

HAMPTON ROADS CHAPTER

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



STRATEGIC PLAN

2012 - 2016

Developed by

Pamela T. Dunning
Troy University
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INTRODUCTION

The American Society for Public Administrators (ASPA) is an unincorporated association founded in 1939 and exists under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to advocate greater effectiveness in government. The Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA was founded in 1977 to offer networking and educational opportunities for public service professionals in the Hampton Roads region. The Chapter serves the sixteen counties and cities of Southeastern Virginia – from Colonial Williamsburg to Virginia Beach. The chapter is basically the creation of its members — its activities and functions are a reflection of the goals and interests of those members who want to be involved in the field of public administration at the local level.

Program meetings focused on current events in public administration are held for Chapter members at a minimum four times a year. The Annual Meeting is held in May of each year to announce the results of the chapter elections and to recognize Chapter award recipients. In accordance with ASPA's Constitution, active chapters must at minimum elect a president, vice-president, and a secretary/treasurer to serve as board members and to create program plans for the organization. The Hampton Roads Chapter Council currently consists of the following positions: Chapter President, President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, eight Council members, Student Representative, two most recent past presidents, and the local COMPA Chapter President. The terms of office are designated by the Chapter By-Laws. The President-Elect serves a term of two years, one as President-Elect and another as Chapter President to provide sufficient succession planning within the organization. The Secretary and Treasurer are appointed annually by the President, while all other Board Members serve a two-year term of office. Current running committee chairs, appointed by the President, include Membership, Marketing, Finance, Symposium and Awards. A web administrator is also appointed by the President.

At a planning retreat held in November, 2011, strategic planning team members began the development of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA's first strategic plan (See Appendix for a list of members). Chapter documents, council minutes, financial documents, member surveys, and a student-drafted plan were used to develop the following mission statement and strategic issues. The mission statement:

The mission of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA is to promote the ethical and exemplary practice of public service.

The three strategic issues that will be the focus of this strategic plan are:

- 1. How do we increase and retain membership?**
- 2. How do we improve the administration of the chapter?**
- 3. How do we improve programs and services to our stakeholders?**

FORMAL & INFORMAL MANDATES

Formal Mandates

The formal mandates of the Hampton Roads Chapter of Public Administration consist of federal law that defines the organization as a non-profit organization, the national ASPA By-laws and Code of Ethics, and the Hampton Roads Chapter Constitution and By-Laws. A summation of the dictates of these formal mandates is provided below:

IRS Code Section 501c (3)

- Defines organization as non-profit, for professional & educational purposes
- Identifies chapters as subunits of ASPA and Group Exemption Status
- Allows tax deductions to benefactors for donations to ASPA
- Prohibits participation or intervention in political campaigns
- Holds ASPA liable for all debts incurred

ASPA Constitution/By-Laws

- Defines requirements for forming and maintaining active chapter status
- Determines Membership Guidelines, Officer Requirements, Tax Exemption Rules
- Requires Executive Director to sign off on any contracts issued on behalf of a chapter organization
- Requires annual meetings to elect officers, and the submission of annual financial reports

ASPA Code of Ethics

- Defines what is meant by serving the public interest
- Defines respectful behavior towards rules and laws
- Defines characteristics of personal integrity to promote public trust
- Outlines commitment to promoting ethical organizations to the public
- Defines commitment to professional excellence

Hampton Roads Chapter ASPA Constitution/By-Laws

- Determines purposes of Chapter
- Allows for and determines policy regarding Chapter rights to take positions on matters of public policy
- Describes Chapter membership criteria
- Defines geographic boundary covered by Chapter
- Outlines Officer and Governing Body organization, election rules, and terms of office
- Describes rules regarding times, notice to members, and reporting of finances at Chapter meetings
- Outlines procedure for making amendments to Chapter By-Laws
- Determines Fiscal Year deadlines for Chapter

Informal Mandates

Informal mandates are less-defined functions of the organization, but functions that are expected from the organization as a result of past performance or regular organizational operations. The Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA informal mandates are:

- Development of chapter program plans
- Promote the exchange of knowledge on issues facing public administration
- Address important public issues relevant to the Hampton Roads region
- Promote attendance and increase membership and retention
- Find good professional speakers to draw attendance to bi-monthly meetings
- Create greater professional network for people in the public administration field
- Addressing member interests in program development
- Create value for public professionals in their careers and endeavors

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

A stakeholder analysis is conducted in order to identify key groups that are concerned with the organization's successful functioning. By identifying stakeholders and determining the criteria by which these groups define organizational effectiveness, the strategic planning process can assess how well the organization currently addresses the needs of its constituency and determine feasible and organized solutions to further address these needs. **Internal stakeholders** are groups within an organization, while **external stakeholders** are groups outside the organization who may be affected by the function of the organization.

