The month of May brought the 2018 ASWB Education Conference: Developing Tools for Social Work Mobility. Those attending the conference had the opportunity to experience Halifax, Nova Scotia, during the spring season. Beyond the natural beauty of the Nova Scotia province, nature shared with us the beauty of green grass, blooming dogwood trees, tulips, and azaleas to name a few.

In addition to admiring the beauty of the country, I need to thank the Nova Scotians for hosting the conference. I must also thank all Canadian members of ASWB for their warm welcomes, generosity, and fellowship. Once more, their alliance and commitment to ASWB has been shown in action—not just in word.

When I think of spring moving into summer at ASWB, I’m reminded of the adage “Don’t let grass grow under your feet.” The six members of the 2017–2018 Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee, the ASWB Board liaison to the REAL Committee, ASWB’s education and training senior manager, and ASWB’s director of volunteer engagement and outreach and the meetings manager definitely didn’t let grass grow under their feet as they planned the conference and developed the Mobility tools, which were shared with attendees during each conference session.

In addition to engaging in the sessions on Mobility implementation, conference attendees provided valuable input into the ASWB strategic planning process by participating in focus group discussions. This process allowed member board members and member board staff to have a voice in shaping the 2019–2021 ASWB strategic plan. Five questions were posed to focus group participants. I’m sharing condensed versions of the questions here:

Q1: What are the issues and trends that are most likely to impact social work boards, social workers, and regulation within the next two to five years?

Q2: Where should ASWB focus time and other resources in the next three to five years to best meet the needs of our members?

Q3: Where should ASWB focus time and other resources in the next three to five years to best meet the needs of the social work regulatory community?
Q4: What ASWB programs, services, and products could be developed, expanded, and/or improved to meet membership needs?

Q5: What are the biggest challenges ASWB faces as an association in making a difference for social work boards?

I observed full, rich, generative, as well as poignant discussions during the focus group sessions. Conference attendees were encouraged to continue contemplating the questions posed during the groups and to share additional thoughts and ideas throughout the conference. Information collected is continuing to be analyzed and will be incorporated into the ASWB 2019–2021 strategic plan. If you wish to contribute, please send your ideas to info@aswb.org, subject: strategic focus groups.

The focus groups planted seeds that sprouted and continue to grow as summer arrives. ASWB is moving forward with six strategic planning workgroups comprising Board members and staff. Their generative discussions will enrich the strategic planning “soil” where the seeds are growing as we prepare to harvest the fruitful ideas from these planning activities in late summer to early fall.
Your Board in action

A summary of the work of ASWB’s Board of Directors at its May 17, 2018, meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia

The ASWB Board of Directors met in person on Thursday, May 17, 2018, at the Marriott Harbourfront Hotel in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Director at Large Joyce Bell of Maryland was unable to attend; Director at Large Patricia O’Reilly of West Virginia joined via Zoom technology. Here is a recap of the activities of the Board at that meeting.

Treasurer’s report: Board members reviewed and accepted financial statements through December 31, 2017, and March 31, 2018, and statements from ASWB’s investment accounts for the same periods. The Board reviewed and approved the draft audit for the year ending December 31, 2017. The general reserve funds were also reviewed.

The Board received a progress report on the new headquarters project as part of the treasurer’s report. Members approved an updated construction budget that reflects changes in costs from the time the budget was first established in 2015. A motion to allow executive staff discretion to determine if excess cash flow should go to building fund, reserves, or both during 2018 was approved (votes: 8 yes, 1 no). The Board also was presented with talking points about the new headquarters developed by the Communications and Marketing department.

The Board received the report of the Finance Committee. The committee discussed exam fees and ways to manage potential increases so that adjustments would be planned and incremental. The committee believes that providing regular reports about the status of exam fees to delegates at the annual meeting reflects respect for the voice of the delegates in the process. The committee requested that staff develop a policy for reporting about exam fees every one to two years at the Annual Meeting of the Delegate Assembly. The report would include a recommendation with rationale for either increasing or making no change to the fees.

Strategic discussions

Mobility implementation update. The Board previewed Mobility implementation talking points that would be distributed to membership during the 2018 Education Conference.

