

Michael and Amy-

The Task Force on Membership and Member Services has concluded its deliberations. We attach two sets of recommendations, unanimously endorsed by the Task Force. The first we sent to Michael in February, and we have included it here as well. The second is a further set of recommendations, primarily concerned with membership services. It also includes an appendix with some details concerning the sorts of services that are offered by other professional organizations.

Anita Silvers and Dana Nelkin will continue to work on a questionnaire to send to APA members pertaining to desired services. We are very pleased with the apparent commitment on the part of the APA to work toward a single, online site (perhaps with Interfolio) to support the job market; this is an important and visible first step.

Please let us know if there are any questions. We will continue to be available to help in any way we can as the recommendations are considered, and, we hope, implemented.

Sincerely,

John Martin Fischer and Manuel Vargas
Co-chairs, Task Force on Membership and Member Services

Task Force on Membership and Member Services

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The APA Task Force for Membership and Member Services

Proposals

February 27, 2012

1. The Task Force recommends to the Chair of the National Board of Officers and/or the Executive Committee as appropriate, that the ED enter into negotiations with Academic Jobs Online (Duke University Mathematics Department) or some alternative website to secure the best possible arrangement for the use of a single, central website for the job market, including both the listing of jobs and the applying for them. The ED would present a report to the National Board of Officers including information about prices for students and hiring departments. The Board of Officers will then consider surveying the membership concerning the advisability of using a central website (under the envisaged arrangement or possible arrangements and fee structure (or structures)).

COMMENTS: One possibility is to have a dedicated site branded as the JFP. An alternative, if less attractive, option would be to negotiate for a group discount for APA members and departments. The appeal of the academic jobs online service is that it allows job applicants to upload all of their materials just once, and it would allow hiring departments access to all of these materials (in accordance with all policies of the hiring departments' institutions). It would thus be much simpler, especially for job candidates. Depending in part on the results of the negotiation, the Board should consider requiring that all hiring be done through this site (unless there is some specific and strong reason why a department could not use the site, as approved in advance). Alternatively, the Board should consider issuing a strong recommendation to all departments that they use this site for all hiring.

2. The Task Force recommends to the Chair of the National Board of Officers, in consultation with the Executive Committee where it is appropriate, that he ask the ED to do a thorough study of the relative merits of in-person interviews (at divisional meetings) and interviews by Skype or similar electronic means. In particular, the ED should do research on how other, similar academic organizations conduct interviews, and should assemble and analyze whatever data are available. The ED would then present a report to the Board, who should then consider various options concerning interviews in the future. The Board would also consider whether to survey the membership about this issue. A reason to evaluate the current system of in-person interviews at the Eastern Division Meetings is that it places considerable burdens on graduate students who must plan to attend the meetings--purchasing airline tickets and making hotel reservations--in a context in which it is difficult to predict whether they will have interviews (or how many they will have). Even if a student does indeed have interviews, it is expensive to travel to the Eastern Meetings, and there is technology (including skype) that is now available that can arguably support the process of interviewing in an adequate way.

3. The Task Force recommends to the National Board of Officers that it consider requiring that all departments doing in-person interviews at the Eastern Meetings give notice to the candidates they intend to interview by a specific date—a date early enough to facilitate planning by the candidates. The specific date would be a matter of discussion by the Board.

4. The Task Force recommends that the National Board of Officers clarify the role of the "reception" in the job market. In particular, we recommend that the Board consider issuing a ruling to the effect that the reception should not be used as an opportunity for supplementary or additional interviewing.
5. The Task Force recommends that the Chair of the Board direct the national office to develop a plan to provide incentives for paying dues on time, perhaps including early payment discounts and late payment fees.
6. The Task Force recommends that the Chair of the Board instruct the national office to implement the "Teacher Associate" membership category (previously approved by the Executive Committee) in its annual dues function as soon as possible, ideally by the 2012 dues registration period.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Chair of the Board, in consultation with the Executive Committee, direct the national office to develop a proposal (or proposals) for an "associate members" membership category. We also recommend that such a proposal be developed in consultation with other organizations that have such categories, that the proposal be constructed with an eye towards avoiding a net loss of APA membership dues, and that any implementation of the new category be performed as a pilot program to gauge any effects on overall membership dues.
8. The Task Force recommends that the Chair of the Board, in consultation with the Executive Committee where it is appropriate, instruct the national office to construct and conduct a survey of actual and relevantly potential APA members regarding what services that population would like the APA to provide. We recommend that the timing of this follow soon after the development of specific proposals concerning options for a job website, with an eye towards getting profession-wide reactions about the options. Further, we recommend that the Executive Committee direct the national office to do this in a way that outlines the services the APA does provide and that describes some of the services the APA could reasonably provide under something like its current funding structure, and where appropriate, mentioning services that are in development or being considered.
9. We strongly recommend that the national office and the Executive Committee make better use of mechanisms (such as the website) for distributing information about APA decisions, activities, and the like that is of interest or significance to the membership: for example, prize announcements, policy decisions of particular interest (e.g., decisions about discrimination constraints on the JFP), and the like. Beyond updating the website (and supplementing it with an RSS feed or equivalent), we recommend a regular (perhaps annual) email update to members about notable activities of the national office and Executive Committee.

