

Division 19 Membership: Composition, Current Needs, & Recruitment Strategies

Capstone Project for Joshua Camins

Problem

The Society of Military Psychology (Division 19 AKA D19) was formed in 1945. Over the last 74 years, there have been attempts to propel Division 19's mission forward. These efforts have included the development of an initial strategic plan (2007-2012) and a revised plan (2019-2024). The most recent iteration of this plan include Strategic Objective 1 [SO1] ("Increase Society membership and promote inclusivity and diversity") and Strategic Objective 2 [SO2] ("Improve member engagement"). Both objectives by their very nature require that division leadership has a solid understanding of membership composition, needs, and is able to develop targeted recruitment strategies.

D19 recruits individuals from a wide spectrum of disciplines and areas within psychology. However, as of January 2019, there was no database on the exact composition of the membership. Further, although anecdotal evidence suggested certain groups were better represented, no data was available to support rationale for recruiting from specific groups. Lastly, in order to maintain and grow its sphere of influence, D19 must constantly seek to improve recruitment and retention with members across all areas of psychology. The capstone project described below is an effort to address the aforementioned problems.

Stakeholders

Understanding the unique characteristics and needs of D19's membership is relevant to many groups. First and foremost, the current and incoming leadership benefits a great deal. Comprehension of their constituents needs allows for the appropriate development of programming. Second, D19's membership as a whole benefits from greater understanding of the Society. This project will help underrepresented groups find a voice and will increase the strength of the division. Third, the Society for Military Psychology is often called on to represent

the entire field of military psychology. Understanding the members and how to serve them will allow the division to do an appropriate job when called upon to address salient military-related issues. Finally, this project benefits the American Psychological Association, as it may help foster increased collaboration within and between fields of study. Further, it will allow the division to identify programming that will serve APA members.

Project

This project required a two-part approach. The first part consisted of a survey developed to assess membership composition and to gather information on areas of strength and weakness as identified by division membership. It was subsequently distributed via email to the entire division. The second part was the distribution of two qualitative questions via email to key members identified by D19 President Stephen Bowles, Ph.D.

Survey

The survey was comprised of three parts: background, military service, Division 19 specific questions. Although the author submitted a draft of the survey to Division Leadership in March 2019, the final survey (38 questions) was not distributed until June 2019. After an initial email, three subsequent reminders were sent to potential participants. There was a 16% response rate with 242 “started” surveys and 197 recorded responses.

Respondents had an average age of 46.2 years ($SD = 16.3$, Range 19-100). Sex and sexual orientation were not included in the survey as a survey reviewer requested the information be removed. In total, 49 (24.9%) Students, 64 (32.5%) ECPs, 21 (10.7%) Fellows, 109 (55.3%) Members completed the survey. See Tables 1 to 3 below for information on race/ethnicity, highest degree, and area of study.

Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity

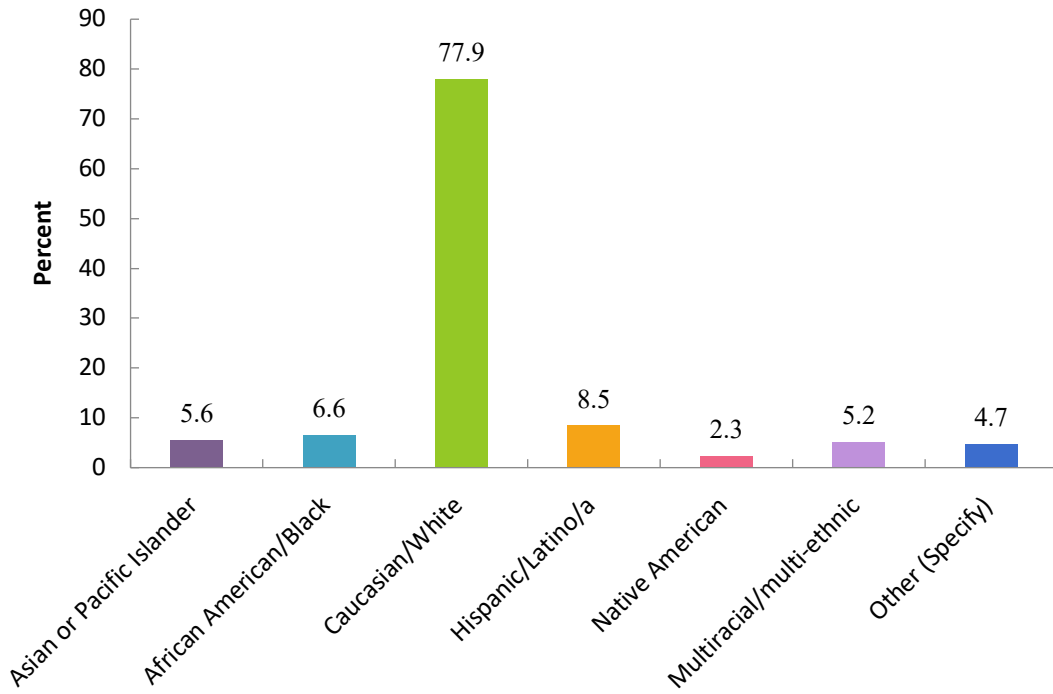


Figure 2: Highest Degree Earned

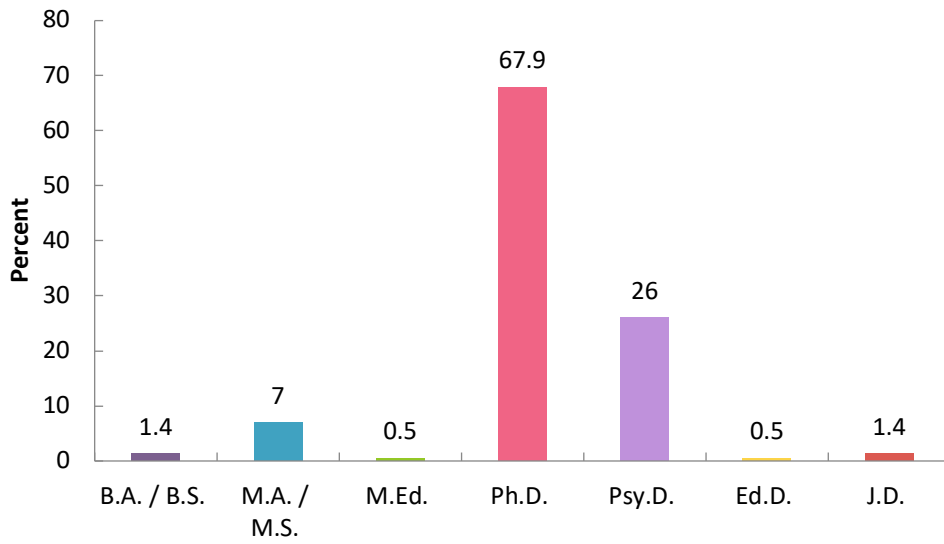
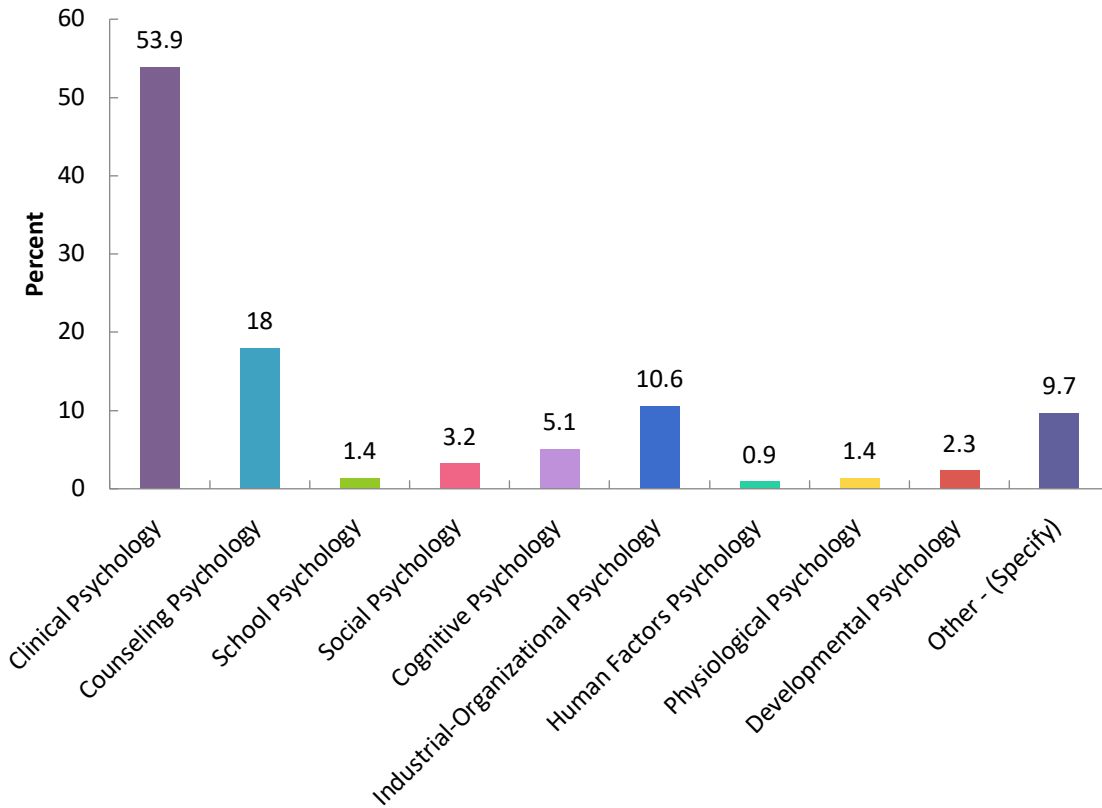


