

JCSA TODAY

Results of the 1999 Membership Survey

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The preliminary overview of findings drawn from a 1999 survey of the membership of JCSA indicates that respondents are generally satisfied with their work, have high levels of Jewish identity and affiliation, and have a strong sense of professionalization. Gender equality remains an important challenge.

The Jewish Communal Service Association (JCSA) was founded in 1899 as the National Conference of Jewish Charities. It continues today as the primary professional association for a wide range of professionals working in Jewish communal agencies. JCSA is committed to enhancing professional standards, education, outreach, affiliation, and is concerned with issues of vital interest to Jewish communal life. Its Affiliated Professional Associations (APAs) are:

- Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS)
- Association of Jewish Community Organization Personnel (AJCOP)
- Association of Jewish Center Professionals (AJCP)
- Association of Jewish Community Relations Workers (AJCRW)
- Association of Jewish Vocational Service Professionals (AJVSP)
- Council for Jewish Education (CJE)
- Jewish Social Service Professionals Association (JSSPA)
- National Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC)

During the summer of 1998 in anticipation of the 100th Anniversary of the *Association*, the Wurzweiler School of Social Work of Yeshiva University was invited by the leadership of JCSA to conduct a detailed assessment of its membership, the last comprehensive survey having been conducted in 1982.

A questionnaire and sampling methodol-

ogy were developed, and a formal proposal was submitted to JCSA. An agreement was reached between Wurzweiler and the JCSA Research Advisory Committee composed of JCSA/APA leaders.

Thereafter, a questionnaire was developed utilizing three primary instruments: (a) the 1982 JCSA survey, (b) an instrument utilized by Urbont (1966) in his study of the Jewish Center movement, and (c) Banchevsky's (1976) study of the training needs of workers in the Center field. These resources were supplemented by an additional set of questions that the authors believed would identify the practice realities of the 21st century. The Research Advisory Committee reacted to and modified several drafts of the questionnaire.

Focus groups were then utilized to ensure that the information being sought reflected the realities of the workplace and what those employed in the field felt about issues covered in the survey. Demographics, attitudes about the Jewish community, religious and communal attitudes and affiliations, reasons for entering the field, attitudes towards the profession, and reasons for joining and maintaining membership in JCSA were elicited. Two new areas of inquiry were included: gender and health concerns.

These efforts resulted in a questionnaire that would assist the *Association* in planning its membership services for the new millennium, enabling leaders to respond more accurately to the needs of professionals and the community. The current study provides information that can be compared to the 1982 membership survey.

CONTEXT OF SURVEY

The survey was conducted in the context of an array of literature on the structure and function of the American Jewish communal enterprise. This context is evidenced in *Trends and Issues in Jewish Social Welfare in the United States 1899-1958*, which provides a comprehensive and eclectic mix of perspectives from the proceedings and reports of the Jewish Communal Service Association (Morris & Freund, 1966). Although primarily historical in nature, the volume covers such areas as: agency responsibility, inter-group cooperation, problems and needs of the community, effects of various policies on the agency and the community, problems in Jewish communal life, the effect of national organizations, and purposes and goals of Jewish communal service.

This context is further elaborated by Linzer (1972) in *A Selected Bibliography*, which covered developments in the field between 1960-1970. He cites thousands of references from a variety of sources, covering such areas as Jewish communal service, mental health services, Jewish vocational services, and Jewish youth. The bibliography provides an important and updated supplement to the Morris and Freund volume.

Our contextual understanding of issues was broadened by Canter's (1967) *Research Readings in Jewish Communal Service*, a compendium of research-based articles written during the 1960s. Although the primary focus is on the Jewish Community Center movement, the articles have a wide application, offering research-based analysis relevant to all areas of Jewish communal service. Similarly, Sklare (1980) updates our understanding in a compendium of articles covering the major issues facing the Jewish community of the 1980s.

A comprehensive body of literature also exists on professional practice within Jewish communal service. Bubis, Phillips, Reitman, and Rotto (1985), for example, surveyed executive directors from a variety of Jewish communal agencies, in an attempt to identify the desired competencies of new workers.

