

**Economic Climate
QuiP and QuiPS Results**

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Introduction and Method

Early in 2008, a stratified random sample of APA members and a stratified random sample of APA student affiliates were sent an email asking members of each to agree to participate in a series of brief opinion surveys on issues related to psychology, APA, and APAGS (to be known as QuiP for Quick Opinion Poll, and QuiPS for Quick Opinion Poll for Students). Eventually, one thousand six hundred and thirty-nine members agreed to be part of QuiP, and 1,652 students agreed to be part of QuiPS.

The demographic characteristics of the final member sample were compared to current APA member profiles to ensure it was representative of the larger membership. The demographic characteristics of the final student sample were compared against current APA student affiliate profiles to ensure it was representative of the larger student membership. The final samples for both QuiP and QuiPS were determined to be representative.

The purpose of this current APA Quick Poll was to investigate members' and student affiliates' perceptions of how the current economic climate is affecting their employment and education, as well as their future plans. Members were asked a number of questions pertaining to their employment status, their primary employment position, and changes to different aspects of their employment due to the current economic climate. Student affiliates were asked about their graduate status, and a number of questions about how the current economic climate has affected their finances related to school, and their education plans. Finally, both student affiliates and members reported whether they feel the economic situation will improve, remain the same, or worsen in the coming calendar year, and what role they feel APA can fill in helping its members and student affiliates cope with the current economic situation. Appendices A and B contain the cover letter and the survey that were sent to poll members.

In November, 2008, the panel members were sent an email describing the purpose of the poll and were provided with login instructions to the survey (see Appendix A). One week after the initial email, a reminder email was distributed to those who had not participated in the online survey. A final request for participation was sent the following week.

A total of 938 of the 1,639 members surveyed completed the survey, yielding a true overall response rate of 57.2%. Member respondent demographics were compared to the total sample and were determined to be representative. For the student affiliate sample, 696 of the 1,652 student affiliates surveyed responded, yielding a true overall response rate of 42%. Responding student affiliate demographics were compared against the sample and were determined to be representative.

Results

Members

Results for participants who are members can be generalized to the larger APA member population.

Overall, 68% percent of the members reported that they were employed **full time** (35 hours per week or and 12% were **retired**. Less than 2% of the member respondents were **unemployed but actively seeking work**.

The next item asked respondents to rate on a Likert scale how certain aspects of their primary employment had changed due to the current economic situation. The scale ranged from 1 (Large Decrease) to 5 (Large Increase). Respondents also had the option to choose Don't Know, or Not Applicable.

Across all categories the majority of member respondents reported no change as a result of the current economic climate. Fifty-three percent of members said there was no change in the **number of clients** they were seeing as a result of the current economic status. The mean was 1.91 with an SD of .914. Twenty-four percent reported a small decrease, and 13% reported a small increase in number of clients.

Sixty-four percent of members reported no change in their **employment security** as a result of the current economic status. The mean was 1.75 with an SD of .843. Twenty-four percent reported a small decrease in their employment security as a result of the current economic status.

Seventy-six percent of respondents indicated no change in their **career**

advancement, with a mean of 1.87 and an SD of .695, while thirteen percent reported a small decrease in their career advancement.

Seventy-three percent of members indicated no change in the amount of **insurance reimbursement** they were receiving (mean of 1.95, SD .924), while 15% indicated a small decrease.

Fifty-four percent of members (mean of 1.91 and SD of 1.306) indicated no change in the amount of **research funding**, while 23% reported a small decrease in funding, and 11% reported a large decrease in funding due to the current economic situation.

Sixty-three percent of members reported no change in their **salary or income**, while 20% reported a small decrease. The mean was 1.87 with an SD of .848.

Finally, the majority of respondents (51%) indicated no change in their **ongoing or planned projects/operations** due to current economic status, while 30% reported a small decrease. Seven percent indicated a large decrease, while 6% indicated a small increase in their ongoing or planned projects/operations. The mean was 1.78 with an SD of 1.003.

The patterns held for all items regardless of demographics, including primary employment position.

Members were asked if they felt the **current economic situation** would worsen, remain the same, or improve over the next calendar year. The majority of respondents (62%) indicated they felt the economy would worsen, 21% felt it would remain the same, and 17% felt it would improve, regardless of member demographics.