The APA Task Force for Membership and Member Services
Further Proposals
July 10, 2012

1. We recommend that the new ED evaluate the current categories of data collection, and take measures to improve, where appropriate. Among the things of obvious and widespread interest are basic demographic information about the profession, including race and gender, as well as philosophical specializations.

COMMENTS: on the web form there is no obvious way to fill in categories that are not included, such as philosophy of action, experimental philosophy, and moral psychology.

2. We recommend a thorough review and redesign of the APA website with the goal of removing clutter, identifying the main links and categories more distinctly, and enhancing timeliness. Moreover, we recommend consideration of the following: (A) a section that is regularly updated every few days with some relevant news item; (B) updates to the website should be complemented with an RSS-feed or equivalent that broadcasts such changes to those who use RSS-style newsreaders; (C) there should be an expanded guide to grant opportunities; (D) if possible, a section highlighting philosophy in the news; (E) finally, optimization for major web browsers (such as Chrome and Safari) is imperative, and the note advising visitors to use Explorer and Firefox should be identified as a temporary measure while the website is brought up to current standards.

COMMENTS: Regular updates would encourage members to visit the website and make use of its contents. Indeed, several members have noted that a full-time media person might not be a bad idea for the APA, if there was some way to fund it. This person could both help keep APA communications up to date as well as help us “place” stories in the news media, and facilitate media contacts with philosophers for news articles.

3. We recommend that the website be updated to include TOC-style listings of the contents of the newsletters, to facilitate awareness of the contents of the newsletters. Also, it would be helpful if the contents of each newsletter could be downloaded as a single pdf, for those who prefer printing the contents.

COMMENTS: It now looks like much of this has been implemented— however, it would be best to have links to a “current issues” splash page. As it stands now, the links from news and announcements page leads to a page from which pdf links are not obvious.

4. We recommend that the ED and national office consider a membership campaign, broadly modeled on the membership campaigns of museums and public radio. The overarching idea would be to use contact with potential members as opportunities to

advertise membership benefits that emphasize the importance of keeping the organization alive, make it easy for non-members to join and existing members to renew, and give members a token to show that they are being 'good citizens'. In particular, we recommend that the APA use conference registration and conference invitations as opportunities to increase membership by: (A) Advertising APA member benefits and activities, (B) Making it easy for members to join and pay registration fees together (C) 'Discounting' some of the registration fee from the membership fee (some departments pay for registration fees but not membership fees, so this would entail that those departments would pay some of the membership fee making the cost of becoming a member less prohibitive), and, possibly (D) Offering some visual token of membership. Conceivably, these could include things such as a tote bag, mug, or pen with membership.

COMMENTS: As an example of one way to provide incentives for signing up for membership, at conference registration participants should be informed of APA member benefits and professional activities and then made an offer. For example, regular members paying the conference registration fee could be offered a membership renewal fee at a discounted rate (regular membership fee minus some percentage or all of the conference registration fee). For those who are not yet members and simply planning to pay the non-member conference registration fee, it might make sense to offer an enticement to join. For example, if they decide to join, they pay the conference registration fee as a regular member plus discounted membership fee (regular membership fee minus some percentage or all of the conference registration fee). Another example of how to fold in membership appeals: when speakers are invited to comment or participate in the program the e-mail link through which they accept should ask them to register for the conference and then give them the options detailed above.

5. We continue to recommend a survey of the profession about which services would be of interest to members.

COMMENTS: Anita Silvers and Dana Nelkin are working to generate some sample questions. We recognize that lack of widespread active engagement in the APA and its affairs may generate low inclination to open and complete a survey, so a good cover letter will help, as will follow-up mailings.

APPENDIX:

A sample of services offered by various professional organizations,
but not obviously offered by the APA in the stated form.

American Anthropological Association

25% off their entire online order of books from Wiley-Blackwell on Wiley.com.
Cover yourself and your family with AAA Member Insurance.
Membership includes membership to 38 AAA Sections. (other more field
specific sub-associations)

American Philological Association

Discounts on books
Journal subscriptions
Discount on journal subscriptions

American Economic Association

Membership is only \$20 and you get discounts to journals, etc. But then it appears
that you pay more for the conferences, to submit to conferences, etc. For
example, if you are a member you pay \$100 to submit to the AEA, \$200 if you're
not a member
Access to discussion forum

American Sociological Association

Access to online community/discussion form to discuss journal articles, books,
teaching, etc.
Become involved in one or more of ASA's 51 special interest sections, available
only to ASA members.
TRAILS. ASA's new digital library service for the sociology profession. This site
contains over 2,000 educational resources in over 70 different sociological areas
of interest. Members can purchase an annual subscription to TRAILS for a small
fee of \$25. ASA welcomes teaching resource contributions from the membership
too.

American Political Science Association

Journal subscriptions (3 journals)
eJobs (posting resume, etc)