



## 2020-2023 Strategic Plan

Approved by the ASHE Board of Directors  
October 24, 2019

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University of Texas at Austin

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**At-Large Member**

(2017-2019)

University of Maryland

**Karen Bussey**

**Graduate Student Rep**

(2018-2020)

Howard University

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**CAHEP Chair**

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Rowan University

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**Fundraising Chair**

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Teachers College, Columbia  
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**CIHE Chair**

(2018-2020)

Texas Tech University

## **Staff**

Jason P. Guilbeau, Executive Director

James E. Hines, Conference Coordinator

Summer Crawley, Graduate Assistant

Ishaan Gandhi, Graduate Assistant

Terrance Knighten, Graduate Assistant

Cathy Laungier, Graduate Assistant

Sal Veltre, Graduate Assistant

Juanita Jasso Hinojosa, Strategic Planning  
Intern

# Planning Workgroups

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## **Conference**

- ▶ KerryAnn O'Meara, University of Maryland
- ▶ Genia Bettencourt, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- ▶ Heather Rowan-Kenyon, Boston College
- ▶ Jillian Reading, University at Buffalo
- ▶ Kevin McClure, University of North Carolina Wilmington
- ▶ Shannon Calderone, Washington State University - Tri Cities
- ▶ Monica Masino, The University of the West Indies Open Campus
- ▶ James Hines, Association for the Study of Higher Education

## **Publications**

- ▶ Kimberly Griffin, University of Maryland
- ▶ Elsa Gonzalez, University of Houston
- ▶ Sharon Holmes, Binghamton University
- ▶ Sydney Freeman Jr., University of Idaho

## **Professional Development**

- ▶ Joy Gayles, North Carolina State University
- ▶ Dante Salto, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
- ▶ Deryl Hatch-Tocaimaza, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- ▶ Jody Jessup-Anger, Marquette University
- ▶ Lisa Rubin, Kansas State University
- ▶ Tiffani Riggers-Piehl, University of Missouri Kansas City

## **Graduate Students**

- ▶ Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, University of California, Los Angeles
- ▶ Karen Bussey, Howard University
- ▶ Cheryl Ching, University of Massachusetts Boston
- ▶ Katalin Szelenyi, University of Massachusetts Boston
- ▶ Monica Esqueda, University of California, Davis

## **Voice/External Relations Workgroup**

- ▶ Liliana Garces, University of Texas, Austin
- ▶ Antonio Duran, Auburn University
- ▶ Joy Blanchard, Louisiana State University
- ▶ Lisa Wolf-Wendel, University of Kansas
- ▶ Paul Rubin, University of Utah

## **Values Workgroup**

- ▶ Karen Miksch, University of Minnesota
- ▶ Lori Patton Davis, The Ohio State University
- ▶ Robin Minthorn, University of Washington Tacoma
- ▶ Sergio Gonzalez, Claremont Graduate University
- ▶ Victoria Malaney Brown, University of Massachusetts Amherst

# Development of the Plan

## Planning Timeline

February:

- Board approved outline and framework
- Call For Workgroups Volunteers sent to membership

March

- Workgroups selected and begin work

May

- Membership Assessment (with responses from 422 current and former members)

June

- Workgroups Leads reported at Summer Board Meeting
- Online Town Hall Meeting #1

July

- Online Town Hall Meeting #2
- Finalized Workgroup reports/plans

August/September

- Initial draft developed

October

- Board reviewed draft and provided feedback
- Board voted to approve plan

November

- Plan presented to membership at annual conference

## Context of the Plan

ASHE has grown from a small group of scholars that could meet once a year in a few conference rooms to a complex organization drawing over 1500 researchers to an annual meeting. At the same time that higher education research has grown into a thriving field, society has undergone technological advances that allow for new way of organizing meetings, forming intellectual communities, and communicating scholarship. We in higher education have also seen threats to traditional forms of professional associations, changes in revenue sources, and opportunities to adapt to expectations of contemporary membership. In spite of organizational growth, expansion of modes of professional expression, and understanding these threats and opportunities, ASHE has never had a strategic plan. In 2019, the ASHE board of directors began the process of strategic planning. Building from positions of financial and membership strength, and incorporating core values of scholarly quality, inclusion, and equity, we solicited volunteers from the membership to engage in a year-long process that resulted in this plan you are reading.

# The Plan

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While our original intent was to create a six-year strategic plan to bring our Association through its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we changed course a bit. Upon reading the recommendations of the strategic plan workgroups, we realized we needed to first solidify our foundation before expanding.

