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To: APPAM Policy Council  
From: Strategic Planning Committee  
Subject: Committee Recommendations

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In October 2010, the APPAM Strategic Planning Committee was charged with leading an effort to set a long run vision for the organization and a strategy for how best to pursue the long-run vision. The Policy Council ultimately is responsible for setting APPAM strategy and policy. The Strategic Planning Committee was created to collect data, assess alternatives, and present recommendations to the Policy Council. As outlined in the 10/19/2010 memo to the Policy Council and Institutional Representatives from then President Richard Burkhauser and President-Elect Helen Ladd, the process occurred in five phases:

- (1) Planning.** The plan for creating the strategic plan was presented to and approved by the Executive Committee, the Policy Council, and the Institutional Representatives in 2010.
- (2) Initial data collection and analysis.** Data collection included structured interviews with approximately 40 members, and a survey of the full membership.
- (3) Structured consultation with the Policy Council and Institutional Representatives.** Held in conjunction with the 2011 Spring meeting, approximately 40 members of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Institutional Representatives, and the Policy Council participated in a spirited day-long exchange.
- (4) Final analysis and deliberations.** The committee met in person in June 2011, in addition to phone and e-mail consultations.
- (5) Review of recommendations.** This is the topic of the attached report on strategic objectives, and the purpose of the related discussions at the fall governance meetings.

Drawing from the data collection, and especially the Spring consultation with the Policy Council and Institutional Representatives, the committee identified three strategic objectives for the Association. The committee also identified initial strategies for addressing those objectives that

should be pursued over the next four years. Some issues, such as the Association's approach to international initiatives, are not mentioned in our summary report, because either members appear to be content with the current thrust or no specific strategies emerged from our information gathering and discussions.

Included with this memo is a summary table that provides an overview of our proposed strategic objectives and recommendations, and our summary report entitled "*Building on APPAM's Strengths: Strategic Objectives and Recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee*". The Executive Committee has reviewed and endorsed the report, which we now present to the Policy Council for review and endorsement.

In a separate document, we provide the full Committee Report, which includes more extensive background information on the data and analysis, as well as more detail on the strategies and tactics that were proposed in support of the identified objectives.



## **Building on APPAM's Strengths:**

### **Strategic Objectives and Recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee**

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#### **Organizational Mission and Vision**

*"APPAM is dedicated to improving public policy and management by fostering excellence in research, analysis and education."* (APPAM mission statement)

The Committee's discussions with association members confirmed that the existing APPAM mission statement remains relevant and reflective of member preferences. Furthermore, APPAM members strongly support the association and its primary activities--the Fall Conference and JPAM--expressing an appreciation for the multidisciplinary environment and policy focus they encounter at APPAM. Members feel that to most effectively pursue its mission and sustain the association, APPAM should seek to build on these strengths. APPAM should support activities that embrace different methodologies, disciplines, and perspectives in approaching policy questions; it should strengthen connections between evidence related to policy effectiveness and the practicalities of policy making and practice; and it should assure a robust future by encouraging policy students and young professionals to become long-term, active APPAM members, and reaching out to diversify its membership. Members expressed comfort with modest growth in the organization to support these goals.

#### **Current Strengths and Challenges for the Future**

As noted, APPAM members expressed strong support for the core mission and activities of the organization. Since being founded in 1979 by representatives of 15 public policy schools and research institutes, the organization has grown to have over 1500 individuals and 80 institutional members, which provide a strong base of human and financial resources to address the organization's mission.

Notwithstanding these considerable strengths, and a clear message from most members that the APPAM is highly valued as is, the vision for the future and the strategic goals reflect an awareness of a number of key challenges and opportunities.

- Members—both individuals and organizations—face competing demands for scarce resources. There are a growing number of organizations addressing the topics, methods and disciplines central to APPAM. At the same time, increasing budget and time pressures mean members need to be strategic and selective in committing resources.
- As policy analysis, public management and related disciplines have developed, the tendency to become more specialized and technical makes it more difficult for APPAM activities to be cutting edge, while still including a diverse range of methods and perspectives, and reaching across silos to broadly address important issues.
- As APPAM has matured as an organization, it faces the challenge of renewing and expanding its membership to assure a strong and sustainable organization that reflects the diversity of professional roles, disciplinary training, methodology, ideology, and gender, race and ethnicity of the field.

### **Strategic Objectives and Recommendations**

The Committee identified three strategic objectives for the association:

1. Promote greater integration across disciplinary, methodological and topical silos;
2. Increase the policy relevance of our work
3. Expand active membership

The three strategic objectives, as well as proposed changes to the APPAM governance structure to align it with the strategic objectives, are outlined in Table 1. We discuss each objective and offer some illustrative examples of related initiatives, below.

