GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SUB-GROUP

Summary of FY16 Work & Recommendations

Team Lead: Mary Perkinson, Director of Advocacy

Jonna Gerken, BOD

Liz Buzzard, Senator

Raven Cross, Senator

Pam Dingman, Senator

Dayna Johnson, Senator, Former Committee Chair

Britta Jost, Former Committee Chair

Martha Walker, Former Committee Chair

Rachel Morford, Region Governor, Former Committee Chair

Marcia Lampela, staff

Randy Freedman, staff

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Feedback from the McKinley Governance study highlighted a need to reevaluate SWE's Committee structure and purpose.

- Many members gain valuable leadership experience through participation on a SWE committee. However, inconsistent expectations and accountability can make this experience less effective for some members. With committees becoming more important in the leadership pipeline, committee chairs need to be strong with very clear expectations about roles and responsibilities.
- The current committee structure, responsibilities and accountability will be reviewed, focusing on leadership opportunities and communication pipelines.

They recommended:

- Consolidate current committees (pending other structural changes)
- Establish term limits (concerns expressed from some committees)
- Enhance periodic review process (already occurs at some frequency)

The committee sub-group began the assessment by discussing the roles that committees perform for the society. The team created a list of questions that we identified that should be answered as part of our evaluation. The list of questions was then used to identify the topics the team evaluated:

- Do existing committees need to be reorganized?
- What is the role of committees in the society?
- How do we make the best use of volunteer resources?
- How do we create meaningful, value-added committee roles?
- How can we take advantage of 'micro-volunteering' options?
- How can we strengthen the committees' role in the Society?
- Can we strengthen the chair role so it's more desirable and esteemed?
- What are the existing committees' roles and responsibilities (charter) and are they still value-added? Do they align with the Strategic Plan?
- Can we create a solid leadership pipeline that values committee service? Does the structure support the pipeline? Will there be enough opportunities?
- What is the right size for a society committee?
- How should committees onboard new members?
- What should be the committee term limits?
- How to we encourage and ensure committees have a diverse membership?
- What makes a strong committee work group structure?
- Who should committees be reporting to?
- How will committees communicate to and with membership?
- Is there work that can be moved to HQ? What is the role of the staff liaison?
- What's a successful volunteer recognition and feedback loop?
- What's working and not working in committees now?
- How will this translate down through the rest of the organization?

The team then defined the purpose of the committees and areas that needed improvement. We then broke the discussion down into themes and topics and systematically reviewed the areas at the bi-weekly meetings. As the topics were discussed we also determined ways to improve the committee processes we were evaluating. Below is a list of the various topics the team discussed at our meetings:

- The roles and purpose of committees within the society
- Areas where committees need to improve
- Evaluation of committee consolidation or sunset
- Committee structure evaluation
- Volunteer utilization evaluation
- Committee member term limits
- Committee responsibilities evaluation
- Committee chair training evaluation

The sub-group identified several actions during the committee evaluation that were completed this year. The Government Relation and Public Policy (GRPP) charter was modified to have GRPP managed by a coordinator instead of a chair. The Conference Advisory Board (CAB) Charter was modified to include WE Local planning. The team also revised the committee chair training to include missing information that was identified by the sub-group during the committee evaluation. The committee chair training will be scheduled in July. The sub-group also identified additional recommendations that are defined within this report.

BACKGROUND

The team defined the role of committees within the society as:

- a key leadership pipeline
- a way for SWE members to follow their passion in a specific area
- empowered to generate ideas and communicate new initiatives
- a place to focus on and implement ideas
- having a larger society focus (strategic and prioritized goals and objectives)
- deciding on the direction for SWE programs and ideas
- responsible for communicating new initiatives
- creating a networking across society and build relationships
- a place to interact with SWE members that have diverse perspectives
- a place for all committee members to learn and develop new leadership skills
- a way for an individual to further pursue society goals and support the mission

The team identified that committees need to improve in the following areas:

- Succession planning
- Sharing information with the sections
- Volunteer utilization
- Eliminate silos/duplicate efforts
- Communication between committees
- Turnover – members/leads

- Year to year workload levels
- Clearer roles and responsibilities
- Training for committee members/leaders
- Documentation retention

COMMITTEE EVALUATIONS

EVALUATION OF COMMITTEE CONSOLIDATION OR SUNSET

The team began the committee consolidation evaluation by assessing all of the existing SWE committees to determine the feasibility of combining existing committees or considering if they should be sunset. The Women in Academia Committee was identified as a committee that could be combined with the Membership committee or with GradSWE. The Government Relations and Public Policy Committee was evaluated to determine if it should be sunset. The LCC, Curriculum and CAB were evaluated to determine if they could be combined. The sub-group also evaluated if there was a need for an Advocacy committee but after discussions decided that this committee was not necessary at this time.

