Exploring the Feasibility of a Combined ACHCA Chapter of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Students

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Introduction and Abstract

• The significance of this project is to grow, strengthen, and retain a viable membership base for a combined ACHCA Minnesota and Wisconsin chapter. This combined chapter will also include an affiliation with the UW – Eau Claire (UWEC) ACHCA student organization.

• To achieve this, the current study assesses past, current, and future ACHCA members to gain a better understanding of members’ needs and what members wish to get out of the organization.

• A survey was distributed to approximately 200 individuals belonging to the ACHCA Wisconsin and Minnesota chapters. The survey results will be shared more fully, along with our subsequent evaluations, when further responses are received.

• Specific actions steps that are being advanced, guided by the steering committee and ACHCA designated staff, will also be reported at a later date.

Problem

• The ACHCA Professional Association does not have a strong membership presence in the Midwest region. Currently, viable independent chapters in Minnesota and Wisconsin do not exist.

• The current study attempts to evaluate the best approach to pursue for a combined chapter and related activities to help move this initiative forward with both a joint chapter and an affiliated ACHCA student organization.

Methods

• The research team reviewed ACHCA professional association services and reviewed sample survey templates to construct an independent survey for use in the current study.

• Surveys were distributed to approximately 200 existing and past Minnesota and Wisconsin ACHCA chapter members. Additionally, surveys were also specifically sent to a sample from a pool of UWEC health care administration graduates, from the last five years’ cohorts, who were actively involved with the on-campus student ACHCA organization and its regular activities.

• Survey questions assessed participants’ preferences for certain organizational activities, agreement with a merged chapter, potential obstacles or challenges to a merged chapter, and more.

• The survey conducted had a 27% response rate from participants (i.e., 54 surveys returned).

• The professional experience of respondents was quite diverse: 28% of respondents were current students, 33% had been in the profession between 1-5 years, 8% had 6-10 years of experience, and 31% had been in the field for over 10 years.

• Geographically, 59% of survey respondents were from Wisconsin, 34% from Minnesota, and 7% were outside these two states.

• Of the respondents, 65% were current ACHCA members, 32% were past members, and 3% have never been a member.

• With respect to membership length, 17% had been members for 0-12 months, 50% were members for 1-3 years, 6% were members for 3-5 years, and 27% have been an ACHCA member for 5 or more years.

Results

• Results indicate a diverse sample population from the two states, with differing levels of experience.

• The support to create the new combined ACHCA chapter was heavily favored, with a 96% approval rate from survey respondents.

• Networking and educational opportunities are the most valued resource and opportunity that ACHCA can offer its members. This is similar to the respondents’ priority of activities, where leadership development and educational opportunities were the top two most valued membership services.

• Effective communication strategies and the potential time commitment were identified as the main challenges to successfully merging the chapters.

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Next Steps

• Based on the strong support from respondents, the concept of merging will be advanced with a formal meeting of leadership from the chapters, the UWEC student organization, and CHAASE board members, along with creating a strategic working plan.

• Leadership development opportunities will be included with the annual National Emerging Leadership Summits (NELS), mentoring, and other related activities (seen as opportunities in responses).

• An event at UWEC will be co-sponsored, possibly in conjunction with the annual CHAASE Fall Forum or in conjunction with affiliated associations.

• The services of a UWEC student, working with the chapter Secretary/Treasurer, should be funded annually and will be considered.

• The team working to combine chapters will continue to work with the national ACHCA organization in efforts to learn strategies used by other chapters.

References and Contact Information


• National Emerging Leadership Summit (NELS). Retrieved from: http://www.dowling.edu/nels/

• The ACHCA Handbook and Annual Report: The current study and will subsequently only be shared with the research team.

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