Strategic planning. The Board reviewed the strategic planning process, including timelines for data collection and workgroup assignments.

Membership Task Force report. The Board received the
Membership Task Force report, which included recommendations related to membership categories and a summary of generative discussions that provided content for Board consideration related to development of a French language version of the exam and a separate validated Associate exam for certifying social service workers, which the Board will discuss in detail at its August meeting.

The task force recommended no changes to membership structure at this time, recognizing that Board decisions reached in August could have implications for membership categories and membership requirements. The Board accepted the task force’s recommendation to have staff attending the June meeting of the Canadian Council of Social Work Registrars discuss the issues related to development of a French language version of the ASWB exams at that meeting to explore possible options for the Board to consider in August.

Exam services update. The Board reviewed a strategy paper from staff about the implications of translating the licensing exams into French, which Board members had first received in 2017 and were renewing their familiarity with in preparation for the August meeting.

Nominating Process Subcommittee report. The Board received the report of the subcommittee appointed to explore several aspects of the ASWB nomination process. The Board approved a recommendation to propose a bylaws amendment to remove the option for the Board president to appoint a Board member to the Nominating Committee (vote: 5 yes, 3 no, 1 abstain). The Board also approved a recommendation for the president to appoint a task force to review the overall nominations process.

Ongoing Board business
Approval of minutes. The Board approved the minutes of the January 28, 2018, Board meeting in Coronado, California.

Confirmation of decisions made in email meetings. The Board confirmed the decisions made in email meetings conducted on February 5 and 19, March 23 and 28, and April 9, 2018.

Role of Board members as ambassadors: The president’s leadership letter addressed service as ambassadors internally and externally. Board members discussed expectations and opportunities for them to serve as representatives of ASWB at outside events, such as conferences of NASW or CSWE.

Committee/Task Force/Meetings reports: The Board received reports from staff about exhibiting and presenting at the annual conference of Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) and participating as a sponsor in Social Work Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C. The Board also received a report about attendance at the 50th anniversary conference of the National Association of Black Social Workers, where Board members gave a workshop and presented a proclamation from ASWB honoring NABSW on celebrating 50 years.

Board meeting evaluation: Board members were advised that the president would send the meeting evaluation survey to them after the Board meeting adjourned.
Paying the piper

Treasurer MEL HARRINGTON of South Dakota “paid the piper” at the Welcome Reception during the 2018 Education Conference. Bagpiper Grant Hill of Ontario is a student working summers at the Citadel, the fortress that guarded the city of Halifax. He wears the Mackenzie tartan, representative of one of the fortress’s regiments.

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Halifax hills no contest for these runners

JENNIFER FULCHER of Mississippi and MICHELLE NOWLAN of New Brunswick stayed in Halifax following the Education Conference to run in the Blue Nose Half Marathon.

It was Nowlan’s third time participating in this event and her 15th half marathon. This one might have been the most challenging, though—and not just because of Halifax’s hills. Nowlan had undergone back surgery a year ago. “I had made it my goal to be able to run a half marathon this year,” she said, “so mission accomplished.”

Fulcher loves to run and says, “Any time I take a trip, I check to see if there is a race happening.” She was happy that the pouring rain that greeted runners the morning of the race ended just as she lined up at the starting line. “It was a great course,” Fulcher said, “and running is a great way to see the city.

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A primer on licensure

“Get Licensed, Live Licensed — Next Steps for New Social Work Graduates by CEO MARY JO MONAHAN was published in the May/June issue of Social Work Today magazine, just in time to capture the interest of recent graduates. The article makes the case for licensure as the best way to protect the public and reviews the steps to getting licensed and living licensed.

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Another feather in her cap

SAUNDRA STARKS of Kentucky was elected chair-elect of the Council on Social Work Education Board of Directors and will start her one-year term July 1. She will begin her three-year term as chair next year. In addition to serving on the CSWE Board of Directors, she also served on the boards of ASWB and the National Association of Social Workers.

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Send all news and pictures to Jayne Wood, newsletter editor, at jwood@aswb.org or call Jayne at 800.225.6880, ext. 3075.
Who’ll stop the rain

New building update: Construction has been delayed/stopped/slowed by all the rain this spring. The rain keeps the soil moist, resulting in limited compaction. And we need compaction, said DWIGHT HYMANS, to build the pad for the building and parking lot. In spite of the rain, there has been progress over the last month. The sewer line has been installed, and the roadbed has been put in place.

