

# AICP President-Elect Candidates

Michael Harper, AICP

Daniel Lauber, AICP

In an effort to better inform the APA membership, the Chapter President Council (CPC) has developed a series of questions for national candidates for the American Planning Association (APA). Mike Southard and Sumner Sharpe compiled this survey for distribution by the CPC Executive Committee. The CPC encourages chapters to endorse candidates who represent their views and positions.

## ***Q1A) What role do you believe continuing education plays in the advancement of a professional planner's career?***

**MH:** Continuing education should respond to three core roles in a professional planner's career: 1) Maintaining a level of skills and knowledge that reinforce the confidence that his/her clients, colleagues, and the general public should have in his/her advice and recommendations; 2) Expanding the opportunities for career growth, whether it be in breadth of skills and/or increase in responsibilities; and 3) Eventually providing the skills, knowledge and experience that can be passed along to colleagues who are, themselves, working toward the first two roles.

**DL:** Once on the job, any planner who fails to continue learning his profession falls behind and becomes unemployable. Continuing to educate one's self is essential in every profession. How we educate ourselves varies considerably. The planner who studies every PAS report that comes down the pike has probably obtained the best continuing education available – far better than any short courses or APA conference sessions. Many planners, though, prefer to take a course or conference session as their means of continuing education. Others want teleconferences and online education with interaction. Who is to say which is the most effective method? Each individual planner knows what works best for her.

## ***Q1B) Do you favor mandatory continuing education for certified planners?***

**MH:** Yes, I support the concept of mandatory continuing education (MCE) because I believe it can be a visible and positive way of demonstrating AICP members' commitment to excellent professional service to our clients, colleagues and the general public. Yes, I support the concept of MCE as a reminder to every AICP member that continuing education is a fundamental responsibility of the members' adherence to one of the tenets of the AICP Code of Ethics.

No, I do not support the immediate implementation of MCE at this time. No member of the Institute should be faced with the obligation of meeting an MCE requirement without: knowing what is specifically required of him/her; having an expectation that the Institute can either provide the resources or direct that person to those resources that assist a member in meeting the requirement; and having confidence that the Institute has created a program of advising employers, clients and the general public of the important value of supporting AICP members in meeting the MCV obligation.

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I am proud that as an AICP Commissioner for the past four years, I have been part of the Commission's efforts to study the above issues through a pilot program involving three of your chapters and through a soon to be released insert in the AICP Casebook.

As AICP President, I will work hard to bring closure to the issues noted above and other related issues in a manner what will result in continuing education being seen as a positive aspect on membership in AICP. As AICP President, you have my commitment to work with the CPC and your individual chapter executive boards to better provide and support continuing education opportunities at the chapter level.

**DL:** We should, of course, apply sound planning practices in the governance of our own organization – and that means requiring that proponents of a proposition like mandatory continuing education to demonstrate that requiring continuing education makes a professional more competent – not base our decisions on myth and our personal prejudices like the worst planning commissioners do.

Proponents of mandatory continuing education have not met this burden of proof. They have not produced factual evidence that professionals who are required to take formal education courses are more competent than professionals who learn on their own. Nobody has shown, for example, that attorneys in states with mandatory continuing education requirements, are more competent than attorneys in states without those requirements. Consequently, I agree with the substantial majority of AICP members, as found in two random sample surveys, that continuing education should be voluntary.

***Q 1C) What role should APA (nationally) and the chapter (locally) have in educating planners?***

**MH:** I have to provide two answers to the above question:

For AICP members, AICP has an obligation to identify what is considered core education subjects and, then, provide the resources in a cost effective and convenient manner to assist in continuing education. The Institute must work with the chapters to identify how best the core education subjects can be identified and communicated to AICP members. In addition, AICP cannot just advise the chapters of what those core subjects are, but must also work with chapters to identify how best to deliver continuing education and what resources are required to successfully meet the continuing education effort.

For APA members, APA and AICP must work collaboratively to identify both professional planner needs (non-AICP member) and citizen planner needs. Again, the chapters are the best resource for commencing this dialogue and reaching consensus on the strategy to provide continuing education. And, again, the national organizations must work through the chapters to find cost effective and efficient ways of delivering these education services. I see the national organizations, both APA and AICP, providing advice and resources, but also listening closely to the chapters and their members concerning education needs and opportunities.

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**DL:** For nearly 16 years I've been calling for APA/AICP to provide affordable, accessible, high quality continuing education opportunities, largely at the local and regional level – a call that has fallen largely on deaf ears as we fritter away our resources arguing over making continuing education mandatory to stay in AICP.

It is highly premature to even discuss making continuing education mandatory when APA/AICP still does such a mediocre job of providing continuing education. We need high quality live, videotaped, computerized, online, and teleconferenced continuing education packages put together by national APA (which has the staff and financial resources to do this) and provided to chapters and sections. Chapters that have put together solid, high quality continuing education programs should share them with other chapters and with national APA. This sharing was one of the reasons the CPC was originally created.

AICP has dropped the ball on continuing education. Its leadership hasn't been flexible. When economic times are good, national institutes like the fine AICP Zoning Institute, thrive. When economic times are bad, they lose a small fortune. Instead of offering such excellent national educational opportunities during the good economic times of the late 1990s, the AICP Commission was too busy debating making continuing education mandatory. It lost a great opportunity to provide the substantive continuing education that our members want. Until we have a consistently excellent continuing education program in place, it is premature to even discuss requiring formal continuing education to remain an AICP member.

***Q2A) Of the six major goals (in the APA 220/2003 ODP), please prioritize them in the order of highest to least importance.***

**MH:** 1. Foster organizational change and maintain financial sustainability; 2. Create a culture of continuing education and provide more education opportunities for practicing planners; 3. Aggressively advocate and implement policies and legislative agendas that support and sustain good planning at the local, state, and national levels; 4. Pursue social, economic, and racial equity in America's communities; 5. Develop new membership and marketing strategies; and 6. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional and cultural identity of APA.

I want it made clear that I do not perceive that ranking these from most to least important diminishes the need to work on achieving all of the goals or devoting resources to accomplishing them.

**DL:** The priority list that follows speaks only to the goals. It does not address the strategies offered in the ODP. That said, I would rank the goals as follows: 1. Pursue social, economic, and racial equity in America's communities [Unfortunately the ODP still skirts the key issue of American Apartheid, and fails to offer any realistic strategies to accomplish this goal.]; 2. Aggressively advocate and implement policies and legislative agendas that support and sustain good planning at the local, state, and national levels;

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3. Create a culture of continuing education and provide more education opportunities for practicing planners; 4. Foster organizational change and maintain financial sustainability; 5. Develop new membership and product marketing strategies; and 5. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional, and cultural identity of APA

## ***Q2B) Are there any other elements or goals that you would include in the ODP and why?***

**MH:** Having had the opportunity to participate in the development of the ODP as an AICP Commissioner, I am satisfied with the six major goals. I agree with APA President Bruce McClendon that it is important to focus our resources and energies on a few goals, without losing sight that this is a dynamic process. I am proud that the AICP Commission proposed the fourth goal noted above and successfully advocated for its inclusion in the ODP.

**DL:** The goal that is most central to what APA is all about is: Create a public and political climate that allows planners to practice the sound, ethical, inclusionary planning that APA has long advocated – without fear of losing our jobs.

After 29 years as a professional planner, this goal strikes me as the key objective to which APA should aspire – the goal that encompasses everything else. It's going to take decades to achieve, but why not start now?

## ***Q2C) How can Chapters be utilized to better implement the ODP?***

**MH:** I believe the chapters can best be utilized by each chapter developing a specific work program around each of the six goals and developing a strategy of implementing them at the chapter level. Although each of the six goals certainly has a national aspect to them, they also have chapter implications and opportunities. Members will be much more willing, in my opinion, to work toward achieving the six goals when they, first, participate in making them happen at the chapter and local level. CPC can provide the forum for exchanging ideas and formulating strategies to locally achieve the goals.

