What We Heard

A fundamental goal of the MME Board’s Strategic Planning Committee is to ensure that a new strategic plan is based on the concerns and ideas of the membership. We directed our consultant, The Nonprofit Spot, to survey the membership and conduct focus groups at the 2020 Winter Institute. They’ve completed those tasks and have presented the results to us and we want to update the membership on what we heard.

The Process

An extensive survey was conducted in early January with 123 members responding representing a 35% response rate. A less than 25% response rate is typical so the consultants were pleased with the high rate of response. Individual results have been aggregated and the comments anonymized to protect the confidentiality of the responses. The survey results can be found at here.

Four focus groups were conducted at the 2020 Winter Institute. Members could sign up for a session focused on 1) women and minorities 2) members aged 45 and under, 3) members from the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Michigan or 4) just members in general. The groups averaged about 10 persons per group.

Focus Group responses were classified using a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis. Focus Group results were compared to the overall survey results and also to the subgroups of the survey which mirrored each of the focus groups. An overview of the focus group results can be found at www.mme.org.

Key Strategic Issues

Generally, the results of the survey and of the focus groups were consistent with each other. Several key themes emerged with particular issues which could be improved but with an overall tone that MME is generally working well. The following are the key strategic issues the membership would like to see addressed in a strategic plan:
Key Strategic Issues

• MME should implement some needed improvements while remaining cognizant that the organization is generally doing what its membership wants it to do.
• MME should be a force to improve the political & governmental climate that city managers work in.
• MME should address a number of small but persistent issues which are the source of some organization conflict while those issues are still small.
• Newer members, and particularly women and minority members, would benefit from mentoring programs and other programs and actions that would make them feel more welcome in the organization.
• The pipeline for people to enter into the profession has deteriorated and needs to be improved.
• The reputation of the profession continues to suffer and efforts should be made to improve it.
• Some processes of the organization, in particular the nominations process, seem opaque and it would be good if there were greater transparency in how these processes are conducted.
• The Listserv is a valuable resource but some improvements should be made in how it is used.
• While current programming is well served by the current level of staff and volunteer capacity, desired improvements would likely require greater staff capacity.
• The relationships with partners such as MML and ICMA are positive, but roles and responsibilities should be reviewed to allow for better or different partnership opportunities.
• The sheer distance between parts of the state creates time and participation constraints and MME should work to find ways to address those constraints in the delivery of programs and services.

Let us know what you think!

We want to ensure these issues represent the needs of MME membership. Please share any additional feedback with us via this form by noon on Friday, May 22!