

The Value of Association Membership: An Evaluation of the Central Texas
Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration

by

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Collins (2006, xii) describes associations as the hidden glue of our society and economy. Like the mortar that holds the bricks of a building in place, associations go largely unnoticed, yet they do much to hold the entire structure together¹. Dalton and Dignam (2006, 8) define associations as any scientific, scholarly, academic, or professional organization composed of individual members who seek to benefit from collective activities such as education, networking, or advocacy. Traditionally, remarkable associations make a practice of aligning their products and services with their mission and keep members at the center of their universe (ASAE, 2006, 37). How do associations they know whether they have hit the mark or missed by a mile? By asking members again and again what they wish to receive in return for their membership.

Purpose

Levin (2000, xiii) asserts that members expect associations to help them cope not only with what's new in their careers or businesses but also with the speed in which these new developments enter their lives. Associations have the daunting challenge of keeping up with the changes in the lives of their members. To put it simply, it's not about the organization; it's about the members (Levin 2000, 1). Traditionally, organizations measured their usefulness to members in terms of the quantity of services provided. In theory, the more "stuff" an organization could give its members, the more value they would see in membership². In more recent times research has shown that members do not want "stuff" from the association, they want value. Webster's³ dictionary defines value as: 1) *adequate return*; 2) *usefulness*; and 3) *worth*. Levin (2000, 41) affirms that associations need to find out what their members consider indispensable, then find ways to provide those services even as technologies evolve and develop.

¹ American Society for Association Executives. 2006. 7 Measures of success: What remarkable associations do that others don't. ASAE and the Center for Association Leadership.

² Levin, M. 2000. Millennium membership: How to attract and keep members in the new marketplace. ASAE and the Center for Association Leadership.

³ Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. see <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/value>

Associations offer key services that support professional development, professional practices, knowledge generation, and research. These key services include bringing interested parties together to help facilitate communication, cooperation, and understanding (Fisher 1997, 321).

When associations provide the key services the outcomes can include⁴:

- Promoting quality education and excellent service in the profession
- Fostering educational leadership and direction
- Encouraging career and professional development
- Developing and maintaining an ongoing relationship with businesses and other stakeholders
- Nurturing partnerships within educational communities
- Promoting a spirit of fellowship
- Recognizing professional members, business partners, and student organization member for outstanding contributions

These services are provided by the professional association's local chapters. Chapters serve their professional association by providing programs and services to the membership at a local level. They are responsible for enhancing communication among members and serve as the primary link between the national organization and the membership.

Central Texas Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration

Sirkin and McDermott (1995, 32) assert that it is crucial to identify members' expectations from the organization; you can't satisfy needs you don't know about. One such organization that requests feedback from its membership is the Central Texas Chapter of the American Society of Public Administration (CenTex)⁵. In 1998 John Paddenburg was approached by the CenTex officers to conduct an evaluation on the organization. In a continuing effort to improve its service to the membership and the communities of Central Texas the officers requested that Paddenburg examine the effectiveness of the organization and its

⁴ The 2006 Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education

⁵ For more Texas State Applied Research Projects dealing with the Central Texas Chapter of the American Schools for Public Administration see: Paddenburg (1999) and Sanchez (2005).

programs and services. The purpose of the officers' request was to identify the areas where the organization was performing well and the areas that needed improvement.

The council for the Centex Chapter of ASPA is constantly trying to figure out the best programming for its members. This applied research project is a follow-up to the 1999 John Paddenburg study. The study develops a basic profile of the CenTex Chapter membership to assess the effectiveness of current programs and services, evaluates the need for future services, and determines whether the membership's attitudes and opinions have changed since Paddenburg's 1999 study.

Research Purpose

There are four purposes of this research. The first purpose is to describe the membership of Centex and the attitudes and opinions of current Centex ASPA members about the programs and services offered. Second, is to use the opinions of the members to assess the effectiveness of current programs and services offered by the Centex Chapter. The third purpose is to describe the need for future services for the Centex membership. Fourth, this paper compares the current attitudes and opinions of members with a similar survey conducted by John Paddenburg in 1999.

Professional Associations

The occurrence of individuals formally associating to support their common interest or profession can be dated back to the ancient times. Craft guilds of medieval times as well as the mercantile systems of colonial America are examples (Haynes 2006, 3). Haynes (2006, 3) asserts that in more modern times associations have grown in number, stature, and effectiveness. Associations and professional societies are now at the forefront of industry or professional standards, and statistical information (Levin, 2000, 111).

According to the American Society of Association Executives the specific purpose of a professional association is to "promote the interest, welfare, or common good of an industry, a

profession, a field of interest or endeavor, or a group of members”. Local affiliates and chapters serve as the backbone to professional associations by providing programs and services to the membership at a local level. Chapters face the challenge of designing and including the benefits, services, activities, communications, and recognition that the members want and believe are of value (Rich and Hines, 2002, 93). Affiliates and chapters also provide up to date information, formal programs for information sharing, access to outside sources, a network of contacts, and expose members to a variety of viewpoints and perspectives (Frank 1997, 308). It is through the local affiliates that most members associate and participate with the association (Paddenburg 1999, 22).

Functions of Associations

Fisher (1997) argues that if associations do not serve the purpose and provide value stated in the mission statement, the association will not sustain overtime, it will lose its support and go out of business. In addition, Fisher mentions that associations bring value to its profession by encouraging and supporting research that feeds the theoretical/knowledge base of the profession. Paddenburg (1999, 22) identified three important functions associations:

1. The association defines the nature and scope of the field, while maintaining relations with other fields.
2. The association treats the profession as a whole, looking beyond the narrow self-interest groups and individuals.
3. An association performs as a social organism, performing social functions that individuals cannot perform separately.

In 2006 Dalton and Dignam conducted a survey to establish a baseline understanding of the factors that individuals analyze as they consider affiliating with a particular association. Dalton and Dingman’s survey listed eight functions professional associations typically perform. They asked respondents to pick the three functions they thought were most important, the top five functions were:

1. Providing training/professional development to members

2. Providing technical information to members
3. Providing timely information about the field to members
4. Connecting practitioners within a field to each other/networking
5. Creating and disseminating standards of practice

The survey found that networking, technical information, and professional development are among the most important association functions (Dalton and Dignan 2006, 21). The results from this research coincide with Paddenburg's 1999 findings.