Since ASHE was founded 44 years ago, we have largely conformed to the conventions of other scholarly associations: offering an annual conference, publishing journals and books, setting standards of quality of through the review process, and recognizing achievement through association awards. In the last decade, ASHE has accelerated expansion of membership, conference proposals submitted, conference attendance, and programs and services offered. The field has met this expansion with much excitement and momentum. However, it has also challenged us as a scholarly association to reflect upon who we are and where we are going.

While much has changed since 1976, the foundation of our Association remains strong. When ASHE was formed out of the American Association for Higher Education, it was to create a community of scholars. As such, this plans seeks to re-focus ASHE on this foundation, recognizing advances in the meaning and experience of “scholarship” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This plan seeks not to layout revolutionary ideas, but instead to build upon this foundation.

The first question we had to answer is “Who are our members?” The core membership of ASHE consists of higher education researchers within the United States. While these researchers include faculty members, graduate students, administrators, and those who work outside of the academy, members are nested within an ecosystem of students, administrators, practitioners, and society. Our association occupies a unique space in the higher education realm, offering a home and resource to researchers. At the same time, ASHE has members with expertise that could and should impact practice.

## Goals

In alignment with our history and our membership, ASHE will be an *organizationally just* association that *uplifts members* through:

- 1.Sustaining a relevant, innovative, and meaningful annual conference.
- 2.Communicating scholarly research in traditional and innovative ways.
- 3.Advancing members’ research, teaching, and advocacy skills and impact.

## Timeline

**Phase I: Alignment and Re-Alignment (2020):** The immediate focus will be to continue the conversations and work started within the strategic planning workgroups. ASHE will spend a year continuing to evaluate, aligning, and re-aligning our processes, policies, and procedures.

**Phase II: A Re-Focused Organization (2021):** ASHE will build upon the foundation of Phase I to expand our services and programs, including developing strategic partnerships and outreach.

**Phase II: Preparing for the 50<sup>th</sup> (2022):** ASHE will engage in a new strategic planning process.

# SUSTAINING A RELEVANT, INNOVATIVE, AND MEANINGFUL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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*Conference surveys reveal that the conference helps attendees cultivate research ideas, provide an effective mechanism for promoting career and professional development goals, provides opportunities for networking and building connections with other colleagues, and offers meaningful and relevant pre-conference sessions. However, there are opportunities to ensure greater relevancy across roles and career stages, quality feedback from reviewers and discussants, and elevation of research presented in poster and roundtable sessions.*

## **Phase I\***

*\*All Conference goals are in Phase I to ensure that ASHE's largest and core event is sustainable for the long-term. As such, the foundation developed in Phase I is intended to empower the Conference Steering Committee moving forward.*

### **Goal 1: ASHE will re-align the conference structure and operations to increase efficiency and impact.**

- ▲ Create a Conference Coordinating Committee to include the chairs of relevant committees and coordinators (e.g., pre-con chairs, ASHE Dash, local liaison, an Indigenous liaison, etc.) as well as the ASHE Conference Coordinator. This committee will be charged with serving as an umbrella group to coordinate the various aspects of conference planning and ensuring that efforts are mutually reinforcing and not overlapping.
- ▲ Develop a Conference Operations Manual and a Conference Program Manual to include long-term and sustainable policies that will help guide the work of the Conference Coordinating Committee, but which also allow the President and Program Committee Chairs the ability to mold the conference within their own vision.

### **Goal 2: ASHE will strengthen the review and feedback process.**

- ▲ Update the reviewer form to include measures that ensure reliability amongst reviewers and word minimums for feedback so that reviewers are required to enter substantive comments.
- ▲ Develop resources to assist members in the review process to include examples of reviews and guidance on how to complete a successful review (e.g., a webinar, instructions).
- ▲ Develop expectations, standards, and trainings for the discussant role. This will include an overview on providing feedback and different ways in which to structure the discussant time during sessions.

### **Goal 3: ASHE will develop a policy and procedures on engaging with local communities.**

- ▲ Continue work with the Land Acknowledgement Workgroup to implement and refine recommendations.
- ▲ Develop the role, expectations, and resources for a Local Engagement Sub-Committee, housed under the Conference Steering Committee.

# COMMUNICATING SCHOLARLY RESEARCH IN TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE WAYS

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*ASHE publications have historically spoken largely to ASHE members and higher education researchers and students; they have not had a far reach into policy or practice. ASHE's scholarly journal, *The Review of Higher Education*, has a strong reputation in the field – it historically has been a “top tier” journal and has all of the traditional metrics that suggest it is prestigious and influential (e.g. high rejection rate, high impact factor). However, there is an opportunity for dynamic and cutting-edge publications, as well as a consideration of whether it is possible to be elements of both types of publications at the same time.*

## **Phase I:**

**Goal 1: ASHE will strengthen *The Review of Higher Education* to increase transparency and impact.**

- ⤴ Develop a relevant, equitable, and financially sustainable vision for the journal; make this vision publicly available.
- ⤴ Develop a community informed statement on research and rigor, embracing multiple epistemologies, methodologies, and perspectives.
- ⤴ Develop a general timeline from submission to print which will be publicly available.
- ⤴ Ensure on-going assessment of reviewer feedback as well as ensure the term limits on reviewers are equitably enforced.

