

From the President



Jesús M. Salazar
2019–2020 SPWLA President

March is the month of elections, not only in the US, with the primaries already upon us, but also in the SPWLA. This year, we have a very strong slate of candidates running for several positions. I'm happy to see that our efforts to have a more diverse and inclusive board of directors and membership, in general, keeps moving forward. Out of the seven open positions we have women running in four of them. I ask every petrophysicist and petrophysics enthusiast reading these lines to vote; please support your favorite candidate. Remember that you need to be a member in good standing (i.e., paid up) to have the privilege of casting a ballot. So, if you have not already done so, please renew your membership ASAP. I wish all the best to the nominees and thank them for volunteering to the Society. I also want to remind the nominees that being part of the board is not only something that looks nice on your resume, it's a one- or two-year commitment you make with your constituents to work for the continued improvement of our Society.

The first quarter of 2020 is almost gone and I'd like to show our membership numbers at the close of 2019. I'm including several plots to illustrate the membership changes in the last 7 years and the demographics for 2019. We closed 2019 with a total of 2,651 paid members, which represents a 10% improvement with respect to the previous year. Figure 1 shows the time evolution in the number of members along with the nominal oil price during most of the last decade. As you can see, the number of members pretty much tracks the ups and downs of the price West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil. Even though we're a bit far off those peak membership numbers, we consider that having more than 2,600 members is solid and it reflects in the financial health of the society. Despite a slight recovery in the price of oil price in 2018, the membership hit a low at the end of that year before rebounding in 2019. Hopefully, we will continue to see the growth trend continue in 2020 and beyond; if you have not done so, please renew your membership. Figure 2 shows the percentage distributions of our members by category and geographical location around the world. To no surprise, most of them reside in North America, followed by Europe and Asia. We've been making efforts to attract more members from Latin America and Africa by implementing the Group 2 pricing for those countries and by directly contacting potential members to lead chapters. I'm happy to see that we have more than 300 student members and continue receiving requests to start new student chapters. If you want to start a chapter or wish to have a more active role in the SPWLA please contact me or your regional director.

