



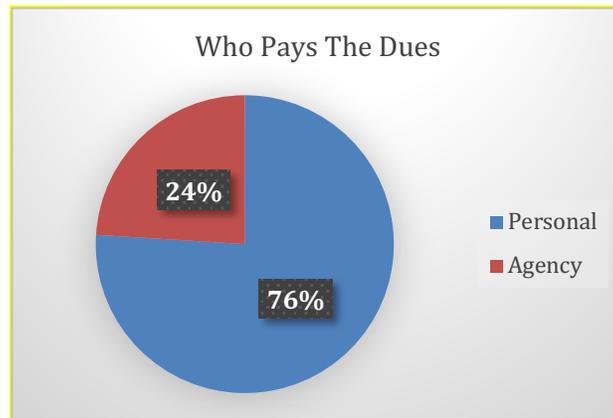
AMERICAN ACADEMY for PARK and RECREATION ADMINISTRATION

A Report to the Membership on the AAPRA Strategic Positioning Survey July 2019

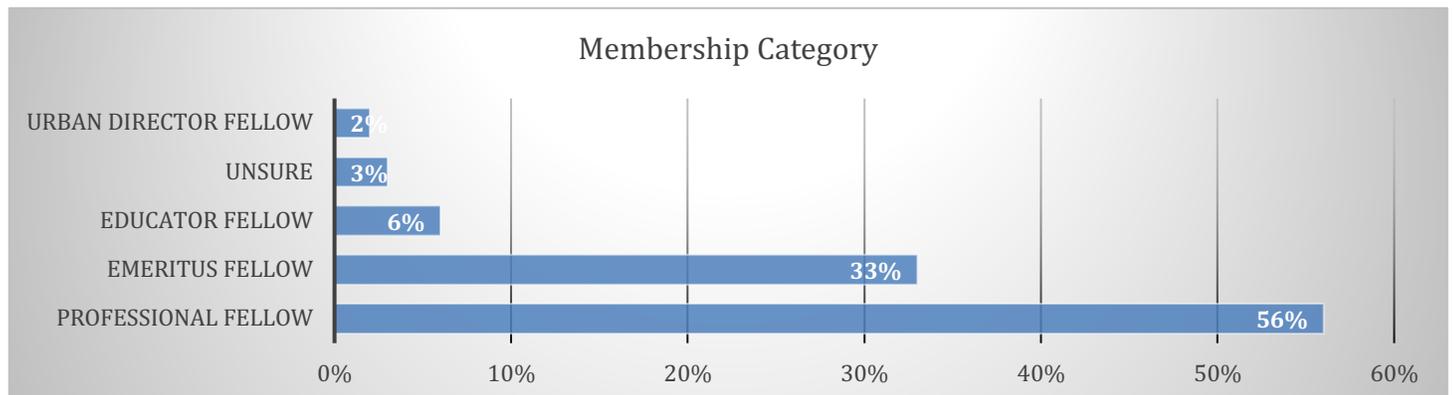
Introduction: In June 2019 the Academy conducted a strategic positioning survey of its 194 members. A total of 69 responses were received for a 33% response rate. The purpose of the member survey is to assist in guiding the direction of the Academy in the next 3-5 years. We thank all who responded, and we look forward to more dialogue at the membership interactions during the 2019 NRPA conference in Baltimore. At 40 years old, the Academy is reflective of the past with more focus on its future.

