



AASECT STRATEGIC PLAN (7/1/20-6/30/23)

Written by the AASECT Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF)

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FINAL DRAFT FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS VOTE

May 29, 2020

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Transparency Statement & Process Documentation

This document and the Strategic Plan included within was created by the Strategic Planning Task Force. The Strategic Planning Task Force was convened by Past President, Debby Herbenick in November 2017, when during a board meeting Tameca Harris-Jackson, Membership Chair at the time, raised the idea of creating a strategic plan to guide AASECT moving forward. Eli Green volunteered to chair a board Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF). The President (Susan Stiritz), Secretary (Melissa Novak) and Executive Director (Kellie Braband) joined the task force, along with Tameca Harris-Jackson. The President-Elect (Chris Fariello) came on the task force at the start of his term about 2 months after the task force convened. The goal and primary aim of the SPTF is to take an aerial view of the organization, assess its current strengths and weaknesses, and use those to create a formal Strategic Plan that identifies avenues for intentional, long term change. The strategic plan must further align AASECT with its mission, strengthen the services provided to and for our members, and ensure the health of the organization as a whole.

The work of the SPTF is to create the strategic plan for the organization, with input from the AASECT membership and leadership. The SPTF utilized several sources of member feedback to inform the strategic plan that we are presenting for your review here. These included annual member surveys from 2016 and 2017, a non-member survey that was conducted in 2017 to gather information from lapsed members and sexuality professionals who were not interested in joining AASECT, review of member concerns raised at prior board meetings and business meetings, one-on-one conversations with AASECT members and AASECT past and present leadership, the listening session in Puerto Rico, feedback from volunteers and committee chairs, feedback given by conference and institute presenters, feedback posted on the list-serve and social media channels, and outreach to Board Members or the AASECT Office. The Board of Directors (BOD) also held a one-day meeting/training in November 2018 on best practices for strategic planning, which included an organizational assessment to better understand our key areas of need and strengths. As a part of the strategic plan we are recommending to the BOD, we are including changes ~~with~~ to make feedback channels more accessible and effective, which will then ~~be able to~~ better inform future strategic plans.

After reviewing and gathering all of this information, the strategic planning process involved identifying 4-6 overall goals for AASECT leadership to focus on over the course of the next 3+ years. Within each of those goals, we identified objectives to support that goal. Each of the objectives has multiple action steps which identify the concrete steps to be taken. This current strategic plan focuses on addressing structural issues and concerns within AASECT—particularly those related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)—that have hindered us from being able to implement organization-wide changes thus far, to better prepare us to address more non-structural issues moving forward. Once approved, the strategic plan covers a three-year time period (July 1, 2020-June 30, 2023).

Throughout the strategic planning process, we sought to hold ourselves accountable for identifying areas where AASECT has unintentionally created individual and systemic barriers for new and current members, particularly those who experience higher levels of oppressions, and identify the

structures within AASECT that hold these inequities in place. Multiple members of the SPTF have engaged in formal training in anti-racist and anti-oppressive practices and applied those learnings to help inform the process of drafting the strategic plan. We also fully acknowledge our limitations and liabilities as a predominantly white group, and one being comprised entirely of Board Members and the Executive Director to be the ones to lead this work.

One of our key criteria for this process has been ensuring that we are soliciting feedback from the AASECT membership about the strategic plan and openly discussion what is included with interested members. The task force had many conversations about how to best achieve getting feedback from as wide of a range of the AASECT membership as is feasible, and in a way that engages practices of equitable feedback opportunities. Where we landed was hosting a series of Zoom calls where the SPTF could review the goals and objectives of the strategic plan with members and receive conversational, real time feedback on the drafts. In considering the audiences for the Zoom calls, we intentionally started with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee to center the feedback from this committee in the process, and to check that we have accurately captured high level areas of need for AASECT to address in order to create a more equitable field, and aligning these values in our professional practices. The SPTF met with the DEI committee on 11/7/19 for their initial feedback and the first round of edits has been made, and the final version of this document with all other changes has gone back to the DEI committee for their feedback prior to presenting this to the Board for a formal vote of approval at the May 2020 Board Meeting.

The Board of Directors reviewed the current draft of the Strategic Plan in Nov 2019, and approved bringing the plan to the membership through 3-4 zoom calls with members. We created one specifically for all committee members at all levels, SIG leaders, Regional Reps and Organizational CE Providers on Feb 4, 2020. The second and third calls (2/14/20 and 2/21/20) were open to all members, including those who were unable to make the first call. Invites were sent out via the list-serve, e-blast, and social media. We also directly invited 75 members who were randomly selected to be invited based on a random number generator that corresponds to membership ID numbers. All attendees were invited to provide written feedback after the call, which was available for a minimum of two weeks after the last Zoom call. Anyone who was not able to attend the calls but wanted to participate was given a copy of the presentation and strategic plan and was invited to complete the post-call survey to provide their feedback.

During these Zoom calls, an AASECT staff member/volunteer documented the feedback anonymously (Please see attached.) The SPTF reviewed the feedback in whole and made slight revisions based on the feedback received. Overall we received consistent messaging from members that we hit many of the key areas of need and that members are in support of the changes that we are proposing. The feedback that was not able to be implemented because it is beyond the scope of what is achievable for this plan, is documented and held in the addendum to this strategic plan so that it will be held in consideration for the next strategic plan, and that feedback provided is documented and available to all for accountability and other purposes.

As the members of the SPTF, we believe that this strategic plan lays out a path to significantly strengthen our organization, what we provide to members, the quality of the work that we do, and starts to engage more anti-oppressive principles and practices. We also acknowledge that what we

have laid out here is limited and has flaws. We intend this as a starting point and know that there is much work that will need to be done to fully achieve these goals. It is our hope that by having a robust strategic plan that truly represents the wants and needs of our membership, will help engage our membership in this process and puts us on this path to actualizing these goals.

This document is respectfully submitted to the Board of Directors for their approval by:

- The Strategic Planning Task Force (Nov 2017- June 30, 2020)

Eli R. Green (Chair), Tameca Harris-Jackson, Susan Stirtiz, Chris Fariello, Melissa Novak, and Kellie Braband

The attached Strategic Plan was presented to the AASECT Board of Directors for a vote on May 29, 2020, and was approved with the gratitude of the Board.

AASECT STRATEGIC PLAN (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023)

Goal 1: To examine AASECT services, policies and procedures through the lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) - specifically, but not limited to, inequities in class and race - to shift the organizational culture towards one that centers DEI as a fundamental component of our organization.

- **Initiative 1A:** Identify and implement opportunities for AASECT leadership (Board of Directors/BOD and Bostrom) to better understand—and be better prepared to implement—leadership best practices from a DEI-centered, racial justice, and anti-oppression perspective, while also shifting board culture to be more affirming of diverse identities and experiences.
- **Initiative 1B:** Complete a comprehensive review of the organization to evaluate the organization’s barriers and opportunities for increasing social and racial justice to ensure all AASECT members are able to fully participate in the organization.
- **Initiative 1C:** Create more opportunities to allocate financial resources to support participation in AASECT and related events/programs by those who would otherwise experience significant struggle to attend, or not be able to participate in AASECT events, credentialing, and leadership opportunities. (See also Goal 6)
- **Initiative 1D:** Increase awareness at all levels of the organization about the urgency for adopting and utilizing a DEI lens in sex therapy, counseling, and education, while increasing systems in place to support members in their DEI related learning to advance their personal and professional practices. (See also Goal 2, Initiative 2)
- **Initiative 1E:** Provide greater access to our members to participate in (and lead) our activities/events, volunteer/leadership opportunities, and certification, regardless of financial or physical limitations. (See also Goal 4).
- **Initiative 1F:** Increase effectiveness of data collection related to our members, with the goal of better understanding the demographics and other key factors of those who engage in the AASECT and our various program for use in the ongoing assessment.
- **Initiative 1G:** Create systems to evaluate choices for conference locations, contractors, and products to ensure alignment with our DEI values.
- **Initiative 1H:** Create accountability and assessment processes to determine short- and long-term success of centering DEI within AASECT.

Goal 2: To conduct a comprehensive assessment of the AASECT certification process for the purpose of ensuring that certification processes and procedures are clear, consistent, support equitable access, provide value across disciplines, and align with AASECT's commitment to centering DEI.

