

CASLPA Supportive Personnel 2005 Survey Report

Introduction

1. Background

The consideration of establishing a CASLPA membership category for Supportive Personnel dates back to 1995. This was followed in 1999 by an 87% majority vote by CASLPA members to create this new associate member category. The vote was then followed by a two-year project in four phases to define the conditions, requirements and responsibilities of this new membership category. An expert panel was formed to lead the process of developing consensus statements which laid out the requirements and responsibilities. These statements were validated by an independent sample of 200 CASLPA members and the results were compiled into a final report. The CASLPA Board of Directors worked through statements that did not reach consensus by the expert panel and produced a final draft report in February of 2004. This draft report was sent to all CASLPA members in a survey in May 2004. Based on the feedback from our members, CASLPA released the Guidelines for Supportive Personnel working with audiologists and speech-language pathologists in October of 2004.

2. Objectives

The 2005 survey of supportive personnel and students in a supportive personnel training program was undertaken by CASLPA as a process to measure the potential needs of prospective CASLPA Supportive Personnel members. The survey was primarily designed to assist CASLPA in determining what membership benefits would be of most value to this group.

3. Methodology

CASLPA designed the survey utilizing an Internet-based tool, SurveyMonkey. The on-line survey consisted of nine key questions which were developed as a result of a focus group held with supportive personnel in the Ottawa area. The questions addressed such things as benefits, demographics and education level.

Since the survey was designed to be completed by supportive personnel and students in a supportive personnel training program whom, at this time, are not part of CASLPA's membership, its distribution was done in a variety of ways. The link to the survey was provided for distribution to as many potential respondents as possible via CASLPA members and supportive personnel training program directors. In addition, the survey description and link was also available on CASLPA's website. Also, CASLPA developed an Access database

to track contact information of supportive personnel interested in receiving information on the up-coming membership category. The survey link was also sent to all those in the database.

A total of 171 respondents completed the survey between May 13, 2005 and June 20, 2005. Twenty seven paper surveys were also completed by students from Durham College's supportive personnel training program and these responses were data-entered and are reflected in the overall on-line survey results.

Survey Results

The first question asked respondents to indicate their interest level for each of the benefits outlined.

1. On the scale below, please indicate which of the benefits outlined would be of interest to you as a future CASLPA member:									
	Very interested						Not at all interested	N/A	Response Average
Access to Affinity programs including discounts on cell phones, home and auto insurance, credit card...)	38% (65)	8% (14)	12% (21)	10% (17)	11% (18)	8% (13)	12% (21)	0% (0)	3.19
Access to on-line membership directory	31% (52)	25% (43)	17% (29)	12% (20)	8% (14)	4% (7)	2% (4)	0% (0)	2.63
CASLPA conference member discount	48% (81)	21% (36)	15% (26)	7% (12)	2% (4)	3% (5)	2% (3)	1% (1)	2.10
CASLPA's monthly E-news (electronic newsletter) "Commun-E-cate"	47% (80)	18% (31)	20% (33)	7% (12)	5% (8)	1% (2)	2% (3)	0% (0)	2.14
CASLPA's professional journal-JSLPA	42% (71)	26% (44)	15% (25)	9% (15)	6% (10)	1% (1)	1% (1)	1% (1)	2.14
CASLPA's quarterly newsletter "Communiqué"	31% (52)	26% (44)	20% (33)	14% (23)	4% (7)	1% (2)	3% (5)	1% (1)	2.49
CASLPA website with 'member's only' access	47% (80)	27% (46)	14% (24)	7% (12)	1% (2)	1% (1)	2% (3)	1% (1)	1.96

Code of Ethics	47% (79)	32% (54)	10% (16)	8% (14)	1% (2)	1% (2)	1% (1)	0% (0)	1.90
Employment listings on website	72% (120)	15% (25)	6% (10)	4% (6)	1% (2)	1% (1)	2% (3)	0% (0)	1.56
Inclusion in membership and salary surveys	61% (101)	24% (39)	6% (10)	5% (8)	2% (4)	0% (0)	2% (3)	0% (0)	1.71
Long-distance savings through CASLPA's toll free line	28% (46)	17% (28)	14% (24)	15% (25)	10% (17)	4% (7)	11% (18)	1% (1)	3.19
On-line Education courses related to Supportive Personnel	74% (123)	19% (32)	4% (7)	2% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1% (2)	0% (0)	1.40
Professional Liability Insurance	42% (70)	21% (35)	11% (19)	11% (18)	2% (4)	4% (7)	6% (10)	3% (5)	2.46
Total Respondents									169

When examining the above responses, the top five benefits that are of most interest to prospective supportive personnel members are:

1. On-line education (74%)
2. Employment listings on website (72%)
3. Inclusion in the membership and salary surveys (61%)
4. CASLPA conference member discount (48%)
5. Commun-E-cate, Communiqué, Code of Ethics and Members-only access on website (all at 47%)

The respondents were then asked to rate their level of agreement for other added benefits to membership.

