



# **NASPA**

## **PUBLIC POLICY DIVISION**

**Rebecca Mills**

**Director, Public Policy Division**

**March 2013**

### **NASPA Board Action Items**

None at this time

### **NASPA Mission**

To be the principal source for leadership, scholarship, professional development, and advocacy for students.

### **Leadership**

The Public Policy Division sought to enhance member engagement through a Town Hall meeting at the national conference and subsequent follow-up activities.

### **Scholarship**

Nothing to report.

### **Professional Development**

Rebecca Mills and Brian Sponsler presented with others at a Dial-In for the Small Colleges and Universities Division. The title of the dial-in was "Public Policy Issues for Small Colleges and Universities." An audience of 150 NASPA members participated in this dial-in conference, held on February 6, 2013,

Rebecca Mills participated in the December meeting of the Knowledge Community Chairs, at the invitation of Yvette Castillo. She discussed with participants NASPA's newly created guidelines to request that NASPA take a position and/or make a public statement on a policy issue or current event.

## Advocacy

The Public Policy Division was founded to assist NASPA in its public policy advocacy efforts. The summary below for our activities to support Goal 2 of NASPA's strategic plan delineates the efforts of the division.

## NASPA Strategic Plan

### Goal 1

**Build the capacity to create knowledge and use data to provide evidence that will support excellence in practice.**

***1.4 Enhance skills and provide tools to conduct student affairs program reviews in support of best practice and institutional effectiveness.***

The Public Policy Division Chair represents NASPA on the Higher Education Mental Health Alliance (HEMHA). This year, HEMHA members worked with the Jed Foundation to create a document focused on campus based teams designed to "identify and monitor students whose behaviors may be troubling. . . so that they can receive any needed referrals or other appropriate assistance and treatment." The document, [Balancing Safety and Support on Campus: A Guide for Campus Teams](#), is available on the Jed Foundation website. NASPA is one of the sponsors of this document, and the public policy division chair participated in the planning and editing of the document. The resulting document provides evidence that supports excellence in practice.

Specifically, the publication was prepared to help both existing and new teams make informed decisions about their structure, scope, functions, and day-to-day operations. This guide summarizes the existing literature on campus teams and suggests some of the key issues that should be considered when creating or managing a campus team.

### Goal 2

**Lead advocacy efforts that shape the changing landscape of higher education.**

**Objectives**

***2.1 Assert NASPA's leadership role in critical issues of public policy regarding higher education.***

The Public Policy Division addresses this goal by responding to requests from NASPA's leadership and staff. Division members provide advice on requests about legislative proposals, advocacy initiatives, possible partnerships (such as signing on to letters or statements drafted by other higher education advocacy organizations). We also engage in discussion of "bubbling" issues in order to determine whether to share those issues with NASPA staff and board members. Issues of note this year included the following (in no particular order):

- Weapons on campus
- Credit Hour Bill
- Impact of budget on higher education programs and initiatives
- Pell language in the Omnibus Bill 2012
- ESPN vs OSU Amicus Brief
- Budget impact on minority-serving institutions
- Amicus Brief supporting University of Illinois (FERPA issue)
- Violence Against Women Act
- Student Loan Interest Deduction
- NCAA Academic Progress Rate
- Implications of immigration reform for undocumented students and for institutions

## **2.2 *Define, adopt, and communicate a public stance on critical policy issues in higher education.***

The Public Policy Division assumed responsibility for accomplishing this objective over time. In July, we presented the Board with an agenda and a set of guiding principles for their consideration. Both were adopted at the July meeting. The specific steps leading up to those actions follow.

Following the March 2012 conference, where we sponsored the first Town Hall Meeting on Public Policy, the Public Policy Division accomplished the following:

- Engaged the membership, through email, in a follow-up to the Town Hall Meeting to ensure a member-driven process in creating the public policy agenda.
- Submitted a public policy agenda to the Board for consideration at the July meeting; the agenda was approved by the Board.
- Created and submitted a document based on Board discussion at July meeting to guide decisions about public policy issue for inclusion in the public policy agenda; this guiding principles document received Board approval.
- Prepared briefing papers to support the three major issues in the public policy agenda
- Created a communication plan for sharing the public policy agenda with members
  - Prepared and forwarded information to the national office so that NASPA's President could share information initially with the entire membership
  - Created materials and suggested revisions for the public policy section of NASPA's website (to be implemented prior to sharing the agenda)
  - Sent messages on Twitter (AKA "tweeted") about the agenda and supporting materials

- Collaborated with others to create guidelines to request that NASPA take a position and/or make a public statement on a policy issue or current event. These were approved by the Board.

### **2.3 *Build capacity among membership in order to effectively influence public policy.***

The Public Policy Division focused our efforts to build capacity among members so that they can help lead advocacy efforts in two primary ways: regional and national conference presentations and public policy articles for newsletters and Leadership Exchange. Specifically, as a division, we accomplished the following:

- Presented the following well-attended sessions at the 2012 national conference:
  - Shaping the Agenda: Current Issues in Public Policy
  - Shaping Change: Public Policy Leadership on Campuses
  - Town Hall Meeting: Setting NASPA's Public Policy Agenda
- Planned and worked with others to coordinate the following well-attended sessions at the national conference:
  - Public Policy Breakfast Briefing: The Attainment Agenda and Student Affairs
  - ADA Compliance
  - FERPA Overview and Update
  - Exclusively for SSAOs: What SSAOs Need to Know from Washington; The Policy Landscape for 2012
  - Title IX and the Dear Colleague Letter
- Presented and/or co-presented (as individuals) public policy presentations on
  - Providing Excellent Service to Undocumented Students (Kandy Mink Salas)
  - Enough is Enough: Concealed Carry on College Campuses (Rebecca Mills)
- Worked with NASPA staff to create a template for use in regional conference sessions on Public Policy and presented public policy overview sessions at regional conferences for Regions I, IV-E, V, and VI.
- Created a series of articles on Public Policy for Leadership Exchange that supported NASPA's strategic plan. These included:
  - *Informed Voices, Powerful Agenda: Contributing to NASPA's Public Policy Agenda* by Rebecca Mills and Brian Collins
  - *Setting NASPA's Public Policy Agenda* by Rebecca Mills, Kandy Mink Salas, Lisa Erwin, and Erik Kneubuehl
  - *NASPA'S Public Policy Agenda for 2012-2013* by Rebecca Mills and Brian Sponsler.
  - *Performance-Based Funding* by Lisa A Erwin.
- Worked with NASPA staff met to discuss how a newly redesigned NASPA website that included advocacy tools could enhance member engagement in and knowledge about public policy.

**2.4 Track state and regional issues that might significantly affect students, practitioners, and/or campuses.**

To stay abreast of state and regional public policy issues of interest to NASPA members, the Public Policy Division:

- Discusses state and regional issues of interest during the monthly divisional phone calls
- Solicits and shares information from regional board colleagues and regional members
- Appoints a liaison from the Knowledge Communities leadership group to ensure that issues of interest to the KCs are shared with the division.

**Goal 3**

Nothing to report.

**Goal 4**

Nothing to report.