

**ASPA HAMPTON ROAD CHAPTER**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

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PA6630

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration (HR ASPA) strategic plan highlights the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and challenges of educational and professional development of public administrators. The Hampton Roads strategic plan has notable strengths such as scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students of public administration, networking capabilities, and partnership opportunities. The strategic plan also documents weaknesses of the Hampton Roads Chapter such as a deficit between overall membership and revenue collection.

The HR ASPA strategic plan discusses the formal and informal mandates, and their influence on how funding issues are address, and whether the mandates meet with the organization's intended mission. Internal and external stakeholders' involvement is contingent on the benefits that are provided by the chapter.

Three key strategies are vital to reach the organizations proposed goals. First, develop a professional curriculum for entry and mid-level public service professionals. Second, create a fee based networking event for students and professionals who are interested in public sector service. And lastly, discuss an increase in membership cost for local chapters and/or increase national funding.

### Mission Statement

ASPA is the leading public service organization that:

- Advances the art, science, teaching, and practice of public and non-profit administration.

- Promotes the value of joining and elevating the public service profession.
- Builds bridges among all who pursue public purposes.
- Provides networking and professional development opportunities to those committed to public service values.
- Achieves innovative solutions to the challenges of governance.

### Core Value

Public Administration achieves public value by improving and supporting good governance.

### Commitment

Over the coming three years, ASPA will become more dynamic and agile in the pursuit of our purpose by serving our core and auxiliary constituencies, and working to expand our collaborative networks with groups who share our value and commitment.

## **FORMAL AND INFORMAL MANDATES**

It is essential for organizations to know exactly what it is they are obligated to do or not do. Mandates are obligations that organizations have assumed or that have been passed down to them by some authority and may be formal or informal. Formal mandates maybe charters, by-laws, or agreements. Informal mandates may be more subtle or implied; for example: an elected board member may have made commitments to that a specific action if voted in. Understanding an organization's mandates will assist in defining what the organization's mission is. The Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration's mandates are as follows:

### Formal Mandates

The Chapter's formal mandates restrict how revenue is collected and spent and establish the rules by the organization is governed as well as the tenets of ethical behavior it must adhere to. In terms of this visioning exercise, the organization's non-profit 501(C) 3 status is the most important because it may limit ways the organization chooses to raise revenues to address funding issues:

- Non-Profit 501(C) 3 status
- ASPA Constitution and By-Laws
- ASPA Code of Ethics
- Chapter Constitution and By-Laws

### Informal Mandates

The Chapter's informal mandates are tasks and goals that have been previously committed to. This informal mandates will not have a significant impact on the strategic visioning process, but they may support the identified strategies and conclusions:

- Development of Chapter Program Plans.
- Promote the exchange of knowledge on issues facing public administration.
- Address important public issues relevant to the region.
- Promote Attendance and increase membership and retention.
- Find good professional speakers to draw attendance to 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 endeavor.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

A stakeholder may be an individual, a group of people, or any other organization that is impacted by the organization's actions. Identifying stakeholders and clarifying their relationship is crucial to begin a strategic planning process. These stakeholders will play a key role in the development of issues and strategies to address them. Stakeholders can be either internal or external to the organization. The following are the stakeholders for the Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration:

### Internal Stakeholders

The internal stakeholders play a role in the day-to-day operation, the activities, and events of the organization. They have a vested interest in the success of the Chapter and they are:

- ASPA National Council
- Chapter Officers and Council
- Current HR ASPA Members
- Conference of Minority Public Administrators (COMPA)

### External Stakeholders

The external stakeholders are those persons, groups and organizations that receive a benefit or some service from the Chapter or may collaborate on similar interests with the Chapter. Students and members receive the benefit of access to professional development and

networking while local governments and other public agencies may turn to the Chapter for access to potential employees, training, and other resources for public administration personnel.

