Subject: Task Forces for 2009
From: Janet Carlson <jfcarlson57@AOL.COM>
Reply-To: STP Extended Executive Committee <TOPEC@LIST.KENNESAW.EDU>
Date: Mon, 15 Dec 2008 14:28:01 -0500

Greetings all,

I am writing to request Executive Committee approval to form six task forces, four of which derive directly from the presidential initiatives outlined in my vision statement delivered at APA and articulated in the Fall 2008 STP Newsletter. The need for the other two task forces became apparent over the last few months, arising primarily from conversations I have had with various EC members.

The task forces, if approved for appointment, will address: Targeted Membership Recruitment, Member Involvement, Interdivisional Relationships, Communication, STP Awards, and Electronic Rules of Order. I appreciate your consideration of this proposal and ask for your support.

Please consider the floor open for discussion and feel free to post comments to the TOPEC list or to email me privately (jfcarlson57@aol.com).

Descriptions of the proposed task forces follow below:

(1) Task Force on Targeted Membership Recruitment
CHARGE: Review membership trends over the last several years to ascertain which membership category would be best suited (i.e., has the highest yield potential) for a targeted recruitment effort; work collaboratively with the Chair of the Recruitment, Retention, and Public Relations Committee to develop strategies to pursue members in this category.

(2) Task Force on Member Involvement
CHARGE: Examine the level of STP member involvement in activities of the Society and recommend a
ctions to increase involvement. Further, the task force is charged with offering suggestions that foster greater involvement of members of ethnically and culturally diverse groups and historically underrepresented groups.

(3) Task Force on Interdivisional Relationships
CHARGE: Assess the nature of STP's relationship with other APA divisions and identify ways in which these relationships may be strengthened. Among the assessments to include: (1) comparison of divisions' procedures for current Fellows to become a Fellow in other respective divisions, and (2) elucidation of other divisions' use of teaching/mentoring awards.

(4) Task Force on Communication
CHARGE: Examine the means through which STP members may receive information about the Society and assess the effectiveness of communication strategies. Recommend ways to: (1) expand transparency of STP procedures and processes to the general membership, and (2) improve communication with the general membership.

(5) Task Force on STP Awards

CHARGE: Review the various award programs within STP and make recommendations concerning the number and dollar amounts associated with the awards. Consider, for example, whether fewer awards of more substantial amounts or more awards of lesser amounts would make more sense. For the sake of this discussion, assume revenue neutrality (i.e., assume there will be no cuts and no additions to respective budget lines).
  Included under this charge are the following award programs: (1) IRA, (2) Small Grants, (3) Faculty Development Awards, (4) Teaching Awards, and (5) Poster Awards at Regional Teaching Conferences.

(6) Task Force on Electronic Rules of Order

CHARGE: Develop recommendations for conducting business by email and other electronic means, referencing principles of orderly conduct (e.g., Roberts' Rules of Order) and examining practices of other organizations similar to STP (e.g., other divisions of APA).

Sincerely,
JCarlson

Greetings:

I do hope everyone is safely traveling and celebrating the holidays. I
want to report that we approved Janet's task forces for her Presidential
year. We also approved the 2009 operating budget.

Happy Holidays!
Maureen

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Draft Report from Task Force on
Targeted Membership Recruitment
Submitted June 5, 2009

Members:
Jeffrey Holmes, Chair
Suzie Baker
Ted Bosack
Warren Fass
William Langston
Val Whittlesey

Charge

Review membership trends over the last several years to ascertain which membership category would be best suited (i.e., has the highest yield potential) for a targeted recruitment effort; work collaboratively with the Chair of the Recruitment, Retention, and Public Relations Committee to develop strategies to pursue members in this category.

Summary of Data Examined

We examined all the data available to us which although incomplete did allow us to draw some potentially useful conclusions. It is important to note that it was sometimes difficult to get a perfectly clear picture of the data because of the separate membership records for those who pay dues through APA and those who pay directly to STP. First we compared the detailed membership records maintained by STP for the years 2007 and 2008. Specifically we looked at members who paid dues in 2007 but did not renew in 2008. Our objective was to determine if there was any notable demographic pattern that predicted non-renewal. Our second source of data was the membership profiles posted on the APA website. This data is posted in summary form so we could compare membership patterns across the years 2005-2008 but we could not compare reenrollment patterns. We contacted the APA via email three separate times to request additional detail on their posted data but did not receive any reply so our examination of APA membership profiles was limited to what was available online. One important issue that arose from this concerned the lack of specificity of portions of the online data. For example, our group struggled to draw conclusions about some of the geographic distributions because they are reported by region but the regions are not consistently well-defined. Based on this admittedly imperfect data we offer some observations and recommendations.

