



During the 2013 American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting in Boston, MA the general body of the LGBT Caucus of Public Health Professionals (“the Caucus”) approved the 2013 Strategic Plan¹. The Strategic Plan identified six (6) content areas, each with its own associated content area goals and suggested activities. What follows is a review of the suggested activities for each content area as well as recommendations to better reach identified goals in the upcoming year. Note that general structural-based recommendations are provided first, then a summary of activities and associated recommendations are provided for each content area.

Disclaimers

- ✔ To accurately reflect the activities of the Caucus the primary mode of evaluation was based on thorough review of Executive Committee minutes. Reflections on programmatic activities were addressed with the LGBT Caucus Chair and, where appropriate, specific Executive Committee members.
- ✔ Many of the recommended goals and activities outlined in the Strategic Plan specifically involve the annual APHA meeting – the one time a year that we come together as a Caucus². As such, a number of the suggestions for improvement herein are based on planned activities.
- ✔ The opinions expressed in this document are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the entire general membership of the LGBT Caucus nor the Executive Committee.

Structural-based Recommendations

Unlike content area-based recommendations, the following recommendations are intended to help improve the organizational capacity of the Caucus to best devise a road map in accomplishing the many goals put forth in the Strategic Plan.

- ✔ An annual internal evaluation of the Strategic Plan is to be conducted every year and findings presented at the LGBT Caucus business meeting as an agenda item.
- ✔ The responsibility of preparing the internal evaluation shall fall on the Chair-elect position; which will ensure that the incoming leader of the Caucus is familiar and up to date with the Strategic Plan. In years where there is no Chair-elect, the current Chair shall be charged with preparing the internal evaluation in conjunction with the immediate-past Chair.
- ✔ Given the limited time of the Student Chair position – a one (1) year term – it is recommended that the immediate past student chair assume a non-voting immediate-past position to allow for streamlined transition of responsibilities between terms.
- ✔ The Executive Committee should explore options to create revenue for the Caucus outside of membership fees. Currently membership dues constitute the Caucus’ only funding source.
- ✔ Finally, recognizing that the Strategic Plan is a living document intended to be revisited as the Caucus evolves through the years, it is recommended that a new Strategic Plan be developed every 8-10 years at the discretion of the LGBT Caucus Executive Committee.

¹ 2013 LGBT Strategic Plan is available at: http://www.aphalgbt.org/APHALGBT_StrategicPlan2014.pdf

² 2014 APHA LGBT Caucus sessions and activities can be found here: <https://apha.confex.com/apha/142am/webprogram/LGBT.html>

Content area-based Recommendations

I. Recruitment and Retention	
[Goal 1] Recruit an active and diverse membership	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded opportunity to recruit members on-site during the APHA annual meeting via mobile technology. • Showcasing diversity of Caucus via conference sessions: 6 oral and 3 poster sessions (65 total abstracts) for the 2014 meeting. • As of January 2015 there are currently 80 active (i.e., dues-paying) members.
[Goal 2] Retain an active and diverse membership	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded membership renewal opportunity on-site during the APHA annual meeting via mobile technology. • Explicit targeting of abstract submissions that showcase research featuring for Sexual Minority Women and Trans and Gender Variant populations

Perhaps the most important accomplishment during the 2013-2014 year was the added ability of the Caucus to provide potential members the opportunity join the Caucus on-site during the annual meeting, as well as giving current members the ability to renew their dues through credit/debit card payments made via smartphones. This payment system will also enable individuals to pay for the annual Caucus awards dinner as well.

Still, the following suggestions for improvement are put forth:

- ✓ Institute a reduced fee schedule, similar to that of APHA registration, for first-time members and/or those within 5 years of their terminal degree and/or those with incomes <\$45,000. Currently dues are \$45 for general members, and \$10 for students enrolled at an institution. An intermediate fee level will help recruit and retain an active and diverse membership.
- ✓ Create an opt-in member only directory as an incentive for individuals to be part of the Caucus. The membership directory is idealized to further foster active collaboration and increase member investment in the Caucus. Additionally, unlike web-based group directories (e.g., Facebook), only official (i.e., dues paying) members will have access to this professionalization enhancing directory.
- ✓ Designate two (2) current members to take on the role of “Welcome Point Person” throughout the annual meeting. While having a booth at the annual meeting increases visibility of the Caucus, a designated liaison to actively engage potentials members would maximize our ability to showcase the diversity of the Caucus and allow for booth volunteers to take care of payments relating to membership dues and the Caucus awards dinner.