#### **1. Promote greater integration across disciplinary, methodological and topical silos.**

Members expressed an appreciation for the multidisciplinary environment and policy focus they encounter at APPAM, and offered strong support for trying to create greater integration in our discussions of public policy analysis and management. Members are concerned that we risk becoming entrenched in silos and may lose the identity of APPAM as the association where the emphasis is on examining policy from multiple perspectives to generate meaningful insights about policy analysis and management. For example, while members want APPAM to cultivate new policy areas as part of the Fall Conference, they would prefer that new areas be integrated with other parts of the conference rather than simply added on as an extra silo.

To promote greater integration we propose two new activities be added to the Fall Conference on a trial basis. These new activities are intended to encourage interaction among analysts, practitioners, and policymakers with different perspectives and provide both larger and smaller scale opportunities to engage in more integrated policy discussions.

- **Recommendation 1.1:** APPAM dedicate a set of sessions focused on critical policy topics or program areas, but organized to achieve diversity of methods, discipline, and academic/practice perspective. For example, a panel could be composed of researchers using different analytic methods to understand the scope of a problem, program implementation, or the impact of a program. As another example, a panel could be composed of committee staffers from Congress and the White House, together with key researchers, to discuss policy priorities in a given topic area in light of the existing evidence. Because we will retain the regular submission process for the rest of the conference, it is not necessary for the integrated panels to cover the full spectrum of APPAM member interests.

- Responsibility: President-Elect and Program Committee. The President-elect will work with the Fall Conference Program Committee to identify the policy areas or topics to be included in the request for integrated paper and panel proposals, and will appoint a Program Committee member or members to assemble integrated panels from the targeted submissions or from other relevant submissions identified by Program Committee members. For example, the President-elect, working with the Program Committee, could suggest pregnancy prevention as a topic and invite members to submit papers or panels that examine the issue from a public health perspective, an economic perspective, a program implementation perspective, etc.

- **Recommendation 1.2:** Establish a set of small-group discussions at the Fall Conference, where panelists will engage in a cross-cutting discussion of a particular policy issue, methodological debate, or puzzle. The objective of these sessions will be to provide a more intimate discussion between two scholars or experts and Fall Conference attendees than is possible during the typical session. For example, we could have two experts discuss the merits and challenges of mixed methods studies. Similarly, we could have two scholars/practitioners debate different interventions to help prepare low-skilled workers for the shifting skill demands of the labor market.

- Responsibility: The President-elect will work with the Fall Conference Program Committee to identify the format of the small-group session and the topics to be included in session as well as the researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to be invited to participate as panelists.

- **Recommendation 1.3:** Support modest growth of the Fall Conference to accommodate recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 without reducing the existing sessions that are highly valued by current members. Our short-run goal is to add 4 to 6 new integrated sessions to the conference (treating the small-group discussions as one session). Expansion of the Fall Conference will require that we address capacity constraints that are due to our current contractual commitments. The space demands of adding 4 to 6 new integrated sessions in the short run are relatively modest and should be manageable without extending the duration of the conference. In the longer run, future conference arrangements will need to take into account the desired expansion of integrated sessions.

- o Responsibility: Executive Director

## 2. Increase the policy relevance of our work

APPAM members expressed a desire for their work to be policy relevant and have influence on policy making or practice, and believe APPAM can contribute by facilitating greater interaction with policy makers and practitioners. In this case, “policy makers” refers to elected, appointed, or career officials working in local, state, or federal government, and “practitioners” refers to professionals who work in operation, administration or management roles related to public policy, including teachers and other education leaders, social workers, case managers, program managers, government agency officials, and other public administrators. Practitioners would also include foundation officials. Greater interaction of researchers with policy makers and practitioners can help researchers adapt their research to the needs of policy makers and practitioners, and can simultaneously help inform policy makers and practitioners regarding evidence on key policy questions.

- **Recommendation 2.1:** Create or reinforce preferences to expand participation of practitioners and policy makers in the Fall Conference and JPAM. The guidelines for the Fall Conference will be revised to highlight the importance of giving a preference for sessions or panels that involve policy makers or practitioners in meaningful roles in which they can share their perspectives, particularly where their role extends beyond just chairing a session or even discussing research findings. The JPAM Editor should consider the potential value of occasional symposia in the journal about important and timely issues of policy or practice.

