Based on the research I conducted on web platforms, the demos Corey and I listened to, and communication with a few organizations who use the programs, my recommendation may come as a surprise. As much as I would love Wild Apricot to be a more user-friendly platform with more dynamic features for our members, it truly provides us the most benefits for the price we pay.
The three platforms I requested demos from in June were MemberClicks, Star Chapter, and Engagifii.

The most transparent of the three in June was StarChatper, based on the amount of active users they would place us in the premium plan. This plan would include a $899 startup fee and then $100 a month for 800 active members. The platform did not have as many options as Wild Apricot for customization. I received an email from StarChaper in September that they received an upgrade in their web layout design and mobile capabilities which included an upgrade in cost. The new rate is $1,559 startup fee and $165 month subscription fee billed annually for 1,200 active members.   It takes roughly six to eight weeks to go live with StarChapter. https://www.starchapter.com/Layouts

The next most transparent company was MemberClicks. While the MemberClicks rep was nice, she was vague on the exact amount of money that would be required to transition to MemberClicks. Each feature had its own price point and she kept mention many different variables that would alter the exact price for their product. The lack of transparency concerned me so I reached out to other organizations that used their platform. I first reached out to AACRAO because the representative mentioned they were a client and their website looked really nice. I was disappointed to learn that they do not use MemberClicks and that AACRAO covers the costs for six associations to use the product. Armed with this knowledge I reviewed a couple regional AACROA websites and was underwhelmed. I also reached out to NCTA, an organization I am a member of, and asked them about their experience with MemberClicks. I quickly learned that they feel that the website works for their membership but the platform itself was bare bones. I recognize that their experience could be due to the options they chose instead of purchasing the full MemberClicks package with all "varibles" included.

The least transparent company was Engagifii. After reaching out more than once for a demo I never heard back from them. If they are unwilling to schedule a demo with a potential client, I can only imagine how they would treat an actual client.

I was the most impressed with StarChapter because of their professionalism and transparency with pricing and upgrades to their programs. Which leads me to explain why I am recommending we stick with Wild Apricot. As an organization, I think we need to be forward thinkers and assess how we are using our resources and funds.   The field of Higher Education is bracing for upcoming changes – less student populations in the future and less appropriations of tax funds. These two concerns will become TACUSPA's concerns as well as we strive to increase membership and weather the storms of change. After reviewing other products, I learned we do not have an inferior product and in fact, it is one of the better ones available to organizations of our size.

After serving on the board for the past two years I have learned that even though our budget looks large, we consistently spend what we make. I am concerned that if we purchase a new expensive product at this precise time it will place us in a bind in the future because TACUSPA will be devoting a large chunk of money to a new website. And we will not be able to use resources in new innovative ways because we have an expensive web platform. This year we will remove the expense of WuFoo, which will allow us to adjust funds and cover the new Wild Apricot fees. I would like for TACUSPA to continue to use Authorize.net because Wild Apricot's payment system is the biggest complaint amongst users, but that decision is up to the board to decide.

Colleges and universities are cutting back in expenses and we need to be mindful of this trend. Last month's the Chronicle of Higher Education wrote an article on technology and innovation and it really hit home. "They can no longer ask themselves simply, How can we innovate? They must also fully prepare themselves to answer the question, How *should* we innovate?" My answer is to be strategic and to think of future issues alongside our current issues in higher education and those issues do not include changing Wild Apricot's web platform. [https://www.chronicle.com/artic le/Colleges-Must-Play-a I-Role-in/247308](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Must-Play-aI-Role-in/247308)