



Crucial Conversations: A Legislative Panel Discussion

with Dawn Hogue, Debra Persinger, and Les Sweeney

Print this handout or download the document and then use the text boxes to type notes.

I. The US Department of Education's "150% Rule" changing to 100%

II. Gainful employment: debt-to-income ratio

III. Interstate Massage Compact (IMPact)

Resources

The ABMP Podcast, [Episode 420–Gainful Employment \(and the 100% Rule\)](#) with Les Sweeney

[“Why Quality Education Matters.”](#) Lance Hostetter, *Massage & Bodywork* magazine, March–April 2024

Panel Bios

Dawn Hogue

A graduate of the Cayce/Reilly School of Massage, Dawn Hogue has been in the healing arts profession for 25 years. She serves as the executive director for the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation (COMTA) where she manages the agency's operations, compliance responsibilities, and support of all COMTA activities. She is also the current chair of the Massage Therapy Advisory Board for the Virginia Board of Nursing. Dawn graduated from Naropa University having earned a master's degree in somatic psychology and is trained in the Matrixworks model of leadership and group facilitation. She is passionate about holistic health and advancing educational standards for massage therapy/bodywork and esthetics. Learn more at comta.org.

Debra Persinger, PhD

Dr. Debra Persinger brings a rare combination of management experience, examination expertise, and national and state legislative know-how to the Federation for State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB), where she serves as executive director. She has directed all psychometric aspects of examination development and was instrumental in offering award-winning quality assessment services for examinations for four professional certification and licensure programs. She has an undergraduate degree in human nutrition, postgraduate teacher training, a master's degree in human development and family studies, and a doctoral degree in human services. She is a former university lecturer and coauthored *Conversations with Teachers of Asian Medicine*. She frequently presents at regulatory and credentialing conferences and has provided trainings for local and federal law enforcement agencies about the intersection of massage therapy with human trafficking. Learn more at fsmtb.org.

Les Sweeney

Les Sweeney is president and chief executive officer of Professional Assist Corporation, the parent organization of ABMP, ASCP, AHP, and ANP, leading membership associations that serve more than 120,000 individuals in the massage and cosmetology professions. Les is a graduate of the University of Virginia, has more than three decades experience in association management, a master's degree in business administration with a concentration in entrepreneurship from the University of Colorado, is a licensed massage therapist, been the lead singer in a band for 30 plus years, recently got an undeserved hole-in-one, and inadvertently appeared on the Super Bowl XLIII telecast while returning to his seat from the restroom. His five words of advice? Actually, seven: "Have a good time, all the time." Connect with Les at les@abmp.com.