2. Other added benefits to CASLPA membership could include the following. Please indicate your level of agreement						
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	N/A	Response Average
Enhanced access to information and resources	79% (134)	19% (32)	1% (2)	1% (1)	0% (0)	1.23
Established Code of Ethics helps instill confidence in the profession as viewed by fellow professionals and consumers	77% (129)	20% (33)	2% (3)	1% (2)	1% (1)	1.27
Gives Supportive Personnel a voice on issues that affect the profession and a conduit to assist in implementing change	84% (142)	15% (25)	0% (0)	1% (2)	0% (0)	1.18
Interprovincial mobility	63% (106)	29% (48)	2% (4)	3% (5)	3% (5)	1.44

Provides added recognition and credibility to the profession of Supportive Personnel on a national level	88% (148)	11% (18)	2% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.14
Total Respondents						169

The responses show that there was strong agreement with all additional CASLPA membership benefits listed, particularly:

1. Added recognition and credibility for the profession of supportive personnel
2. Provides a voice on issues that affect the profession of supportive personnel and a conduit to assist in implementing change
3. Enhanced access to information and resources

Membership fees were also addressed and respondents were asked whether a potential annual fee of \$125.00 seemed reasonable.

3. Is an annual membership fee of \$125 reasonable to you?	
Yes	
No	
View Other (please specify)	
Total	

Although 64.3% agreed that a fee of \$125.00 is reasonable, several comments made (in “other” section) suggested that it is too high, especially considering that CDAAC annual fees are only \$55.00. Other suggested fees were \$100.00, \$75.00, \$50.00.

The following question was raised in order to seek insight into associative trends. Would supportive personnel prefer to align themselves in an association with supportive personnel in other health care disciplines (i.e. OT, PT) or with the speech-language pathologists and audiologists?

4. In western Canada, there are organizations forming to include a diverse group of assistants such Occupational Therapy assistants, Physio Therapy assistants, Communication Disorders assistants, Rehabilitation and Recreational assistants under one association. Would you be more likely to join a National Assistants Association or CASLPA?

CASLPA	
National Therapist Association	
View Other (please specify)	

Overwhelmingly, respondents would prefer to join CASLPA. We could extrapolate that this indicates more commonalities with speech-language pathologists and audiologists than with other health care supportive personnel. The majority of the comments in the “other” indicated a preference to join both associations.

The next question addresses student membership for supportive personnel and whether or not CASLPA should create this category.

5. Do you think CASLPA should develop a student membership category for Supportive Personnel?		
		Resp Per
Yes		57
No		10
Uncertain		30
View Other (please specify)		1
		Total Respond

The majority of respondents (57.5%) agreed that CASLPA should create a student membership category for supportive personnel.

Questions 6 & 7 targeted education level and work focus. Responses indicated the following:

- 52.1% of the respondents were graduates from a supportive personnel training program. 21% were on-the-job-trained and 26.9% (other) were students in a supportive personnel training program.
- 52.1% of respondents work in the area of speech-language pathology, 12.6% work in the area of audiology and 28.1% are students

Respondents were asked to indicate in which setting they work.

8. In what setting do you currently do the majority of your work?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
	Clinic	21.4%	34
	Education	22.6%	36
	Hospital	13.8%	22
	Government	4.4%	7
	Private Practice	6.9%	11
	University	1.3%	2
View	Other (please specify)	29.6%	47
Total Respondents			159

Other than students (in “other”), the majority of respondents work in educational (22.6%) and clinical (21.4%) settings.

The final question addressed demographic information.

9. In which region are you based?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
	Prince Edward Island	0%	0
	Nova Scotia	0%	0
	New Brunswick	0%	0
	Newfoundland and Labrador	0.6%	1
	Quebec	0.6%	1
	Ontario	49.1%	83
	Manitoba	0%	0
	Saskatchewan	4.1%	7
	Alberta	30.8%	52
	British Columbia	13%	22
	Northwest Territories	1.2%	2
	Yukon	0.6%	1

Other (please specify)		0%	0
Total Respondents			169

The majority of respondents are located in Ontario (49.1%) and Alberta (30.8%). Four provinces had no response to this survey (PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba).

Conclusions

The survey results reveal strong agreement regarding the value of CASLPA membership for supportive personnel and results clearly demonstrate which benefits would be of most value to prospective supportive personnel members. The majority of respondents indicated that membership into CASLPA would enhance the profession of supportive personnel in terms of increased recognition, added credibility, advocacy and enhanced access to information and resources.

Responses from the survey also indicate that supportive personnel would be more likely to join CASLPA than a national therapists association. This suggests that supportive personnel align themselves more closely with speech-language pathologists and audiologists than supportive personnel from other healthcare disciplines. This should encourage CASLPA to continually promote unity between the different membership categories that share a commonality, working in the field of communication disorders.

The lack of responses from the maritime provinces (PEI, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) suggests that CASLPA should focus on additional marketing and recruitment in that geographical area.

The trends observed from this survey provide an optimistic future for CASLPA's 2006 launch of the membership category "Supportive Personnel".