In order for chapters to prosper members must be provided with networking opportunities, access to information, and ways to grow professionally (Paddenburg 1999, 23-24). Paddenburg (1999) found that the local chapters are the places where members are the most involved with the organization. Relationships are built among members who participate in their chapter activities. According to Haynes and Samuel (2006) building these relationships helps members promote their profession as well as nurture their individual careers. By actively participating in chapter events and networking with other professionals, members can begin to understand what it means to be a professional in the field.

Local chapters of professional associations need to provide activities to encourage members to attend and demonstrate the organization is active even if the members, personally, do not participate (Rich and Hines 2002, 86). A chapter without activities lacks perceived value. Even if members do not attend, the value is not diminished just because they are unable to take advantage of the valued activity. The leadership of local chapters face the challenge of designing and including the benefits, services, activities, communications, and recognition the members want and believe are valuable (Rich and Hines 2002, 93). After surveying the literature on the functions of professional associations and their local chapters networking, access to information and professional skills development are identified as the main functions of local chapters. Next this paper takes a close look at the nature of these local chapters services.

Membership

Members are at the heart of associations- and members value is the blood that keeps the heart pumping⁶. Associations must continuously strive to promote awareness in the field in order to attract new members (Paddenburg 19, 1999). Officers are responsible to ensure the vitality of chapter by promoting membership. Sirkin and McDermott (1995, 1) affirm that member values will change over time, and so must membership benefits- the products and services, both tangible and intangible, that the association delivers. It is the officer's responsibility to create the value for the membership.

Dalton and Dignam (8, 2006) argue that a person's decision to join an association is not a cost benefit analysis, but rather a thought process that balances "what's in it for me and for us". The first step in understanding and promoting the chapter is to have a demographic profile of the chapter's membership. This gives the council insight to the membership's diverse background, level of education, occupation, and professional specialty. By understanding the memberships demographic local leaders better serve their members. Sirkin and McDermott argue (1995, 41) that the council should think of the chapter as a brand. If successful, then satisfied customers (members) will develop brand loyalty. If members feel the chapter has an excellent track record for products and services they will be more likely to become involved and tell their colleagues about the good service they receive. Membership is one of these important services (Sirkin and McDermott 1995, 41). In addition, chapter leaders should know what the members value about their membership and maintain the ability to respond meaningfully when needs change. If the chapter cannot respond some other membership organization or for-profit group will be ready to fulfill unmet needs (Sirkin and McDermott 1995, 7).

The council can also ensure the vitality of the chapter's membership by understanding why individuals join and in some cases drop membership. Paddenburg (1999, 20) argues that

⁶ American Society for Association Executives 2006

reasons for members leaving an association are vitally important when considering the basis of why people join. Dalton and Dignam agree that it is important to understand why individuals choose to leave professional associations. By understanding why individuals choose to drop their membership the council can take preemptive steps to combat those issues. In their 1995 study, Sirkin and McDermott found a disproportionate drop among senior members in some associations. Sirkin and McDermott speculated the seniors may have felt the programs weren't advanced enough or didn't provide the right industry contacts.

Dalton and Dignam (2006, 23) found, as one might expect, the failure of chapters to deliver the expected value is by far the most prevalent reason for individual drops membership. The results of their survey showed that 45% of the 16,944 respondents report dropping an association membership for reasons that relate to the chapter's performance, the majority cite reasons beyond the association's control. Such reasons as: change of career focus, did not feel welcome in the group, and disagreed with association's political/advocacy positions (Dalton and Dignam 2006, 24). These reasons for dropping membership coincide with a study performed by Kamm for the American Library Association. Kamm (1997, 295) identified three reasons members discontinue their membership with professional associations: 1) The high cost of dues, 2) lack opportunities for involvement in the chapter, and 3) internal political issues within the chapter.

In the same study Kamm (1997, 295) found that people join professional associations for retention, tenure or promotion, to influence professional goals and current developments in the field, and to speak or publish. Dalton and Dignam (2006, 19) affirm that the decision to join an association is more accurately a decision to affiliate. When people affiliate, they let the world around them know that they share an important quality with this group (Dalton and Dignam

2006, 19). If members believe their membership is a valuable investment of their time and money they will continue to maintain membership in the chapter.

Networking

Cornell and Farkas (1995, 44) define networking as the building of business and social relationships for present and future opportunities. Networking provides members with new perspectives, and new opportunities and thereby creates a sense of a professional community (Paddenburg 1999, 23). According to Dalton and Dignam (2006, 31) “the value of networking increases significantly with level of involvement- those who actually network through their chapter come to value it more highly and may, as a consequence develop a greater appreciation for the value of leadership experience”.

Sue Kami (295, 1997) found that most members considered the opportunity to network with other colleagues as the most important reason to join a professional association. The ability to network is an essential part of any professional association and is beneficial to all members (Paddenburg 1999, 23). Networking can also assist young members in finding a mentor to provide guidance for their professional growth.

Mentoring

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide." For their Mentor/Protégé Program, the Anesthesiology Department of Cleveland's MetroHealth System defines mentor as "a wise, loyal advisor or coach." In an effort for chapters to retain membership from senior members chapters have created advanced programs such as volunteer and mentorship opportunities (Sirken and McDermott 1995, 26). Young professionals can share triumphs, defeats and new ideas with mentors. Further, mentors can provide guidance, nonjudgmental audience and constructive criticism (Apelbaum 2008). Mentors are individuals,

usually older, always more experienced, who help and guide another individual's development, this guidance is not done for personal gain.

Access to Information

Sirkin and McDermott (1995, 50) affirm that associations are in an ideal position to collect information on an industry, profession, cause, donor, or customer group because of the relationship they've established with their members- data that members may be reluctant to give an outside third-party vendor. For example, the American Ceramic Society, offers members access to abstracts via print, on-line, and CD-ROM services (Sirkin and McDermott 1995, 50). Some association information databases are available through online services such as Dialogue. Through Dialogue members can access information they need when they need it, regardless of time zone, association operation hours, and staffing patterns (Sirkin and McDermott 1995, 50).