Exam Committee reunion

VICKI COY (NB), RUTH WEINZETTLE (LA), and DEBBY JONES (BC) got to know one another several years ago as members of the ASWB Examination Committee and form reviewers. All are now serving as regulators in their home jurisdictions and were reunited at the 2018 Education Conference in Halifax.

REAL-ly well done!

REAL Committee members received service awards from ASWB President Tim Brown for their planning of the 2018 Education Conference. From left, committee members are: VICKI GARDINE WILLIAMS (TN), BARB WHITENECT (NB), CAROLYN SZAFRAN (KS), ENDSLEY REAL (GA), KENYA ANDERSON (TN), chair KATE ZACHER-PATE (MN).

Getting the treatment

Former ASWB president DORINDA NOBLE gets “The Johnson Treatment” at an exhibit at the LBJ Presidential Library in Austin, Texas. DORINDA used this photo to illustrate her presentation at the 2018 Education Conference, which drew on the late president’s well-known powers of persuasion.

A REAL rest!

After helping the REAL Committee put on a successful Education Conference, ASWB staff member JAN FITTS took a few days for R&R on Deer Island and Fredericton, New Brunswick, with friends. There she met George, the greeter at the local coffee shop where he stays with his owner, the barista.

View from above the new home of ASWB
Harold Dean honored by Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

HAROLD DEAN of Arkansas was recently named a 2018 Legacy Leadership Award honoree by the Arkansas Division of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The annual award recognizes individuals who have a vision for a world without blood cancers and honors their ongoing passion and dedication for the people of Arkansas.

Harold is clinical social work program manager for the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Myeloma Institute. The role is both administrative and clinical. His four-member team meets with an average of 10 new myeloma patients a week, provides social work coverage to both the outpatient clinic and the 30-bed inpatient unit, helps patients who need assistance dealing with financial difficulties and emotional issues, and offers support to caregivers. Harold explained: “For some people, cancer is a chronic disease. The patient is always seeing the doctor. Many get stem cell transplants and may be on maintenance medication. Social workers help them deal with lifestyle changes and help them come to terms with role changes in their families.”

Harold has found innovative ways to expand services for patients since becoming program manager three years ago. They now offer patients therapeutic social activities and an educational series. Harold believes these opportunities serve two purposes—helping patients and raising the profile of social work within the institution, where other staff members “see the department reaching out and making a difference,” he said.

Harold also has found creative ways to raise money for the department’s Patient Support Fund, which helps pay for treatment-related expenses such as transportation, lodging, meals, and in some cases, medications. Last year, the $1000 raised through two bake sales paid for 100 nights of lodging for myeloma patients at the local cancer lodging facility.

For the last three years Harold has organized and run the annual National Cancer Survivors Day in central Arkansas, bringing together several organizations in the area for a joint celebration. Because of the collaboration, he noted, funding was used more effectively and a larger gathering took place because everyone was attending one event.

The director and deputy director for the institute congratulated Harold, writing: “You are such a delight to have working on our team. Through your tireless dedication, you assist our patients in so many ways, from basic needs such as securing an affordable place to stay while in Little Rock for treatment to crucial emotional support and counseling. You inspire us. Thank you for going above and beyond every single day for our patients.”

Harold has worked in the field of oncology social work for more than 26 years and holds an oncology social work certification through the Board of Oncology Social Work Certification. He has been a field instructor for 28 years and a field liaison for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Social Work for 18 years. In 2010, he started the Little Rock Blood Cancer Support Group. He serves as co-facilitator of this group of 28 participants, which meets monthly. The group is thriving, Harold notes with great satisfaction.

“What I like about the work,” he said, “is that it’s a nice blend of helping with both the practical aspects and the emotional components of life. When working with cancer patients, it’s important to keep in mind that you’re always dealing with the impact of the disease and sometimes this can be coupled with mental health issues, substance abuse, or other psychosocial stressors. This is why I stayed in the field—it’s challenging and rewarding.”

