



# A History of the Iowa Psychological Association

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The Iowa Psychological Association (IPA) is a state organization that thrives on its membership. Its long history is mixed with challenges and successes that resulted from external and internal pressures and have shaped the organization as it exists today. The present work will outline a brief history of IPA, including two major issues that recur throughout (i.e., membership trends and dues), to provide a framework for current members to better understand this organization.

## HISTORY

George Lovell began to gather together a group of individuals in 1947 to develop the Iowa Psychological Association, which was intended to be a state affiliate of the American Psychological Association (APA; Demorest, 2009). By the time of the first business meeting in 1949, IPA had an established executive committee and a following that was larger than initially expected (Demorest, 2009). IPA's original goals and mission revolved around professional work for psychologists in the state, which was differentiated from scientific concerns (Demorest, 2009). However, in 1951 the purpose of IPA was expanded to include several issues relevant to professional psychologists in Iowa (e.g., legislation, certification, ethics, etc.), as well as to encourage teaching, research, study, and utilization of psychology (Demorest, 2009).

During the 1980s while the field of psychology was thriving, APA underwent several structural changes as a result of growing dissatisfaction within the organization (Fowler, 1992). IPA followed this national trend and also underwent structural changes in an attempt to better meet the needs and concerns of its members (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993). One major change was the creation of divisions that allowed for the grouping of members by profession (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993). Division I, created in 1988, represented practicing psychologists, Division II was established in 1989 and represented psychologists in academia, and Division III was formed in 1990 to represent students (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993). Another important change was the addition of a paid Executive Secretary to provide needed services for the organization (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993).

During the 1990s, the division system was eliminated as a way to balance the financial burden of all members of IPA (Anderson & Rank, 2009). Also during the 1990s, advocacy and lobbying became a growing force (Anderson & Rank, 2009). At the close of 1999, IPA underwent changes in directorship and experienced the loss of numerous records and membership numbers (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). However, IPA grew in its strength and organizational structure throughout the 2000s despite some struggles that arose (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). An issue that frequently appeared as a topic of discussion during the early history and continued in more recent years was that of membership and dues.

## MEMBERSHIP

It appears that concerns related to membership have demanded much of the attention of executive and annual meetings of IPA over the years. Shortage in membership, debate regarding master's level professionals, and confusion related to school psychologists dominated such discussions (Demorest, 2009). Particularly in the early years of IPA, much change occurred regarding membership eligibility (Demorest, 2009). In 1949, eligibility for IPA membership was based on one's membership to APA (Demorest, 2009). In 1952, there were 12 school psychologists who were not members of APA who applied to IPA (Demorest, 2009). Because of their lack of APA membership, they were not eligible for full IPA membership at that time, which sparked a need to re-examine membership eligibility requirements (Demorest, 2009). In 1953, membership eligibility was discussed, and it was decided that IPA membership would allow one to qualify for IPA membership, but a lack of APA membership would not bar one from IPA membership (Demorest, 2009). For those not affiliated with APA, eligibility for IPA membership was based on whether one had a graduate degree in psychology (with a minimum number of graduate hours) and worked in a psychology-related position (Demorest, 2009). By 1956, members were from an array of professional organizations, including private practices, community organizations, VAs, hospitals, and colleges, among others (Demorest, 2009). Not only were clinical and counseling psychologist's members of IPA, but so too were those who specialized in school psychology, speech pathology, educational psychology, and other related fields (Demorest, 2009). However, in 1958 there were only 80 members of IPA, which again spurred a consideration of membership requirements (Demorest, 2009). It was determined that because many school psychologists were ineligible for membership, partly due to the minimum number of graduate hours required, this would be altered (Demorest, 2009).

As it relates to membership numbers, in 1961 there were 83 members of IPA (Demorest, 2009). In 1964 there were 290 members of IPA, 89 identifying as school psychologists (Demorest, 2009). By 1972, IPA had 314 members (Demorest, 2009). In more recent years, membership has seen a combination of both increasing and decreasing trends. Membership fell from 1998 and 2000 by roughly 30% (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). Membership also declined from 2000 and 2010 by 8% (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). A declining trend in membership was observed until 2014 when there began to be a very slight increase in members (IPA, 2014). In 2015, it was recorded that IPA had 245 members (IPA, 2015), fewer than was recorded nearly 10 years earlier. Additionally, a discrepancy between the number of graying members and incoming younger members has grown during the 2000s (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011).

## DUES

Another major topic of many meetings throughout IPA's history was that of dues (Demorest, 2009). Today, dues for full members with advocacy are set at \$350 (\$50 for students; IPA, 2016). However, when IPA first began dues were significantly lower and began to rise steadily. During the very first business meeting of IPA in 1949, the dues were set at one dollar per year (Demorest, 2009). Dues remained between one and three dollars until 1960 when they were raised to five dollars (Demorest, 2009). Nearly 10 years later in 1971, dues were set at \$35 (Demorest, 2009), and in 1980 the dues were \$40 (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993). The topic of dues is one that consistently arises throughout IPA's history (Demorest, 2009).

## CONCLUSION

IPA remains a strong organization that rests on a long history of successes and challenges. Those who are members of IPA appear to be a vital part of the organization, therefore communication is a central component to its functioning. Communication seems to have changed vastly with the advances in technology throughout IPA's history. Executive meetings and annual conferences appear to have been held regularly since the very early years of IPA, though the regularity and focus may have varied. In 1955, a committee was formed to focus on the development of a newsletter for IPA (Demorest, 2009). The Iowa Psychologist continues to publish issues regularly, though the frequency of publications appears to have varied throughout IPA's history. While early issues were published in print, the newsletter began to be published electronically in 2005 (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). In 1985, the IPA Bulletin Board was created to disseminate legislative information to IPA members, and in 1992 the name was changed to the IPA Bulletin (Hutzell & Jennings, 1993). As technology began to advance in the 1990s, a listserv was created, and the IPA website launched (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). Psyche-E, another method of communication for members, has evolved from mail- to electronically-based (Laughlin & Schultes, 2011). These forms of communication along with the members are an essential part of IPA.

The history of IPA appears to have helped to shape the focus and scope of the organization and will likely continue to do so as IPA continues into the future.

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