They found that agencies wanted their employees to have greater knowledge of Jewish values, the organized Jewish community, and contemporary Jewish issues. They also found that there was a trend among executives toward hiring workers with degrees from diverse backgrounds, not specifically social work or Jewish communal service. Levine (1985) asserts that in order to be a capable Jewish communal professional, one must be an active participant in Jewish life and community and that there are three uses of self for the Jewish communal worker: (1) Jewish conscious use of self, (2) conscious Jewish use of self, and (3) conscious use of Jewish self. He describes a number of expectations of professionals, including the worker taking steps to fulfill a Jewish lifestyle, openly embracing Jewish tradition, and adopting Jewish expression.

In more recent years, additional authors have addressed issues of Jewish communal service as an integral part of Jewish life. Linzer (1978) for example, compares an array of social work and Jewish philosophic themes, discussing both congruencies and differences between the two. He reflects on what it means to practice social work in Jewish communal agencies. This same theme is explored in several works that investigate the effect of current Jewish sociodemographics on social work practice (Goldstein, 1992; Linzer, Levitz & Schnall, 1995; Linzer, Schnall & Chanes, 1998).

Reisman (1981) views the relationship between Jewish communal work and social work as a dialectic. He provides a history of the changing nature between the two philosophies, attempting to show their complementarity. He points out that Jewish communal service is ever evolving, asserting that in its most advanced state, a Jewish ideological stance will become an expectation.

Linzer, Levitz, and Schnall (1995) address modern problems that affect the Jewish family of the 21st century. Chapters include stress points for the Jewish family, social implications, Jewish women, intermarriage, and caring for parents.

More recently, Bubis and Reisman (1996) advocate the need for specialized training beyond social work for Jewish communal workers. They assert that Jewish communal professionals are confronted with an agenda of Jewish continuity, and the curricula of schools should reflect this. They describe a number of issues of concern for the future: mixed marriages, collaboration, lay-professional partnerships, sharing of curricula between schools, synthesizing of professional identities and upgrading of services.

QUESTIONNAIRE & SAMPLE

An anonymous nine-page questionnaire (covering 76 categories) was mailed in May 1999 to a random sample of 1960 of the 2522 *Association* members. Different types of question formats were utilized to obtain responses. In order to insure a 95% confidence interval of + or - 5%, a minimum of 500 responses were required. This would also provide a highly representative proportion of the membership (20%). Assuming a 25% response rate, a random sample of 1960 JCSA members was drawn to meet this goal. At times respondents were requested to fill in their answers, such as age and the number of times they had visited Israel. Other times, as in attitudes about the Jewish community, respondents were requested to rank order their choices from most important to least important. Questionnaires from 76 of the 1,960 members on the sampling frame were returned because of incorrect addresses or other reasons. After follow-up letters and telephone calls, 565 questionnaires were returned for a 30% response rate.

The representativeness of the sample is a critical factor in the reliability of the survey. Table 1 displays the relationship between the actual distributions of members by APA to the distribution of the sample of 565.

While there appears to be a disproportion of federation and family service professionals, all APAs have adequate representation in the sample compared to their actual number of members in the association.

The ages of the respondents ranged from

23 to 91 years. The mean age of the sample was 51 years. Just over half (51.1%) were male; 80.3 percent were married. On average they were employed in the field of Jewish communal service for 20 years (SD = 12 years). Most of the respondents had obtained a master's (68%) or a doctorate (12%). Most indicated their field of practice as communal service (51%), social work (39%) or education (19%). Thirty percent of the respondents are executive directors, 25 percent direct a program, and 11.5 percent are retired. They also indicated that they were in their current agency on average for 11 years and in their present position for 8 years. The majority of respondents (80%) earn over \$40,000 with 23 percent earning over \$100,000.

FINDINGS

The respondents were requested to rank the five most important concerns to the Jewish community. As Figure 1 displays, Jewish identity was the most selected item (76%); intermarriage was selected by 69.8 percent of the respondents; non-affiliation/ under-affiliation was selected by 60.3 percent of the respondents; and secular/religious acrimony was selected by 59.7 percent of the respondents. The others items listed were selected by less than 50 percent of the respondents.

The respondents were asked to rank the five most important items "for you as a professional." Figure 2 displays the responses to this question.

Almost 62 percent of the sample ranked "professional standards and practices" in the top five. "Continuing professional education" was identified by 51.7 percent of the sample, and "lay-professional relationships" were identified by 43.7 percent of the sample.

