

May 3, 2009

To: CDP Chair, AAMFT National Board, and Division Leaders
From: The Oregon Division

RE: RECENT ISSUES RAISED

Dear Fellow Members,

The Oregon division met together in a closed session to track, educate and communicate together about the recent issues that have been raised with the catalyst of the NJAMFT letter and then the ensuing responses both from the CDP Chair and/or the Board, as well as from other division leaders.

We have chosen to utilize the Divlist to ensure and to value open communication from all entities. Since there is not a better option at this time, we are valuing this public forum. As we currently understand it, the other options for communicate are on Facebook, outside the venue of AAMFT, or via the next CDP meeting in October. Our stance as the Oregon Board is that "problems" or issues should be discussed via the Divlist as it keeps topics relevant and immediate, and is inclusive to all involved.

Oregon is entering into this dialogue as we respond to the system, due to our belief that in a healthy system this kind of dialogue needs to happen. We are taking a stance of collaboration with the entire system; we do not conceptualize this as an Us versus Them approach (i.e., we are not viewing this as the NJ Movement vs AAMFT), and we embrace the system as a whole, which needs to move toward healing.

The NJAMFT letter has brought to light some significant concerns about our whole system and we would like to offer these points:

- a) Items addressed by NJAMFT need to be dialogued **openly and ongoing**.
- b) The National Board process-decision-making, needs to be a **greater system-known knowledge-base**.
- c) There appears to be a **process challenge** for all of us in leadership of AAMFT: How do we conduct open, honest exploration of ourselves without defensiveness, fear and divisiveness.

We, the Oregon board, want to recognize that NJAMFT brought forward a voice of distress within our organization. This is current and also *historical*. This does not negate the quality of work that has already transpired within AAMFT, the Board or by the ED. We, Oregon, do not wish anyone to be vilified in the process (whether that is the ED or the NJAMFT or NJAMFT DP).

So what now? How will our system, as a whole, move to health and cohesion? We would like to suggest a number of options:

1. **Listening** to voices spoken **with attunement** to the needs of the members followed by **positive action** in recognition of that

communication. This is based upon the recurrence of issues being re-addressed over the years. In plain English, this stuff keeps coming up because folks don't feel heard.

2. **Consultation, audit and outside review** of the structure and function of the Board and ED to further ensure best practices. We suggest that the Outside reviewer should not be chosen by or influenced in any way by the board or the ED, to facilitate a clean-slate for the division leaders' peace of mind.
3. A continued, uncensored, public forum on all our issues as an organization.

In closing, we would like to share with you what it was like for us as a group to mull over the process of discussion we have watched unfold. We found ourselves considering any potential "backlash" for joining in the discussion. We share this publically, because we believe that it is a sign of the unhealthiness of what we have recently witnessed. It is our opinion, that as members of the organization and as leaders of the organization, we must all be willing to ask hard, uncomfortable questions without any negative consequences to ourselves in the manner of personal attacks, censorship, or to be dismissed. We are guessing that others may feel this way as well, and so we would choose to sound the bell that the health of our organization rests on our ability to share in open, respectful dialogue.

Oregon respectfully asks for the National Board to support open discussion, provide answers, and to continue to address any and all concerns brought forward by both the NJAMFT and by others.

Serving MFTs alongside the rest of you,

The OAMFT

Shelley Hanson, President
Stephanie Miller, President-Elect
James Brown, Treasurer
Marti Olsen-Laney, General Board Member and Legislative Chair
Deanne Fahy, General Board Member
Jim Prather, General Board Member
Lara Barnes, General Board Member
Trish Rohani, Student Representative