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**LAI Membership GAP Committee Report**

**September 22, 2015**

**1:00PM Pacific Time - Teleconference**

**Purpose of the Membership GAP Committee:** The purpose of the Membership GAP Committee is to provide a study and make recommendations addressing the gap in membership categories between LAISA student members and LAI full members. Study and recommend approaches to address the LAI Strategic Plan recommendation to attract younger members to LAI and to build awareness of LAI so qualified professionals are nominated for membership to the Society.

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| Committee Members | | | |
| Chapter | **Name** | **Position** | **P/A** |
| Orange County | Steven R. Gragg | LAI First Vice President, Committee Chair | P |
| Sacramento | Tim Youmans | LAI President | P |
| Phoenix | Sheila Harris | Past Chapter President, LAI Assistant Treasurer | P |
| Golden Gate | Jim Musbach | Western Region VP | P |
| George Washington | Erwin Andres | President | P |
| Ely – Chicago | Todd Cabanban | President | P |
| Los Angeles | Millard Lee  Dr. James Fawcett | President  Past President – substituting for Millar Lee | A  P |
| Philadelphia | Anthony Forte | President | P |
| Phoenix | Cindy Hammond | President | P |
| Golden Gate | Paul Woolford | Member | A |
| Memphis | Dr. Mark Sunderman | Member | P |
| Ely - Chicago | Celeste Hammond | Member | P |
| Phoenix | Ian Turner | PathFinders | P |
| Phoenix | Jonathan Bennett | PathFinders | P |
|  | Sheila Hamilton | LAI Executive Director | P |

Steven Gragg welcomed everyone to the meeting at 1:05pm PST.

Steven G. provided an overview of the purpose of the committee and directed them to the materials located at, <https://www.lai.org/committees/membership-gap-committee>. He referenced a series of emails sent out prior to this meeting and specifically reviewed the following:

Fact 1 – LAI by-laws allows for student members and full members. When a student member graduates, there is a GAP in between and no place for them to go. This group will study that gap and make recommendations to LAI Executive Committee and ultimately the Board of Governors for action.

Fact 2 – LAI membership is aging and declining. The LAI Strategic Plan places a high priority on membership retention and recruitment while maintaining the exclusivity and other positive aspects that differentiates LAI as a Society from all the other real estate trade groups. If we are going to sustain our Society and be viable, we must have members.

Reality 1 - Chapters have varying needs and approaches to membership.  Some chapters struggle to retain and grow membership. Some chapters have strong academic memberships and ties to real estate programs and see value to mentoring students. (In fact, that is how LAI was founded by Richard T Ely and is part of our DNA). Some long established, large and prestigious chapters like Ely and Golden Gate have people waiting in line for the invitation to join.

Other chapters like Aloha and Memphis induct new members and sustain themselves easily.  We can all learn from your successes.

Reality 2 – No one is interested in watering down the quality of the LAI membership. We value LAI for the small group and networking with senior industry leaders. When I go to a LAI meeting, I don’t want people hounding me for a job, to sell a product or service and constantly hitting me up for sponsorships and donations. I can get that at ULI.

Challenge – We identify talented students and give them a LAISA membership. When they graduate we tell them to go away for at least 10 years before they are eligible for consideration for a LAI membership. At that point they go to ULI Young Leaders or their trade associations for their disciplines and get active and involved. When they become accomplished and leaders in their field, they no longer have a connection to LAI and are too busy (or feel slighted) and not interested in what we have to offer.

Question – Are there solutions that balance all of these facts, realities and challenges. If so, what is the best solution?

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Committee members introduced themselves:

Phoenix Chapter – Sheila Harris, Cindy Hammond, Ian Turner, and Jonathan Bennett. Created the PathFinders Club in Phoenix...

Memphis Chapter – Dr. Mark Sunderman at the University of Memphis, in charge of Memphis Student Chapter.

Ely Chapter – Todd Cabanban Chapter President and Celeste Hammond at the John Marshall Law School, in charge of Chicago Student Chapter.

George Washington – Erwin Andres, Chapter President

Los Angeles Chapter – Dr. Jim Fawcett, Past International President and sitting in for LA Chapter President Millard Lee.

Philadelphia Chapter – Tony Forte, Chapter President

Golden Gate Chapter – not on call but serving on committee is Chapter President Paul Woolford and RVP West Jim Musbach.

Steven Gragg asked the committee members to share how their chapters manage those individuals who do not yet qualify for LAI membership but whom they want to engage as prospects.

Erwin A. – George Washington chapter doesn’t have anything formalized. The program content drives who attends. LAI members will bring their younger associates with them to the programs. Designate a member to keep tabs on those future members.

Tony F. – Philadelphia doesn’t have an active student membership. They have talked about finding a way to get younger professionals involved. They have talked about PathFinders and they like the idea.

