

## Policy Statement 79

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### **This We Believe About the Value of Professional Associations**

Professional associations for educators exist to help members value and promote their profession as well as nurture their individual careers. Professional associations provide organizing structures that support the creation and distribution of knowledge, the sharing of best practices, a framework for solving problems and obtaining advice, and a forum to debate what being a professional means.

**We believe that** professional associations are essential for the vitality of the business education profession. Professional associations offer key services that support professional development, professional practices, knowledge generation, and research. Outcomes from these services include

- Promoting quality education and excellence in the profession
- Fostering educational leadership and direction
- Encouraging career development and professional growth
- Developing and maintaining an ongoing relationship with businesses and other stakeholders
- Nurturing partnerships within educational communities
- Promoting a spirit of fellowship
- Recognizing professional members, business partners, and student organization members for outstanding contributions

These outcomes are valuable to members, employers of educators, the profession, businesses, and community partners.

#### **Value to Members**

A professional association is its members! Active participation by members is mutually beneficial to an association and its members. The vitality of an association is perpetuated by the contributions of the members, and members benefit through the various association activities and services.

Through association publications members share ideas, cutting-edge information, practices, and research. Publications include journals, magazines, newsletters, white papers, and electronic publications. These forums provide individuals an opportunity to share best practices and/or explain how trends in the larger community impact the profession. Practical, interesting, and relevant to the practitioner, publications help define the purpose and direction of the association. Members are often the authors of the publications as well as avid readers. **Thus, we believe that** quality publications support dynamic communities of practice.

Members also have the opportunity to obtain and share best practices and the results of research through networking, presentations, communities of practice, publications, and other means of communication (websites, discussion boards, e-mail, chat rooms, listservs). Professional associations provide opportunities for leadership development, industry certification, job searches, on-line experiences, and professional growth and development through conferences and other association activities. Opportunities to participate give members a venue for sustaining camaraderie. Members benefit by developing friendships, sharing ideas that foster a higher quality of educational environment, and discussing problems and ways to solve them. **Thus, we believe that** members should take an active role by participating in association activities.

Professional associations encourage members to participate in research activities as researchers and/or as participants. Professional associations may provide financial resources and professional support for research. **Thus,**

**we believe that** members will strengthen the profession by participating in research, as well as by conducting and applying research to enhance their programs.

### **Value to the Business Education Profession**

Professional associations provide leadership, direction, and a united voice for the business education profession. The vitality and credibility of the profession is sustained through association activities, programs, and research. Professional associations serve as historians by archiving information for the profession. The leadership uses these elements of the professional association to provide direction for the profession.

Marketing strategies are a key component in sustaining the profession. As professional associations market the profession, all stakeholders benefit. The values and goals of the profession are reflected in the marketing strategies of the professional associations.

For the profession to prosper, professional associations must provide a forum for the exchange of ideas to provide direction for the profession. These forums may include conferences, seminars, and training sessions. Members meet face-to-face to exchange ideas, interact, develop relationships, and strengthen professional networks.

A knowledge base is the foundation of the profession. Professional associations expand the knowledge base through continued research. **Thus, we believe that** research is vital to the health and growth of the profession. Research improves teaching practices, administration of programs, and curriculum development.

A unified voice for the profession is available through the association. This voice advocates for the profession on behalf of educators at the local, state, and national levels on issues such as legislative initiatives and mandates. **Thus, we believe that** the association must provide leadership, direction, and a unified voice for the profession.

### **Value to Employers of Educators**

Employers of educators benefit from services provided by professional associations when their business educators actively participate. Active participation in professional development opportunities facilitates the development of highly qualified educators. Through members' professional involvement, employers have access to standardized curriculum, assessment tools, industry standards, funds for research, outlets for publication, and employer recognition. Employers also benefit from the career placement services provided by professional associations. **Thus, we believe that** employers should encourage their business educators to maintain an active role in professional associations.

### **Value to Students, Businesses, and Community Partners**

Students directly benefit from educators who are actively involved in professional associations. Businesses and communities ultimately benefit when highly trained students assume their roles as productive citizens and employees. Businesses with access to a well developed workforce are more competitive in the global marketplace. Professional associations assist educators in responding to environmental trends. **Thus, we believe that** students, businesses, and communities profit when educators actively participate in professional associations.

**We believe that** members of the profession, employers of educators, businesses, and communities, as well as other stakeholders, are the beneficiaries of successful professional associations. Professional associations must creatively focus on the future to continuously provide value to all stakeholders. As professional associations grow and expand, they must continuously respond to changing demographics and societal changes through needs assessments and strategic planning. Students, businesses, and communities are the ultimate beneficiaries of strong professional associations. **Thus, we believe that** viable professional associations are essential to the life of the business education profession.