



GOVERNANCE

SECTIONS SUB-GROUP

Summary of FY16 Work & Recommendations

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BACKGROUND

Initial recommendations related to Sections from the McKinley report are below.

- Create model Section bylaws that emphasize efficiency in governance, flexibility in the leadership structure, and maximizing the time and contributions of members serving in local roles. The model bylaws should also include baseline Section performance criteria and other affiliation parameters (e.g., aligning with SWE corporate identity) as well as protocols that define the appropriate roles, responsibilities, and number of volunteer officers and positions.
- Enhance leadership development training and onboarding for Section leaders to elevate the effectiveness of all Sections, clearly communicate roles and responsibilities, and enhance the member experience at the Section level. Additionally, SWE should ensure that all Section leaders have access to funding to attend SWE-sponsored leadership training and development programs.
- Develop programs and mechanisms for ongoing communication from the Sections to the Board / SWE HQ and vice versa. This may include in-person and virtual town-hall meetings, video updates, and / or ongoing communication with SWE HQ staff liaisons.

SUB-GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Reviewing the recommendations, the team interpreted the first recommendation regarding bylaws as a look at the overall Section structure. The team had two areas of focus:

1. New Section, Affiliate, & interest group formation process
2. Section officer structure & election process

The sub-group did not focus on the additional two recommendations. The recommendation related to enhanced leadership development training is listed as an FY17 operational goal for the BOD. The recommendation related to improved communication is being acted upon by the entire governance project as part of the communication plan. A governance website and email has been created and is being utilized by the Society. Changes to overall Society communication have also been made since the McKinley survey, with the change of All Together to a blog's format, additions of SWE President Facebook & Instagram personalities, additions of SWE Pinterest and Snapchat channels, and frequent video content being posted. The interaction of members with the BOD has increased in the past year.

NEW SECTION, AFFILIATE AND INTEREST GROUP FORMATION PROCESS

Currently there are three different types of groups which can be formed in SWE. Members belong to one of these groups or to the Members at Large (MAL) organization. The three groups are:

1. Sections: These are formed per the bylaws and the new Section formation procedure. There are separate procedures for collegiate and professional and coordinators to assist with the process. They are only allowed to be formed in the US and US territories per SWE bylaws. They have a specific officer structure and election process detailed in their bylaws. They have finances, receive

dues rebates, and are often formed as a 501(c)3 subordinate of SWE. They can also utilize their university's 501(c)3 designation.

2. Collegiate Interest Groups: These are groups formed with few requirements and are not detailed in the SWE bylaws. CIGs were created with 2-year and community colleges as the target audience in the early 2000's. They can have as few as 4 members to be chartered. They do not receive dues rebates and are not fiscally considered subordinates of SWE. When CIGs were created (SIGs at the time), they were required to have a sponsoring organization to hold money for them – either their college or a local professional SWE Section. At this time, there are a few long time CIGs which still have this arrangement. Many CIGs utilize funds given to them via their college.
3. Affiliates: These are a recent addition to SWE for creating international groups of members. They can be formed with as few as one either collegiate or professional member in an international location. Collegiate "Friends of SWE" can also form an Affiliate. They do not receive dues rebates and are not fiscally considered subordinates of SWE.

The group discussed whether we should retain the current structure or modify it, as well as whether international members should be allowed to create Sections and why this was not previously pursued. It was noted that some of the current international Affiliates do not want the burden of financial requirements, a complication that dues rebates would create. It was also noted there has long been a desire of some professional Sections to form groups similar to CIGs.

The recommendation of the committee was to have two separate categories of member groups: Sections and Affiliates. This would allow for a clear delineation between groups with finances and dues rebates vs. those without. The Affiliate category should be expanded to allow for groups of collegiate members and groups of professional members in both inside and outside of the US.

The formation process for Sections was also discussed. The CIG formation process was recently reviewed as was the Affiliate process, so the Section process was the focus of the sub-group. The majority of the Section formation process is facilitated via HQ. New section coordinators act as resources to help with SWE knowledge and providing support for new Sections throughout the process. This coordinator is not necessarily geographically close to the new Section, so this all done via phone and/or email. It was recommended to transition this responsibility to the Leadership Coaching Committee, as they have members throughout the US and have extensive knowledge of Section operations. This would allow for coaching to potentially be in-person.

Additional discussions were held on how to handle Sections that may wish to split due to being either geographically large (i.e. Section that are entire states like Minnesota or New Jersey) or because of having a large geographic area which creates difficulty due to travel times (as was the case for Sections in the Seattle and Los Angeles areas). One benchmarking opportunities for this is from AIChE; they allow Sections to create two subsections for a two year period to work through the details, and then are split at the end of the period.

Actions:

- The BOD has voted in August 2016 to change the name of CIGs to Affiliates. HQ will be updating the procedures online to reflect the new name.
- The bylaws when revised in the future should include both groups as subordinates of SWE. Currently only Sections are listed in the bylaws. As we continue to expand globally, if there is demand for the

more formal Sections vs. Affiliates internationally, the bylaws should be expended to allow for Sections outside of the US.

- The BOD approved the elimination of the new section coordinator roles in March. The duties of this role have been disseminated to the LCC and HQ.
- The BOD approved an updated Section Formation Procedure in August. This rewrite of the procedure was facilitated by Heather Doty, Director of Regions.
- Work with members of the bylaws committee on a process for splitting Sections. There are benchmarking examples from other organizations such as AIChE which could be utilized.

SECTION OFFICER STRUCTURE AND ELECTION PROCESS

As the governance project progresses, modifications will need to be made which will affect the Section officer structure. For example, as regions are eliminated, region representatives for professional Sections will no longer be needed. This will result in a rewrite of the professional Section bylaws template.

It was also discussed that many Sections do not follow the election process outlined in their bylaws. It is suggested that as the template is rewritten, it should be reviewed by the bylaws committee to see if there are options for elections.

Actions:

As the timeline implementation is not yet determined, the Sections sub-group did not pursue a rewrite at this time. It is preferred to have Sections only change their bylaws once since this is a large effort for changing over 400 Sections.

FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

This spring, two separate collegiate groups asked about the requirement to have combined undergraduate and graduate Sections. At some universities, according to university policies, the undergrad and graduate SWE members function as different Sections, while for SWE they are considered one Section. By SWE policies, any money the Section receives from a dues rebate would go to the undergraduate collegiate Section. Any money they receive from the university as a student organization goes to either the undergrads or to the graduate students, but isn't mixed. They pay different activity fees to the university and are administratively separate. SWE prefers an inclusive model but will need to look into how to address the different needs of graduates vs. undergraduates. As this was too late to be added to the scope, the membership committee graduate member sub-group is looking into this to provide a recommendation.