



Corner

American Academy of Health Physics
 American Board of Health Physics
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Summary Report:

American Academy of Health Physics 1999 Membership Opinion Survey

Using the May 1999 edition of the "CHP Corner" column in the Health Physics Society's *Newsletter*, the membership of the Academy was polled on a variety of topics, primarily via the Academy Web page. At the onset of this initiative, several Academy Executive Committee members had expressed concern that at least some of the inquiries "telegraphed" an obvious answer such that the outcome of the item was unlikely to prove useful. It must be admitted that the survey was not exhaustively refined (all the qualified pollsters are already working on the next presidential election). However, the membership survey *was* useful in filling the *Newsletter*, (always a good thing if you're the editor) and it has suggested some ideas that may provide additional Academy and/or committee initiatives.

It could also be said that the 1997 San Antonio strategic planning workshops implied a leadership commitment to poll the membership for input . . . which we have now done. Additionally, there is always some value in providing the membership a means to input to the leadership, i.e., the logical extension of "two heads are better than one." (The committee directory portion of the Academy Web page is presently provided with hot-link email addresses to communicate with the Academy leadership.)

As we had already recognized from the American Board of Medical Physics (ABMP) experience, there are *differences of opinion* regarding how the Academy should interface with other professional credentialing organizations. There appears to be more membership interest in title protection and licensing than might have been anticipated. Floating the mentoring program idea did not capture any clear consensus. No one took shots at this trial balloon, but neither did anyone seem overly interested in keeping it aloft. There is some strong antispecialty examination

sentiment among the membership. Most indicated that they had credential dilution concerns associated with any specialty exam proposals. Some ABMP-involvement opinion *was* provided, even though the topic had been consciously avoided by the survey questions.

Of the nearly 300 responses to the survey, only six (<2%) were snail-mailed. Virtually all participation was online via the Web page. Scott Medling built the online survey to automatically sort and accumulate responses such that the compilation of the results was very straightforward. This effort was so successful that it has led to also transitioning the Certified Health Physicist (CHP) salary survey to a Web-based electronic response capability. In the editor's experience, this proportion of membership response reflects very well on you as the Academy and your interest and support of its workings. Preaddressed, *postage-paid* questionnaire return envelopes might not have received an equal proportion of membership participation in "the old days."

Probably most useful to the Executive Committee's interest in moving the Academy forward is a careful consideration of the various ideas and opinions provided in the responses to the open-ended questions grouped at the back of the survey questionnaire. These were provided to the Academy Executive Committee and Committee Chairpersons at the Philadelphia meeting in late June.

One example is a "consensus" request for some spreadsheet-type tracking tool that members could access at the Web site and use for tracking their continuing education credit accumulation with potential electronic submittal. This is probably a request that the Executive Committee could fulfill. We might want to partner with another organization like the National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists or American Board of Industrial Hygiene to spread the development costs of such a software tracking tool. Alternatively, this might be a likely graduate project for an applied computer systems major if we could identify a CHP faculty mentor with the appropriate university connections.

Scott Medling has recently built a Web page link for submission of materials to the *Newsletter*; it may be appropriate to have a similar mechanism for online feedback to the entire Executive Committee.

We hope the various committees and Executive Committee members who submitted survey questions obtained some responses that have generated further committee discussion or new ideas and initiatives.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: Cumulative membership response to the individual survey items will be reported in the December *CHP News*, along with the 1999 edition of the membership salary survey. ■