Harold is serving his second year as director at large with ASWB. He was appointed to the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board in 2013 and served as its chair from 2014 through 2017.

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More ready than not for Mobility implementation

What’s in your tool kit?

The port city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, with its active harbourfront welcoming cruise ships, ferries, sailboats, and supply ships, provided a fitting backdrop for a conference on “mobility”—even though the mobility under discussion was “social work practice mobility.”

ASWB’s 2018 Education Conference drew more than 100 regulators, all ready to learn about taking the next steps in implementing social work practice mobility. The sessions were interactive and intended to provide a tool kit of resources and knowledge that participants could take back to their jurisdictions and put to work. Conference proceedings are in development, but following are summaries of the sessions with links to session PowerPoints. For more detail, visit mobilitytools.org.

Mobility Tool Kit Step 1: Identify the problem: The urgency for Mobility strategies

- Identify the overarching impact of Mobility in individual jurisdictions as it affects social work professionals.
- Explain how to adapt successful strategies that have changed the world for use in their jurisdiction.

Summary: Using Lyndon B. Johnson as the model of a persuasive communicator, speaker Dorinda Noble, a former ASWB president and co-chair of the Mobility Task Force, looked at various negotiating strategies Johnson employed. She discussed how social work regulators and collaborators can adapt these strategies to the Mobility efforts in their jurisdictions.

Mobility Tool Kit Step 2: Adapt knowledge to local context: Legal lessons learned

- Identify areas in a mutual recognition agreement where precise wording is necessary.
- Differentiate between jurisdictional structures and how variation in structure affects mutual recognition models.
- Differentiate between binding legal interpretations, reconciliation of occupational standards, and dispute/complaint resolution.
- Identify what case law about board authority, statutory interpretation, or application of mutual recognition principles is relevant in their jurisdiction.
**Summary:** Attorneys Tiffany Thorne and Dale Atkinson led this session. Thorne presented on labour mobility in Canada following enactment of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)/Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA). Atkinson presented on legal lessons learned that impact Mobility strategies in the United States.

**Step 2 presentations:**
- Tiffany Thorne
- Dale Atkinson

**Mobility Tool Kit Step 3: Analyze stakeholders**
- Develop marketing personas for messaging about social work practice mobility.
- Identify marketing and communication channels to reach audiences.
- Write messages targeted at the marketing personas developed during the session.

**Summary:** Speakers Patty Dold of NASW Assurance Services Inc. and Bobbie Hartman (ASWB) shared marketing tools for identifying and analyzing the key stakeholders for Mobility messages. They helped attendees practice writing messages and identified marketing channels that would be effective for Mobility messages.

**Step 3 presentation**

**Mobility Tool Kit Step 4: Assess resources**
- Identify similar licensure requirements across license categories in other jurisdictions.
- Determine the difference between a licensure requirement and an arbitrary barrier to licensure.

**Summary:** ASWB staff members led this interactive session that explored strategic messaging and communication plan elements, and organization of a jurisdictional Mobility Readiness Team. Jennifer Henkel led participants through ASWB resources using a game modeled on Jeopardy!® Jayne Wood discussed communications tools and strategies for developing the “elevator pitch” as well as the larger jurisdictional communication plan and provided Mobility talking points (http://members.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Social-Work-Practice-Mobility-Implementation-alternate-layout.pdf). CEO Mary Jo Monahan discussed how to conduct a “premortem” as a way to ensure success and shared strategies for organizing a jurisdictional Mobility Readiness Team of partners to implement Mobility within and between jurisdictions.

**Step 4 presentation**

**Mobility Tool Kit Step 5 – Session A: Assess facilitators and barriers to interjurisdictional practice: Practice across professions and borders**
- Identify similar licensure requirements across license categories in other jurisdictions.
- Explain the importance of trusting the due diligence of other jurisdictions.
- Identify three or more shared reasons for why interjurisdictional agreements matter and to whom they matter.
- Describe three or more strategies helpful for making progress toward agreements.