As mentioned above, 76 percent of the respondents ranked Jewish identity in the top five concerns, indicating their strong Jewish communal commitment. A number of other responses demonstrate the sample's strong Jewish identity. Almost 99 percent of the respondents thought knowledge of Jewish history was important to their work. They also agreed that they were Jewish role

Table 1. Comparison of APA Membership to Sample.

<u>APA</u>	<u>Actual % of Membership</u>	<u>Sample %</u>
Aging Services	6.3	5.3
Federation/Community Organization	23.4	34.9
Community Centers	28.8	25.1
Community Relations	1.9	1.5
Vocational Services	3.8	5.1
Education	8.1	6.3
Family Service	5.6	10.9
Chaplains*	13.4	10.6

*NAJC was affiliated with JCSA at the time of the survey. They have subsequently ended their affiliation.

models because of their professional position. Furthermore, 82.3 percent of the respondents indicated working in the Jewish community was a very important reason for selecting their agency. A large number belong to a synagogue (89%), with 47 percent identifying themselves as Conservative, 20 percent Reform, 16 percent Orthodox, and 3 percent each for Reconstructionist and non-affiliated. Most of the sample (93%) visited Israel at least once (mean=8.7 visits). A quarter of the sample indicated that they spoke excellent Hebrew, and 55 percent began their Jewish education in Hebrew school or Talmud Torah. A total of 37 percent took college-level courses in Jewish studies. Most (77%) participate in agency-sponsored Jewish studies activities.

The respondents were asked to rate the importance of education and training on a scale from 5 (extremely important) to 1 (not at all important). Figure 3 displays the mean scores for each item.

Communication (mean=4.7), supervision (mean=4.5), administration (mean=4.5), lay involvement and volunteers (mean=4.3), and Jewish life (mean=4.3) were rated as very important. Governmental relations (mean=3.1), research (mean=3.0), and counseling (mean=3.0) were rated somewhat important.

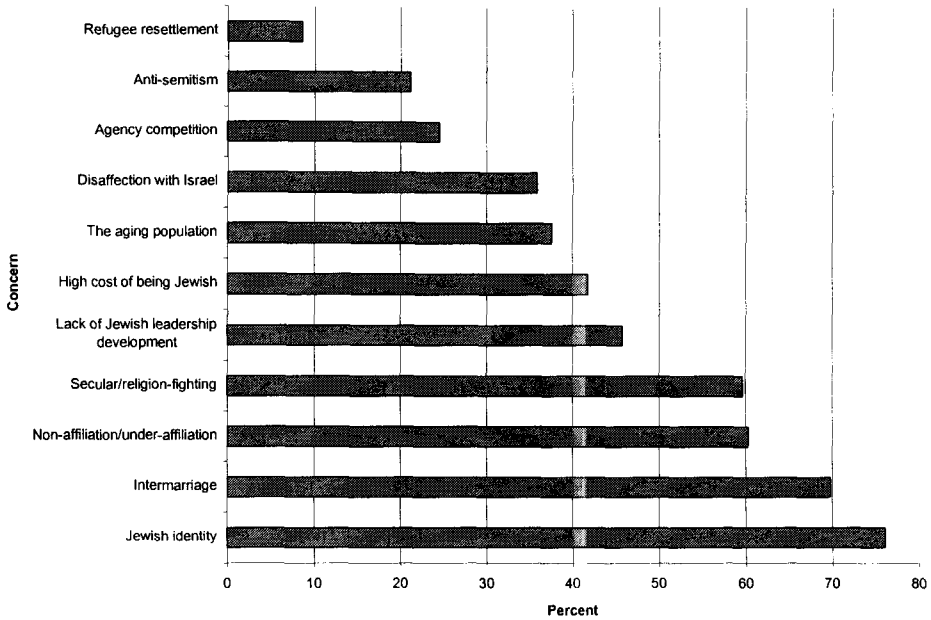
Most respondents (83%) indicated that they receive a great deal of satisfaction from their work. On a scale from 1 to 10, the mean stress level is 4 (1=high stress, 10=low stress). Although there is no difference between the

mean level of stress for male and female respondents, there is for those earning over \$120,000 (mean=3.4) compared to those earning \$20,000 to \$39,000 (mean=4.7, $F=5$, $p<.001$). On a scale from 1 to 10 the mean perception of health is 3.4 (1=excellent; 10=poor). Age, gender, years in the field, and years at present job had no impact upon the level of stress. When asked if they "would have more control over their health in another field," 68 percent disagreed. The majority of respondents (71.5%) indicated that it would be unlikely or very unlikely that they will seek employment outside the Jewish communal service. The mean length of time they plan to remain at their present job is 8 years. Also, 45 percent believe their maximum salary to be over \$100,000, and 34 percent expect to achieve their maximum in 1 to 3 years; and 33 percent in 4 to 6 years.

