

NASBA STATE BOARD REPORT

A Digest of Current Developments Affecting State Accountancy Regulation

Spring 2020

Mike Fritz Vice Chair Nominee

W. Michael Fritz, CPA (OH) was selected on May 1 as the Nominating Committee's candidate for NASBA Vice Chair 2020-2021, to stand for election at the October Annual Business Meeting. If elected Vice Chair by the member State Boards of Accountancy, Mr. Fritz will automatically accede to NASBA Chair 2021-2022.

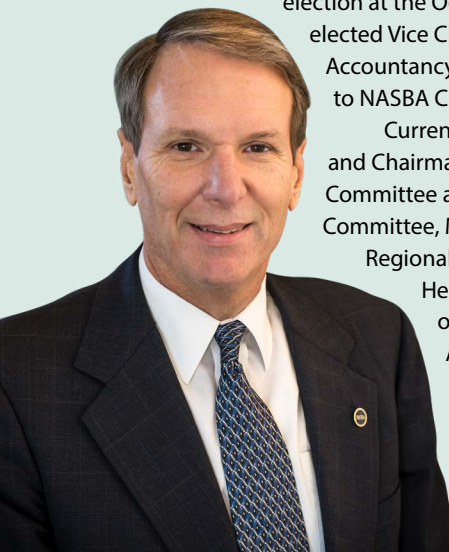
Currently serving as NASBA Treasurer and Chairman of the Regulatory Response Committee and the Administration and Finance Committee, Mr. Fritz is former Great Lakes Regional Director and NASBA Secretary.

He has been an active member of NASBA's Standard-Setting Advisory Committee, Ethics & Strategic Issues Committee, Global Strategies Committee and Relations with Member Boards Committee. He completed his seven-year term with the

Accountancy Board of Ohio in December 2015, having served as Board chair and chair of several committees. Mr. Fritz is a retired senior partner of Deloitte & Touche LLP, in Columbus, OH, where he served as national industry professional practice director for the public sector industry as well as a lead client service partner.

Election of the NASBA officers will be held at the Annual Business Meeting on November 3, 2020 in San Diego, CA. Nominating Committee Chair Janice Gray (OK) has requested that all qualified State Board members interested in serving on the 2020-2021 Board of Directors submit a letter of interest and biographical information to janiceg@cpagray.com or aholt@nasba.org. Nominations for any elected Board position, including the office of Vice Chair, may also be made by at least five Boards if filed with NASBA Chair Laurie J. Tish (WA) at least 10 days prior to the Annual Business Meeting. No nominations from the floor will be recognized.

State Boards from the Central, Middle Atlantic, Pacific and Southeast are asked to submit their nominations for their Nominating Committee representatives, with bios and resumes, to janiceg@cpagray.com or aholt@nasba.org. ♦



Board Approves Rules for Comment



Laurie Tish

More pieces are falling into place for the CPA Evolution. On April 24 the NASBA Board of Directors passed the following motion: "The NASBA Board of Directors approves the draft UAA Model Rule Requirements on Education as presented today by UAA Committee Chair Coalter Baker (TX), to be exposed for public comment for a period of 90 days.

This approval is deferred and contingent upon the successful passage of the AICPA Council resolution supporting the advancement of the CPA Evolution Initiative at the May 2020 Council meeting." In bringing the Model Rules proposal to the NASBA Board, Mr. Baker reported they had been brought to the UAA Committee by the CPA Evolution Initiative, after having consulted with their Education Advisory Group (see *sbr* 1/20) and Exam Advisory Group (see *sbr* 2/20), as well as the NASBA Education Committee. It is anticipated the proposed Model Rules will be posted for comment the last week in May.

Mr. Baker explained that NASBA approves the Model Rules for exposure, but since this is a joint effort, the views of the AICPA are important for the process to work. During the AICPA/NASBA UAA Committee's meeting on March 30, no objections to exposing the Model Rules, as presented, was voiced by the AICPA members. The AICPA Council is expected to vote on their support of the CPA Evolution Initiative in May and the Model Rules are to be distributed after that vote.