- **Initiative 2A:** Convene a Certification Assessment Task Force, who will have the responsibility of conducting/overseeing a Practice Analysis and submitting a comprehensive review of the certification program to the Board of Directors.
- **Initiative 2B:** Identify ways in which DEI can be centered in the certification process – both as criteria towards certification, as well as who has access to certification and ways to better support those who do not and include these findings in a comprehensive proposal.
- **Initiative 2C:** Explore the possibility of having standalone certification processes and criteria for each of the AASECT certified practice areas (sex education, counseling and therapy), including proposals for how this could be achieved and implementation processes and timelines.
- **Initiative 2D:** Develop an appeals process for certification decisions so that applicants are able to request a review (e.g. a panel of peers, a DEI-informed ombudsperson, etc.) before a final decision about a person's application is made.
- **Initiative 2E:** Conduct a cost/benefit analysis to better understand the cumulative costs associated with achieving AASECT certification, as well as the financial benefits for the different types of certification, to better inform decision making about costs associated with certification.
- **Initiative 2F:** Create a feedback system so that those who are seeking to, are in the process of, or who have recently been certified/re-certified, have opportunities to communicate their experiences about the process to AASECT leadership.
- **Initiative 2G:** Solicit bids for online certification management software to select software that will allow for greater ease and objectivity in the application process for applicants, supervisors, volunteers and staff.

Goal 3: To increase the value, benefit, and appeal of AASECT membership for current and potential members, with particular attention to supporting the value and benefit of members who are, or desire to be, sexuality education and counseling members.

- **Initiative 3A:** Create a task force consisting of members of the Membership and DEI Committees with the responsibility of conducting/overseeing the assessment and submitting a comprehensive proposal to the Board of Directors.
- **Initiative 3B:** Clarify the benefits of, and accessibility to, AASECT membership so that current and potential members are aware of requirements of membership and the full benefits of being a member of the organization
- **Initiative 3C:** Identify effective and sustainable ways that AASECT can better highlight the contributions and successes of members to the organization and field as a whole, as well as increasing cross-disciplinary support between educators, counselors and therapists, with a particular focus on developing the growth of counseling and education member segments.

Goal 4: To improve the overall health of the organization by increasing member accessibility and engagement at all levels of the organization.

- **Initiative 4A:** Improve communication and formalize feedback between the leadership and membership to help increase transparency of decisions made by the Board of Directors.
- **Initiative 4B:** Increase members' understanding of the organization and governance structure so that all members are aware of and have access to information about how AASECT functions as an organization.
- **Initiative 4C:** Provide greater access to volunteer and leadership positions within AASECT, so that members are aware of and are more easily able to engage in AASECT.
- **Initiative 4D:** Redesign the AASECT website to facilitate member use, engagement and benefit, to include addressing accessibility concerns and user limitations.
- **Initiative 4E:** Provide greater access to our members to participate in our activities/events, volunteer/leadership opportunities, and certification, regardless of financial or physical limitations. (See also Goal 1).

Goal 5: To examine the structure of AASECT's leadership model with the goal of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the BOD, Committees, and overall functioning of the organization to better meet the demands of a growing membership

- **Initiative 5A:** Examine the overall structure(s) of the BOD to identify potential areas of restructuring to better serve the membership, with a particular focus on DEI, and creating a DEI specific position on the BOD.
- **Initiative 5B:** Evaluate the current BOD structure for workload equity, efficiency, effectiveness, and adequate representation of organizational needs and implement changes that enhance organizational structure and function, to ensure that BOD volunteers are realistically able to achieve their work.
- **Initiative 5C:** Examine BOD member decision and communication processes to ensure that all BOD members have access to information that will support their ability to make fully informed decisions.
- **Initiative 5D:** Examine ways to increase the effectiveness of the transition and orientation processes to increase effectiveness of transition/succession planning and orientation process for committee and board positions so that historical and current work in progress can span across board terms.
- **Initiative 5E:** Create an ongoing process for strategic planning, implementation, accountability and evaluation to ensure that the Strategic Plan remains as a central guiding document for AASECT leadership and membership.

Goal 6: To stabilize the long-term financial health of the organization so that AASECT is better prepared for periods of financial hardships and creates opportunities to utilize excess funds in ways that advances Goals 1-5, with a particular focus on goal 1.

- **Initiative 6A:** Reserve and maintain one year of operating funds by 2025, so that AASECT is better prepared to handle fluctuations in membership, event attendance and other factors impacting our long-term financial viability. And, create an intentional plan for how these funds, along with other AASECT endeavors will be managed over the next 5 years.
- **Initiative 6B:** For AASECT leadership to collect more comprehensive data to have a better understanding of the economic power of different membership segments (i.e. educators, counselors and therapists, students, early career, retired, etc.) so that we can better understand economic strengths and disparities amongst our members (as well as general needs), which will help us to make more informed decisions about membership fees, conference registration costs, certification fees, and other costs associated with AASECT.
- **Initiative 6C:** To increase financial accessibility to AASECT services (membership, certification, conferences, institutes, SARs, leadership, etc.) for current and future members who have limited financial resources so that they are able to fully participate in all that AASECT offers.

- **Initiative 6D:** To create a culture of cultivated giving that provides opportunities for established members to redistribute economic resources to members with less economic privilege and new/early career professionals so that there is ample financial support to boost future generations of sexuality professionals.
- **Initiative 6E:** Complete a cost/benefit analysis of how time and money are used by Bostrom (AASECT's management company) so that AASECT can ensure that the paid services are completed in a way that is efficient and responsible with AASECT funds.

ADDENDUM 1: Initial Strategic Plan Feedback from the DEI Committee

Joint Meeting of the Strategic Planning Task Force and the DEI Committee

Initial Presentation of the Strategic Plan for DEI Feedback

November 7, 2019: Meeting Minutes

Convened: 5:05 PM | Ended: 6:15 PM

Minutes distributed 11.13.19

| DEI Committee Members Present: | SPTF Members Present: |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (Names withheld for privacy) | Eli Green |
| | Melissa Novak |
| | Chris Fariello |
| | Kellie Braband |
| | Tameca Harris-Jackson |
| | Susan Stiritz (Joined 5:15) |

Minutes

Minutes for this meeting were recorded by: Kellie Braband (first 30 mins) and Melissa Novak (remainder of meeting). The combined notes were then compared with written notes and edited by Eli Green for distribution to all who were present.

Questions Posed in Advance by SPTF (via email):

We welcome any feedback the committee has to offer, and also specifically invite feedback about:

- Does the scope of the document/plan overall capture the key themes of AASECT’s areas of growth, from the vantage point of members of this committee?
- Are there significant gaps in what we have proposed, especially from a DEI perspective?
- Is this a Strategic Plan that you feel comfortable supporting?
- Thoughts or considerations that you would like the SPTF (and the Board of Directors) to be aware of moving forward in this process? *(Additional question added at the meeting)*

Meeting Overview:

Everyone present was asked to introduce themselves, their role within AASECT, pronouns and any additional information folks wanted to share. Eli started by acknowledging and apologizing for the error of the SPTF in asking the DEI committee to give feedback on a very early draft of the strategic plan when we were not ready to receive feedback. Eli then provided background and history of the origins of the strategic plan and reviewed the

sources of feedback from members (and beyond) that were used to inform the creation of the Strategic Plan. Eli presented and explained each of the six goals, with additional input and clarification from members of the Strategic Planning Task Force, and included that while the first goal of the SP is centered on DEI, we worked to infuse DEI throughout all goals and levels of the SP. Opportunities for questions and feedback were provided between each of the goals, as well as the plan as a whole. After the presentation of the 6 goals, everything was opened up for further questions and discussion (documented below), which continued past the initial anticipated time of 6 PM until about 6:15. Folks left the meeting as they needed to.

Feedback from the DEI Committee:

- Feedback was provided to the SPTF that the DEI committee had less than a week to review the 24-page document and would have appreciated more time to review it in advance.
 - *Response:* Eli here: I want to personally take responsibility for this as it was entirely due to my own overcommitted work schedule, my sincere apologies for not being able to get it to the committee members sooner!
 - *Commitment:* Eli will work to provide more time for review on future drafts of the Strategic Plan, and if that is not possible, will communicate expected delivery timeframes in advance.
- The DEI committee named several concerns about the scope and feasibility of the Strategic Plan, specifically that having six goals is too many, and that the goals are not “SMART” (in regards to not being specific enough and time bound). There were multiple concerns about the proposed 3-year timeline not being enough time to cover all that is included in the SP. The SPTF was asked to name the top three priority goals out of the 6, that we would be putting the most focus into.
 - *Response regarding the timeline:* The SPTF has been focused on building out the plan, and has been waiting on assigning timelines until we had a cohesive plan. Now that the plan is in the review stages, the SPTF will go ahead and start mapping out the year-by-year objectives, so that the plan can also be view in an annual view.
 - *Commitment:* We will have completed as much of the year-by-year ordering as we are able to by the time we circle back to the DEI committee for final feedback, so that the DEI committee is able to see the timeline prior to the SPTF putting this to the board for an official vote.
 - *4/1/20 Update:* In further conversations after our initial call with DEI, the SPTF decided to remove the Action Steps from the plan being presented to the membership and board for a vote, so as to center the plan on the direction being taken, rather than the steps to achieve it, to reduce confusion among members and expedite the approval process. The action steps will be re-engaged and reconsidered by the SP implementation committee once the plan is approved. To

reduce confusion about how “objectives” are being used in this context, we have changed the objectives to sub-goals. Due to the nature of the goals that we are laying out, we did not find that using a SMART approach was feasible, but we are creating timelines and plans for how those will be implemented.