Four major internal stakeholder groups and two over-arching major external stakeholder groups were identified as exerting pressure upon the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA. A list and explanation of the significance of each stakeholder groups is provided below.

Internal Stakeholders

Current chapter membership

The chapter currently has 124 (April 2012) members. These members span all levels of government, non-profits, military, retirees and students. They have a direct stake in the viability of the chapter and support the chapter financially through their chapter dues and attendance at programmed events.

Local public sector employees/Executive level management/Elected Officials

Non-member local public sector employees and executive level management and elected officials are invited to attend chapter meetings, special events and are eligible for award opportunities. The chapter provides them with professional development opportunities and networking events.

Academic community

Universities and colleges within the Hampton Roads area have long been supporters of the chapter through active leadership in the chapter and via students in public administration & public affairs programs. According to a recent survey of membership, a majority of current ASPAHR members became aware of ASPAHR through their college professors. Special events such as the Student Forum and Annual Symposium target students.

Military/Non-profits/Contractors

Non-member military, non-profit and government contractors are invited to attend chapter meetings, special events and are eligible for award opportunities. The chapter provides them with professional development opportunities and networking events.

External Stakeholders

Hampton Roads Community

The community in general has a vested interest in having public service employees that are competent, ethical and provide equity of service. This is consistent with the mission and goals of APSA national and the chapter. Although the communities direct involvement in the chapter is not essential for chapter success, their perception of public employees can impact the viability of the chapter in terms of serving as an essential professional organization. The chapter should be perceived as contributing to the effectiveness of public service.

COMPA, ICMA and other professional associations

The Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA) is an ASPA organization with a general mission statement and purpose that is nearly identical. Monthly programs are similar, membership overlaps and the respective governing councils coordinate their annual activities. Many of our local government leaders are members of the International County/City Managers Association (ICMA) and of COMPA and ASPAHR. The stakeholder interest is primarily one of overlapping membership and organizational purpose.

MISSION STATEMENT

While not having a specific mission statement, the Chapter's purpose can be found in the Chapter Constitution:

This Chapter is organized for the professional and educational purposes of: exclusively charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now in effect or as may hereafter be amended ("Code"). Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, such purposes include the following:

- (a) Advancing the science, processes, and art of public administration.
- (b) Advancing the equality of opportunity of all persons through public administration.
- (c) Advancing the importance of public service.

Considerable discussion was held in the development of the mission statement. The following was discussed as what we do or promote:

- Promoting public interest
- Inspiration
- Lunches
- Principled and ethical leadership
- Intergovernmental communication in the region
- Guidance and training
- Best practice in PA
- Meetings
- Networking and collaboration
- Build relationships across practitioners and academics

The following areas were discussed regarding our unique character:

- Strong regionalism
- A large number of public employees
- Large military population – not active
- Long term membership
- Transportation – area (big enough to have 2 chapters
- Diversified
- High quality of local government
- Academic participation
- Active participation
- Collaboration with COMPA

Through the analysis of formal and informal mandates and the identification of stakeholder concerns, a mission statement was created to reflect our unique character and purpose:

“The mission of the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA is to promote the ethical and exemplary practice of public service.”

This mission statement concisely captures the philosophy and core values of the organization in a succinct statement. The following initiatives were considered core to the mission and will be further amplified via strategic initiatives:

- Recognize outstanding achievement locally in public service
- To advance opportunity and professional excellence in PA

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS (SWOT) ANALYSIS

The Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA Strategic Planning Committee met on November 5, 2011 and a SWOT analysis was conducted through a brainstorming session to identify key internal and external factors facing the Chapter. Discussion ensued regarding human, financial, and internal organizational strengths and weaknesses. Further brainstorming efforts revealed important external threats and challenges facing the Hampton Roads Chapter. These strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were later categorized into groups to add clarity to the identification process, and were used for input regarding the identification of strategic issues.

