

Regional Task Force Report to the AAGT Board:

This task force, originally conceived during the board retreat that took place at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, CA in September of 2014, was created to address the need to clarify the relationship between AAGT and the regions, the risk of AAGT being associated with regional conferences in the absence of a formal proposal form, and concerns for the need for regional conference co-sponsorship and post-evaluation protocols. In addition, the task force was to explore the structure of regions and the function of the Regional Contact Person and to evaluate whether this board position continues to be necessary.

Board members Adam Kincel, Brad Larsen-Sanchez, Burt Lazarin, Maryanne Nicholls, and Patricia Tucker volunteered to be members of the task force. Later, board member Deirdre Winter (Regional Development Fund Coordinator) and AAGT members Charlie Bowman and Robert Resnick joined the task force.

Following is the report that was made to the board by the task force:

Regional Task Force Proposal – Version 4.5 - Final

14 July 2016

Committee Members: Charlie Bowman, Adam Kincel, Brad Larsen-Sanchez, Burt Lazarin, Maryanne Nicholls, Robert Resnick, Patricia Tucker & Deirdre Winter

1) A task force devoted to thinking about the role of AAGT regions was formed at the Asilomar conference board retreat and met and identified the following areas as important ones for our memberships' consideration regarding the AAGT regions:

a) What constitutes a region? Should a region be defined geographically or by some other delineation? Should regions be set or be constructed as needs emerge?

b) Should AAGT have designated regions at all? What if we did not have regions but allowed groups to apply for AAGT sponsorship as needed if they wish to have a conference or activity and would like sponsorship?

c) If we do have designated regions, what are the responsibilities of the region to AAGT and what are the responsibilities of AAGT to the region?

d) If we have designated AAGT regions, what requirements should AAGT set for a region's AAGT-sponsored conference, meeting, or other activity?

2) The Task Force then developed the following proposal:

a) We are in agreement that having designated AAGT regions will be a benefit to AAGT in the long-term in their ability to advance Gestalt therapy through bringing in more Gestalt practitioners and other interested practitioners on a local level and that establishing AAGT regions will strengthen AAGT's ability to advance Gestalt therapy in the years ahead as our membership continues to grow. We are also recommending that AAGT continue to select Regional Contact people so that communications lines between AAGT and the Region remain clear and accessible.

Notwithstanding the establishment of some designated regions, AAGT will continue to consider applications for support, financial and otherwise, from areas that are not (yet) designated regions. These will be areas where Gestalt therapists are few and far between, which makes it difficult for them to associate and promote the advancement of Gestalt therapy.

i) A "region" is "an area or division, especially part of a country or the world having definable characteristics but not always fixed boundaries

ii) A region can be determined in part by the presence of a number of AAGT member in a particular area, of a gestalt organization or group in that area, and the availability of an AAGT member to represent that area.

b) Should AAGT have designated Regions at all?

i) Alternative 1: Leave the RCP structure in the constitution as it is and recruit an RCP representative to recreate the structure.

ii) Alternative 2: Replace the RCP structure with an alternative?

iii) Alternative 3: Delete RCP from the constitution to enable new grass root movement to emerge. Perhaps a new task force should be created to discuss this matter.

c) Any region that wishes to have an AAGT-sponsored or co-sponsored event may apply to AAGT to do so, establishing that they will meet specific AAGT requirements of sponsorship including:

i) Demonstrating that their event is in full accordance with the same values, Covenant of Community, By-Laws, history and precedents of AAGT.

ii) Have an inclusive recruitment strategy. If any restrictions are made to who may present or participate (e.g. women only conferences), the organizer will present a case why this restriction was necessary.

iii) Submitting in advance to a committee comprised of AAGT board members and non-board members, their plan for their event including theme, overall plan with number of workshops, invited presenters, reviewed workshops, etc. and/or collaborate on this plan with the designated AAGT officer.

iv) That all presentation offerings are reviewed for a determination of whether the content is consistent with Gestalt therapy theory and practice.

v) That the conference structure and offerings are reviewed for a determination of whether the plan for the conference is in accord with the AAGT Covenant of Community.

vi) That Regions must meet these requirements to be eligible for AAGT support in the form of scholarship funds availability, CEU support and publicity.

vi) Requirements for regions that are not designated regions but considered to be worthy of support for development may deviate from the above in justified cases.

d) We ask that AAGT now develop a Regional Event committee that includes some board members and some non-board members and whose purpose it is to review applications from regions.

e) The Regional Task Force did not come to consensus on one of the issues before it; this is the issue of whether Regions choosing to restrict their presenters to local practitioners (i.e. those who live and/or work in their Region) constitutes a violation of the Covenant of Community.

Three types of opinions were presented in this discussion:

- presenters should not be restricted as this is against AAGT practice of inclusion
- although restriction of presenters is not inclusive it should be allowed e.g. for the purpose of subgrouping
- restriction of presenters may be inclusive depending how inclusion is defined.

This discussion should be recorded by the Archivist along a recommendation that it is important that a restriction introduced by a regional conference organising an event in the future is reflected in their title and aims.

f) The Task Force also recommends that the AAGT Board create and maintain an ongoing file with notations from ever changing liaisons (for especially as new issues arise in plans presented to the board), about all AAGT co-sponsored regional events and issues. This will afford future liaison board members an ever growing historical ground by which to be informed – and still not be limited by. Good boundaries need to be both firm, flexible and porous. This file is to be kept by the archivist.

g) We ask the Membership to work together towards consensus on the issue in e. and also to more fully develop the criteria that would be required for AAGT sponsorship of a regional event that are noted above.