The respondents were questioned on their decision to accept their present job. Figure 4 displays the responses to these items.

A mean of 5 indicates that the item is extremely important, while a mean of 1 would indicate its non-importance. The opportunity for education was rated the most important (mean=4.1). The opportunity to develop administrative skills (mean=3.8), for contact with clients / members (mean=3.7), working conditions (mean=3.4), and Jewish content of the agency (3.4) were seen as very important factors in the acceptance of a position. The size of the agency, opportunities for ad-

Figure 1. Attitudes About the Jewish Community.



vancement, and the physical facilities of the agency were seen as less important.

Although there is no difference between men and woman on the level of stress and job satisfaction, woman are earning less. As Table

2 displays almost 22.8 percent of men are earning over \$120,000 compared to women who only represent 4 percent of this category (chi square=96.6, $p<.001$).

Twenty-eight percent of woman are earn-

Figure 2. Professional Attitudes and Affiliations.

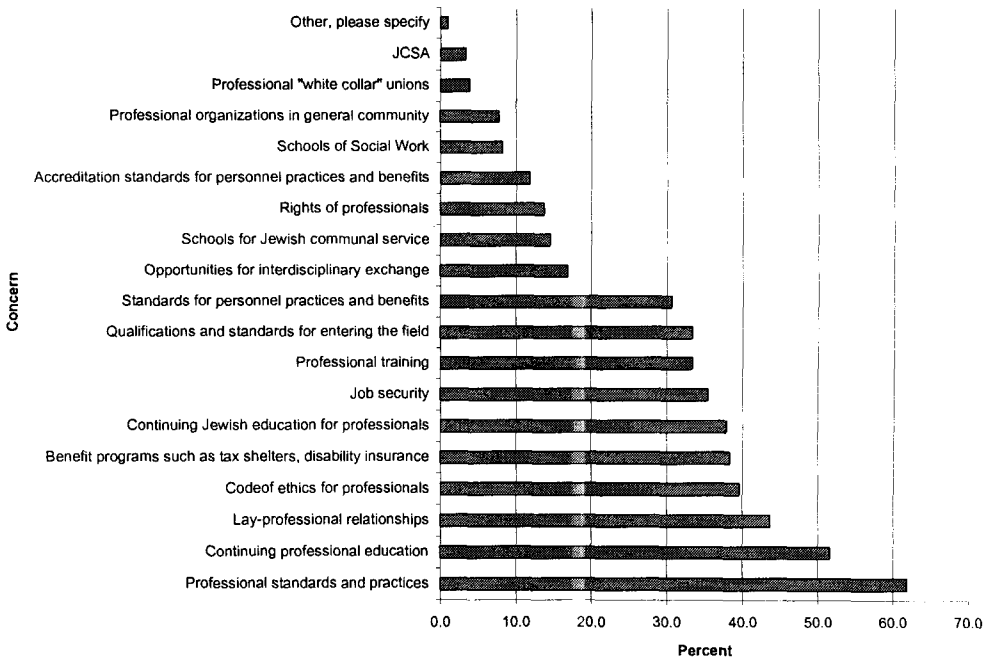
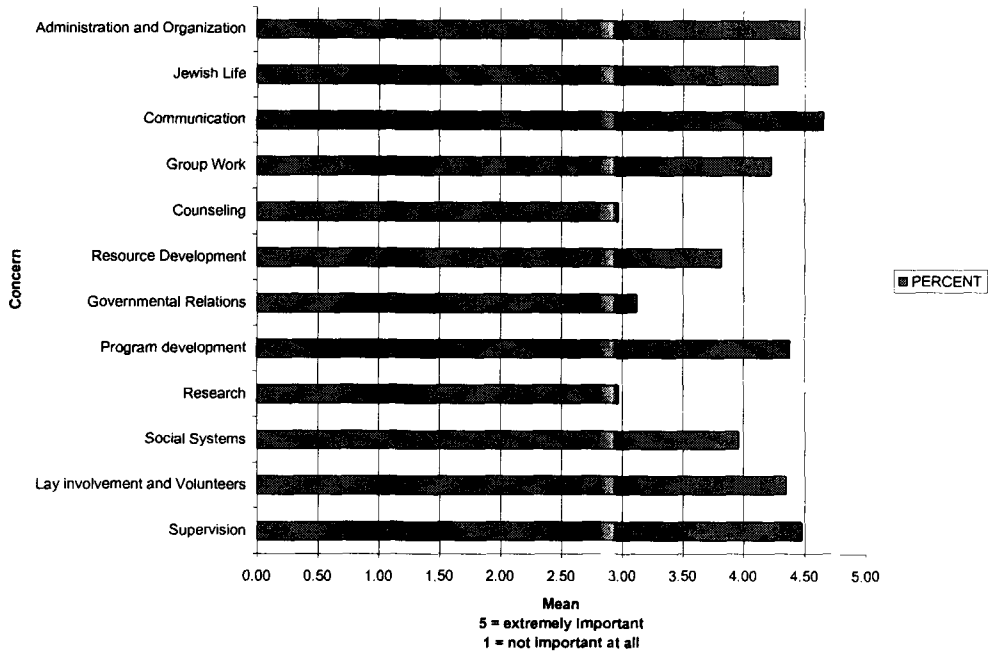


