

NJPA Plans for Relevance: Step 3 – Committees

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The Strategic Planning, Budget and Personnel Committee (hereafter, our Committee) took up where the retreat ended. Our Committee's charge is to flesh out the strategic plan that was agreed upon at the retreat. Furthermore, at the retreat we discussed the chapters, the governing body, that is, NJPA's Council, etc. The scope of what NJPA had undertaken had advanced beyond strategic planning to reorganization. We now had five clearly stated strategic goals. But what was the best infrastructure that would achieve these goals?

Our Committee also faced the reality that NJPA's governance and operations needed to proceed while our Committee focused on strategic planning and re-organization. Rather than address each aspect of NJPA in a logical progression, which would dictate starting with our values and mission, our Committee set priorities based on expediency. In the order of the highest to lowest priority, these were 1. Chapters 2. Components 3. Council 4. Mission, Values, Vision. We were able to do this because NJPA already has a written mission, and thus, we weren't starting from scratch.

First, the matter of the Chapters needed to be addressed because corrections needed to be made with all deliberate speed. We set a deadline for this work to be completed by May 2013. Second, we needed to decide about the committees because the incoming President needed to make various committee appointments for 2013-2104 at the beginning of his term in June and July. Third, any changes in the composition of the Council needed to be resolved prior to the next nomination/elections in early 2014. Fortunately, we had Dr Miskimen's excellent notes from the retreat to help us do this work.

Chapters It was clear from the retreat that the consensus was to keep the geographical chapters, and thus, the only issue that remained for our Committee was to answer the question – “How?” The Residents Chapter is in a class by itself and no changes were needed. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Residents Chapter is also geographical because it has members from the six residency programs that are located throughout New Jersey.

Immediately after the retreat, President Mahkija formed an Ad Hoc Work Group on Chapters and appointed Dr. O'Neill, who was a member of our Committee, as the chair. Although this established a good mechanism to address “How do we keep the chapters?” there was still much concern that the hidden agenda was to eliminate the chapters. After an intense debate, our Committee got down to working on the “problem” of the chapters and how we could reorganize them in order for them to survive. After Dr Napoli consulted with Colleen Coyle, Esq, APA's General Counsel, our Committee produced a document outlining three options and the pros and cons of each option. Dr. O'Neill circulated this to the geographical chapters. In addition, Dr. O'Neill and Deb Wilson wrote a document on the proposed policy that would apply to the chapter reorganization. After much discussion, questions answered, and clarifications made, four of the five Chapters gave their verbal approval for the same option. Therefore, our Committee was

able to bring a proposal to the Council that this option be approved. Although the Council approved the proposed reorganization of the chapters, the chapters wanted further assurance of the specifics. Therefore, I wrote, “NJPA Policy and Procedures on Chapters” that was distributed to the chapters. By September, four of five geographical chapters were in compliance with these policy and procedures.

The Southern Chapter was the last to agree with the re-organization but thanks to the persistent efforts of Steve Ager, MD, Councilor and Southern Chapter Representative, the members of the Southern Chapter “saw the light” and didn’t secede. We also are grateful to all the members of the Southern Chapter who participated in this chapter’s meetings on re-organization, especially Dr Polly Graham and her husband Roger who have devotedly served the Southern Chapter for many years.

Components While the re-organization of the chapters was being implemented, our Committee simultaneously turned its attention to the components. We readily agreed that there should be five super committees, one for each of the five strategic goals. Dr Ciolino dubbed them the five pillars. This was more than symbolic because we are counting on these five super committees as the crucial structure to achieve NJPA’s strategic goals.

