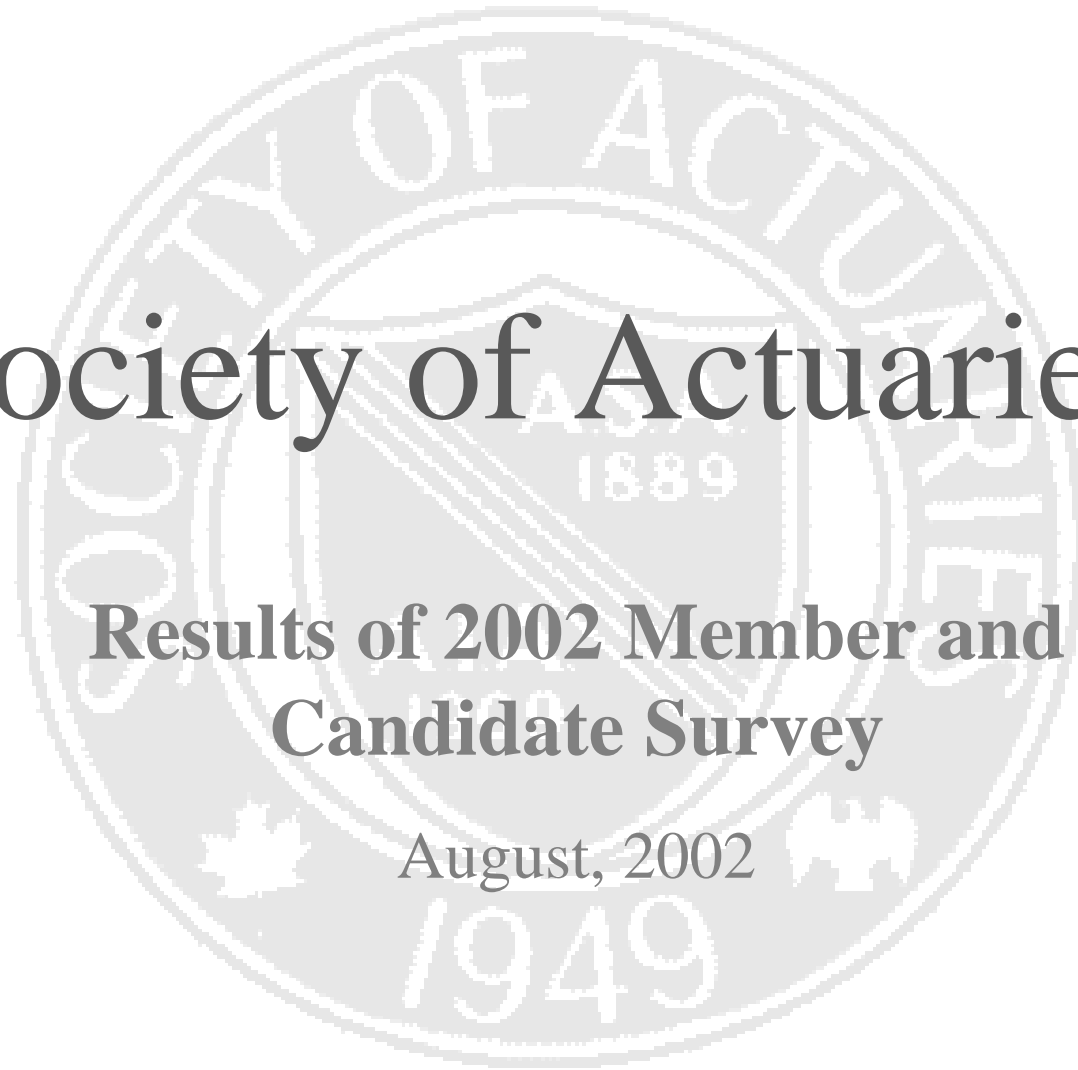Society of Actuaries

Society of Actuaries

Results of 2002 Member and Candidate Survey

August, 2002

The SOA sponsored research among members and candidates to determine how the SOA can provide maximum satisfaction

Primary objectives of the research:

- Measure member and candidate current satisfaction with SOA services

- Identify needs, expectation and priorities of members and candidates by segment (practice area, section, geography, etc.)

- Determine how to improve offerings to our members and candidates

- Identify drivers of member and candidate satisfaction

- Gain members and candidates perspectives on policy and strategic issues being evaluated by the SOA's Board of Governors as part of the strategic planning process

- Assess the SOA's performance on the Value Propositions *AND* assess relevance of Value Propositions to members as stated in the strategic plan

- Create baseline to measure the SOA's Board of Governors' effectiveness in meeting strategic directions

The Member and Candidate research is the foundation for several strategic initiatives in the SOA Strategic Plan

- Deliver products and services focused on customers' needs

- Be the first choice provider of direct and indirect education

- Advance the actuarial practice through research

- Build the most effective and efficient processes and structures to ensure the SOA delivers value to its customers

The research effort was supported by qualitative and quantitative analysis

- Research design and analysis was conducted by Erin Research, an independent research firm

- Qualitative interviews were conducted among 45 members and candidates to serve as a foundation for the survey design

- Notification of the online survey was distributed to all SOA members who provided email addresses and all candidates who have written an exam in the last two years
  - 76% of members and candidates with valid email addresses received email notification of the survey
  - 33% of members and and 24% of candidates completed the survey

Areas explored by the Member and Candidate Survey

- **Overall satisfaction**

- **SOA's role in the profession**

- **Rating of SOA's services**

  - **By Members**

  - **By Candidates (both pre-ASA and ASA's studying for the FSA)**

- **Competing professions**

Key Findings

- **Members and candidates respondents are generally satisfied with the SOA, yet feel the SOA provides average value for membership dues**

- **Member respondents indicated that the greatest opportunity to improve their satisfaction lies in**
  - Improving promotion of the actuarial profession to employers and society
  - Maintaining and enhancing the value of the credentials
  - Providing content through continuing education or publications that highlights emerging issues

- **Member respondents also want the SOA to stay focused on delivering valuable products and services, such as experience studies and continuing education, which helps them in their daily job activities**

Key Findings

- **Candidate respondents indicated that the greatest opportunity to improve their satisfaction lies in**
  - Maintaining and enhancing the value of the credential
  - Providing career development and job networking resources
- **Candidate respondents also provided their views on changes to the current education and qualification system that the SOA should consider**
- **Members and candidates are very interested in the future direction of the SOA – we thank members and candidates for strong participation!!!**