Societies also offer catalogs and peer review publications to their membership⁷. The New York City Chapter of the American Marketing Association publishes a reference book that lists research firms. Because the book has a national audience, the New York City chapter has a royalty agreement with other chapters that sell copies of it (Sirkin and McDermott 1995, 51). The book not only creates a large revenue stream for the New York City chapter but also gives it nationwide recognition. The American Society of Public Administration publishes the *Public Administration Review (PAR)*, a scholarly journal that debuted in 1940 as America's first and only generalist scholarly public administration journal (Stillman and Raadschelders, 2006, 1). The journal provides members of ASPA with lengthy professional essays, seeks out the best administrative research, encourages the exploration of critical dilemmas and controversial topics in the current practice and study of public administration, and surveys what is occurring throughout the field (Stillman and Raadschelders, 2006, 2).

⁷ This can be an alternative means to generate funds to the chapter

A key function of a chapter is to provide members access to current and local information or developments in the field (Fisher 1997). Access to information can be gained when members participate in events hosted by the chapter such as awards banquets, council meetings, and conferences. Chapters use newsletters and websites to provide membership with up-to-date information, profile member accomplishments, transitions of the local membership, and news from the national organization.

Newsletters

Professional associations strive to maintain an ongoing flow of communications with their members. Newsletters are publications distributed by an organization to a particular information-seeking audience. A newsletter, as the name indicates, serves as an important communication tool for the council and the chapter membership (Smith 277, 2003). Newsletters give the chapter constant exposure, keeping members current on what is going on and strive to keep the memberships level of interest and commitment high. For many organizations, newsletters are the most important publication.

As a provider of news, a newsletter should focus on information relevant to its audience (Smith 276, 2003). It is part news, part letter. Officer columns provide the opportunity for officers to speak directly to the membership, and give members the ability to see inside the council. Smith (2003, 277) believes that newsletters serve several different objectives:

- To maintain a relationship with a public
- To reinforce attitudes and actions beneficial to an organization
- To create and then maintain a dialogue between the organization and its publics, or among members of the audience
- To increase and maintain a level of awareness by a public about issues important to an organization
- To increase and maintain a level of interest and/or positive attitudes for an active public about an issue

Newsletters are becoming increasingly popular, by some estimates, more than ten thousand are published in the United States each year (Feinglass 2005, 131). Feinglass (2005, 131) goes on to argue that the popularity of newsletters attests to their perceived effectiveness. With the advent of e-mail newsletters, many organizations have gotten away from traditional newsletters, thereby saving considerable money on printing and mailing costs (Feinglass (2005, 131). However, Rich and Hines note (2002, 88) that eNewsletters are becoming popular with web savvy members, these condensed versions of a hard copy newsletter should not replace the traditional printed newsletter, only supplement the printed version.

Websites

Feinglass argues that every organization should have a website (Feinglass 131, 2005). In today's world not having a website is like not having a phone number. According to Feinglass (131, 2005) no one is going to take seriously an organization that does not have a website. He goes on to argue that it is essential for an organization to have an online presence. Chapters should have a membership section on their Website. This section should include a way to join, once having joined members should be directed to the member's only section, which can be a great communication tool (Rich and Hines 2002, 90). Feinglass (245, 2005) states that every professional association's website should contain the following indispensable elements:

- Information about the organization's history
- The organization's mission statement
- Biographies of officers and key staff members
- Information on funding sources and current projects
- Policy statements
- Reports on the organization's activities and achievements
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the organization, along with their answers
- An archive of news stories that have appeared about the organization
- The current issue of the organization's newsletter and archived issues of previous newsletters
- The organization's current annual report
- An online brochure

- An outline of planned giving opportunities for supporters
- A regularly updated calendar of upcoming events sponsored by or related to the organization

Along with the website, email is another useful tool for communication with the membership.

Rich and Hines (2002, 89) state that it is also important to remember that e-mail is a two way communication. When members email a question, complaint, or suggestion, they need a response. Someone should have the responsibility for answering the mail in a timely manner.

This becomes a service issue in the minds of the members (Rich and Hines 2002, 89)

Professional Skills Development

People who participate in professional organizations are provided with the opportunity to improve or enhance leadership skills, administrative skills, and planning and implementation skills (Paddenburg 19, 1999). Professionals, practitioners, and students join professional associations in hopes of gaining skills that will enhance their professional growth. Skills can be attained through participating in social networking, attending conferences, and other association activities where members interact (Fisher, 39, 1997).

Levin (2000, xiii) affirms that members expect the organization to help them cope not only with what's new in their careers or businesses but also with the speed in which these new developments enter their lives. It is a daunting challenge for any association, one that will grow in importance as technology continues to hasten the speed of change. Rich and Hines (2002, 86) argue an association without professional development opportunities lacks perceived value. And, even if members do not attend, the activities have value in their eyes, they were just not able to take advantage of that valued activity⁸.

CenTex ASPA

⁸ Rich, P and Hines, D. 2002. Membership development. Maryland: Aspen Publishers

The CenTex Chapter of ASPA is composed of more than 150 professionals, practitioners, and students who have an interest in the field of public administration. The governing body of Centex is comprised of the chapter officers, the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, newsletter editor, webmaster, parliamentarian, membership chair, and eighteen council members. The Chapter serves the cities of Central Texas including Austin, San Marcos, Seguin, Columbus, Huntsville, Tyler, Brownwood, Brady, and Kerrville (Centex Constitution). Membership in the Chapter is open to all interested individuals without regard to race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, creed, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability or political affiliation (Centex Constitution). The officers and board members encourage the membership to volunteer, participate in chapter events, and attend board meetings and national conferences.

In 1978 CenTex ASPA adopted By-laws and then amended those By-Laws in 2004. The amended By-laws state that the chapter focuses on the following service areas in Central Texas:

- Advancing the science, processes, and art of public administration.
- Advancing the equality of opportunity of all persons through public administration.
- Encouraging and facilitating the interchange of ideas and information among Central Texans interested or engaged in the field of public administration.
- Promoting public administration in Central Texas through encouragement and support of professional development, public service productivity, professionalism, and administrative excellence.

The CenTex Chapter is a nonprofit professional organization that relies on the officers and council members who volunteer to operate then organization by promoting events, conferences and social gatherings for networking among its membership (Sanchez 2005,17).