We discussed what these entities should be called in order to distinguish them from “regular” committees. We decided to follow the APA nomenclature and call them “Councils.” Naming four of the five councils was easy but there was a lot of wrangling about what to name the council that would focus on NJPA’s strategic goal of maintaining high standards and promoting quality. Some viewed this goal as what NJPA does about patient care services and health care systems such as addressing access, affordability, funding, and regulations. But calling this council the “Council on Patient Care”, as originally suggested by Bob Harris, was thought to be a misnomer because NJPA does not provide patient care; its members provide the care. “Patient Care” was also too narrow because NJPA’s mission focuses on promoting mental health not just treatment of illness and on public health which encompasses everyone and not only patients. Furthermore, some psychiatrists do not provide care. For example, some forensic psychiatrists conduct psychiatric evaluations, render expert opinions and serve as expert witnesses but do not treat patients.

In order to better identify the purpose and scope of this council, we asked, “What drives access to affordable health services, quality care for patients, public health and mental health?” The answer is standards. For example, standards drive funding in community psychiatry. If a public facility does not meet certain standards upon inspection, it can lose its funding. If standards of care are set, then there can be advocacy to fund mental health programs sufficiently to meet and maintain those standards. As Dr. Bransfield, NJPA Past President, reminds us, it is the House of Medicine that has historically and should continue to set the standards for the profession and health care. Part of NJPA’s mission is “to maintain the professional standards in that specialty [that is, psychiatry].” In the NPJA By-laws, one of the purposes and objectives of NJPA is “to advance the standards of all psychiatric services and facilities”

As I assume the DSM work groups can attest, some names come easily and quickly; other names take shape only after obsessing over fine distinctions. Despite recognizing that “standards” is central to the work of this council, it was still difficult to settle on a simple, short name that stated this council’s purpose. After much iteration, our Committee decided to present several options to the BOT. After “beating a dead horse” during an *ad nauseam* discussion, the BOT approved Dr. Steven Resnick’s recommendation “Council on Professional Standards.”

In summary, there would be: 1. Council on Advocacy, 2. Council on Education, 3. Council on Member Services, 4. Council on Professional Standards and 5. Council on Finance and Resources

The decision to call these super committees “councils” dictated a name change for our governing body that has been known as “Council.” After brainstorming many possibilities including Board of Directors, Board of Governors, Board of Trustees, Executive Board and Executive Council, we settled on Board of Trustees. This is consistent with other non-profits and medical societies, and our American Psychiatric Association. [Note: Hereafter, I will refer to the NJPA governing body as the Board of Trustees or the BOT.]

Next our Committee asked: What should we do with the other committees? Keep them all? Eliminate those that have been non-productive or are now superfluous because of the new councils? What should we do with the standing committees that presently are a requirement of the NJPA By-laws? Do we need them all? Must our by-laws require these committees even if NJPA wants to retain them? Should we eliminate any committees that are not needed now but when the need arises, the BOT could approve an Ad Hoc Work Group (AHWG) to address that specific need? Should we change any committees to special interest groups?

An AHWG (aka Task Force) is a group formed to address a specific immediate need and is dissolved after finishing its work. A Special Interest Group within an organization is a subgroup of members with a common interest who want to advance this interest and promote knowledge about this specific area. Committees work for the BOT. SIGs promote the professional interest of a group of members. For example, the BOT refers a matter to a Council or one of the committees assigned to a specific Council for further study and requires that these entities report back to the BOT with a recommended action in regard to funding, policy and/or NJPA position.

Our Committee had the advantage of a lesson learned. In 2009, the APA sunsetted almost all of its committees. This sweeping action was demoralizing for many members who voluntarily had given their wisdom and hard work over a long time and felt unappreciated. In addition, many felt their area of interest was being neglected because their committees were disbanded. We wanted to strike the balance between streamlining the NJPA components and not dismissing and offending our members who are actively engaged in committee work. Dr Gochfeld was a strong voice for keeping the committees.

Therefore we wanted to use the precise surgical scalpel approach and not an axe. Deb Wilson and Carla Ross reviewed the status of all NJPA committees and provided our Committee with list of recommendations. Using this list, I made a chart that tabulated the five Councils, their assigned strategic goal, their objectives and functions, and the possible assignment of committees to each Council.