Figure 3: Area of Degree



Respondents identified their areas of expertise within military psychology. The most common areas were PTSD (92, 46.7), General Mental Health (82, 41.6%), General Psychological Assessment (67, 34.0%), and Fitness for Duty (52, 26.4%). The least common were Work Design (5, 2.5%), Technology Development (8, 4.1%), Personnel Recruiting (13, 6.6%), and Human-Machine Interface (14, 7.1%). A significant portion of the membership reported current or past military service. See Tables 4, 5, and 6 for information pertaining to membership military history.

Figure 4: Members with Current/Past Active Duty Service

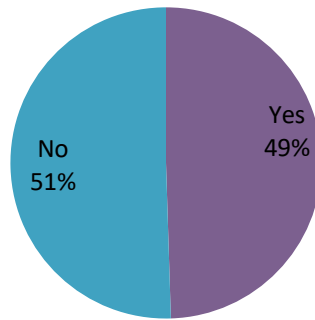


Figure 5: Members with Current/Past Reserve or National Guard Service

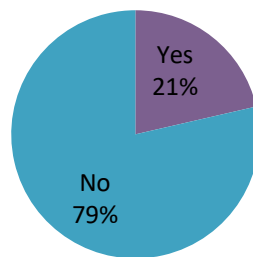


Figure 6: Active Duty Branches

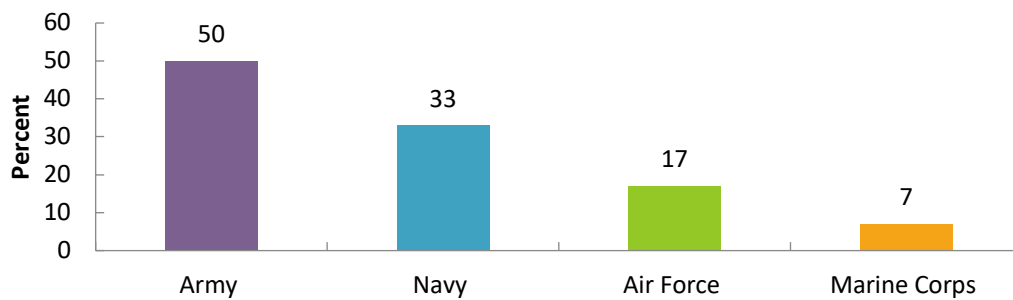


Figure 7: Reserve/National Guard Branches

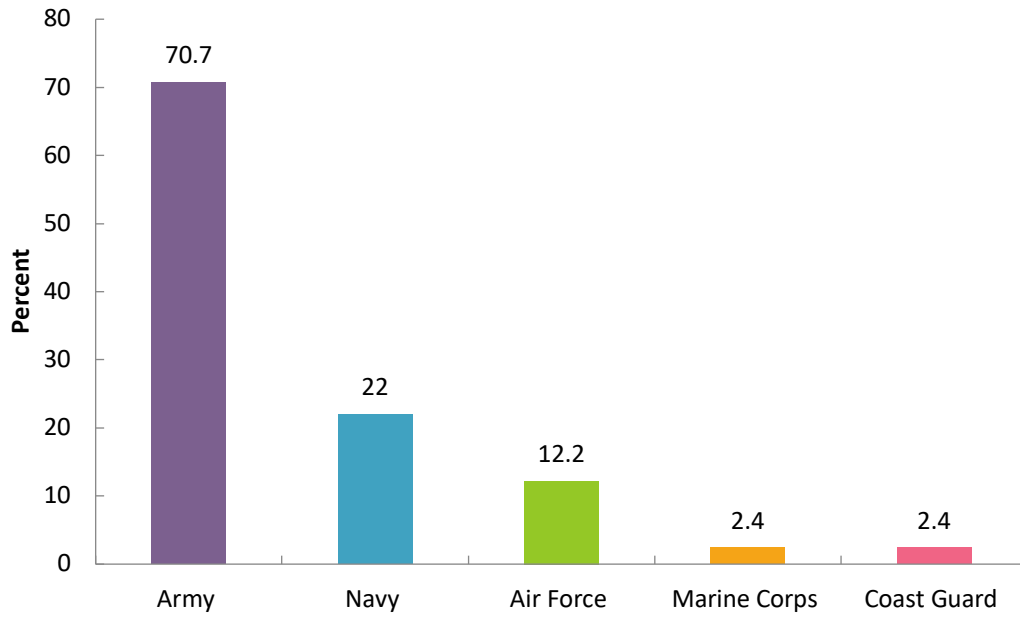


Figure 8: Active Duty Last Rank

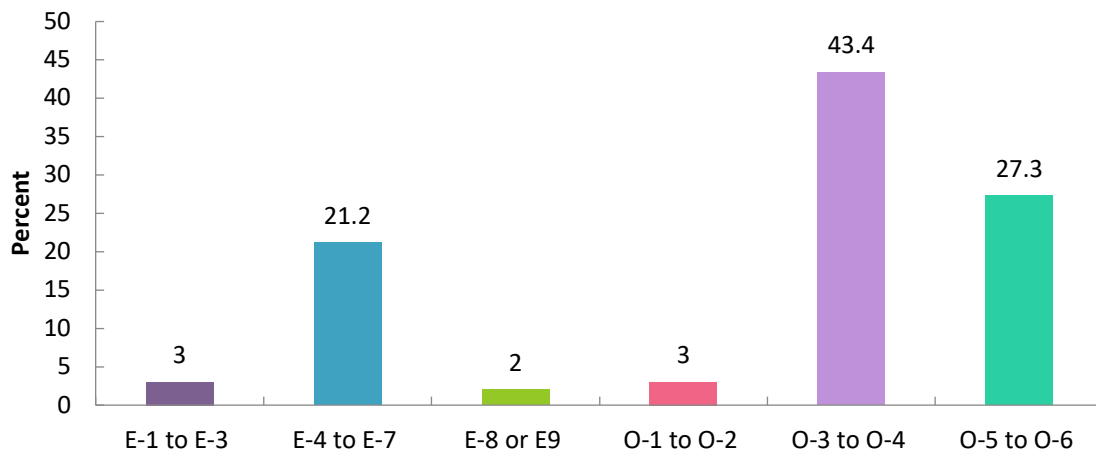


Figure 9: Reserve/National Guard Last Rank

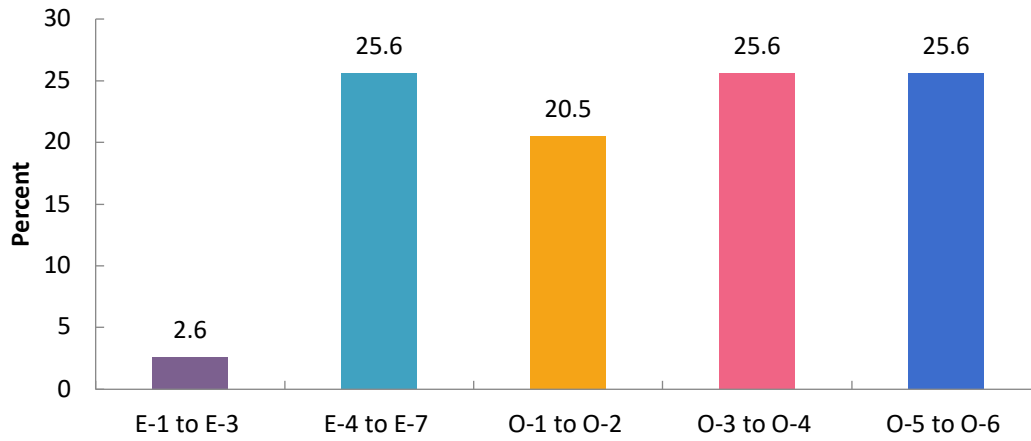


Figure 10: Active Duty Number of Deployments

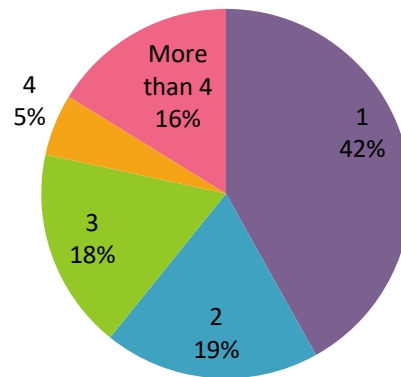
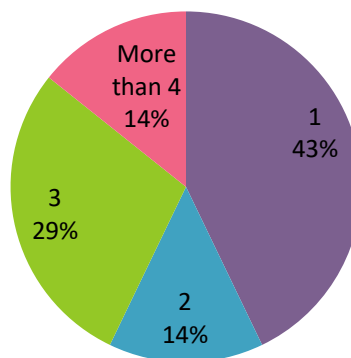


Figure 11: Reserve/National Guard Number of Deployments



When asked about APA and division activities, the membership had a pretty diverse range of experiences. There was an average of 8.4 years in the Division (SD = 10.3, Range 0-

50). The most commonly co-joined divisions were 56 (Trauma Psychology; $n = 35$), 12 (Society of Clinical Psychology; $n = 22$), 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology; $n = 21$) and 18 (Psychologists in Public Service; $n = 20$). The top referral sources for Division 19 were Colleague/Friend ($n = 84$), APA Website ($n = 79$) and APA Conference ($n = 23$). Overall, 44% of respondents believe APA dues are too high and 8.6% believe Division 19 Dues are too high.

