

Onboarding: ACSP Interest Group Leadership

I. Introduction and Group Definition

Slide 1: Title Slide

- **Main Title:** Fostering Community: ACSP Interest Group Leadership
- **Subtitle:** A Guide for Group Leaders and Members

Slide 2: ACSP Mission and Values Refresher

- **Mission:** The Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning promotes education, research and outreach in the United States and Canada and throughout the world by seeking to:
 - recognize diverse needs and interests in planning;
 - strengthen the role of planning education in colleges and universities through publications, conferences and community engagement;
 - improve and enhance the accreditation process, and;
 - extend planning beyond the classroom into the world of practice.
- **Values:**
 - Excellence in education and scholarship
 - Broadly inclusive methodological perspectives and a fully inclusive range of voices
 - Engagement across multiple publics
 - Education that supports inclusion and cultural competence
 - An inclusive and a welcoming environment within all our association activities
 - IGs as the Heart

Slide 3: What is an Interest Group (IG)?

- **Definition & Structure:** A designated, formally recognized entity for ACSP faculty and students with a **common concern or research base**. While understood to be under the ACSP 501c3 not-for-profit umbrella, IGs have elected leadership and their own formalized bylaws. Interest group members should also be ACSP members.
- **Purpose:** To encourage discussion, collaboration, and **advance specific interests** and concerns of members within planning academia (e.g., outreach, research, and advocacy).
- **The Four Designated IGs:** FWIG, GPEIG, POCIG, and QT-IG.

Slide 4: Differentiating ACSP Groups and Affiliated Organizations

- **Formal and Informal ACSP Groups**
 - **Interest Groups (formal):**
 - Formal Structure, elected leadership, and missions.
 - Officially designated by the ACSP Governing Board.
 - Invited to attend Governing Board meetings, but are not part of the board and thus cannot vote at board meetings.

- Eligible to apply for ACSP funding.
 - Leaders serve as official liaisons to the ACSP Governing Board and must submit semi-annual reports, usually in Feb/March and Aug/Sept. This is required to maintain your group's active status and is crucial for funding.
- **Working Groups (not formal):**
 - Informal groups without elected leadership or bylaws.
 - Function for casual discussions and collaborations via listservs/social media.
 - Not funded by ACSP (do not collect dues or apply for funding).
- **Partner or Affiliated Organizations:**
 - GPEAN - ACSP appoints a member to the GPEAN Board. This rep is a non-voting member of the ACSP board.
 - AESOP - ACSP appoints someone to work closely with AESOP and report to the ACSP board about on-going activities of joint interest.
 - PAB - ACSP appoints three faculty to the PAB board. These reps are non-voting members of the ACSP board.
 - APA - ACSP and APA work on mutually beneficial projects and initiatives.
 - IACP - ACSP and IACP work on mutually beneficial projects and initiatives.

II. Managing an Interest Group

Slide 5: Pillar 1: Special Events

- **Event Planning:** Leaders determine the event (e.g., one proposed session, a business meeting, or social; Staff assists with appearance of the event(s) in the conference app.
- **Webinars & Outreach:** Encouraged year-round; coordinate with ACSP staff for scheduling and promotion.

Slide 6: Pillar 2: Fundraising

- **Fundraising:** External fundraising may be directed through the **official ACSP Donation Portal** (donations are designated to the IG).
- **Past Success Examples:** IG funding has successfully supported specialized research workshops, and publication fees for edited volumes.

Slide 7: Pillar 3: Organizing Sessions

- **Session Options:**
 - **Panels or workshops:** (not guaranteed, space is limited) Starting in 2026, non-reviewed session submissions will follow the same schedule as all submissions. No deadline extensions.
 - The National Conference Committee will review these sessions for redundancy with track submissions.
 - Non-reviewed session submission deadline is mid May
 - **The Rule: No Schedule Changes:** Once published, the conference schedule is final. Sessions **will not be rearranged**. Speakers may be substituted in a timely manner.
 - IGs are encouraged to co-organize sessions with other groups including GPEAN, AESOP, APA, etc. and at different conferences

Slide 8: Pillar 4: Managing Meetings

- **Business Meetings:** ACSP provides space at the annual conference for the **annual business meeting** to elect, recruit, or congratulate on their election of new leaders, discuss bylaws, and set goals.
- **Collaboration:** Coordinate with other IGs or ACSP Committees to make sure initiatives do not overlap (e.g., mentorship online (Zoom) workshops).

Slide 9: Pillar 5: ACSP Mentorship Ecosystem

- All interest groups engage in mentorship. Overview of current ACSP efforts [link](#):
 - **Faculty:**
 - **Faculty Support:** Year-round mentoring, writing workshops, and tailored programs for women, faculty of color, LGBTQ+ scholars, and global educators.
 - **Leadership Development:** Chairs Academy
 - **Students:**
 - **Pre-Doctoral Mentoring:** Workshops for underrepresented students preparing for PhD study.
 - **Doctoral Student Support:** Dissertation, publishing, and job market guidance.
 - **Student Network:** Peer mentoring, “Doctor Is In” clinic, and professional development.