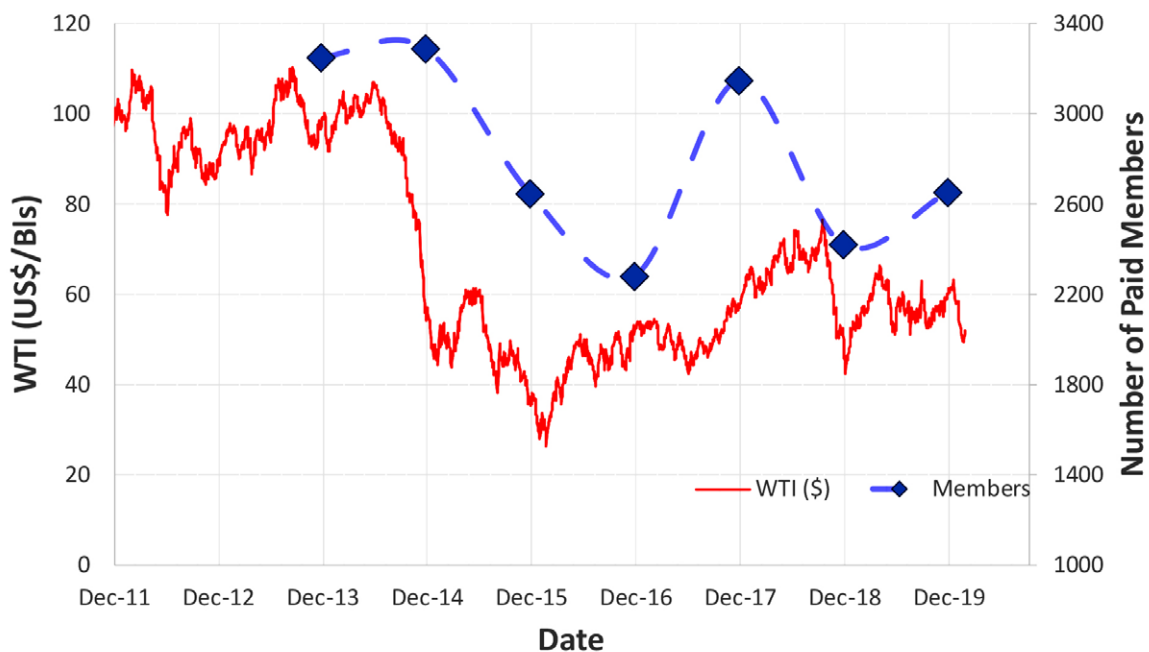


Fig. 1—Number of SPWLA members over the past 7 years compared to oil price. At the end of 2019, we had 2,651 paid members. The downturn between 2015 and 2017 put many of our members in job transitions and affected the membership registration. The bump observed at the closing of 2017 was helped by having a well-attended symposium in Oklahoma City. Large attendance at Symposiums usually boost the membership numbers because membership is offered with the higher registration cost for nonmember delegates.

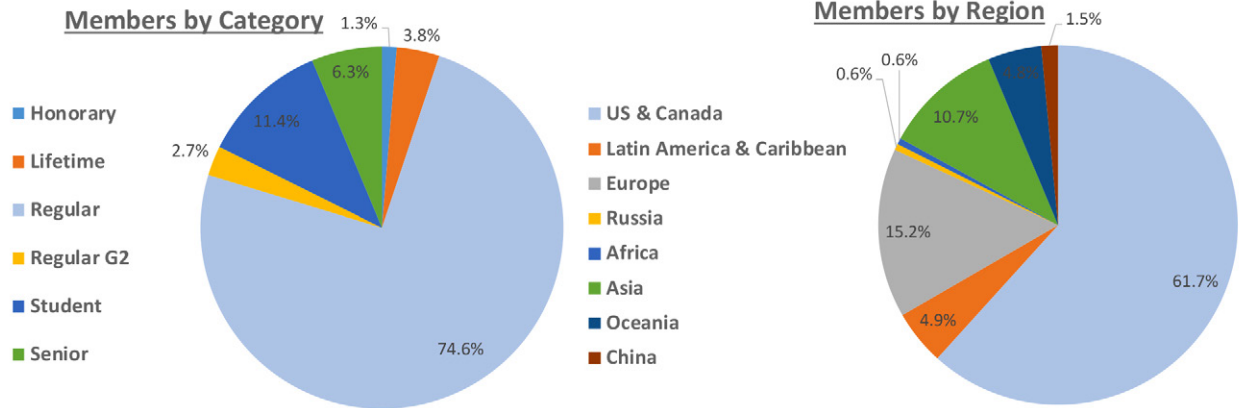


Fig. 2—Relative distribution of members by category and geographical locations for SPWLA's membership at the close of 2019. For members' category description refer to our website; location is based on the physical address provided in each member's profile.

To complete my analysis of the membership numbers. I'm including some demographics of age and gender. This one was a bit tricky, only 84% responded about their age, and 86% about their gender. I removed some outliers, such as two or three with an age less than 18 years old, and one with age of 120 years. Figure 3 shows the age distribution that ranges between 20 and 94 years old, from our very young student members all the way to our respected senior members that remain involved in the society. We really appreciate the loyalty of all our members. It is interesting to see the bimodal distribution of age with one peak around 45 (that's where I stack), another one at 65 and a dip between 50 and 60, which reflects the general age gap in the oil and gas E&P industry for people who started they career during downturns in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Finally, the embedded pie chart shows the split between male and female members, our membership is extremely male dominated we have more work to do in recruiting women to join our society. I'm happy to see that more women keep joining our discipline but many of them have not become members yet. We still need to push and motivate people if we want to make it back to 3,000+ members, let's target the young generation of petrophysicist who are the future of this organization.