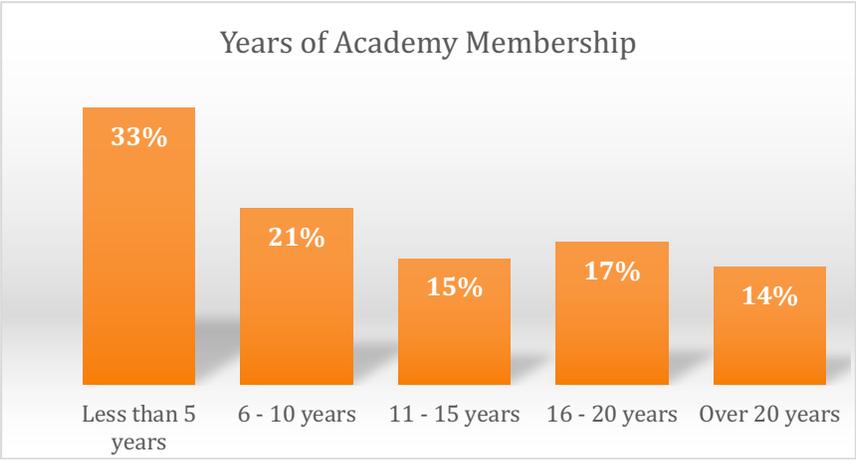
A number of questions were asked regarding the “demographics” of the current Academy members as well as strategic questions regarding the Academy’s vision and mission; possible partners the Academy should consider; what issues are most pressing to the future of the profession; what daily challenges Academy members face; opinions regarding the Academy’s nomination process; and what could be the role of Emeritus Academy members.

Demographic Responses:



Current membership category (of those who responded to the survey; is fairly reflective of the current membership):





Potential role of Emeritus Fellows

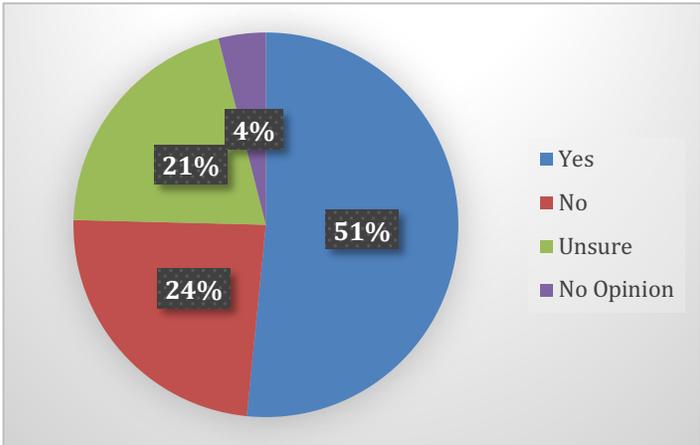
Emeritus Fellows (Active Fellows who self-select to move to Emeritus category due to retirement) were specifically asked to provide feedback on the role they feel they can best play in the Academy. A range of responses were received with mentoring future professionals; helping to identify potential Academy members; continue to belong and financially support the organization; and continue to serve on committees / task forces.

One respondent stated “Emeritus Fellows are only a phone call away to help any current member with any problems or challenges they may have. We are the silent resources for the Academy.”

Opinions regarding the Academy’s nomination procedure(s)

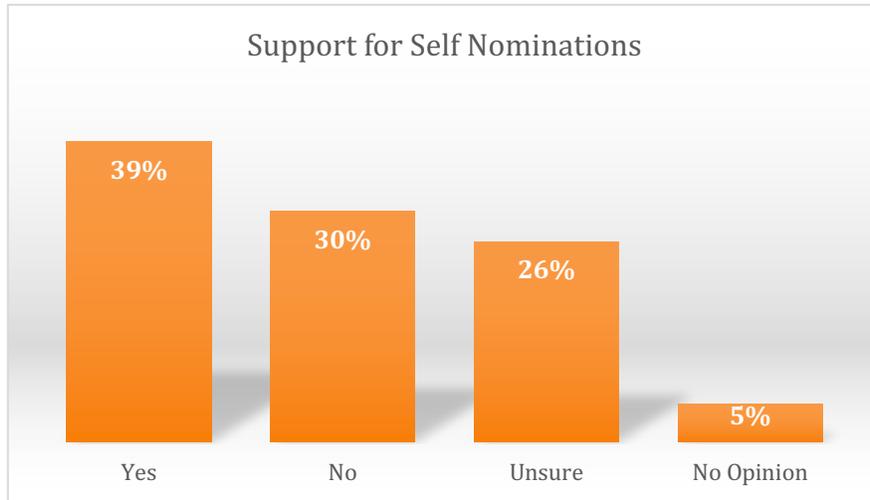
Several questions were asked relative to the Academy’s current nomination process whereby a current member (excluding Board of Director members and Membership Committee members) may nominate an individual and ask two Academy members to support that nomination.