Integrating Programs and Functions

CenTex provides its members a number of opportunities to gain practical information, discuss the latest research and trends in the field, and make valuable professional contacts (centex.org). These opportunities include hosting mentoring mixers, awards banquets, open

council meetings, quarterly newsletters, informational website, conferences, and viewings of public service documentaries. Council members are constantly trying to achieve the goals of ASPA by providing ample opportunities for members to grow professionally in the field of public administration.

Mixers

CenTex hosts mixers throughout the year to give the members a chance to interact and network with public service professionals at the local level. Mixers serve as a place to meet potential mentors in the field of public administration. Mentoring is a trusting relationship that brings young members together with professionals in the field who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee (Appelbaum). Centex hosts one mixer each quarter throughout the calendar year. The mixers are held in at local restaurants on Friday afternoons after members get off work, this typically occurs around 5:30pm. The chapter also reaches out to its membership base at Texas State University. The Fall '08 mixer was held in San Marcos at a restaurant close to the campus in an effort to encourage student involvement in the Chapter.

Awards Banquet

CenTex ASPA hosts the Public Service Recognition Awards Banquet during Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW). Public Service Recognition Week is celebrated the first Monday through Sunday each year in May. Since 1985 PSRW has honored the men and women who serve America as federal, state and local government employees. The banquet is meant to educate citizens and chapter members about the many ways in which government serves the people (The Council for Excellence in Government 2008). CenTex PSRW awards banquet honors local public servants, student achievements and practitioners in the field of public administration.

Invitation to the 2008 PSRW Awards Banquet



The awards presented at the PSRW Banquet include⁹:

- Public Administrator of the Year
- Elected Public Official of the Year
- Emerging Public Administration Professional of the Year
- Public Administration Educator of the Year
- James W. McGrew Research Award (Capstone Category and Assignment Category)
- Public Innovations Awards
- Service to Centex ASPA Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Student inductions to the Pi Alpha Alpha Honor Society

PSRW also serves as CenTex's fundraiser each year. Invitations are sent via email to the membership and public service employees close to the organization. Tickets are sold to student members at a discounted price to encourage participation. The event is held in a hotel ballroom

⁹ For award recipients see http://www.main.org/aspa/index_files/PSRW2008.htm

and includes a three course dinner, awards presentation, and a key note speaker (PSRW Awards Banquet Invitation).

Council Meetings

Council meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month from at the Henry B. Terrazas Branch Library in Austin, Texas (Fall 2008 Newsletter). All board and council members are employed with full-time jobs; therefore, the meetings take place during the lunch hour from 12pm-1pm. In order for a meeting to occur there must be a quorum of no less than seven council members (CenTex Constitution). Council meetings are open to all Centex members. The dates of the council meetings are listed on the calendar on the Centex website and on all newsletter publications. The minutes are recorded by the council's Secretary and are posted to the website following each meeting. The minutes are posted on the Chapters website in an effort to keep members up to date on the current topics and issues that were addressed at the council meeting.

Newsletter

The purpose of a newsletter is to provide specialized information to a targeted audience, in this case the CenTex membership. The Centex Chapter Newsletter Editor publishes a quarterly e-newsletter throughout the calendar year. The publication is sent via email to the membership.

Smith (2003) argues that a newsletter should serve several different objectives:

- To maintain a relationship with a public
- To reinforce attitudes and actions beneficial to an organization
- To create and then maintain a dialogue between the organization and its publics, or among members of the audience
- To increase to maintain a level of awareness by a public about issues important to an organization
- To increase to maintain a level of interest and/or positive attitudes for an active public about an issue

The award winning Centex newsletter calls for submissions to celebrate life events such as birth announcements, marriages, and professional accomplishments of Centex members. The newsletter also includes a section devoted to board members. This gives the board members a chance to share a personal message to the membership.



Website <http://www.main.org/aspa/>

The Centex Chapter has an informational website where members can go to find out the latest news from the Chapter. Feinglass (2005) argues that every nonprofit organization should have a website; in today's society not having a website is like not having a phone number. Feinglass (2005) goes on to say that no one is going to take seriously any organization that does not have a website. CenTex's website provides contact information for the council members, a calendar of events, minutes from past meetings, the Chapters Constitution, and many more items of interests to members. The website is meant to serve as an information tool to give members access to information that they would not otherwise have.

Conferences

Conferences provide a forum to allow professionals, practitioners and students to come together to discuss the challenges confronting the field of public administration and society. ASPA's National Conference provides members with a multitude of opportunities to gain practical information, to listen and to discuss the latest research and make valuable professional

contacts while doing so (aspa.org). The council encourages members to participate in the state and national conferences by offering alternative ways of transportation to the conference, chapter socials at the conference, and chances to volunteer at the information booth.

Viewing and discussing policy related documentaries

Earlier this year the Centex Chapter had their first public policy documentary viewing. The viewing was followed by a discussion relating to the topics seen in the film. The viewing was held at a council members' house and also included a pot luck dinner. Members were given to opportunity to bring a food item, the council felt that by hosting a pot luck dinner members would feel a sense of community by sharing and engaging over a meal. Those who attended regarded the event as a success. CenTex has planned to hold future public policy documentary viewings for the membership.

CenTex is the local chapter of ASPA. Local chapters play a vital role that contributes to the success of the organization's mission by providing valuable networking and skills development opportunities through conferences, seminars, luncheons, and awards (Haynes and Samuel 2006). Chapters are responsible for enhancing communication among members and serve as the primary link between the national organization and the membership. The paper will now look at the national organization, the American Society for Public Administration and discuss its programs and functions.

National ASPA

Since 1939 the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) has been the nation's most respected professional society representing all forums in the public service arena. The mission of ASPA is to (aspanet.org):

- Advance the art, science, teaching, and practice of public and non-profit administration.
- Promote the value of joining and elevating the public service profession.

- Build bridges among all who pursue public purposes.
- Provide networking and professional development opportunities to those committed to public service values.
- Achieve innovative solutions to the challenges of governance.