- Public Service Professionals (Non-Members)
- Students
- Local Governments
- Other Public Agencies (e.g. school districts, state agencies)
- Non-Profit Organizations

### **PROPOSED MEMBERS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM**

The strategic planning team is responsible for the technical coordination of the strategic planning process. The team must facilitate the discussion and make recommendations to the key decision makers. Bryson specifies that the team consist of members that are “skilled in boundary spanning, process facilitation, technical analysis, advocacy, and self-criticism” (Bryson, 2004). The following persons should make up the Hampton Roads Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration's strategic planning team:

- President (Hopefully will be the champion of the process),
- Treasurer (To assess costs of the process as well as cost of implementing proposed objectives).
- Program Committee Chair
- Marketing Committee Chair
- Student Representative

- National ASPA Representative (Preferably someone with knowledge of the National ASPA strategic plan).

First and foremost, the Strategic Planning Team must have a leader. Ideally, the president of the chapter should be the champion who guides the organization through the process, motivates the SPT to stay focused on the issues, and helps articulate a vision. Given the issue of funding the organization, the treasurer is essential to assess the costs of the process as well as the cost of implementing proposed strategies. The program and marketing committee chairs must be included in the SPT to brainstorm and implement strategies to improve membership. A student representative is important because students make up one of the most significant membership types. Finally, the National ASPA representative will provide guidance for the Chapter in terms of the National ASPA strategic plan and knowledge of what other chapters are doing that may apply to the Hampton Roads Chapter.

## **SWOC ANALYSIS**

### Strengths

The HR ASPA showed a solid foundation of strengths where it can build upon a strong structure. By collaborating all of its strengths and organizing it accordingly, HR ASPA can satisfy its internal and external stakeholders, accomplish its mission, and comply with the formal and informal mandates. The annual events are well received and many contributions and donations help provide scholarship to both undergraduate and graduate students. HR ASPA clearly shows a well-established organization and that members and future members can build upon for future success. An important strength not mentioned is the dedication provided by its members in allowing future recipients of the organization.

- Hosts annual events that are well attended.
- Provides scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$1000 to both undergraduate and graduate students studying public administration.
- Organization considers their total membership of 165 members (of which 83 or 50 percent are students) to be good.
- ASPA membership information and applications are available at all events.
- Organization is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization, which allows tax deductions for benefactors.
- Chapter mandates (formal and informal) are documented for members to reference when necessary.
- Clearly defined roles of officers and committees.
- Chapter provides information to members regarding job opportunities.
- Chapter offers unique opportunities for social networking and "face-time" with established members of the Public Administration community.

### Weaknesses

The HR ASPA Chapter has an overwhelming list of weakness and a surmountable amount of dedication will be needed to confront address these issues. The need to concentrate on its current members is necessary since 66% do not believe the organization is heading towards the right direction and focusing on them is the key. Donations must be set aside for technological improvement with redundancy to better serve its members and non-members, which will ease some of the tension. The challenges with memberships, negative perceptions, and communications all need to be re-evaluated and re-visited to better understand how to enhance

the drawbacks and capitalized on the issue(s). The weaknesses are extensive and should be addressed through identifying and effectively deciphering them:

- Challenges with membership.
- Low number of professional members and volunteers.
- Chapter membership is declining (e.g. losing between 30 – 40 members annually).
- Membership directory uses MS Excel as a contact database opposed to other forms of databases that could help with communication, announcements, updates, and so on.
- Negative perceptions.
- Only about a third of HR ASPA members believe HR ASPA is “moving in the right direction”.
- Activities (e.g. meetings and events) that address members’ needs are difficult to schedule.
- Meeting topics are uninteresting to members.
- Financial management and fundraising.
- Little or no revenue is generated from fundraising activities.
- Decreasing revenue is threatening fiscal insolvency and support for awards, scholarships, and student activities.
- Annual income is less than annual expenses.
- Members live in different areas and majority did not enter proper code when they joined, which prevents the chapter from receiving accurate chapter dues from national.
- Communication.
- Not sufficiently promoting member attendance to meetings.

- The Constitution should clarify the difference between meetings and program activities to ensure accurate records of participating members and nonmembers.
- Some forms of communication (e.g. the newsletter) are inconsistent.

### Opportunities

With external prospect such as ICMA, APWA, ALA, COMPA, and ASCE that HR ASPA can utilize will aid significantly to the cause of the organization. Establishing this connection will create an even stronger foundation for the organization and provide membership opportunities which will also increase funding. With technological advancements and marketing i.e. social networking and email and text phone blast will allow the spread of the organization throughout the community allow the spread of the organization throughout the community.

