

IAEM Student Member Task Force Report – January 2019

The IAEM Student Member Task Force was appointed by then-President Nick Crossley in the summer of 2018. The members are:

Sarah Miller, Chair
Marty Shaub, Ex-Officio
Beth Armstrong, Ex-Officio
Chandra Fox, Board Representative
Dan Robeson, Board Representative
Lanita Lloyd, Bylaws Committee Representative
Charlie Palocy, Student Region (President) Representative
Jody Hodge, Past-Student Representative
Kain Martin, Undergraduate Student Representative
Jennifer Van Wart, Graduate Student Representative

The Task Force was provided a background document and problem statements, which are included at the end of this report and referenced below. What follows are the specific recommendations of the Task Force, accompanied by discussion points and notes about how they address the given problem statements.

Proposed Bylaws, APP and Structural changes

The intent of Student membership in IAEM has been, and continues to be, to support future emergency management professionals through networking, mentoring, career development opportunities, and other related activities. Emerging professionals come from all walks of life and from all ages. Their common experience is that of being students and not holding credentials in emergency management. To that end, the Student Membership Task Force makes the following recommendations.

Bylaws/APP Changes

Student membership is available for up to six continuous years to anyone enrolled at least half-time in an academic program at a post-secondary institution accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education (regional accreditation or specific national accreditation) or international equivalent, who has not previously been an individual member of IAEM and who does not hold a CEM credential. Exceptions to these requirements may be made by the Executive Director as stated below.

Discussion:

- *Six continuous years: This is to avoid the situation where people are students, then become professionals, then decide they want to become students again. It's counter to the idea that we are trying to help people become professionals. We want to support them on their initial quest for education that gets them into this field, regardless of what academic level that education is at. The current system theoretically allows someone to be a region or USA Officer, then revert to student membership and become a Student Region officer. It's unfair to the emerging professionals who are looking for leadership opportunities, which could end up being taken by professional emergency managers.*

- *Half-time: This is consistent with current practice and is indicative of someone who is actively working toward a degree or certificate, with an end date in mind.*
- *Accreditation: We conferred with the CEM Commission on this. We want to allow the same degrees they do and this is consistent with their process. See also below for student validation.*
- *Not a previous Individual Member/not a CEM: Being a previous Individual Member or a CEM is indicative of someone who is not an emerging professional. It is indicative of someone who has already established themselves in the profession, which is counter to the intent of student membership.*
- *Implementation: IAEM staff or an assigned committee will need to check the current student members to see who would no longer be eligible. With their next renewal, those members would need to upgrade to Individual Membership, with IAEM Staff would notify them of. Also suggest that student members who choose to upgrade mid-year be offered a discount on their Individual Membership that is the equivalent to the cost of the Student Member dues (if not already been done).*
- *Addresses Problem Statement #1 by clearly stating who is eligible for student membership, in a way that is enforceable.*

Exceptions will only be considered for:

- *Length of time: Due to extenuating circumstances, outside the control of the member, which caused the member to extend their studies beyond six continuous years (i.e. extended illness, military deployment, etc.). Requests for exceptions must be directed by the student member to the Executive Director via e-mail and include appropriate documentation to justify the exception.*

Discussion: whatever degree you're working on, you should be able to get it done in six years. Since this is intended for emerging professionals, full-time students could get a Bachelor's and Master's in that time. Part-time students (maybe transitioning from another career) could get pretty much any single degree in that time. We also thought that limiting the scope of extenuating circumstances to things that the person had no control over was a good idea. We vested the decision for exceptions in the Executive Director because that provides consistency over time, as opposed to vesting it in role that may change people every year or two (such as the Student Region President).

Student member limitations:

- Student members who obtain their CEM will be required to upgrade to Individual Membership upon their next renewal.
- Student members may not vote on association business.
- Student members may not run for or hold association officer or director positions.

Discussion: The only change to this from current practice is the requirement to upgrade to Individual Membership with their next renewal. Since the stated intent of student membership is to support emerging professionals, having your CEM is counter to that. If you have your CEM, you have already proven that you have 2 or 3 years equivalent of full-time experience. It doesn't make sense though to require people to upgrade in the middle of their membership cycle, so if they earn their CEM, they would not have to upgrade until their next renewal. There was quite a bit of discussion about this and we conferred with the CEM Commission here as well. One thought was to say that student members would not be eligible to take the CEM exam, but that is counter to the goals of the CEM program and might even make some things harder for them.