- *Response regarding the scope:* We do very much understand that this is a large and in many ways sweeping strategic plan, that lays out the pathway for significant changes within AAASECT at all levels. Given how intertwined all of the pieces are, we are hard pressed to cut down on the number of goals and objectives outlined here because we believe that all of these pieces are necessary to create the type of systemic change we are hoping to achieve. We wrote this plan to center around DEI, both through making DEI the literal first goal, as well as infusing DEI throughout the rest of the strategic plan.
- *Commitment:* Given the scope of our plan, we are aware that most goals, and some objectives and action steps, will take longer than this initial three years. The way that we have discussed this and hope to structure this is that any work that is not able to be achieved in this current strategic plan (if the current plan is approved by the BOD) will be automatically rolled into the next strategic plan. (We are working on policy and procedures to ensure that this happens in a way that honors the work, and cannot be casually undone by future overseers of this work.)
- *(4/1/20 Update: The SPTF spent a lot of time discussing this feedback and concerns, and we fully recognize the scope of what we are attempting here. We decided that rather than narrowing down the plan, we wanted to try to achieve the vision that we have created and hope to inspire a groundswell of support from members to enact these plans. We firmly believe that each of these elements is interwoven in such a way that it will be difficult to make progress without addressing these key structural areas.)*

One specific piece of feedback regarding the action steps for Goal 5, is that it is not specifically named in the Strategic Plan that there is currently an effort underway to create a permanent DEI position on the AAASECT Board of Directors. Additionally there was a specific ask to name a target for representation of diversity at all levels of leadership of AAASECT and for the BOD to receive specific anti-oppression training.

- *Response/Commitment:* We are more than happy to add in the additional DEI position piece and did so before sending the Strategic Plan to the BOD for their review. For the target number for representation of diversity, we are in support of having target numbers that create specific criteria to represent different identities. We do have concerns about balancing the needs for more representation while also wanting to shift the culture of leadership and the organization to decrease the amount of emotional labor it will require to participate in these spaces with individuals with less DEI awareness and related skills. We know a small part of this can be addressed by BOD training (more on

this below), but also know that is a very limited number of folks, compared to all of those are on committees, etc., and so are wondering if this level of specificity might be better for the next strategic plan? We would welcome further conversations with the DEI committee about how to best balance this and ensure that we are truly aware of the emotional labor involved in such service.

- Concerns were named about whether/how the prior feedback on the incomplete version of the SP was incorporated within the current version of the SP – particularly in light of the time, energy and effort that was put into the DEI committee’s original feedback.
 - *Response:* We really do understand that we made a mistake here (likely multiple) and want to take responsibility for this. While we did use the feedback you gave us to help shape the plan that we created, we did not properly credit that, and we understand that the impact of our actions was to ask the DEI committee to review the work we had done, and then we did not follow through in a timely manner on our commitment to bring the conversation back to the DEI committee, in a way that may have made DEI committee members feel that your feedback was not used or valued. We are going to try to be more conscious of this moving forward.
 - *Commitment:* If the DEI committee would like, the SPTF will go through the original feedback that you provided to the SPTF, and we can provide where your feedback links up with the goals/objectives/action steps that we created. And we do welcome further conversations about the feedback that you have already provided, particularly on areas that we were not as easily able to incorporate, or, areas that members of the committee do not feel are adequately or appropriately addressed in the current draft of the SP.
 - *(4/1/20 Update: We did not hear back from the DEI committee with a desire to move forward with this, so while we did go back to review that feedback again as a task force to double check that we had captured everything, we did not write up anything further to document this.)*

- A desire to see concrete action as soon as possible, ideally by the June 2020 conference, was named.
 - *Response:* We agree and would love to see things in this plan happen as quickly as can be done well (i.e. not just for the sake of saying we have done something). We believe that one of the strongest concrete actions that we can take is to get this plan approved by the board for implementation, as this plan will then guide all of the work of the board and the organization for the next three years+. This will be the first time in recent AASECT history where there has been such a guiding force in place, and the first one ever in AASECT (that we know of) to prioritize DEI. The plan is meant specifically to take a long view of AASECT and the changes that need to happen –in particular– to address the systemic barriers based on privilege that have accrued over time, so that we can do our best to

remove these barriers, to change the culture of the organization as a whole. We are hoping the strategic plan will be the bricks of a new foundation for AAASECT's future.

- *Commitment:* Since there is already work on progress in some elements of the strategic plan (for example, the task force examining how to have a DEI position on the board, the task force that is starting for sex education, surveying members for demographic info to have a formal understanding of membership, etc.), the SPTF will commit to reporting out on work already completed or in progress at the 2020 conference, as well as via eblast (since we know not all members can or want to attend the conference). It is our intention (though this has not been formalized) to create a report-back process for membership as a regular part of the strategic plan.
 - *4/1/20 Update:* As outgoing president, Susan Stirtz will be providing a summary of the related work that has been done so far prior to leaving office, and the SPTF will be drafting an eblast to inform the membership of this entire process, including work that has already been started.
- It was requested that the Strategic Plan feedback process start and end with the DEI committee.
 - *Commitment:* Once the SPTF has completed the four zoom calls (outlined in the transparency document) and made any related revisions, the SPTF will reconvene with DEI for any final feedback prior to our submission of the strategic plan to the board of directors or approval. Chris also invites any and all members of the DEI committee who would like to do so to join any or all of our open Zoom calls for feedback on the strategic plan, and we also want to acknowledge that while we will welcome this, we understand that this may not be the best use of your time, energy and emotional labor.
 - *4/1/20 Update:* Per our commitment, the SPTF is redistributing the final draft of the plan to the DEI committee and are requesting a Zoom call (if desired by DEI to provide or discuss any remaining feedback) prior to bringing it to the board as a vote.
 - It was requested that the SPTF make a more direct effort to keep the DEI committee in the loop about progress of the work on the Strategic Plan, as a means of increasing our ability to be held accountable. It was also requested that the SPTF provide space for the DEI committee to raise topics and priorities with us, rather than us setting the agenda.
 - *Commitment:* Eli will provide an update within a week of the November board meeting (11/15-16/19) to update the DEI committee on how the initial review of the SP goes with the BOD. After that the SPTF will commit to sending updates no less than every six weeks, and more frequently if there are updates to be shared. We hope this to be in addition to further conversations. For these future conversations, a request for agenda items will be made in advance, (or

alternatively if the DEI committee would like to facilitate the conversations instead of the SPTF, we would welcome that too.)

- *(4/1/20 Update: We will continue to provide 6-week updates through the BOD vote, and then hope to engage with the DEI committee to help determine the best ways of communicating about work in progress moving forward.)*
- During the meeting the SPTF heard the feedback that AAASECT has a reputation for being money driven, and that reparations may be due as a way of addressing harm that has occurred.
 - *Response:* We appreciate having this shared with us. We are unsure of a related commitment related to shifting the perceptions but are hoping that through our work on Goal 6, that will help to redistribute more money towards DEI efforts in a sustainable way, that this perception will change over time as a result of the actions of the BOD and beyond. We are also interested in having further conversations around what reparations might look like so that we can help to identify related opportunities and commitments.
 - *(4/1/20 Update: We continue to be aware of this, and we are currently having proactive conversations to ensure we will continue to support and prioritize our DEI-related goals in light of the current financial challenges due to COVID-19.)*

Overall themes:

In addition to the feedback that was offered, the SPTF would also like to specifically acknowledge some of the overarching learnings we took away, and areas of growth that we have identified for ourselves upon further discussion and reflection after our meeting.

1. Through the conversation as a whole, the SPTF hears and understands that there is much work to be done to attempt to repair prior and current missteps – including not fully honoring the professional and emotional labor contributed by the DEI committee in service of the organization– and that AAASECT leadership in particular has to demonstrate a true commitment to centering DEI work/people/perspectives, as well as a willingness to be held accountable.
 - *Commitment:* We hear you, and while we know we will make mistakes as we move forward, we are committed to learning through them, and trying to help our colleagues learn as well. We welcome accountability. As a means of demonstrating this, we have included specific commitments in this response, so that the DEI committee can know what to expect from us, and so that we can be held accountable when we do not or are not able to follow through on what we have promised.
2. Through the conversation as a whole, the SPTF members understand that we are not making it clear enough in our descriptions that this strategic plan intentionally centers around DEI and that it is our desire to change AAASECT in a way that is more socially just.

