

Dear CAPCSD Members,

I am pleased to communicate with you in the first newsletter of my Presidency of CAPCSD. Our board met in July and we had a positive and reflective gathering. As always, we reviewed the conference plan for 2018. Many great sessions are planned based on member input. We are excited about the offerings!

During our time together we discussed one challenge that is going to impact our membership in the near future. The issue is related to our 2018 venue in Austin, Texas and recent legislation in that state.

Currently, Texas is planning to hold a special session of the legislature that will address 19 issues, one of which is similar to the North Carolina bathroom law (you can read the bill [here](#)). More immediately, though, is California's travel ban for state employees wishing to travel to meetings in Texas because of a recently-passed Texas law that supports discriminatory practice in adoption and foster care. That bill can be found [here](#).

As you know, CAPCSD voted 2 years ago to forego holding a conference in Charlotte because of the North Carolina transgender bathroom bill, at substantial financial loss to the association. That bill was repealed. We may recover some of that money by holding the conference there in 2021 and we remain under contract to do so.

Last year, the Council's By-Laws were revised to include a non-discrimination statement that includes gender as one of the groups we voted we would not discriminate against as an organization.

That being said, there are several challenges that we face for the 2018 conference:

- Timing and logistics: Our conference is less than one year away. We have fewer options to negotiate for a different location as in the Charlotte situation due to timing. Coupled with this is the fact that our conference continues to grow. We are under multiple contracts in Austin due to the need for additional sleeping rooms at a different hotel.
- Potential financial loss: The Board has discussed the financial implications, which at this point would amount to a minimum loss of \$200,000 because of our 2018 hotel contracts. (Note: Our total net worth as an organization stands at approximately \$1.1 million, including funds that are "held" for the future conference in Charlotte, North Carolina).

What is your Board doing?

We are taking this situation very seriously, both for 2018 and the future. We are attempting to balance our respect for diversity and the financial solvency of our organization. Our discussions have been spirited.

- I have written a letter to the Texas Governor cc'd to the head of the legislature, the Mayor of Austin, the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Hilton Corporation to let them know our stance on non-discrimination and our opposition to the proposed legislation.
- The Board is monitoring the evolving situation in Texas.
- The Board is also monitoring listserv traffic on the American Society of American Executives (ASAE) to get information on how other associations are responding to these kinds of issues.
- We continually review our contract with the Hilton Austin and we are remaining in communication with our hotel site liaison to foster positive communication about our organizational concerns.
- We are monitoring travel bans and exception policies across states.
- The Board has already planned out the next three years of conferences. However, we are aggressively pursuing other cities and states that are welcoming and nondiscriminatory for conference offerings after 2021. This means that we may not always be able to host our conference in a warm climate.
- We are observing that there are an increasing number of venues that have stronger "cancellation language" in their contracts. This language gives us *less* leverage because many hotel chains are beginning to exclude legislation related to social issues as a reason for termination.

We thank you for your patience and understanding during this process. Your Board will be carefully weighing our options during these next months. You can be assured that this will be an ongoing discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark DeRuiter', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark DeRuiter, MBA, PhD
President, Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders