

APA At-Large Focused Candidates

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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.

1) *The CPC has formally taken the position in favor of mandatory continuing education for certified planners. The next few questions pertain to your position as a candidate for national office on continuing education.*

- a) *What role do you believe continuing education plays in the advancement of a professional planner's career?*
- b) *Do you favor mandatory continuing education for certified planners?*
- c) *What role should APA (nationally) and the chapter (locally) have in educating planners?*

PS: Most professional organizations have required continuing education to keep up to date with the latest developments, research, laws, techniques, and best available science. In the field of planning it has taken some time to be recognized by the public, governments, and the built community as professionals whose ideas, methods, and plans enable us all to have a better place to live, earn a living, play, and eventually to retire. In order not to lose this hard-won respect, we need to do all we can to ensure that planners are aware of the latest and best in planning. Continuing education should be a requirement for planners as long as they are active in the profession. The APA and local chapters could work with the planning departments of universities and the research and development departments of companies which make technical tools to offer continuing education both locally and nationally.

SM: 1A: Continuing education plays two roles. First, it helps keep planners “sharp,” or proficient in their discipline. For many, graduate school is just a distant memory, and if you don’t practice in a particular area of planning on a daily basis, it’s easy to get rusty. Just as other professionals (doctors, lawyers, accountants) must constantly hone their skills, so must the professional planner. Second, it provides the opportunity to stay on the cutting edge of planning, whether it’s technological (GIS, CAD and other aids) or philosophical (new urbanism, etc).

1B: Absolutely. If we don’t uphold a higher standard, a standard based on education, then just what does being “certified” mean? And the continuing education should be legitimate (like doctors and lawyers), not bogus, like some realtors.

1C: APA can assist in a variety of ways. First, the national chapter should inform planners about the education requirements, the courses available (where applicable), and provide multiple options to learn about them all. The local chapters may coordinate with educational institutions (universities, community colleges) to ensure courses are available

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with enough frequency (and locations) to make continuing education realistic. Recognition of accomplishments at the local level is also a good idea.

2) *The APA Board of Directors has adopted the 2002/2003 Organizational Development Plan (ODP). The following questions pertain to your views of the plan and its role toward advancing the profession, as well as the organization.*

- a) *Of the six major goals, please prioritize them in the order of highest to least importance.*
- b) *Are there any other elements or goals that you would include in the ODP and why?*
- c) *How can the Chapters be utilized to better implement the ODP?*

PS: Of the six major goals, please prioritize them in the order of highest to least importance.

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. Develop new membership and product marketing strategies.
5. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional and cultural identity of APA.
6. Pursue social, economic and racial equity in America's communities.

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

2B: Not really other elements, only that the connection/relationship between planners (both public and private) and elected officials needs more emphasis. Complaining, “they just don’t get it” doesn’t help; we need to help them understand what good planning is.

My main goal, as stated in my original position statement, is to make APA membership “automatic” for new planning commissioners, and to have some planning education be a part of the process for all new planning commissioners.

2C: Chapters are the key to most of the ODP. Chapters must initiate or improve relationships with local and state elected officials, to make them part of the solution, not the problem. They need to be partners in planning; we can’t expect to come to them and say, “do this, it’s the right thing.” They need to understand why. Stressing membership for all planners (and commissioners) is something best done at the local level, and the educational opportunities won’t be there without local participation and organization. APA members need to be more visible; only then will non-members (and the employers of planners) know the difference, and distinguishing between APA and non-APA planners will help both our continuing education effort and our membership effort.

3) *The following questions pertain to the make-up of the APA Board of Directors and American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Commission. Please provide your opinion with an explanation as to your reasoning.*

- a) *Should the voting for AICP President be only by AICP members instead of by all APA members?*
- b) *Should the APA President serve as a voting member on the AICP Commission?*
- c) *Should the CPC, DC, SRC, AICP, and/or College of Fellows (COF) be voting members on the APA Board?*
- d) *The AICP Commission has an even number of voting members. Should the AICP President vote only when breaking a tie vote?*

PS: **3A:** Voting for AICP President should be only by AICP members. There are many members of APA who would not qualify for membership in AICP (e.g. planning officials and students) and they should not be entitled to vote unless they are also AICP members.

3B: The APA President should serve as a voting member on the AICP Commission because the two groups are merged into the APA umbrella organization. The cooperative efforts of both groups are needed to advance the APA, and having the APA President sit as a voting member serves this cooperation. (In practice I would imagine that the great majority of APA Presidents have also been AICP members.)

3C: These groups should have representatives on the APA Board, but they should be advisory to the Board and not voting members.

3D: My opinions about the AICP Commission are still in the formative stage. As I answered to a question above, probably the AICP Commission should make the decisions about when its President is allowed to vote.

SM: 3A: I think the AICP members should decide who their leader should be; having attained a higher level of recognition in the planning community makes them more uniquely qualified to determine how this group should be led. While I think it's important that we all work cooperatively, AICP's should determine the AICP President.

3B: Yes, because AICP is a part of APA. Additionally, it has been my experience that most APA Presidents have been AICP-certified.

3C: I need to become more informed about the pros and cons of this issue before I can answer definitively; the AICP President should be a voting member.

3D: No, I think the President should be allowed a vote. AICP elects a president based on their knowledge, experience, and qualifications. It seems improper not to have their opinion included, since they, if anyone, should have a good understanding of the issues. Either come to consensus, or add another board member.

4) *The American Institute of Certified Planners has inducted three classes into the College of Fellows. The Chapters play an integral role in selecting nominees, financing, and preparing nomination packets. The following questions pertain to the relationship between the Chapters, AICP and FAICP.*

- a) *Should the FAICP selection committee provide the Chapter President with evaluation information pertaining to non-selected candidates?*
- b) *Should the COF classes be limited to a specific number or should all worthy nominees be honored?*
- c) *Should a Chapter's endorsement be given more consideration than an individual endorsement?*

PS: As a planning commissioner, not a professional planner, I think the decision about how nominees and selection to the College of Fellows should be left to those eligible to vote for the nominees – professional planners. If the APA Board of Directors does not choose the Fellows, or determine the criteria for nomination to the College of Fellows, they should not have input in the matter. I do not feel well enough informed to offer an educated opinion on the matter.

SM: 4A: I think it would be helpful to those not selected, as well as to those nominating them.

4B: Certain minimum criteria should be maintained (base scoring, or something similar); they should not be limited in number, since we never know who will be a candidate in

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any given year. Just like the baseball Hall of Fame, if multiple nominees get the required minimum vote in any given year, they all (or none) get in. But the minimum threshold is set fairly high. It should be based on merit, not how tough the competition was that year.

4C: Assuming it carries the weight of the entire chapter (i.e. it was voted on), yes.