Responses regarding appropriateness of the current nomination procedures:

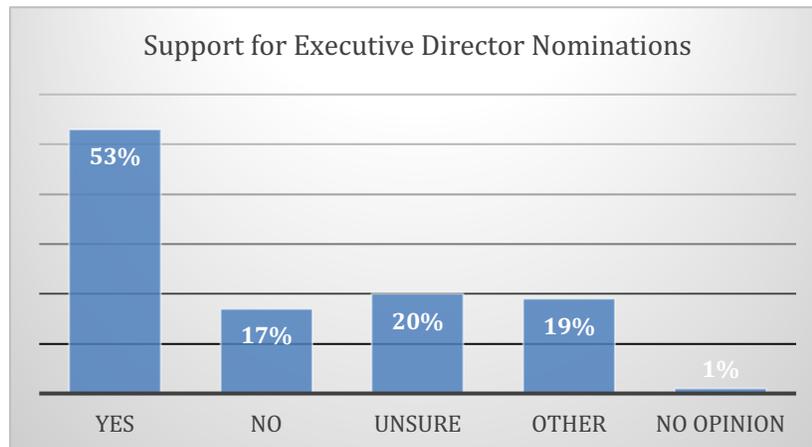


Comments indicate the process is cumbersome; takes too much effort; exclusivity could “miss” key people; and an encouragement to think more broadly how to “engage future leaders.”

Support for self-nomination with two Academy members writing letters of support met with a mixed reaction:



Support for state park & recreation association executives nominating individual(s) with continuing to require two support letters from current Academy members received support:



Comments reflected support and non-support with several indicating a state executive may be pressured to nominate an individual due to their position within the organization rather than their leadership / experiences.

ACTION NOTE: *The Membership Committee carefully considered these responses and submitted the following recommendations to the Academy Board of Directors in July 2019:*

- Our experience with intentional outreach suggests the decline in nominations was due to process, therefore we recommended continued outreach efforts especially from states that are underrepresented as well as extra calls for nominations to the membership.
- Monitor the number of nominations annually, and if there is a decline consider the state executive director nominations as needed.
- Offer an open-study session at the 2020 NRPA conference for Academy membership to better understand and have a dialog around the nomination process.

- The issue of national exposure as a criterion for membership may be limiting for professionals. A discussion of the requirements in terms of what options are available for professionals at the national level should be discussed prior to issuing the call for nominations for the 2020 class.
- The current application does not list the evaluation criteria for the nominator and nominee statement creating a challenge for applicants and committee members to score. Recommend adding the evaluation criteria into the application so that nominators/nominee’s know what to address when writing their statements. (NOTE: this issue will be addressed before the 2020 nomination packet is distributed.)

Plans are underway to conduct the suggested nomination “study session” at the 2020 NRPA conference in conjunction with other Academy events. Date / time will be communicated when known.

Creating the Academy’s Vision and Mission

While entering its 40th year, the Academy does not have a formal “vision” statement reflecting where we want to be as an organization, or a “mission” statement to reflect the “business we are in.”

The Academy Bylaws state the following four purposes:

1. To advance knowledge related to the administration of public parks and recreation;
2. To encourage scholarly efforts both by practitioners and educators to enhance the practice of public parks and recreation administration;
3. To promote broader public understanding of the importance of public parks and recreation to the public good;
4. To conduct research, publish scholarly papers and/or sponsor seminars related to the advancement of public parks and recreation administration

An Academy Board of Directors sub-committee is discussing these responses and will submit recommendations to the Board of Directors.