- There are other associations to network or establish partnerships with (e.g. ICMA, APWA, ALA, COMPA, and ASCE).
- Locations likely to increase participation with scheduled meetings and activities.
- Utility of social internet sites (e.g. Facebook.com, Twitter.com, etc.).

### Challenges

It is no surprise that the challenges facing HR ASPA cannot be solved overnight, rather must to be dealt with frequently. Recruitment of nonmember volunteers is not easily obtained and taxing due to lack of visibility to the general public. Of course, there is also the concern of insufficient professional council members that needs to be sought after. It is paramount that HR ASPA remains pertinent to new era of public administration students and taking advantage of strengths and opportunities.

- Political and public administrator professionals from local government offices are needed to serve as council members.
- Nonmember volunteers are difficult to recruit,
- Locations may not allow others (members, nonmembers, volunteers, etc.) to attend events, functions, meetings, or other organization activities.
- There is a lack of chapter visibility in the general public.
- Need to remain relevant to new era of public administration student.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES AND STRATEGIES TO MANAGE THESE ISSUES**

### Strategic Issue:

- I. How does the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA plan to increase overall membership of the organization?

### Strategies

1. What are the practical alternatives, dreams, or visions we might pursue to address this strategic issues, achieve this goal, or realize this idealized scenario?
  - Create a Facebook page for HRASPA.
  - Advertise on the city of Hampton's governmental website.
  - Identify NGO's and City, County, and State Employees to market benefits of HRASPA membership.
  - Initiate membership drives by participating in school organizational fairs.

- Create flyers, handbills, or other marketing materials that could be distributed or placed in different locations.
2. What are the barriers to the realization of these alternatives, dreams, or idealized scenarios?
- Government may not allow marketing of HR ASPA on their website.
  - Companies may not allow solicitation of membership to their employees.
  - Flyers, handbills, or other marketing materials will compete with other existing or similar materials from other organizations and will require a certain level of uniqueness to stand out.
  - Uniqueness or design for marketing materials may be challenging to achieve if current members do not have graphic design backgrounds or if hiring such graphic artist is not feasible for the chapter to consider.
3. What major proposals might we pursue to achieve these alternatives, dreams or idealized scenarios?
- Board members may designate a group of volunteers to identify 5 public sector/nonprofit organizations and market to employees' benefits of HR ASPA.
  - Offer reduced membership dues to this targeted group.
  - Have webmaster create Facebook page.
  - Research the membership pages of other nonprofit organizations and solicit participation from their list.
  - Contact webmaster for Hampton Roads Government website and place information on their marketing link.

- Partner with other professional organizations such as COMPA to improve organizational capacity, collaborate on developing interesting topics for Chapter events, and general networking.
  - Consider membership interests and develop programs for professional development that are relevant as indicated by membership survey.
  - Consider hosting a free networking and socialization event on campus for public administration students and invite local public administrators as special guests to share insight or their experience towards success in the field of public administration.
  - Consider partnering with other local student organizations (e.g. perhaps an art club or organization for marketing students) to create unique or eye catching promotional materials.
4. What major actions (with existing staff working within existing job descriptions) must be taken within the next year (or two) to implement the major proposals?
- Create networking infrastructure to support sustained marketing efforts through social networking, and web-based marketing.
  - Formulate a taskforce to continuously monitor membership growth and efficacy of marketing strategies.
5. What specific steps must be taken within the next six months to implement the major proposals, and who is responsible for each step?
- Work with national group to ensure chapter is viewed as active (Chapter Officers & Council).

- Formulate membership committee (Current ASPA members & Chapter Officers & Council).
- Create infrastructure for web-based marketing (Webmaster).

#### Proposed Strategies for Issue I

- Increase marketing via social networking sites.
- Advertise on governmental websites.
- Advertise directly to staff of public sector and nonprofit organizations.
- Offer reduced membership to professional members for first year.
- Offer incentives for multi-year membership participation.
- Create partnerships that promote continuing education units/professional certification units by participation and membership with HR ASPA.

#### Strategic Issue:

- II. How does the Hampton Roads Chapter of ASPA increase funding giving the organization financial stability for the future?