Members and candidates are generally satisfied with the SOA

Member and candidate rating of SOA performance in supporting professional needs

Mean = 6.5

Very Dissatisfied
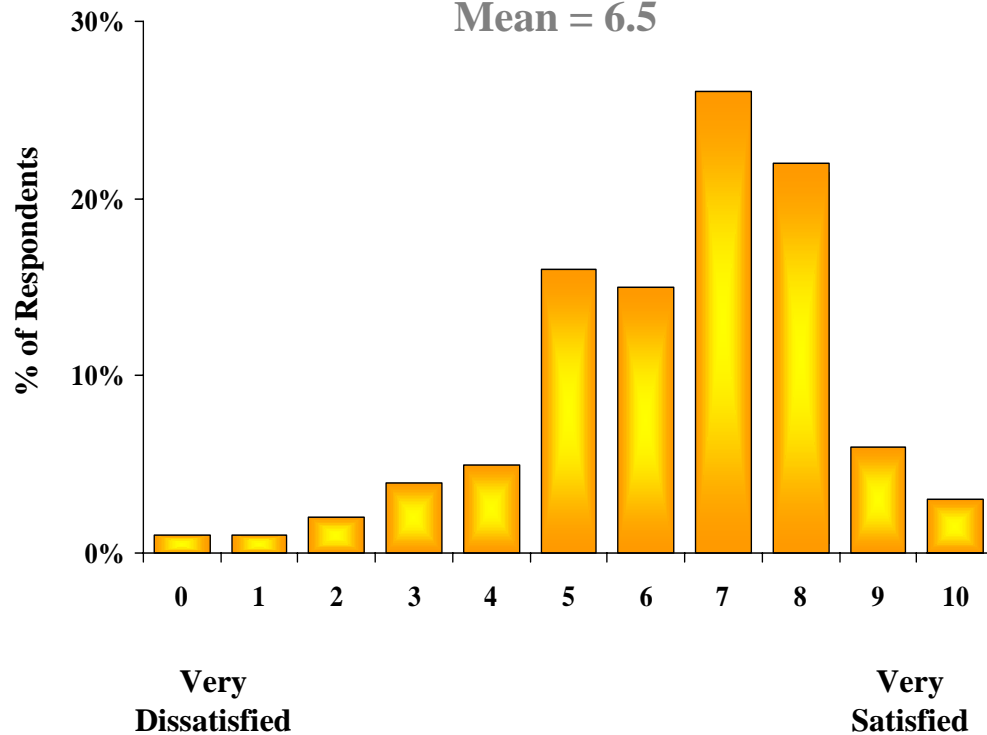
Very Satisfied

Member and candidate rating of SOA performance in advancing the professional

Mean = 6.3

Very Dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
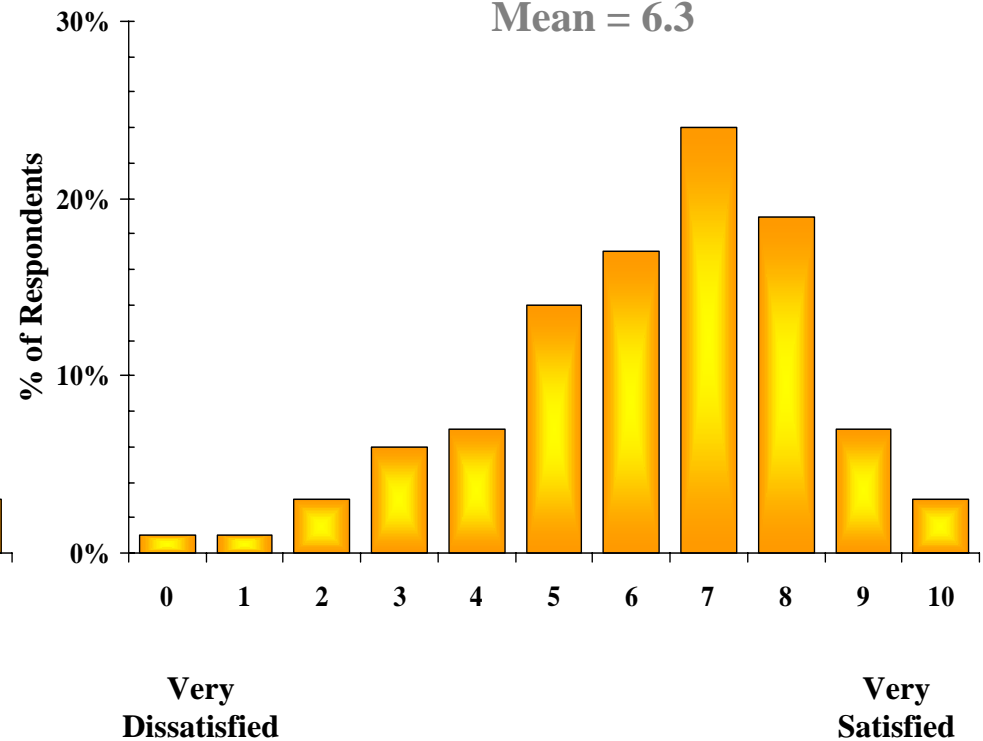
42% of members and candidates are more satisfied with the SOA today than in past years