Celeste H. – Ely has had a student chapter from the mid-1990s. They have benefitted by having members involved in the school. There were 2 other schools in Chicago that had chapters but they are now dormant. What is purpose of student chapters and what is their role?

Todd C. – Ely does invite the students to the lunch programs.

Dr. Mark Sunderman – Memphis Chapter student group was dormant for several years. They decided about 3 years ago to reengage. They hold 3 events a year at the University; they use members of LAI to speak. They provide scholarships to approximately 3 students per year. The requirement of the recipient is to attend the monthly meetings of LAI. Once they graduate there is nowhere for them to go within LAI. He is using the student group on campus as way to promote real estate. They get 10-12 at their meetings. Attendees are a variety of undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty will also attend when interested in the topic.

Dr. Jim Fawcett – Los Angeles Chapter/USC – They don’t have an active faculty member to shepherd a student chapter. Erwin’s point is important that there needs to be a member of the LAI chapter to take on the responsibility. It seems that

the challenge is not so much the “gap” between student members and full members, but also those young to mid-career professionals who are approaching the 10 year minimum requirement.

Cindy Hammond/Sheila Harris – Phoenix – Sheila Harris really did it because of the 10 year gap challenge, the fledgling student group, and the declining LAI membership. One of the duties of the Phoenix Chapter Immediate Past President is to be the liaison between the students/PathFinders group. Cindy Hammond noted Ian Turner championed the group startup and they have had successful meetings, there are 32 PathFinders members. The challenge has been those who want to join PathFinders, when they are eligible for LAI membership. We are still developing this and looking to this committee to help define the next steps.

Ian Turner – Phoenix PathFinders – As a past student member, he wanted the alumni group to have something to do with LAI. He worked with Sheila Harris and Sheila Hamilton to develop the program. They are financially solvent, they have 8 sponsors at $900/each per year. It’s all inclusive at $75/year membership dues. It is a startup; we are working through finding how to work with the larger LAI membership. They don’t have a board, they have a steering committee that reviews the PathFinder applications, if the committee approves it is then approved by the LAI Chapter President and Membership Committee Chair. As a whole mid-level career people are interested in reconnecting after the downturn in the market.

Jon Bennett – Phoenix PathFinders - Because we are still new there are growing pains. How long can someone be a member of PathFinders? What happens if an LAI member invites a PF to join as a regular member and the PF doesn’t want to move up?

Steve Gragg asked what is the membership makeup of the PathFinders Club?

Jon Bennett – Categories include attorneys, bankers, appraisers, brokers, property managers, engineers, architects, home builder, contractor. For the most part they have between 1 and 10 years of experience.

Next steps:

Dr. Jim Fawcett – This needs a white paper, proposal to the LAI board. Ian Lord has done a good job for other issues for the board. I think what Phoenix has done is marvelous. I think we should submit it to the board for approval.

Steve Gragg – We need to study it first and then come up with recommendations before preparing a white paper.

Tim Youmans – Strategic planning update will kick off in San Diego next week. This group can provide a range of options and develop a paper to take actions on and take into the SP effort.

Sheila Hamilton to put together a committee roster.

After discussions in San Diego next week we will setup another conference call.

Steve Gragg – We have 2 student organizations with only 11 members. One way to resolve the “gap” is to get rid of the student membership category and LAISA organizations. He doesn’t recommend that because how do we sustain the organization in the future if we don’t identify and start cultivating members early in their careers before they get involved in ULI and their trade organizations?

Dr. Mark Sunderman - Memphis he doesn’t see the problem of the GAP. The regular membership of LAI are excited to have access to the students.

Steve Gragg – The Memphis Chapter is one of the venerable old chapters with a waiting list for membership because it is a prestigious membership in their market. Like Ely and Golden Gate, they have no problem recruiting LAI members.

Todd Cabanban –the student chapter is not meant to be a road to membership in the Ely Chapter.

Tony Forte – There’s nothing to stop the chapters from creating affiliate clubs such as PathFinders. Individual chapters could .create their own PathFinders or not.

Steve Gragg – Is this something we could codify from the International perspective?

Tony Forte – The International could provide guidance and assistance, the framework. Encourage as a best practice and provide some materials/templates for the chapters that want to have a PathFinders club.

Steve Gragg – Representing the Golden Gate chapter since they are not on the phone. They feel they have plenty of members, a waiting list and they are not interested in a student association or a PathFinders club. They realize that is not the case with all chapters and want to help, but they do not want to be required to have either.

Conclusion

Steve Gragg – he will share the minutes of this meeting at the San Diego meetings and ask for feedback. Another call will be scheduled to continue the work of the committee with the goal of providing recommendations to the Strategic Planning Committee by the Memphis meetings April 21-23, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 PST.