



ASPIRE, INC. President's Report Winter 2009

Executive Board Members:

President: Ryan Ross, M.Ed.
Past President: Dan Benge, Ph.D.
President Elect: Dawn Eckhardt
Treasurer: John Shafer
Secretary: Brandon McLean

Date: November 09, 2009

This past year the ASPIRE Board continued to work toward better fiscal solvency through very conservative spending measures. At the conclusion of the Spearfish conferences, the regional budget is once again strong enough to support some of the past activities and future projects.

The primary savings occurred through teleconferencing for board meetings. This activity benefitted the both regional and state budgets. The state associations nor the region, incurred expenses for board travel, room & board, meals, et cetera for the past two years, thus allowing both state and regional budgets to grow. However, this came with a price. The boards in the last two years (in this president's opinion) were not as cohesive as boards in the past. The new administration has made plans to address this by meeting in person as a board again and this will happen in January at the little America Resort in Cheyenne, WY. Little America is where we will have our next regional meeting October 9 – 14 of 2010. The May meeting will still follow the conference call format to continue to support our financial stability and growth.

The strength of this region is the continuity of leadership in key committee positions. Solid and committed chairs have allowed ASPIRE to be leaders in COE Fair Share, COE State Initiative, Governmental Relations, Membership and so on. Retaining past presidents has also strengthened our core through their involvement in LDI, committee leadership, and committee work. New leaders bring renewed enthusiasm to our cause.

This year, the Board has several goals. These goals not only benefit our region but to support the national efforts of the Council. Below is a brief overview of our goals for this year.

I. Regional News: Goals and Objectives for this year

- ASPIRE, INC. wants to beat last years COE Fair Share goal of 177%.
- Build on the regional fact book created last year using the program APR information.
- The Leadership Development Institute is under going some changes under the leadership of ASPIRE Past Presidents Oscar Felix, Kathy Felker and Andrea Reeve. The two track program will continue to provide professional development to emerging leaders and seasoned professional.
- The 2010 ASPIRE Conference will be in Cheyenne, Wyoming, October 9-14. The theme, “Winds of Change”.
- States in the ASPIRE Region; Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota and Colorado have all been encouraged to apply for the State Initiative Grants.
- TRiO Day dates for all states have been set.
- Elaine Metcalfe, ASPIRE Past President, has revitalized the election nominations process for regional offices in hopes of identifying a pool of candidates for ASPIRE board leadership positions. She selected a core of regional members to help identify potential leaders. Additional surveys were completed and position descriptions were updated to aid in the process.
- ASPIRE continues to have a strong national voice in addressing issues and advocating for students at the state and local level as evidenced by the support of Senate letters and amendments.
- The Board has secured sites for the 2011 (Salt Lake City) ASPIRE conferences.
- Audit was contracted and completed with no eminent concerns found.

II. Regional Activities Related to the Council’s Strategic Plan:

COE Strategic Plan Goals for 2005-2010

Goal 1: Strengthen the Council’s capacity to enhance the quality of existing educational opportunity programs and increase the number of students served.

- Action alerts sent by COE continue to be forwarded to the membership by the Governmental Relations Committee and the state presidents.
- Carol Gritts, Development Chair and her committee are in full swing in achieving fair share goals.

Goal 2: Cultivate and strengthen relationships with all stakeholders to maximize educational opportunities for the least advantaged students.

- An ASPIRE regional data sheet was created and provided to policy makers at Policy Seminar.
- States in the ASPIRE region are really working hard to position themselves better with other stakeholders. One example is Montana which installed the Montana TRiO Advisory Committee. This committee consults with the Commissioner of Higher Education on issues related to college access for low income and first generation students. The state has also launched the TRiO Policy Advisory Committee to represent TRiO at the state level with others in the college access movement.
- ND ASPIRE has been selected as a stake holder, and committee member for the North Dakota College Access Challenge Grant Steering Committee
- Colorado has become a key player in the States Race to the Top campaign established by the Governor.
- TRiO Staff from around the region will be participating in College Goal Sunday, providing assistance and expertise to students and their families.

Goal 3: Develop leaders to further the mission of the Council.

- The Leadership Development Institute is undergoing some changes under the leadership of ASPIRE Past Presidents Oscar Felix, Kathy Felker and Andrea Reeve. The two track program will provide professional development to emerging leaders and the seasoned professional.

Goal 4: Expand the state initiative to increase support for equal educational opportunity.

- ASPIRE, INC. is now incorporated in North Dakota and a 501(C)(3) group exemption has been filed with the IRS to allow state chapters to fall under the non-profit umbrella of ASPIRE, INC. This will allow states to pursue public and private partnerships to improve educational access to low income, first generation and disabled students in the ASPIRE region.
- Ray Carlisle the regional chair coordinating state initiatives has stepped down. Two candidates are under review to take his place. Until they are settled Ray is still helping out.