Discussion of the Model Rules will be featured during NASBA's

two virtual Regional Meetings in June (see page 7 for more details).

Webinars Set Stage for Model Rules

NASBA Chair Laurie Tish (WA) had reported to the State Boards, during a series of four webinars delivered March 23-26, that the CPA

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Flexibility Aided NASBA's Transition

Preparation for offering more flexibility in employee scheduling actually enabled NASBA to more easily transition to all working home because of COVID-19, NASBA President and Chief Executive Officer Ken Bishop reported to the NASBA Board on April 24. The competition for talent in Nashville had led NASBA's human resources department to recommend offering more possible work-at-home options. To implement this plan, NASBA had purchased more laptop computers, headsets, monitors, etc., to allow for work away from the office.

When Tennessee declared its "Safe at Home" program, NASBA was prepared: "We had the core team working remotely from Day 1," President Bishop told the Board. He anticipates the month of May will look much like April for NASBA – with limited staff in the office and everyone working at home who can work at home. As the flow of work increases, staff released will be recalled from furlough. Both the Guam and New York City NASBA sites are closed, with staff either

working from home or furloughed.

NASBA had started to be concerned about the pandemic in January and began scenario planning in February, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Colleen Conrad told the Board. Although staff did not expect the situation to be as extreme as it turned out to be, "we worked through the scenarios in February, which turned out to be a blessing, because we hit the ground running early."

With campuses closing, the NASBA Center for the Public Trust (CPT) has focused on what can be done virtually. Over 3,000 students are now involved in the student chapters of the CPT. President Bishop noted the CPT's video competition had a record 117 entries this year.

Another transition has been bringing Brenner (Brie) Allen, Esq., on staff as NASBA's regulatory counsel. NASBA now has four attorneys on staff, President Bishop reported. ♦

Volunteer for 2020–21 Committees

The time is right to sign up for NASBA's 2020-2021 committees. All State Board members and NASBA associates are eligible to serve on NASBA's committees. Submissions are requested now – even from those who are currently serving on NASBA committees. All are required to submit a new form to indicate their interest in continuing to serve on a committee.

NASBA Vice Chair Carlos Barrera will be making committee assignments based on the information contained in the submitted

forms. He has requested that those who have a long –standing history on a particular committee consider applying for another committee on which they can add their expertise, experience and knowledge.

Most of the committee work will be accomplished via virtual meetings and e-mail, but may also require in-person meetings when ordinary travel resumes.

Committee interest forms can be found on www.nasba.org. For additional information, contact Noël Winter at nwinter@nasba.org. ♦

Board Approves Rules for Comment (Continued from page 1)

Evolution Initiative was recommending that changes be made to the UAA's Model Rules Article 5, on education, and no modifications to the Uniform Accountancy Act or its Model Rules would be needed to accommodate the changes being proposed for the Uniform CPA Examination. Just eight states need to make changes to offer the proposed Uniform CPA Examination: Oklahoma would need to change its act and Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, Texas and Washington would need to change their rules, as those eight specify the names of each of the Examination's sections.

Ms. Tish briefly summarized the plan for the CPA Evolution, first outlined at the October 2020 Annual Meeting. Since that time feedback from an additional 1,000 individuals had been gathered, and their responses were "overwhelmingly positive and we believe we are on the right track," she stated. Among those surveyed were 639 accounting and non-accounting majors. Asked for their response to the new CPA model, 47 percent of the accounting majors said their interest in taking the Uniform CPA Examination was increased with the new plan, and 33 percent said they would continue to be interested in the Exam. When 98 non-accounting majors were asked about their interest in taking the CPA Examination, half said they were more interested with the proposed Examination.

Some respondents have suggested adding more disciplines as options, besides the three now being proposed (business reporting and analysis; information systems and controls; and tax compliance and planning). Ms. Tish said that would be possible in the future, but the task force believes these three are the right ones for today.

