

Vision Search Task Force Meets With Future Consultant in Hollywood

Thomas Haines, PhD | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

The Vision Search Task Force (VSTF) met for a fifth time in Hollywood, Calif. at the AOM Alliance's most recent annual conference. Task force members continued the planning of an AOM Future Search conference, which is tentatively being planned for late summer or early fall 2005.

The task force has also enlisted the help of a distinguished Future Search consultant, Sandra Janoff. Dr. Janoff is a world-renowned specialist in bringing disparate groups together in one setting to identify community differences and commonalities. The latter is used for the development of a unified vision that the community as a whole can embrace and work towards achieving. Dr. Janoff is currently co-director (with Marvin Weisbord) of the Future Search Network, a worldwide network offering communities as well as corporations future search processes and training. Drs. Janoff and Weisbord are originators of the process and co-authors of the well-received *Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations and Communities*.

Dr. Janoff has agreed to help the VSTF over the next year and a half to organize and conduct a Future Search Conference for the acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) community. This three-day event will be attended by a select number of participants, each representing their specific stakeholder group. Initial stakeholder groups have tentatively been identified and would include voices from such groups as practitioners, regulators, consumers, vendors, educators (including administrators, faculty and students), third-party payers, national and state professional organization members, as well as AOM researchers. The list of stakeholder groups will be defined much better and expanded as the VSTF planning progresses over the next several months. If you have a stakeholder group that is not included above and you feel it can provide another important voice, please log onto www.acupuncturetoday.com/vstf and contact us directly to be sure your input is considered in the planning process. Hopefully, by the end of the summer, we will have the stakeholder groups well-defined and a nomination process in place on our website where specific individuals can be nominated within stakeholder groups. Please look for "An Update on VSTF Activities" in the August issue of *Acupuncture Today* for information on our nomination process.

The typical number of participants at a Future Search Conference is usually in multiples of 64, i.e., eight tables of eight participants. At this time, it is unclear just how many participants will be invited to the AOM Future Search Conference, since the funding has not been clarified and the level of interest has yet to be assessed. However, if attendance at the VSTF Town Hall meetings is any indication of interest, it is anticipated that at least 128 (2 x 64) representative stakeholders would be invited from the AOM community to participate in a three-day conference.

The Future Search conference process has worked wonders within many communities across all continents, with amazing success. Readers are encouraged to visit the website of Drs. Janoff and Weisbord at www.futuresearch.net, or go the Vision Search Task Force at www.acupuncturetoday.com/vstf and click "Future Search" under the "Links" section.

Our website contains a listing of VSTF membership and meeting dates; all of the VSTF meeting minutes; the VSTF Town Hall summaries; a discussion forum for the major AOM issues that have been identified so far; and various articles written about our purpose and progress over the last two years. Under development is a link to a "Future Search Participant Nomination Site" that will allow individuals to be identified for possible selection to the three-day conference to be held in 2005.

We realize that most of our input to date has been regional, since not everyone can attend the Town Hall meetings held in conjunction with the biannual professional conferences. Fortunately, with the construction of the VSTF website, anyone anywhere in the world can access the VSTF by logging on to our site or by e-mailing us directly. We value your ideas concerning the Future Search process and need your insights and input for planning a successful AOM Future Search conference.

Our next Town Hall meeting will be held in Las Vegas on Friday, October 22. A VSTF panel will share updates on conference planning as well as the status of the selection process to be used for selecting participants from the various stakeholder groups. Try to make this important meeting, or at least submit your thoughts prior to the meeting through our website.

Our hope is that a successful AOM Future Search Conference will:

- Identify an attainable and inspirational common vision for the AOM community, which will include all voices from within the profession;
- Establish a broad conversation to stimulate and encourage the acceptance of a common vision; and
- Define dignified and effective guidelines for strategic planning and conflict resolution for the AOM community in the future.

If you wish, you can submit written responses directly to:

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