Slide 9: Pillar 6: Awards

- **ACSP General Awards:**
 - **ACSP & Interest Group Awards**
 - Joint ACSP/Interest Group awards are subject to the ACSP’s practices and policies regarding award management and distribution.
 - IGs appoint and manage the award committees to select winners of these awards.
 - The application deadline for all award submissions is June 1 (no extensions). The deadline for selection of award winners is the first week of August.
 - ACSP promotes all winners of these awards.
 - Examples:
 - *FWIG: Marcia M. Feld Leadership Award, Margarita McCoy Award and Marsha Ritzdorf Award*
 - *GPEIG: Gill-Chin Lim Best Dissertation on International Planning Award and two Gill-Chin Lim Student Travel Awards*
 - *POCIG: Edward Blakely Award*
 - **Internal Interest Group Awards:**
 - These awards are created within the interest group structure.
 - The interest group manages the application process, the decision making and notification process, and the visibility for the winner(s).
 - ACSP does not have oversight of award management, or provide funding for

awards created by the interest groups.

Slide 10: Pillar 7: Community Input

- Periodically, ACSP will invite you to provide feedback, for example, on conference locations, etc.
- You do not need to survey your membership on most of the issues when ACSP is asking for your input.
- However, some groups have done an annual member survey which might provide invaluable information to the IG board on member needs, identifies key research issues, and informs ACSP Governing Board when considering new policies/decisions.

Slide 11: Pillar 8: Sustaining Community: Delegation & Best Practices

- **Ad Hoc Committees (Delegation):** Use IG ad hoc committees to distribute the workload and prevent burnout, especially for IG board members who are tenure-track faculty or students.
 - **When to Seek Support:** Delegate tasks like event planning, newsletter development, or specific research projects to your own members. IG leadership doesn't need to take on everything!
- **Cultivating Community:** Best practices for a vibrant, supportive, and inclusive environment.
 - **Vibrant:** Regularly promote member successes and plan varied engagement events (virtual and in-person).
 - **Supportive & Inclusive:** Establish clear, zero-tolerance guidelines for non-inclusive behavior and promote mentorship across career stages.
 - **Active:** Ensure timely communication via listservs and forums.

Slide 12: Pillar 9: Institutional Knowledge & Resource Transition

- **Foundational History:** Seek an **orientation or 'coffee talk' with previous leaders** to gain historical context and understand the group's evolution.
- **Archival Knowledge:**
 - Review past budget requests, bi-annual reports to the board, research, publications, and presentations to leverage existing institutional knowledge in the website and or Google/Box folders.
 - Send newsletters, messages to your membership, meeting minutes, etc. to the ACSP to archive on your web pages.
- **Operational Continuity:** Verify the status of shared digital storage (e.g., Google Folders) within your own IG (ACSP does not keep IG information unless it is in the website). Ensure all leaders know how to use the group's **Listserv/Google Groups** for official communication.
- **Succession Planning:** Implement strategies for running smooth, transparent elections and actively recruiting diverse board members.

III. Governance, Reporting, & Policy

Slide 13: Finances

- **External Funding - The ACSP doesn't have decision-making oversight of external funds raised by IGs.** When the group hosts a fundraiser or receives external funding, these funds can either

be put into an external checking account, or the ACSP can host them.

- IGs may have their own bank accounts but none do at this time.
- If ACSP is hosting, at any time, IGs can inquire about the balance of their fund.
- ACSP has software to help accept donations from members or others.
- If ACSP is hosting, at any time of the year, receipts for expenses can be submitted to the ACSP Bursar and bills will be paid.
- **ACSP Funding** - Each year, the ACSP assesses its own ability through the budgeting process to possibly provide funds to support IG projects or initiatives.
 - If the ACSP determines there are available funds to provide support for IG initiatives, the ACSP will invite funding proposals once per year after the Governing Board approves the new fiscal year's budget (FY is July 1 - June 30). The ACSP does not consider new funding proposals in the fall.
 - If a proposed initiative is approved by the ACSP, payments will be provided based on successfully achieving scheduled benchmarks or on project completion.
 - Projects or initiatives must be completed within the approved fiscal year.
 - Proposal Content:
 - Proposed Activity - proposals should be for non-recurrent initiatives and directly support the priorities of the current ACSP Strategic Plan
 - Intended Community
 - Execution team contact information
 - Additional funding sources
 - Itemized expenses (with justification)
 - Outcomes and accountability: reporting benchmarks (deadlines), target completion date, measurable outcomes, success determination

Slide 14: Examples of what is/not fundable through the ACSP

- **What will not be considered by the ACSP** - These expenses could be paid using IG externally raised funds.
 - ACSP faculty, board members, and interest-group leaders cannot receive personal compensation (salary, stipends, or honoraria) from these funds.
 - External Website - ACSP provides web pages for each IG so will not financially support an external website.
 - Food and beverage, entertainment, excessive audio visual equipment, etc. for events held at the conference or at other times during the year.
 - IG operations expenses - merchandise, supplies, conference exhibit creation, etc.
 - Recurring expenses such as software subscription, ongoing program costs, etc.
- **What might be funded by the ACSP with an accepted proposal:**
 - Development of a workshop or training session that strengthens scholarship, pedagogy, or capacity-building in alignment with ACSP priorities.
 - Honorarium for invited speakers who are not ACSP member faculty or ACSP students.
 - Creation of a special report or white paper that advances knowledge, visibility, or impact related to the IG's focus area.
 - Support for a research activity, including student research assistance for survey design, data collection, data analysis, or transcription services.