The team started the committee consolidation discussion by evaluating if Women in Academia (WIA) should be a subcommittee of membership.

Pros of making WIA a sub-group of the membership committee

- Less committees
- Working on the membership committee they would have a stronger SWE voice

Cons of making WIA a sub-group of the membership committee

- In academia there is a prestige associated with being a chair and/or member of a standing society committee. Universities are more likely to support their membership and participation in SWE. Participation also aids in promotion and tenure discussions.
- If we combine, we may lose engagement based on the great progress WIA has made independently in the past two years.
- The membership committee is very different then the WIA. However, WIA is not that different than some of the other subcommittees/workgroups (MCC and affiliates).

The team next evaluated creating an Academia Committee by combining WIA and GradSWE. We thought combining the groups to an Academia committee maybe a better match that a membership subcommittee.

Pros of making WIA a sub-group of a new Academia committee

- Increased synergy between GradSWE and WIA
- The two groups already work together often and are meeting together
- Gives both groups a stronger SWE voice
- GradSWE is a large group that is led by coordinators but is set up in the committee model
- The committee could have work groups based on shared interest
- It would be a natural progression for the GradSWE members to remain on the Academia committee if their career path is Academia

Cons of making WIA a sub-group of a new Academia committee

- If we combine them into an Academia committee we may lose engagement, based on the great progress each has made in the past two years.
- Not all GradSWE members will become WIA and both groups have a different focus even though there is some alignment in goals.
- If the WIA and GradSWE are combined we may stifle GradSWE's voice because they may end up deferring to WIA.

The team recommends that WIA remain a stand-alone committee and not be combined with another group at this time.

The team also evaluated if the Conference Advisory Board, Curriculum and LCC Committees should be combined into a Professional Education Committee.

Pros of combining the Conference Advisory Board, Curriculum and LCC Committees

- The combination would increase synergy between the Conference Advisory Board, Curriculum and LCC Committees by better linking the groups. This would help provide a consistent theme that they would support.
- The combination would align well with the LCC providing continuing education credits for attending their sessions.
- The curriculum work group could provide ideas for new sessions for LCC.
- The combined Professional Education Committee could create more holistic offerings with LCC modules, webinars and other curriculum.
- This group could focus on knowledge gaps and provide information that can reach members wherever they are located.
- This group would become a very important information pipeline once we eliminate the Regions.

Cons of combining the Conference Advisory Board, Curriculum and LCC Committees

- Combining all three groups may make them too large and hard to manage.
- The role of LCC will need to change to support the elimination of Regions and the new form may not support combining into a Professional Education Committee.

The team recommends forming a Professional Education Committee that would consist of the Curriculum and LCC, but not including the Conference Advisory Board.

The Conference Advisory Board should remain independent, however needs to include WE Local conference planning to align content and conference experience.

Recommendations of Committee Consolidation or Sunset

1. The team recommended that the Government Relations and Public Policy (GRPP) Committee be sunset. The GRPP charter has been revised to have a GRPP coordinator instead of committee and a motion was submitted and approved by the BOD. The GRPP efforts will be led by a coordinator beginning in FY17.

2. The team also recommends forming a Professional Education Committee that would consist of the Curriculum and LCC committees. This option was discussed with the BOD and it was decided that at this time the committees would need to stay separate. The committee recommends re-evaluating this option once the Region Sub-team has identified the roles that need to move from the Regions to committees.

3. The team recommended that the Conference Planning Committee roles be updated to include WE Local conferences. The Conference Planning Committee charter has been revised to include WE Local conferences and a motion has been submitted and approved by the BOD.

