



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

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DATE: September 14, 2019

SUBJECT: Distance Education Program Update

Informational Report

The following report summarizes the status of the APA California distance education program for 2019 and offers some preliminary marketing recommendations to be discussed by the Board at a future date.

Conference Video Recordings

Eleven videos from the 2018 Conference were made available throughout 2019 and will continue to be available until October 2020. As previously reported, the direct links to the videos were inadvertently sent out with the initial email blast in October 2018 which likely cut into the paid registrations during the latter part of 2018 and early part of 2019.

In May 2019 a new marketing approach was tested involving e-blasts featuring one video at a time. The new approach incorporated the same features as a webinar promotion (complete description, list of speakers etc.) but also pointed out the unique advantages of on-demand viewing. The technique was quite successful, generating several times more registered viewers than the previous method of offering all of the videos at once. As a result, focused e-blasts will be continued for the remainder of the year and throughout 2020.

Eleven new session video recordings are planned for the 2019 conference in Santa Barbara. The recordings will be made available within two weeks following the conference which should improve overall revenue generation for 2019. The 2019 videos will feature closer views of speakers and panelists.

Webinars

To date, in 2019, no webinars have been hosted directly by APA California. However in April 2019 APA California partnered with the Sacramento Valley Section and Sacramento Area Council of Government (SACOG) to publicize a 2019 Housing Legislative Update Webinar offering 1.5 law credits. The SACOG hosted webinar was free to APA members in the Sacramento Valley region. For its efforts APA California received the rights to make the webinar recording available for on-demand viewing throughout the state. The number of registrants for the on-demand webinar recording exceeded that of the live webinar and demonstrated that fees can successfully be charged for webinar recordings.

APA California stands ready to partner with any Section that wants to organize and host a webinar. Fee revenues for the webinar, if charged, would generally go to the Section. Fees for the on-demand recording would generally go to the Chapter.

Live Streaming

On May 23, 2019, APA California partnered with the Central and San Diego Sections to live stream an event titled: 2019 AICP Application Preparation Session. The registration fee of \$15 included a link to the live stream as an alternative to attending the live event in San Diego. Registration and revenue collection was handled by the San Diego Section. The successful live stream was the first of its kind for APA California and the recording was later made available to all APA members statewide. Additionally, statewide registrations to watch the recording exceeded the live event/live stream participation and generated additional revenue for APA California. The fee for viewing the recording was \$15 for the first registrant, and \$10 for each additional registrant for group showing.

The Central and San Diego Sections are planning two additional AICP Exam Preparation sessions in February 2020. APA California will be live streaming both sessions. Recordings of the sessions will again be made available to APA members statewide.

Following the success of the Central and San Diego Section live stream, APA California will be live streaming the APA California 2019 Legislative Update session directly from the Santa Barbara conference. Conference registrants will automatically receive a link to the live stream allowing them to watch from another location or another time and still earn CM credits. The live stream

is instantly recorded and remains accessible from the same link. Those not attending the conference may register to participate by live stream. The fee is \$15.

MOU Agreement / APA Learn

Earlier in the year, the Chapter received the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement from APA National to make available a number of APA California distance education videos through the APA Learn platform. The 2018 conference videos are ready to be uploaded at any time and may include selections from the 2019 conference.

Action: Approve the amended MOU agreement (attached) and allow the California Chapter President to make any minor changes while negotiating terms w/ National APA.

Collaboration with Planetizen

Earlier in the year, the Board approved exploring a collaboration with Planetizen to create of a planning commissioner training course to provide much needed training to planning commissioner and board members. The attached draft MOU is to outline a possible high-level business relationship between Planetizen, Inc. (Planetizen) and the California Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA California). It cover the goal, responsibilities of both parties, pricing, profit sharing options of 50/50 and 25/75 and etc.

Action: Provide direction on the draft MOU including the recommended profit sharing option 1 (50/50) and form a Planning Commission Training Committee to establish the curriculum and speaker list of subject matter experts.

APA California Distance Education Marketing

Marketing is essential for a successful distance education program. The APA Learn/MOU Agreement, if entered into, would open up a new national distribution channel for Chapter distance education products while keeping the current Chapter distribution system (YouTube channel) in place. Further, under the agreement, APA California would be required to help promote the APA Learn program.

Whether or not the MOU is signed, APA California would benefit by developing a comprehensive marketing program for distance education products similar to what APA national uses in promoting the APA Learn program.

Below are some preliminary recommendations for consideration:

1. Develop a brand name for the APA CA distance education program.
2. Dedicate an entire section of the Chapter website to APA CA distance education and add a top level link to it from the home page.

3. Require every Chapter email blast to including a link to the APA CA distance education webpage as well as the APA Learn webpage (if MOU is signed). These links may be incorporated into the email footer.
4. Require every issue of CalPlanner to include a minimum quarter page ad for APA distance education with at least two or three full page ads to launch the campaign.
5. Utilize the Chapter conference in various ways to promote the APA CA distance education program. For example, an announcement at a one of the plenary events accompanied by a PowerPoint visual or short video could be very effective.

It is recommended that this topic be explored further at a future Board meeting or the APA Chapter retreat in 2020.