Goal 5: Develop and diversify resources to build the Council's capacity to advance equal educational opportunity.

- Amy Verlanic is the Corporate Development chair for this year. She is working with members from each state to identify other resources to support college access initiatives.

Goal 6: Strengthen the Council’s role as a global leader and promote global opportunities for the least advantaged students.

- Michael Wade is the co-chair of the COE International Access Committee and through this role has updated the region of global opportunities for TRiO students.

III. Regional Activities Related to the Council Board Initiatives:

- A priority this year is to continue to generate a regional fact book to disseminate at Policy Seminar. Last year this was accomplished with 66% of TRiO projects providing APR data for the report.
- ASPIRE attained 177% of Fair Share for the year.
- Ryan Ross, ASPIRE President, has revised the ASPIRE INC. Strategic Plan.

States at a Glance

State News:

Colorado

- a. **CO** – Several Directors and state leaders contacted Senator Bennett’s office seeking support for SSS programs through a potential new supplement grant. While initial progress was good, Senator Bennett felt it pertinent to focus on general TRIO funding this year. Great foundation work was done and we can be confident TRIO is on Senator Bennett’s radar for potential work and support in the future. On the heels of this effort, Program Directors have been encouraged to share program evaluations and assessment findings with their state and federal leaders.
- b. **CO** – Race to the Top update: On November 13, the state office will hold the last of the Race to the Top planning meetings. This meeting will bring each of the four work groups together to summarize the efforts and plans so far. Representatives from CCA will be in attendance. A conference call for CCA State Initiative team is set for November 18th to wrap up Race to the Top and discuss the next steps.
- c. **CO** – Planning is underway for CCA’s two major professional development events, the Annual State Meeting,

and the Post-Secondary and Adult Education Conference. The State Meeting is tentatively set for February 19th or 26th. The PSAE Conference is tentatively set for May 17th.

North Dakota

- ND ASPIRE continues to develop our state website, www.ndaspire.org as a result of the COE State Initiative Grant
- Elaine Metcalfe, Cheryl Kingsbury, and Mary Fredricks met with the ND Governor and Lieutenant Governor to discuss college access programs in the state
- ND ASPIRE met our COE “10 for 10” campaign goal
- ND ASPIRE President attended the advisory board/steering committee meeting for North Dakota College Access Network
- ND State Initiative Committee completed the updated state fact book, which will be available online
- ND ASPIRE members attended the regional ASPIRE meeting in Rapid City, SD
- Mary Fredricks, State Initiative Chair, continues to spearhead legislative efforts in the state of North Dakota

South Dakota:

- Successfully hosted the last regional meeting in Spearfish, SD

Utah:

- Annual state meeting in Springdale, UT (Zion National Park), March 11-13, 2009. Hosted by Southern Utah University and included a service project for the Best Friends Animal Shelter in Kanab, UT.
- TRIO Day luncheon held at Salt Lake Community College was attended by staff, students, and aides from local congressional offices.
- Inaugural SSS Student Leadership Conference was held by Weber State University. WSU SSS Student Advisory Board organized and hosted the conference. Conference included a service project to assist Somali Bantu (and other) refugees who have relocated to Salt Lake City

Wyoming:

Wyoming ASPIRE is proud to announce they have met the 10 for 10 in 2010 COE campaign and look forward to sending members to Policy Seminar in March, 2010.

Wyoming ASPIRE members are working on the distribution of the Wyoming ASPIRE comprehensive brochures that were created with help from the COE grant for state initiatives last year.

February 25, 2010 – Educational Access Day

Regional Chairperson for National TRIO Day is University of Wyoming McNair Assoc. Director Susan Stoddard. The chairperson/coordinator for TRIO Day in Wyoming is Rachel Martinez from Laramie County Community College. She is preparing for Educational Access Day in Cheyenne. On February 25, TRIO students, staff and alumni from around Wyoming will visit the Capital and Governor Freudenthal's office in Cheyenne to help educate politicians and promote TRIO programs.

April 22 – 23, 2010 – Wyoming ASPIRE Spring Conference

The Wyoming ASPIRE Spring Conference will be held in Casper, Wyoming on April 22nd and 23rd, 2010. Wyoming ASPIRE President Lori Brown-Wirth (UB/MSIP – University of Wyoming) and Regional ASPIRE Government Relations Chairperson Rachel Martinez (Sage TRIO – Laramie County Community College) are working together on the agenda for this important state ASPIRE event.

October 10 – 13, 2010 – Regional ASPIRE Fall Conference

The Wyoming ASPIRE members are actively preparing for the Regional ASPIRE Conference which will be held in Cheyenne, Wyoming in October 2010. Co-chairs and University of Wyoming employees Brandi Roesener (UB/MSIP) and Ginny Ruckman (EOC) are working on making this an excellent conference.