

Gene,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the questions. Your questions indicate the two overarching concerns of utilizing national resources in support of chapters and education. During my term as Chair of the Chapter Presidents Council, these issues frequently emerged and the CPC took clear action to address them. Tangible results included greater inclusion of the CPC in the Development Plan process and the recent and well received Education Summit. My position statement generally addresses the questions posed, but more specific answers are included in the body of your e-mail below. I appreciate the opportunity to serve and if I can further clarify any of these matter, please let me know.

Bob

----- Original Message ----- **From:** blewis@cityoflewisville.com **To:** dsiegel@parametrix.com ; floydclapp@hotmail.com ; mbarker@ruralcap.com ; Bobbarber@rlbnet.com ; scockre@ci.dallas.tx.us ; msilver34@aol.com ; mcanelly@earthlink.net ; cstricklin@CitiesThatWork.com ; sue.schwartz@ci.greensboro.nc.us ; Chandra.Foreman@lakelandgov.net ; msouthard@shawneeok.org **Cc:** [Barrett Carol@ci.san-marcos.tx.us](mailto:Barrett_Carol@ci.san-marcos.tx.us) ; dlillie@flash.net
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2004 11:02 AM **Subject:** TxAPA Questionnaire

Dear Candidates,

Thanks for your interest in serving APA and AICP by being on the ballot in the spring election. The Texas Chapter Board has voted to consider endorsement of candidates for APA and AICP offices. In this regard I am including a list of five questions for your consideration. Your response will be submitted to the Chapter's executive committee for discussion at it's January 30 meeting. The packet for that meeting will be sent out soon so I would appreciate your response in a timely fashion. The packet already includes a copy of your position statement as it appeared in the November issue of Planning. Even if you should be unable to respond to the questions, please reply by e-mail so I can confirm that you received this request. If you have any questions please feel free to let me know.

Thanks,

Gene Lewis
Texas Chapter President
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- [Every year, more planning commissioners attend the Texas Chapter's annual conference for the two day Short Course than attend the national conference. What lessons can the national organization learn from this?](#)

The Texas experience, and the experience of others, shows that chapters are most often the most effective and efficient means of delivering educational products and services at the Chapter level. Our national organization can better support that delivery through a careful and collaborative partnership with chapters and divisions, which addresses expressed chapter needs. A closer partnership might provide

administrative support, publication assistance, or other services, depending on chapter needs, freeing chapters to respond to educational and other needs on a chapter and regional basis. Chapters know the training needs and concerns of their area best and must receive greater support in doing what chapters do best.

- **National resources to chapters do not recognize the challenges of a state like Texas where our sections are very large (the size of state) and geographically disbursed. How would you address this?**

As Chair of the Chapter Presidents, I recognized quickly that there are is broad range of Chapter sizes, capabilities, and need. Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that wide ranging needs are effectively addressed. For APA to grow to its full potential, more than one approach is required., Resource allocation must be responsive to regional and chapter variations. Greater and more targeted dialogue between chapters and national APA, carefully listening, and inclusive organizational planning will achieve a better fit between resource allocation and the diversity of chapter needs. Ideas such as regional staff, designed to place national APA resources closer to the chapter level should be considered. Expansion of partnership pilot efforts, like your online conference registration assisted by national, should occur. We must be willing to test new ways of strengthening and empowering chapters to be fully effective. In this way, APA can expand its service to cause of planning.

- **Texas planning authority for local governments is very limited. Moreover, many cities have planning commissions, but no professional planners. What is the role of APA in providing support to planning under these circumstances?**

I noted many outreach and educational goals on the Texas Chapter website directed at non-professionals who have a direct influence over the advancement of planning. I believe APA's most effective role is in supporting Texas in achieving its goals is both through direct partnerships, as mentioned above, as well as high quality research and product development that can be used by the Chapter. A clear and major part of this role is, again, responsiveness to expressed chapter needs.

- **What specific strategies would you use to encourage Texas planning schools to engage more aggressively in providing continuing education for planners?**

The recently concluded educational summit, sponsored by the Chapter Presidents Council, created a very positive dialog exploring this topic. One outcome, adopted by the participants, was the need to develop clear professional standards for continuing education. The development and implementation of such standards would further excellence in planning practice and lend real mission and purpose for continuing education throughout the country. Development of standards for continuing education should be promptly and responsibly carried out and as a board member, I will determinedly work to follow though. My position statement speaks clearly to this issue.

- **The model for APA/AICP relies on a high level of participation and support from the members. More than twenty years ago planning agencies supported their planning staff in such endeavors. Tight times and limited resources mean that planners who support their organization now often do so on their own time and their own nickel. The national organization seems unaware of the local constraints on volunteers. What ideas do you have?**

As a member of a small chapter I know first hand the time demands of participating in chapter leadership and activities. I will bring that perspective to the Board. There is real opportunity to enhance administrative support from the national level where needed. Regional Staff is one idea that should be considered. More extensive and beneficial partnerships have been tested and proven.