More than 10,000 practitioners, teachers, and students make up the diverse membership of ASPA. With more than 125 local chapters and university based affiliates in the United States ASPA members have the opportunity to enhance their professional development and advance their careers by taking advantage of the services offered by their local ASPA chapters (main.org).

Research Design

The research method, survey research, is used to develop a profile of the CenTex Chapter membership, assess the effectiveness of current programs and services, evaluate the need for future services, and determine whether the membership's attitudes and opinions have changed since Paddenburg's 1999 study. Scott and Garrison (2006, 160) affirm that surveys of public opinion are usually conducted to find out what large groups of people think about a particular problem. Babbie (2007, 244) asserts that survey research "is probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly".

Survey research can elicit information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques (McIntyre, 1999, 75). The survey used in this study provides members the opportunity to express their opinions on the need for future services. Paddenburg (1999, 37) argues that surveys are an excellent means for measuring attitudes and orientation in a large population. The survey utilized in this study is organized using the descriptive categories of the conceptual framework. Each survey question addresses a particular sub-topic from the descriptive categories in *Table 2.1*. The results of the survey provide the descriptive statistics used to measure the members' attitudes and opinions on the effectiveness of current programs and services offered by the Centex Chapter. The collected data is not only useful for providing insight to the attitudes and opinions of the Centex membership, but could also be used in future research to compare these findings to the attitudes and opinions of members in other ASPA chapters or any local chapter wishing to improve service to their membership.

Sample¹⁰

In 1999 study Paddenburg mailed his survey to the one hundred and fifty four active members of CenTex ASPA. “The term ‘active’ is defined as a member having paid their annual dues to the national organization of ASPA” (Paddenburg, 1999, 39). In order to receive the list of current ‘active’ members, an email request was sent to the Senior Director for Membership Services of ASPA. The list received contained a group of one hundred and sixty three names and email addresses, this way an accurate and reliable conclusion can be drawn about each of the programs and services offered by the CenTex Chapter. The survey for this study was created on Survey Monkey, an online survey instrument. Survey Monkey is a powerful online survey instrument that allows the user to view the results as they are collected in real-time and has the capability to send reminder emails to persons who have not participated in the survey (Survey Monkey.com). An email request was sent to the one hundred and sixty three current ‘active’ CenTex members (see appendix B) to participate in the survey. The response rate was 23%.

Table 4.1 illustrates the operationalization of Paddenburg’s membership survey that is used to conduct the research. The questionnaire (see appendix A) is included. Paddenburg established the following criteria for the collection of data:

- Answers to the program information are based on a scale of 1, meaning very ineffective, to 5, meaning very effective.
- In all questions with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response; answers of ‘yes’ are given a value of 1, while answers of ‘no’ are given a value of 0.
- Questions of sex are coded with answers of ‘male’ being given a value of 0 and ‘female’ given a value of 1.
- Questions of ethnicity are coded by the following ‘African American’ 1, ‘Caucasian’ 2, ‘Hispanic’ 3, and ‘Other’ 5.

¹⁰ This project is exempt from full or expedited review by the Texas State Institutional Review Board. The exemption number for this study is EXP2008V8739.

Table 4.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework developed by Paddenburg for his 1999 study

I. Membership Profile	Questionnaire Item
Sex	Please respond to the following: Sex: Male Female
Ethnicity	Please respond to the following: African American 1 Caucasian 2 Hispanic 3 Other 4
Employment	What sector do you work in?
Education	What is your highest level of education?
Student	Are you currently a student?
II. Networking Opportunities	Please rate each program in regards to how effectively you believe Centex ASPA provides networking opportunities. On a scale from 1, representing 'very ineffective', to 5, representing 'very effective'. Mark DK (Don't Know) for events/opportunities you are not familiar with.
Mixers	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Awards Banquet	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Council Meetings	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Newsletter	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Website	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Annual Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Public Service Recognition Week	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Texas ASPA Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Viewing and discussing policy related documentaries	1 2 3 4 5 DK
III. Access to Information	Please rate each program in regards to how effectively you believe Centex ASPA provides access to information. On a scale from 1, representing 'very ineffective', to 5, representing 'very effective'. Mark DK (Don't Know) for events/opportunities you are not familiar with.
Mixers	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Awards Banquet	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Council Meetings	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Newsletter	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Website	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Annual Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Public Service Recognition Week	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Texas ASPA Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Viewing and discussing policy related documentaries	1 2 3 4 5 DK
III. Professional Skills Development	Please rate each program in regards to how effectively you believe Centex ASPA provides skills development opportunities. On a scale from 1, representing 'very ineffective', to 5, representing 'very effective'. Mark DK (Don't Know) for events/opportunities you are not familiar with.
Mixers	1 2 3 4 5 DK

Awards Banquet	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Council Meetings	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Newsletter	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Website	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Annual Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Public Service Recognition Week	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Texas ASPA Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Viewing and discussing policy related documentaries	1 2 3 4 5 DK
IV. Unique Characteristics	
School received degree (s)?	From what school (s) did you receive your degree (s)?
Other professional organizations	To what other professional associations do you belong?
Membership directory	Would you be interested in receiving an annual membership directory for Centex ASPA?
Speakers at events	Please make recommendations for possible speakers at Centex events.
Considered for council member	Would you like to be considered for a council position member or officer position?
Chair or serve on a committee?	Would you like to chair or serve on a committee?
Attend national conference?	Have you ever attended an ASPA national conference?
V. Future Programs	
Programs or Services for networking Opportunities	Please list possible programs that could provide networking opportunities for Centex members.
Networking Reception in Austin	Would you attend? 5-7pm networking reception in Austin? 5-7 pm networking reception in San Marcos?
Programs or Services for access to information	Please list any programs or services that could allow members greater access to information about public administration.
Dinner program in Austin	Would you attend? 6-8:30pm dinner program in Austin? 6-8:30pm dinner program in San Marcos?
Attend Conference of Texas' ASPA Chapters?	Would you be interested in attending a conference in Texas for ASPA members in all of Texas' ASPA chapters?
Programs or Services for skills development	Please list possible programs or services that would provide members with the opportunity for professional skills development.
Saturday conference in Austin	Would you attend? A Saturday 6-hour conference in Austin? A Saturday 6-hour conference in San Marcos?
Weekday conference in Austin	Would you attend? A weekday 6-hour conference in Austin? A weekday 6-hour conference in San Marcos?

