

On the Road to Remarkable

(Sustainable Chapters Essential to Ensure a Successful Journey)

Late Development – International Board Intends to Introduce an Amendment to Amendment #1

After considering the feedback gathered at division annual meetings and through other communications regarding amendment #1, the International Board intends to make the first amendment to this bylaw proposal. The motion to be introduced will lower the minimum number of chapter members necessary to maintain a chapter from the originally proposed 15 members to 10 Professional members.

Furthermore, the board motion will also extend the deadline for the initial phase-in of the requirement to July 1, 2012, and the initial probationary period will be extended to December 31, 2012. This will allow a longer period for chapters who are not currently meeting the requirement to recruit new members to satisfy the requirement.

Why Establish 10 as the Number Required:

“Ten” is no more a magical number than the originally proposed “15” when deciding a minimum number of members required in a chapter. Since the original proposed bylaws were distributed in mid-April, International Board members have been following the eGroup postings, engaging in direct communications with members via email and having in-person discussions at most of the division annual meetings. In response to nearly three months of feedback and honest discussion, the board decided to revise the minimum requirement downward but has added an expectation that a core nucleus of the chapter members have professional member status. Career-minded administrative professionals have been the primary emphasis of IAAP efforts since a strategic planning session in 2005 established that group as our focus. In addition, most chapter Bylaws and Standing Rules specify that chapter leaders must be professional members.

Why does a chapter even need a minimum size? Chapters must have a sufficient number of volunteers not only to conduct the governance of the organization, but also do the work within the chapters which, as we all know, is volunteer-driven. IAAP constantly receives reports that chapters with fewer than 10 professional members have issues with “leadership burn out.” As well, chapters with fewer than 10 professional members often have difficulty retaining new members for more than a year, because the current leadership has been entrenched in the same roles for years and years and is not bringing new ideas into the chapter leadership.

IAAP is aware that there currently are chapters with fewer than ten professional members that are creating value for their members. But what is the long-range outlook for those chapters – three, four or five years down the road – should a couple of key leaders move or retire?

Creating meaningful and progressively advanced leadership opportunities for newer members – “succession planning” – is much more likely to happen with chapters that have more than 10 professional members.

Creating sustainability for the long-term and stable prospects for chapters requires a nucleus of members who can fulfill the demands of the chapter membership. This nucleus needs to be large enough to share the burden to ensure the continuing success of a chapter.

Background:

Three years ago IAAP began its journey to create a remarkable association. Utilizing the research documented in the American Society of Association Executives, *7 Measures of Success, what Remarkable Associations Do that Others Don't*, IAAP began a concerted and thoughtful effort to make IAAP a better, more valuable organization for its members. Over the past three years changes have been implemented, some programs eliminated and some programs were improved. The significant change to the certification program is just one example. As IAAP further advanced through the 7 Measures effort, it became clearer that the infrastructure of IAAP also needs to be improved. In order to successfully deliver programs and to encourage effective components at the division and chapter levels, IAAP must deal with a problem that has been discussed by the International Board for many years but has never been resolved: Should there be a minimum number of members required to maintain a chapter charter within IAAP? Without an effective infrastructure with some minimum requirements, delivery of information and programs, including leadership training becomes more onerous and less effective.

Chapter Size and IAAP's Brand in the Market Place

To employers and organizations in a given area, chapters are the face of IAAP. The size of such chapters can either project an image of viability in terms of providing value for a career-minded admin or an image of impracticability should that chapter have a very small membership and only a handful of those attend monthly educational events. The decision of employers to support admins with membership dues and to attend meetings does partly depend on the size of that organization at the local level. Most large companies have branches in several locations across the U.S. and Canada. An ineffective chapter which is not providing value could affect the perception of chapters in other locations which are providing value. This perception does inhibit IAAP's effort to become a remarkable association. How we are perceived at the local level does affect the image of the entire organization.

Chapter Requirements will Initiate Changes that Benefit IAAP

Like any change that is being proposed, whether at a company or in an organization like IAAP, there will be some pain in implementing that change. As everyone knows, change hurts the most when it directly affects you. But just as change creates some pain, it also allows for gains and creates new opportunities for changing the status quo and making advances. Establishing a minimum standard creates a goal or target for those chapters with fewer than 10 professional members to shoot for in their recruitment

efforts. This standard also creates some urgency for chapters which are at or just above the 10 professional member level.

The issue of the chapter or chapters hanging on with a President and a Treasurer and a few other members garners much of the division leadership's time and the yearly dread of whether this chapter is going to disband or not. Currently, IAAP has no authority to disband such chapters. A minimum standard allows IAAP to focus its efforts on chapters which have some commonality in terms of their governance ability and ability to deliver programs effectively. It allows divisions to focus their efforts on encouraging chapters which are viable to create value for members within that chapter and division.

The last area of potential positive change coming out of a chapter size standard will be the creative ways that chapters can merge their resources (both financial and volunteer). IAAP has had several successful division mergers over the years with more considerable geographic distance challenges than most chapter mergers would encounter. In addition, utilization of virtual chapters is not just a dream but a reality with success stories already happening today. An additional potential strategy is for divisions to take the lead in developing virtual chapters within their borders to help create a network for members at a local level who may not have access to a traditional chapter.

It is easier to focus on the negative impact that may take place if change is initiated. However, the positives, not only to the entire organization but to those who are most closely impacted, often far outweigh the negative impact. Change always requires work. Change always requires an open mind. Most importantly, change requires leadership to see past the negative fog that is sometimes created and focus on the future which is much more bright and resilient in providing a future path for an organization like IAAP. A path on the road to remarkable.