- *Commitment:* The SPTF members will work together to draft language and approaches that more clearly and directly names that DEI is intentionally the center of the Strategic Plan so that we can use those in all discussions and framing moving forward.
 - *(4/1/20 Update: We implemented this feedback in the three Zoom calls held with members, and explained in each that this is an intentionally DEI-centered plan, and will continue to speak of it in this manner moving forward.)*
3. Throughout the conversation as a whole, the SPTF members better understand the need for us to be able to answer process questions about how the Strategic Plan will be implemented once it is approved, including work distribution.
- *Commitment:* At the next SPTF meeting, we will begin discussing next steps for more fully flushing out what this process will look like and start setting up structures for implementation. We will report this back out to the DEI committee once we have this complete, with a goal of before July 1, 2020.
 - *(4/1/20 Update: This process has been somewhat delayed by the process of completing the Strategic Plan. As incoming President, Chris Fariello has appointed Eli Green & Tameca Harris-Jackson as co-chairs of the Strategic Plan Committee to oversee this work moving forward, which was approved by the BOD in Feb 2020. The three of us were planning to meet in person in April to map out the specifics, and will still try to do so remotely insomuch as is possible in the current context. Regardless, the Strategic Plan will be voted on prior to July 1, 2020.)*

Additional pieces:

- Susan S requested that anyone who is interested in doing DEI training work within AAASECT or knows of external trainers that do DEI work (especially BOD leadership) that they would like to recommend, to please send those recommendations to Kellie Braband (kbraband@asect.org). These requests are for pay, and there is not an expectation that AAASECT will ask for free DEI training by internal or external experts.
- It was shared that there would be a diversity related board training at the November 15th meeting, and we wanted to clarify that the board training on Nov 15th is not a diversity-related training. Providing anti-oppression leadership training for the BOD is a priority, and we are in conversations about how to schedule that, given that half of the board changes over every year. This is a priority, is included on the strategic plan, and we hope to schedule this for as soon as we can.

Items above noted for further/future conversations

(The following items are ones that were raised on the call and were noted for additional conversation during future meetings. They are also recorded here for ease of access in future meetings.)

- Strategies for balancing having more DEI representation at all levels of AAASECT leadership, while also not wanting people serving in these roles to have additional emotional labor of tokenization and microaggressions.
- Further DEI feedback around certification, training for certification, and benefits of AAASECT and certification in comparison to the emotional labor.
- Further conversations about what reparations within AAASECT might look like.
- Further wants from SPTF, or AAASECT leadership/BOD, as a whole. Particularly as it relates to providing support to the DEI committee to reduce the strain of emotional labor.

ADDENDUM 2: Feedback from Membership (via Zoom Calls & Surveys)

SPTF Meeting Dates:

1. Tuesday, February 4, 2020; 9pm - 10:30pm EST
2. Tuesday, February 11, 2020; 7pm - 8:30pm EST
3. Friday, February 21, 2020; 12noon - 1:30pm EST

Data Sources:

- Audio feedback from SPTF member calls
- Written feedback (via chats) from SPTF member calls
- Emails from members following calls
- Member survey regarding the strategic plan goals (follow up from SPTF member calls or for those who could not attend calls)
- DEI Committee SPTF Call and Email correspondence

Goal 1: DEI

Examining AAASECT services, policies and procedures through the lenses of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)* to identify areas to shift the organizational culture towards one that centers DEI as a fundamental component of our organization. (*With a primary focus on [but not limited to] inequities in class and race.)

- **Comment:** Good idea
- **Comment:** I strongly support this!
- **Comment:** Absolutely agree with this goal! as this should be at the core of AAASECT's mission.
- **Comment:** Great goal and in line with reported experiences of colleagues.
- **Comment:** The times are changing and AAASECT should go with the times.
- **Comment:** This is integral given this is what kept me away for over 20 years.
- **Comment:** I support this goal and appreciate what has been shared.
- **Comment:** This is a vital goal and I am in full support. As things are just coming together, I cannot comment as to how successful we have been in this mission but I am sure with your leadership we will make our association a much more inclusive organization.
- **Comment:** Remember that political diversity is also diversity. Conservatives should have a place in AAASECT if AAASECT culture values diversity.
- **Comment:** I think a white male colleague's complaint on the February 21st call sums up nicely the challenge AAASECT will face in implementing a DEI lens. If you see no value in

learning about DEI and how it applies to SECT, you likely have no grounding in the historical abuses perpetuated by the medical and therapy professions against people of color, LGBTQIA+, and low-limited socioeconomic status. The conference keynote in question was held in Puerto Rico? The island was ground zero for highly questionable and damaging reproductive and sexual health research and practices. Failure to see this type of impact on potential clients and our responsibility as practitioners to examine our implicit and explicit biases will limit desirability and accessibility of SECT work. Organizations are uniquely a product of the people who are members and administrators. I don't get the sense that my colleague is an outlier, and he certainly has kindred spirits in other sex-focused organizations...SSSS, SMSNA, etc. AAASECT is overdue for this type of work.

- **Comment:** This feels extremely important and as someone relatively new to the org, I'm really pleased to see it listed as the first identified goal for the organization. Lack of attention to DEI - both discussions about, but a real hard look at policies, representation, and culture of the org is unfortunately quite common (it's named as an ideal without any action/change bc of cost, reluctance to address privilege/race/class within current org/membership)...so this is heartening and I thought it was well-worded.
- **Comment:** Class is not sufficiently addressed or recognized. This is an expensive organization. Much more in line with incomes of Clinical practitioners over educators. Most educators who are certified are full-time university faculty. Literally this is statistically true. AAASECT is elitist in the expensive conferences that require one to work for free (when training is your 'day-job') and you must pay to have the privilege to contribute to the professional and organizational discussion. It's all very 'in-crowd' and cliché-ish. Yes it's about race and ethnicity and it's about status and access to financial underwriters or high income. A national organization of youth workers at least offers free conference registration as compensation for presenting. AAASECT events are fancy and pricey, making that expense a requirement is a barrier to class inclusion. straight up. Class is not sufficiently addressed or recognized. This is an expensive organization. Much more in line with incomes of Clinical practitioners over educators. Most educators who are certified are full-time university faculty. Literally this is statistically true. AAASECT is elitist in the expensive conferences that require one to work for free (when training is your 'day-job') and you must pay to have the privilege to contribute to the professional and organizational discussion. It's all very 'in-crowd' and cliché-ish. Yes it's about race and ethnicity and it's about status and access to financial underwriters or high income. A national organization of youth workers at least offers free conference registration as compensation for presenting. AAASECT events are fancy and pricey, making that expense a requirement is a barrier to class inclusion. straight up.
- **Comment:** Requiring presenters at the conference to pay to attend and present is a classist requirement

- **Comment:** There are concerns about inclusion of training that focuses on regional differences/needs. How is AAASECT supporting training for those who require the information/content but may be limited in accessing information due to region (e.g., rural) or financial barriers? How will trainings be more reflective of the regional differences for therapists, counselors, and educators?
- **Comment:** A lot of the ethical and other information provided by AAASECT seems to target clinically-focused persons. It is helpful that the strategic plan is directly naming educators for access and training need
- **Comment:** There is no interest (personally) in learning about colonialism if I am attending conferences to obtain information about sex therapy. Why would inclusion of this information be necessary?
- **Comment:** There have been historical and current issues by members attending conferences where People of Color report directly experiencing racist actions by others in conference attendance. This has significantly impacted experiences for POC AAASECT members.
- **Comment:** I agree with these priorities. They seem like lofty goals and I am wondering if there is any agreement on the methods to achieve these goals?
- **Comment:** We must state that social justice and sexual health are intrinsically linked.
- **Comment:** I fully support this goal
- **Comment:** Super excited about this goal
- **Comment:** Of course we need to be inclusive but I'm more interested in keeping the AAASECT focus on sexuality. I feel like AAASECT's primary purpose is being subsumed.
- **Comment:** I think this call raised awareness of this issue, but not certain what steps AAASECT is undertaking to address the problem. Also, hearing on the call that DEI wasn't important from a participant(white, male, older) , and we should just talk about sexuality, bolstered my reserve that things have to change.
- **Comment:** Very important! Keeping up with other organizations in both the states and abroad regarding diversity and varied therapeutic processes is paramount for the growth of AAASECT.
- **Comment:** I appreciate DEI as being a fundamental component but it's also important to understand that inequities in class/race occur even in the so-called identified "white privileged" category. Please be careful about the potential of creating racism on any level.
- **Suggestion:** Goal 1 speaks to center DEI in leadership and certification, but how so in events? It is recommended to clarify/state DEI in events and align/promote events that also support and strengthen DEI
- **Suggestion:** "Is it possible to assess the financial accessibility of certification and supervision for individuals considering certification and supervision?"

- **Suggestion:** I am a fan of quotas. Maybe there should be number/percentage goals tied to the board and leadership.
- **Suggestion:** I think recreating different definitions of what AASECTS' DEI would look like, and then having a survey done to see which definition people resonate towards, would be helpful.
- **Suggestion:** I think our AASECT mission statement should also be updated to include the lenses of DEI.
- **Suggestion:** We must state that social justice and sexual health are intrinsically linked.
- **Suggestion:** This is an important goal, but I am concerned that it is goal #1 whereas financial sustainability is goal #6. Really, if you don't have financial sustainability, you don't have the resources to achieve the other goals. I do understand that AASECT is making a statement by putting DEI first, but I urge AASECT to reconsider. It can be goals 2 and 3, while making AASECT's continued existence the top priority.

