

The Society's new Home Office

Brad Morrison raised the excellent question of how moving to CHMS will actually work. While not everything is completely certain, based on the meetings and discussions I have had, I feel that I have a pretty good idea of how things will look from the perspective of our different stakeholders. – Bob Eberlein, March 16, 2017.

For Members and Sponsors

There will be little change. The phone number, held by UAlbany, will likely be different, but it will be answered "System Dynamics Society." The Executive Director will be addressable by name, as will likely another person. These people will both be employees of CHMS, but will be the face of the Society home office and be very much like employees of the current Home Office in their interactions with members.

For a Conference Attendee

The Executive Director will be in attendance and consistently present the face of the Society. The paper submission and review process will change, but the basic character of the conference will continue unchanged unless the PC chooses a new direction. The financial arrangements, including the breakdown of registration fees, sponsorship and cost, will change, but still look much like they do for current conferences.

For a Conference Hosts and Program Chairs

The role of the Conference Host will continue to be significant, especially at University based sites. The Program Chairs will still be responsible for the Program. The biggest different is that the Home Office will not pick up the slack should the hosts or chairs fail to keep things on track. The Home Office can remind them of what needs to be done, but will not be able to do it for them.

For an Officer or Member of the Policy Council

The Policy Council is the decision making authority of the Society and that will be even more clearly true after the move. All payments require the authorization of an Officer, normally the VP Finance. Any investment decisions will be the responsibility of the PC (or a designated committee). The employees at CHMS will provide advice, based on best practices for non-profit organizations, on financial and other governance matters, but they will not make decisions.

The responsibility of PC members will also change. Officers will need to communicate more directly their intent so that CHMS employees have clear direction for their activities. Balancing workload with the resources available through CHMS will be monitored by the Executive Director, but the PC must set the priorities and it (or a sub-body) must respond when there are choices that need to be made. The PC will also be responsible for the selection (or at a minimum approval of CHMS selection) of the Executive Director.

For the Rest of the World

CHMS has people who work on public relations and member recruitment. I expect this will increase our reach, and help us bring in new members and sponsors. Support for other constituencies, such as primary and secondary teachers, will be based on decisions of the PC. New initiatives will need to come through the PC, but can certainly designate resources within or outside of CHMS for their execution.

A Final Thought

Over the past 20 years Society operations have been professionalized and localized through the Home Office. This has been good for the Society. Roberta Spencer has been a dedicated, resourceful and capable Executive Director and has helped keep the Society in good financial and organizational shape. Going forward we need to rely on the Home Office, not an individual within it, to help the Society prosper. That is what drives most of the changes described above; moving to CHMS just seems like the best way to make them happen.