



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 the area of nutrition education.



Dr. Nell Ard is the Chief Accreditation Officer with the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Nell has a baccalaureate, master's, and PhD in nursing. She was a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Family for 13 years and in nursing education for 37 years teaching in a variety of nursing programs. Nell has been actively involved in nursing education at the regional, state, and national levels. She has published several books, articles and given presentations extensively. Nell has been a Certified Nurse Educator since 2007 and a Fellow in the Academy of Nurse Educators since 2009. Nell has been active in nursing accreditation since 2004, working full-time with the ACEN since 2012 where one of her primary roles is working with nursing programs pursuing Candidacy and initial accreditation with the agency.



Kevin Connell is Associate Director for Accreditation Review at the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP). Since joining CACREP in 2018, he has helped design and lead self-study workshops, trained staff and peer reviewers, developed new accreditation resources, served as staff liaison to board committees on grievances and policies/procedures, and provided ongoing support to accredited and accreditation-seeking programs. Prior to working in accreditation, Kevin was Senior Director for Research, Standards and Practices at National Geographic, leading a team responsible for accuracy and adherence to editorial standards of programming on the organization's television channels.



Megan Cruz is a practice director at McKinley Advisors with deep experience in association leadership, strategic planning, and organizational transformation. She helps associations clarify priorities, align stakeholders, and develop mission-driven plans that advance long-term impact. Megan also advises and facilitates mergers and affiliation explorations, guiding boards and executive teams through complex, high-stakes decisions with transparency, trust, and rigor. Before joining McKinley, she spent 14 years in association leadership, including serving as Executive Director for four associations and as Senior Vice President at a Washington, DC-based association management company. She began her career at ASAE, building international partnerships, earned her Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential in 2017, and holds a BS in Business Administration from Georgetown University.



Amy Dykens is CEO of Weave Accreditation and host of the *Accreditation Conversations* podcast. A former academic dean and faculty member, Dr. Dykens brings years of hands-on higher education experience to accreditation. She is also the author of the forthcoming book *Accreditation, Simplified*, publishing this Fall with Myers Education Press.



Jonathan Fansmith is Senior Vice President for Government Relations and National Engagement at the American Council on Education (ACE), leading federal advocacy for the nation's colleges and universities on issues such as student aid, regulation, research funding, and tax policy. Since 2022, Fansmith has modernized ACE's advocacy strategies and helped launch its 2023 National Engagement Office, which shapes public debate on higher education and supports institutions navigating state policy changes affecting academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In earlier ACE roles, he led higher education advocacy on Higher Education Act reauthorization and COVID-19 relief funding, work that helped earn his team NASPA's 2021 Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education Award.

Fansmith is a frequent commentator on higher education policy in major outlets including The Washington Post, Politico, The New York Times, CNN, NPR, and Inside Higher Ed. He has written for The Washington Post, Inside Higher Ed, and The Journal of College and University Law, cohosts ACE's dotEDU podcast, and regularly speaks at conferences and public forums. Fansmith serves on the Think College National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup and is a past president and former executive committee member of the Committee for Education Funding. He holds a bachelor's degree in history from Georgetown University and a master's degree in government from Johns Hopkins University. He lives in Washington, DC, with his wife, two daughters, and a poorly trained dog.



Dr. M. Sylvia Fernandez currently serves as the President and CEO of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) which is the national accrediting body, solely in the Counseling profession, with accredited master's and doctoral programs in 483 institutions across the US and Puerto Rico. Dr. M. Sylvia Fernandez was a counselor educator and administrator for 29 years prior to joining CACREP where she has been for the last eight years. She has extensive professional service and leadership experience in state, national, and international Counseling professional membership, accreditation, and regulatory organizations. Her publications include co-editing a book, and numerous peer reviewed journal articles. Her presentations, both peer-reviewed and invited, at state, national, and international venues are in the areas of multicultural issues in counseling and related disciplines, counselor education and credentialing, professional identity and ethics, and clinical supervision.



Kendra L. Harrington, PT, DPT, MS is currently the Vice President, Practice & Research at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). However, she just concluded 16 years as Director, Residency and Fellowship Accreditation for APTA. In that role, she led the department responsible for advancing residency and fellowship education, overseeing accreditation processes, and managing the growth of more than 800 programs nationwide. She has also spearheaded the development of residency and fellowship centralized application and accreditation management systems, as well as competency-based education and evaluation tools that continue to shape post-professional physical therapist education.



Dr. Ann Kenimer is the Chief Accreditation Officer at ABET, bringing over three decades of academic and leadership experience to her role. Prior to joining the ABET Headquarters staff in 2024, Kenimer spent over 20 years as an ABET volunteer serving as a program evaluator, team chair, executive committee member, and officer in the Engineering Accreditation Commission. Kenimer is also professor emerita and associate provost for undergraduate studies emerita at Texas A&M University. Over her 30-year career, she held several college- and university-level administrative positions. A registered professional engineer in Texas, Kenimer earned her Ph.D. in agricultural engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign following her M.S. and B.S. degrees in agricultural engineering from Virginia Tech. She holds the status of fellow of ABET and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE).



