



2026 Spring e-Conference

Speaker Bios

Rayane AbuSabha



Rayane AbuSabha is the Executive Director of the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). She is also Professor Emerita at The Sage Colleges in Troy, New York where she served as the Department Chair of Nutrition Science and directed several nutrition and dietetics programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Before coming to The Sage Colleges, Rayane was the Executive Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Board and the Breast Cancer Research Board at the New York State Department of Health. She has over thirty years of research experience and is well published in nutrition education.

Collina Cooke



Collina D. Cooke, PhD, LCSW-C, serves as Executive Director of Accreditation at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), where she leads national accreditation efforts to uphold rigorous standards and advance access, representation, and student success in social work education. In this role, she manages the implementation of CSWE Board of Accreditation (BOA) policies and procedures, ensuring quality and integrity across accredited programs.

Dr. Cooke previously served as Director of CSWE's Minority Fellowship Program, where she strengthened mentorship, leadership development, and advocacy for emerging professionals addressing mental health and substance use in underserved communities. With more than a decade of clinical practice experience, she draws on her foundation as a licensed clinical social worker to inform her leadership, scholarship, and service.

Megan Fujita



Megan Fujita, Ph.D., MSW, is the Vice President of Education at the Council on Social Work Education, the national body for social work education in the United States. Dr. Fujita leads strategic development of educational programming, research, grants, and initiatives. She is an expert in higher education policy, social work education, and program evaluation. She holds a PhD in education policy and research methodology from George Mason University and a Master's of Social Work in interpersonal practice and mental health from the University of Michigan. She has held administrative and faculty appointments at George Washington University School of Nursing and George Mason University's College of Education and Human Development.

Laura Gambino



Dr. Laura M. Gambino is a Vice President for the New England Commission of Higher Education, where her work focuses on helping institutions and the Commission use data and conduct assessment for institutional learning and improvement. Prior to joining NECHE in 2018, Gambino was Associate Dean for Assessment and Technology and Professor of Information Technology at Guttman Community College (CUNY) and a Visiting Scholar at the Community College Research Center (CCRC), Teacher's College, Columbia University. Laura also worked for 13 years at Connecticut's Tunxis Community College as a Professor/ePortfolio Coordinator. From 2011 to 2014 Dr. Gambino was the Research Coordinator for the FIPSE-funded Connect to Learning project at LaGuardia Community College (CUNY). Gambino, a leading ePortfolio and assessment practitioner and researcher, served as a Coach for the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

Jennifer Goodman Horowitz



Jennifer Goodman Horowitz is a strategic communications advisor to boards and executive leadership teams navigating high stakes change. As President of Horowitz Marketing Communications (HMC), she partners with mission-driven organizations—particularly in accreditation, education, and professional services—to clarify value, align governance messaging, and strengthen stakeholder trust in complex environments.

Among her current engagements, Ms. Horowitz advises the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) on communications strategy, brand alignment, and stakeholder positioning during a period of organizational evolution.

Prior to founding HMC, she led marketing and communications for CGI Federal, a \$1.4B subsidiary of CGI, where she rebuilt the function and repositioned the brand at scale. Earlier in her career, Ms. Horowitz held leadership roles at global PR firms, advising Fortune 500 companies and international associations. www.horowitzmc.com

Tom Harnisch



Tom Harnisch joined SHEEO in 2020 as Vice President for Government Relations. Dr. Harnisch leads the planning, implementation, and coordination of SHEEO's portfolio of federal relations, policy, communication, and advocacy work. He monitors new and potential federal action that have relevance for membership and articulates their impact. Prior to joining SHEEO, he worked at AASCU since 2007 in roles including Director of State Relations and Policy Analysis. His research has been cited in major outlets including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Politico, Inside Higher Ed, and The Chronicle of Higher Education. He is also adjunct faculty at Georgetown University and The George Washington University. Dr. Harnisch earned degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Minnesota, and The George Washington University.

Jesmarie Johnson



Jesmarie Johnson is the Executive Director of the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB), a 501(c)(3) organization that accredits bachelor's and master's programs in urban planning across North America. She joined PAB in 2010 as Associate Director and became Executive Director in 2018. In her role, she partners with an eight-member board, oversees a pool of roughly 150 Site Visitors, and advances the board's strategic priorities while ensuring a consistent, transparent accreditation process. Before PAB, she served the City of Schenectady (New York) as Economic Development Coordinator and Planner. She is an active member of the Association Forum and the American Society of Association Executives and earned the Certified Association Executive credential in 2020. She holds an MS in City and Regional Planning from Pratt Institute.

Angela Kennedy



Dr. Angela Kennedy is Chief Executive Officer of the Commission on Health Informatics and Information Management Education. Dr. Kennedy is a strong advocate for "Health Information Where & When You Need It." She is recognized nationally and internationally for her work in consumer health advocacy and health literacy. In 2015, she testified before the US Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee and was appointed by the US Secretary of Health and Human

Services to the Office of the National Coordinator's (ONC) Health Information Standards Federal Advisory Committee and ONC Consumer Task Force. Dr. Kennedy served as a director on the North Louisiana Go Care Board of Directors and North Louisiana Bayou Health Board of Directors. She is also a former member of the Board of Directors of Claiborne Memorial Medical Center.