Strengths

- Regionalism
- Website quality
- Membership
 - Long term collective memory
 - Long term membership
 - Diverse membership
 - Already have a diverse membership and many avenues for more members including universities, high ranking current members
 - Government contractors are next door
- Leadership
- Strong council leadership
 - Skilled and committed chapter leadership
 - Commitment is strong from current council and membership wanting to address challenges through strategic planning
- Events – well attended, awards luncheon, March symposium
- Academic support
- Dedication to the PA profession
- Tradition of public service excellence at local government level

Weaknesses

- Luncheon content and time constraints for speakers
- Developing relevant events and topics
- No name recognition

- Large geographic region covered by chapter
 - Geographic dispersion and travel time
- Membership
 - High level of membership turnover
 - Low technical government presence
 - Low level of executive membership
 - Membership attrition is high
 - Low level of non-profit membership
 - Not every member as invested as council members
- Lack of leadership succession plan/development
- Communication
 - Communication to members and general public
 - Low level of direct communication using multiple methods
 - Communication (awareness of events)
- Lack of control over economic situations – must wait out the current financial crisis

Opportunities

- Collaboration/Links to Other Organizations
 - Link with other organizations – Virginia Local Government Managers Association (VLGMA), International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
 - Collaboration with other professional occupations and other relevant fields
 - Greater collaboration with other professional organizations
 - Outreach to non-profit organizations
- Media
 - Improve outreach with media
 - Develop media connections
 - More active use of social media
- Improve communication (external/internal)
- Newsletter with opinion on current issues in Hampton Roads public sector
- Offer professional development seminars as detailed in report/survey (we have members capable of hosting such events including professors, PhD students. Etc
- ASPAHR could benefit from doing a bit of networking as an organization in order to gain members/support (i.e. encouraging members to attend the events of other associations and organizations in order to scout out new members and support
- Expand membership
 - Recruitment of untapped stakeholders

- Broaden membership – nonprofits, military, contractors
- Encourage non-profit and military
- Encourage upper management
- Promote membership to academic areas beyond PA
- Begin a mentoring program with students (engage)
- Begin earlier in schools – high school for career opportunities
- Development of strategic plan

Threats

- Declining membership
- Transient community
- Transportation – travel difficulty, increasing traffic congestion
- Economic
 - Economic downturn – reduction in discretionary income for professional associations, decrease in membership
 - Budget reductions of military and general government
 - Economic pressure for dues
 - Fiscal solvency of chapter now and future of ASPAHR (*could be included in Weaknesses*)
 - Chapter finances – no revenue or dollars lost on events (*could be included in Weaknesses*)
- Low level of public confidence in government
- Perception of a focus on academia
- Low confidence and satisfaction with ASPA customer service

STRATEGIC ISSUES

The following critical issues were identified for the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA, and include explanations clarifying why it is important for the organization to address them and what will happen if they are not addressed:

- *How do we increase and retain membership?*

An active membership is critical for the chapter to continue to offer programs and events to benefit the region.

Consequence if Not Addressed: If this issue is not addressed, the effectiveness of the organization is diminished by low attendance. Over time, this issue threatens the viability of the chapter.

- *How do we improve the administration of the chapter?*

Effective and timely administration is critical for the chapter to successfully operate in the geographically large Hampton Roads area.

Consequence if Not Addressed: If this issue is not addressed, program offerings will suffer, which will contribute to lower attendance and membership rates. This will also affect the number of members who volunteer to assume management of the chapter and associated programs.

- *How do we improve programs and services to our stakeholders?*

The chapter exists to provide a venue for programs that will enhance the ability of public administrators to provide exemplary public service. With competing demands, the chapter's programs need to be timely and relevant.

Consequence if Not Addressed: If this issue is not addressed, membership will continue to dwindle, the organization may face another long period of inactivity, and professionals will lose a valuable opportunity for networking. In addition, visibility may also affect the financial viability of an organization, and failure to address this will translate into missed opportunities for increasing Chapter funding.

APPENDIX A

STRATEGIC ISSUES WORKING PAPERS

The following represents the initial work compiled by the three strategic issue teams. The three issues are expanded below:

Strategic Issue: How do we increase and retain membership?

1. Our specific goals or desired outcomes for this issue are:

- Increase membership by 10% within a year by the 3rd year
- Retain 99% of our membership, (retain 60% in the 1st year, 75% in the 2nd year) with special attention to student members

2. What are some practical initiatives we might pursue to address this issue and achieve our goal(s) or outcome(s)?

- Hold annual membership drive; offer some kind of incentive. Perhaps the Chapter can offer an incentive for new student memberships and a separate incentive for new professional memberships.
- Develop media contacts to raise awareness of organization; seek stories for high profile speakers
- Establish two consistent sites – South Side and Peninsula – and alternate meetings
- Establish closer relationships/partnerships with COMPA and other professional organizations; collaborate on programs, provide information for newsletters, meetings, etc.
- Use web site to reach members and others using social media and forums
- Continue professional development, scholarships and awards programs; include the outreach to the high school level students as well
- Develop cadre of outreach members in each city government
- Send out a renew membership letter/reminder to all members
- Send personal invitations to all ASPA events to city managers, non- profits and military

