

TESTIMONIALS FROM SOPHE AND AAHE PAST PRESIDENTS
REGARDING THE AAHE-SOPHE MODIFIED MERGER

MARCH 1, 2012

“As an AAHE Scholar and a SOPHE past president, I believe very deeply that this merger is the best thing that has happened to our profession in a very long time. AAHE and SOPHE coming together solidify the partnership that has been maintained for years. SOPHE and AAHE worked together for years to develop and implement individual and institutional initiatives to ensure quality assurance in producing professional health educators. With this merger, we can truly say that we may have had two separate organizations but our legacy is the same and indeed our posterity should reflect our sameness of vision and purpose housed in one organization. I support this merger fully and believe very strongly that whatever concerns or uneasiness that some members, on either side, may have would be put to rest as the benefits of the union manifest as we forge ahead as one independent health education organization. I have registered to attend the meeting in Boston and I look forward to celebrating a new beginning for health education and health promotion family.”

**Collins O. Airhihenbuwa, PhD, Pennsylvania State University
SOPHE President 2004-2005**

“The unification of our profession as demonstrated by one professional organization is something that many have longed for over the last 30 years. Our profession has suffered from not being unified and from lacking one voice. While there have been several attempts at this in the past, there were always roadblocks that prevented it. I want to commend the current SOPHE and AAHE leadership for pursuing this unification and for the hard work that has gone into making this successful. They are to be commended for looking past the differences and seeing a future that is bigger than the individual organizations we now have. It now compels us as members to work hard to make this new organization work. I, therefore, call on all health educators to support the unification of our two professional organizations and to do what you can in the future to ensure that this new organization will speak with one strong voice for health education.”

**Steve Dorman, MPH, PhD, University of Florida
AAHE President-Elect 2006-2008, AAHE President, 2008-2010**

“As a member who has served on the Board of both organizations, I could not be more excited about the potential of this merger to strengthen the discipline of health education and implement new and exciting health promotion initiatives. While there are many similarities between the two organizations’ mission and roles, when merged, the new organization will have more members to advocate for health educators and health education. Also building on the strengths of both organizations, there will be more opportunities to link public health and school health programs in major health promotion efforts.”

**Diane Allensworth, PhD, Kent State University (Emeritus)
SOPHE President 2010-11**

“More than 25 years ago, our professional predecessors, Larry Green and Peter Cortese, and others, pursued a merger of our two professional organizations. In the intervening years, a merger has been the topic of many discussions in the profession, often ending with the question “Why hasn’t this happened already?” Soon it will be done, and I am confident this is going to be very positive for health education. The future of our merged organizations will increase capacity to serve members and the profession, and increase our advocacy power. We can’t know where health education would be today had AAHE and SOPHE merged 25 years ago, but 25 years from now, I am certain we will recognize this merger as one of the very best things to happen in our profession.”

**Thomas M. Davis, H.S.D., University of Northern Iowa
AAHE President, 2010-2012**

“As a past President and board member of AAHE and a past trustee of SOPHE, I am fully supportive of the SOPHE/AAHE merger. These are two organizations with long and illustrious histories that have served their members well. The two organizations have worked closely together on many notable projects and have a mutual respect for each other. The time has come, however, to make one combined organization that will be stronger than either of the individual organizations. Back in 1978, one finding from The Bethesda Conference on Commonalities and Differences was that Health Education was ONE profession. This merger will create ONE professional organization to represent and promote the profession. The advantages of having one professional voice for health educators are many. It will make a more cohesive profession, allow us to more effectively lobby and advocate for health and health education, increase networking opportunities for health educators, eliminate duplication of effort, and unite the profession with a common mission and vision. Special thanks go to those individuals who have worked tirelessly over the past few years to make this merger a reality.”

**Randall R. Cottrell, D.Ed., MCHES, University of Cincinnati
AAHE Board 1999-2002, AAHE President 2004-2006, SOPHE Trustee 2008-2010**

“In searching my files for some of the history of aborted false starts on the momentous merger of AAHE and SOPHE membership, I see that my computer is too young to have those files from the 1980s. I do want to congratulate Tom Davis, Caile Spear, Donna Videto, and David Birch on behalf of AAHE and AAHPERD, and our SOPHE colleagues who labored to bring this about after it languished for most of three decades since first proposed, explored, and probed with joint committees in the early 1980s. Those committees at least produced some joint publications on ethics and baccalaureate training guidelines for health education. Bravo to all who labored to bring this to pass. And thank you for all the work you have ahead of you to make it seamless.”

