



The Global Standard in Public Service Education

August 7, 2012

NASPAA asks members to consider a new name for the organization

Over the past year or two, many members have communicated to NASPAA's Executive Council and leadership their thoughts that the organization's full spelled-out name no longer represents our geographic or disciplinary breadth. Some have questioned whether it adequately represented the public policy field, while others have expressed concerns that the name may hinder membership growth, especially among non-US schools.

In response, last fall the Council established a Task Force to review the organization's name and branding, chaired by former President Jeff Raffel. *[See Background section on p. 2 for details]*

The Council also approved adopting a tagline: **The Global Standard in Public Service Education**, which did not require a membership vote. NASPAA has already introduced it, printed under the acronym logo, on official documents and online. *[See above for example]*

The Council has now endorsed changing the organization's name, with two options that use new words to fit the NASPAA acronym:

Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration

Network Among Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration

Both options offer substitutes for the words "National" and "Association", and add the word "Policy". The second option allows a stricter adherence to the letters in the acronym.

There will be a membership vote at the 2012 Annual Business Meeting on October 19 in Austin, during the NASPAA Annual Conference, to consider this legal name change (one vote per member school; only those in attendance will be able to vote). Here is a sample ballot:

1. Should NASPAA change its name from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration? Yes _____ No _____

[If the question does not pass, NASPAA will continue using the acronym and the new tagline.]

2. If question #1 passes, which new name would you prefer?

[Please select one, regardless of your vote on question #1]

_____ **Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration**

_____ **Network Among Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration**

continued

Background

Last fall, NASPAA's Executive Council established a Task Force to review NASPAA's name and branding, in light of membership concerns about the name no longer reflecting the organization's membership, especially the recent addition of full membership for schools outside the US (there are currently eight, and several more have indicated their interest in applying).

The task force was charged with exploring possible options for changes to NASPAA's name, acronym, tag line, and logo and to report back to the Council with recommendations at its Spring 2012 meeting. The task force was asked to consider these possible options (though not limited to these):

- Keep the name and acronym
- Keep the acronym, but change the words that spell it out
- Keep the acronym, stop using the full name, and add a tagline
- Keep acronym but add a prefix or suffix (e.g. NASPAA--Global)
- Change both the name and acronym

The task force was asked to consider these factors for any name and tagline:

- A name, brand, and image should capture our mission and message.
- A name should be clear and self-explanatory. It should also have currently marketing usefulness: be competitive in the marketplace for prospective NASPAA members as well as among students, employers, and other stakeholders.
- All member schools should be able to identify with the name and feel that they fit within it.

The task force held several conference calls between December and March. NASPAA staff met with a good-government and a higher education association that recently changed their names and/or acronyms and logos, to collect lessons learned and best practices. Based on the lessons learned from these organizations, and task force discussions, a survey was designed to query members' thoughts on the current name, whether they perceived a need to change, and what words/phrases/concepts were important to use. The survey also solicited respondents to suggest a new name and/or tagline.

As you may recall, the survey was sent to all principal representatives in February. It was also sent to the Executive Council, members of all committees and sections, and other representatives from member schools who attended the 2011 Annual Conference. There were approximately 120 usable responses. There were two areas of broad consensus: support for a new tag line, especially one that addressed our quality public service education mission, and members felt that the current acronym has great value and brand recognition. The most-cited word to add to any potential name/tagline was "International/Global".

The task force's recommendations and a set of "finalists" for the five options above were presented to the Council at its Spring 2012 meeting. The Council considered the finalists, approved a tagline, and endorsed changing the name, with the two options above.

NASPAA thanks all those members who supplied such thoughtful responses to the survey or otherwise provided feedback. We realize that changing NASPAA's name would be a significant step, and are grateful that such a large segment of the membership has participated in the process.