Goal 2: Certification

Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the AASECT certification process with the goal of evaluating the certification program and implementing changes to ensure that the procedures are clear and consistent, that certification is equitably accessible and valuable across disciplines, and the related requirements reflect AASECT's commitment towards centering DEI.

- **Comment:** OMG thank god. The process is atrocious!
- **Comment:** I was lucky to have an awesome supervisor who really aided me in the process of obtaining my sex educator certification. But, not everyone is as lucky as I am.
- **Comment:** Agreed. As an International member, there are very limited opportunities for us to accumulate all the required CE credits to be a certified member, as well as renewal our membership. Hope the review process will also take in consideration of attracting and maintain International membership, in particular the certification process. Do understand that AASECT may mainly want to focus on US mainland membership. As an ex-AASECT International members representative, I want to share that AASECT is a reputable institution that many overseas countries see it as an accredited qualification granting agent. I do hope there is a modified pathway for us to get certification and renewal of membership.
- **Comment:** Your question should be what are the needs of the professionals on the ground doing sexuality education, especially those not AASECT certified. The certification of sexuality educator is not important in the field, as evidenced by the low numbers of certified educators. 29 US states have 2 or fewer certified sexuality educators, and 17 of those states have zero certified educators. Washington state has zero certified educators, and Illinois has one. This in no way reflects the talented leaders in sexuality education in those examples. The problem is not that it is a difficult credential to get. More problematic

for AAASECT is the fact it isn't compelling for people doing sexuality education outside of universities. And it's pricey. Given AAASECT has available some of the world's leading trainers in sexuality as members, and doesn't position them in leadership roles for conference planning, CE Committee and other learning-based work AAASECT does is offensive and a missed opportunity. Many clinical people think they inherently possess skills to plan and do effective education and training offerings. Too often their success is based on luck, not expertise. This bias reflects a value that educators, counselors and therapists bring equal skills as facilitators, educators and trainers.

- **Comment:** I hope this will place an equal emphasis on education.
- **Comment:** Changes to the certification process are needed
- **Comment:** I'm glad I had an opportunity to mention that experience should be able to be the equivalent of a degree, in order for more educators to be able to access certification. As it is currently, I don't think DEI is centered- the certification process is expensive. There should be some certification scholarships, etc.
- **Comment:** There are major issues here: application/credentialing tracking system (moving to electronic); standardization of interpretation of certification process; and how explicit and implicit costs of certification impact who becomes certified (e.g., travel to programs, registration/tuition, supervision fees commensurate with therapy billing rates, often \$150+ per hour). I paid in excess of \$5,000 to UMichigan for tuition and fees and roughly \$3,000 for multiple trips to Michigan, just for the educational/didactic component. This figure does not include annual AAASECT membership fees (\$220 annually) and hourly group and individual supervision costs over a 50-hour period (an additional \$5K, which is on the low end of CST supervision rates). It will cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$14,000 to complete the training and supervision just to qualify for the certification. This rate is almost double what I will have paid for memberships, liability insurance, continuing education, supervision, and testing necessary for the clinical social work license.
- **Comment:** I believe this is an essential component of the training of any sex educator, therapist and counselor. I often see the lack of awareness of diversity in trainings and this is a HIGH concern especially with the diverse populations that we work with.
- **Comment:** Important for those not sure how to enter the profession, at schools without the major/classes or those that have worked professionally for years with little direction.
- **Comment:** I am so glad we hired a consultant. She was a delight with whom to work.
- **Comment:** Certification has been arduous and involved a level of conflict I did not anticipate. I took a year off from AAASECT to assess whether I felt certification was worth the time, effort, money and honestly stress. I have experienced an environment where if you're in the process of certification you are looked down upon rather than mentored- I have struggled to find any benefit to certification as it has been a made clear that even though we pay dues before membership we are NEVER to mention AAASECT in print or marketing

materials in any way. I understand wanting to keep certification separate, but at what point do we recognize we devalue certification when we make it undesirable or unattainable due to the organization's cultural attitudes towards those in the process of becoming certified?

- **Comment:** I do not have enough knowledge regarding certification across disciplines to comment. But, am willing and open to learn.
- **Comment:** It's great to hear about the upcoming software to assist in the certification process. The process is confusing and at times overwhelming. Many times I considered dropping out due to that but was too far in [investments/time] therefore will continue to completion./ I was aghast at AAECT's handling of the "Special Compensation" case presented by the very brave member who called attention to her trials and tribulations with it [re: her making the decision to attend a SAR closer to her geographically & being topically more interesting to her and then having the application denied due to missed 2 week window]. That needs to be corrected in which there is a level of ethical common sense used in extenuating circumstances such as that. Stonewalling or non-communication with her, despite her numerous attempts to get an answer was less than professional.
- **Comment:** I am a member of the sex therapy certification committee and will be taking on a co-chair position in June so I'm very interested as to how I can impact this goal and am curious if step goals will be considered as the longer-term evaluation process is in the works. My hope is that we can still move on smaller changes that make sense (i.e. electronic application via a free or low-cost option) while larger changes are being evaluated thoroughly over time.
- **Comment:** The supervision process is daunting. AAECT should consider streamlining the process
- **Comment:** During the call a question was raised about how this would play out for certification renewals, and I think that is an important question to explore. Will this apply ONLY to new certifications, or will it somehow make its way to everyone. If only new certs, then AAECT risks having folks operating on two planes, and I really think the gap needs to be bridged. Thus, if DEI will be a priority, it needs to be incorporated into everyone's certification -- new certs, renewals, annual hours, etc.
- **Comment:** Another consideration is what qualifications will AAECT expect of DEI training? Is a provider one simply because they say they have this expertise? Or are there tangible measures that can be checked for quality assurance?
- **Comment:** Again a very critical goal. I am not sure what structure we will use to ensure this (mainly our feedback or we are going to include literature, best practices from other organizations, etc.)
- **Comment:** What is the average number of people certified each year. I would be helpful to have transparent access to that data for members.

- **Direct response:** *"I don't have the new per year (though we can get that later), here is the current total across each: CST / DST: 848 (145 Diplomates, 703 CST), CSE: 138, CSC: 73, CSTS: 135, CSES: 30, CSCS: 5, TOTAL: 1229*
- **Comment:** Financial accessibility for certification of sexuality educators is a barrier
- **Comment:** More transparency and clarity needed in the certification process
- **Comment:** I'm thrilled to see DEI so prominent in the plan!
- **Comment:** I think DEI is important culturally for the health of our organization and the field and the communities we serve. DEI is not however the reason we exist as an organization so I personally would not make this the number one goal. I do think the Chair of DEI should be a Board position. If we follow the money which leads to the financial health of the organization, certification is the core of our financial health and often why people join AASECT.
- **Comment:** Ideal. I also see that there was a task force just formed about the education piece. As someone on the education certification committee, I would love a streamlined process, but also with clear guidelines about what counts and what does not. As someone who submitted an application a couple years ago, making the process clearer to applications will be great as well.
- **Comment:** It "feels" like there is a status difference between educators and therapists. The needs of educators needs to be addressed
 - **Direct [member] response:** *AASECT changed over time. Added the "T" and changed the feel of the organization*
- **Comment:** "I just got my sex educator certification last year July 2019 and felt that there things that needed to change"
- **Comment:** "I am completing supervision and the application process is daunting and honestly discouraging"
- **Comment:** "I think we should provide surveys to individuals after they have obtained their certifications. This way we are constantly reviewing the process.
- **Comment:** As someone about to start the process (starting at the U Michigan program in April) and who has heard that it's daunting, this is also heartening to see. I'm pretty organized and type A but even still have heard that the process can be confusing, overwhelming, and expensive. Any ways to streamline/simplify would be wonderful.
- **Comment:** There is a concern about "lowering standards" for certification.
 - **Direct response:** *The intention is not to lower standards, but to increase access/remove barriers to certification.*
 - **Direct [member] response:** *"Other professions also have X amount of field work and experience = education. Tech, Government jobs, etc. Think for educators, we have to think about what that looks like. That is definitely not lowering standards."*

