



Membership Recruitment & Retention Plan

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Situational Analysis and Future of NAGAP

NAGAP, The Association for Graduate Enrollment Management (NAGAP) is the only professional association devoted exclusively to the concerns of professionals working in the field of graduate enrollment management (GEM) within colleges and universities. Membership in NAGAP provides an opportunity to network with colleagues at educational institutions of all types including public, private, large, small, secular and non-secular (NAGAP website, 2019).

The industry of higher education has been under scrutiny in recent years. In addition to shrinking pools of high school graduates, the value of a college degree has come into question, leaving institutions to face enrollment declines, budget cuts and in some cases, closure (Seltzer, 2019). With fewer resources, declining recruitment pipelines and increasing expectations to do more with less, now more than ever, individuals working within a graduate enrollment area need professional development, access to professional literature and the opportunity to network and share ideas.

A changing education landscape is not the only challenge higher education professionals are facing. For the first time ever, there are now four different generations (Baby Boomers, Generation X, General Y/Millennials, and Generation Z) of employees in the workplace. These different generations have different work styles, appreciate receiving information in different formats and have varying levels of comfort engaging in networking opportunities. These differences have created additional challenges for employers to engage these individuals in their work and ultimately the professional organizations that can help them be successful (Memberclicks, 2019).

In addition to the multi-generations that now exist in the workplace, there are four identified issues impacting association membership. First, most associations are seeing a “graying” of the association population (Demitropoulos, 2010). The second is many potential young members are not aware of the association and if they are, they don’t think it’s targeted to them. The assumption is the association is for their manager or someone above them on the organizational chart. The third is that in many cases, even if the young worker is aware of the association, they don’t see the value in joining and paying the membership fee (Kaiser, 2017). The last issue is the declining institutional budgets within higher education. In some cases, the need to conserve resources on campuses has created additional scrutiny on professional development making it hard to justify membership and professional development expenditures.

According to an article in Higher Ed Jobs, the greatest benefit of being a member in an association is the networking and camaraderie that occurs among members. However, to reap the benefits, the member must be willing to invest the time and effort in association activities and become involved (Cherwin, 2010).

Associations successful in attracting and retaining younger members are focused on providing the value that young professionals want and need. These associations also work hard to create the types of new member experiences that warmly welcome young members and help them feel an immediate sense of belonging and connection (Kaiser, 2017).

While the “graying” members will most likely continue to join and engage in associations, more will need to be done to segment messaging and offer variety in programming to attract and retain younger members from diverse backgrounds with experiences in a broad range of regions and institution types, and professional roles and interests across all areas of graduate enrollment management.

Key Focus Areas from NAGAP Strategic Priorities

Building on the 2018-2020 Strategic Priorities for NAGAP, Key Areas #3 and #4 address many items related to the work of the membership committee, the marketing and communications committee, and the association diversity and inclusion efforts. The following outline provides strategies to support these priorities.

Key Focus Area 3: Marketing, Recruitment, and Retention of Members

We will be recognized as the leader in GEM by meeting the ever-changing professional needs of our membership.

Key Focus Area 4: Diversity and Inclusion

We will have a comprehensive focus on inclusiveness and diversity across all core aspects of the association, including membership, leadership, and education.

Marketing and Recruitment Strategy and Tactics

Targets and Tactics to Diversify the Membership

- Review current membership data and demographics to identify underrepresented areas such as:
 - states or regions in which there are no NAGAP members,
 - underrepresented groups by race and gender,
 - institution type (public, private, enrollment size), and
 - disciplinary role.
- Determine goal and strategy to recruit new NAGAP members from targeted groups based on demographic analysis.

Encourage Membership Among Individuals Who Have Participated in a NAGAP Activity but are Not Members

- Review rosters of webinar participants, annual conference and PDI attendees, and Leadership Academy participants from the most recent 1-2 years and identify individuals who are not currently members.
 - Determine goal and strategy to recruit a percentage of this group to become NAGAP members.
- Work with the Chapters to identify and convert chapter members who have yet to join the Association.