4. The team recommends that the role of the LCC be expanded to include the section support that is currently coming from the regions. The future coaches should be a section champion/mentor working with a set of assigned sections. The committee's future role will be section support, vitality, leadership support and mentoring. The LCC will use less learning modules/presentations and focus on facilitation skills and learning tools to support and interact with the sections. As the LCC's approach evolves it will need to be renamed to better reflect their new role within the society.

5. The team recommends evaluating the Membership committee core purpose and strategic direction based on what SWE needs from a member perspective as we evolve. Consider renaming the Membership Committee to better reflect this change. Additionally, remove tactical responsibilities and assign to HQ or coordinator.

6. The team recommends developing a process for creating/sunsetting a group representing individual member demographics (i.e. Affinity Groups) and determining whether these groups should be contained within or external to the Membership committee.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE EVALUATION

The team evaluated committee structures and determined that that using work groups/subcommittees leads like the Outreach Committee is a best practice for larger committees. It also allows work groups/subcommittees leads to effectively implement 'on demand' volunteering with short term time commitments vs. long term ones used by most committees. As the regions are dissolved the responsibility for section mentoring will move to committees. The committees will need to put in a structure to organize and ensure section support. Each committee will need to evaluate if work group/subcommittees are an effective way to support their workload.

Committees are both strategic and tactical. The committee work group structure gives more volunteer opportunities for members to learn how to be strategic before they move into strategic leadership positions. This structure allows the committee chair and chair elect to focus on creating goals that are in alignment with the strategic plan. The work groups/subcommittees leads could learn to be strategic by creating

additional goals for their group. However, the main function of the work groups/subcommittees leads would be the tactical implementation of the committee goals.

Using work groups/subcommittees with leads supports a stronger leadership pipeline. It also helps train multiple chair elect candidates for the committee chair elect positions. Each year we have multiple calls chair elects to fill all of the committee positions.

Recommendations for Committee Structure

1. The team recommends using a committee work group structure for larger committees to give more volunteer opportunities for members to learn how to be strategic before they move into strategic leadership positions. It also helps train multiple chair elect candidates for the committee chair elect positions. If we are able to have larger committees with more leadership opportunities through work groups/subcommittees we can create a stronger leadership pipeline. This structure allows the committee chair and chair elect to focus on creating goals that are in alignment with the strategic plan. The work groups/subcommittee's leads could learn to be strategic by creating additional goals for their group. However, the main function of the work groups/subcommittees leads would be the tactical implementation of the committee goals.

2. The team recommends utilizing work group leads/coordinators to facilitate opportunities for on demand volunteering with short term time commitments vs. long term ones used by most standing committees.

VOLUNTEER UTILIZATION EVALUATION

SWE members gain valuable leadership experience through their participation on a SWE committee. With committees becoming more important in the leadership pipeline, committee chairs will need to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the committee members.

The size of some committees and the long tenure of members impacts the ability of new committee members participate. The team recommends initiating term limits to ensure positions will be open for new committee team members, creating additional leadership opportunities for new members to get involved, and minimizing volunteer burnout.

With today's busy lifestyles volunteers are looking for flexible volunteer opportunities. Committees should try to breakdown tasks into steps that can be supported with both long and short duration efforts from committee members.

Several committees have a separate list serve for people that have an interest in the focus area of the committee but are not part of the committee (e.g. Outreach and legacy GRPP). The committees are able to effectively use the list serve to find volunteers for the committee's short duration tasks and on boarding committee members if new opportunities for volunteers comes up during the year.

Recommendations for Volunteer Utilization

1. The team recommends that committee chairs review the committee's workload and goals to determine what size the committee needs to be before adding new members they may not have

tasks for. However, they need to make an effort to make sure they are onboarding new members every year for diversity of thought.

2. Team recommends term limits of 5-7 years (committee determined), with members able to return after a 2 year hiatus. Committees need new members bring new ideas and thoughts and to reduce volunteer burnout. Ideally this will encourage experienced members to join new committees and share their knowledge and best practices.

3. The team recommends using a secondary e-mail list to ask volunteers interested in the committee to volunteer for shorter duration tasks. This allows for time-based action for volunteering.

    a. This would include an option for how many hours volunteers are interested in working on a committee. We need a more flexible way to allow volunteers to complete tasks on committees.