Lunch hour speaker in Austin	Would you attend? A lunch hour with a guest speaker in Austin? A lunch hour with a guest speaker in San Marcos?
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Results

Response Rate

This survey instrument utilized in this study was emailed to 163 active members of CenTex ASPA¹¹. Paddenburg (1999, 43) defined the term ‘active’ as a member having paid their annual dues to the national organization of ASPA. The survey had a response rate of 23%¹². In 1999 Paddenburg mailed his survey to the 154 active members of ASPA. The response rate for the Paddenburg study was 33%. Caution must be taken when interpreting the results from the studies due to the low response rates. Thirty-eight out of 154 members completed the 2008 survey, meaning a large population of the membership is not represented. Table 6.1 shows the demographic information of the respondents from the current active members compared to the demographic profile of active members in 1999.

Table 5.1 Demographic Information

	2008		1999	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
SEX				
Male	18	47.4%	27	58.7%
Female	20	52.6%	19	41.3%
Total	38	100%	46	100.0%
ETHNICITY				
African American	2	5.3%	4	8.7%
Caucasian	27	71.1%	32	69.6%
Hispanic	7	18.4%	10	21.7%
Other	2	5.3%	0	0.0%
Total	38	100%	46	100.0%

¹¹ See Appendix B for the email requesting survey participation

¹² See Appendix A for the Membership Survey

SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT				
Public	28	80%	29	67.4%
Private	1	2.9%	5	11.6%
Non-Profit	3	8.6%	3	7%
Academia	6	17.1%	6	14%
Total	38	97%	43	100.0%
EDUCATION				
Bachelors	16	42.1%	17	35.4%
Masters	20	52.6%	26	56.3%
PhD	2	5.3%	2	4.2%
JD	0	0%	2	4.2%
Total	38			100%
		100%		
STUDENT				
Yes	11	28.9%	n/a	n/a
No	27	71.1%	n/a	n/a
Total	38	100%		

Member Profile

The majority of the respondents to the 2008 survey indicated they were female (52.6%), Caucasian (71.1%), working in the public sector (80%), and hold a Masters Degree (52.6%). Of the respondents, 28.9% are currently enrolled in a university¹³. In 1999 the majority of respondents indicated they were male (58.7%), Caucasian (69.8%), hold Masters Degrees (56.3%), and work in the public sector (45.7%). Paddenburg did not provide the statistical information for the student responses in his 1999 study.

Networking Opportunities

The effectiveness of the CenTex Chapter in providing networking opportunities compared to the 1999 study is presented in Table 5.2.

¹³A list of the universities is given in Appendix C.

Table 5.2 Program Effectiveness: Networking Opportunities

PROGRAM	2008		1999	
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN
Mixers	35	4.23	40	3.72%
Awards Banquet	30	4.27	40	3.60%
Council Meetings	26	3.73	36	3.55%
Newsletter	37	3.86	46	3.09%
Website	34	3.94	43	3.88%
Annual Conference	28	4.25	39	3.61%
Public Service Recognition Week	28	3.93	n/a	n/a
Texas ASPA Conference	26	4.35	n/a	n/a
Viewing and Discussing Polict Related Documentaries	22	3.68	n/a	n/a
Adopt-A-Highway*	n/a	n/a	36	2.66%
Co-Sponsored Programs*	n/a	n/a	40	3.55%
Student Leadership Forum*	n/a	n/a	38	3.42%
Membership Luncheons*	n/a	n/a	41	3.51%

Items marked with * were not surveyed in the 2008 study
 Items coded in red were added to the 2008 survey

Overall, the findings show the programs and services for networking opportunities provided by CenTex Chapter are very effective. The means were generally higher in the 2008 study when compared to the study preformed in 1999. On a scale with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest the Texas ASPA Conference was rated most effective, with a mean response of 4.35. The Awards Banquet was rated second with a mean response of 4.27, while the National Annual Conference was rated third with a mean of 4.25. In 1999 Paddenburg found that members thought the website was the most effective means of networking, while the mixers were rated second and the National Annual Conference was rated third.

The lowest rated program offered by the CenTex Chapter as a means of networking was the Viewing and Discussion of a Policy Rated Documentary. The low rating of the Viewing and Discussion of a Policy related documentary offer little surprise. The Chapter has only held one documentary viewing. While those who attended regarded the viewing as a success, take into

consideration that the documentary viewing is a new program. Therefore, a high rating should not be expected for a program that has only been held once in the chapter’s history.

The ratings of networking opportunities for the current programs and services indicate an important factor. The memberships overall attitudes and opinions of networking opportunities offered by CenTex has improved since the 1999 study. . Members have a greater value for the programs and services and see them as an effective means of networking.

The 2008 and 1999 study comparison offered one more surprise. The participants of the 2008 study did not rate the website as an effective means of networking, while in 1999 it was rated as the most effective means. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the Internet was a relatively new occurrence and the basic information that the website provided was seen as “groundbreaking”. In today’s world the internet is a common occurrence, it is expected for any legitimate organization, for and non profit alike, to have an information website.

Access to Information

Table 5.3 indicates how effective the CenTex’s chapter’s current programs and services provide access to information for the membership and how they compare to Paddenburg’s findings in 1999.

Table 5.3 Program Effectiveness: Access to Information

PROGRAM	2000		1999	
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN
Mixers	34	3.38	37	2.75%
Awards Banquet	32	3.91	39	3.21%
Council Meetings	27	3.59	37	3.27%
Newsletter	35	3.97	43	3.91%
Website	35	4.06	41	3.93%
Annual Conference	28	4.36	39	3.87%
Public Service Recognition Week	32	3.94	n/a	n/a

Texas ASPA Conference	28	4.5	n/a	n/a
Viewing and Discussing Polict Related Documentaries	26	4.04	n/a	n/a
Co-Sponsored Programs*	n/a	n/a	39	3.51%
Student Leadership Forum*	n/a	n/a	37	3.30%
Membership Luncheons*	n/a	n/a	40	3.27%

Items marked with * were not surveyed in the 2008 study
Items coded in red were added to the 2008 survey

The data indicates that the overall attitudes and opinions of members have risen since the 1999 study. The 2008 study found that members see the Texas ASPA Conference as the most effective means of gaining access to information with a mean of 4.5%. The Annual Conference was rated second with a mean of 4.06% and the chapter’s website was rated third with a mean of 4.06% on a 1 to 5 scale with 5 being the most effective. In 1999 the Chapters website as the most effective means of gaining access to information. The newsletter was rated second while the National Annual Conference was rated third. The chapter’s website high rating in both studies offers no surprise. The purpose the website is to provide current information about the CenTex Chapter and give members updates about chapter functions and services. The website also provides links to other websites that are relevant to public administration for members to access.

