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# Perceptions of the Benefits of Professional Organizations: What do Candidates Really Think?

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**Abstract:** This study highlights perceptions of undergraduate students in the education program at a private, religious university in Virginia. Teacher candidate responses to an online survey portrayed views on the importance of joining and participating in local and national level professional education organizations (n=57). The responses reflected candidates' perceptions of service, camaraderie, career preparation, and other opportunities that professional organizations seek to provide.

## Survey

The survey included one question asking the type of licensure the participant was seeking, six scale-based questions, five open-ended response questions, and one yes or no question. Students answered the given a scale of one to five, one meaning Strongly Disagree and five meaning Strongly Agree.

### A. The scaled questions were as follows:

1. Is it a justifiable requirement to join a professional organization?
2. Did the organization you chose provide sufficient experiences for meaningful service and contribution?
3. Did the organization you chose provide learning opportunities?
4. Did you experience a sense of community and camaraderie as a result of your membership in the organization of your choice?
5. Did this camaraderie with fellow members encourage you to stay in your chosen field and improve your practice?
6. Do you believe you are better prepared for your profession as a result of joining the organization?

### B. Open-ended question were as follows:

1. Describe your organization.
2. What is most beneficial about the organization?
3. What were the most meaningful experiences you had as a member of this organization?
4. What things do you wish were different about the organization?
5. Do you recommend that the Education Department keep professional organization membership a requirement in the future? (Yes/No) Why or why not?

## Summary

The expected outcome of the administered survey was that students would see their membership and involvement in professional education organizations as both beneficial and meaningful. To view the results within the full text article, please see: [http://www.ateva.org/blog/?page\\_id=38](http://www.ateva.org/blog/?page_id=38).

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