Figure 3. Concerns About Education and Training.



ing between \$20,000 and \$39,000 compared to only 5 percent of men. The males on average have been in the field for 25 years compared to women who average 15 years of experience ($t=9.9, p<.001$). The respondents indicated

that 78 percent of the CEOs are male.

The minority of the sample (45%) agreed that "women have the same opportunities as men in the field of Jewish communal service". However, as Table 3 suggests, when men are

Figure 4. Decision to Accept Current Job.

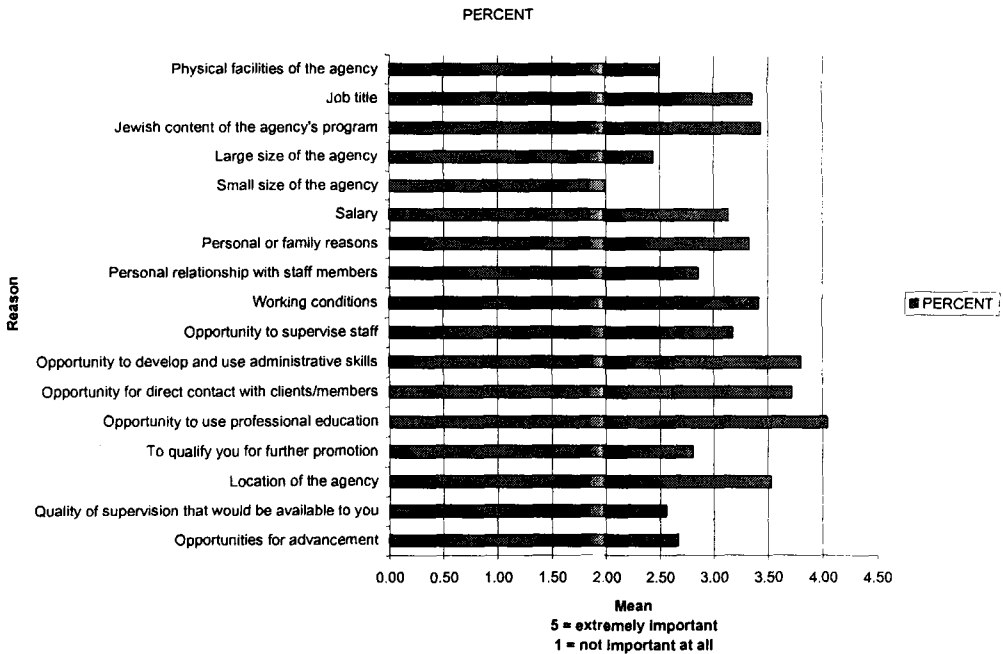


Table 2. Salary by Gender.

