<http://counselored.unlv.edu/WACES>) is one of five regional divisions of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), which is a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). The Western region includes seven states and the Pacific Rim countries.

Each year, WACES seeks nominations for Student of the Year. Students who are nominated for this award demonstrate an outstanding commitment to the counseling profession by contributing in some substantial way to professional identity and advocacy in their state. Student of the Year is a highly coveted award and, therefore, is extremely competitive and judged with considerable scrutiny.

Chris and Callie were chosen from the many candidates because of their commitment to the AzCA. As they began their tenure as Student Representatives, Chris and Callie identified a need for change.

They independently approached their Faculty Representative and asked what they could do, in their role, to address the needs that they had identified. They met with the advisor several times, discussing counselor identity at the state and national level, professional advocacy strategies, and practical solutions.

The Student Representatives created a plan that included revising AzCA public relations materials, recruiting student involvement, advocating for a strong connection with the ACA, and assisting with hiring a new Executive Director to oversee organizational procedure and direction.

They created a new AzCA Power Point presentation, with associated notes that stress a connection with the ACA, the importance of student involvement, recent legislative actions that have resulted from professional advocacy, and the overall benefits of the organization. They have delivered this presentation to students, generating a noticeable increase in student interest and attention to the AzCA.

Additionally, they each participated on the Executive Director Search Committee, which ultimately led to the hiring of our new Executive Directors.

ACA Leadership Conference Highlights

Submitted by: Callie A. Dahlgren, UOP Student Representative



In early November, with the assistance of the AzCA, I had the extraordinary opportunity as a Student Representative of the AzCA to attend the ACA Western Region Leadership Conference in Seattle, Washington.

The semi-annual conference provides an opportunity for Western Region leaders and emerging leaders of state branches to come together to discuss current events in their respective branches.

The trip afforded me the opportunity to learn how organizations such as the AzCA operate and how the ACA and state branches can work together to benefit counselors and the counseling profession at both local and national levels. At the three day conference, I also had the privilege of meeting the President, Colleen Logan, and President-Elect, Lynn Lynde, of the ACA, in addition to leaders and emerging leaders from eight western states.

From these leaders, I learned that all branches have suffered severe hardships at one time or another and some continue to struggle on a daily basis. It was encouraging to learn that some of the branches that have struggled in the past are now thriving.

In the year ahead, it is my hope that AzCA is among the flourishing and elite state branches. The following are some suggestions I have based on my attendance at the conference that may assist in making the vision of a successful state branch a reality:

1. Revamping the AzCA website would allow us to utilize this accessible, modern, and economical tool to its fullest potential. The revamping could include an entire new look, as well as accepting credit card payments for membership dues. Other improvements may include educational podcasts and links to helpful and informative websites.
2. The state organization should be one of the resources available for licensed counselors to obtain CEUs. It could be beneficial to the AzCA and its members if it were to work toward creating a reliable and continuous avenue for counselor members to obtain CEUs through the AzCA.
3. At the conference, I learned the value of teamwork in volunteer organizations like the AzCA. It is difficult to operate an efficient and valuable program without help from its community. A suggestion to increase our team is by way of a membership drive, wherein we work to recruit members and encourage new and old members to participate and become active on the Board of Directors or committees where needed.

(Continued on page 4)

Get
involved
in AzCA!

Next Board
Meeting:

March 28,
2009

10 am - 12 pm

NAU –
North Valley
15601 N. 28th
Ave. #134
Phoenix, AZ
85053

NAU-
Yuma
AC 126

“Serving
Professional
Counselors in
Arizona Since
1952.”

Comments from the editor:

As you can see, AzCA is making significant changes in order to better serve the counseling community in Arizona.

The newsletter is an excellent opportunity to connect with one another and share information that can benefit us all.

If you have an article you would like to submit, please contact me at le@fceinfo.com for more information.

There is also an opportunity to advertise for members and non-members. You can find our rates on the AzCA website, www.azca.org.

I look forward to including new articles from many old and new members for the next newsletter!

Lori Epting, L.A.C.,
Editor



ACA Leadership Conference Highlights continued

4. With anticipated increased membership and member involvement in mind, providing convenient and creative ways for members to participate and make a difference in the organization is vital. Providing educational emails or mini-seminars designed to teach members how to make an impact without leaving their homes or taking too much time away from their already busy lives is one idea. Seminars could include instruction on the best way to write state legislators to advocate on behalf of laws influencing licensed professional counselors.
5. A great way to get to know your colleagues, build camaraderie, earn CEUs, generate buzz about our professional organization, and generate revenue for future events is through annual state conferences and mini conferences. By providing consistent, well-organized state conferences, we can achieve all of the above and more. Having an annual conference could be a goal for the AzCA each year.

6. As mentioned above, I suggest we create avenues for our members to learn how to advocate on behalf of professional counselors throughout the state. Such training could lead to a much needed public policy committee. This committee would work with the AzCA President to write letters and make personal appearances on behalf of AzCA's constituents, advocating for legislature in favor of the counseling profession.
7. Daily lives can be hectic which often times leaves little room for attendance at a monthly board meeting to keep abreast of current events in our organization. Implementing a "Coffee Break" at various times and locations throughout the month is a suggestion to help members stay active and involved in the AzCA. The Coffee Break could be half-hour long informative meetings, the date and times of such meetings could be posted on the AzCA website.
8. Knowing what members want, need, and expect is extremely important. A way to learn about our members and how the organization can better serve them is through an annual survey. Results from the survey would be instrumental in implementing new ideas and forming goals for the following year.

I am truly looking forward to the year ahead. We are part of an organization with a vast amount of potential – potential which I believe we can fulfill if we work together, not only for our state organization but also for the counseling profession!