- **Comment:** There is concern that the organization is going more toward language that indicates “license” versus “certification”
- **Comment:** AASECT needs to uphold high standards regardless, otherwise certification is meaningless.
- **Comment:** Certification has provided me with a professional family
- **Comment:** Scholarships provide a mutual benefit to the organization as well as the individual. I currently live in a town with 0 certified sex therapists. I plan to start supervision later this year and I can guarantee you there will be an increase once I'm finished and advertising. My certification will be a reminder to those who may have been interested at one time and forgot about it, those who say, "hey, I want a certification too" and even those who won't want one person monopolizing the untapped market. I hope you all continue to offer scholarships and would love to know where I can go to get more information on any current or future opportunities so I can apply.
- **Suggestion:** I think you need to study the effect on organizational providers and potential loss of income to AASECT if changes are made. Also there are certainly costs associated with a testing program.
- **Suggestion:** Streamline the supervision certification process for POC!! I am excited about supervising and there is a huge need in my area, but I still have 1.5 more years to wait to become a supervisor (even though I supervise AMFTs ASWS and APCCs and have a M.Ed in Human Sexuality)
- **Suggestion:** Let's have asynchronous online courses for pay that let people meet the more difficult parts of their cert reqs, and let that be a money maker for us. We could also offer nationally certified college peer educators (NASPA CPE) a sex ed badge.
- **Suggestion:** I think that assessing the AASECT certification process is needed. Providing a post certification process survey would constantly help AASECT in making the process easier and successful.
- **Suggestion:** I think having a separate team really focus on the certification process is needed. After completing my application in June 2019 and then obtaining my sex educator certification on July 2019, I was really aware of how unorganized and somewhat difficult the application process was.
- **Suggestion:** Things that need to be addressed: -Easier way to submit the application - Supervisors annually trained in the application process, so that they are knowledgeable about changes. -A video or powerpoint presentation that walks applicants through the process -Easy form that keeps applicants supervision hours organized
- **Suggestion:** Will this include supervision certification. I think the best way to address difficulties in getting POC certified would be to have POC supervisors (I had one meeting with an older white woman who corrected my grammar and pronunciation throughout our

supervision hour) I would love to see POC lead course requirements for supervision or the process of being a certified supervisor somehow streamlined for POC

- **Suggestion:** For certified members attending conferences, have an extra add on for ribbons and badges
- **Suggestion:** “I think the process of applying for any certifications should be made easier in terms of providing all the required information and paperwork through a specifically designed system that AAASECT will use, instead of having us create a PDF document and emailing our application.”
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT should investigate why educators aren’t more compelled to be certified
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT should consider adopting an hours tracking software. When individuals become members, they gain access and can keep track of the CEUs needed for certification
 - **Direct [member] response:** *“I was thinking of at least a well-designed spreadsheet for folks to keep track of client and supervision hours. Better would be some sort of software or website interface. I’m using an AirTable provided by my supervisor, but that came well-after I started needing to keep track of hours”*

Goal 3: Member Value (educator & counselor focus)

Increasing the value and benefit provided to AAASECT members to help support current members and increase appeal to potential members, with particular attention to growing the sexuality education and counseling membership segments.

- **Comment:** This is important--and really by making the AAASECT educator certification mean something. I can't think of one way that educators are supported other than a name in a database and a couple sessions at the conference. Is there awareness of financial struggle? Is there a connection to mentors to help us become better educators? Does AAASECT offer professional development or training for educators to help make getting CEs more readily accessible? Supervision is nice, but how does AAASECT stand behind educators as an economic good and good to the field?
- **Comment:** As a sexuality educator I am not invited by the concept of being a seedling that needs growth. Again, your question should be "why doesn't AAASECT membership matter to people doing this work?" AAASECT doesn't have a presence or hold a space of respect in many places across the US, not because of anything bad, it is invisible, even to members and certified professionals. Even the list serve is mostly therapists.
- **Comment:** In my term of office as International Members Representative (2 years ago), there were more than 130 overseas members. It is not a big number comparing to US mainland, but I did raise the concerns to our needs to the Membership Committee re lacking of attention and benefits received from the Association.
- **Comment:** The certification process is expensive and financially will likely hit SE members harder, as SC members are more likely to be from professions (nursing, doctors, etc.) in

institutions with more professional development resources and higher salaries. If certification is not a requirement for this practice, then fewer people will see a value in completing the process. Memberships are reasonably-priced on the whole. However, why be a member if you are not going to become certified or attend meetings?

- **Comment:** I whole heartedly agree that more attention needs to be paid toward education and counseling. I am a therapist and can only speak to my experience in this capacity. As noted above I struggle to see the benefit at this time to those in the process of certification. We are not able to note any membership or affiliation with AAASECT. Even while obtaining my license through my state I was able to say I was working toward licensure, however AAASECT reserves that privilege only for those through the certification process. There is, therefore, no benefit at this time while going through certification which will present an obstacle to membership as the organization continues to move forward..
- **Comment:** There are so many qualified professionals who just cannot afford what we consider an "elitist" entity. This trickles down to us only being able to assist wealthy people. How fair is it for only wealthy, elitist people to enjoy sex?
- **Comment:** It is not clear in the strategic plan what the advocacy plan is to engage in processes such as align with insurance companies for those who are educators [to allow them to bill insurance companies]
- **Comment:** I don't remember that part of the call...
- **Comment:** Supporting current and future educational and counseling members regarding the value of cohesion and collaboration in all membership segments builds a solid foundation for growth and diversity expansion
- **Comment:** It sounded like there were some good ideas about increasing value/benefit via new website.
- **Comment:** I support this goal and would just be curious to know if the segments that are receiving more attention align with the growth in the overall field. So for example are there more sex education jobs available so that the field of educators that we support will be employable over time and how does that compare to the growth in sex therapy?
- **Comment:** I strongly support this and hope it will include some of the history in growing these segments.
- **Comment:** SUPPORT and DIVERSITY are key to grow the membership of AAASECT. Regional representatives should have a more active role of checking in with members of AAASECT as this will increase the feeling of support.
- **Comment:** I agree with this priority but none of the goals are about the promotion of our professions to the outside world. They all focus on the internal workings of the organization. I'm concerned that we need to keep selling the value of what we do - especially sexuality education to the general public. Because CSE's are the smallest group, we are also the least affluent and the most in need of promotion of our profession.

- **Comment:** How well does the general population know about CST, CSE, CSC and what can be done to increase awareness? This conversation has me wondering what AAASECT does or could do to help improve the general population's awareness of what a CSE, CSC, CST are. If not the general population, at least the population of allied health professionals. Increasing that awareness could increase the value of AAASECT certification for all of us.
 - **Direct response:** *Badges have been created as a way to help brand certification; however, it is not clear where we are in the process of rolling this out*
- **Comment:** What is the true value of the certification outside of the organization/profession? What value does the public see?
- **Comment:** "I'm going to pass on attending this. It seems like a waste of my time. This won't count towards anything I'm trying to achieve, or reduce the cost of any of this expensive venture."
- **Comment:** A past president told me that "Certification is the reason we exist as an organization." When I hear the words, "comprehensive assessment" I worry that we will pay somebody to do a lot of fancy thinking without practical improvements. We have a reputation for making the certification process difficult. This is one of the top two complaints I hear from my supervisees and the people in my section. (The second big complaint is the lack of safety on the list serve). The certification process needs a cultural make-over. It needs to be a member-friendly culture that invites people to become certified and helps them relish the process of this amazing opportunity for them to grow professionally. The application process needs to be streamlined, efficient, effective, consistent, and easy to follow. The process of becoming certified needs to foster a positive member experience that endears our members to AAASECT.
- **Comment:** "29 states have 2 or fewer certified educators, 17 have 0!"
- **Comment:** "For Goal #3 - In terms of adding even more value to members as well as providing more affordable and timely access to content/CEUs, I'm wondering if it would be possible to (video) record the sessions during our conferences so that when given a "Sophie's Choice" situation where you must choose between two really deserving topics/sessions, you can attend one in person and take advantage of the other later online. Also, many of our members can not afford (either time or money wise) to attend the conference in person. Obviously this needs to recognize the value (\$\$) of the presenter and balance access while not over-cannibalizing conference attendance. The ability to push content out quickly versus waiting until the next conference... e.g. whatever the new DEI content requirements are going to be for certification, it may be a good way to get people excited about a course that was offered online for CEU credit as part of the membership fee as maybe the kickoff content."