Our Committee compromised on the following recommendations to the BOT:

1. The Strategic Planning, Budget and Personnel Committee should be changed. The functions for budget and personnel would be incorporated into the work of the Council on Finance and Resources. The Strategic Planning function would be transferred to the Ad Hoc Work Group on Strategic Planning and Re-Organization. This AHWG will be disbanded once the re-organization is completed

2. There are presently nine committees delineated in the NJPA By-laws.

A. The following by-law committees should be retained – 1) Executive, 2) Ethics (under the Council on Professional Standards) and 3) Nominating (under the Council of Finance and Resources) [Rationale: These committees attend to essential ongoing functions.]

B. The following by-law committees should be redesignated: 1) Budget (as the Council on Finance and Resources) and 2) Membership (as the Council on Member Services) [Rationale: These committees address essential functions but the new designation is consistent with the new orientation and expanded scope of these entities. For example, the focus is not only on the budget but on all financial matters and resources that are necessary for association strength. The focus on membership is not only acquiring new members, overseeing the APA transferring members, and retaining existing members but also engaging members and providing services and value for their membership.]

C. The following by-law committees should be eliminated because their tasks would be subsumed under other components: 1) Editorial (This refers to the newsletter. [Rationale: The NJPA Administration does the work of publishing the NJPA newsletter. There is no need for a committee let alone a by-law committee for this work. Since the newsletter is a service for and means to communicate with members, it should be under the oversight of the Council on Member Services.] 2) Program (Presently, this is the Program and Awards Committee) [Rationale: The Council on Education would perform the functions of this committee. There is no need to specify this in the by-laws.]

D. The By-Laws Committee should be retained. [Rationale: Although the By-laws Committee might need to be a standing committee that is specified in the by-laws because it can be constituted as an AHWG when there is a need to review the by-laws, it better to keep this small committee so there are by-law experts designated always available to inform the BOT about by-law procedures, and thus, functions parliamentarians.]

3. The Ethics Committee should be placed under the aegis of the Council on Professional Standards. [Rationale: A code of professional ethics is a set of standards that govern the behavior of those in a profession. An ethics committee by investigating and making determinations about individual compliance with the professional code of ethics

maintains overall quality of services provided by and the performance of the specific profession.]

4. The following committees should be retained and come under the aegis of the Council on Professional Standards: Addictive Disorders Committee, Child Psychiatry Committee, Forensic Psychiatry Committee, Geriatric Psychiatry Committee, Practice Issues Committee, Psychopharmacology Committee and Public/Community Psychiatry Committee [Rationale: The work of these committees has been primarily focused on standards and/or quality care in various areas of psychiatry.]

5. The Disaster Preparedness Committee and Committee on Women should become Special Interest Groups and should be under the auspices of the Council on Member Services [Rationale: 1) These subjects are interests of a subgroup of members. What is needed is an entity that would provide a forum and support for these members but would not work for the BOT. The Disaster Preparedness Committee never functioned as a disaster psychiatry outreach response team but as a support for members who were involved in this volunteer work. 2) Special Interest Groups are a service provided to members.] [Note: As approved by the BOT, the new names are Disaster Psychiatry SIG and Issues Relating to Women SIG]

6. The Fellowship Committee should be dissolved and its task be incorporated into the Council on Member Services. [Rationale: There is no needed to have a separate committee to do this work.]

7. The Residents Committee should be dissolved and its tasks should be a function of the Council on Education. [Rationale: There is no need for both a Residents Chapter and a Residents Committee, The task of the Residents Committee over the years has been to be the jury to select the best resident and medical student papers. Most recently, this committee has been involved in planning the Residents Fair but this task is being done primarily by the Program Committee and the Residents Committee]

8. The Committee on Public Education should be eliminated and its function should be part of the Council on Education. [Rationale: Presently, there is no needed to have a separate committee to do this work.]

9. The Information Technology committee should be eliminated. In regard to IT, there are two functions – communication and IT resources. The former function should be the responsibility of the Council on Member Services and the latter function should be the responsibility of the Council on Finance and Resources. [Rationale: The respective councils should perform these functions. Communicating with members is part of serving members. Therefore, communication via IT such as community forums, digital newsletter, eNews and Websites should be a function of the Council on Member Services. Determining the need for and funds allocated to IT resources should be the function of the Council on Finance and Resources.]

