

**TO: APA California Board of Directors**

**FROM: Kimberly Brosseau, AICP**

 **Vice President of Professional Development**

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**Distance Education Coordinator**

**DATE: May 24, 2018**

**SUBJECT: Fees for Webinars and Conference Recordings**

**RECOMMENDATION*: Establish Board policy to charge fees for all distance education offerings (webinars and recordings) with discretion given to the Vice-President of Professional Development to reduce or waive fees for specific offerings on a case-by-case basis.***

**BACKGROUND:**

In June 2014, the Chapter Webinar Committee released recommendations for a Distance Education program to be implemented in two component phases. Phase 1 consisted of a webinar component (See Attachment 1). Phase 2 consisted of a conference session recording component. Implementation of the two phases appears to have occurred in reverse order.

Phase 2 was launched as a pilot program at the 2014 Chapter Conference in Anaheim. The recording method, which has evolved over time, currently relies on the use of a laptop computer and USB cameras set-up in the session room at the conference. Yearly costs are estimated to be $150 for up to nine session recordings. Up to three additional recordings may be made by the AV service selected for the conference--typically ballroom scale events such as the opening plenary, closing plenary, and diversity summit. Costs for the AV produced videos are part of the conference budget. Fees are charged for viewing the recordings with exceptions made for promotional purposes. Yearly revenues for the session recording component are: 2015 ($1,510), 2016 ($3,326), and 2017 ($1,945). To date, $1,775 has been collected in 2018.

Phase 1 was initiated in July 2017 with activation of the Chapter’s GoToWebinar account. To date, the GoToWebinar account has been used to make available two Chapter sponsored and three Section sponsored webinars. Webinar recordings have also been made available. The current cost to the Chapter for the GoToWebinar account is $1,908 per year. The webinars and recordings are currently being offered for free as way to promote the service.

**DISCUSSION**:

While the response to the Chapter webinars has been excellent, their free availability has a significant impact on the paid session recordings. Viewing records show that free offerings, whether webinars or session recordings, receive higher view rates than paid recordings. Additionally, when free webinars are available, paid registrations for “same subject” session recordings drop substantially. In essence, the free webinars compete with the paid session recordings resulting in leakage of potential revenue.

Charging for the webinars would eliminate the revenue leakage as well as offset the higher cost of the webinar program. With this change the Chapter distance education program would be entirely self-supporting. As the program grows, net revenues could be used for other Chapter purposes.

As recommended, the VP of Professional Development would retain discretion to reduce or waive fees for individual distance education offerings on a case-by-case basis. Examples include: AICP training webinars for students and marketing promotions to familiarize APA members with Chapter distance education products.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The above recommendation is intended to maximize the revenue generated by the distance education program. Since Board goals may differ, the following alternatives are offered for discussion, respecting that many other alternatives are possible:

1. Continue offering the Chapter webinars for free and charge only for the session recordings.
2. Continue offering the Chapter webinars for free but charge for recorded webinars and session recordings.
3. Offer one (or more) webinar(s) each year for free, but charge for the remainder. Continue to charge for session recordings.
4. Offer all webinars and session recordings for free as a member benefit.

**ISSUES FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:**

A number of potential issues regarding program goals, registration and payment, accessibility, and classification for CM credit purposes may be of interest to the Board before taking action. These issues are described as follows:

**Program Goals:** While the GoToWebinar account is new, the Chapter has a history of providing free webinars to APA members. Typically, an APA member or consulting firm would donate use of a paid webinar service for this purpose. The recommendation of the 2014 Webinar Committee was to establish a Chapter GoToWebinar account and make it available for webinars and session recordings. The intent was to charge for both products. GoToWebinar proved impractical for session recordings but has worked well for webinars. **Charging for the webinars may be perceived by some members as the loss of an existing member benefit, particularly in regard to the popular APA California Legislative Update Webinar which offers 1.5 CM law credits.**

**Registration and Payment:** The GoToWebinar service handles event registration but does not include a payment feature. To accept payment, the Chapter would need to route webinar registration through Constant Contact as is now done for the session recordings. Once payment is made the registrant would receive a link to the GoToWebinar site where a second registration for the online event would need to be made. **A two-part registration in conjunction with the fee could deter some members from participating.** As an alternative, it may be possible to integrate GoToWebinar with a payment system using a third party service such as Zapier.com.

Presently, the Chapter is charging $10 per CM credit for session recordings. This level is recommended for all distance education products initially, subject to future adjustment by the Chapter Board.

**Product Classification and Accessibility:** The webinar component produces two products: 1) a live webinar which is classified by APA as a live online event and 2) a webinar recording which is classified as an on-demand product. While the above recommendation is to charge the same fee for both products, those who attended the live webinar should be able to access the recording at no additional cost. This can be achieved by making the recording available to webinar participants through a direct link to the GoToWebinar recording archives. Chapter members who did not register for the webinar may view the recording by registering and paying through Constant Contact.