



North American and Caribbean
Association of Schools in Social Work

To IASSW Board; NACASSW Executive Committee; President CSWE; President CASWE

From Karene-Anne Nathaniel-DeCaires
President, NACASSW/President ACSWE (interim)

Date July 9th 2020

Subject Report on key activities in the North American and Caribbean region for the IASSW Virtual Board meeting of July 2020 via zoom.

This has certainly been an unprecedented time in the history of the world which will undoubtedly alter the direction of modern civilization. The COVID 19 pandemic highlighted the deep widespread and pervasive inequalities and vulnerabilities facing communities across the world, and for this region the anti-racism demonstrations of the past month have further spotlighted the institutional injustice that have persisted over time. In addition to numerous virtual sessions and webinars, each sub-regional association issued statements supporting workers and populations affected by the pandemic. We also made strong statements denouncing racism, which have been widely circulated among stakeholders.

The American association (CSWE) recently presented findings of a student survey which showed that the large majority of social work students would be willing to return to face to face classes, but on-line delivery would not adversely impact their commitment to social work education. The CSWE has also registered its objection to the proposal for international students to be required to leave the US if their classes are being taught on line. The next CSWE APM is carded for November 2020 in Denver Colorado.

The Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences Congress June 1-4th 2020 was moved on-line due to the pandemic. However, the CASWE-ACFTS made a decision not to participate in the on line mode, and cancelled its 2020 conference which would usually be a part of the annual congress. There were several reasons provided to support their decision, and arrangements were made for the refund of fees to delegates with apologies to presenters.

The Caribbean association (ACSWE) is currently undergoing a legal registration process in Jamaica. This association has faced some serious challenges over the last year with access to association funds held by paypal, the inability to host the 2019 biennial conference and socio-economic uncertainty about the future post-covid. The ACSWE is optimistic about a 2021 biennial conference and BGM and will explore options for a virtual conference.

Preliminary discussions have begun for a NACASSW webinar on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on migrants and refugees with presenters from migrant support organizations across all three subregions. Further details will be provided to the Board in due course.

Despite the postponement of the Biennial Congress to November, the NACASSW leadership is due to rotate to Canada effective July 2020, normally coinciding with the last board meeting of the Congress. I have had a discussion with Kathy Hogarth, the Vice President of CASWE-ACFTS and co-chair of its international affairs committee about the transition to Canadian leadership of NACASSW, and the need to reconstitute the executive committee. The IASSW board will be advised in due course of the membership of the new executive committee, including the named president and would be regional vice president of IA for the North American and Caribbean region 2020-2024.

It was my honour to serve in the capacity as NACASSW President for the last four years. I will continue to support the work of the regional and international associations in the Caribbean and across the world.



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