10. The Practice Issues and Psychopharmacology Committee that once were two distinct committees should be revert back to being separate committees. [Rationale: There is an

unintended consequence of this name. This combined committee makes it appear that psychopharmacology should have a special place in clinical practice. This implies that psychotherapy has lesser value. The devaluation of psychotherapy is reflected in the lower payment for and various attitudes about psychotherapy. NPJA should not perpetuate this devaluation.]

These recommendations would reduce the present 22 committees to five councils, ten committees and two SIGs for a total of 17 components.

[See Table of Organization]

Composition of the Board of Trustees (aka Council)– Here too, our Committee agreed on the need to strike a balance. On the one hand, we wanted the traditional ideal of having positions as opportunities for involvement and that offer a ladder for development and advancement. On the other had, we had to face the reality that there is a decline in participation and lessening of human resources to fill BOT positions.

There was also the risk of moving to a small, inbred, non-elected board that would be a concentration of power in the hands of a few. A pertinent caveat is the oft-quoted statement of Lord Aston that “Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.” But in reality, NJPA never had an uncontested election and, under the present Bylaws, the membership does not vote unless there is at least one contested position. The safeguard will be our diligently promoting member participation at all levels and maintaining transparency. Protection for NJPA and its members rests in our board members adhering to the law and faithfully fulfilling their three duties of obedience, loyalty and care.

In addition, one of the reasons for reducing the size of a BOT is to facilitate rapid action when necessary. Our Committee decided to recommend a reduction in the size of the Executive Committee rather than radically reduce the size of the BOT. As a committee of the whole, that is, part of the BOT, a smaller Executive Committee would be a rapid “task force” that can efficiently take action that is granted to it in policy by the entire BOT.

We were guided by Dr. Petti’s emphasizing that whatever our Committee recommends, the purpose should be for sustainability and continuity. Furthermore, the five Trustee positions for the geographical chapters were sacrosanct because the BOT approved these positions as part of the chapter re-organization.

Our Committee compromised on the following recommendations:

1. The composition of the BOT should consist of the following: A) voting members – President, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Immediate Past President, the President of the Residents Chapter and 11 Trustees (two trustees-at-large, one trustee each from the five geographical chapters, and one trustee position for each of

four Council chairs (Advocacy, Education, Membership Services and Professional Standards) (Note: The Secretary-Treasurer chairs the Council on Finance and Resources. This is reverts back to the traditional structure in which the Treasurer had chaired the Budget Committee. This had been changed a few years ago when three committees were combined into the Strategic Planning, Budget and Personnel Committee, for which the Treasurer was not the appointed chair.) B) *ex officio* non-voting members – 1) Representatives to the APA Assembly and the Executive Director 2) any NJPA member who holds an elected APA position, that is, a) either an Assembly officer or Area 3 position other than NJPA Representative to the Assembly or b) an APA Officer or Trustee position. (Note: The total voting members would be 17. This is an odd number so that there cannot be a tie vote. A quorum would be a majority, that is, nine voting members. A two-thirds majority would be 12 voting members.)

2. The Executive Committee of the BOT should be comprised of the President, Senior Vice President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, Immediate Past President and Executive Director (*ex officio*). This would remove the Representatives to the Assembly (presently two) but they would remain on the BOT. The Executive Director is presently a *de facto* member. This change would make the Executor Director a *de jure* non-voting member because this would be stated in the by-laws. There would be five voting members so that there would never be a tied vote. Any action would require that all five members vote. Voting could be done via telecommunications in addition to a face-to-face meeting.

3. The position of President should be for two terms of one year each with the requirement that a sitting President needs to be re-elected to the 2nd term.

4. The President Elect position should be eliminated. [Rationale: If number three is approved, the President Elect position would no longer be workable because the individual in this position either would be waiting in the wings for two years or might never become president because under the new structure anyone could challenge a sitting president for the possible second term.]

