



Annual Report on Home Office Operations for 2005

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The annual report is located at <http://www.systemdynamics.org/PolicyCouncil/HomeOfficeReportJuly2006.pdf>

Executive Director's Report on Home Office Operations of The System Dynamics Society
Summer Policy Council Meeting: July 2006, Nijmegen
By Roberta L. Spencer

ANNUAL REPORT. I hope that you find the information contained in the report to be a useful reference source for understanding how our home office operates. The annual report has become quite long, with dense statistical summaries of Society operations. The full annual report is produced only once per year and is available at the annual research conference. I would appreciate any comments that you may have on change in format, other information to include, or improvements. Below provides some highlights for the 2005 calendar year.

Overall, the Society is growing and is in good health.

NEW INITIATIVES. Each year we focus on several areas for development. Highlights of these new initiatives are:

- **Web-Based Policy Council Meeting.** The Society assisted in setting up and managing the discussion board for this first-time event.
- **Digitizing projects with Wiley and MIT/University of Bradford.** These projects will result in all older issues of the System Dynamics Review and Dynamica to be available on the web.
- **Past Conference Proceedings.** This year the home office, working with work-study students, has started the process of getting all earlier print-only conference proceedings indexed and scanned, to be included on the Society website.
- **Conference Management.** With the leadership of Bob Eberlein, we continue to incorporate refinements into the web submission and review system. Many suggestions to make the conference more welcoming have become events this year in Nijmegen.
- **New Office Space.** Construction work is underway.
- **One-time Moving Sale.** Inventory was successfully reduced for our temporary move.
- **New Product Development.** We continue to rely on product sales to subsidize routine operations. We are still working toward offering the Fireside Chat featuring Jay Forrester and George Richardson, and a reprinting of The Electronic Oracle by Dana Meadows. We are always looking for new product ideas. Please see me if you have any.

ROUTINE OPERATIONS. The Home Office continues to think of operations around the categories of membership, sales, society sponsorship, conference management, web presence, and financial management. We explicitly allocate and track our time to measure our effort in these various areas. Highlights of our operations as presented in the annual report are:

- **Membership.** Annual membership for 2005 reached an all-time high of 1052. Mid-year reports for 2006 indicate that membership is currently 980, slightly lower than last year at the same time. We routinely track membership statistics by occupation and geography.
- **Sponsorship.** Sponsors of the Society and its annual conference provide critical financial support to our operations. We receive sponsorship support in a number of helpful ways from a wide spectrum of people and organizations. We count 34 Society and 26 conference sponsors thus far for 2006 providing approximately \$70,000 in direct donations. What does not appear in this number is the value of all the sponsorship in-kind. We work extremely hard to keep our current sponsors and recruit new sponsors.
- **Conferences.** Conferences have now become the largest area of effort by home office staff.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES. Progress on so many fronts inevitably presents issues and challenges that need continuing attention and effort.

- **Core Operations Still Not Self-Sustaining.** Sales continue to cross-subsidize other areas of operations. Income from membership and other stable recurring income sources do not fully cover our core operations. How to keep our net profit centers in good shape is an ongoing concern.
- **Professional Staff May Depress Volunteer Efforts.** In all areas, Society operations are becoming more and more professionalized. Conference duties in particular have increased and tasks formerly performed on a voluntary basis are now done by paid staff at the home office. Providing more services also creates new tasks for the home office. While this trend creates an opportunity to learn and perform better over time, it also drives up the cost for Society home operations.
- **Conference Planning.** Efforts to standardize routine aspects of the conference, realistic budgeting, and careful site

selection are important items for future conference planning.

- The Wiley Partnership. Wiley continues to be a strong core partner publishing the System Dynamics Review.
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