

AAPSE Membership Changes  
Range of Issues and Concerns for AAPSE E Consideration Raised by AAPSE Members  
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I have collected and summarized below a range of views, issues and concerns regarding membership status of retired or separated members and expanding who qualifies as full member. I conducted interviews, had email exchanges and other interactions with AAPSE members to develop this summary.

## **I. Retired Membership**

Near unanimous support for AAPSE to revisit the current By-law that allows a member to keep his or her membership status into retirement, but requires those full members who leave their PSEP or SLA position to become Associate members. There is no agreement on what should be done. This issue is becoming more urgent as more AAPSE members are expected to retire in coming years. Most recognized, from one point of view, is some unfairness for those who leave their position instead of retiring. The feeling of unfairness by many was deemed greater for those members who made significant contributions to both AAPSE and pesticide safety education before leaving (not retiring) from their position

Other interviewees expressed strong opinion that WHAT a person does in retirement may be a factor in determining full membership. Contributing to projects or efforts similar to their PSEP/SLA work (development of manuals, work on pesticide issues facing the organization, helping with regional and national workshops, projects directed by AAPSE leadership etc.) is qualitatively different from someone who becomes a private sector trainer or industry consultant. For more on private sector trainers versus PSEP and SLA members that pertain to this concern, see below.

## **II. Expanding AAPSE Full Membership to New Groups of People**

The concerns raised are varied, complex and have most to do with the kind of organization the member wishes AAPSE to become:

- A) Be a voice at the national table for those in Extension and state agencies that develop and deliver and oversee EPA approved C&T programs and the unique public obligations, public accountability and responsibilities inherent in these public programs (status quo).
  
- B) Only by broadening full membership to all who have an interest in pesticide safety education can AAPSE become THE central forum for discussion and debate and so best strengthen PSEP, C&T and the broader educational efforts to enhance the public good. Such an

organization can build a deeper understanding how PSEPs, C&T/SLAs, private sector trainers and industry can work synergistically together to strengthen support and create quality outcomes for pesticide safety education. With such an organization, it would matter less who was in leadership of the organization, as all have a stake to enhance the public outcome goals of pesticide safety education. If AAPSE does not change, its national voice will diminish as its membership is affected due to the ongoing decline of state PSEP and C&T programs.

A and B above can be seen as two end points on a continuum of possible options regarding AAPSE full member qualifications.

1. All expressed the great need for AAPSE to network, share, and communicate with stakeholders and with industry and other organizations and private sector trainers. All saw the need for AAPSE to form partnerships with other organizations to achieve our goals. Some felt AAPSE could do so without expanding full membership. Others felt that only by expanding full membership could the organization be truly be effective and have a much stronger national voice in face of decline of PSEPs in more and more states.
2. Some felt the organization's integrity could be questioned if we were to refuse full membership to those individuals who have worked so hard in recent years for the interests of PSEPs and pesticide safety education. Others felt the integrity of the organization could be harmed by creating closer ties between C&T/SLA's and the regulated community.
3. Some saw the current Associate membership as underutilized, as it is open to everyone without any restriction and allows extensive participation in the organization in many ways, especially on committees and in discussions of issues facing the organization.
4. If only some non-PSEP/SLA's individuals are offered full membership and others are not, there are concerns by some the organization would have difficulty creating clear lines for who could be and who could not be a full member
5. A common concern was the possibility of people working for industry or advocacy groups may someday become a majority in leadership of the organization and the unique voice for PSEP and C&T/SLA could be diminished in AAPSE. In such a case, some felt we would see some members leave AAPSE, especially SLA members, who may face concerns of their administrators due to conflict of interest.
6. Concern was expressed by some interviewees that industry people may be paid for their time as part of the job for their involvement in AAPSE – creating an uneven playing field compared to PSEP and SLA members who are public employees.
7. One interviewee was very blunt. SLAs and even PSEPs are already perceived to be 'in the pocket' of industry (manufacturer and distributors of pesticides) by many people. There needs to be a 'firewall' between us and industry. Bad enough SLA's are funded by registration fees in many people's minds (as is the EPA PSEP pass through PRIA funds).
8. A number of interviewees mentioned The Pesticide Stewardship Alliance as an alternative to AAPSE for industry individuals wanting to join an organization working on pesticide issues. TPSA has expanded its focus somewhat beyond management of pesticide containers and wastes.

9. Concerns were expressed over potential large shifts in membership to environmental advocacy organizations, OSHA/NIOSH and other non-FIFRA health and safety and especially the regulated pesticide industry (from applicators to distributors to manufacturers and registrants) and how that would impact the organization and diminish the voice of PSEPs and SLAs. Others see this expansion as moving the organization forward and expanding its voice and, given AAPSE's history, it is unlikely AAPSE would be 'taken over' by members who do not share concern for PSEPs and state C&T programs.
10. Many were more willing to consider full membership for private sector trainers who provided approved C&T training than other groups. (Role of private sector trainers varies greatly from state-to-state due to state C&T regulations and capacity of a state's PSEP.) There were two opposing strongly held views:
  - a. Private sector trainers providing education as part of an approved EPA C&T programs are part of C&T and in some states significant provider of training. In other states private sector trainers provide unique training that is otherwise hard to provide. They can be seen as an integral part of PSEP/C&T whose full inclusion in AAPSE would both broaden and strengthen the organization at the national level.
  - b. Private sector trainers have very different goals, purposes and roles for their training businesses than do public sector PSEP and SLA pesticide programs with significant QUALITATIVE differences. Private sector trainers are not publicly obligated or publically accountable in the same way as PSEPs and SLAs for develop, design and oversight of pesticide safety education. Or do they have the same directives and obligations for all categories and parts of a C&T program as do PSEPs and SLAs. Or do private sector trainers have the same formal relationships/networking as PSEPs and SLAs do with government and universities.
11. Almost all interviewees felt the most important concern was for AAPSE leadership to provide a fair and open process for a full vetting of the issues allowing all members to be heard without intimidation – and the issue not be driven by the loudest voices or by the views of individuals who make up AAPSE leadership.