<u>Current Salary</u>	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Under \$20,000	1.7	5.7
\$20,000-\$39,000	5.2	27.6
\$40,000-\$60,000	19.8	26.0
\$61,000-\$80,000	18.1	23.6
\$81,000-\$100,000	18.1	7.7
\$101,000-\$120,000	14.2	5.3
Over \$120,000	22.8	4.1

compared to women on this question, 37% of the women agree compared to 54 percent of the men (chi square = 23.1, $p < .001$).

On the other hand, 76 percent of the sample strongly agree or agree with the statement, "Women have the same opportunity as men in your agency." When men are compared to women on this question 82 percent of the men agree strongly or agree compared to women, who agree strongly or agree 69 percent of the time (chi square = 14.1, $p < .01$). The majority of the sample (77%) strongly agrees or agrees with the statement, "Over the past 5 years, there have been advances in gender equality among employees in Jewish communal service." When men and women are compared on this question, 89 percent of men agree strongly or agree compared to 64 percent of women (chi square = 58.4, $p < .001$).

The majority (62%) of respondents agreed or agreed strongly with "in Jewish communal service, women are generally offered lower salaries than men for the same job." When men and woman were compared on the question, 70 percent of the women agreed compared to 54 percent of the men (chi square = 60.1, $p < .001$). A majority (60%) of the sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "The career ladder in the Jewish communal service is tougher for women." When men are compared to women on this question, 64 percent of the women strongly agree or agree, while 55 percent of the men strongly agree or agree (chi square = 14.9, $p < .01$).

The respondents were asked to rate the benefits of the JCSA. The most important benefit was networking with other

professionals (54%). The *Journal of Jewish Communal Service* was seen as a benefit by 42 percent of the sample. Finally, 40 percent indicated professional development as a benefit.

The majority of the respondents belong to an APA (74%). Most of them indicated they were not active in their APA (58%). When asked how important the APA was to them, 14.5 percent indicated it was very important and 21 percent, important. About half of the respondents attended an APA conference within the past 3 years. Of those attending a conference in the past 3 years, 60 percent said that it had been helpful to them.

COMPARISON TO THE 1982 JCSA MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

While it is not possible to directly compare the 1999 membership survey to that conducted in 1982 because of differences in questionnaire items, several statements can be made.

Gender

Sixty percent of respondents to the 1982 study were male, in comparison to 50 percent of the respondents to the 1999 survey.

Education

Respondents to both the 1982 and 1999 surveys had similar educational backgrounds. In 1982, 71 percent of respondents had received Masters degrees, compared with 68 percent of the 1999 respondents. In 1982, only 10 percent had a doctorate compared with 12

Table 3. Perception of Treatment of Women.

1. Women have the same opportunities as men in the field of Jewish communal service.

	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Strongly agree	14.9	10.1
Agree	39.3	26.8
Disagree	35.5	40.1
Strongly disagree	6.9	18.3
Uncertain	3.4	4.7

2. Women have the same opportunity as men in your agency.

	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Strongly agree	35.8	28.4
Agree	48.5	40.8
Disagree	13.4	19.2
Strongly disagree	2.4	8.0
Uncertain	2.0	3.6

3. Over the past 5 years, there have been advances in gender equality among employees in Jewish communal service.

	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Strongly agree	28.2	11.0
Agree	61.8	53.1
Disagree	4.2	13.8
Strongly disagree	.8	3.9
Uncertain	5.0	18.1

4. In general, women in Jewish communal service have the same opportunities for advancement as in other fields.

	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Strongly agree	13.8	7.1
Agree	45.8	35.4
Disagree	28.1	32.7
Strongly disagree	2.4	10.2
Uncertain	9.9	14.6

5. The career ladder in Jewish communal service is tougher for women.

	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>Female (%)</u>
Strongly agree	11.6	21.7
Agree	43.8	42.5
Disagree	28.7	22.8
Strongly disagree	9.7	3.9
Uncertain	8.1	9.1

percent of 1999 respondents.

Issues of Concern

Respondents to both surveys indicated similar issues of concern. The large majority of both samples indicated that issues of Jewish survival, continuity, and maintaining Jewish

identity were important.

As Figure 5 displays, the membership survey conducted during the 1970s found that 45 percent of respondents were under 40 years of age. The 1982 survey found 32 percent under 40 years of age. The 1999 survey found only 17 percent of respondents were under 40 years of age.

