



# Membership: It is Really Everyone's Responsibility

By Lisa Potter

As the new interim membership committee chair of Rocky Mountain APPA, I have taken the opportunity to learn more about how one becomes an APPA member, and the advantages of joining a regional chapter. I found that joining APPA is actually easy to do. All the regions have links to APPA and membership from their websites. And the advantages were clearly listed on the APPA website. So I thought, why can't we get more members? Who wouldn't want to utilize these benefits?

Unfortunately, what I am finding is that we may not promote APPA and our regional chapters enough to other institutions, community colleges, and K-12s that are not currently members of APPA. Many of these institutions are not familiar with APPA or what APPA has to offer.

Another issue I found surprising is that we do not always promote the additional opportunities for membership within our own chapters and regions, nor do we do a great job informing others in our departments that our institution is a member of APPA.

## WHAT DO I HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

Increased membership, of course! Membership has to start with us, the leaders of our profession and those already involved in APPA and our regions. To make this happen, we have to become better communicators in promoting all



the wonderful opportunities that APPA provides. We all need to reach out to our colleagues at other institutions, including community colleges and K-12s. Just a few minutes of our time could make a difference to someone else in our profession—you could make that difference.

Take the time to send an e-mail introducing yourself and what APPA has to offer, then follow with a phone call make it more personal. If we each took 10 to 20 minutes a month from our busy schedules to send a few e-mails—or better yet, make a few phone calls—we could potentially help APPA and our regional memberships grow. This, in return, provides us and our colleagues more networking prospects.

Consider hosting a Drive-In Workshop—use these as an opening to invite non-members to an APPA professional development session at no cost. These settings are excellent for discussing APPA and its benefits; show them first-hand all the networking among the

attendees. Keep the roster and follow up to recruit from these registrants later.

Next, we have to encourage our staff to become more involved in APPA by starting with their region chapters, and ensure that they understand all the opportunities that are available to them through APPA.

We also should try to recruit more members from our own institutions by promoting the high quality of courses and publications. I'm sure we each have a few rising stars that would welcome the experience. A few great ways to get started are by hosting a Drive-In Workshop and/or a Supervisor's Toolkit session. Your staff can become involved with setting these up and can attend—it's a great introduction.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can help with recruitment:

- Call other schools in your region or state and ask them to join APPA and your region or local chapter.
- Start out with trying to recruit just one

school a year. If each of us could get just one school/person to join a year, we could double our membership.

- If you can reach out to just one institution a month, think of what we can collectively do to get the word out about APPA. Imagine the increase in membership we could gain this way.
- Promote the benefits of networking. We attend the Institute for Facilities Management, the Leadership Academy, the annual conference, and our regional chapter annual meetings. There, we are introduced to hundreds of our peers and colleagues. We collect names and contacts, building relationships through these events. Here's a good quote: "The key for success isn't knowing everything there is to know, the key to success is having the phone numbers of those who know parts of it."

It is almost impossible to know everything; however as a professional we know we can learn from our colleagues. Through our APPA introductions, we find others that have experienced similar issues, concerns, and challenges. And, we can reach out to them to seek their advice, share ideas and experiences and find the answers. We understand each other, and this allows us to make quick e-mails or phone calls to get information and ideas. We can build upon what they have learned and "network plagiarize" from each other. Why reinvent the wheel, when we can borrow from others? We can also use the information we garner for a quick analysis of our deficiencies—and best of all—to measure our successes.

- Host a Drive-In Workshop.
- Host a Supervisor's Toolkit course, and invite other institutions to attend.
- Enlighten others on the benefits of professional development for themselves and for their team. Remind them that it is essential to invest in staff, to nurture their talents, and build on their strengths. This is how we all become self-confident, build

self-esteem, and become self-assured. We then exhibit and lead by example.

- Be an advocate of training budgets! Remind your upper management that training is not just a frill to be cut from budgets when times are lean. It is an essential component of strategic improvement to achieve our missions and goals, and to keep staff engaged in our endeavors.
- Keep your upper management informed and aware of APPA. Get them involved or to attend APPA events. Remind them that APPA is one of the only well-rounded programs for educational facilities professionals.
- Get your future leaders/rising stars involved with APPA. By investing in them, we enable them to become better communicators and able to support and communicate our visions, needed changes, and the goals we all develop for our organizations.

- Recruit additional members from your own institutions. Staff members in your work units, others within your department. Recruit from other departments on campus (i.e., housing, athletics, library, museum), and don't forget about our students interested in the field.

Membership in APPA is a unique opportunity that allows us to demonstrate our excellence in service, leadership, and character. And, it provides us with the opportunity to learn.

Now let's get out there and let others know all about it! ☎

Lisa Potter is assistant director facilities operations at the University of Colorado Boulder and can be reached at [lisa.potter@colorado.edu](mailto:lisa.potter@colorado.edu).

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