

APA At-Large Candidates

Terree Bergman, FAICP

Michael Davolio, AICP

Timothy W. Brown, AICP

Leslie Kettren, 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?

TB: As our communities change so must our approaches to problem solving. As is true in other fields, knowledge advances. Competent planners must keep abreast of current thinking and current techniques.

MD: I believe that continuing education is essential in the advancement of a planner's career. Planners are part of a profession where change is the norm. The ability to adapt to change comes through understanding new information as it becomes available. Planners who do not continually update their knowledge base will simply not be able to compete with planners who do. Perhaps more importantly, planners who do not take advantage of continuing education opportunities will be less effective in their jobs, and therefore less able to provide the leadership that is expected of them.

TWB: I believe continuing education is very important in the advancement of a professional planner's career. Planning is an ever evolving field.

LK: Continuing education is essential in keeping a professional planner current on innovative planning techniques and new tools for implementation of planning projects. Through education, planners learn about the best practices around the globe and to find where the best resources are for projects that may be similar to one in which they are engaged. Planners that have knowledge are also planners that have respect both from their peers *and* from the public that they serve.

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

TB: Mandatory continuing education would help to ensure that planners are aware of current best practices in the field. The CPC, which represents the closest ties to the members of APA, is in support of mandatory continuing education, and I believe the AICP Commission should heed the Council's advice.

MD: I am in favor of mandatory continuing education for certified planners, and I helped lead the effort within the CPC to bring this issue to the APA Board and the AICP Commission. I believe that our credibility as professionals demands that certified planners regularly seek to gain new knowledge through continuing education.

TWB: I do not favor mandatory continuing education. This puts too much of a burden on entry level planners and small to medium size planning organizations, especially in challenging economic times.

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LK: I believe that continuing education is necessary for certified planners. However, by making continuing education mandatory, tracking may be difficult. In addition, APA's resources might be consumed with tracking efforts rather than being allocated for other programs. I would recommend a stipulation that all AICP planners be retested every 5 years, either by a written exam or orally, to keep their certification current.

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

TB: Traditionally continuing education has been the responsibility of AICP. I know that the Planners Training Service courses were dropped for financial reasons, but I believe that loss was a big one. I do not think an acceptable alternative has been developed. I participated in several of the audio training sessions, and while they were helpful, they did not come close to achieving the quality of the PTS workshops. I believe that APA and AICP need to continue to seek ways to offer effective continuing education. Likewise, the chapters should take an active role. Chapter conferences and professional development workshops can provide training that is accessible and affordable. Local training also offers the advantage of focusing on topics of local or regional importance.

MD: Both APA National and its chapters have important roles as resources to educate planners. While there will be some overlap of roles and responsibilities, APA (including the AICP Commission and the divisions) should provide an overall framework that includes: funding for both national and chapter-based education efforts; technical support; hands-on training through the national conference, video conferences, and other methods; creating liaisons with other organizations who may provide useful training opportunities; and creating a culture where ongoing education and training has value to planners.

In most cases, the Chapters will be best equipped to provide cost-effective training opportunities at the local level. They will be able to tap into the expertise of local training providers, and they will be able to evaluate local training opportunities provided outside APA.

TWB: I believe that the major role for educating planners should fall at the Chapter level. This is where most member services are provided. National APA should support the Chapters in this endeavor.

LK: It is the responsibility of APA and its local chapters to develop advanced educational programs for professional planners. While planners can and do attend sessions developed by other sister organizations, these programs are not always targeted for the types of information that is specific to planning.

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

TB: First, I don't believe these are "goals"; they are objectives, and all are important. Prioritizing is not always a productive thing to do, as things can be of equal importance. We need to choose among them only if we believe that we do not have the ability to accomplish all of them. I will make my best effort to be responsive to the question.