Most Important Items For You As A Professional

Respondents from both surveys ranked "professional standards and practice" as their most important concern. In 1982, two other areas were listed as being important: model codes of personnel practices and benefits and a code of ethics for the profession. In the 1999 survey, respondents ranked "continuing professional education" and "lay-professional relationships" as major concerns.

Jewish Affiliations

Respondents from both surveys indicated strong Jewish affiliations and opinions and the importance of such commitments. The 1982 survey revealed a high level of Jewish identification, with nearly 80 percent being members of a congregation. During their youth, 70 percent of 1982 respondents were members of a Jewish youth organization; over half attended a Jewish-sponsored summer camp. Just under 83 percent of 1982 respondents visited Israel at least once; with over 40 percent having participated in an organized program in Israel.

In contrast, 89 percent of 1999 survey respondents belong to a congregation, 93 percent of respondents had visited Israel at least once, and almost 77 percent partici-

pated in agency-sponsored Jewish studies programs.

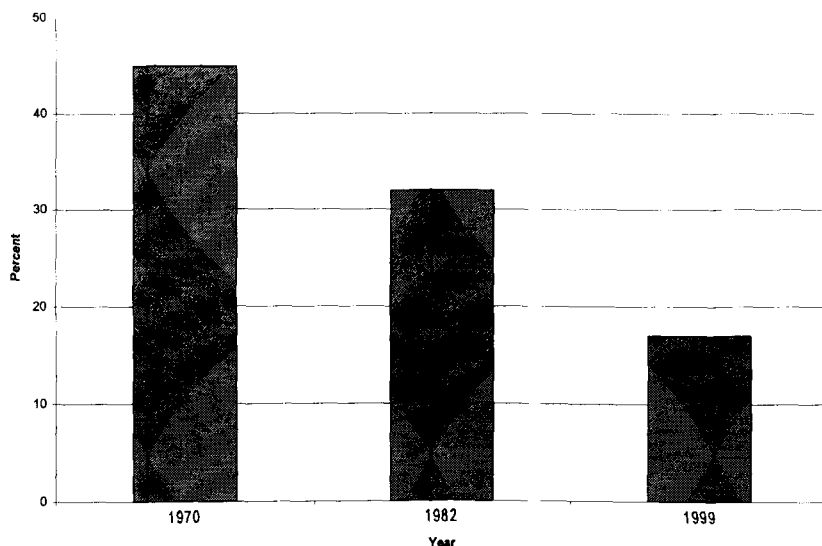
Although some of the variables are different between the two studies, respondents from both surveys indicated high levels of Jewish involvement, and agreement that through the nature of their positions, they were Jewish role models.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing has been a preliminary overview of findings drawn from a broad survey of the membership of the Jewish Communal Service Association, based on responses from 565 of its constituents. The data yields a wealth of information about the respondents, their demographic profile, their interests and their perceptions about the field, its training institutions and its professional horizons. Future analysis will focus more specifically upon individual sections of the study, including Jewish identity, job satisfaction, professional development, gender concerns, and the substance of the task facing those who will toil on behalf of the Jewish community in the years to come. Yet some preliminary assessments are in order.

First the good news, and there is much of it. Respondents appear content and broadly satisfied with their work. They are upwardly

Figure 5. Percent of Members Under 40.



mobile, they believe that they will attain their maximum salary in the near future, and they intend to remain in the field. The typical concerns of professionals and executives—stress or the status of their health—appear manageable, and they do not believe that they would have “greater control” over such issues in another field.

There is also much to celebrate in the respondents’ high levels of Jewish identity and affiliation. Almost all belong to a synagogue, and almost all have visited Israel at least once—many far more often. Large majorities tell us that the Jewish atmosphere and content of their agency were vital in their choice of work, and over three-quarters participate in programs of Jewish studies. Comparisons with previous generations of professionals remain for future study. Still, one senses a new trend in the training and in the profile of the membership.

This is also reflected in the world that our respondents see from their desks, schoolrooms, Community Centers, and campuses. They tell us that the issues that confounded their professional forebears—refugee settlement, anti-Semitism, and the relationship to Israel—no longer rank very high among the flashpoints of their communities. Instead, the most daunting problems they face deal with waning Jewish identity, intermarriage, and low levels of affiliation, a function of communal success and affluence rather than physical or economic deprivation. These also are concerns that demand a different complex of skills and services matched by sensitive and complex training initiatives.