Despite the largest proportion of members reporting no change in each of the queried areas, approximately 17%-37% of members reported small to large decreases due to the current economic situation, in all areas of employment, including the amount of research funds available, number of clients for whom they are providing services, salary or income, and employment security. Additionally, ongoing or planned future projects, and members' employment security were experiencing these decreases.

Student Affiliates

Results for student affiliates can be generalized to the larger APA graduate student affiliate population.

Out of the 1,652 student affiliates surveyed, a total of 696 student affiliates completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 42%. Ninety-eight

percent of these respondents reported that they were **currently graduate students. Undergraduate student respondents did not respond in sufficient numbers to allow us** to report on the question of whether they were planning to attend graduate school.

Next, students were asked how the current economic situation had affected their personal finances related to school.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that the **economic downturn reduced personal savings** allocated to their education. Thirty-three percent indicated that they **increased reliance on work**, and 26% said that they **increased the use of credit cards** to fund their education. Thirty-three percent of respondents reported that the **current economic situation had no effect** on their personal finances related to school.

Fifty-six percent of respondents reported that the **current economic situation has had no effect** on their education plans. When asked how the current economic situation was affecting their education plans, 24% of respondents said that they will have to find employment or find an additional job. Twenty-one percent said that they will have to **increase the number of hours** that they work at their current place of employment.

Student affiliates were asked if they felt the **current economic situation** would worsen, remain the same, or improve over the next calendar year. The majority of respondents (50%) indicated they felt the economy would worsen, 28% felt it would remain the same, and 21% felt it would improve, regardless of student affiliate demographics.

Summary of Text Responses

Poll members were asked to respond to the question below.

“What role do you see for APA in helping its members and student affiliates cope with the current economic situation?”

Members

The most often-mentioned response in each broad section below is in bold.

Finances

Suggestions that focused on reducing or freezing dues for a limited time/ for particular groups (unemployed/retirees/etc)

or keeping dues steady – no increases. Hardship dues. Similar

suggestions re convention registrations (unemployed=free, early career professionals and new doctorates=lower fees/dues)/assessments/journal and subscription costs. Don't cut services.

Emergency loans/subsidies for post-doctorates or interns/ faculty travel funds/long term low interest loans to students/APA credit card with low interest rate

Reduce unnecessary association costs: double mailings/ mailing expenses/travel/expensive convention sites. However, do not lay off staff and thereby reduce ability to serve members.

Advocacy/lobbying

Strong theme throughout that this was not a time to lessen advocacy efforts. Keep working on securing funding for students, researchers, legislation that supports health care benefits. Use research/science to support arguments for psychological services. Keep working to highlight underserved areas/populations.

Employment

Keep information flowing on job/employment opportunities. Provide through variety of media: Monitor/online/clearinghouse/encourage greater sharing of information among members of job openings.

Provide current information on the job market nationally: impact of economic situation on health services, students, faculty, and researchers. **Honest** forecasts about impacts of various bailouts/government actions. Broadly. Update frequently. Links to existing "discussions"/sources.

Provide information on how to find work/stay employed in what may be a different economic environment. Information on alternative or non-traditional careers, and how to prepare for these. Information to schools/educators on how to do this. Psychology is applicable to a wide variety of settings.

Establish/support discussion groups/online support groups/mentoring/webinars re financial/economic issues. Consultant services. **Could the effective way that APA responds to national disasters be adapted to this situation?**

Social/Support

Disseminate FREE information on importance of self care/coping/stress reduction and how to do this. Work to emphasize importance of a positive

outlook, reduce fear/panic. Motivational and person-sided support. Strength of self-fulfilling prophecy should be recognized.

These can be approached using some of the techniques above: discussion groups/online offerings. Important to note that not all access information electronically.

Research how various health care proposals will impact psychologists and population. How other professions/disciplines fare re debt/reimbursement/income/research funding.

Involvement in local community where have expertise to help (be it health Care/lectures/research). Educate individuals to different lifestyles. Work with organizations that provide services to poor and underserved.

Student Affiliates

Student affiliate responses were **more** singularly focused on financial concerns and considerations than was the case with members. These are listed roughly in order of descending frequency of mention.

Direct financial help: Reduce membership costs/journal costs/waive fees/education costs. Establish member-funded financial assistance fund.