I believe #2 is the most important at this time. APA has long needed to create a positive image of planners and planning. Many of the other objectives will be easier if we accomplish this one; #3 and #6 to me are closely related issues and are extremely important. To be effective as planners, we need policies and legislation that enable us to do our jobs. Well-formulated policies and legislation will promote equity; #5, continuing education, is critically important. We need to continue to search for effective ways of promoting and providing education. Partnering with other organizations (such as universities) can be a way to conserve resources while providing excellent opportunities; #1 contains two issues: organizational change and financial stability. Obviously financial stability is critical; it should be (and is, I believe) an ongoing responsibility of the staff and board. I do not believe we need to foster change for the sake of change, but we need to be flexible and responsive to changing conditions; and if we accomplish all of the other objectives, #4 will take care of itself.

MD: All of the six major goals set forth in the ODP are important. Several should be implemented concurrently. I would implement the six major goals in the following order:

- I. 1. Foster organizational change and maintain financial sustainability. This goal would be my first priority for implementation mostly because the action steps needed to achieve the goal are, in my opinion, long overdue. It is also #1 because unless APA can maintain its financial house in good order, then we risk losing the organization as a tool for positive change. In the past, it has been too easy for staff to simply pass cost increases on to the membership without considering lower-cost alternatives. It's amazing to me that this ODP is the first such plan to tie budget expenditures directly to the plan. APA's *raison d'etre* is to provide useful, cost-effective services to its members. This is, therefore, the goal from which all others flow. One concern that I have with this goal, however, is its reliance on information and support from the association management industry. While this resource will undoubtedly be helpful, the new organizational model must first be tied to the needs of APA's members.
- II. 5. Create a culture of continuing education and provide more education opportunities for practicing planners. This goal would be my second implementation priority because it addresses a primary need of our members. Without an effective continuing education program, planners will be less able to provide a credible voice in their

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communities. Since such a program should become financially self-sustaining over time, it makes sense to pursue this goal as a priority.

- III. 3. Aggressively advocate and implement policies and legislative agendas that support and sustain good planning at the local, state, and national levels; and 2. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional, and cultural identity of APA. These two goals should be pursued in tandem. Effective legislative and policy initiatives, especially 'Growing Smart,' should also promote the APA 'brand.' In pursuing these goals, it would be wise to remember the words of Tip O'Neil: "All politics is local." In recent years, APA national (with the help of CPC) has provided a significant increase in support of Chapter legislative activities. I would strongly support continuing and expanding this support, because today's city council members and state legislators will be tomorrow's Congressmen.
- IV. 4. Develop new membership and product marketing strategies. I have shown this goal as a later step only because I believe that the first three priorities identified above must be implemented before we make a concerted effort at membership expansion. If we undertake membership initiatives without first addressing the issue of organizational change, or implementing an effective continuing education program, or establishing a unified brand definition, then we run the risk of alienating potential members who may perceive the organization as disorganized.
- V. 6. Pursue social, economic, and racial equity in America's communities. I believe this to be an important and worthwhile goal. I also believe that most planners pursue this goal every day. If APA affirmatively addresses each of the goals shown above, then this goal will also be addressed as a part of those actions. For example, equity should be a cornerstone of any APA legislative initiative.

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

Goal 1. Foster organizational change/maintain financial sustainability

Goal 3. Advocate and implement policies and legislative agendas that support and sustain good planning at the local, state, and national levels.

Goal 6. Pursue Social, Economic, and Racial Equity

Goal 5. Create a culture of continuing education and provide more education opportunities for practicing planners.

Goal 4. Develop new membership and product marketing strategies

Goal 2. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional, and cultural identity of APA and AICP

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

1. Foster organizational change/maintain financial sustainability
2. 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. Develop new membership and product marketing strategies
5. Pursue Social, Economic, and Racial Equity
6. Develop and promote a brand definition that reflects the visual, emotional, and cultural identity of APA and AICP

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

TB: I think the APA leadership did a thorough and thoughtful job of developing this plan. It should serve us well until the next plan is adopted.

MD: There are a number of other elements or goals that could have been included. However, I would be reluctant to offer any at this time because I agree with the staff's assertion that too many goals dilutes the message and distracts from our ability to achieve the goals that have been set forth.

