

## Task Force on Shared Conference Week

Notes for Presentation at NADD Business Meeting  
Oct. 14, 2015

Task Force members and their representing organizations:

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The group first met on March 31.

- There was strong support from the members for the concept.
- Because of existing commitments by the organizations it was determined that the first opportunity for a shared conference week was in Dallas in 2020.
- A slogan for the conference period was adopted: "Many Voices-One City-One Week".
- The members agreed to reach out to leaders in BPD, CSWE, SSWR and GADE to determine their engagement and commitment to the concept.

The Task Force met again on September 29 to discuss their findings.

Across all four organizations support was expressed for the concept of bringing the separate conferences together. Multiple concerns also were articulated.

- It may be difficult for faculty and graduate students to be away for one week.
- The cost of attending multiple conferences in one week, including separate registrations, food and lodging may be prohibitive.
- There is concern over conference fatigue affecting productive engagement.
- There may be a loss of funds for organizations, such as BPD, that depend on conference registration.
- October is too early for many doctoral students to be ready for conference interviews and subsequent job talks.
- Finally, SSWR has adopted guidelines for choosing conference sites that take into account the status of union contracts and negotiations at event sites. In effect, these guidelines rule out states that have adopted "Right to Work" statutes. The effect of the guidelines is that SSWR will not hold a conference in Dallas and Orlando where CSWE is booked for 2020 and 2021, respectively.

### **Recommendation**

The Task Force recognizes that, while there are significant concerns, the value of coordinating multiple conferences in one week is worthy of further consideration. Bringing a very large number of social work educators and researchers together in one city has the potential of elevating the national visibility of social work, enhancing discussion of social work education across all levels of the academy, and reducing overall costs of attending multiple conferences.

It is recommended that a task force be created with members who have experience in conference organization and who can represent the constituency of their organization. Such a group would have at least two members from BPD, CSWE, GADE, NADD, and SSWR.

The charge to the new task force should include the following elements.

- Examine the logistics and cost of holding multiple conferences in one week and in one location.
- Model the revenue stream for each organization.
- Consider the conference culture that exists in each organization and how the new model may change that culture.