An examination of differences between groups with regard to division and membership perspectives indicated that students are more likely to say dues are too high. Students ($M = \$30.7$) recommended lower division dues relative to non-students ($\$41.1$). ECPs ($M = \33.6) recommended lower division dues relative to non-ECPs ($\$40.9$).

When asked about representativeness of their respective fields, I/O Psychologists are less likely to feel well represented in Division $\chi^2 (1) = 8.6, p = .003$. Similarly, Counseling Psychologists are less likely to feel well represented in Division, $\chi^2 (1) = 3.7, p = .053$. In addition, Social & Cognitive Psychologists are less likely to feel well represented in Division, $\chi^2 (1) = 5.2, p = .02$. However, as expected, Clinical Psychologists are more likely to feel well represented in Division, $\chi^2 (1) = 16.4, p = .00$.

Members made several requests for additions to division programming. These requests included: More on Veteran Suicide, More on TBI, Less emphasis on clinical, Skill building opportunities, Moral Injury, Diversity, Family-related research and issues, and Ethics.

Recommendations to engage underrepresented groups within the division included: Attract more HF and I/O, Bring attention back to Research, Focus more on civilians in military psychology, More focus on applied psychology, More focus on addictions, More focus on culture within military (e.g., race and military, branch differences etc.).

Respondents felt the division could grow by: focusing on current/past servicemember recruitment, Collaborations with VA, More research, Focus on students, Gender identity issues, Connect with other fields of psychology, Networking, Access to empirically supported treatment training/resources, Increase graduate student funding (with faculty mentor or other professional oversight).