**Summary:** Speaker Kim Madsen, executive director of the California Board of Behavioral Sciences, discussed the challenges and benefits of a composite board and California’s proposal to improve license portability. She shared ways to initiate conversations with stakeholders to develop a framework that improves license portability but does not compromise consumer protection or practice standards. Lynn Labrecque King, executive director and registrar of the Alberta College of Social Workers, discussed challenges encountered by the Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators to respond to the CFTA as the organization works toward national collaboration. She shared what were key ingredients toward agreements for facilitating interjurisdictional practice, including illustrations of activities that served to build bridges.

**Step 5A presentations:**
- Kim Madsen
- Lynn Labrecque King
Mobility Tool Kit Step 5 – Session B: Assess facilitators and barriers to interjurisdictional practice: Practice across borders using technology

- Explain the principal variations of licensure requirements related to telehealth.
- Identify considerations that policymakers may contemplate as they develop and administer regulations related to telehealth practice.
- Explore possible solutions to the current regulatory challenges that regulatory bodies face with technology-assisted practice.
- Describe the ethical risks for social workers when working with patients/clients in a virtual environment.

Summary: Speaker Sherrie Williams of Global Partnership for Telehealth described how telemedicine/ electronic practice is changing the landscape of health and mental health care and how telehealth/ electronic practice may be used in real world clinical situations. Dwight Hymans (ASWB) led an interactive discussion about how technology affects policy regulators, referring participants to the ASWB Model Regulatory Standards for Technology in Social Work Practice as a resource for developing language for regulating practice across jurisdictional lines via telehealth/electronic practice.

Step 5B presentations:
Sherrie Williams
Dwight Hymans

Mobility Tool Kit Step 6: Select, tailor, implement, and evaluate strategies

- Evaluate the challenges for Mobility in their home jurisdiction.
- Use knowledge from the conference to create a plan that addresses their jurisdiction’s challenges with interjurisdictional licensure.
- Identify a motto with a visual cue representing an attitude or action to make social work practice mobility and license portability happen.

Summary: Carolyn Szafran and Vicki Gardine Williams, members of the Regulatory Education and Leadership (REAL) Committee, facilitated a group activity where participants shared with each other and with ASWB how they will use the tools they collected throughout the conference to begin to create a jurisdictional Mobility implementation plan. Harold Dean, ASWB director at large and REAL Committee Board liaison, led a visualization activity using cards with a variety of photographic images to help participants identify attitudes, actions, or mottoes that would help them make social work mobility happen in their jurisdictions.

Step 6 presentation

Mobility Tool Kit Step 7: Sustain knowledge use: Story time

- Name the four qualities demonstrated by an effective storyteller.
- Identify four storytelling techniques to use during their next speech.
- Articulate what works and what does not work when communicating regulatory stories.

Summary: Led by Harold Dean and CEO Mary Jo Monahan, this session gave participants strategies for developing engaging stories to connect with stakeholders to bring about change. Speakers shared an acronym (HAIL) as a tool that participants could use to ensure that their stories meet the “four cornerstones” of effective speaking: Honesty, Authenticity, Integrity, Love (wishing people well). The speakers then modeled these techniques by sharing examples of persuasive and inspirational stories.

Step 7 presentation
Training energizes board chairs and administrators

“IT was a rich experience filled with robust discussions,” said CEO Mary Jo Monahan, reflecting on ASWB’s inaugural Executive Leadership Training, held May 31–June 2, 2018, in Arlington, Virginia. The training brought together pairs of regulatory board chairs and board administrators from ten jurisdictions for a weekend of training geared toward partnership-building, an exploration of roles, and leadership skill-building that is anticipated to result in success for the boards they lead.

Monahan first floated the idea for the training after attendees at a Board Member Exchange session requested such a learning opportunity. As she and Jennifer Henkel, ASWB’s director of member services, gathered ideas, they began with the successful and effective format ASWB has used for New Board Member Training. They invited Dale Atkinson, ASWB legal counsel, and NBMT facilitator Richard Silver of Québec to join them in bringing expertise and teaching experience. All four engaged in a detailed planning process for this new offering during the March NBMT session in Little Rock, Arkansas.

The agenda for the weekend included topics both personal and

![Image of people engaged in discussion during training session]

Billy Dilworth, executive director, and Spencer Blalock, board chair, of the Mississippi Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage & Family Therapists collaborate during a session.
practical. Participants learned how key components of a successful partnership—clarity of roles and responsibilities and trust in each other—can lead to positive results. On Friday, they compared the structures and practices of their boards, discussed best practices for leading effective meetings, and learned techniques for facilitating decision-making. Saturday’s topics included using oversight, orientation, and evaluation to ensure board performance; achieving effective communication; and creating leadership agreements.