3. What are the possible barriers to realizing these strategy alternatives?

- The large geographic area for our Chapter which covers Southside and the Peninsula
- Transportation issues
- Public sector hit by recession, membership not supported by agencies

- Lack of name/organization recognition
- Low level of public confidence in government
- Organization not meeting members' needs

4. *What are the key actions (with existing resources of people/dollars) that must be taken to implement the major initiatives?*

- Web person to carry on social media work (Facebook Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.)
- Funds for membership incentives

5. *What specific steps could be taken within six months (after plan adoption) to implement the major initiatives, and who is responsible for taking them?*

Step	Party Responsible
Maintain updated membership list	Membership Committee
Set up social media links on web site (combine with discussions with COMPA and similar groups as one marketing campaign.*	Web master/Chapter Officers
Advertise meetings in VP and DP	Program Committee
Locate and select two meetings sites	Program Committee
*Begin discussions with COMPA and other groups on collaboration opportunities	Chapter Officers
Identify member needs from ASPAHR	Membership Committee

Strategic Issue: How do we improve the administration of the chapter?

1. *Specific goals or desired outcomes:*

- Develop a volunteer management plan that eliminates need to plead for volunteers.
- Develop a succession plan for council members' and officers' terms of service.
- Build collaboration between HRASPA, COMPA, and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) Hampton Roads Chapters that shares goals and resources.
- Improved management of the chapter

2. *Practical alternatives that will address this issue and achieve our goals and desired outcomes:*

- Reorganize the current Annual Award Committee structure to better attract council members to serve on the committees.
 - Combine committees such that fewer volunteers are needed
 - Commitment from council members to serve on at least one committee each year
 - Establish council positions that are designated to a committee as part of the member's commitment before becoming a council member.
 - Explore establishing permanent committees rather than temporary
- Develop a succession plan for council members' and officers' terms of service.
 - Review term lengths and consider extending term to 2 years
 - Establish roles for council members based on years of service. (i.e. first year serve on one committee, second year head a committee, third year serve on recruitment committee)
- Develop a working relationship with COMPA and NFBPA that shares information, manpower, and resources such that the administration of both organizations benefit.
 - Investigate what makes the organizations uniquely different. Do the differences preclude membership in one or the other organization?
 - Can administrative tasks be shared? (i.e. can we share a website and therefore share the Webmaster? Can we combine board meetings?
 - Can we combine events? Can we combine awards?
- Develop a method that provides increased accessibility and sharing capability to council members and officers of all files created by and for the organization.
 - Investigate and invest in software or web access that allows council members and officers to access files stored in a secure centrally located place.

3. *Possible barriers to realizing these strategy alternatives:*

- The bylaws, constitution, or mandates of ASPA or COMPA at the local or national level may preclude the local chapters from combining memberships or sharing financial resources.
- Council membership may reject restructuring of Annual Awards Committees.

- The cost of providing centrally located files may be prohibitive. The logistics of using a cloud-like system may be too complex for a small organization.

4. *Major initiatives to pursue to achieve these strategy alternatives:*

- Review other chapter structures
- Review other organization structures such as Kiwanis and Lions Clubs
- Consider joint events and pooling resources with COMPA
- Investigate and invest in software or web access that allows council members and officers to access files stored in a secure centrally located place.

5. *Key actions*

- Review national ASPA for their perspective on membership and length of terms
- Review ASPAHR current structure and develop possible alternatives
- Review surveys presented at strategic planning session for ideas and suggestions
- Consider SharePoint software or web access for sharing information more readily with membership
- Arrange a meeting with the ASPAHR and COMPA Executive Councils

6. *Specific Steps to be taken within in six months after plan adoption to implement the major initiatives, and who is responsible for taking the step:*

Step	Party Responsible
Review national ASPA documents for rules and mandates with regards to joint ventures with COMPA	Robert Morin (will enlist Susan Gooden as a resource)
Review national ASPA for their perspective on membership and length of terms	Robert Morin (will enlist Susan Gooden as a resource)
Review organization documents for ASPAHR, as well as other chapters and organizations, for written rules or guidelines regarding committee structure and purpose	Susan Perry
Arrange a meeting with all interested ASPAHR and COMPA executive council members to discuss interest in and feasibility of joint efforts.	Susan Perry
Investigate various software and web access	Janet Read (will enlist David

<p>options (i.e. SharePoint and Wiki Accounts) – what are the costs and requirements. Do we already have shared web access through any current sources (i.e. Business Banking at Wells Fargo or PayPal?) Review other chapters and organizations for ideas regarding sharing of organization files among council members.</p>	<p>Chapman as a resource)</p>
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Strategic Issue: How do we improve programs and services to our stakeholders?