II. Activities and Relationships	
[Goal 1] Develop professional relationships with community-based LGBT health organizations	* Needs improvement / ongoing *
[Goal 2] Enhance Caucus presence and activities during annual APHA meeting	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation with the Critical Coalitional Public Health Discussion group; which focuses on enhancing critical dialogues pertaining to women and/or trans/gender-variant identified individuals. • Initiated discussion with the American Indian/ Alaskan Native/ Native Hawaiian Caucus and the Women’s Caucus for a possible joint collaboration on Native/ Indigenous LGBT Health for the 2015 APHA annual meeting. • Inclusion of links to Caucus session and event information in e-newsletter prior to the start of the annual meeting.

During the 2013-2014 year the Caucus was successful in enhancing dialogues with relevant groups to plan future activities. Additionally longstanding activities that have traditionally been done in prior years, such as the Caucus awards dinner and social, will continue to occur.

Still, the following recommendations are put forth to help improve activities and relationships with external LGBT health organization as well as within APHA:

- ✔ Feature a user-driven community calendar on the website where members can submit events and announcements. Additionally, the website “Resources” section should be thoroughly reviewed and updated to include more LGBT population health links on an annual basis.
- ✔ Sponsor socially-orientated joint events (e.g., urban outings, film showings, local LGBT history tours of the host city) with local LGBT organizations during the Annual Meeting, whenever possible.
- ✔ Send out the agenda, and associated materials/ handouts, for the Caucus business meeting ahead of time so that individuals can anticipate what to expect during the meeting and to encourage attendance. This is especially important for individuals who have never attended a Caucus business meeting before and may be apprehensive about participating.

III. Communication and Social Media	
[Goal 1] Cultivate new avenues to fortify communication between Caucus members	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial increase in Caucus Facebook group page³ membership. Over 350 individuals have joined as of October 2014 – which is up 150 members from June 2014 alone. • Began digitizing Caucus historical documents, which were donated to the Gerber/ Hart Library in Chicago, IL in 2010; plan for this digital repository to be publically available to members by 2015 APHA meetings, the Caucus 40 year anniversary
[Goal 2] Sustain transparency in communication between Executive Committee and membership	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Re-)Creation of the biannual Caucus newsletter by Executive Committee with new hyperlink friendly template. • Initiation of a Caucus conference call to solicit member feedback and serve as an open space for relevant LGBT health issues.
[Goal 3] Improve membership registration infrastructure and link to Caucus listserv	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moved registration to a centralized online location (www.aphalgbt.org). • Integrating mobile technology to allow for on-site member registration and renewal at the annual meeting.

During the 2013-2014 year the Caucus was particularly successful in cross pollenating its communication and social media goals. For example, the Caucus newsletter was distributed via the e-mail listserv, as well as posted online to the Facebook group. Additionally announcements, such as for the Caucus conference call and LGBT health related webinars, were made via several Caucus media outlets.

Still, the following recommendations are put forth:

- ✔ Consider the creation of a LinkedIn page for the Caucus. This could be particularly beneficial for those who wish to maintain a distinction between personal-orientated social media profiles (Facebook) and professional-orientated social media profiles (LinkedIn).