TWB: Yes. I think there should be something in the ODP concerning National APA supporting the Chapters. Chapters are where most member services are provided. This is where the rubber meets the road. I think there should be something in writing addressing the importance of Chapter support.

LK: Communication is key to the success of these programs. It is imperative that APA develops a Communication Plan that targets who does what, why, when and how. This will cultivate interaction between the national organization and the Chapters.

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

TB: It has been difficult to get chapter participation in the process. I suppose there is a parallel with the difficulty we have in getting citizen involvement in community plans. Chapters have many responsibilities and limited time and resources. Perhaps we could develop a "model" for chapters to use in getting member involvement in this important process.

MD: The Chapters need to be partners in implementing the ODP. As the front line in working with the membership, the Chapters have insights into member's needs that they must share with the national organization. Chapters also have a clear understanding of local legislative and policy needs, and ideas on ways to address those needs that will resonate with local elected officials. Such information should be valuable in coordinating with a national legislative agenda. Finally, Chapters can be a cost-effective resource for APA to use to deliver services to members. This is especially true for most types of traditional continuing education.

TWB: The Chapters are where most member services are provided, so they are uniquely situated to better implement Goal 4. Develop new membership and product marketing

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strategies, Goal 5. Create a culture of continuing education and provide more education opportunities for practicing planners and Goal 3. Advocate and implement policies and legislative agendas that support and sustain good planning at the local, state and national levels at the local and state levels. National should work closely with the Chapters on these issues.

LK: The local Chapters should be asked to approve and recognize the plan and then be encouraged to utilize the ODP in the operations and development of their own programs and initiatives.

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

TB: Changing this selection process is an interesting idea. It does seem that there is merit to the idea that the AICP president should be selected by the AICP members. I know that the thinking has been that because the AICP president serves on the APA Board, the broader membership should have a voice. But there are other board members who are not elected by the members at large. I do not have a fixed opinion on this issue and would want to consider all arguments carefully.

MD: I believe that voting for AICP President should remain with AICP members only. I can understand the arguments that this voting method suggests some elitism, but I believe that it may also provide some motivation for planners to aspire to AICP membership.

There has been a good amount of discussion in recent years regarding the relationship between APA and AICP. Discussions about who should vote, who should represent whom, and how the organizations should be structured are all, in my opinion, symptoms of our struggle for identity. In considering (and, hopefully, resolving) these issues, I believe that we should keep foremost in mind those attributes that bind us, rather than those that would separate us. APA is the umbrella under which we all stand (those of you who live in the Pacific Northwest will understand the metaphor). AICP serves a more specific purpose for a subset of APA's membership. I believe that we should focus our efforts on maintaining a close working relationship between all of APA's interests.

TWB: No. Since it is a requirement to be an APA member to become AICP qualified, I believe all APA members should vote for this position.

LK: No, all APA members should vote for the AICP President because the AICP represents the highest standard of professionalism and integrity to all APA members.

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

TB: No. I see no reason to make this change.

MD: Both the APA and the AICP Presidents should have reciprocal voting rights. This arrangement provides the greatest opportunities for continuing and expanding dialogue

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between these two groups. What should happen if an APA President is not an AICP member? In my mind, the APA President earns his voting right through his office, and not through AICP membership.

TWB: No. Since the AICP President sits on the APA Board, there is no reason for the APA President to serve as a voting member of the AICP Commission. The AICP President is on the APA Board to make sure that AICP concerns are addressed by the APA Board.

LK: Yes, because as the overall coordinating organization for the AICP and APA, the views and policies of APA should be represented on the AICP Commission.

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

TB: I would like to see the CPC, DC, and SRC representatives have voting privileges. AICP has them already. I see no reason to add the COF, as it is a subset of AICP. I have long believed that removing the CPC chair's status as a voting member diminished the importance of CPC. The chapters are the key to the success of our organization, and they should have a formal voice, not just an advisory one. If one council is to have voting status, the others should, also.

MD: With the exception of the College of Fellows, all of the above have a legitimate place at the table. Each should represent their constituencies with a vote on the Board. With regard to the COF, as a subset of AICP, their voting rights should rest within that organization.