Shirdell Mattox is a maternal health architect, global maternal health equity leader, and Executive Director of the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC). She is dedicated to transforming the systems that shape pregnancy and birth outcomes by expanding access to community-based maternity care, strengthening the midwifery workforce, and advancing innovative approaches to maternal health policy and education. Her work bridges accreditation, workforce development, and health equity to improve outcomes, particularly for underserved communities globally. An international speaker and presenter, Shirdell is recognized for her system-thinking approach to maternal health and higher education leadership. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Global Health Equity at Meharry Medical College and holds an Executive MBA from Brown University and IE Business School.



Dr. Marc Mewed is the Director of Accreditation at the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). provides leadership, development, and day-to-day management of the accreditation program, building relationships with internal and external constituents to support architectural programs in the accreditation process. Prior to joining NAAB, Marc spent 11 years with ACPE: The Standard for Spiritual Care and Education in several roles, most notably as the Associate Executive Director overseeing the accreditation of over 300 programs and the certification process for educators. Prior to joining ACPE, Marc spent over 20 years in K-12 leadership in independent schools. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Near Eastern Studies from Emory University, a Master of Arts in Education from the American Jewish University, and an EdD in Educational and Organizational Leadership from Northeastern University.



Mollie Mulvanity is the Deputy Director of the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and has served on the ASPA Board of Directors since 2020, including her current role as vice chair and past service as treasurer. Prior to that, she served three years as chair of ASPA's Fall Professional Development Subcommittee. Mollie joined CEPH in 2005 and served as an Accreditation Specialist and Director of Accreditation Services before assuming her current role. Mollie has visited more than 150 public health programs while providing consultation or staffing accreditation reviews, including universities throughout the US and in Europe, Asia, and Australia and has managed multiple criteria and procedures revision processes. Mollie currently serves as a public member for ARC-PA and formerly served as a public member on the Commission for Approval of Teams at the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association and as a member of its Standards Revision Taskforce.



Jamie Pak is a Program Accreditation Manager at the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) and has been with ACEND since 2019. She provides consultation for accreditation reviews to programs in the U.S. and internationally. She is also the primary staff to provide support for the implementation and administration of technology used by ACEND. Her expertise lies in accreditation processes and technology implementation. Prior to joining ACEND, she was an Assistant Director of Accreditation at the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Jamie received her master's degree in clinical Mental Health Counseling from Colorado Christian University and bachelor's degree in Cognitive Science from the University of Virginia.



John Przypyszny 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.



Jeff Reiter is the CEO and founder of RWK IT Services, where he helps organizational leaders strengthen cybersecurity, protect sensitive information, and make more confident decisions about technology and AI. For more than 27 years, Jeff has worked with leadership teams to bring clarity to complex issues such as data protection, operational resilience, documentation, and responsible technology use. His work includes supporting accreditation organizations and other professional associations that manage sensitive information, member data, standards, and confidential documentation. Jeff is also the author of *The Cyber Playbook*;



Mary L. Romanello, PT, PhD earned her Bachelor of Science in education from the University of Cincinnati, her master's degree in physical therapy from Indiana Central University, and her doctoral degree in educational administration from Miami University, Ohio. She served high school and college athletes as an athletic trainer and physical therapist during her 16 years as a practicing clinician in addition to her patient care duties in a sports medicine clinic. Mary has participated in accreditation activities at multiple levels having led a physical therapy program's transition from a master's to a doctoral degree. She experienced accreditation as a director and academic dean when starting new health care programs and from the accreditor angle when conducting onsite reviews. Mary has been instrumental in building new health care programs and guiding others through accreditation reaffirmation in nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and athletic training. Mary assumed the role as Director, Accreditation at the American Physical Therapy Association Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education in July 2021 and she was recently promoted to Vice-President.



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.



Emily Vandermade is the Compliance and Regulatory Specialist at the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA), where she supports CEA's compliance reporting activities, provides regulatory support, and serves as the staff liaison to the Research and Expansion Committee. She also acts as a site visit representative and regularly delivers presentations, workshops and training events. Emily's prior experience includes program coordination and teaching in various settings, including adult education, community college settings, and in private and public institutions abroad. She has an MA in TESOL and prior volunteer experience as the Professional Development co-chair for WATESOL, the local branch of TESOL International.



Kelly Velasquez is the Director of Accreditation Site Visit Operations for the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at ASHA, where she has worked for the past 30 years. In her current role, she is responsible for directing all activities related to accreditation site visits and the recruitment, selection, and evaluation of volunteer site visitors. She holds a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University in English and psychology and completed all the coursework for a master's degree in clinical psychology with an emphasis in research statistics from Loyola University.



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.



Leanne Worsfold, MEd, RPN, is Senior Strategic Partner, Innovation and Strategic Planning, at the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Previously, she was Senior Director, Education, QM and Assessment, at the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics & Information Management Education (CAHIIM). She holds a Master of Education in Open, Digital, and Distance. At ACEND, she leads mission-aligned initiatives that advance nutrition and dietetics education. Leanne brings more than 15 years of senior leadership experience in higher education, including academic innovation, technology-enabled programs, and risk- and competency-based frameworks for accrediting, certification, and licensure organizations in the United States and Canada. She also led national regulatory initiatives at iComp Consulting with organizations including CCRNR, ACOTRO, and the Colleges of Pharmacists and Physiotherapists of Ontario. Leanne has authored and co-authored publications in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* and the *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* on competency-based education, and has presented at CLEAR, ATP, and NCCA conferences.