Slide 15: Making Statements

- **Statement Policy**
 - ACSP is creating but has not yet adopted a policy on making public statements.
 - We are exploring the idea of creating space in the weekly newsletter for people to share opinion letters with invitations for individual support.
 - **Required use of disclaimer language** if an IG feels strongly about making a statement: "The opinions and views expressed in this content are the opinions of the designated author and do not reflect the opinions or views of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning or any of its members."

Slide 16: Navigating the ACSP Handbook

- **Interest & Working Groups (Page 12):** Defines group structure and general scope.
- **Association Budget Preparation (Pages 19-22):** Outlines the process for ACSP's financial oversight.
- **Funding Request for Studies or Initiatives (Page 64 & 69):** **CRITICAL** section detailing proposal components for any new project funding.

Slide 17: Working Timeframes

- **Funding Requests:** If funding is available, ACSP will issue proposal invitations in late spring after the ACSP Governing Board approves its annual working budget. If a proposal is approved, the funds are available July 1.
- **Biannual Reports:** Reports are typically due early in the year (Feb/March) and Fall (Aug/September). Reminders and instructions for reports are shared by ACSP staff. This allows the Executive Committee to review reports for important elements to share during the board meetings.
- **Governing Board (GB) Meetings:** The GB meets twice per year. Spring date will vary (virtual meeting) and then the day before the ACSP conference in the Fall. Your role is to monitor GB activities and provide input on policy decisions that affect your community.
- **Conference Sessions:** Proposals due in May. Watch for invitations from ACSP staff. Space is becoming increasingly tight and this deadline will be strict as we move forward.
- **Award Committee Member Confirmations** - ACSP needs to know your confirmed award committee members by February of each year.
- **Award Submissions:** All applications/nominations for ACSP awards have a firm June 1 deadline. If an IG has its own internal awards, the deadline can be set as they wish..
- **IG Deadlines:** IGs set their own deadlines for completion of their CV Book production and other initiatives.
- **Conference Events:** ACSP staff must know of your plans by late spring of each year to plan appropriately for the fall conference.

Slide 18: Role of IG Leadership at ACSP Board Meetings

- IG leaders are invited participants but are *non-voting* members of the Board.
- The Governing Board previously considered giving IG a Board seat, but concerns were raised that as the number of IG grows, this could lead to an undemocratic imbalance in representation.
- The Governing Board meets one day prior to the conference, and members cover their own expenses since no funding is provided to support this extra day.
- They are encouraged to participate in all discussions, which helps them stay informed about

ACSP priorities and ongoing initiatives.

- Reports without decisions needed by the board are assigned to the Consent Agenda.
- If clarification is needed from a report, IG leaders may of course respond, otherwise, there are no oral presentations of reports on the Consent Agenda.

Slide 19: Leader Compliance & Risk Management (Handbook p. 62-64)

- **Avoid "Apparent Authority":** IG leaders **cannot** speak on behalf of ACSP, sign contracts, or expend unapproved ACSP funds. All authority rests with the ACSP President and Governing Board.
- **Data & IP Rights:** ACSP retains "unlimited rights to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data" for *any* ACSP-funded research.
- **Publication Rules:** Funded projects *must* acknowledge ACSP support and give primary publication consideration to the **Journal of Planning Education and Research (JPER)**.

Slide 20: Your Dedicated ACSP Staff Support Team

- **Funding & Governance:** Donna Dodd (ddodd@acsp.org). For expense management, policy interpretations, and official funding submissions.
- **Web & Communications:** Damien Raimondi (damien@acsp.org). For IG webpage updates.
- **Communications via ACSP Channels:** Nicole Smith (nicole@acsp.org). Social media and newsletter submissions.
- **Conference & Events:** Camden Miller (Camden@acsp.org). For conference meeting space, sessions, and event logistics.
- **Newsletter:** If you are doing a webinar or would like something to be elevated to the newsletter. Email text and images, etc. to news@acsp.org. ACSP has a weekly newsletter which are sent every Tuesday.
- **NOTE: ACSP staff are not IG staff.** For example, they will announce a webinar that your IG is organizing, but will not invite speakers, manage attendance, provide the Zoom link, or create marketing pieces. If you have questions, please ask Donna what staff can help and cannot help you with.

Slide 21: Questions?

- **Call to Action:** Immediate Action: Review the **ACSP Handbook** and your group's **Bylaws**.
- **When in doubt** email Donna and she will provide or research answers, and can direct you to the right person!