Inbound Lead Capture: Leverage NAGAP “Products” to Generate Prospect Lists

- Research reports and other partnerships: Get names from partner landing sites (e.g., Carnegie, RNL NAGAP research project – names collected to download of report)
- Research grant: Names gathered by Research Committee during outreach promoting research grant, and names captured from grant proposals received from non-members (students and professionals)
- Survey respondents: Salary survey and Flash Feedback survey – distribute beyond NAGAP membership, gather contact info from survey respondents
- Develop and re-package original NAGAP content to use for inbound marketing initiatives

In-Person Recruitment Activities

- Send a NAGAP representative to attend events that have a minority focus to attract prospective NAGAP members with diverse backgrounds, such as the Atlanta University Consortium and the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education.
- Identify other association and vendor conferences and events where we could have a physical activity (present, brown bag, reception, table, etc.) to generate interest and collect names.

Digital Marketing Campaigns

Ongoing

Feathr Geofencing Campaign

- Targeting locations where other higher ed conferences are occurring.
- Goal: To market NAGAP to higher ed professionals outside of our network, attendees at other relevant conferences.
- Audience: Attendees at higher ed conferences around US

February - March

Feathr Campaign #1 - GEM Summit Campaign

- Retargeting and social media advertising.
- Keyword search to identify new users.
- Goal: Encourage registration for Summit by current and prospective NAGAP members.
- Audience: Visitors to NAGAP home page

May - June

Feather Campaign #2 - Summer Institute

- Retargeting and social media advertising.
- Keyword search to identify new users.
- Goal: Encourage registration for PDI by current and prospective members.
- Audience: Visitors to NAGAP home page

December

Feather Campaign #3 - Winter Institute

- Retargeting and social media advertising.
- Keyword search to identify new users.
- Goal: Encourage registration for PDI by current and prospective members.
- Audience: Visitors to NAGAP home page

Membership Retention & Engagement Strategy and Initiatives

Retain New Members Beyond the First Year or the First Activity

- Create a webinar or other remote/virtual “get to know NAGAP” information session to serve all NAGAP members when they first join the Association. Whether or not they ever attend the annual conference, offer all members a “new to the group” experience, including key information (e.g., member benefits, committees, educational activities, research and publication activities) and pathways to engagement (e.g., member profiles and testimonials, leadership pathways).
- Leverage the experience and outcomes of the First Timer’s Reception at the annual conference
 - Provide opportunities to engage more versus just “sit and be spoken to”
 - Provide an opportunity for the Chapters to take an active role so individuals understand all of the benefits available to them.
 - Distinguish the First Timer’s Reception at annual conference from a general “get to know NAGAP” information session. Focus on what is unique about attending the conference, that new participants will want to understand (e.g., how to meet and authentically engage with other attendees and build a professional network here at this event).

- Create a “New Member” group in The Exchange to include all new members during their first 12 months of membership. Identify 2-3 volunteer Ambassadors to seed conversation, offer relevant announcements, and help connect individual new members with opportunities to further engage with NAGAP (e.g., encourage proposal submissions for annual conference sessions, highlight benefits of summer PDI, facilitate networking conversations, provide discussions prompts on relevant topics)

Optimize The Exchange as a Networking Platform for NAGAP Members

- Develop engagement strategies and related action plans to promote networking in The Exchange beyond discussion boards and existing communities.
- Determine “members only” content to be available on The Exchange, as well as content available on The Exchange for non-members, to serve as member recruitment opportunities.
- Determine goals and process to launch the member engagement scoring tool available within the Higher Logic platform to measure member engagement and identify new areas of opportunity.

Engage members in volunteer opportunities to build affinity and commitment to NAGAP (e.g., committees, event support, chapters)

- Develop clear process for members to volunteer – annually, quarterly, or throughout the year
- Develop outreach campaign to encourage participation in call for volunteers
- Develop plan to match members with volunteer opportunities as needed
- Clarify expectations of committee chairs in volunteer engagement and follow-up
- Conduct occasional outreach (2-3 messages per year) to members who have responded to the call for volunteers but were not matched with any committees or activities
- Create videos or webinars on volunteer opportunities and other pathways to engagement

Marketing Campaigns

Membership Monday Spotlights & Leadership Pathway Profiles – Ongoing

- Shared across all social media channels and on website.
- Goal: To highlight diversity of membership and engage with members.
- Audience: NAGAP members

