

Diversity Committee Report

Summer Policy Council Meeting 2016

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the System Dynamics Society demographics for 2015 membership and conference. Total membership decreased from 1159 in 2013 to 1097 in 2015. Overall, the reporting of demographic information remained high at 90%. Results using revised estimates shows that the percentage of women members decreased slightly from 18.1% in 2014 to 17,6% in 2015. The small proportion of female members and the lack of critical mass possibly affects the culture and image of the System Dynamics Society. The age distribution has remained relatively stable. Students moved down from represented an estimated 20.1% of the membership in 2014 to 18% in 2015..

This report summarizes membership demographics for the System Dynamics Society through the 2015 calendar year.

It is important to note that some new members and conference participants elect to not disclose demographic information the first year they join the society or attend a conference, but in subsequent years voluntarily provide demographic information. As a consequence, the percentage of missing data for a particular year tends to decrease with each additional year. This report uses data from the 2016 snapshot. Thanks to Erin Sheehan and Roberta Spencer for providing the statistics.

Overall Membership Demographics and Trends

Total membership decreased from 1159 in 2013 to 1143 in 2014 and 1097 in 2015. (see Table 1).

Membership by Gender and Year

Table 1 shows the composition of membership by gender and year using several estimates, including data from the revised membership forms asking for demographic information. Revised estimates shows that the percentage of women members is slightly going down again from 18.1% in 2014 to 17.6% in 2015, reaching the level of 2011.. With this percentage women members are far from having a critical mass, which may affect the culture and external image of the society.

Table 1 Membership by Gender and Year

Gender	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Women ¹	134 14.6%	158 16.3%	163 16.6%	174 17.5%	161 16.8%	167 16.4%	184 18.1%	174 17.6%
Men ¹	785 85.4%	813 83.7%	817 83.4%	823 82.5%	792 83.2%	854 83.6%	834 81.9%	810 82.3%
Unknown ²	151 14.1%	135 12.2%	87 8.2%	128 11.4%	129 12.1%	138 11.9%	126 11.1%	113 10-%
Total	1070	1106	1067	1125	1082	1159	1144	1097

¹ Reported by frequency and as a percent of known gender. ² Reported by frequency and as a percent of total membership.

Membership by Age

Analysis of data from the 2016 snapshot suggests that the age distribution of membership remains relatively stable (see Table 2). The largest age group can be found in the cohort 60 years and older (25.6%), with the 40-49 cohort declining to a still considerable proportion of 22.9%. The number of members below 25 (1.8%) and 25 to 29 (6.8%) fall very much behind.

Conference Attendance by Gender

Conference attendance by gender moved up to 24.2%, after a dip of 11.5% in 2011 (see Table 3). However, it is important to note that the percentage of conference participants where gender is unknown is much higher than membership (41.6% unknown for conference participants versus 11.1% for membership) and is sufficiently large that one should view small changes in the gender of conference participants with caution. However, it is noteworthy that the gender balance in membership is improving over the years, while in membership it is stalling or even getting worse. The larger attention of women to the SDC conferences shows the percentage of female members can be potentially improved.

Table 2 Membership by Age Group and Year

Age	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Under 25 ¹	1.1%	1.4%	1.8%	1.4%	1.8%
25 to 29 ¹	5.1%	4.9%	7.1%	6.3%	6.8%
30 to 39 ¹	20.8%	19.8%	22.0%	22.2%	21.1%
40 to 49 ¹	24.1%	25.3%	24.9%	24.2%	22.9%
50 to 59 ¹	27.0%	25.9%	23.0%	22.6%	21.7%
60 or older ¹	21.9%	22.7%	21.2%	23.2%	25.6%
Unknown ²	14.4%	10.7%	12.6%	9.4%	11.2%

¹ As percent of known ages

² As percent of total membership

Table 3 Conference Attendance by Gender and Year

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014	2015
Women	80	65	61	72	64	72
% ¹	20.6%	22.5%	11.5%	22.8%	22.6%	24.2%
Men	309	224	238	244	218	225
% ¹	79.4%	77.5%	79.6%	77.2%	77.4%	75.8%
Unknown	168	194	251	227	202	
% ²	30.2%	40.2%	45.6%	41.8%	41.6%	
Total	557	483	550	543	485	

¹ As percent of known gender.

² As percent of total membership

Students

Students represented an estimated 20.1% of the membership in 2014, nearly equaling the peak of 21.3% in 2007. The vast majority of students were enrolled in doctoral programs (12.8% of membership) followed by students in masters programs (5.8% of membership). Further increasing the proportion of student members may be the way to increase the membership of younger age cohorts.

Table 4 Student Membership by Year

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014	2015
Doctoral	121	121	97	102	120	116
% ¹	14.5%	13.5%	11.5%	11.3%	12.8%	12.9%
Masters	38	42	41	46	50	47
% ¹	4.5%	4.7%	4.9%	5.1%	5.3%	5.2%
Undergraduate	9	8	4	6	6	6
% ¹	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%

Other	10	4	8	10	14	12
% ¹	1.2%	0.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.5%	1.3%
Total students	178	175	150	164	193	181
% ¹	21.3%	19.6%	17.8%	20.1%	20.5%	20.1%
Unknown	316	149	280	253	205	198
% ²	27.4%	14.3%	33.1%	21.8%	21.8%	22%

¹ As percent of members with known student status.

² As percent of all members.

Diversity Committee Activities for 2015

The Diversity Committee advocates awareness amongst program officers to select enough women role models in keynote speakers, session chairs and administrative functions. It has been advising the program committee about candidates with a diverse background for policy council membership and formal positions within the System Dynamics Community. Society members with formal positions have reacted positively towards these suggestions.