-Callie A. Dahlgren

Effort to Gain Medicare Coverage of Counselors

DACA Office of Public Policy and Legislation - December, 2008

Submitted by: Scott Barstow, Director of Public Policy and Legislation at the ACA

The counseling profession has come a long way in the last two decades. Counselors are licensed in 49 states and the District of Columbia, and counselors' services are routinely covered under both public and private health plans. However, counselors remain shut out of the single largest health insurance program in the country: Medicare. In 2007, Medicare provided health care coverage for 43 million Americans, and enrollment is expected to increase steadily to an estimated 77 million covered beneficiaries by 2031. Medicare's benefit package is written by Congress, and counselors are not covered as independent providers under the program. As a result, not only do consumers who become Medicare beneficiaries lose access to more than 100,000 licensed professional counselors across the country, but counselors also lose jobs—often to less qualified or experienced providers—at agencies and practices which rely on Medicare reimbursements for their income.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) is working together with Arizona Counselors Association (AzCA) and the American Mental Health Counselors Association to get legislation enacted to cover counselors under Medicare, and the next opportunity for this will be in 2009. Congress is certain to take up major Medicare legislation this year, and counselor coverage should be part of this. AzCA is working with ACA in drafting and sending letters to the Arizona congressional delegation soliciting their support for counselor coverage legislation, but we also need to have individual counselors do their part.

This is where you come in! ACA is working hard to increase grassroots support for Medicare coverage of counselors. Studies show that individual constituent contacts make a much bigger impact on members of Congress than do visits from lobbyists. Without constituent contacts, members of Congress simply won't listen when ACA's lobbyists knock on their door and ask them to support Medicare coverage of counselors.

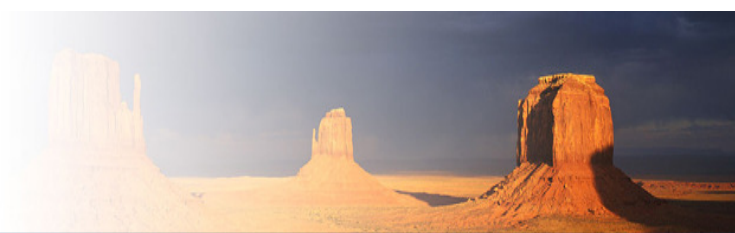
It is important to note that these contacts—whether calls, e-mails, or letters—must be individualized, and *not* just form e-mails or form letters. Congressional offices are getting absolutely flooded with constituent contacts, a large portion of which are form e-mails and letters. Congressional staff view these with great suspicion, and they and their bosses pay dramatically more attention to e-mails and letters written in the constituent's own words. ACA recently held a conference call with interested members to hear from an expert in communications with Congress discuss recent research findings. A powerpoint file and the audio of the conference call are available on ACA's website at

<http://www.counseling.org/PublicPolicy/TP/ResourcesAndReportsMembers/CT2.aspx>

ACA has two websites which can help you advocate for Medicare coverage of counselors. The main public policy office website is at <http://www.counseling.org/publicpolicy>, and includes information on the current status of the major issues ACA staff is working on, and how counselors can help advocate. The second website is at <http://capwiz.com/counseling>. This site lets counselors easily identify their Senators and Representative, and lets them generate a letter or e-mail—in their own words!—on major counseling policy issues.

In addition to encouraging counselors to get involved on the Medicare issue by contacting their members of Congress, ACA is asking counselors to share their stories about how the lack of Medicare coverage is affecting you and your clients. If you have an anecdote, please share it with Peter Atlee of ACA's staff at patlee@counseling.org. These anecdotes are helpful in discussing the real-world impact of Medicare's lack of recognition of the counseling profession when ACA staff are lobbying congressional offices. Peter can be reached by phone at 1-800-347-6647 x242.

Thank you for your interest, and please help us make 2009 a banner year for the profession!



AzCA Board Retreat Report

February 21, 2009

Submitted by: Martin Loaiza, AzCA President

The Arizona Counselor's Association leadership had a retreat on Saturday, February 21, 2009. The leadership has a broad representation which included, counseling students, LISAC, LPC, University Professors, and PhDs, all from diverse employment and backgrounds, but with a common goal: to elevate the name of AzCA, improve counselor identity, and ensure that the membership gets their money's worth. After several hours of brainstorming we left the UOP building, which was graciously secured for our use by Dr. Kerstner (one of our ED's), with a strong sense of what our goals and objectives are for the year 2009-2010.

Goals for 2009-2010;

- Strong leadership and structured transitions;
We will revitalize local chapters, develop and maintain a leadership pool, provide training to Board members and local AzCA chapter representatives, and work closely with ACA.
- Improve membership benefits;
We will provide trainings targeting the need of local communities through local AzCA chapters. We will produce newsletters and journals which, in turn, provide opportunities to be published. We will improve our web presence, add PayPal, improve response to questions and concerns, and listen to what members want and/or need.
- Improve financial status;
We will increase our membership drives, use advertisement in journals and newsletters, conduct one-day trainings on ethics, cultural competencies, and a two-day annual conference. We will also explore other means to ensure financial stability.
- Strengthen and improve the image of the counseling profession;
We will work closely with our parent association, adhere to American Counseling Association guidelines, use our chapter to improve visibility, and promote our professional identity. We will develop collaboration with other counseling organizations to present a unified front in the development of legislature that affects counselors. We will reach out and improve collaboration with universities and colleges not represented on our Board.
- Provide trainings targeting the need of local communities through local AzCA chapters;
We will produce newsletters and journals which in turn provide opportunities to be published. We will improve our web presence, add pay-pal, improve response times to completing memberships, answering questions and concerns, and listening for what members want or need from their state organization.

For more information, or to become a member, visit www.azca.org, or email at email@azca.org