Communication Plans with Specific Groups

Guiding Principles

- Integrated messages for all platforms in alignment with 2017 NAGAP Needs Assessment:
 1. 49.69 % new members with less than 3 years of experience in graduate enrollment
 2. 50.31% renewing/returning members with 7 plus years of experience
- Leverage comprehensive set of channels to communicate NAGAP’s unique value proposition:
 - NAGAP Website: The primary source of information for anyone working in graduate enrollment management and the first introduction to the association for non-members. Should be updated, mobile-friendly, optimized for organic search traffic. The board and an appointed website committee will investigate the cost and timeline for a new website design and mobile-responsive platform. Review the current website to determine if content should be delivered differently based on the four generations of membership. Add short video clips where possible.
 - Membership Brochure: Update the membership brochure bi-annually for distribution.
 - The Exchange

- Social Media: Develop social media strategy to consistently communicate through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- Chapter Websites: Provide “boiler plate” language on NAGAP initiatives and the benefits of NAGAP membership for all chapters to include on their websites.

Additional Content Needed for Communication Plans

- Create an informational NAGAP video - to share at chapter events, PDIs, and through website/social media. There will be a short and long version. Goal: Provide prospective members a quick overview of membership benefits.
- Testimonials – at least 3 – each focused on specific benefits:
 1. Events
 2. Network
 3. Deliverables – e.g., NAGAP News, The Exchange, GEM CAT

Communication Plan: Suspects

Customized messages based on audience, with link to NAGAP inquiry form

Communication Plan: New Leads

First communication is co-signed by NAGAP President and Membership Chair

Subsequent communications are signed by Membership Chair

- Day 1 – NEW LEAD EMAIL: “You may be someone who could benefit from membership in NAGAP...” with brief outline of benefits. Include link to member brochure PDF. CTA: Learn more
 - *If new lead is from a REFERRAL:
 - Day 1 – REFERRAL NEW LEAD EMAIL: Same message as Day 1 NEW LEAD EMAIL + mention the referral
 - Day 1 – EMAIL to person who referred the new lead: Thank you for referring a future NAGAP member
- Day 14 – EMAIL: Become a member of NAGAP with member profile/quote. CTA: Become a member
- Day 28 – EMAIL: Check out an upcoming NAGAP Event (Highlight PDIs, Summit, Leadership Academy, Webinars...?) and discuss professional benefits. CTA: Learn more about events/link to event landing pages
- Day 44 – EMAIL: Member profile outlining earned benefits from participation in a NAGAP event. (Could segment this based on what we know (i.e. job title to drive toward Leadership Academy, Summer PDI, etc.) CTA: Learn about events
- Day 58 – EMAIL: Event spotlight: GEM Summit – Our premiere events, what you can participate in there, value of going, etc. CTA: Learn more about GEM Summit
- Day 72 – EMAIL: Event spotlight: NAGAP webinars – Discuss rotating topics with monthly options, etc. CTA: Become a member to access these events
- Day 96 – EMAIL: Haven’t joined NAGAP yet? You’re missing out on all of these benefits.... CTA: Become a member

Communication Plan: New Members

Within 1 week of membership:

- Welcome Email (President/Membership Chair)
- NAGAP news shout out
- Welcome wagon-call from member of membership committee

Day 14: Overview of benefits of NAGAP membership:

- The Exchange
- GEM Summit annual conference
- Pre-Summit Institute
- Chapter Affiliation (intimate level with those colleagues in your geographical region)
- Mentor/Mentee Program
- Professional Development Institutes (Winter/Summer)
- Select vendors offer NAGAP member rates (i.e. Carnegie)
- Research grants and the opportunity to attend NAGAP conferences at a significantly reduced cost
- Webinars & Podcasts
- *Perspectives Magazine* (send email with a link to one of the articles as an enticement to want more)
- Research tools (GEMCAT)
- NAGAP News (Weekly updates for the association)

AD-HOC Announcements

Main event announcements depending on time of year and member demo (i.e. GEM Summit announcement, PDI announcement, etc.)