The memberships’ rating of programs for access to information is mostly as expected. The conferences and website received high ratings in access to information as expected, while the council meetings received the lowest rating for members to access information. The data indicates that the CenTex Chapter is effective in providing the membership opportunities to access information in the field of public administration. The Chapter has improved its programs and services since 1999, this can be seen by the higher ratings in the 2008 survey when compared to the 1999 data.

Professional Skills Development

The following table indicates the chapters' effectiveness in providing its members with professional development opportunities and compares the results to Paddenburg's 1999 findings.

Table 5.4 Program Effectiveness: Professional Skills Development

PROGRAM	2000		1999	
	N	MEAN	N	MEAN
Mixers	33	3.36	40	2.97%
Awards Banquet	31	3.32	42	2.76%
Council Meetings	25	3.68	38	2.97%
Newsletter	34	3.53	45	2.96%
Website	33	3.64	43	2.91%
Annual Conference	27	3.96	42	3.71%
Public Service Recognition Week	32	3.5	n/a	n/a
Texas ASPA Conference	26	4.04	n/a	n/a
Viewing and Discussing Polict Related Documentaries	27	3.89	n/a	n/a
Co-Sponsored Programs*	n/a	n/a	40	3.30%
Student Leadership Forum*	n/a	n/a	39	3.18%
Membership Luncheons*	n/a	n/a	40	2.98%

Items marked with * were not surveyed in the 2008 study

Items coded in red were added to the 2008 survey

The Texas ASPA Conference was rated the highest an as effective means of providing members with the opportunity for professional development with a mean of 4.04 %. The National Annual Conference was rated second with a mean of 3.96% and the viewing and discussing policy related documentaries was rated third with a mean of 3.89%. In 1999 Paddenburg found that the majority of programs and services offered by the CenTex chapter were considered ineffective in providing professional skills development to the membership. The

membership’s attitudes and opinions have changed improved since the 1999 study. The 2008 study found that ASPA conferences were considered as an effective means of gaining professional skills. The rise in conference attendance can be attributed to this finding. Members are now taking a more active role in ASPA functions thereby enhancing their skill set as public administrators by reaching out to other individuals in the field.

The results for professional skills development offered little surprises. The conferences were rated the highest as an effective means for members to develop their professional skills. This opinion has not changed much since 1999. Members are able to gather together in a professional setting to enhance their knowledge about the field; this in turn will help them develop their professional skill set.

Recommendations

This section looks at possible programs and services to be offered by the CenTex Chapter in the future identified by the survey instrument. The following table presents members interest in attending the programs not currently offered by CenTex.

Table 6.1 Likelihood to Attend Future Programs

PROGRAM OR SERVICE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT YES
CenTex Membership Directory	34	89.5%
Lunch hour speaker in Austin	38	71.1%
Lunch hour speaker in San Marcos	38	21.1%
Saturday 6-hour Conference in Austin	38	69.2%
Saturday 6-hour Conference in San Marcos	38	48.7%
Weekday 6-hour Conference in Austin	38	66.7%
Weekday 6-hour Conference in San Marcos	38	42.6%

The data presented in *Table 6.1* indicates that these programs should be implemented by the CenTex Chapter. There was an overwhelming majority of members who expressed interest

in receiving a membership directory for the chapter. There was also considerable interest for a Lunch hour speaker in Austin (71.1%). The programs offered in San Marcos received mild support though not as strongly as programs offered in Austin. This can be attributed to the fact that the majority of members reside and work in Austin.

Member Recommendations

The suggestions provided by the membership can be divided into 5 categories: Suggestions for networking opportunities, access to information and professional development, possible speakers for CenTex events and new services.

Networking

The suggestions offered in this category ranged from CenTex providing brief presentations on public administration at the chapter's mixers to forming partnerships with other local organizations. Partnerships with organizations provide the membership with the opportunity to form contacts outside the CenTex Chapter. Respondents also suggested CenTex provide more mentoring opportunities. Mentoring is a way to bring experienced members together with those who are just starting out in public administration. Although mixers were not rated as an effective means of networking, many members suggested that the Chapter provide members with monthly mixers to give members the opportunity to come together and network.

Hence the CenTex Chapter should hold mixers every other month to provide members with the opportunity to engage with one another and more contacts. Currently the CenTex Chapter hosts 4 mixers each year. This should be increased to six each year to provide members more opportunities to participate in chapter functions. Of course, this means that more funds need to be allocated for the mixers. CenTex should look into building relationships with local

restaurants in an effort to get price reductions on food and space rental in exchange for business and publicity.

Access to Information

The suggestions offered by the membership to increase access to information ranged from structured discussions with seasoned public administrators at chapter functions to creating a social networking page for members to post blogs about what changes they see happening in the field of public administration. CenTex should focus on ways to engage the membership in discussions focusing on public policy during the mixers. By providing a topic of discussion or theme for the mixers the chapter will encourage professional dialogue on contemporary policy or administration issues and enhance access to information. Therefore, the chapter along with hosting more mixers throughout the year, should develop create a central policy or management related themes for each mixer. This would provide members with the opportunity to exchange ideas on a particular topic facing the field of public administration. Creating a central theme for each mixer should provide members with a more meaningful experience.

Creating a social networking page can help CenTex reach out to individuals who might now otherwise engage in chapter functions. The council should create a social networking page on the internet to provide individuals who are not members of the CenTex Chapter to learn about the programs and services offered by the chapter and the benefits of joining. Social networking sites that should be utilized by the chapter include MySpace, FaceBook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Professional Development

Respondents also suggested ways for the CenTex Chapter to provide more effective ways for members to enhance their professional skills set. These suggestions include training sessions on GIS, SPSS, statistics and public speaking courses. Therefore, the CenTex Chapter should

implement training and refresher courses for the membership. This will require planning; the location, subject, speaker/teacher for the session will need to be determined. CenTex has many members working in the academic sector so finding a volunteer to lead a session on statistics or public speaking should not be too difficult. Training sessions offer an effective means for members to enhance their professional skill set.