TWB: No. The larger a Board becomes, the more unwieldy it also becomes. This makes it very difficult to get important work done in a timely manner.

LK: No, the elected Board of Directors should be the only voting members. However, each of these organizations should attend Board meetings and participate as affiliate members.

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

TB: I think there are arguments on both sides of this issue, and I don't have a strong feeling either way. If the president votes on all matters, the members have a better opportunity to know where the president stands on various issues. On the other hand, a voting president may be less effective at impartially chairing meetings.

MD: I can see no reason why the AICP President should not have the right to vote on all issues before the Commission. The duties and responsibilities of the President require him or her to study each issue with the same diligence of any other Commission member. Given the level of study and effort required, it seems silly to deny the President the right to vote.

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TWB: Yes. This is the current structure of the AICP Commission and follows Roberts Rules of Order. It should not change.

LK: The AICP Commission should have an uneven number of voting members on the board to eliminate the possibility of tie votes. In addition, the president should vote on every issue and have an equal vote like the other Board members.

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

TB: I do not know the background of this question. If chapters find that this information is needed, perhaps it should be provided. At the same time, the integrity of the selection process should not be compromised. If there are reasons (such as privacy issues) that preclude the release of this information, those reasons should be respected.

MD: I know from personal experience the amount of time and effort that chapters put into FAICP nominations. I absolutely believe that the selection committee has a duty to provide evaluation information to Chapter Presidents regarding non-selected candidates. This information will provide valuable guidance to the Chapters in putting together subsequent nomination packages. It will also provide important feedback regarding the perceived qualifications of a specific candidate. If some evaluation information is deemed to be sensitive, I am confident that the selection committee and the Chapter President can reach an understanding regarding the need for confidentiality.

TWB: Yes. I believe this would be helpful for Chapters in preparing future nominating packets.

LK: Yes, it is a good idea to review and make note of all materials and information from all potential candidates.

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

TB: Again, I do not know the background of this question. It would seem that some limitation on the number admitted annually makes sense. For one thing, the length of the awards ceremony should be considered. The most common model for this sort of honor seems to be to limit the numbers. Those who are not admitted in a particular year can be nominated again (just like the Baseball Hall of Fame). If the numbers are too large, the honor is diminished.

MD: I believe that all worthy nominees should be honored. I do not believe that a worthy candidate should be turned away simply because an arbitrary quota has already been filled. FAICP induction is granted to those whose body of work over a lifetime has commended him or her for consideration. We have learned from sad experience that life is not infinite. If a nomination were to be deferred due to a quota system, then we risk not recognizing an outstanding career during that person's lifetime.

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As a secondary consideration, I can see no practical way to devise a quota system that would be fair to all, especially given the disparity in membership numbers in different Chapters. As an organization, we have far more important issues to address than taking the time to try to devise such a system.

TWB: All worthy nominees should be honored. If a person meets all the qualifications, there is no reason to delay his or her induction.

LK: The classes should be limited to a specific number to maintain the high standard of excellence.

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

TB: I think the COF should look at the whole package – individual endorsements, chapter endorsements, and accomplishments. It is the accumulation of information about the candidate's worthiness that provides the needed background for the decision.

MD: As a general rule, I believe that the effort put forth by a Chapter should receive great weight. However, I can envision circumstances where an individual endorsement should be strongly considered. For example, if an individual spends his or her entire career in one state, and subsequently retires to another state, then the potential candidate's name would be sent to a Chapter President who may have no knowledge of an individual's achievements.

I believe that, in order to make an informed decision regarding an individual endorsement, the selection committee should communicate with the appropriate Chapter to indicate that an individual endorsement has been received, and to seek the Chapter's response to that endorsement.

TWB: Yes. Although the individual may have a better handle on the candidate's professional qualifications, if a Chapter has researched a nominee's qualifications and decides to endorse that candidate, then it should carry more weight than an individual endorsement only.

LK: Yes, if the chapter represents the voice of its members.