Infrastructure & Resources Needed

Budget Resources

- Allocate additional funds to a membership growth effort (e.g., digital marketing, CRM, ambassador swag, travel for in-person recruitment activities)

Inquiry Form

- Request for Information Form, add to NAGAP website
- Longer term: landing page(s) with inquiry forms, specific to marketing campaigns

CRM

- Research cost to purchase a CRM and maintain each year.
- A CRM would provide the ability to identify new members from returning members by membership date so that messaging could be segmented with a different value message as appropriate.
- Automated messaging would allow NAGAP to provide more strategic messages to members and vendors and cut down on the amount of information in NAGAP News that members sometimes overlook.
- A CRM would minimize staff time needed to send manual e-mails.
- Maintaining the membership and vendor lists would be streamlined with a CRM and would allow staff and board members the ability to see how both populations interact with the association to improve future strategic decisions.

Ambassador Program

Create an Ambassador program for current members to recruit additional NAGAP members.

- Ambassadors receive a training session, including a brief “elevator pitch” on the benefits of the NAGAP network, member benefits, educational activities, and research and publications activities.
- Ambassadors receive specific “swag” from NAGAP for serving in this role (e.g., NAGAP polo shirts) that identified them as NAGAP representatives while they are attending recruitment events on behalf of

their institutions. Ambassadors who travel extensively for student recruitment can recruit NAGAP members at recruitment events across all regions.

- Ambassadors send emails and make phone calls to prospective new members, under the direction of the membership committee, based on identified groups that are underrepresented in the current membership.
- Ambassadors contact existing members whose membership renewals are past due, to encourage renewal and/or understand reasons for non-renewal.

Membership Cycle Operations and Processes

Changes to Membership Renewal Timeline and Process

- Separate the annual conference registration process from the annual membership renewal process by December of 2020 to impact annual conference registration for 2021.
- Update all website language to explain that membership renewal takes place separate from the annual conference registration so they understand when their annual renewal will be due.
- Closely monitor membership renewal rates and plan to discuss the effectiveness of this renewal timeline change. Be prepared to adjust renewal timeline again if membership renewal rates decline.

Membership Renewal Timeline and Process

- Membership renewal is due by July 1st. NAGAP removes expired accounts within 30 days of expiration (August 1st) and notifies via e-mail the impact of the lost benefits.
- Membership renewal e-mail campaign starts in May and follows:
 - May 1st – first renewal notice
 - June 1st – second renewal notice
 - June 15th – third renewal notice
 - July 1st – final notice letting people know they will expire on August 1st. Anyone that has not renewed by August 1st will have their credentials inactivated.

New Members Receive:

- Response within 24 hours of receipt of new membership application
 - New applications are processed immediately.
 - User name and password are emailed to them.
- Welcome packet mailed to new members monthly, which includes:
 - Welcome letter from the Membership Chair
 - Lapel pin
 - Most recent printed *Perspectives*
 - Chapter information
 - Add welcome E-mail from President of NAGAP

Assessing Our Effectiveness: Key Performance Indicators

- Identify current NAGAP member retention rates for each membership category, compare with industry standards, and set target retention goals in tandem with new membership goals for future years.
- Engagement in The Exchange: Identify current and target percentages of members with active profiles. Launch and leverage the engagement scoring tool within The Exchange to measure effectiveness of new engagement strategies and activities.

- Attendance at the Annual First Timer’s Reception and evaluation results. Conduct a yearly analysis of attendance numbers and engagement levels.
- Participation in new member initiatives. Collect data to be used to measure engagement level at different activities or with different initiatives.
- Participation in educational activities. Goal to be at or above past participation levels.
- Open and click rate of NAGAP News. Goal to be at or above industry standard.
- Open and click rate of *Perspectives* digital issues. Goal to be at or above past rates
- Meeting or exceeding the annual membership headcount and revenue goals. The 2019-20 membership goals are included here for reference.

Membership Goals for 2019-20

The following membership goals have been set by the NAGAP Board of Directors for the 2019-2020 membership year:

Category	Fee	Goal	Revenue
Individual Members	\$250	550	\$137,500
Institutional/Org. Pays	\$250	875	\$218,750
Affiliate Membership	\$475	31	\$14,725
Associate Membership	\$200	5	\$1,000
Student Membership	\$50	5	\$250
Retired Membership	\$50	10	\$500
Membership Labels	\$1,500	7	\$10,500
Totals		1,483	\$383,225.00

**Membership labels are in reference to purchased lists from the membership database.*

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