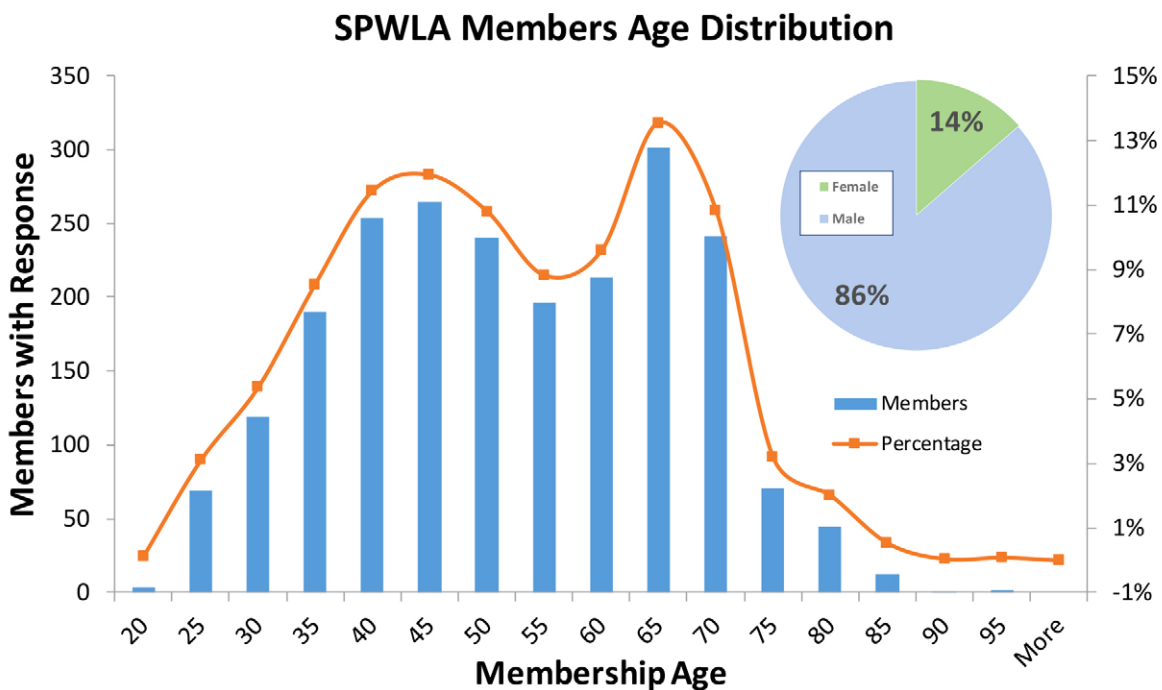


Fig. 3—Age and gender distribution of SPWLA members for 2019. The average age of our members is approximately 50 years old.

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The decline in membership is not exclusive to SPWLA, it is a general problem for the oil gas industry. Most companies, both operators and service providers, have reduced their workforce considerably in the last 5 years, including geoscientists and engineers. They prefer to work very lean to be able to survive in an environment of \$50/barrel, or less. I'm optimistic that our discipline will survive the ups and downs of the industry and make alliances with the evolving digital technologies to improve our interpretation and workflows and create value in a sustainable fashion.

We need to educate the younger generation that a career in the oil and gas industry is still possible and that we can produce the energy we need sustainably. I already started doing my part, last month I talked to Carnegie Vanguard High School (Houston) students about college and careers and how I ended up working as a petrophysicist, after going to college and graduating as a physicist. It was a productive conversation with a group of bright kids and hopefully a few of them will bring the message home and start thinking about a career in science and engineering. The last figure of this article shows a photo of my daughter Aranza and yours truly. Aranza happens to attend Carnegie HS and through my presentation now she understands a little bit more about what dad does for a living.

I close with this note reminding everybody that the 61st Annual Symposium is right around the corner and registration is now open. Whether you're presenting a paper, showcasing your technology, or just going for the educative opportunity, please plan ahead and take advantage of the early bird Symposium's price and reduced rate at the hotel. We have a lineup of six excellent workshops and two exciting field trips and plenty of learning opportunities from the record breaking 130+ papers selected for oral presentations and posters thanks to the flexibility of parallel sessions. You will also have the opportunity to attend to three evening social events, the business lunches during the week, or if you fancy something quicker and more informal, this year we include a networking business lunch where you can catch up with colleagues, friends, or clients.



Fig. 4—With my daughter during my presentation at Carnegie Vanguard HS in Houston. during College and Career Day. I spoke about science, especially physics, and discussed my path to working in petrophysics, including my years of volunteering for the SPWLA and SPE, and how the oil and gas industry can be sustainable and contribute to the development of new energy resources. I got a very nice thermal mug for my weekend morning coffee ☺

Stay connected my friends,
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