Member and candidate satisfaction with SOA today compared to past years

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
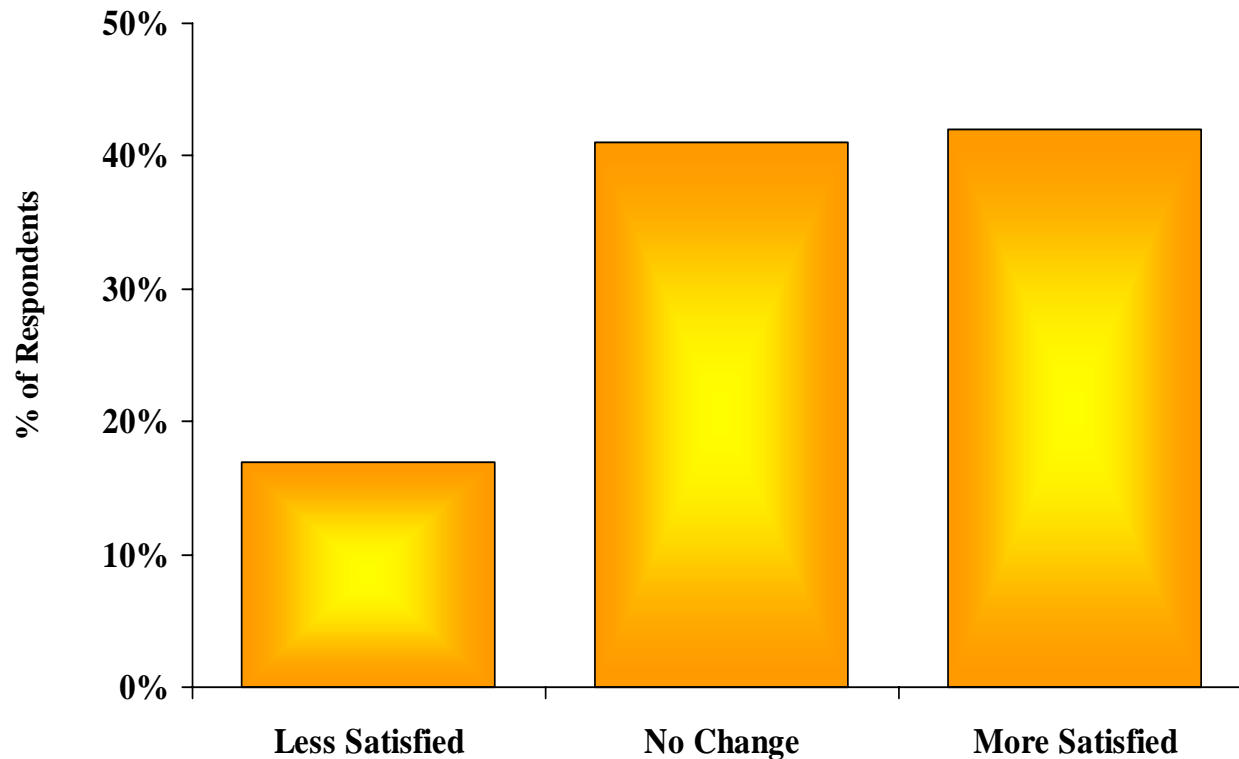
A majority of the respondents feel the SOA provides average value for membership dues

Member and candidate rating of value for membership dues
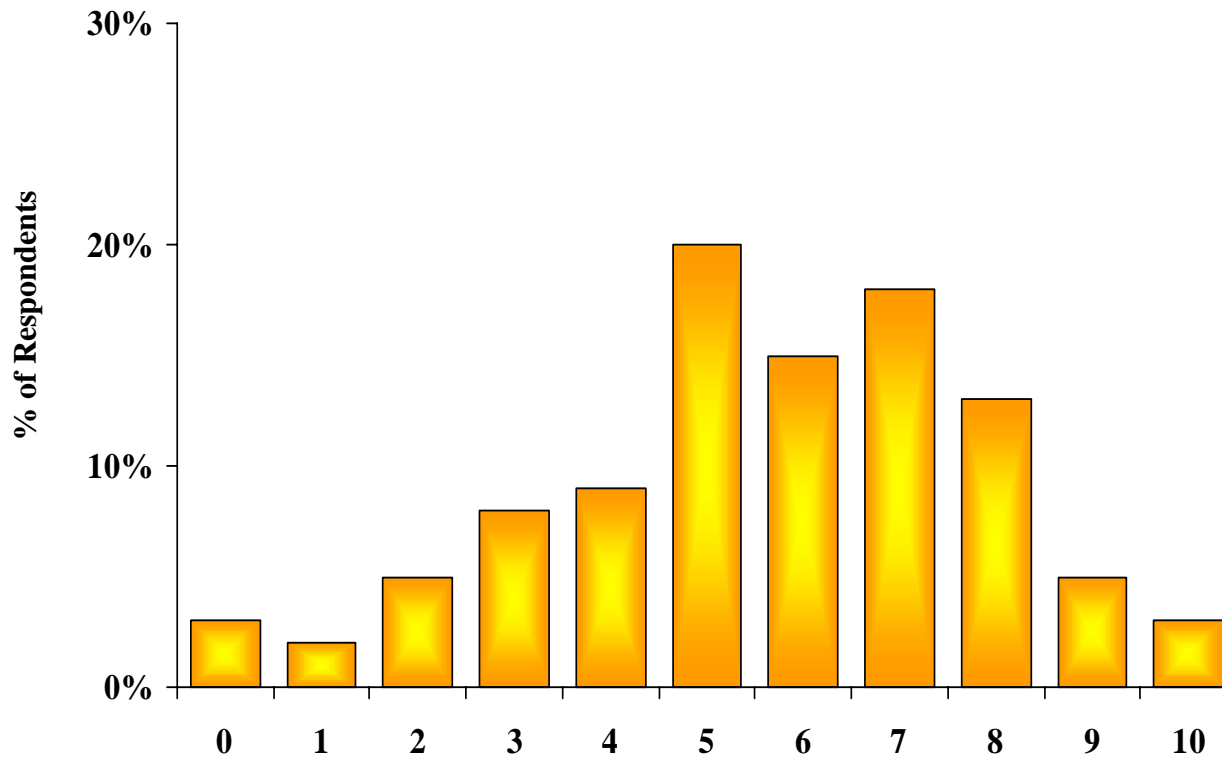
Overall difference among major Practice Areas

Mean Score of Member Satisfaction by Practice Area

Very Satisfied — 10

Very Dissatisfied — 0

Legend: ☐ Supports your professional needs ☐ Advances the profession

Categories: Life Insurance, Health Benefits Systems, Finance, Retirement Systems, Non-Traditional