Lawrence W. Green, DrPH, University of California at San Francisco

SOPHE President, 1983-1984

“I want to share how proud I am of both current and past leadership of AAHE and SOPHE as they have worked very diligently over the past several years to develop a new organization that will be much stronger for our health education profession. The benefits will be significant in such areas of professional development, publications, advocacy and a wide range of membership services. I really look forward to the future of our profession.”

**Robert Simmons, DrPH, MPH, CHES, CHP, Thomas Jefferson School of Public Health
SOPHE President, 2007-2008**

“I have been a member of these two great organizations for many years and I support this modified merger. AAHE and SOPHE have collaborated on many issues and because of their cooperation our voices and efforts had a greater impact. The joining of these two organizations will strengthen our great profession and enable us to better advocate for health education. We are stronger and more powerful when we work together. The diversity and breadth of our membership provides a solid foundation for a new future together. Our many voices and skill sets empower us to have a greater influence on the health of individuals and communities across the nation. Now is the time to bring these two prestigious health education organizations together for the continued advancement of our profession.”

**Caile E. Spear, PhD, MCHES, Boise State University
AAHE President, 2012**

“For over three years now, both SOPHE and AAHE have been actively collaborating on creating the future of both organizations. While deeply respecting the history and needs of each of the separate memberships, they have been looking forward together to create one independent health education organization. This is a wonderful example of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts. I look forward to the completion of the modified merger and the resulting strengthening of the entire health education profession that I know will be the outcome of this effort. I also commend the many, many individuals who have worked so hard on behalf of both organizations to make this possible.”

**Kathryn Meier, MPH, CHES, University of Rhode Island
SOPHE President, 2008-2009**

“As a past President of SOPHE, I highly endorse all the work that has been done and the future decisions that must be made to ensure a smooth transition of the merger of AAHE and SOPHE. These are both fine health education organizations and the merger will ensure enhanced visibility and credibility for health education, as well as broader access to state of the art educational programs, publications and advocacy efforts for the health education professional. As a coalition expert, I can assure you that it always makes sense to collaborate when the vision, mission and ultimate goals of partners match. Strategic partnering avoids duplication of effort and resources, increases the critical mass of members needed to an advocacy impact, mobilizes more support and diverse expertise from members, and helps build the case for critical issues. In short, sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards just makes good sense. I applaud the efforts of both SOPHE and AAHE leaders in taking this bold step – it’s the right one!”

**Fran Butterfoss, PhD, Coalitions Work
SOPHE President, 2000-2001**

“Like most wise decisions, the joining of AAHE and SOPHE has come after long and deliberate consideration. As SOPHE President at the 50th year of our organization (1999), even then we worked together exploring how the two groups could unite in its efforts to advocate on behalf of health education’s central relevance to human progress and those who work in health education. Having a unified voice is essential if we are to be heard over the din of competing agenda nationally and locally. For over the past decade, both SOPHE and AAHE have worked to increase our relevance and influence exploring ways to leverage our influence collectively. The logical and best conclusion of our work is the unification of the organizations to optimize the effectiveness of our collective mission. Please join this effort to multiply your voice by staying an active member of the organization.”

**Robert Goodman, PhD, MPH, Indiana University
SOPHE President, 1998-1999**

“From my perspective as a past AAHE President, and past board member of both AAHE and SOPHE, I strongly support the merger of these two outstanding professional organizations. I have served in several different health education roles during my career – public school health educator, health education coordinator in a state department of education, university faculty member, and university department chair. Based on these varied perspectives, I am extremely excited about the potential impact of this new alliance. I see no downside to the AAHE/SOPHE merger. I envision the activities and presence of the new organization leading to a stronger voice for advocacy; better communication among health educators working in different settings; a recognized “go-to” organization for health education professionals, students, and stakeholders; and a better understanding of health education and health educators among the general public.”

**David A. Birch, PhD, MCHES, University of Alabama
AAHE President, 2000-2002**