Sharon Luke



Sharon Luke, EdD, PA-C, is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). She brings more than 30 years of experience in the PA profession, including clinical practice, education, and accreditation leadership. She served as an ARC-PA Commissioner from 2010 to 2015 and later joined staff as Assistant Director, becoming Executive Director in 2016 and President/CEO in 2024. She has extensive experience as a PA program director and educator and works to advance high-quality PA education and patient care.

Jonathan Lurie



Jonathan Lurie, Vice President, Client Support and Innovation at Smithbucklin, leads strategic planning engagements that help associations define direction, align leadership, and execute focused, adaptable strategies. He partners with boards and staff to facilitate planning processes, strengthen governance, and apply proven association practices grounded in research and real-world insight. Jonathan also leads the Association Excellence Program (AXPSM), guiding executive directors and volunteer leaders through ongoing conversations about prioritization, performance, and organizational effectiveness. Since joining Smithbucklin in 1999, he has served as an executive director for multiple client organizations and previously led new client development. An active

member of the American Society of Association Executives, he contributes to ForesightWorks research. Jonathan holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Shirdell Mattox



Shirdell Mattox is a maternal health equity leader working to transform the systems that shape pregnancy and birth outcomes in the United States. Her work focuses on expanding access to community-based maternity care, strengthening the midwifery workforce, and advancing solutions that address maternal health disparities, particularly for Black mothers. She holds an International Executive MBA from Brown University and IE Business School.

Sam Morello



Sam Morello DVM, Diplomate ACVS. Dr. Sam Morello earned her DVM from Cornell University and completed a residency in large animal surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. After over a decade as a surgery professor and adjunct at Cornell, she joined the AVMA as Associate Director of Education and Research supporting accreditation of veterinary education. She has published and lectured

extensively and served in numerous leadership roles including ACVS and Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative.

Todd Neuharth



Todd Neuharth currently serves as the Director of Accreditation for the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education. He has served as Department Chair and Program Director overseeing accreditation of athletic training programs and has clinical experience as both an athletic trainer and physician assistant. He holds a DPhil in epidemiology with a concentration in biostatistics along with multiple degrees in health education and biology.

John Przepyszny



John Przepyszny leads the firm's education team. He is a preeminent legal authority on higher education law and a trusted advisor to clients on matters pertaining to accreditation, regulatory compliance, policy and transactions related to higher education. With almost three decades of experience, John counsels institutions, education companies and accrediting agencies. He frequently speaks on education law issues and co-authored a compendium on distance education for the National Association of College and University Attorneys.

Denise Roosendaal



Denise Roosendaal is a thirty-seven-year veteran of association management. She has served as Executive Director for the Institute for Credentialing Excellence for fourteen years, overseeing the accrediting function administered by the NCCA. Her undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree is from the University of Virginia. Her Master of Arts in Public Administration is from Syracuse University. She is a regular speaker for the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) and has collaborated with dozens of boards of directors on the topic of good governance. Denise co-authored the chapter on the topic of credentialing in the ASAE Handbook of Professional Practices in Association Management. She is the 2018 recipient of the Ben Shimberg Public Service Award given annually by the Citizen's Advocacy Center.

Lawrence Schall



Dr. Lawrence Schall is the President of the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). Under his leadership, NECHE has expanded nationally and globally. Previously, he served as President of Oglethorpe University for 15 years, leading significant institutional transformation and fundraising success. He holds degrees from Swarthmore College and the University of Pennsylvania and previously practiced law as a civil rights attorney.

Mark Spence



Mark Spence has worked in specialized and professional accreditation for over twenty years. He currently serves as the Director of Strategic Initiatives for the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

Kristen Varol



Kristen Varol has worked at CEPH since 2010 providing consultation to and staffing accreditation reviews for schools and programs across the US and internationally. She is the primary staff contact for units interested in pursuing initial accreditation and those located outside of the US. Kristen supports internal consistency in accreditation reviews across a staff of nine site visit coordinators. She has presented at professional meetings about accreditation best practices and on CEPH accreditation criteria, particularly in relation to MPH curricula. Kristen received her Master of Public Health degree in health behavior and health promotion from Ohio State University. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from California State University, Long Beach.

Zach Waymer



Zach Waymer, MPA, is the Executive Director and Secretary of the Board of Directors of ASPA, the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors, since April 2025. Previously, he was with the Higher Learning Commission for over 10 years and served as its Government Affairs Officer where he managed all advocacy, communication, and collaboration with federal, state, and local branches of government on legislation, policy, and regulations. Prior to his work in accreditation, Zach worked in the administrations of Ohio Governors Ted Strickland and John Kasich for the Ohio Department of Higher Education where he directed statewide grants to expand cooperative education and internships, implemented programs to align higher education and the workforce, and managed initiatives for disability services, textbooks, veterans, college savings plans, sustainability, efficiencies, and data. Zach started his career in higher education at The Ohio State University in Student Life managing one of the largest college health insurance programs in the country and subsequently worked in Academic Affairs for the University Registrar as a residency and FERPA officer. He is a frequent speaker at national and regional events on higher education advocacy, policy, and regulation.

Zach earned his Master of Public Affairs from the Truman School of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Missouri - Columbia. He also holds certifications in Crisis Leadership in Higher Education from Harvard University, Board Leadership as well as Project Management from Northwestern University, Executive Management from The Ohio State University, and Agile Methods from the Scrum Alliance among others.