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
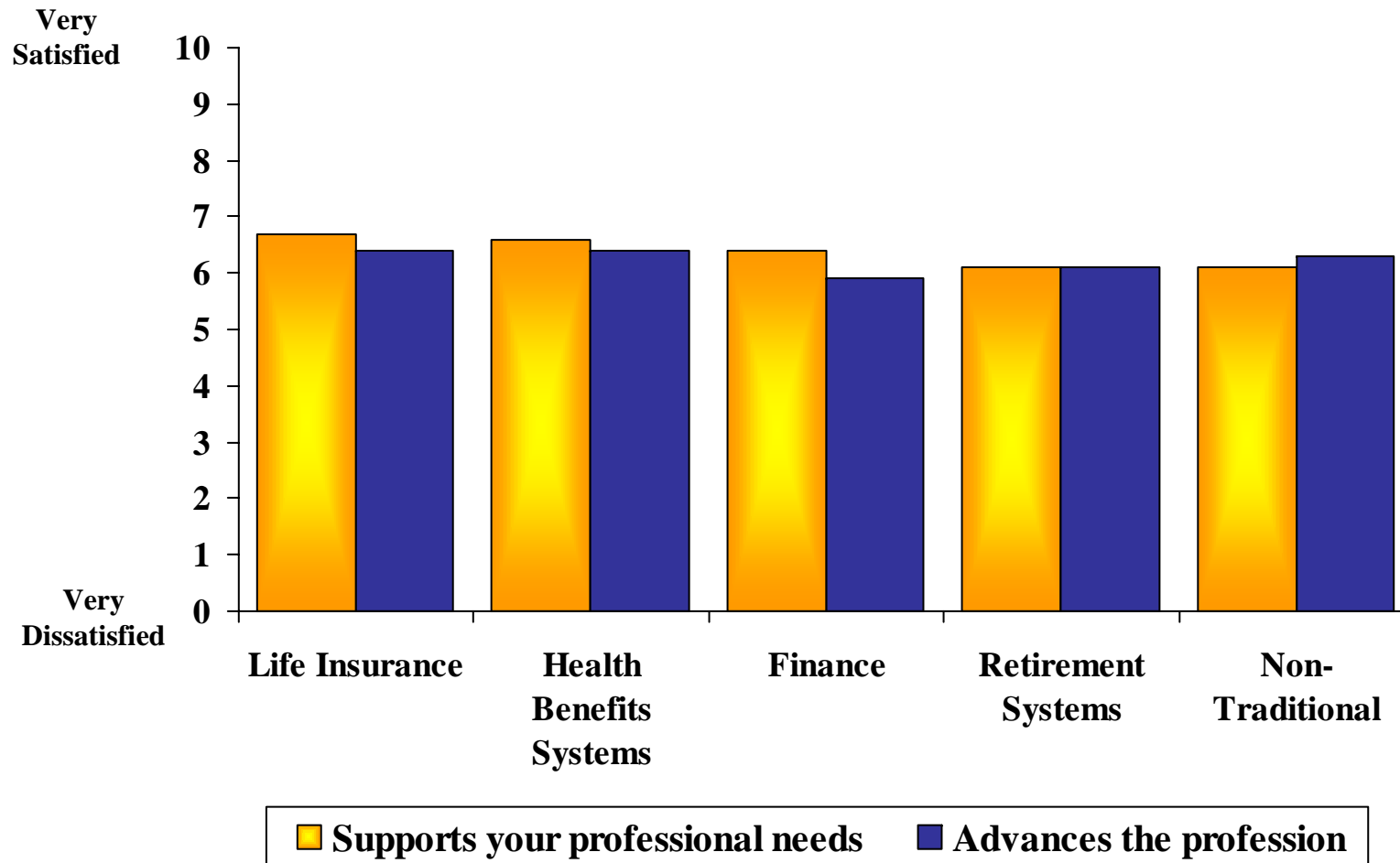
Overall difference among major Practice Areas (continued)

Provides Good Value for Membership Dues
Mean score of Members by Practice Area

Strongly Agree — 10

Strongly Disagree — 0

Life Insurance | Health Benefits Systems | Finance | Retirement Systems | Non-Traditional | All Members

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
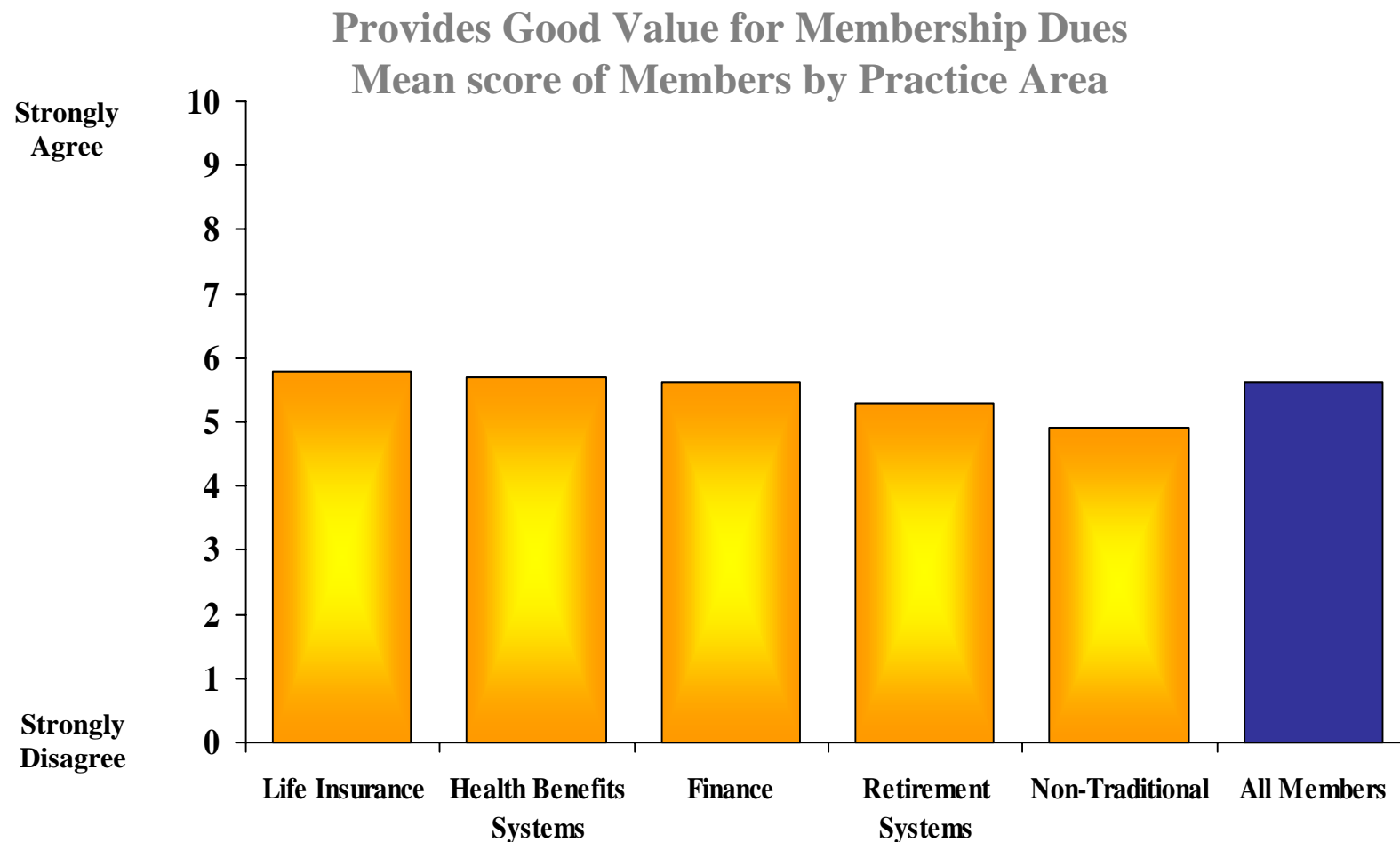
Respondents' views of the SOA's role in the profession