- o Responsibility: President and President-Elect (conference) JPAM Editor (JPAM)

- **Recommendation 2.2:** Stimulate and support meetings specifically designed to provide opportunities for APPAM members to talk directly with featured policy makers or practitioners. These could be part of the regular Fall Conference, or institutional members could be recruited to co-host these meetings and hold them at their locations during the Fall or Spring conferences or at other times of the year. A less formal approach would be to set up multiple tables in a meeting room, at which one or more policy makers or practitioners would be available for informal discussions on specific policy topics with APPAM members, similar to the small-group discussions described in recommendation 1.2.

- o Responsibility: President will issue an invitation to members for proposals, to be screened by the Executive Committee

- **Recommendation 2.3:** Investigate and develop new opportunities to engage policy makers and practitioners in a more “virtual” manner, which can supplement the conferences and JPAM as venues for these efforts. Going this route can both lower the costs to policy makers or practitioners of participating in APPAM activities and it can also enhance the accessibility of these efforts to APPAM members. For example, we might consider sponsoring webinars that follow a point/counterpoint format to get policy makers more engaged with APPAM.

- o Responsibility: Executive Director (for implementation); Policy Council (supporting access to appropriate technology and expertise).

### 3. Expand active membership

For APPAM to remain a viable organization, we need to continue to maintain and expand the individual and institutional membership of the organization. All of the recommendations contained in this document are designed to ensure that APPAM effectively serves the needs of its members and therefore remains an important factor in members' careers. However, there was agreement that we also could do more to take advantage of specific opportunities to develop closer ties to potential members.

- **Recommendation 3.1:** Expand the pipeline of future members by increasing the participation of graduate students in APPAM membership and existing APPAM activities. Promote more aggressively the advantages to graduate students of participating in APPAM and the opportunities for students to do so at reduced costs. Create a limited number of student fellowships to support membership in the Association and attendance at the annual conferences (and provide a benefit to students of institutional members). APPAM should also consider engaging students directly in APPAM governance by including them on the policy council. This step would help expose APPAM to the student perspective and it would also contribute to the development of key individuals as future APPAM leaders.

- o Responsibility: New standing committee focused on membership (subject to Policy Council approval); both the committee structure and student representation on Policy Council are addressed as part of Implementation Recommendations 1 and 2.

- **Recommendation 3.2:** In order for students to become more engaged in the Fall Conference sessions, we recommend that the President-elect and the Program Committee accept/create sessions that include students when possible.

- o Responsibility: President-Elect and Fall Conference Committee

- **Recommendation 3.3:** Increase professional memberships by exploring collaborations with like-minded organizations in fields of interest to APPAM members. Candidates for collaboration include the Public Management Research Association, which is directly focused on public management issues that are part of the mission of APPAM and remain of strong interest to APPAM members. The Population Association of America and the Association for Education Finance and Policy are also potential collaborators. Examples of collaborative activities could include:

1. Asking other organizations to create a track of panels at the Fall Conference
2. Establishing mutual member benefits, such sharing access to organization-sponsored journals
3. Creating meeting or webinars of interest to multiple organizations

- o Responsibility: Executive Director and President, in consultation with the Executive Committee and Policy Council.
- **Recommendation 3.4:** Maintain and increase diversity among APPAM members. The first strategic goal—to increase integration across disciplinary, methodological and topical silos, reflects in substantial part the desire of the membership to maintain and strengthen the diversity of APPAM participation across disciplines, methods, ideologies and policy areas. The second strategic goal reflects the need to engage a diverse set of professionals—researchers, policymakers and practitioners, in APPAM. The committee also discussed the central importance of encouraging racial and ethnic diversity in association activities. The association has ongoing efforts to address this goal to some extent, but we feel further attention and future deliberations of the Policy Council and other governance groups should consider additional actions to address this issue, based on an assessment of options conducted by the new standing committee on membership. While we are recommending that the membership committee immediately focus on racial and ethnic diversity, the committee may eventually decide or be directed to address other dimensions of diversity.
  - o Responsibility: New standing committee on membership.
- **Recommendation 3.5:** In an effort to increase institutional membership, APPAM will survey its institutional members to find out how the association can best serve their needs. The results of this survey will be used to develop, in consultation with the institutional representatives, a proposal for new policies or initiatives to encourage institutions to join (or rejoin) APPAM.
  - o Responsibility: New standing committee on membership

## Implementation

The membership strongly supports APPAM and the association’s two core activities, the Fall Conference and JPAM. It follows that our proposals are designed to enhance, rather than fundamentally restructure, these undertakings. Most of the initiatives outlined in this document would be implemented within the current structure of APPAM leadership and administration. In general, the initiatives are assigned to standing committees, officers, or administration, as specified above. To better align the governance structure for the association with the strategic objectives and support the proper functioning of the association, we offer three recommendations related to implementation.