**DL:** I've long stressed that APA needs to build its lobbying, public relations, and continuing education efforts at the chapter and section levels. This means providing genuine training for chapter officers and development of databases of planners with expertise on different issues that chapters and sections would use in these efforts. We want the media to come to planners for responses to planning and zoning issues. Instead we get the sort of article that appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* last week, an article on the development of a new Chicago zoning ordinance. Not a single planner was quoted – it was all architects and developers.

We need intensive workshops at chapter and regional conferences (where *all* relevant chapter officers and interested members can attend) that national APA funds and staffs to

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train planners to develop and implement an effective media and lobbying program. This also means having competent staff and consultants to conduct these workshops (these are not short workshops – it would take one to two days to properly train people). Meetings of the CPC would offer an excellent opportunity for chapters to share what they've learned is effective and ineffective so each chapter does not have to reinvent the wheel.

Chapters should be part of a serious revival of the Planners Threatened Committee. They are the key to identifying the communities where planners are not allowed to practice the sound, ethical, inclusionary planning APA advocates. We need to identify these communities so that our members know what they're getting into when they apply to work for these communities. Like one education association, we *may* want to publicize those communities that disallow such planning. Naturally, this idea needs to be carefully studied and tested.

## ***Q3A) Should the voting for AICP President be only be AICP members instead of all APA members?***

**MH:** (Before responding to this question, I must advise the CPC that I requested AICP President Sam Casella to appoint another chair of the by-laws committee (a position I had held since 1998) so that no appearance of conflict or influence on my part would occur. As the CPC is aware, the AICP Commission has asked that this issue be discussed by the APA Board. In response, the APA Board requested that the Commission provide a more formal comment on the issue through the Commission's by-laws committee and ex-officio members comprised of two APA Board members. I have deliberately absented myself from these discussions.)

I provided background material to the AICP Commission on this item before I was nominated as a candidate for the AICP President Elect position. Preparing that material has led me to conclude that whether the AICP President is elected by the entire APA membership, or only by the AICP membership, is dictated by the role of the AICP President.

I believe that the AICP President is elected to provide leadership to the Commission and representation of the Institute's members and interests. I did not seek election as the AICP President with the goal of being a member of the APA Board. Those that have an interest in governing the APA should run for one of the many positions available on the Board, including President.

Given the above, I think that it makes sense to limit the election of the AICP President to AICP members only.

**DL:** The creators of the AIP and ASPO merger that produced APA and its subsidiary AICP, recognized that the actions AICP takes would affect all planners, not just AICP members. Consequently, they decided that all APA members should vote for the AICP President who is charged with representing the concerns of all APA members before the AICP Commission – a system of checks and balances.

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In addition, the 1985 amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the bylaws reflected the principle that all members of the APA Board of Directors should be elected by all APA members within their geographical jurisdiction. Since the AICP President sits on the APA Board of Directors – solely to make sure that the concerns of AICP members are addressed by the APA Board (in those days, most planning professional members were not AICP members) – it was determined that the AICP President would be elected by all APA members. Nobody has stated any sound, rational reason to change this approach. Just because some people may not like the result of several elections for AICP President is no reason to change this carefully reasoned system.

### ***Q3B) Should the APA President serve as a voting member of the AICP Commission?***

**MH:** I do not support the idea of the APA President being a voting member of the AICP Commission. The Institute is a subsidiary of APA, much like the CPC, Divisions Council, etc. I understand that the idea of the APA President being a voting member of the AICP Commission was one idea to address the preceding issue, but it would be inconsistent with the governance of other organizations within APA, such as CPC. Would CPC be prepared to have a non-Chapter President having a vote?

**DL:** No. It's hard to see any rational reason to make this change. Having served as APA President, I can assure you that the APA President has enough to do without adding service on the AICP Commission.

### ***Q3C) Should the CPC, DC, SRC, AICP, and/or College of Fellows (COF) be voting members on the APA Board?***

**MH:** I assume by this question that the CPC is asking if the elected chairs or presidents of these organizations should have a vote on the APA Board. I wouldn't have a problem over endorsing voting rights for the chairs of the CPC, DC, SRC and, of course, the continued voting right of the AICP President. I do not see the need to extend this to the COF chair. Unlike the other organizations in which the membership that is represented has some opportunity to elect its leaders, e.g. chapter members elect their president who, in turn, may be elected by similarly elected presidents to the CPC President's position; the COF is a group of individuals who are nominated for membership, and not even elected to the College by all COF members.