Percentage of members and candidates who agree or disagree with statement about the SOA's role in the profession

Statement	% disagree (0-3)	% neutral (4-6)	%agree (7-10)
FSA is valued as a credential by employers	3	15	82
Actuarial profession has a strong future	9	31	60
Should be more active preparing for globalization	7	38	55
Value of SOA is to maintain ASA & FSA credentials	14	34	52
Good job informing members about emerging areas	8	42	50
SOA does sufficient research on major social issues	12	40	48
ASA is valued as a credential by employers	18	36	45
SOA supports new fields of practice	12	46	42
SOA contributes to the global actuarial community	10	50	40
SOA represents my specific practice interests and needs	18	44	38
SOA provides good value for membership dues	18	44	38

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

Members indicated that the SOA's greatest opportunity is improving promotion of the actuarial profession

Service	Importance	Performance	Gap
1. Maintain/enhance value of credentials	8.4	6.1	2.3
2. Maintain high examination standards	8.4	7.1	1.3
3. Continuing education: Current practice	8.0	6.6	1.4
4. Quality of service to members	7.9	7.7	0.2
5. Promote image among employers	7.5	5.2	2.3
6. Promote profession's image in society	7.5	4.9	2.6
7. Communications: newsletters, publications	7.5	6.6	0.9
8. Continuing education: Emerging issues	7.2	5.8	1.4
9. Networking, conferences, discussions	6.8	6.3	0.5
10. Experience studies	6.7	6.0	0.7
11. Other practical research	6.6	5.4	1.2
12. Theoretical research	5.7	4.5	1.2
13. Job search information and resources	5.4	5.0	0.4
14. NAAJ	5.5	4.5	1.0

Simultaneously, members want the SOA to stay focused on ensuring integrity of the credentials and providing products that help them in their current practice

Service	Most important service SOA provides	
	Ranked no. 1	Ranked in top 3
Maintain and enhance the value of credentials	34%	21%
Maintain high exam standard	13%	12%
Continuing education: Current practice	12%	14%
Experience studies	11%	11%
Promote image among employers	8%	9%
Promote image in society	8%	9%
Continuing education: Emerging issues	3%	7%
Networking	3%	4%
Other practical research	2%	5%
Communications	1%	2%
Theoretical research	1%	2%
Job search	1%	2%
NAAJ	1%	1%
Quality of service	1%	1%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

How members within Practice Areas rated the importance of SOA services

Service	Finance	Health Benefits	Life Insurance	Retire. Systems	Non Traditional	All Members
1. Maintain/enhance value of credentials	8.1	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.2	8.4
2. Maintain high examination standards	8.4	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.0	8.4
3. Continuing education: Current practice	8.0	8.3	8.5	7.5	7.4	8.0
4. Quality of service to members	8.1	8.1	8.1	7.8	7.7	7.9
5. Promote image among employers	7.4	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.5
6. Promote profession's image in society	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.7	7.5	7.5
7. Communications: newsletters, publications	7.8	7.5	7.8	7.1	7.4	7.5
8. Continuing education: Emerging issues	7.7	7.2	7.5	6.7	7.0	7.2
9. Networking, conferences, discussions	7.2	7.1	7.2	6.3	6.5	6.8
10. Experience studies	5.7	6.6	7.7	6.1	5.4	6.7
11. Other practical research	6.6	6.5	7.0	6.2	5.9	6.6
12. Theoretical research	6.4	5.3	6.0	5.2	5.8	5.7
13. NAAJ	6.6	5.1	5.8	4.8	5.7	5.5
14. Job search information and resources	5.1	5.7	6.0	5.3	5.5	5.4

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

How members within Practice Areas rated the performance the SOA in its ability to deliver upon services

Service	Finance	Health Benefits	Life Insurance	Retire. Systems	Non Traditional	All Members
1. Maintain/enhance value of credentials	5.9	6.5	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.1
2. Maintain high examination standards	7.1	6.9	7.1	7.1	6.9	7.1
3. Continuing education: Current practice	6.4	6.6	7.0	6.0	6.1	6.6
4. Quality of service to members	4.9	8.0	4.8	7.6	7.4	7.7
5. Promote image among employers	5.0	5.3	5.2	5.1	4.9	5.2
6. Promote profession's image in society	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.9
7. Communications: newsletters, publications	6.8	6.6	6.9	6.2	6.3	6.6
8. Continuing education: Emerging issues	5.8	5.8	6.1	5.4	5.3	5.8
9. Networking, conferences, discussions	6.5	6.8	6.8	5.5	6.0	6.3
10. Experience studies	5.5	5.3	6.9	5.6	5.0	6.0
11. Other practical research	5.5	4.9	5.7	5.1	5.0	5.4
12. Theoretical research	5.2	3.9	4.7	4.0	4.5	4.5
13. NAAJ	5.3	3.9	4.7	3.9	4.7	4.5
14. Job search information and resources	4.8	5.2	5.2	4.9	4.9	5.0

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

The gap in importance vs. performance scores by major Practice Area

| Service	Finance	Health Benefits	Life Insurance	Retire. Systems	Non Traditional	All Members
1. Maintain/enhance value of credentials	2.2	2.0	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3
2. Maintain high examination standards	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3
3. Continuing education: Current practice	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.4
4. Quality of service to members	3.2	0.1	3.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
5. Promote image among employers	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.3
6. Promote profession's image in society	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.9	3.0	2.6
7. Communications: newsletters, publications	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9
8. Continuing education: Emerging issues	1.9	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.4
9. Networking, conferences, discussions	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.5
10. Experience studies	0.2	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.4	0.7
11. Other practical research	1.1	1.6	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.2
12. Theoretical research	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2
13. NAAJ	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0
14. Job search information and resources	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.4