Observations

The data from STP records indicate significant turnover in membership, at least when comparing 2008 with 2007. The 2008 records indicate that several hundred members who were on the rolls the previous year did not renew their membership. However, this was offset by several hundred new memberships. It was largely impossible to determine why so many members failed to renew or whether those who departed tended to represent any particular category. In addition to this relatively large general turnover, we also observed that STP membership levels are low for those under age 35, those from traditionally underrepresented groups, and those from the east south central region of the United States. In the case of

geographic area, we were unable to ascertain which specific states make up the noted region to determine whether the low membership from that area is due to smaller overall populations.

Targeted Member Recruitment

Consistent with our task force's charge of identifying one specific membership category for focused recruiting attention, we recommend that STP particularly emphasize strategies aimed at bringing students and young professionals into the organization. This objective fits well with past recruitment objectives, and its success is integral to the long term success of the organization. As an additional suggestion, we recommend that STP continue efforts to diversify its membership by reaching out to students and professionals from underrepresented groups.

Suggested Recruitment Strategies

As a strategy to target young potential members, we recommend targeted STP programming at the APA, APS, and regional conventions for at least a few years. One of our members felt strongly that extending efforts beyond APA events is important because past experience indicates that a great many of the early-career attendees at APA do not intend to become teachers and therefore have limited interest in STP. Possible programming topics for younger faculty might include strategies for initiating a successful faculty career, using the scholarship of teaching to successfully navigate tenure review, etc. Locating tables with STP representatives, materials, and applications outside of these sessions might be considered. The particular strength of these options is that they would not create an excessive financial burden for the Society.

An important issue with regard to younger members is that many who join as graduate students do not renew their memberships after graduating and moving on to different institutions. The Long Range Planning Committee is currently working to address this problem but maintaining connections with these professionals should prove worthwhile. On this same front, we also recommend collaboration with the STP Graduate Student Teaching Association (GTSA) to enhance connections with recent graduates. GTSA has liaisons in place and has shown willingness in the past to distribute STP information which would help the Society to reach early career professionals. It may also be helpful to issue a mailing to younger faculty if mailing lists are available from APA and if the cost of doing so is not prohibitive.

Toward the goal of diversifying membership, the Society might consider additional specialized programming at national and regional conferences. Suggested topics include transforming inclusive teaching and professional service into successful scholarship, incorporating diversity into the curriculum, etc.

Additional Suggestions to Increase Membership

To supplement the recommendations above, we offer the following suggestions that emerged during our discussions and which may serve to increase new memberships and renewals across a broader spectrum of categories.

1. Revisit the previous strategy of offering multiple-year memberships – possibly with the incentive of a small discount. Our understanding is that the previous trial of this approach met with modest success, and hopefully this strategy would reduce the number of members who

simply forget to renew. The viability of this strategy might be contingent on APA's ability to apply this alternate billing procedure. Forcing those who pay STP dues through APA to begin paying directly to STP might actually cost us members through forgetfulness, etc.

2. Use state or regional liaisons to reach out to students and faculty in a more focused way on campuses across the country. These liaisons should be well-versed in the advantages of STP membership and can help to inform potential members of these benefits. They would identify existing members at specific schools and encourage them to advocate for membership among their colleagues. The state and regional liaisons could also work with the presidents of the regional associations to promote STP.

3. Consider offering free memberships for the first year – especially for early career professionals. Alternatively, STP might give department chairs one free membership to give away to a new faculty member. It might also be useful to offer a reduced membership rate or free introductory membership to adjunct faculty. This might help reach early career people who will later move into permanent faculty positions.

4. Consider limiting access to STP resources (such as ToP) to members to encourage support from those who utilize the resources. We recognize that there is currently a debate about this issue among the members of the LRPC.

5. Post regular announcements to the STP Facebook group encouraging nonmembers to join the organization.

6. Develop plans to carefully track all existing and new members. Where possible, obtain more specific member information from APA and merge the data sets so that the information is clear and complete. In addition, it might be prudent to include a question on the STP registration web page asking where the applicant heard about STP. Maintaining this information over time should clarify where most members are first becoming acquainted with STP and consequently may serve to trigger new recruiting ideas.