Student validation:

- Student members will be required to obtain and submit a current enrollment verification certification from the National Student Clearinghouse (<https://studentclearinghouse.org/mystudentcenter/verifications/>) showing half-time or greater enrollment. Students may be able to obtain these certificates free of charge via their school or they may need to pay a nominal fee to the Clearinghouse to obtain one.
- The Executive Director may accept alternate documentation from a student who attends an eligible school that does not participate in the National Student Clearinghouse.

Discussion: This specific validation process was chosen because it provides a standardized format and terminology. It also ensures that a school is appropriately accredited and that the student is enrolled at least half-time, using whatever standard their individual school uses. This certificate is made available free of charge to many students via their schools and for everybody else, it's available at a very reasonable cost (currently \$2.50). Current documentation in the membership database is all over the board, with a huge variety of documentation being provided, much of which does not directly indicate accreditation or student status. This leaves staff to have to interpret and/or research all this information and/or utilize the honor system. Addresses Problem Statement #2 by requiring standardized documentation that is easy to assess. Addresses Problem Statement #3 by requiring documentation to be provided annually. HQ staff has also noted that the new membership database will allow/require student members to input their school affiliation which also addresses Problem Statement #3. Also addresses Problem Statement #8, which will primarily be fixed with the new membership database rollout.

Structural Changes

The current USA Student region will spend the 2018/2019 year transitioning to a Caucus. The Caucus will be open to any IAEM member who is a current student, regardless of CEM or enrollment status. Student members will automatically be enrolled in the Caucus, while Individual members of IAEM who are also students will have the option to self-enroll in the Caucus. Student Caucus bylaws will be created and approved no later than the September 2019 IAEM-USA Board meeting. The Student Caucus will run simultaneously with the Student Region through the 2019/2020 year, with the intent of disbanding the Student Region at the end of that time, assuming the Student Caucus is successful. If the Caucus is unsuccessful, the Student Region will not disband.

Discussion: Creating a Student Caucus allows everyone who is a student, regardless of anything else, to interact with other students. Right now, Individual Members who are also students are excluded from joining in "student member" activities, while Student Members are not readily being included in geographic region activities, committees, and caucuses. Student members end up primarily networking with other students, which is not conducive to engaging them in the profession and helping them enter the field. The dual-track system outlined will allow the Caucus to get up and running without losing the structure of the existing Region. There were concerns raised by the student members of the Task Force that non-students would join the student caucus. To avoid this, it's suggested that the bylaws of this new caucus be modeled on those of the Uniformed Services Caucus and/or the Universities and Colleges Caucus, which both limit who can join and/or serve in leadership roles within them. This addresses Problem Statement #5. This is also a partial solution to Problem Statement #6, as a Caucus presents additional opportunities for building value for students. It also partially addresses Problem Statement #7.b by providing a platform for all students, not just those using the discounted student membership.

Geographic regions will incorporate student members into their regions and will be encouraged to add student members to their Region leadership teams if they can find students who are interested.

Discussion: There was significant discussion around this issue. Per the current bylaws, student members are members of both the Student Region and their geographic region, however this has come as a surprise to many geographic region Presidents. Ideally, every geographic region would incorporate student members into their leadership team, however requiring this would be problematic. First, requiring it would require that every region rewrite their bylaws. Second, students have been reluctant to volunteer when asked to serve in roles with their geographic regions. Multiple geographic regions have designated student slot(s) in their leadership teams, or have asked for student volunteers, with limited response. This section requires a long-term culture shift regarding how students and geographic regions interact. It will be incumbent upon the Board to make sure this happens long-term. This partially addresses Problem Statement #4, but helping ensure member equity through representation.

Support of students in the profession will continue to be stated in the IAEM-USA Strategic Goals.

Discussion: None.

There were portions of some of the problem statements that could not be addressed directly by this task force. Specifically;

- Problem Statement #4.a: it is beyond the scope of this task force to make recommendations related to how large or small of a discount should be offered to student members for various IAEM products and services. While we agree that the student rate should cover the actual costs of student members, we do not know what that amount is.
- Problem Statement #6. This problem is not limited to student members, but it becomes very visible with student members (see chart below). Building value for members in order to increase member retention is probably best addressed by the Membership Committee.
- Problem Statement #7 a and c. Sub-problem a is a communication issue that will have to be addressed by either Student leadership or the Board. It doesn't require any changes to the Bylaws or the APPs, just better communication of what's already there. Sub-problem c is an administrative process that likely needs to be incorporated into the new Student Caucus bylaws and the existing Student Chapter paperwork.