NASBA Vice President – State Relations Daniel J. Dustin, who co-presented the webinars, responded to a question from Southwest

Regional Director Jack Emmons on the schools' ability to handle the expanded curriculum being proposed. Mr. Dustin said that the CPA Evolution Education Advisory Group reported some schools were already covering that content in their programs. The Advisory Group also predicted that some of the smaller schools might focus on a couple of the discipline areas, not all, and might even partner with other schools to offer advanced courses for all three disciplines.

Another question raised at the webinar sessions was why the revised Model Rules state nine hours of internship or independent study can be counted. Ms. Tish said this had been proposed by the Education Advisory Group. It allows for more flexibility in the program, possibly helps to lower education costs and can provide more real world experience. Mr. Dustin noted that currently state rules differ on how many internship hours they allow, ranging from three hours, to six hours, to no specified limit in various states. He underscored the aim is to have the states adopt uniform Model Rules.

Executive Vice President Colleen Conrad answered a question about the possibility of a candidate switching discipline areas on the envisioned Uniform CPA Examination. All candidates would need to take the core components of the Examination, but they would select one of the three disciplines in which to be tested. Ms. Conrad explained that a candidate could switch his or her choice of disciplines, but they would only need to pass one discipline section to complete the total four sections needed within the 18-month period.

Chair Tish was asked if she thought having the new Examination launched in January 2024 was overly optimistic. She responded that the project is now hitting its target dates, so she believes the new Examination would be ready for candidates in early 2024. ♦

PRESIDENT'S MEMO



I Love NY

In late February I landed in New York City to attend several meetings and work in our Manhattan office. When I arrived in baggage claim, I could not help but notice a large and ominous sign that read: "Health Warning – Know the Signs of Coronavirus." While I was fully aware of the impact of the coronavirus in China, and the possibility of the contagion reaching the United States (NASBA had already had internal discussions about preparing for it), the bright yellow sign caught my attention. By the time I flew home to Nashville a few days later, I could sense the mood in New York was changing. While I had no idea that the trip would be my last one for the foreseeable future, I instinctively perceived the threat. One of my last



Ken L. Bishop
President & CEO

thoughts before boarding the flight home was, "I love New York."

I distinctly remember the first time I visited New York City. As a small-town boy from Central Missouri, I was overwhelmed by the mass of people, the sounds, the smells and the tremendous energy of the city. I never imagined that I would be there. While NASBA had its 2017 Annual Meeting there, it is estimated that nearly 65 percent of Americans have never been to New York, and will never see the Statue of Liberty, Times Square or the Empire State Building. I certainly would not have contemplated that someday I would have staff, countless acquaintances and dear friends there, much less that I would travel to the city multiple times a year. Though many will not experience actually being there, almost everyone has seen the tee shirts, sweatshirts and bumper stickers with the slogan "I Love (heart) NY".

You are probably asking: What does this have to do with accounting? Good question. It probably has more to do with people than the profession, but we cannot ignore that New York City is the financial capital of the U.S. Many big firms are headquartered there, as are the AICPA, IFAC, the New York Stock Exchange and countless other financial institutions. What happens there impacts us all, including this horrific pandemic.

Within a few weeks of my returning home, we had curtailed all travel, cancelled conferences and ultimately shut down all our offices. My focus became the wellbeing of NASBA, the safety of our staff and volunteers, and ensuring that we could maintain our core mission responsibilities to State Boards.

In recent days, the term "reopen" has taken on a new significance. Businesses, cities, states and territories are all exploring how and when to open-up their economies. NASBA is no different. We have developed a four-phase plan to get to what will likely be our "new normal." We have enhanced our technology capabilities and are developing new alternative work strategies. Face masks, sanitizers, social distancing and increased working from home will be a part of our lives for some time, but we are encouraged by the progress that has been made in "flattening the curve" and the opportunity to allow business functions to resume.