5. The Senior Vice President and Vice President positions should be retained. The term of office for each the Senior VP and VP should be for one year with a re-election for a second one year term. [Rationale: Retaining these two positions will provide a partial development and advancement ladder along with the Secretary-Treasurer and Trustee positions. Since there would no longer be a President Elect position, this provides a means of succession if the President were no longer able to serve, that is, the Senior Vice President would serve as President. Note: A) The authority of President presently secedes to the President Elect. B) The Vice President would no longer automatically move up and become the Senior Vice President.]

6. The separate offices of Secretary and Treasurer should be combined into the office of Secretary-Treasurer. [Rationale: The administration, the Executive Director and staff does most of the work of these two positions, for example, recording minutes, notifying the membership, paying expenses and generating financial reports. Nevertheless, these

positions are integral to governance because these officers are responsible for the oversight of these necessary tasks. With the reduced workload for each of these officer positions, one member can perform this oversight responsibility.]

7. The two Trustee-at-Large positions should remain elected positions each for a term of two years. The election years of each of the two Trustees-at-Large would alternate.

8. The four Trustee positions designated for four of the five Council Chairs should be appointed positions because the chairpersons of four of the councils are appointed.

Bylaw Changes – The BOT approved the re-organization of the chapters, the establishment of the Councils and the re-organization of the components. The BOT still needs to take action on our Committees recommendations about the BOT composition. Although the BOT approved some of these changes, a revision of the NJPA By-Laws is necessary. Once these revisions are written, and reviewed by the BOT, a two-thirds vote of the BOT and vote of the membership is required for approval. This is in process. Our Committee reviewed the existing NJPA By-laws and the model district branch by-laws in the Procedural Code of the Assembly of the APA.

Mission, Values, Vision and Tagline We used our existing mission statement as the basis for formulating the strategic plan. But we will come full circle in our strategic planning and re-organization when our Committee re-visits NJPA’s mission statement in order to stylistically modernize and streamline it. We don’t anticipate any substantive changes. We will have to concentrate more on enumerating out values and expressing our vision because NJPA does not have these in writing. Finally the Committee intends to recommend a tagline. But what are the definitions of these elements?

Mission – A brief statement containing the purpose for the existence of NJPA. It is present- and action-oriented

Vision – A future-oriented inspiring statement of what NJPA wants to be.

Values – A list of guiding principles embraced by NJPA that provides a foundation for NJPA’s mission and vision.

Tagline – A short sentence, phrase or a few words that capture the essence of NJPA and its purpose. The tagline would accompany NJPA’s name and/or logo.

Summary NJPA is not just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic or making minor cosmetic changes. Although NJPA is making significant substantive changes including reorganizing the geographical chapters, the biggest change is a paradigm shift in how we are thinking about our mission and strategic goals. In addition, we reorganized to emphasize and effectively work on NJPA’s strategic goals. NJPA has formulated five strategic goals that represent the core competencies of NJPA – advocating, educating, serving our members, promoting standards and sustaining NJPA. The NJPA members, who are organized into five structural pillars, will be the core structure for achieving these five strategic goals. These five entities are: Council on Advocacy, Council on Education, Council on Membership Services, Council on Professional Standards, and

Council on Finance and Resources. In concert with the NJPA Administration, these Councils work for the Board of Trustee, the NJPA governing body.

We are rejuvenating our grass roots participation via our five geographical chapters that engage psychiatrists in their respective communities, are “farm teams” that select and develop members who are recruited to lead on the state level, and advocate with district legislators since “all politics is local” according to Tip O’Neill, former Speaker of the US House of Representatives.

Ad Hoc Work Group on Strategic Planning and Re-Organization: Charles Ciolino, MD, Linda Gochfeld, MD, Vasudev Mahkija, MD, Theresa Miskimen, MD, Joseph C Napoli, MD (Chairperson), James O’Neil, MD, Theodore Petti, MD, Carla Ross, Bertram Warren, MD, and Deb Wilson