- **Comment:** It is difficult creating a sustainable business and it is also significantly difficult for historically marginalized communities to create sustainable business. Would business development be encompassed in that “value added” support?
 - **Direct response:** *This is great for a conference session or institute! (note, other SPTF members agreed, with a note to accessibility)*
- **Comment:** “...one barrier to certification is the requirement for educators to have a bachelor's degree. I can rattle off a long list of sexuality educators who have been in this field for a long time, who are experts with lived experience in the field. There needs to be a way to translate the work they have done, created, and do to equal earning a degree. For many people, access and ability to go to college aren't a possibility in their early years or currently.”
- **Comment:** “I've path of educators in sexuality is very different than other professions and disciplines. Also, being a sex educator is not exactly lucrative, a hustle always, and many people are freelance. Most educators I know don't work for practices or institutions that pay for us to attend AAASECT, but we know how valuable being a part of AAASECT is. I am thinking about --- answer. I want this certification because it tells institutions and the public that I am part of a professional organization around sexuality. Hell, I have that I am a member in my bio, because it lets others know that I'm serious about my work.”
- **Comment:** Completely supportive. In this category, we might want to address the shortage of supervisors in these areas as well since that is a hindering factor for some folks getting AAASECT certified.
- **Comment:** There was no mention of maybe adding more appealing benefits to the membership package
- **Comment:** Another important goal. I'm JUST across that threshold of financial security where I can pay my fees/annual dues without compromising my business/other responsibilities so I can appreciate the value of having opportunities to bring all kinds of people (and those at different points in their career- I'm newly in private practice from a community mental health background).
- **Comment:** This is where DEI should be focused, attracting diverse members.
- **Suggestion:** I am not certain this needs to be a priority for AAASECT. There are other organizations, like NSEC that are meeting the needs of sexuality educators better than AAASECT. AAASECT does not need to compete with them; rather, AAASECT should focus on and prioritize its core existing constituency, sex therapists and counselors. Rather than be all things to all people, AAASECT should find ways to provide more meaningful benefits for its existing members.
- **Suggestion:** It would be great if there was a deeper understanding of the diversity of sexuality educators who make up AAASECT membership - and those who do not (and why). I don't think we can be everything to all kinds of educators, so figuring out what the diverse

groups we want to support need from the sexuality educators is paramount. I believe the group who is being provided the educational product should be the key deciders as to standards their educators adhere to, not outsiders like AAASECT committee members.

- **Suggestion:** It would be great if we boost the numbers of counselors and educators.
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT needs merch (and no, not the bags or lanyards we get at conferences).
- **Suggestion:** A more user friendly website would be a great start. Another thought is for AAASECT to have a section on the website that offers resources to its members. Having paying members being able to access resources not provided to non paying individuals would be wonderful. For example, being able to access sexuality journals/ articles, or find events or classes, etc... Connecting AAASECT with more college school/programs that revolve around sexuality studies.
- **Suggestion:** I think the idea of having actual legit badges would be wonderful. I also think that a certification card should be provided every time one obtains/renews their certification. (Something like the cards given out for CPR/first aid).
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT awareness outside of the U.S. is limited. Promotion of AAASECT outside of the U.S. should be considered
- **Suggestion:** It is recommended that AAASECT investigate ways to establish the value of certification in a time where people are “internet famous”
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT should find out why more people are not attending or returning to conferences.
 - **Direct [member] response:** *People would not come because of changes to the conferences*
- **Suggestion:** Make the AAASECT conference more open and visible to other disciplines
 - **Direct [member] response:** *Our tagline should be “We’re all about making more people come”*
- **Suggestion:** Counselors are often medical providers. Consider a medical track as well as various other tracks such as counseling, medical, therapy, research, etc.
- **Suggestion:** AAASECT should develop partnerships with other universities [to increase organizational awareness]. “I think that if AAASECT was partnered...when I was getting my MA in sexuality studies, other peers in my cohort would have gone forward to obtain their certifications.”
 - **Direct response:** *“...universities and programs can choose to be CEU providers and align with AAASECT cert standards, so that graduates can be ready for certification once they have their hours met”*
 - **Direct response:** *“...Widener, Minnesota, etc. but it may be beneficial to examine how to expand these partnerships”*

Goal 4: Member engagement

Improving the overall health of the organization by increasing member engagement at all levels of the organization.

- **Comment:** No feedback except this seems tied to goal 6, and might be moved up if goal 6 is moved up.
- **Comment:** Goal 4 & 3 are the same: Who is in this monolithic group of "educators"? The educational backgrounds, job settings, compensation levels, and target groups we work with are so diverse. It's possible for 4 CSE's to sit at a table and have very little in common because of these factors. Therapists work in 3 types of practices and do very similar things. Counselors are also fairly narrow. But "educators"? Lumping us together like this is NOT helpful. Do you know who we are in any more detail from membership surveys?
- **Comment:** I agree. engagement and its purpose could be different though for various people which I hope we can address in building up this part of the strategic document.
- **Comment:** It currently seems very therapists heavy and not welcoming to others so this is great.
- **Comment:** One barrier to ongoing engagement has been mentioned which is access to trainings/education required for certification. This is difficult even in a well-resourced place (New York City).
- **Comment:** I LOVE the idea of the calls and including different members of the AASECT community. This opening of the organization will assist in getting different points of view from a diverse sample.
- **Comment:** There is an old business axiom: "Markets make businesses, businesses don't make markets." The marketplace is going to drive our growth so I am not so sure I completely embrace this goal as written.
- **Comment:** There seems to be an assumption that members aren't engaged because they don't have the information about how to get involved. What are the other reasons members aren't engaged and how can that be accommodated (i.e. lack of time, growing practices, underpaid and don't want to work for free). What are ways you can engage student members who are fresh and excited about AASECT membership?
- **Comment:** I've been part of many orgs where there's a lack of transparency and it's frustrating and ultimately does make me less enthusiastic about getting involved more than paying annual dues. I've already been pleased at the general tone/vibe of AASECT (I was introduced by attending the conference last summer) that really encouraged a break-down of some of these traditional hierarchies in terms of

connecting/networking/sharing resources. A focused goal to increase this and to engage members more fully (and to offer more resources on the website to get more people using it) sounds well worthwhile.

- **Comment:** I have been constantly thinking about this. I think that it would be great to have AASECT members connect socially with each other, besides through the conferences.
- **Comment:** This medium, webinar, is something to consider for future AASECT conferences, meetings, feedback processes, etc.
- **Comment:** “I am really glad that the organization is being proactive in addressing the high need for accessing membership, conferences etc. for diverse professionals... In the past I’ve tried to reach out to other Sex Therapists in the area with no results of wanting to collaborate or meet. I would love to see where this proposed strategic plan takes shape by creating communities of therapists, educators and counselor professionals that can truly support each other no matter what. As part of this organization I envision the creation of diverse spaces for professional exchange in different communities across the US as well as overseas.
- **Comment:** “Accessibility is a concern for the website and for the certification software.”
- **Comment:** How can others be helpful to the certification review process as it relates to the strategic plan? (see direct response below)
- **Comment:** “Where do we find out about other volunteer opportunities?”
 - **Direct response:** *We LOVE these volunteer asks! Thank you! We are taking note for strategic plan volunteers and for general volunteer opportunities you can also email info@asect.org*
- **Comment:** Many members are interested in data that would indicate why members have left and why other members stay
- **Comment:** As we know and teach, communication is vital in any form of relationship.
- **Comment:** Agreed. Probably through accessibility. Being sensitive to the economic and professional needs of current and future members would be ideal.
- **Comment:** Hell yes.
- **Comment:** I don't recall that part of the call
- **Suggestion:** I urge you to analyze data about patterns in profiles of members and certified people. AASECT has become quite niche. I am guessing many academics have found SSS to be a more welcoming home.
- **Suggestion:** An organization lives and dies by widening its volunteer base. AASECT cannot sustain its efforts over time with the usual cast of characters at meetings and on committees. I know a lot of senior SECT members, who are supervisors and trainers, are retiring over the next decade. This will have big impact on the

organization and the field overall. Who is going to be the next Sallie Foley or Claudia Kraus Piper or Dennis Sugrue or Daniela Wittmann?

- **Suggestion:** I'm looking forward to seeing how this goal will be approached- also has AAASECT ever considered state chapters? Many of us can not afford to go to the conferences and would benefit from more than yearly contact with others in the field
- **Suggestion:** Members would be more involved if there were more benefits to them, like obtaining AAASECT core requirements vs having to pay for them.
- **Suggestion:** It would be great if there were more member involvement in making the plan work.
- **Suggestion:** Promote non-positional leadership and pop-up meetings.
- **Suggestion:** Agreed. Probably through accessibility. Being sensitive to the economic and professional needs of current and future members would be ideal.
- **Suggestion:** There is a need to capture the history of AAASECT in a clear and accessible way (documentation). This should be where AAASECT also claims its strengths and demonstrates a history of where we've been
- **Suggestion:** All committee chairs should follow an "elect" model
- **Suggestion:** It would be helpful to see the responses of the non-member survey. Possibly include data (that we know) representing statistics of our members and other summative data sources
- **Suggestion:** It would be helpful to make a list of data sources that are available online and in print and let members know that those are available
- **Suggestion:** It would be helpful to create new/continuing opportunities for members to highlight their expertise. Bullet #3 is "high level" but does not clearly capture thoughts presented in this suggestion
- **Suggestion:** Share SPTF process steps on the AAASECT website and have the committee information online for members to see what is happening.
- **Suggestion:** Have more Zoom meetings

Goal 5: Leadership Structure & Function

Examining the structure of AAASECT's leadership model with the goal of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the BOD, Committees, and overall functioning of the organization to better meet the demands of a growing membership

- **Comment:** Great goal- no feedback
- **Comment:** My main feedback here is that any efforts here should be done in conversation with the DEI committee to make sure that there's an ongoing consideration of inclusiveness and representation across all of these leadership bodies.