4. The team recommends pairing new committee members with experienced members that are off boarding.   They can train and support the new member to take on their role within the committee.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES EVALUATION

The sub-group evaluated the committees for best practices to build strong committees and engaged teams. Committee expectations should be similar for volunteers when they transition to another committee.

Recommendations for Committee Responsibilities

1. The team recommends that committee job descriptions be updated to include time commitments and format for participation (i.e. phone calls, emails, document generation, etc.).

2. The team recommends that Committee Chairs make sure that the committee is diverse and includes collegiate, graduate, and international members where applicable.

3. The team recommends that the specific leadership competencies that are required for successful chair/chair elect candidates are identified and published.

4. The team recommends that Chair Elects take the Committee Chair training along with Committee Chairs.

5. The team recommends that the Committee Chair and Chair Elect work together throughout the whole year so that the Chair Elect is a backup for the Chair and can have a strong understanding of how the committee works prior to establishing committee goals for the following year.

6. The team recommends that Committee Chair and Chair Elect actively develop committee members that are interested in moving to a chair position. A best practice is to start the year with an individual call to the committee members to determine why they joined the committee and what are they interested in getting out of the experience.

7. The team recommends SWE standardize committee document storage. There have been numerous problems with turnover and losing documentation for a committee.

8. The team recommends that committee members understand what work within the committee is tactical vs. strategic and develop their competencies to support their specific role.

    a. Align scope of committee with competencies being developed and/or tactical vs. strategic roles.

9. The team recommends committee chairs provide timely committee member feedback and acknowledge their efforts.

    a. Through letters to their employers or LinkedIn recommendations
    b. Through E-mail, thank you note or a personal call
    c. Through Spotlights in All Together
    d. On the monthly committee call
    e. Small awards or recognition
    f. Acknowledgement from the Board of Director who works with the committee

10. The team recommends having a Committee Chair and Chair Elect summit in place of the Region Governor summit once the Regions have been dissolved. The committees will become a critical communication and leadership pipeline in the new governance structure.

COMMITTEE TRAINING EVALUATION

The sub-group evaluated the Committee Chair/Coordinator Training for gaps. The team has revised the training to include the additional information the team identified. A self-paced learning module will be developed in FY17 to support the Chair and Chair Elects. This module will allow them to find information by topic as needed throughout the year.

The sub-group recommends that a quarterly round table call for committee chairs be established to share best practices. This will be a way for new chairs to work with more experienced chairs, generate synergy across committees and a better understanding of the society.

Recommendations for Chair/Coordinator Training

1. The team recommends conducting Chair/Coordinator training in July and including Chair/Coordinator-Elects. The training is in August so if the committee is not already transitioning to the new chair they will start off the year behind.

2. The team recommended that training be revised to include additional information that the team identified. The presentation has been revised and finalized.

3. The team recommends that a more in depth self-paced training module be developed that can be taken at any time during the year.

4. The team recommends establishing a quarterly call where Chairs/Coordinators can share best practices and ask questions to more experienced Chairs.

5. The team recommends the development of a committee best practices document or handbook. The document should include the following information:

- Succession planning
- Sharing information downward
- Volunteer utilization
- Silos/duplicate efforts
- Communication between committees
- Turnover – members/leads
- Year to year workload levels
- Clearer roles and responsibilities
- Training for committee members/leaders
- Documentation retention
- On board and off board committee members
- Mentoring new members

CONCLUSION

Dissolution of the Region structure will result in committees becoming a vital pipeline for leadership development and section support. The Chair/Coordinator training has been revised to include best practices and information that can be used to create a strong and engaged committee. Committees will need to implement a communication plan and develop a structure that supports SWE sections and members wherever they are located. Committees will need to reevaluate their volunteer structure and implement work groups where feasible to support expanding volunteer opportunities within the committee. Committees will need to develop opportunities for flexible volunteering such as time based actions and calls for volunteers. Term limits supports committee turnover and opportunities for new members to join the committee and bring new ideas and thoughts.

The Society relies on committee leaders to accomplish strategic objectives and goals. As we continuously evolve, we will increasingly rely on committees to take a more significant and visible role in developing future Society leaders.