And they tell us of yet another troubling concern that looms high in their communal notepad, one that contrasts sharply with the demands for concrete services, communal defense, or outreach. About 60 percent of respondents indicate that among the most serious problems they see facing the Jewish community is the tempestuous infighting between “secular and religious” Jews. Though our history has never been pacific, one senses that here too we have uncovered something new, though not unexpected, under the sun. It also suggests the need for specialized training

and leadership development as we face a new millenium

Finally, we take pride in the professionalism that our respondents take with them to their jobs and to their clients. On the one hand, they tell us that “as a professional,” typical workplace concerns, such as benefit programs, job security, and personnel practices hold only a mid-range level of importance for them. They are far outpaced by issues related to professional standards and the need for continuing professional education. Even the nagging tensions of lay-professional relations rank a distant third.

By the same token when they are asked what attracted them to their present job, our respondents do not rank salary, opportunities for advancement or promotion, the size of the agency, or its facilities among the top. Instead, they are moved by the quality of the work itself, more specifically, opportunities to use professional education, to develop administrative skills, and to work directly with clients. And once again, the Jewish content of the agency’s program is a major inducement.

But there also are important challenges that emerge even in this tentative assessment. One, and again it is no surprise, relates to gender and the role of women in the profession. It is comforting to note that there are no significant differences between men and women in areas of job satisfaction or stress. However, it is upsetting to be reminded that their salaries and perceptions of their mobility do differ markedly. Typically, the bulk of female respondents are lumped in the lower salary ranges, with a good majority earning no more than \$60,000 per year. By contrast, the majority of men in the sample earn over \$80,000 per year.

Similarly, a majority of respondents (although more women than men) believe that women suffer discrimination in the level of their compensation and that the career ladder in Jewish communal service “is tougher” for them. Yet, it is heartening to note that most, including a majority of female respondents, believe that there have been advances in the past years. When asked about their own agencies, they appear equally optimistic,

though significant differences between the genders emerge on both these items as well. There is much work to be done.

Yet another challenge is hurled at the JCSA, the professional organization whose initiative made this study possible. The first comes in the profile of the respondents themselves. There is good reason to believe that the sample is a fair representation of the JCSA membership. Their APA affiliation, for example, seems quite close to those of the population from which they were drawn.

If so, then our sample reflects a clear disproportion of senior members, defined in terms of age, job title and income, within the JCSA. The mean age of our sample is 51 years, with some 20 years of experience in Jewish communal service. A majority of them are senior executives or program directors and about a quarter earn over \$100,000 per year. Informal or anecdotal sources of information reinforce these findings. One senses that this does not reflect the field.

This disproportion may have many roots. Perhaps the costs and values of membership are biased by age and status and do not accrue equally. New recruits and younger professionals may not easily afford the expense of membership, nor can they readily access the benefits that accrue in the form of conferences, professional networking, and skill development. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, the organization may follow initiatives that reflect the needs and interests of its membership, with less concern for those outside, who by definition, can have little influence over the direction of its policies.

Of course none of this is intentional or malicious. Nor is it an uncommon characteristic of professional societies and associations. Nevertheless, if the JCSA is to expand and thrive in the decades to come, it will be vital for it to reach younger communal workers who have chosen not to join its ranks to date. It also must actively encourage those who are currently students to make JCSA membership an essential part of their training and professional development.

It is also important to note that while almost three-quarters of respondents belong to an

APA, few felt that the affiliation was important to them. Similarly, a majority said that their organizational journal was not of benefit to them. While neither finding should be taken at face value, both suggest the need to carefully plot the future of these potentially valuable services.

Once again, this has been only the first presentation of a database that will become an important source of information and study for American Jewry broadly and for the professionals who toil on its behalf. The tentative conclusions drawn herein are precisely that. Our data need yet to be refined and sifted, with more definitive results awaiting careful analysis and reflection. Nevertheless, even these early findings tell us that we have recruited a very special group of professionals on our behalf, professionals whose motivations and skills are essential to the welfare of the community. We may all "shep nachas."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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SHALOM ORCHESTRA

Congratulates

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on its

100th Anniversary

*We are pleased to entertain at the
JCSA Gala Reception and Dinner
November 4, 1999*

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