Henkel notes that a key goal was to make sure participants had ample opportunity to share with one another. “Our participants are leaders and teachers themselves,” she said, “and they had as much to offer the group as we did.” The agenda balanced the available time to include whole group work, peer breakout sessions, table discussions, and partner planning.

Participants noted that a valuable part of the training was the partnership-building infused throughout the weekend. “Within each topic, we had a chance to talk to each other about how it applies to us and how we can change,” said Stan Weinstein, executive director of the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners. He and board chair Sherryl Silberman, who was appointed so recently that she hadn’t yet chaired her first meeting, spent the weekend thinking ahead about opportunities for improvement. “We are sitting here planning,” Weinstein said. “There have been many points raised here that we wouldn’t have thought of.”

Improvement was also on the mind of Lisa Bolhouse, chair of the Florida Board of Clinical Social Work, Marriage & Family Therapy, and Mental Health Counseling. She asked her executive director, Jennifer Wenhold, to participate “to keep on improving ourselves, our board, and what we can offer the state of Florida in serving the public.”

Over the course of the weekend, Henkel and Monahan said they experienced a dawning awareness that the pairs could go deeper than the trainers had expected in speaking about experiences and strategies for overcoming obstacles in their work as regulators. “A highlight of the weekend was the sharing of conflict stories,” Henkel said of a session in which Monahan invited participants to tell stories of challenges their boards had faced and how they worked together to resolve them.

The weekend offered a chance for the pairs to learn from participants from other jurisdictions and to build their own partnerships. “We realized that one of the most important things we could offer participants is time and space to build themselves into a leadership team,” Henkel said. “Most of the time, they are so busy doing the work of their boards that they don’t get the chance to spend one-on-one time together.”

Leigh Hudson, chair of the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board, who attended with Ruthie Bain, left the training energized to be a better regulator. “This training has helped me bond to the board’s administrator,” she said. “We were halfway there, but this pushed us all the way there.”

Angie Hirsch, the new chair of the Minnesota Board of Social Work, also appreciated the opportunity for bonding—she and executive director Kate Zacher-Pate managed some sightseeing before the training began. But more than that, Angie said, “I already have eight items that are actionable when I return.”

Zacher-Pate added, “We are hoping for takeaways that are bigger than relationship-building. We want to help institutionalize new ideas to build a foundation for the next team.” She went on to express appreciation to ASWB “for putting together such a relevant member service.”
Karine Levesque of New Brunswick stepped into the role of chair of the Nominating Committee after serving her first year “learning the process and the qualifications needed for the elected positions.” With prior experience as chair of the New Brunswick board six years ago, she says that she felt comfortable becoming committee chair. Last year was a transition year for the committee, stemming from the changes to the bylaws in 2015 that added two members to the Nominating Committee. They were elected in 2016 and began their terms in 2017.

Because of staggered terms, Claude Leblond of Québec was elected to serve a one-year term. This year is the first year following the bylaws amendment in which all members of the committee are serving full two-year terms. Levesque, Jennifer Fulcher of Mississippi, and Greg Winkler of Wisconsin will complete their service on the committee this year.

Levesque is happy with the way committee members have played to their strengths. At the welcome dinner during the 2018 Education Conference, Carla Moore of Louisiana and Ann-Marie Buchanan of Tennessee, the two new members of the committee, circulated among the tables talking to members, answering questions and encouraging people to submit recommendations. “I was glad to see how comfortable they were to reach out and engage people,” Levesque said. Moore and Buchanan also “are two people who are perfect examples of trying again,” said Levesque, making the point that they were slated more than once before they were elected.

Winkler could be found at the exhibit booth during breaks, ready to talk to members about the nominating process and the positions that will be elected. As Winkler, Fulcher, and Levesque end their terms, their positions will be open on the Nominating Committee. Six positions are up for election on the Board of Directors: president-elect/
office of the president, the only four-year term; and two-year terms for secretary and four directors at large (public member, two licensed social worker positions, and the open position, which may be filled by a member board administrator, a public member, or a licensed social worker).