ATTACHMENT 1

BACKGROUND AND DRAFT PROBLEM STATEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Background:

IAEM has long supported the idea of students of emergency management. This has historically been done through a discounted membership rate for student members, which in turn has led to discounts in other areas (CEM application and conference fee primarily). The intent of this process was to encourage people who are studying emergency management or a related field, who have the intent of joining the emergency management profession, to affiliate with IAEM. The advantage to the organization has been to have a pool of potential long-term members who bring with them the modern theories and research they are learning in school, along with ideas for its practical application. The advantage to student members has been to participate in networking with potential employers and their peers, as well as to learn more about the profession from a practical perspective.

Attempts have to been made to quantify this intent over the years, leading to the current student membership requirements. The current requirements state that student membership is open to anyone studying emergency management full-time or anyone studying part-time and not working full-time. This discounted membership is available to any person for up to six years. Student members are considered to be members of both the Student Region and their geographic region. There is no explicit requirement to provide documentation to support either academic enrollment or job status, only a statement that it may be required. There is a provision for extensions to the 6-year limit, vesting that responsibility with staff, who are to consult with the USA Student Region Board.

As of 7/15/2018, there are 742 people listed as student members of IAEM. They are broken down as follows (note that the numbers don't quite add up due to some duplication in the database):

Years of Student Membership	Number of Members
1	468
2	125
3	55
4	34
5	15
6	11
7	18
8	11

- Of the 11 people who have been student members for 8 or more years, 8 are graduate students, while 3 are not stated. 7 have current student documentation in the system, while 2 have outdated documentation, and 2 have none.
- Of the 18 people who have been student members for 7 years, 9 are graduate students, 2 are undergraduates, and 7 are unknown. 11 have current student documentation in the system, 3 have outdated information, and 4 have none.
- It should be noted that undergraduate vs graduate information is NOT something that is asked for. It just happens to be included on some student's documentation.

Problem Statements

1. The current “Member” definitions within the Association’s Bylaws offer insufficient detail to clearly identify who is eligible for access to membership at a discounted cost in accordance with the Association’s philosophical intent.
 - a. Goal: More clearly identify the individual situation that has been identified as eligible for the discount.
 - i. The intent is to provide support for entry level individuals who are not established in the profession at the time of their initial membership.
 - b. Goal: Ensure the process of verifying eligibility is fair, consistent and places minimal administrative burden on the Association.
2. The current student membership rules are not being enforced, because the process is cumbersome and the documentation requirements are unclear to both students and staff.
 - a. Goal: Create rules that are easily enforceable using standardized documentation.
3. Some student members are clearly abusing the system, by providing old, outdated documentation and by not listing themselves as students in the membership database.
 - a. Goal: Ensure that student members are clearly identified in the membership database, with their college affiliation and degree level.
 - b. Goal: Ensure standardized documentation is being required of, and submitted by, every member claiming the student membership benefit.
4. The current practice of extending discounts to IAEM members for persons who are eligible for discounted student membership appears to automatically be extended to every service or product.
 - a. Goal: Discount just enough to provide basic support without threatening the Association’s financial health.
 - b. Goal: Ensure member equity.
5. The current organizational structure (Student Region) appears to be more isolating than involving for entry level professionals who are not yet established in the profession.
 - a. Goal: Connect entry level professionals with established professionals for purposes of getting internships/jobs/experience.
 - b. Goal: Provide a forum for students to affiliate with like-members while staying connected to professionals (Caucuses: Undergraduate, Graduate).
6. A significant number of student members do not renew from their first year to their second year, which defeats the intent of using student membership as a long-term membership and marketing effort.
 - a. Goal: Create value for student members such that they remain members of the organization and convert to individual membership upon completion of their degree or termination of their student membership discount.
7. Eligibility for membership in student chapters is not well understood, even by some of the chapters.
 - a. Goal: Ensure that chapters understand that any IAEM-USA member can be a member of a student chapter.
 - b. Goal: Ensure that all members who are students, whether they are using the discounted student membership rate, have a platform in which to network with other students.
 - c. Goal: Ensure that student processes are in alignment across the organization (administrative paperwork and processes matches APPs, bylaws, etc.).

8. The membership database is not accurately accounting for the length of time that some members have utilized their student membership discount, due to some members having duplicate accounts that appear to make them new members.
 - a. Goal: Ensure all duplicate accounts are merged. NOTE: This will likely take place as the new membership database is rolled out and is likely of little concern to this task force.