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## **Broadening ASPE's Membership**

By Karen Lewis, ASPE President and Administrative Director at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences

As you know for the last three years on the Saturday before our annual conference officially begins we have held an SP Day where SPs attend professional development workshops and presentations conducted by SPEs. During these SP Days, the participants expressed a desire for an official place where they can obtain more professional development, network and connect with SP Educators and programs in their area. Additionally, KWMG, ASPE's management company, reports that they receive 30-40 requests a year from people seeking information about becoming an SP or relocating to an area where there are SP Programs. As a result, the Membership Committee began exploring the possibility of creating a new ASPE membership category: SP Member.

Members of the committee held SP focus groups in their local institutions to gauge interest and determine what kind of benefits SPs wanted and how much they would pay for membership in an SP organization. The focus groups confirmed that SPs are seeking sources of professional development and connection to each other and other SP Programs, and they would be willing to pay a modest fee for membership in an organization that offers these opportunities.

The Board felt that filling this need for SPs was a logical progression for ASPE. It is in keeping with ASPE's mission of promoting best practice in the application of SP methodology for education and research. Certainly another group could take on that role, and as evidenced by a recent list serve discussion, some have started SP websites. However, since ASPE's mission is also to advance the professional knowledge of its members, who better than ASPE can ensure that SPs seeking professional development receive education based in best practice? Additionally, many SPs go on to be SP Educators. Providing SP professional development is an investment in the future of the SP Educator field and ASPE. Having different categories of membership is in line with other professional organizations as well. INACSL has an associate member category for vendors, AMEE and AAMC have student member categories, and SSH welcomes all who are interested in simulation. As a result, in January, the Board of Directors voted to accept the Membership Committee's recommendation to create the new SP membership category.



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There are still many details to work out. What is proposed thus far is that:

- When joining ASPE, no one can select more than one category of membership. SP membership is specifically for SPs who are actively working in that role.
- When SPs join, they will have their own membership benefits.
- SP members will still have the opportunity to attend SP Day on the Saturday preceding the Educator conference and will not be permitted to register for the SPE Conference. SPEs will not be permitted to attend the SP Day.
- SPs will have their own page on the website that will house Professional Development materials.
- The Professional Development materials may ultimately be turned into learning modules with objectives SPs can meet for a certificate of completion.
- There will be costs associated with website design, but these costs will be recouped from the revenue generated from SP member dues. After costs are covered, SP membership dues will be a source of revenue for ASPE.

The other cost associated with the new member category is human energy. However, assisting in the design and development of the professional materials for the new SP member category is a great way for SP Educators to get involved in ASPE. SPEs can turn the work they do every day into an avenue for conference presentation by leading a session at SP Day or for publication by placing their training materials on the website.

Let the **Membership Committee** know if you would like to participate in broadening ASPE's membership. They could use input on delineating the membership category policies, help with developing the SP professional development materials, and participation in SP Day. Contact **Jennifer Owens** at: [msdjlo@gwu.edu](mailto:msdjlo@gwu.edu).