**Goal 2: ASHE will tout its historical publications and proceedings.**

- ⤴ Archive, synthesize, and promote the history of ASHE publications. Archive conference presentation citations and link to subsequent publications.

## **Phase II:**

**Goal 1: ASHE will develop ways to ensure the research of ASHE members is communicated to a wider audience.**

- ⤴ Develop tools and resources to amplify the impact of *The Review of Higher Education*.
- ⤴ Explore other avenues besides *The Review* to amplify scholarly work in dynamic and cutting-edge ways to both internal members and external audiences.

# ADVANCING MEMBERS' RESEARCH, TEACHING, AND ADVOCACY SKILLS AND IMPACT

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*ASHE has a long history of supporting the socialization and professional development of graduate students and early career professionals in higher education as they transition into academia. Existing professional development spaces help to foster relationships that support and advance the professional development of ASHE members with social identities and/or interests in these particular dimensions or domains of higher education. Currently, professional development opportunities are offered in a face-to-face format just prior to or within the annual conference; many of the professional development opportunities afforded to members are focused on tenure-track faculty at the beginning of their careers; and little comprehensive assessment of professional development is conducted to ensure it meets members' needs and outcomes it espouses.*

## Phase I

### **Goal 1: ASHE will coordinate and standardize professional development opportunities.**

▲ Professional development programs will be re-aligned under a Professional Development Committee. This committee will be charged with institutionalizing the learning outcomes, curriculum, target audience, and financial plans (i.e., self-sustaining, net neutral, or revenue generating) of each program, ensuring long-term sustainability and consistency.

### **Goal 2: ASHE will provide greater operational support for professional development.**

▲ Hire staff to support professional development, with funding to be sustained through revenue generated from offerings.

## Phase II

### **Goal 1: ASHE will ensure programs are relevant, unique, and career-spanning.**

▲ Conduct an environmental scan internally and externally to determine and fill gaps in opportunities. Specific areas of expansion should include opportunities for members to build their scholarly communications skills (e.g., publishing in traditional and innovative mediums, advocacy skills, etc.) and relevant socialization for graduate students.

▲ Identify and develop ways to support members in their advocacy efforts (rather than ASHE taking on an advocacy role).

### **Goal 2: Identify natural and relevant partners.**

▲ Develop partnerships with other organizations to offer cross-interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary professional development opportunities (e.g., ACPA, NCFDD, etc).

# UPLIFTING MEMBERS AS AN ORGANIZATIONALLY JUST ASSOCIATION

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*With an extensive and growing volunteer base, we must align our processes, procedures, and policies with realities. This includes ensuring transparency, impact, and efficiency in all that we do. To achieve the conference, scholarly communication, and professional development goals outlined above, the following governance and operational goals must be achieved.*

## **Phase I:**

### **Goal 1: ASHE will review and refine its organizational structure.**

- ▲ Define and designate governance and programming committees to include clear charges for all entities, position descriptions for all volunteer roles, and a support system from the ASHE Office that includes a meaningful on-boarding and recognition plan. This may also include eliminating or combining related committees.

### **Goal 2: ASHE will recognize the various entities that comprise it.**

- ▲ Develop a three-tiered structure of entity recognition to include internal and ASHE governance, purpose, activities, resource allocation, rights and responsibilities, and triennial review process.
- ▲ Develop standards for ASHE Presidential Commissions to include topic selection, charge, and resource allocation.

### **Goal 3: ASHE will support the use of social science research in policy and practice.**

- ▲ Evaluate ASHE's Position Taking Policy to align the process with Association values and realities of contemporary higher education issues. We have lived with the original policy for a number of years and had a chance to see its affordances and limitations.

### **Goal 4: ASHE will re-commit and clarify its commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity.**

- ▲ Create a Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Standing Committee with a seat on the Board of Directors. This committee will be charged with both being the voice of historically minoritized groups as well as ensuring ASHE (through staff, volunteers, and members) upholds its commitment.
- ▲ Review and update the statement on diversity, inclusion, and equity.

### **Goal 5: ASHE will expand opportunities for graduate student involvement and recognition.**

- ▲ Develop an ASHE Graduate Student Committee, to be co-chaired by the two ASHE Graduate Student Representatives elected to the Board of Directors. This committee will be charged with including graduate student input to drive membership, programming, and targeted support services and identifying opportunities across the Association where training and socialization graduate students to the profession are absent.