³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/68394323392/>

- ✔ To maximize the benefit of Caucus conference calls, agenda items should be sent to the membership in advance. Also, tailoring the call to a specific issue and/or Executive Committee member will foster feedback that could best be used to enhance planned activities. For example, a Caucus conference call dedicated to mentoring, will allow for the Student Chair use the conference call to assess activities for the newly created LGBT Caucus Student Mentorship Program.
- ✔ Archive updates sent out via e-mail listserv and social media on the Caucus website. Additionally, minutes from the annual business meeting should be archived online within two (2) months of the conference for those who were not able to attend.
- ✔ Modify the existing membership database so that members can change their e-mail addresses and other pertinent information as needed. Additionally, members will have the opportunity to provide information that would be used for the opt-it member only directory.
- ✔ Organize and post digitized historical documents to Caucus website. If needed, these can be password protected and/or watermarked “not for distribution”.

IV. Student Involvement and Mentorship

[Goal 1] Create innovative mechanisms to build student presence and representation in Caucus activities	<i>* Needs improvement / ongoing *</i>
[Goal 2] Develop proactive activities which will allow for the mentorship of future LGBT health leaders	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the Student Mentoring Program. As of October 2014, 17 students have been successfully paired with 15 mentors.

The formation of a Student Mentoring Program by the Student Chair during the 2013-2014 year was a monumental accomplishment. While still in its infancy, this program will need to be evaluated during this inaugural year so as to assess efficacy and sustainability of the program in years to come. Given the limited term of the Student Chair position, it is highly recommended that the Membership Chair assist in the evaluation of the Student Mentoring Program.

To further meet the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan, the following recommendations are put forth:

- ✔ Utilizing social media to promote student member accomplishment. For example, using the APHA annual meeting hashtag (for 2014: #apha14) to promote the Walter J. Lear Student Award winner.
- ✔ Create a directory of LGBT groups at Schools of Public Health. By reaching out to these groups, the Caucus can better understand their needs. Additionally, such a directory could be used in increasing cross-university relationships and collaborations.
- ✔ Consider developing an APHA annual meeting “road map” for first time attendees that includes suggested example itineraries for new members who often feel overwhelmed by the conference.

V. Policy and Advocacy

[Goal 1] Strengthen the Caucus' relationship with APHA	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued participation with the Caucus Collaborative, which is composed of 18 APHA Caucuses that work towards addressing the specialized interests of its membership.
[Goal 2] Encourage and support advocacy and outreach on important policy issues by Caucus members	Highlighted activities & accomplishments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted “Reduction of Bullying to Address Health Disparities Among LGBT Youth” policy to Governing Council. • Preparation of a new policy to be submitted for the next cycle.

	Garnering input and assistance from Caucus members.
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During the 2013-2014 year the Caucus was successful in increasing our presence and influence throughout APHA via policy initiatives. By amending the Caucus Collaborative Representative position during the 2013 APHA annual meeting, the Caucus was able to have one individual successfully serve as the Policy Chair & Caucus Collaborative Representative. Holding two (2) distinct yet related positions allowed for streamlined action in moving policy initiatives forward.

Still, the following recommendations are put forth:

- ✔ Post final editions of submitted and approved policies on the website. If needed, these can be password protected and/or watermarked “not for distribution”.
- ✔ Dedicate one of the Caucus conference calls to policy initiatives. This will be a viable way to gain feedback on upcoming policies, to recruit individuals to help research, and to help gain input on distribution and advocacy strategies.

VI. Caucus Mission, Bylaws and Structure	
[Goal 1] Evaluate Caucus Mission Statement and bylaws	<i>* Needs improvement / ongoing *</i>
[Goal 2] Ascertain the effectiveness of the Executive Committee and Caucus leadership structure	<i>* Needs improvement / ongoing *</i>

The 2013 Strategic Plan put forth several suggested outcomes for the Caucus Mission, Bylaws and Structure Content Area. However, the Executive Committee was not able to accomplish these activities in the 2013-2014 year as they prioritized other recommendations from the Strategic Plan.

As such, the original recommendations, which modified years, are re-iterated here:

- ✔ Development of SBM (Structure, Bylaws and Mission Statement) Committee to provide recommendations to the Executive Committee by the 2015 annual APHA meeting.
- ✔ Administration of Executive Committee leadership structure and performance survey to general membership between the 2014 and 2015 annual APHA meetings.
- ✔ Administration of policies and procedures survey to Executive Committee between the 2014 and 2015 annual APHA meetings.

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