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

Candidates want the SOA to improve career development and job search and networking opportunities

Service	Importance	Performance	Gap
1. Study notes to prepare for exams	7.3	6.0	1.3
2. Career development resources	7.1	5.7	1.4
3. Job search information and resource	7.0	5.5	1.5
4. *The Future Actuary*	6.0	5.6	0.4

Candidates also feel changes to the current exam system should be considered

### How much the balance of exam questions should shift between practical and theoretical content
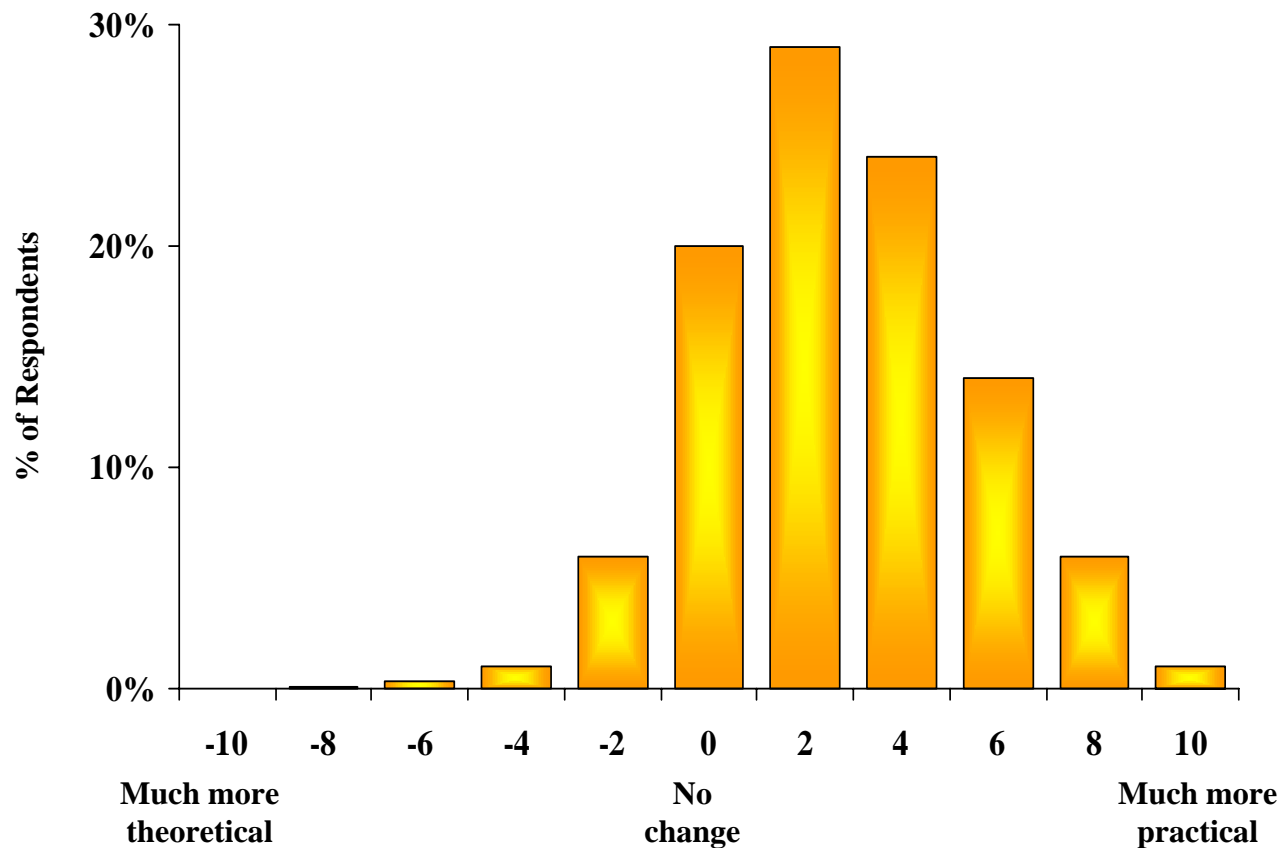
Candidates also feel changes to the current exam system should be considered (continued)
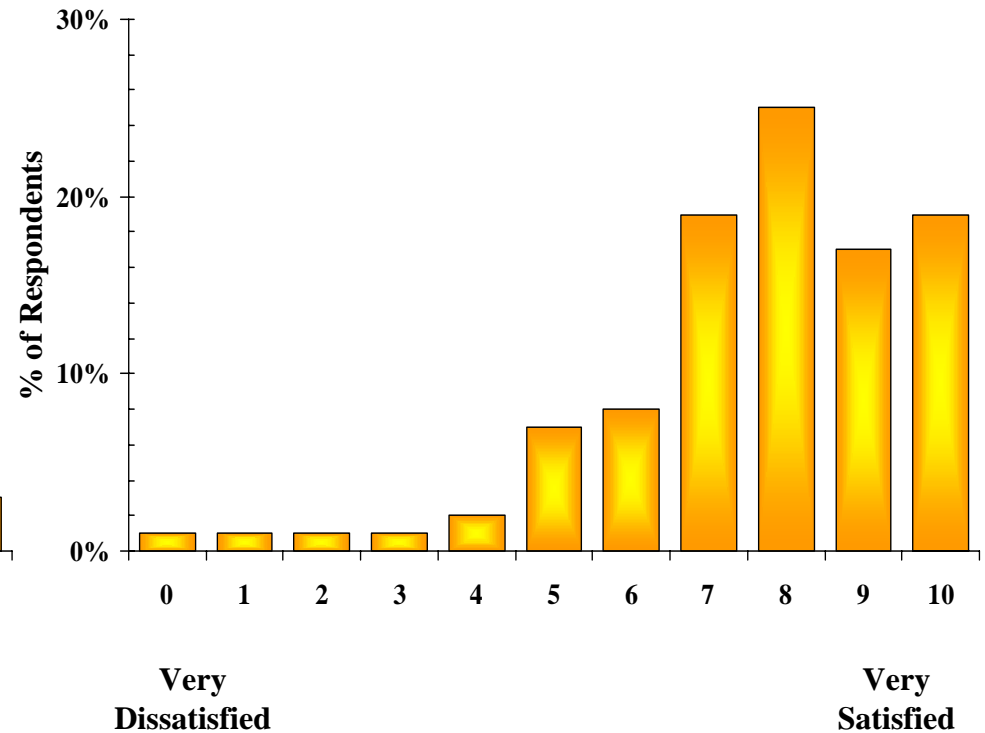
	ASA Candidates Studying for FSA	Pre-ASA Candidates
SOA should shift the balance of the exam questions towards more practical content	70%	75%
Nation-specific content should not be introduced into the curriculum	59%	63%
Travel time should be shortened and/or more predictable (fixed duration)	55%	70%
SOA should explore alternate means for actuarial training through partnerships with colleges and universities	56%	72%
SOA should grant exemptions for equivalent university credits and/or define widely available university courses as prerequisites	52%	67%

