Progress Report #2: Strategic Partners for Spiritual Care Continue to Explore Further Collaboration

December 2019

Participating Associations:
- ACPE: The Standard for Spiritual Care & Education
- Association of Professional Chaplains (APC)
- National of Catholic Chaplains (NACC)
- Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)

Representatives:
- Pat Appelhans, APC
- Amy Greene, ACPE
- Trace Haythorn, ACPE
- Sandra Katz, NAJC
- Bryan Kinzbrunner, NAJC
- Jim Letourneau, NACC
- David Lichter, NACC
- Shawn Mai, ACPE
- Ron Oliver, APC
- Jon Overvold, APC
- Joe Perez, APC
- Melissa Walker-Luckett, ACPE

Discussion Update:
On November 20-21, 2019, representatives for the Strategic Partners for Spiritual Care gathered in Cleveland, OH to continue to explore ideas to formalize their relationships. The strategic partners began dialoguing in early 2018 and provided the Joint Statement conveying the early contours of the discussion. In July 2018 they signed a Memorandum of Understanding, in which they envisioned a formal relationship, such as a federation or trade group, to bolster collaboration and efficiency while maintaining their unique cultures and identities. Each association has a rich culture and history, often intertwined but also unique. While maintaining their distinctiveness, the partners want to align their operations to amplify their voice, increase efficiency, and strengthen their relationships in service of shaping the profession. The April 2019 Progress Report #1 established that “The envisioned entity is being designed to accomplish both outward purposes for common efforts in advocacy, research, and marketing; and inward purposes for collaboration on certification, ethics, and other concerns for mutual benefit.” Over the past months, our leaders continued these discussions.

The consistent thematic goal of the discussions is to further advance the field of professional spiritual care as well as each of the association’s missions and shared values. In addition, we expect greater collaboration will increase efficiency and member services. The strategic partners believe that together they can extend the reach of their care and education. Together, they will have more influence and resources to provide spiritual care so desperately needed in our shared world.

As noted in the Progress Report #1, the leaders of CASC/ACSS, due to previously established priorities already in motion, decided not to join the other partners at this time in the exploration of formalizing a
relationship, and therefore did not participate in the Cleveland meeting. However, they remain committed to maintaining a strong relationship with our spiritual care associations.

At the Cleveland meeting, La Piana Consulting, experts in nonprofit collaboration and strategic restructuring, joined the strategic partners to facilitate the conversation and provide objective advice.

La Piana has over 20 years’ experience supporting nonprofits in assessing, negotiating, and implementing mergers, joint ventures, and other forms of strategic partnerships. The consultants will guide the strategic partners in determining what form of collaboration best advances the partners’ missions and shared goals.

La Piana Consulting will also help the partners develop a communication strategy to engage their members in the process and elicit feedback via online townhall meetings, social media, conferences, and surveys. Moving forward, the strategic partners will publish summaries of all the meetings. Most importantly, members are encouraged to participate in the joint conference in Cleveland, OH, May 11-14, 2020. The conference theme is 20/20 Vision: The Future of Spiritual Care. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to consider their shared future together.

The strategic partners encourage their members to participate in the process. Member feedback will drive the envisioning process and identify innovative solutions to meet each of the association’s challenges and actualize opportunities. Members will have the final decision-making power because each association’s membership will vote on the final proposal. As has been the invitation in the past, members are invited to send questions and ideas to forstrategicpartners@gmail.com.