The Hampton Roads ASPA (ASPAHR) Chapter mission is to advance excellence in public service within the cities and counties of Southeastern Virginia. The strategic planning process is an important element for promoting the long-term effectiveness of the HR-ASPA in meeting its mission and serving the needs of its members. The evaluation component is a critical element in ensuring the efficient and effective achievement of goals and objectives. Below are the draft elements of the evaluation plan:

1. Evaluation and Assessment: A yearly or bi-yearly Council assessment seminar. The council would review the performance feedback and prepare a report for dissemination to the membership. The report could be followed by an assessment presentation/meeting open to all members to discuss the recommendations, generate additional feedback and develop new recommendations. The sources of information include:
 - a) Yearly on-line satisfaction surveys: Member satisfaction assessment of the following areas:
 - i) Activities (satisfaction, effectiveness, number and balance of activities, interest level, convenience, cost, areas for improvement)
 - ii) Communication satisfaction:
 - (1) Timeliness, clarity, and comprehensiveness of each individual method (web, email, meetings, etc.) and an overall assessment of the effectiveness of communication
 - iii) Satisfaction with ASPA national chapter services:
 - (1) Price of membership, the quantity, timeliness and quality of services received (PAR)
 - (2) Quality of customer service
 - (3) Quality and cost of national and regional conferences
 - iv) Event satisfaction survey:
 - (1) Quality, cost, convenience, utility for each event administered on site

2. Focus Groups of members conducted every other year (administered by members who teach Research Methods or other relevant courses as part of a class project). Select representative sample by geographic location, demographics, level of government, and service area (public works, police, city management, human resources, budgeting, etc.). Same areas as the satisfaction survey with additional questions as needed.
3. Attrition analysis survey or interview. Interview or survey lapsed members to determine reason for not renewing (administered by members who teach Research Methods or other relevant courses as part of a class project). Identify trends and reasons for attrition (undesirable reasons such as poor service, lack of satisfaction, lack of ROI, etc. and non-performance reasons such as left area).
4. Needs Assessment to develop baseline data on member needs, interests and preferences (administered by members who teach Research Methods or other relevant courses as part of a class project). A comprehensive needs assessment would include both present members, a sampling of prospective members and governmental and nonprofit agencies that benefit from ASPA. A needs assessment would be conducted every 3 to 5 years. A key area for the needs assessment is professional development:
 - a) Professional development would be more fully explored in the needs assessment, but some ideas that come to mind include career development workshops on specific topics of interest. They could be oriented towards the specific needs of various groups such as pre-service students, mid-career professionals, and executives. In addition, specific professional development workshops may be significant interest generators such as “Six Sigma” and process improvement.
 - b) Potential career enhancement, competency and skills building topics:
 - i) Ethics, dealing with irate citizens, promoting governance, e-government, managing and service delivery with declining resources, regionalism, collaboration, contracting out, regional service agreements, etc.
5. Offering CEU courses in conjunction with local universities: For example, at Regent the Professional and Continuing Education division is developing various certificate programs including public administration and homeland security. They are also considering developing certificate programs on process improvement. These programs could be publicized and offered in conjunction with ASPA. Another option is joint offerings between the various universities presented or organized by ASPA members. The key with partnering is to provide activities and services that are of interest and benefit to agencies. This is where the CEU and professional development programs provide a foundation for increasing agency involvement. Perhaps a needs assessment of agencies and their education and training needs would be appropriate.

6. Benchmarking: A biannual benchmarking survey of other ASPA or similar professional association chapters could be conducted. This will enable us to norm our activities with other chapters and address the following areas:
- c) Types of services and activities offered
 - d) Methods of delivery of services
 - e) Membership retention and recruitment

The effective implementation of the plan requires:

1. the active support and involvement of the Council
2. A core of evaluation “champions” who exert ownership and commitment to ongoing performance improvement
3. The presence of members skilled in research methods
4. Adequate resource support in conducting the research and the data analysis process
5. Sequencing the research process to ensure reasonable effort levels
6. The presence of clear strategic goals, objectives and standards
7. The development of a reasonable number of performance metrics
8. A commitment to ongoing process improvement

The adoption of an evaluation plan will be a helpful addition to meeting chapter mission objectives.

APPENDIX B

List of Strategic Planning Team Members

Pam Dunning, facilitator

John Dunning, recorder

Susan Gooden

Jerri Hoddinott

Jacob Lacy

Adale Martin

Bob Morin

Sherri Neil

Susan Perry

Janet Read

Gary Roberts

Milissa Story

Valerie Walker