Information about financial help: Provide information about financial support for students/grants /information on financial planning via Clearinghouse/networking opportunities.

Internships: Increase internship sites and funding. Cut costs of applying to sites.

Mentoring: Provide/establish forums for discussion of all these issues/increase opportunities for networking/ use members as coaches/mentors.

Advocacy: Continue to advocate for increased stipends/financial support/federal dollars

Employment: Identify and disseminate information about employment opportunities/jobs/economic outlook.

Self care: Provide social support/encouragement/psychological/social help

Member Tables

Member Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Full-time	625	67.6
Part-time	173	18.7
Not Employed, Actively Seeking	12	1.3
Not Employed, Not Actively Seeking	7	.8
Retired	108	11.7
Total	925	100.0

Descriptive Statistics: How have the following changed for you as a result of the current economic situation?

	Number of Clients	Employment Security	Career Advancement	Insurance Reimbursement	Research Funding	Salary/ Income	Ongoing or Planned Projects/ Operations
Valid <i>N</i>	538	769	721	407	365	777	702
Missing	1105	874	922	1236	1278	866	941
Mean	1.91	1.75	1.87	1.95	1.91	1.87	1.78
Median	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Mode	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Std. Deviation	.914	.843	.695	.924	1.306	.848	1.003
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Note: Response items were on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Large Decrease), to 5 (Large Increase).

Frequencies: How have the following changed for you as a result of the current economic situation?

	Large Decrease		Small Decrease		No Change		Small Increase		Large Increase	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employment Security	47	6.1	185	11.3	494	64.2	19	2.5	3	0.4
Career Advancement	32	4.4	95	5.8	559	34.0	19	2.6	5	0.7
Number of Clients	26	4.8	129	7.9	286	53.2	71	13.2	17	3.2
Insurance Reimbursement	20	4.9	59	14.5	295	18.0	11	2.7	0	0.0
Research Funding	40	11.0	83	22.7	195	53.4	4	1.1	2	0.5
Salary/Income	39	5.0	155	19.9	491	63.2	68	8.8	5	0.6
Ongoing/Planned Projects	49	7.0	208	29.6	361	51.4	45	6.4	12	1.7

What is your primary employment position?

Employment Position	Frequency	Percent
Missing/Not Specified	47	2.9
Faculty Position	237	14.4
Educational Administration	30	1.8
Research	47	2.9
Admin. of Research	9	0.5
Direct Human Services	238	14.5
Admin. of Human services	35	2.1
Applied Psychology	96	5.8
Admin. of Applied Psychology	14	0.9
Other Admin. Position	16	1.0

Other Position	63	3.8
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“I feel the current economic situation will _____ in the coming calendar year.”

Economic Status	Frequency	Percent
Worsen	982	59.8
Remain Same	338	20.6
Improve	277	16.9
Missing	46	2.8
Total	1643	100.0

Student Tables

Student Status

Student Status	Frequency	Percent
Missing	13	1.9
Undergraduate student	2	.3
Graduate student	681	97.8
Total	696	100.0

How has the current economic situation affected your finances related to school? (Check all)

Finances	Frequency	Percent
Reduced personal savings because of economic downturn	254	36.5
Increased reliance on work to pay for school	227	32.6
Increase use of credit card to pay for school	184	26.4
Increased use of personal loans	120	17.2
Less available federal and grant loans	82	11.8
Reduced research and teaching assistantships	74	10.6
Less sources of federal support	67	9.6
N/A-no change	228	32.8

How is the current economic status affecting your education plans? (Check all)

Education plans	Frequency	Percent
Will have to find employment or an additional job	166	23.9
Will have to increase number of hours at my work	143	20.5
Will take a break from my studies	38	5.5
Will change full-time to part-time	18	2.6
Will change part time to full time	7	1.0
Has no effect on education plans	388	55.7

“I feel the current economic situation will _____ in the coming calendar year.”

Economic Status	Frequency	Percent
Worsen	349	50.1
Remain same	192	27.6
Improve	144	20.7
Missing	11	1.6
Total	696	100.0

Appendix A:
QuiP and QuiPS Cover Letter

Dear Colleague:

Earlier this year you agreed to be part of an ongoing APA opinion poll, Quick Poll (QuiP). We promised to keep the polls short and to limit the questions and the burden on you. In return, you agreed to give us feedback on items that could be used to inform planning by APA's Central Office, Board and Council.