The recent decision by Prometric to begin opening testing centers is a key component of business resumptions. Our monitoring of social media indicates a pent-up desire and readiness of candidates eager to sit for the Uniform CPA Examination. We are anxious to be able to accommodate these candidates. We stand ready to help State Boards in any way we can as state offices reopen and need support. Our intent is to ramp up communications with Executive Directors and State Boards to provide a forum for sharing issues and resolutions.

Most who know me know that I am an optimist, a "glass half full" kind of guy. I believe that we will all get through this with new skills, capacities and capabilities. There will be trying days ahead, but I know we are up to the task. Hopefully we have seen the worst of this epidemic but the impact, both personal and economic, will be with us for the foreseeable future.

My heart goes out to all of those who have been impacted, particularly in urban areas across the country, including New York City which is the epicenter in the United States. The numbers there are astounding. In New York alone there have been over 300,000 cases and nearly 20,000 deaths in a matter of a couple of months, but it is good to see the continuing decrease in number of cases in recent days.

I look forward to thinking, talking and writing about things other than COVID-19 and its impact. There is a lot going on. CPA Evolution, NOCLAR, staff augmentation and other issues and opportunities are still at the forefront of decisions facing the profession, and work and progress continue. Our staff and volunteers have done an amazing job of keeping things moving, which is a great indication of our perseverance and fortitude. I look forward to getting back on an airplane for a meeting in New York City. I will say it again, "I love NY!"

Be safe my friends!

Semper ad meliora (Always toward better things).


— Ken L. Bishop
President & CEO





The New Normal: NASBA Communicates Early and Often to Keep Members Informed

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned traditional methods of communication on their head. Our everyday vocabulary has been augmented to include “quarantine,” “social distancing,” “stay-at-home,” “remote work” and “virtual or Zoom meetings.” Now more than ever, individuals and entities are demanding instantaneous information to remain connected. As a result, overcommunicating (which pre-corona was taboo) is now the new normal. Information is crucial and NASBA has ramped up its communications to keep State Board executive directors, Board members, licensees and CPA Exam candidates in the know.

For more than a century, NASBA has dedicated itself to enhancing the effectiveness of Boards of Accountancy by sharing regulatory updates, accounting news, guidelines and legislative changes. Under the current coronavirus crisis, there is deeper dependency on online communications and NASBA has shifted its communications strategy to respond to this necessity. We are committed to deliver relevant information and breaking news through our online channels with greater frequency and continued transparency.

In the last two months, for example, there has been a significant and concerted effort to increase posts on our social media channels: LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our social media followership has increased to more than 131,000 followers. More

importantly, engagement among followers has increased more than 200 percent. State Board members, candidates, firms and licensees engaged on these channels are seeing the latest news and updates.

As news breaks, we will continue to email targeted communications to specific stakeholder groups (e.g., executive directors, Board members, licensees or candidates). We understand that everyone has different information requirements and we also know that information can be overlooked or lost in the bombardment of daily emails. In response, the Communications Team created the “NASBA RECAP” email blast, which summarizes the entire previous month’s communications. We hope this recap will give individual members the opportunity to select or review news and information most relevant to them.

Under this new communications strategy, the *State Board Report* newsletter, normally published monthly, will now be released on a quarterly basis (in conjunction with NASBA’s January, April, July and October Board meetings). The newsletter, in addition to providing the latest in regulatory developments, will include decisions and positions issued by the NASBA Board of Directors.

This new strategy to communicate early and often will also allow members to be selective while receiving timely and instantaneous information. We hope you will enjoy and join us in embracing the “New Normal.” ♦

Deadlines and Requirements Changed

Extraordinary times have called for extraordinary measures: As CPA testing centers were closed down, Prometric was cancelling scheduled appointments and was allowing candidates to reschedule at their convenience. NASBA recommended to all Boards of Accountancy that all candidates who have Notices to Schedule (NTS) expiring April 1 through June 30, 2020 be given an extension to September 30, 2020. In addition, the second quarter testing window was extended from June 10, 2020 to June 30, 2020. Then in late April, as some states were talking about starting back to business, Prometric announced it will resume testing for the CPA Examination in the United States as of May 1 in specific locations, as federal guidance has the CPA profession falling under “essential services.” Candidates have been advised to check <https://www.prometric.com/corona-virus-updates> for updates and site closure information.

