

## **American Academy of Health Behavior 2014-2015 Strategic Planning Workgroup Recommendations**

The AAHB-SPWG is making the following recommendations after a review of existing data (e.g., membership and conference surveys, past strategic planning documents) and data collected as part of our planning process (e.g., listening sessions, survey).

### **Core Values**

Core values are the foundation of an organization's work and guide attitudes and behavior. Good core values emerge from the organization (versus being imposed) and when embodied, bring an organization to life for others.

Currently, AAHB's core values are:

- Commitment to and continuous engagement in science-based research
- Pursuit of national health and research priorities
- Excellence in all aspects of The Academy
- Honesty and integrity
- Attention to consistency and detail
- Merit-based recognition

Following a review of existing data and conducting several listening sessions, we revised the core values. In our survey we asked participants if the revised core values reflected their experience with AAHB. There was strong agreement that the revised values do reflect individuals experience with AAHB. Therefore, we feel confident recommending that the Board adopt these revised core values statements:

- Equity - Dedication to promoting, including, and respecting the diversity and strengths of individuals, organizations, communities, and populations
- Excellence - Strives to achieve the highest standards of excellence in all aspects of The Academy
- Health Behavior Research - Commitment to science-based research that leads to new knowledge, advances practice, and informs national health priorities
- Honesty and Integrity - Guided by a collective commitment to sound and just ethical behavior in research and practice
- Merit - Commitment to professional recognition within The Academy based on scientific merit and accomplishments
- Professional Growth - Fosters mentoring and development for all members of The Academy across the professional life-span

## **Mission Statement**

A mission statement is an organization's purpose or reason for being. A good mission statement should be something leaders can use to make decisions and manage performance by.

AAHB's current mission statement is:

“The mission of The Academy is to serve as the research home for health behavior scholars whose primary commitment is to excellence in research and the application of research to practice to improve the public's health.”

Based on the review of existing data and the listening sessions, we made minor modifications to the mission statement. This, too, was included in our survey. Participants were asked how well this revised mission statement captures AAHBs purpose. Results revealed that participants believe it does capture AAHBs purpose. Based on this, we recommend that the Board adopt this revised mission statement:

“The mission of The Academy is to serve as the research home for health behavior scholars committed to excellence and diversity in research to improve the public's health.”

## **Strategic Priorities**

As we reviewed existing data and conducted the listening sessions, several issues came up repeatedly. These were included as six possible priorities in our survey. Survey participants were given additional contextual information and were asked to rank them in terms of order of importance. The priorities we asked about were:

1. Membership
2. Diversity/Equity
3. Secure a Journal
4. Professional Development and Mentoring
5. Presence Beyond the Annual Meeting
6. Financial Development

Based on survey results, we recommend the Board focus on the following three priorities over the next 5 years (in order of priority):

1. Membership and Marketing
2. Professional Development and Mentoring
3. Diversity and Equity

Further, we recommend the following goals for each priority, make a few suggestions for how you might achieve these goals and suggest a timeline. We recognize that each Council will have additional ideas and goals that should be incorporated into the final strategic plan.

## 1. Membership

- Reach a total membership of 250 by the end of 5 years
- Within the next 6 months, come up with a detailed plan on how to retain existing members and begin implementing this plan within the first year
- Within the next 6 months, come up with a detailed plan for recruiting student members and begin implementing this plan within the first year
- By year 2, articulate a transition plan from student membership to full membership within the first year and begin implementing this plan
- Put together a plan within the first year to increase awareness of the organization for the purpose of recruiting new and diverse membership. Begin implementation of the plan in year two.
- Possible strategies to achieve these goals:
  - Edit the current website so it reflects the highly professional nature of The Academy
  - Create a blog as part of the website featuring contributions from members on various topics
  - Send the newsletter to everyone who has participated in The Academy in some way in the past 5 years (those who attended the conference, for instance, not just members) and allow people to sign up to receive the newsletter who aren't members (could have a sign up link on the website)
  - Work with the Diversity and Equity Council on achieving shared goals

## 2. Professional Development and Mentoring

- Within the first year, create a holistic framework through which existing professional development and mentoring opportunities can be clearly communicated, including those that occur during the conference (e.g., professional development luncheons) and outside of the conference (e.g., AAHB mentoring program)
- Within the first year, use the aforementioned framework to develop a more detailed list of opportunities to be developed
- By year 2, craft professional development and mentoring opportunities focused on helping mid-career academics achieve senior status
- By year 3, offer quarterly webinars focused on skill building (e.g., publishing, grant writing, methods)

## 3. Diversity and Equity

- By the end of 5 years, see a measurable increase in diversity in membership, conference presenters, and conference content that promotes discussion of diversity
- Within the next 3 months, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Diversity and Equity Council
- Within the next 3 months, delineate how the Diversity and Equity Council will interface with other councils to help each meet their respective objectives
- Possible strategies to achieve these goals:
  - Complete documents establishing the workgroup as an official council
  - Develop and have approved a set of bylaws for the council

- Have a member of the Diversity and Equity Council represented on all other AAHB Councils/Committees
- Formalize the Diversity and Equity Council's role in assisting other Councils/Committees in achieving mutual aims

In addition to the above priorities, we would also like to address the topic of a journal since that has been of great interest.

Based on our survey results, the journal ranked as a high priority only for some members. The survey responses indicated that members are divided on this issue - some feel strongly that AAHB should have a journal, others do not see it as a priority. Therefore, we are not recommending the journal be a top priority as part of this strategic plan and believe this is an issue the Board can discuss further. If people are interested in championing a journal, we would refer them to existing documents as guidance (namely the journal business plan that has been developed).

Our final recommendation is to update the table created in 2005 by Randy Black and colleagues and updated in 2009 by David Seal and colleagues to reflect what has been accomplished by The Academy since the last strategic planning effort. We would like to see this document sent out with the strategic plan the Board finalizes so members are able to see what has been accomplished by The Academy in the past few years. We also believe it is important to maintain this table moving forward to create an institutional history of strategic planning over the years.