This poll includes a few short questions regarding the current economic climate to which we would like your responses.

Because we would like to provide results to you and to APA directorates by early December 2008, your timely response is critical. After participating you will be able to view real-time preliminary results for a few of the poll items. In early December an email will be sent to you with a link to the complete final report with tables from this QuiP effort.

We hope that you will agree to participate in this poll so that you can have direct input into the activities, policies, and decisions of APA and APAGS. *Individual responses will never be released and results will be reported in the aggregate only.* Poll members can choose to withdraw from the panel at any time by emailing QuiP@apa.org (please remember to write to us using the email address this poll was originally sent to, or you will continue to receive emails from us).

We have placed the survey on a secure website and we have issued you an individual, randomly generated passcode. To access the poll, please enter your passcode listed below. This login information is used to determine who has completed the survey for purposes of follow-up and prevent duplicate responses.

Passcode:

The secure website can be accessed at:

Please contact Brittany Hart by email at QuiP@apa.org or by telephone at (800) 374-2721 extension 5980 if you have any questions. You may also email the Center for Workforce Studies about QuiP at QuiP@apa.org. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Cordially,

Jessica Kohout, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Workforce Studies
Science Directorate, American Psychological Association (APA)

Renee F. Valdez, M.A.
Interim Associate Executive Director
Director, Committee Operations & Programs
American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS)

Appendix B:
QuiP and QuiPS Poll: Economic Climate Instruments

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QuiP/QuIP(s) 2008 Poll

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1. Passcode _____

2. Are you a:

- ☐ Member→ continues to member questions
- ☐ Student Affiliate→ continues to student questions

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Member Page

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3. Are you currently?

- ☐ Employed full-time (35+ hrs. per week) →continues to Q4
- ☐ Employed part-time (less than 35 hrs. per week)→ continues to Q4
- ☐ Not employed, but actively seeking employment→ continues to Q10
- ☐ Not employed, not actively seeking employment→ continues to Q10
- ☐ Retired→ continues to Q10

4. How have the following changed for you as a result of the current economic situation? (Note: Please choose one option for each item. (LD=Large Decrease, SD= Small Decrease, No change, SI=Small Increase, LI=Large Increase, DK=Don't Know, N/A=Not Applicable)

Employment security	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Career advancement	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Number of clients	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Insurance reimbursement	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Research funding	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Salary/Income	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A
Ongoing or planned projects/operations	LD	SD	No Change	SI	LI	DK	N/A

5. What is your primary employment position?

(Drop Down Menu of Options)_____

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Student Page

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6. Are you currently:

- ☐ an undergraduate student→continues to Q7
- ☐ a graduate student→continues to Q8

7. Are you:

- ☐ Planning to go on to graduate school
- ☐ Not planning to go on to graduate school
- ☐ Undecided

8. How has the current economic situation affected your finances related to school? (Please check all that apply)
- ☐ Research/teaching assistantship has been reduced
 - ☐ Federal grant/loan less than previously available
 - ☐ Amounts of federal sources of support less than previously available
 - ☐ Increased reliance on work
 - ☐ Increased use of personal (not federal) loans
 - ☐ Increased use of credit card to fund education
 - ☐ Economic downturn reduced personal savings allocated to my education
 - ☐ No change

9. How is the current economic situation affecting your education plans? (Please check all that apply)
- ☐ I will have to change from full-time to part-time
 - ☐ I will have to change from part-time to full-time
 - ☐ I will have to take a break from my studies
 - ☐ I will have to find employment/find an additional job
 - ☐ I will have to increase the number of hours I work at my current employment
 - ☐ No affect

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Last Page
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10. "I feel the current economic situation will _____ in the coming calendar year."
- ☐ worsen
 - ☐ remain the same
 - ☐ improve

11. What role do you see for APA in helping its members and/or student affiliates cope with the current economic situation?
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Thank You!
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Thank you for taking APA's Quick Opinion Poll; your response is very important to us. If you have any questions or comments about this poll please contact the APA Center for Workforce Studies at 1 (800) 374-2721 ext. 5980 or email QuiP@apa.org.

In a few weeks you will receive an email with a link to the full report and tables for this effort, but for now please feel free to check out some real-time preliminary results below!