NASBA also recommended Boards of Accountancy consider offering a grace period until October 31, 2020 for completing continuing professional education requirements for those licensees who have CPE reporting years ending on or before October 31, 2020. NASBA wrote to the Boards: “The use of a grace period will allow licensees adequate time to adjust their continuing education learning methods due to recent cancellations of conferences and live CPE events across the country, and to meet the growing demands

of their clients during this difficult time. It will also allow Boards of Accountancy the time to assess the impact COVID-19 has had on their operations and to prioritize important Board activities.”

Accountancy Boards have been working in different ways to serve the public. For example, Massachusetts allowed in-person visits by the public to the Board’s office, but only on an appointment basis. Nebraska went from one staff person at a time in its Board Office, to an all remote office when there was an increase in the COVID-19 threat. Virtual Accountancy Board meetings were made possible in Montana, Tennessee and Wyoming, and Delaware will allow the public to participate via phone. California is permitting documents to be scanned and e-mailed to a designated address.

The Texas Board, on March 12, adopted an emergency rule revision to its Rule 511.57 Qualified Accounting Courses to eliminate the requirement that at least 15 of a candidate’s 30 semester hours of upper division accounting courses must be from classes held in-person. This was done in recognition of many universities moving their classes online because of COVID-19 concerns. The revision is good for 120 days, commencing on March 12 but not retroactively, and may be extended for another 60 days by the Board.

How Boards are working through the COVID-19 environment will be discussed during NASBA’s June virtual Regional Meetings. ♦

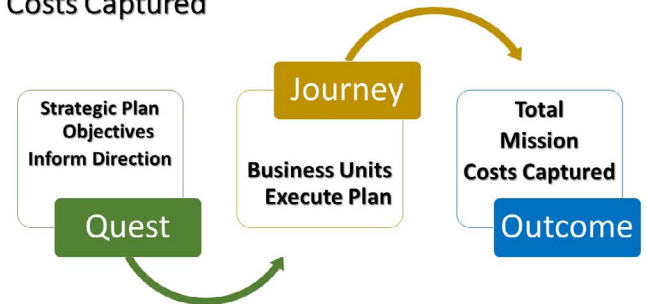
Matching Mission with Activities

A project to better evaluate NASBA's execution of its Strategic Plan was endorsed by the NASBA Board at their meeting on April 24. Beginning in January, the internal management team had identified 235 activities that align to the 13 areas described in NASBA's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. NASBA Chief Sourcing & Strategy Officer Cheryl Farrar told the Board that 74 of the identified activities were mission-related and had not previously been captured. NASBA's Strategic Plan Smartsheet has been updated to include them. Many of the individual activities were found to address several of the 13 areas.

"This discussion led us to taking steps to capture the strategic objectives' costs, so they can be linked to the strategic plan," Ms. Farrar stated. The progress of these mission-related activities is being monitored throughout the remainder of the fiscal year and the Smartsheet updated on a regular basis.

NASBA Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Michael Bryant reported: "One of the discussions led to quantifying the resources devoted to the Strategic Plan. In evaluating our execution of the Strategic Plan, we need some sort of comparative measure of where we are devoting our resources." Meaningful, measurable activities are being mapped to objectives and, where there is

Strategic Plan to Total Mission Services Costs Captured



redundancy, activities are being removed and gaps are being addressed.

The staff directors and managers of the business units are determining allocations of their respective activities to the Strategic Plan's objectives.