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey

Members and candidates believe competition for jobs is relevant in markets actuaries hope to expand presence

Competition in areas where actuaries have been dominant

% of Respondents

30%

20%

10%

0%

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No challenge   **Major challenge**
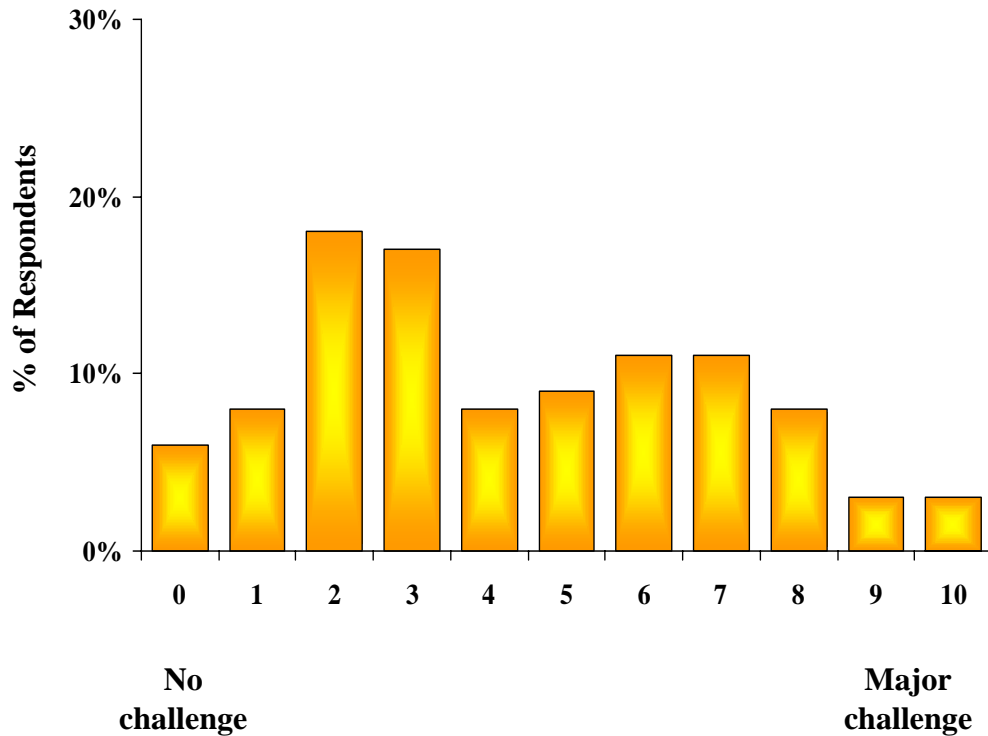
Competition in areas where actuaries hope to expand presence and influence

% of Respondents

30%

20%

10%

0%

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**Very Dissatisfied**   **Very Satisfied**

MBAs and Financial Engineers were identified as professions posing the greatest threat to actuaries in the market

Percentage who rated profession as the one profession posing the greatest competitive challenge

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
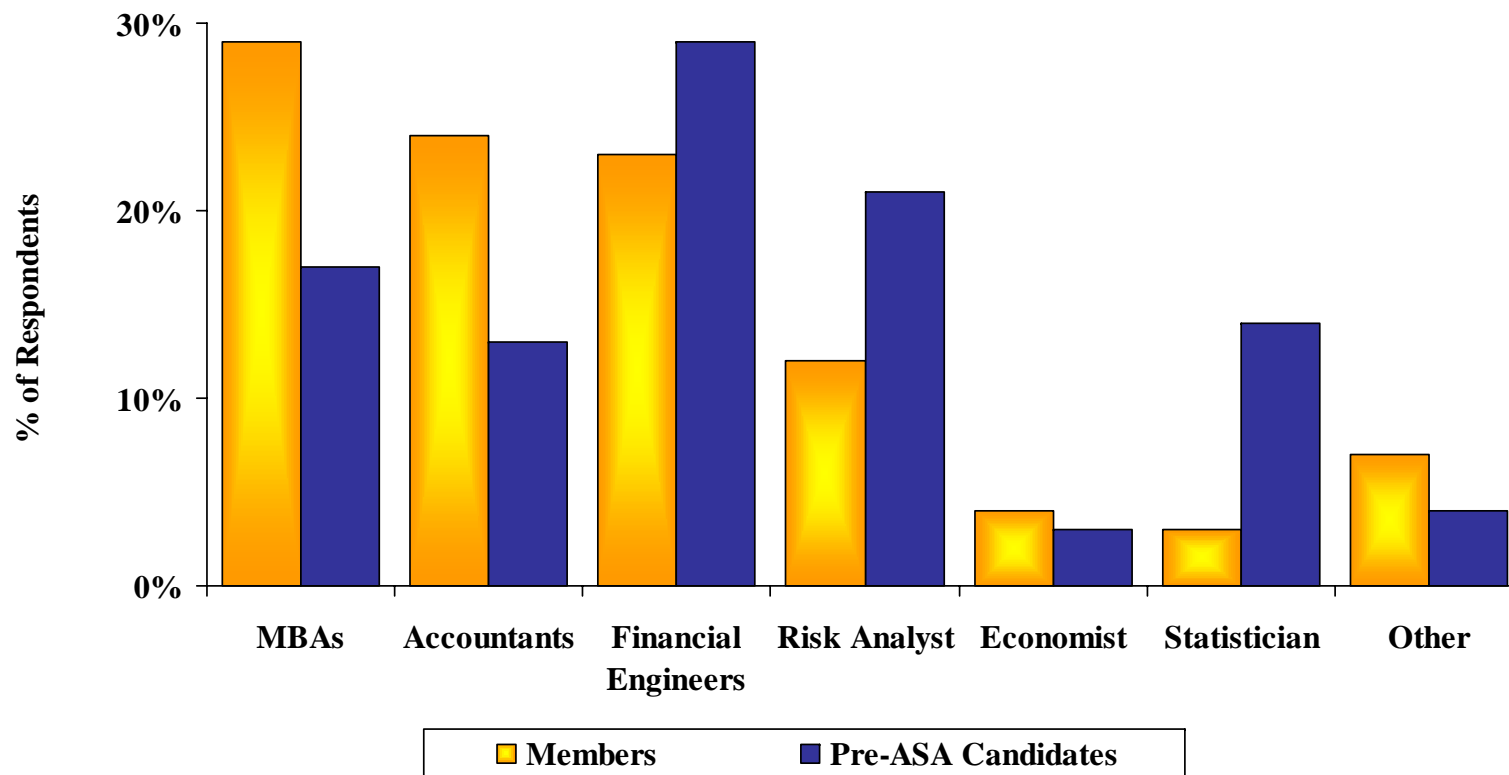
Respondents indicated that the SOA must promote a more dynamic image of the profession to respond to the challenges posed by competing professions