Guest Speakers

The survey asked the participants to recommend guest speakers for chapter functions. Some of the suggestions include commissioners, city managers and agency leaders. Therefore, the chapter should reach out to the city manager in Austin and the city managers in the surrounding cities in CenTex's jurisdiction. The Chapter should utilize the contacts it has in the public sector to bring in commissioners and agency leaders to chapter functions. By having guest speakers at chapter functions attendance is likely to increase as will members ability to network, provide members access to information in public administration, and give members the chance to increase their professional skill set.

New Services

Members also offered suggestions on new programs and services the chapter could offer. One suggestion was for the chapter to organize field trips to museums and tours of government buildings around Austin. Another idea put forth in the survey was for the Chapter to host weekend retreats. Weekend retreats would include seminars for members to learn about emerging trends in the field and gain additional skills through training sessions.

Summary of Recommendations

The following recommendations should be taken into consideration by the 2009-2010

CenTex officers:

- Provide the chapter with a membership directory.
- Host networking lunch hours with guest speakers in Austin.
- Host monthly theme oriented mixers centered on a central policy or management related theme.
- Create a social networking page on the Internet to increase chapter awareness
- Provide training sessions for members to enhance their professional skills
- Host field trips to museums and tours of government buildings in Austin and the surrounding areas.

Conclusion

The results should be interpreted with caution because of the low response rate. A low response rate makes it difficult to generalize with certainty about the meaning or accuracy of the findings. The key findings suggest that the CenTex Chapter is the most effective in providing networking opportunities for the membership. The CenTex Chapter is not as effective in providing access to information and opportunities for skills development when compared to the opportunities for networking. The results show that the membership's attitudes and opinions have risen since Paddenburg's 1999 study.

The CenTex Chapter, like all professional associations, needs to conduct an evaluation of its programs and services offered to the membership every few years. Attitudes and opinions change as new developments and technologies emerge in the field. The attitudes and opinions of the membership need to be evaluated in order for the council to offer the most effective means of

providing programs and services. Any future assessment of the CenTex Chapter should review the attitudes and opinions of the programs and services and continue to strive to meet the expectations of its members.

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Answer the following in the space provided

17. Please list possible programs that could provide networking opportunities among member of Centex.

18. To what other professional associations do you belong?

19. Would you attend?

5-7pm networking reception in Austin	YES	NO
5-7 pm networking reception in San Marcos	YES	NO

20. Would you be interested in receiving an annual membership directory for Centex?

YES NO

Access to Information

Please rate each program in regards to how well you feel it provides access to information in public administration. On a scale from 1, representing 'very ineffective', to 5, representing 'very effective'. Mark DK (Don't Know) for events/opportunities you are not familiar with.

Circle the appropriate response

21. Mixers	1 2 3 4 5 DK
22. Awards Banquet	1 2 3 4 5 DK
23. Council Meetings	1 2 3 4 5 DK
24. Newsletter	1 2 3 4 5 DK
25. Website	1 2 3 4 5 DK
26. Annual Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
27. Public Service Recognition Week	1 2 3 4 5 DK
28. Texas ASPA Conference	1 2 3 4 5 DK
29. Viewing and Discussing policy related documentaries	1 2 3 4 5 DK

Answer the following in the space provided

31. Please list any programs or services that could allow members greater access to information about public administration.

32. Please make recommendations for possible speakers at Centex events.

33. Would you attend?

6-8:30pm dinner program in Austin	YES	NO
6-8:30 pm dinner program in San Marcos	YES	NO

34. Would you be interested in attending a conference in Texas for ASPA members in all of Texas' ASPA chapters? YES NO

Professional Skills Development

Please rate each program in regards to how well you feel it is in developing professional skills On a scale from 1, representing ‘very ineffective’, to 5, representing ‘very effective’. Mark DK (Don’t Know) for events/opportunities you are not familiar with.

Circle the appropriate response

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 35. Mixers | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 36. Awards Banquet | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 37. Council Meetings | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 38. Newsletter | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 39. Website | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 40. Annual Conference | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 41. Public Service Recognition Week | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 42. Texas ASPA Conference | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |
| 43. Viewing and Discussing policy related documentaries | 1 2 3 4 5 DK |

Answer the following in the space provided

44. Please list possible programs or services that would provide members with the opportunity for professional skills development.

Mark any that you would likely attend

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 45. Lunch Hour speaker in Austin | YES | NO |
| Lunch Hour speaker in San Marcos | YES | NO |
| 46. Saturday 6-hour conference in Austin | YES | NO |
| Saturday 6-hour conference in San Marcos | YES | NO |
| 47. Weekday 6-hour conference in Austin | YES | NO |
| Weekday 6-hour conference in San Marcos | YES | NO |

48. Would you like to be considered for a council position member or officer position?
 YES NO

49. Would you like to chair or serve on a committee?
 YES NO

50. Have you ever attended a national conference? YES NO

If no, why not?

If yes, was it worth the travel expense?

Appendix B

Hello Centex Members,

As a member of the Centex Board of Officers I would like to invite you to take a short survey about the programs and services offered by Centex ASPA. The purpose of the survey is to identify the areas where Centex is performing well and the areas that needed improvement. The data collected will be used to gauge the membership's attitudes and opinions of Centex ASPA. The results of the survey will be presented in my Applied Research Project.

My Applied Research Project is an assessment of the Central Texas Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. The board and council members of Centex ASPA are constantly trying to figure out the best programming for its members. Your participation in this survey will give the board insight to the membership's attitudes and opinions of the current programs and services and the need for future programs for the organization.

Please click on the following link to take the survey
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=DZOBPF5eJ5qjNaRtkpKgA_3d_3d

*Participation of the survey is completely voluntary and confidential. Refusal to respond to the survey will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to your membership of Centex ASPA.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Casillas

CenTex Membership Chair