It has been recommended to Vice Chair Carlos Barrera (TX) that NASBA's current Strategic Plan be refined during 2020-2021 to refocus some objectives and clarify some definitions. ♦

ED/Legal Conferences Go Virtual



Grace Berger

As a result of attendance and travel restrictions, on March 18 the 2020 Executive Director and Society CEO Conference and the Legal Counsel Conference became NASBA's first virtual conferences. Attendance numbers for both conferences neared those of the same conferences' previous years' attendance, with approximately 197 individuals listening in as Executive Directors Committee Chair Grace Berger (MT) welcomed all. The meetings covered ongoing topics such as legal cases, peer review, cybersecurity, and the Uniform CPA Examination, but also included sessions on contingency planning and Zoom as the coronavirus climate demanded.

"Contingency planning" was a late addition to the agenda, calling on NASBA Vice President – State Board Relations Daniel J. Dustin to report on how NASBA, AICPA and the Prometric testing centers were handling the coronavirus issue. NASBA had sent out recommendations to all states that CPA candidates who have expiration dates on their notices to test between April 1 until June 30 should be automatically extended until the end of September. As of March 13, most Boards had already approved the recommendation, Mr. Dustin reported, and NASBA would be reaching out to the candidates to update them.

Although much of the AICPA team is working from home, no impact on the Examination's scoring is anticipated, Mr. Dustin was told by AICPA Vice President Mike Decker. "We are organized to transmit scores to the Boards and follow our normal procedures," Mr. Dustin assured the Executive Directors.

The significance of meetings between the regulators and the professional associations was underscored in a presentation by Beth Thoresen, the American Institute of CPAs' Director of Peer Review Operations. Information about the peer review process, which years ago Accountancy Boards were told could not be made available to them through the AICPA's Facilitated State Board Access program, now are becoming accessible. The AICPA has transitioned its Peer Review Program from including 28 Administering Entities to now having only 14.

Ms. Thoresen reported that the Nevada Society of CPAs held a meeting in May 2019 with representatives from the six state Boards for which the Society serves as the Administering Entity of the peer review program. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity for the Society and the Boards to learn about each others' processes and they expect to hold a similar meeting later this year. She recommended other states hold similar meetings with their Administering Entities.

The AICPA's Facilitated State Board Access program, first launched in 2009, is now giving access to firm information to 45 State Boards. As of January 2020, firms in 15 states are requiring some form of facilitated access for re-licensure.

AICPA polled the State Boards to find out what more information would be helpful to them, and 42 Boards responded with their requests. Ms. Thoresen explained: "Now when firms are enrolling, or re-enrolling in the peer review program, they give permission on what information will be shared." New information items added to the list of shareable reports include:

1. Enrolled Firms
2. Firms Expanding Access
3. Firms with Accepted Reviews
4. Firms by Report Grade
5. Firms with Pass with Deficiencies or Fail Report Grades
6. Dropped and Terminated Firms.

The AICPA has prepared a six-page frequently asked question document <https://www.aicpa.org/content/dam/aicpa/advocacy/state/downloadabledocuments/fsba-faq-sboas.pdf> to explain all the information currently available to the Boards and has also prepared a video on the FSBA.

Ms. Thoresen said the coronavirus is expected to impact the dates of peer reviews and the AICPA is considering a webinar for State Boards on that topic. The Administering Entities already have the authority to permit off-site system reviews without advance permission. Those firms that can't accommodate off-site reviews can request extensions. ♦

ARPL Makes a Difference



Skip Braziel

Metrics show that the Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) is making a difference, reported Skip Braziel, AICPA Vice President of State Regulatory and Legislative Affairs, during a webinar for the State Board executive directors held on March 31. NASBA is a member of ARPL, along with eight other organizations that in total represent over 700,000 licensed professionals. ARPL's advertising campaign

has reached millions of people and there are more than 23,000 users of its website. The Alliance is developing content, including talking points, letters to the editor, testimonials, videos and targeted geographical messages, to drive its message that professional licensing is different from other types of licensing.

Thirty-seven State Boards of Accountancy have been in existence for more than a century, John Johnson, NASBA Director of Legislative and Government Affairs, told the webinar's audience. He explained that anti-regulation groups have been half-telling stories: "What they view as barriers, we view as standards. The standards provide a level playing field and should not be viewed as barriers: It would be

dangerous to do so," he remarked.