- **Implementation Recommendation 1:** The Policy Council should consider a revised governance structure that includes a new standing committee structure to encourage greater engagement of Policy Council members and more productive use of their time. A committee structure would allow Policy Council members to better focus their contributions to APPAM governance and ensure that they are intensively engaged in at least one aspect of governance.
  - o Responsibility: Executive Director, in consultation with the President, will generate a formal proposal to the Policy Council that specifies the details of the revised governance structure. The proposal, which may call for changes in the APPAM By-laws, will address issues including:

- The list of standing committees and their responsibilities
  - Selection of committee chairs
  - The functioning of the committees and how they will link with the full Policy Council
  - Expectations regarding participation of Policy Council members, both on the committees and on the general council
  - Roles of the officers and the makeup of the Executive Committee
  - Participation of students on the Policy Council and Committees
- **Implementation Recommendation 2:** Establish a new standing committee on membership, with a charge that includes pursuing recommendations 3.1-3.3.
    - o Responsibility: To be included in the proposal outlined under Implementation Recommendation 1.
  - **Implementation Recommendation 3:** Adjust the structure and organization of the Fall Conference Program Committee to support the recommended new initiatives, including 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.2.
    - o Responsibility: President-Elect

Some of our recommendations, such as the generation of a detailed proposal regarding the revised governance structure, will reside with the Executive Director. At the same time, the standing committees proposed for the revised governance structure may require additional staff support, but will also allow APPAM to more effectively draw on the skills and energy of its members and leadership. As these efforts get rolling, the Executive Director and the President will assess whether our current administrative staffing is adequate to handle the work, or if we need additional staff, either temporary or permanent, to achieve our objectives. The Executive Director and the President will also resolve any remaining gaps in the ownership of the strategic initiatives.

Finally, the Executive Committee will monitor implementation of the initiatives and measure progress against the strategic goals. The committee will provide progress reports to the Policy Council on an annual basis, discussing potential changes in our approach if progress is deemed inadequate or if other problems arise.

**Proposed Motion:**

The Policy Council endorses the strategic objectives developed by the Strategic Planning Committee and authorizes the Executive Committee and Executive Director to pursue the recommendations, in consultation with the Policy Council and Institutional Representatives.

	Strategic Objectives			
	1. Promote greater integration across silos	2. Increase policy relevance of our work	3. Expand active membership	Implementation
<b>Recommendation 1</b>	Develop Fall Conference sessions with an integrated focus	Create/reinforce preferences to expand participation of practitioners and policy makers in Fall Conference and <i>JPAM</i>	Increase participation of graduate students in APPAM membership and existing activities	Develop a standing committee structure to enhance the effectiveness of the Policy Council
Responsibility for Implementation	President-elect and Program Committee	President and President-Elect (conference) <i>JPAM</i> Editor ( <i>JPAM</i> )	New standing committee on membership	Executive Director and Policy Council
<b>Recommendation 2</b>	Create a Fall Conference session comprised of numerous small-group discussions with an integrated focus	Stimulate and support targeted meetings to connect APPAM members with featured policy makers or practitioners	Create/accept Fall Conference sessions that include students when possible	Establish a new standing committee on membership, with a charge that includes pursuing recommendations 3.1-3.3.
Responsibility for Implementation	President-elect and Program Committee	President and Executive Committee	President-elect and Program Committee	Executive Director and Policy Council
<b>Recommendation 3</b>	Grow the Fall Conference to accommodate recommendations 1.1 and 1.2 without reducing the existing sessions	Investigate and develop opportunities to engage policy makers and practitioners in a more “virtual” manner	Explore collaborations with like-minded organizations in fields of interest to APPAM members	Adjust the structure and organization of the Fall Conference Program Committee to support the recommended new initiatives, including 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.2
Responsibility for Implementation	Executive Director	Executive Director, with support from the Policy Council	Executive Director and President	President-Elect
<b>Recommendation 4</b>			Assess options and adopt actions to maintain and increase diversity among	

			members	
Responsibility for Implementation			New standing committee on membership	
<b>Recommendation 5</b>			Conduct a survey of institutional members to identify ways in which the association can best serve their needs. Use the results to develop new policies or initiatives to encourage institutions to join APPAM.	
Responsibility for Implementation			New standing committee on membership	