#### Strategies

1. What are the practical alternatives, dreams, or visions we might pursue to address this strategic issues, achieve this goal, or realize this idealized scenario?
  - Increase membership dues.
  - Create cost based services that appeal to professional community.
  - Create new funding streams through professional development courses & symposiums.

- Request increase in funding from National ASPA.
  - Create networking socials.
2. What are the barriers to the realization of these alternatives, dreams, or idealized scenarios?
- Request may be denied.
  - Raised membership dues may hamper membership recruitment effort.
  - Cost for symposiums and development of professional curriculum may be cumbersome and inappropriate for targeted audience.
3. What major proposals might we pursue to achieve these alternatives, dreams or idealized scenarios?
- Cultivate partnerships with professors and professionals who are HR ASPA members in developing a program for entry level and midlevel employees in the public and nonprofit sector.
  - Discuss with National ASPA increased membership dues or percentage given to chapters. (Currently membership is free in local chapters when members sign up through national ASPA).
  - Solicit National ASPA for increase in funding based on recruitment efforts and strategic ideas.
  - Identify Public Service Professionals (Non-Members) and Students and utilize multi-prong approach for membership and funding. Plan mingling sessions where individuals can network with other Public Service Professionals in a

laid back atmosphere. These networking nights would be fee based for attendance.

- Create a fund raising steering committee to investigate possible activities, opportunities, and fees that can generate new revenues.
  - Continue to fund and enhance awards, scholarships and other events for students and the general membership, e.g. annual conference to attract and maintain members.
4. What major actions (with existing staff working within existing job descriptions) must be taken within the next year (or two) to implement the major proposals?
- Constitution and covenants must be examined and conducted to see if Nationals can increase funding amount to local chapters.
  - Discussions with universities, HR ASPA professional community regarding professional curriculum development.
  - Create an environment for Networking Nights and/or investigate to determine appropriateness of event for targeted group.
5. What specific steps must be taken within the next six months to implement the major proposals, and who is responsible for each step?
- Chapter Council and Officers approach National regarding increase in funding and membership dues.
  - Chapter Council and Officers and HR ASPA members discuss Networking Nights and formation of an exploratory group to assess vitality in community.
  - Chapter Council and Officers approach universities about partnering together on professional development curriculum.

Proposed Strategies for Issue II

- Develop a professional development curriculum for entry and mid-level public service professionals which is fee based.
- Create Networking Night, a networking event, for public service professional, students, and those interested in public sector service. (also fee based)
- Discuss with ASPA increase in membership cost for local chapters and/or increase in funding from National.

**CONCLUSION**

The Hampton Roads ASPA Chapter has strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. The Hampton Roads has a litany of strengths most notable in their well-attended events, strong presence in collegiate life, and established members of the Public Administration community. In spite of their strengths there are some remarkable weaknesses. HR ASPA has weak spots with recruitment efforts and waning membership. HR ASPA's inability to address membership dues being routed to other chapters and pending deficits serve as a serious disadvantage for sustainability. The HR ASPA has several areas for opportunity including the world of social networking. Utilizing social internet sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn, HR ASPA can create a thirst for internet savvy members and technological adept individuals. It also has opportunities to engage in partnership with other organizations to increase membership and awareness in the professional community; however, HR ASPA faces external challenges such as a lack of visibility to the general public, competitive professional organizations, and decrease in federal and charitable grants. HR ASPA also faces internal challenges such as centralizing locations to increase membership attendance and remaining relevant to the public.

The Hampton Roads has many challenges and weaknesses and if not addressed certainly can and will lead to their demise. However, the HR Chapter also has a solid foundation and many opportunities for improvement. HR ASPA must build upon its strengths by addressing its challenges. These challenges are opportunities to increase HR ASPA's footing in the professional and general community. HR ASPA has not been revered as a place where Public Administrators get their start and sustainment and this has resulted in a decrease in membership and decline in new recruits. HR ASPA must mitigate their weaknesses through the implementation of the strategic plan and must address their two main strategic issues membership and financial insolvency. HR ASPA should focus the majority of their resources on recruitment and retention efforts as well as identifying new revenue sources. Adapting and implementing these strategies should prove successful in HR ASPA's ability to continue operating as an organization that creates public value.

## REFERENCES

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