Mean score of members and candidates on how SOA should respond to challenges posed by competing professions

Source: 2002 SOA Member and Candidate Survey
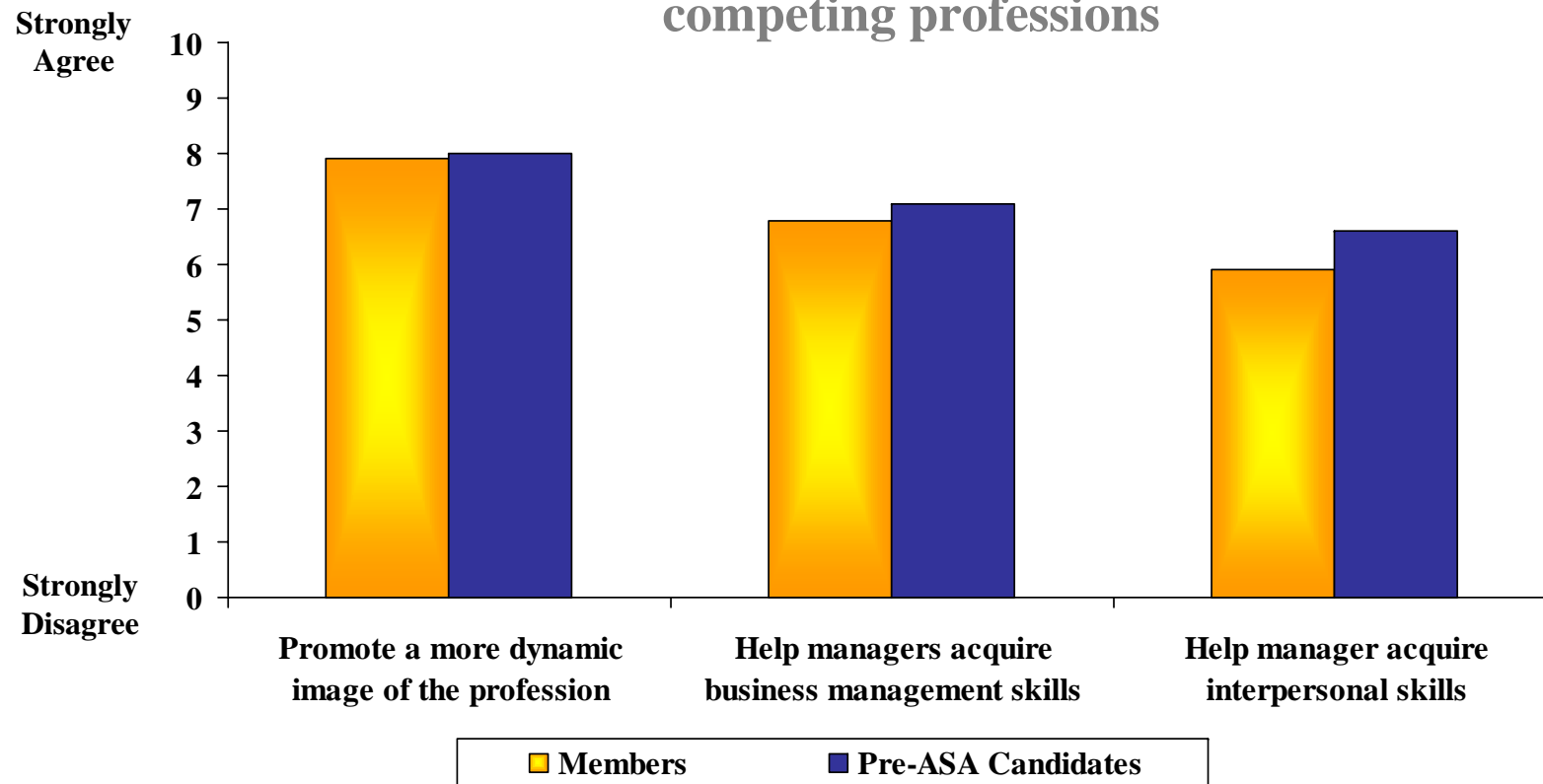
Achievements and Outcomes of the Research

1. **Members perceive recent improvements in service quality:**
   - Day-to-day services receive high ratings
   - 42% see an overall improvement

2. **The Member and Candidate Value Propositions defined in the SOA Strategic Plan are confirmed as strong drivers of satisfaction**

3. **Members believe that the challenge of competing profession is best met by:**
   - Promoting a more dynamic image, and then by
   - Acquiring better business management and interpersonal skills

As next steps for Member and Candidate Research, the SOA will

- **Use the information to guide strategic planning and to develop a roadmap to improve member and candidate satisfaction**

- **Utilize the information to evaluate current product and service mix and develop plans to improve offerings**

- **If you wish to view the entire 2002 Member and Candidate Satisfaction Survey please visit www.soa.org**

- **If you have any questions or feedback about the results or recommendations, please contact Meredith Lego, Marketing Manager, at mlego@soa.org**