Qualitative Interviews

A list of 61 individuals was provided by Stephen Bowles, Ph.D. Individuals were divided into 11 different groups with each group comprising of senior and ECP members. The groups included: Army, Navy, Air Force, VA, Operational, International, Research, Academia, Civilian DoD, I/O, Clinical Health/Forensic/Other. There was an 18% response rate (11 people). In total, 3 USAF –ECP, 2 USAF – SR, 2 VA – SR, 1 Operational – SR, 1 Civilian DoD, 1 Clinical – Suicide. They were asked to respond to the following questions:

What have you found to be successful practices in recruiting people from your organization/specialty into Division 19?

What do you recommend Division 19 do better to recruit people from your organization/specialty?

Thematic analysis from question one (see Figure 12) indicated that respondents recommended an emphasis be placed on students and mentoring to build the division and subgroups. In addition, there were themes of focusing on active duty and students with military interests. Finally, the convention was identified as a prime place to recruit.

Recommendations

Based on the survey and qualitative interviews, the following are recommended by the author. D19 should provide lower dues to ECPs. Perhaps offer a discounted rate for 2-3 years post-degree. D19 should lobby for greater inclusion of counseling, I/O, and social/cognitive, research and practice in the division. There should be an increased emphasis on diversity research and focus on improving division diversity by recruiting current professional minorities (e.g., I/O psychologists) and cultural minorities. Finally, focus programming to a greater extent on research and applied work.