# UPLIFTING MEMBERS AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL JUST ASSOCIATION (continued)

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## **Goal 6: ASHE will be a financially sustainable organization**

- ⤴ Develop a budget process and policies to ensure organizational longevity as well as access to the organization for members.
- ⤴ Develop standards for membership categories, dues, and conference registration, including a biannual review process. This should include ensuring membership data is accurate and measurable.
- ⤴ Develop advancement and fundraising policies, which should include long-term philanthropic priorities (e.g., the graduate student travel fund) as well as short-term campaigns for immediate needs.

## **Goal 7: ASHE and its members will act based upon clearly stated and articulated values.**

- ⤴ Refine values statements such as ethical principles and conflict of interest policy; create an internal mechanism for addressing breaches (note: this could be the same ethics committee noted in next bullet).
- ⤴ Develop anti-harassment policy that addresses harassment in any form (e.g., sexual, racial, bullying, etc.) as well as ramifications for ASHE members. This may include the creation of an ombudsperson/ethics officer/ethic committee.
- ⤴ Develop an accessibility policy which addresses all aspects of the Association, including the conference, scholarly communications, professional development, and general operations.

## **Phase II:**

### **Goal 1: ASHE will employ data-driven decision-making.**

- ⤴ Develop key performance indicators and an assessment program of success for the annual conference.
- ⤴ Develop key performance indicators and an assessment program of success for scholarly communications.
- ⤴ Develop key performance indicators and an assessment program of success for professional development.

### **Goal 2: ASHE will formalize its work through a guide, manual, policies, and/or procedures.**

- ⤴ Each committee will have a guide to direct its work. This should include: the charge from the bylaws, responsibilities of committee members (e.g., a position description), support from the ASHE office, budget, and standard operating procedures.

### **Goal 3: ASHE will review and update its governing documents.**

- ⤴ Review Bylaws and policy documents to ensure alignment (in consideration of this plan and subsequent changes).

*The primary mission of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) is to foster scholarly inquiry of the highest standards of excellence for the purpose of increasing knowledge about and the understanding of higher education.*

The Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) is a scholarly association based in the United States, dedicated to higher education as a field of study. There are over 2,100 members of the association, of whom about 40% are full-time graduate students undertaking master's or doctoral degrees in a range of areas including education and other social sciences. About half of ASHE members are university faculty, mostly in academic programs that focus on some aspect of higher education, such as administration, leadership, or policy. ASHE members also include researchers working in non-university settings, including government, think-tanks, and advocacy organizations. Two to three percent of ASHE members are from outside the United States.

ASHE was incorporated in 1976 in Washington, DC, USA. It emerged from another association, the now-defunct American Association for Higher Education (AAHE). ASHE is managed by a full-time executive director and governed by a board of directors elected by the membership. As of 2019, there are four councils: the Council for the Advancement of Higher Education Programs (CAHEP), Council for Ethnic Participation (CEP), Council for International Higher Education (CIHE), and Council for Public Policy in Higher Education (CPPHE). Standing committees lead activities related to fundraising and philanthropy, publications, awards, position taking, and nominations for elected officers. Presidential commissions, ad hoc committees, and self-formed groups of mutual interests (e.g., athletics, philanthropy, LGBTQ research, studies of liberal arts colleges) exist in a range of formats in- and outside the official governance structure.

The annual conference provides opportunities for higher education scholars to present their research. Conference content is peer-reviewed. About half of the proposals are accepted each year. Authors are then invited to present their work as stand-alone papers, roundtable papers, or posters, or in self-designed paper and symposium sessions. An annual conference program committee is formed each year and other committees are appointed on an ad hoc basis.

ASHE supports researchers through dissemination of research in publications and its annual conference. ASHE owns the academic journal *Review of Higher Education*, which is published by Johns Hopkins University Press in four issues per annual volume. ASHE has overseen several publications designed to advance the study of higher education. With changes to scholarly communication and the ability to access publications electronically, some of these formats were discontinued. The ASHE Reader Series consisted of edited topical volumes (e.g., governance, organizations, diversity, history) that brought together important existing single publications (journal articles, book chapters) for use in graduate courses in higher education. Before these materials were available electronically the ASHE Readers provided convenient sources for instructors and students. The ASHE-ERIC Monograph Series, later the ASHE Monograph Series, was an annual volume of two-to-four issues, treated as topical monographs, synthesizing important areas of knowledge.

ASHE also engages in supporting members' professional development by offering opportunities for ongoing learning. Activities include workshops at the annual conference, synchronous online webinars on research topics or methods, and asynchronous learning through social media and archived material. Some councils offer mentoring programs for early- or mid-career scholars, and periodically ASHE partners with a foundation to sponsor seminars or symposia related to specific topics or research methods.

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