June 28, 2019

Dear members of the higher education community,

In recent months, SHAPE America has held discussions with dozens of members at colleges and universities that host physical education teacher education and/or health education teacher education (PETE/HETE) programs. Our goal in having these conversations was to learn more about the value of SHAPE America serving as the specialized professional association (or “SPA”) for CAEP program accreditation, and to fully understand any impact or ramifications that would result in SHAPE America no longer serving as the SPA. In addition to these conversations, SHAPE America’s Council for Professional Preparation was convened and asked to provide perspective and insight.

As a result of these conversations, and in light of certain budget constraints faced by SHAPE America, we are writing to inform you that SHAPE America will no longer continue to serve as the SPA for CAEP accreditation of PETE and HETE programs.

To be very clear, this decision does NOT mean that SHAPE America is abandoning holding the standards for physical education teacher education and health education teacher education programs at colleges and universities. Indeed, SHAPE America is highly committed to always holding these standards, to convening taskforces to update them as necessary, and to continuously sharing them with our higher education institutions. Further, SHAPE America will always strive to provide resources that accompany these standards, and in fact, we will be intentional and apply resources that would have otherwise been put towards SPA accreditation to developing these.

Additionally, we appreciate that many institutions continue to maintain CAEP’s SPA accreditation for their PETE and HETE programs, but we must also acknowledge that some institutions have moved away from accreditation at the program or department level. Based on our recent conversations and research, we have reason to believe that trend will continue in the future, primarily due to the high fees that are paid to maintain SPA-accredited programs. This is certainly a factor that influenced this decision.
SHAPE America has long valued our higher education community and you have never been more important to advancing our shared mission than you are today. Toward this end, SHAPE America will seek more ways to routinely and thoughtfully engage you as we move forward. Specific ways in which we plan to do this include convening our higher education community on a yearly basis, as opposed to every three years as we have done in the past. We hope to start this new model next year by planning a special day (or potentially more) for a higher education “mini-conference” before or after the SHAPE America National Convention. We will also enlist the help of SHAPE America’s districts to more directly reach out and engage higher education programs at the state and regional levels.

Finally, it is important that we acknowledge the possibility of revisiting this decision at a future point in time. While it is prudent and makes sense for us to move in this direction at this time, we may certainly choose to revisit serving as the SPA in the future based on feedback from the higher education community and depending on SHAPE America’s ability to cover associated costs.

As members of SHAPE America’s higher education community, thank you for your deep and abiding commitment to our future professionals. Thank you for your dedicated efforts to advancing SHAPE America’s mission. Know we stand in appreciation and strong support for all that you are doing, and that we welcome all feedback and any questions on this decision as we move forward.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Morris
Chief Executive Officer
She/Her/Hers