In 2019 ARPL conducted a survey asking people what they thought about professional licensing. While 75 percent of the respondents felt insuring qualifications for certain professionals is important, when asked how they felt about changing professional licensure, 43 percent replied they did not know.

Mr. Braziel said the key takeaway from the poll was that although the respondents appreciated professional licensing, most did not understand how the boards or licensing works and are open to persuasion. "We need to connect our stories to people's everyday lives," he advised. There is a need to: (1) continue to remind the public of unintended consequences, (2) to back up the message with data, and (3) when talking to legislators to have research-based arguments.

Mr. Braziel recommended the Boards check ARPL's material on <http://www.responsiblelicensing.org>. Mr. Johnson reminded all that current state-by-state information on anti-regulation and other legislation can be found on NASBA's website <https://nasba.org/mc/legislative-support/legislativetracking>. ♦

NASBA Responds to BOE and PCAOB

NASBA encourages the AICPA to continue to evolve the Uniform CPA Examination by introducing additional analysis and evaluation simulations across the sections, but is also concerned about de-emphasis of business law topics on the Examination, as stated in its April 30, 2020 response to the AICPA Board of Examiners' "Maintaining the Relevance of the Uniform CPA Examination: An Exposure Draft and Invitation to Comment," <https://nasba.org/app/uploads/2020/05/April-30-2020-NASBA-Response-to-Practice-Analysis.pdf>. The letter documents NASBA's support for the removal of essay questions in BEC, but urges "the AICPA to continue research projects into testing communication in conjunction with content and skills for inclusion in future versions of the Exam."

The NASBA response letter was developed by several NASBA Committees over the past few months and: "All who participated in drafting the NASBA response believe that completely removing state and local (S&L) government accounting from the Exam is inappropriate. All feel that, at a minimum, basic coverage should be retained," the letter from Chair Laurie J. Tish and President and CEO Ken L. Bishop states.

Aligning the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board's quality control standards with the proposed international standards is supported by NASBA, states NASBA Chair Tish's and President and CEO Bishop's March 11, 2020 letter in response to the PCAOB's concept

release entitled "Potential Approach to Revisions to the PCAOB Quality Control Standards." It states: "Aligning standards allows CPAs and firms to adopt responses to be utilized across engagement teams and within their networks/affiliations." They also voice support for principles-based standards, rather than rules-based standards, "as that approach would help with the scalability of quality control standards for smaller firms."

The PCAOB asked for comments on the sufficiency of principles-based requirements to prompt firms to identify and respond to risks. The NASBA letter states: "We believe that supplemental direction is needed. It would be helpful for the PCAOB to issue guidance, including illustrative QC policy documents, especially for the envisioned incremental content for PCAOB audits. The guidance should include illustration of how the content could be scaled for audits of less-complex entities."

Read NASBA's full response on <https://nasba.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Mar-11-2020-NASBA-Response-to-PCAOB-QC-Release.pdf>. Letters in response to the International Ethics Standards Board of Accountants' exposure drafts on non-assurance services and on fee-related provisions of the international Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants will be released in May. These will also be posted on the publications page of NASBA's website as they are submitted. ♦

Word Travels Fast! Continuous CPA Exam Testing starts July 1.

Tacking on to COVID-19

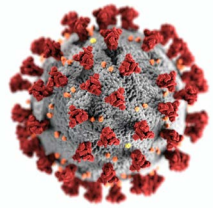
While State Accountancy Boards may be focused on keeping their activities running smoothly despite COVID-19 limitations, others are looking at this as a time to promote their legislative agendas. NASBA Director of Legislative and Governmental Affairs John Johnson warned NASBA's Regional Directors on April 23 that the Heritage Foundation's National Coronavirus Recovery Commission recommended to states, in their *COVID Recovery Report* (page 5), the removal of occupational licensing requirements. The Report also recommends reciprocity expansion:

"The Commission recommends that states remove occupational licensing requirements. States have imposed numerous occupational licensing requirements that in many instances are simply artificial barriers to entry that can inhibit individuals' ability to pursue entrepreneurial work. These should be eliminated. Similarly, states should extend reciprocity so that licensed individuals in one state are not subject to additional requirements in the new state. Eliminating or significantly reducing occupational licensing requirements can help to get people back to work and can also provide a state with access

to individuals with high-demand skills. For example, Massachusetts created a one-day approval process to license doctors with out-of-state licenses as a means to expand access to medical care in response to the virus."