Members were provided 4 possible choices for the *Academy’s vision*:

Leading in advancing the parks and recreation profession	41%
Adding significance to the parks and recreation profession through meaningful research and best leadership practices	45%
Charting the path for the park and recreation profession	5%
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the above • The leader in advancing the park & recreation profession • All of the above 	9%

Members were provided 4 possible choices for the *Academy’s mission*:

Advancing public parks & recreation through research, promoting best practices in parks & recreation management, advocating for the profession and promoting professional development	48%
Advancing the profession of parks and recreation through leadership excellence, best practices, and advocacy	44%
Providing leadership to the park and recreation profession to enhance services and programs and to build communities	5%
Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing public parks and recreation through research, development and promotion of industry best practices, advocating and professional development • Delete “public” from above 	3%

Issues MOST Important to the future of the profession

Five possible choices were provided:

Developing future leaders	76%
Identifying and improving best practices	68%
Influencing funding support for parks & recreation through advocacy efforts	56%
Attracting students to park & recreation degree programs	33%
Other	15%

A wide variety of responses were added to “other:” best practices were most mentioned (recognizing, teaching the business side of parks & recreation), educating policy makers as to the importance of parks & recreation, and ensuring university curricula are relevant to attract future students.

Actions the Academy should undertake in next 3-5 years

Six possible choices were provided / respondents could choose as many as desired:

Supporting research to identify & share best practices	69%
Developing future leaders outside the Academy membership	58%
Professional development of non-Academy members	51%
Developing leaders within the Academy membership	48%
Developing Academy’s members advocacy skills	31%
Professional development for Academy members	28%
Other	18%

A wide variety of responses were given: keeping track of the history; what challenges will climate change bring; define the Academy’s “lane;” recruit younger professionals; need to identify what the Academy can *uniquely* provide that no one else can / does; develop / promote best practices (identify key areas to focus on); return to symposiums to engage members and non-members; Academy is not keeping pace (profession will die or wither).

If you now have the money & the resources to tackle a daily challenge(s) – which one(s) will you invest in?

A wide range of responses were received and the Academy’s Task Force on Research to Advance the Profession is synthesizing the responses to provide direction to the Academy Board of Directors. Their report will be shared with the membership when it is available.

In the interim, a brief summary of responses conveys the following challenges:

CHALLENGE 1 / TIMES MENTIONED

Deferred Maintenance/Infrastructure - 8 times

Equity/Diversity of Facilities - 6 times

Land Acquisition - 2 times

CHALLENGE 2 / TIMES MENTIONED

Deferred Maintenance - 6 times

Land Acquisition - 2 times

CHALLENGE 3 / TIMES MENTIONED

Professional/Leadership Development - 4 times

Equitable Access - 2 times



Possible partners the Academy should engage

Potential Partner Organization	Number of mentions
International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	10
Trust for Public Land (TPL)	9
NRPA	8
State park & recreation associations / societies	7
Universities	6
City Park Alliance	5

A wide range of other partners were presented from Home Depot, National League of Cities, NACRPO, Athletic Business, the Eppley Institute, Smart Cities, CDC, Nature Conservancy, corporate partners, AARP, & ASLA to name a few.

In conclusion

The Academy Board of Directors received the raw data from this survey in July. Under the leadership of 2020 Academy President, Dianne Hoover, the Board will finalize the vision and mission of the Academy as well as identify strategic actions the Academy will undertake in the next 3 to 5 years to position itself as a strong and viable organization, serving the parks and recreation profession. We welcome and encourage Academy members to engage with current leaders on the responses from this survey and to offer your feedback and suggestions regarding our strategic priorities.

Once again, the Academy leadership thanks you for your candid feedback and participation in this effort. When we all participate, we all have an impact.