By endorsing the concept described above, I realize that there may be some who are concerned about violating past agreements between AIP and ASPO; well, we're not AIP or ASPO any longer. By extending voting rights to the elected heads of the CPC, DC and SRC, these organizations' interests might be better effectuated through Board action. I don't see a significant dilution of the current Board's representation of the APA constituency through the extension of voting right.

Having said the above, I have to question whether this is a burning issue that has to be resolved at this time (I have the same question around the issue of electing the AICP

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President Elect). We have so many important issues to address that governance should be taken up as a focused item when something is grievously broken; I don't see where this is evident at this time. I have faith in the APA Board members that I have voted for that this issue will be appropriately considered and acted upon when the time to address this issue occurs.

**DL:** When our membership voted overwhelmingly (80%) to reduce the size of the APA Board to 13 members in 1985, they recognized that a larger board was dysfunctional and unproductive. They have been proven right over the years. There is no sound, rational reason to increase the size of the APA Board of Directors. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

In addition, placing any of these on the APA board would violate the underlying principle that all APA Directors be elected by all APA members within their geographical jurisdiction.

***Q3D) The AICP Commission has an even number of voting members. Should the AICP President vote only when breaking a tie vote?***

**MH:** My response to the question posed above is no. An uneven number of members on any elected body does not guarantee that tie votes will not occur. Restricting the AICP President to only voting when ties do occur is inconsistent with the governance of other organizations within APA. Tie votes, in my opinion, mean that more effort is needed to resolve the issue; not a fatal flaw in the governance process.

**DL:** At present, the AICP President and APA President can vote only when their votes would make a difference in the result – that's what *Robert's Rules of Order* provides and the way we operated when I served on the APA and AICP governing bodies. Has something changed that I should know about?

***Q4A) Should the FAICP selection committee provide the Chapter presidents with evaluation information pertaining to non-elected candidates?***

**MH:** As a prelude to answering these questions, I want to make it clear to the CPC that I support the AICP Commission's hands-off approach to the governance of and processes used by the COF. I take great pride in being a Commission member when the COF was finally created. But I also know that it was not the Commission's intent to be an oversight body of the COF. I certainly expect the COF to provide the courtesy to all participating bodies – CPC, AICP Commission, APA Board, et al – of listening and being responsive to concerns and suggestions of these bodies.

In response to the specific question, I feel it is appropriate for the COF selection committee to provide feedback to the Chapters, or to any nominating organization or individual, on why a nominated candidate might not have been selected. By feedback,

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though, I do not mean providing a record of the specific deliberations. The discussions by the COF selection committee must be kept confidential.

I believe that CPC could provide great assistance to the COF by identifying concerns that the chapters have, suggesting improvements to the nominating process and offering assistance to the COF in specifying criteria for selection to the COF that might not now exist. I would, as AICP President, be very interested in arranging time for both the CPC and the AICP Commission to discuss this issue with an eye toward sharing ideas and concerns, and identifying possible suggestions.

**DL:** I'm at a loss to understand why this question is being asked. Have there been many people recommended by chapter leadership who have been turned down? On the surface providing this sort of information to a Chapter President sounds like an invasion of the nominated individual's privacy.

***Q4B) Should the COF classes be limited to a specific number or should all worthy nominees be honored?***

**MH:** All worthy nominees should be honored.

**DL:** Absent any evidence otherwise, I can't think of any reason why all worthy nominees should not be honored.

***Q4C) Should a Chapter's endorsement be given more consideration than an individual endorsement?***

**MH:** I believe that it is the quality of the endorsement, not necessarily from whom it comes, that determines how much consideration should be given to the endorsement.

**DL:** Those individuals who best know the professional record of a nominee are the best resources for the FAICP selection committee. I'm a bit hard pressed to see how a chapter's officers are more likely to know a professional's record any better than individuals. Let's not return to the old boys' club nature of the oral AIP exam.

Keep this process open and accessible to the regular ol' member.