- **Comment:** not sure what was explained?
- **Comment:** I do not know enough about the various committees to comment
- **Comment:** Has the board members taken any governance training?
- **Comment:** I haven't been involved in leadership enough to follow what's going on but I think you guys are on the right track here.
- **Comment:** I appreciated Roz's input regarding the BOD being aware of the ongoing member concerns. My hope is that ongoing transparency, dialoguing with membership about solutions, and that real actionable steps are taking place.
- **Comment:** Yes I support examining for efficiencies and effectiveness for sure.
- **Comment:** What influence does the management company have on the BOD decision making?
- **Comment:** Let people see the working parts and not just the end -products. Members want to know the "why" behind all our "whats."
- **Comment:** Yes. very critical and brave. I really admire being so open minded to be able to do this. many organizations are stuck in their ways for decades.
- **Comment:** This sounds nice, but a bit lofty, nebulous, or vague. How would this happen? More clearly outlined bylaws? A consult with organizational specialists for what might work best? A structure change for contingency in certain areas and new leadership in others? I am excited to see how this fleshes out.
- **Comment:** I am in favor of this. I am also in favor of being strategic in the use of our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) program. If we believe in the section leader model is an important part of our strategy, section leaders need easy access to communicate with our members. (The section leader model is having local and regular meet and greets, with speakers issuing CE's and the possibility of other local events).
- **Comment:** It's great to get emails about AASECT Leadership, but reading about people and maybe seeing a photo is not enough to help others connect to them. Also, what is the BOD exactly doing to help AASECT grow with the times?
- **Comment:** Member joined the organization in 2018 with a goal of using the special circumstance option to support career goal of being certified as a sex therapist. Finances and access to trainings served as a barrier throughout the process, as well as ineffective communication. The organization has mixed messages regarding organizational culture. There is more of a "loosie goosie" approach with some policies or individuals and in other ways it is the letter of the law. This presents as ineffective in messaging and prohibits members from accessing needed resources and services
 - **Direct [member] response:** *"The DEI committee was also concerned about removing this category. I hope new movement towards accessibility can welcome people with years of experience or "so called alternative educational paths" to become certified.*

- **Comment:** There needs to be more transparency between the board and members throughout the year
- **Comment:** “To address some of the "what's different this time" question- as someone who has been involved and peripheral to the organization for a long time (10+ years- purposely stepping back for some of the inclusion problems that folks refer to) I do see some encouraging changes happening, and do acknowledge the volunteer-led and financially-strapped realities that the org has faced over the years. But of course there's a long way to go”
- **Suggestion:** I hope the board will do ongoing analysis about how the management company vs executive director who is a sexuality professional managing the work of AASECT. I am guessing many of the deep declines in membership among educators can be connected to that shift in "staffing" the organization. I feel confident if we had an executive director who was a sex educator, or counselor we'd have more than one certified educators in Chicago!
- **Suggestion:** No particular comment. However, if the Association values international members, please consider pathways or opportunities that we can be more involved or contributing to the AASECT.

Goal 6: Financial Health

Stabilizing the long-term financial health of the organization so that AASECT is better prepared for periods of financial hardships and creates opportunities to utilize excess funds in ways that advances Goals 1-5, with a particular focus on goal 1.

- **Comment:** I remember some embarrassing financial moments in AASECT's history. So, um yeah, I agree wholeheartedly with this priority, and with the goal of advancing goal 1.
- **Comment:** Yes. very critical for the health of any organization really.
- **Comment:** We need to look at boosting membership and increasing revenue streams at multiple levels.
- **Comment:** Yes. Ideal. Financial literacy and accessibility.
- **Comment:** I don't see the current structure as a primary problem.
- **Comment:** I think that having more fundraising events, which would also provide more exposure to the public, would really help AASECT.
- **Comment:** None- without having a solid understanding of the current financial state, I don't feel I can comment...but it is always important to have savings for the lean years.
- **Comment:** It is important to reinforce the 5th bullet of this goal to assess the relationship with Bostrom
- **Suggestion:** It is important to make economic accessibility a sustainable issue. This objective should be moved up.

- **Suggestion:** AASECT should promote a culture of “alternative” giving when financially members may not be able to contribute, there may be other ways that can contribute meaningfully
- **Suggestion:** Financial health of the organization is a critical issue. I would invest proportionately across all the goals, and would not place a particular focus on goal 1.

Additional Feedback

- **Strategic Plan [review process]:** Love the pre-organization for the meeting
- **Strategic Plan [review process]:** I'm new to the org, really happy to be invited to give feedback (even if it was randomly generated by membership #), and this makes me feel cared about and included and welcomed in a meaningful way.
- **Strategic Plan [feedback form]:** I found this form very helpful. I am not sure if I provided what you needed so feedback on how best to help and contribute would be wonderful :)
- **Strategic Plan [feedback form]:** I loved this survey part after the call. Really gave me time to think and digest. Good call.
- **Strategic Plan [feedback form]:** I wasn't able to attend the Zoom meetings but thought this was a great alternative- to be able to give feedback offline.
- **Strategic Plan:** The objectives in the strategic plan sound biased toward clinical practice members
- **Strategic Plan:** The strategic planning task force calls are starting to “bake in” the values of the strategic plan
- **Strategic Plan:** It feels like there is a new excitement about the trajectory of the organization based on the strategic plan
- **Strategic Plan:** AASECT is being more “progressive”
- **Strategic Plan:** “I think the goals are AWESOME!!! I think that SPFT is on the right path”
- **Strategic Plan:** I think these are key areas that would be very helpful to address as the first step. We might want to delve deeper in some as we collect more information and implement new changes. We also need to make this an ongoing effort as the world is changing and fast! Thank you very much for initiating it.
- **Strategic Plan:** Really happy and frankly relieved.
- **Strategic Plan:** “Speaking to the overall directions of the plan: Well done. There are broad directions of “product”—service/support, how we work with each other, and financial stability. All with DEI being woven in. Finally, having an objective specifically about continuing the planning/implementation process is very smart—that way it will not only be more likely to get done, but it will stay relevant to changing realities. Well done!”
- **Strategic Plan:** It would be helpful when collecting data from people about the strategic plan to find out why DEI and AASECT are important to them

- **Strategic Plan:** “ Great work team! ...I’m so impressed by the work that has been done by this committee. Thanks for your hard work!
- **Strategic Plan:** Excited to see the changes. Feel a bit overwhelmed at what seems like a daunting task, but jazzed to see how these changes will impact membership, accessibility, and the integrity of the organization in the field as a whole.
- **Strategic Plan:** You guys clearly worked really hard and I'm super impressed.
- **Strategic Plan:** You guys are doing wonderful!
- **Strategic Plan:** Sounds good but I think it's also important to have that fleshed out plan shared with the membership
- **Volunteer:** Several members indicated they would like to volunteer to work on the strategic plan goals; most are very interested in certification. For instance, one member wrote: “I would like to volunteer to join the Certification Assessment Task Force. I've already shown an interest in this topic by submitting my own 6 page memorandum in July 2018 re: DEI issues in educator certification.”
- **Question from SPTF Chair:** “Who would be proud to be a member of AAASECT with these goals and objectives?” Response: Several members reported they would be proud to be a member of AAASECT. Others indicated that they would be proud of AAASECT and that these goals and objectives via the strategic plan are necessary for them to consider remaining a member.
- **Other thoughts:** I have been with AAASECT for a long time so I might be positively biased. What I heard from some members and people who are considering becoming members is that AAASECT seems to be a small and closely-net group which does not have a welcoming vibe for others. This might need a bit of exploration to see why this is the case and what we can do to reach out and make our organization more inclusive (not only the known DIE aspects but also beyond what is usually considered in the mix, such as languages, ethnicities, professions, age, level of expertise, etc.)
- **Other thoughts:** I am concerned that we are authorizing our CE providers to tell the graduates of the certification programs that they can say they are certified sex therapists simply by graduating from their programs without going on to become AAASECT certified. This is the opposite of what U of M does. I recognize there are state laws in Florida that need to be considered.
- **Other thoughts:** I do think we need to do a better job of communicating what is going on in aasect to people outside of it. There are a lot of sexuality professionals who are not involved because of their negative views of AAASECT and knowing we are working on things might help a lot.
- **Other thoughts:** I am concerned that there is not more focus on leveraging technology, i.e., use of CRM programs, updated and streamlined websites, marketing for our certified members such as Psychology Today does.

- **Other thoughts:** I think welcoming more people at conferences who are looking to get a little insight on sexuality or who are in parts of the sexuality world that can't get licensed at conferences would be great.
- **Other thoughts:** Provide our section leaders with tools to be effective expand local membership, track local membership, and communicate with local membership.