By the last day of the conference, Levesque says, the hard work had paid off: “People are finding it easier to come to us.” She also believes that the online form, updated this year, has made it easier for people to submit a recommendation. “I’m very happy to see that people didn’t hesitate to say ‘yes’ [when asked to make a recommendation],” Levesque said. “ASWB is an association that people want to contribute to.”

Nominating Committee member Ann-Marie Buchanan (TN) made the rounds, talking to members about submitting recommendations for elected leadership positions.
Heading in the same direction

Two ASWB departments collaborate to make the most of member involvement

Stay in your lane.

The Internet is full of memes about it: You can buy T-shirts with the reminder; there are Pinterest and Instagram images telling you there’s no traffic in your lane; and Kermit the Frog helpfully points out that it costs “$0 to stay in your lane and mind your own business.” No doubt it’s good advice—as long as staying in your lane doesn’t preclude collaboration.

For ASWB Director of Member Services Jennifer Henkel and Volunteer Engagement and Outreach Senior Manager Melissa Ryder, collaboration is key. “We have our distinct lanes,” Henkel says, “but we have to work together to make sure things are integrated.”

Henkel’s lane focuses on direct services to member boards—from specialized training for social work regulators, to contract services offered by ASWB, to visits to ASWB member boards. Ryder’s lane focuses on individuals’ involvement with ASWB—service on committees, elected leadership, and the annual awards. The recent Executive Leadership Training is a good example of how the two departments work together.

Like many ASWB member services, Executive Leadership Training began as an idea from an ASWB member. “There’s almost a flowchart for developing new...
training,” says Henkel. ASWB services “are very member driven.” A request from a member goes to ASWB executive leadership and member services staff to map out objectives and content, then to the association’s Volunteer Engagement and Outreach department to add to ASWB’s calendar. Any training ASWB offers requires a lot of logistical support, including selecting a location, negotiating a contract with the venue, recruiting participants, and arranging travel and meals. That’s where ASWB’s Volunteer Engagement and Outreach team is most visible, but there’s a lot more collaboration between Ryder and Henkel behind the scenes.

New Board Member Training—one of ASWB’s most popular member services—is often a regulator’s first encounter with ASWB. While Ryder and her meeting management staff handle the logistics, Henkel is in front of the group delivering the training. Throughout New Board Member Training, participants are encouraged to get more involved with ASWB. They can invite ASWB staff to visit with their regulatory board, register to attend one of the association’s two major meetings, or submit an online form to volunteer for ASWB’s committees. Henkel handles board visits while Ryder manages the major meetings and coordinates the committee interest forms. That way, the president of ASWB’s Board of Directors has an organized pool of volunteers from which to appoint committee members.

“We’re really fostering involvement,” says Ryder. “There’s a lot more conversation [among members] about volunteering or running for elected positions.” That interest is translating into a steady increase in the number of recommendations to the Nominating Committee for elected positions and in the number of regulators who step forward to volunteer for appointment to other ASWB committees.

Behind the scenes, software is also playing a role in nurturing engagement. Last year ASWB created an online platform for member engagement—engage.aswb.org—that allows individuals to register for meetings and update their contact information. The new system gives social work regulators a clearer entry point for reaching out to ASWB. The same software lets Ryder track an individual’s involvement in ASWB over time—from attending meetings to serving on committees. “The software has helped us integrate information” on individuals and the association’s member boards, says Ryder, and better information makes ASWB more responsive to member needs.

Ryder, who was appointed to head ASWB’s volunteer engagement efforts in 2016, sees her collaboration with the Member Services department as central to her work. “More ideas are brewing,” she says, for further engaging individual volunteers and serving member boards.

“Given how Melissa and I work together,” says Henkel, “it doesn’t matter which of us someone approaches” with a question or an idea. “We’ll support them in getting where they need to go.”

Updates coming

In the coming weeks, look for changes to members.aswb.org that reflect a new emphasis on helping social work regulators find the information they need. ASWB’s web content team conducted research with ASWB members and collaborated with the Member Services and Volunteer Engagement and Outreach departments to reorganize member-focused content.