



Students: Engaging the Future of Our Association

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“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.” — *Chinese proverb*

I often think back to my days in college and recall fondly the times when life seemed so much simpler. The stress of exams and the rush to complete assignments seems much less significant now when compared to the demands of “the real world.” College was also a time for exploration; a chance to learn more about myself, as well as to contemplate the opportunities that were before me. It was also during this time that another piece of the puzzle was presented to me, one that I didn’t appreciate until much later. I was introduced to mentors, and those mentors helped shape who I am today.

Mentors help to prepare students and often identify strengths unrecognized by the students themselves. They prepare students for the challenges they may face, while also providing a sounding board for ideas, questions, or pitfalls that may be encountered along the way. Mentors lead by example and demonstrate a path to success, one that is often imitated by students as they progress through college and their professional careers. One opportunity mentors often expose

students to is involvement in a professional association, but students typically don’t take advantage of this until after they transition into a professional. But why wait?

Though it takes dedication, joining a professional association as a student just makes sense. Students involved in professional associations are afforded networking opportunities with influential professionals and often will be praised for taking the initiative to learn more about the field before embarking on a career path. Members of professional associations often enjoy mentoring ambitious students and appreciate the fresh perspective students can bring to an association. But beyond the networking opportunities and mentoring, students can also benefit from professional associations through the following:

Conferences

Students are often able to participate in local and national conferences at significantly discounted rates (or even free). This allows students to more fully

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