The Goldwater Institute has also recently released a paper that lays out several goals: "We propose four separate reforms. First, we recommend legislation that would amend state administrative codes to eliminate judicial deference to agency decision-making. Second, we recommend Right to Earn a Living legislation that imposes a more protective legal standard in occupational licensing cases. Third, we suggest model legislation that requires agencies to issue permits based on clear, unambiguous standards and comply with strict deadlines. Finally, we recommend a regulatory reset that requires the legislature to re-authorize regulations on a regular basis."

President Ken L. Bishop advised the NASBA Board: "State Boards should be super aware of anti-regulation legislation appearing. We are capable of defending good legislation and are ready to get into the debate." ♦



2020 First Virtual Regionals

NASBA's 2020 Western Regional Meeting will be held June 3-4 and NASBA's 2020 Eastern Regional Meeting will be held June 10-11 -- both on line. No travel to arrange, no rooms to book, no time wasted in the airport -- but also no receptions, no catching up with friends and no meeting new people. On the positive side, the virtual meetings will be an opportunity for Board members and staff who might not otherwise have the funding to attend a NASBA Regional Meeting to be part of this year's Regionals. We are looking forward to larger participation than ever.

Plans now call for presentations on the progress of the CPA Evolution Initiative, proposed Uniform Accountancy Act Model Rules on education, how Boards are facing and working through the COVID-19 challenge, cybersecurity concerns, legal updates, legislative battles and what was learned from the Board of Examiners' Practice



Analysis. Thanks to the features of ZOOM, there will be Regional breakout sessions and voting for Nominating Committee members.

This year nobody will need to consult the "what to wear" guide -- just come as you are. Check the NASBA website for registration details soon. ♦

Global Study of Profession Concluded

With the retirement of Professors Gert Karreman and Hans Verkruijsse, they have concluded their research on the accounting profession, which was aided by NASBA. Their final report, entitled "A Conceptual Competency Framework for Accountants in Regulated Functions, for Accountants in Business and for Accounting Technicians" was released at the beginning of this year. It is based on the global development of accountancy education and the current status of recognition of professional qualifications.

The research team concluded: "...due to globalization and the influence of international standards (including the International Education Standards), convergence between professional accountancy qualifications is happening. It is up to the stakeholders to find new ways to address recognition of qualifications between different countries. The principle of substantial equivalence (instead of equality) is a useful, and probably necessary, tool to achieve this objective."

Their research spanned over two decades, with the project's first publication in 2002. Over the years many experts aided their work. Dr. Karreman was awarded the NASBA Accounting Education Research Grant in 2012 for his work with Dr. Belverd E. Needles on

the conceptual model for analyzing accountancy qualifications internationally, which they reported on to NASBA in March 2013. NASBA's former director of governmental, international and professional affairs, Linda Biek, now the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs' director of compliance, was one of the experts thanked by the researchers for her part in the project.

Drs. Karreman and Verkruijsse ask: "Twenty years after the first study an important question is how well did accountancy education cope with its new environment?" They observe that International Education Standards are providing a global standard for accounting education and standards like IFRS and ISA are being adopted on a country level. A competency approach is replacing the theoretical approach to accountancy education. They believe this type of approach should be furthered "in particular in regard to work in the IT environment."

Although the professors see recognition of qualifications developing well among countries, they also point out such recognition is lagging for those countries that do not use "some major languages like English and French" or that are outside "regional conglomerates (like the EU)." ♦