

VP Member Services Report
Summer meeting of the Policy Council 2008
Submitted by Deborah Campbell

The VP Member Services office (Deb and Agata Sawicka, AVP) has a role on several current projects, including the dues structure, the nominating committee process, the conference fee structure, and the conference review process. This Policy Council meeting, we propose some new projects. The SIGs and the Diversity Committee fall under this office as well. An update on each of these is provided in the following report.

Current projects

Dues structure

Based on the analyses done by the home office and Agata we can report that the new dues structure is, to date, having a slight positive impact on revenue (as of June 20, up by US\$10,000 over what it would have been under the old structure) and a neutral impact on total membership numbers and the new/renew ratio of members. This translates into good news on the revenue front and opportunities to increase new memberships and renewals that we have not yet realized.

While 23% of members chose the dues tier equivalent (US\$85-95) of our previous "regular" dues (US\$90), half of the remaining members were comfortable choosing a higher dues payment (39%) and half were more comfortable choosing a lower dues payment (38%).

Additionally, while more members than previously have chosen an electronic version of the SDR, the highest significant percentage of these is at the lowest tier, reinforcing how important the lowest price tier is for some of our members.

We conclude that, to date, the varied dues options have positively met the varied needs and desires of our members, and have resulted in a slight increase in income for the Society. Follow-up to include: analyse the impact of the new dues structure on new membership with increased granularity (further data to be mined by the home office after the conference), continue to monitor the impact of the new structure over the next year, and propose both a membership renewal project and a membership recruitment project.

A more detailed presentation of the status of the dues structure will be given at the summer PC meeting, with opportunity for Q&A.

Nominating Committee process

Last year, Jim Lyneis and I worked together to improve the institutional memory and transparency to our membership of the nominating committee process. As a result, the PC agreed to our recommendation for the Nominating Committee to:

1. Overlap committee membership over several years. This was formalized by officially changing the makeup of the committee: "Three members shall be the Past President (Chair), the President, and the President-Elect; the other three members shall be appointed for staggered 3-year terms."
2. Announce open positions (Policy Council, VPs, Assistant VPs) at the annual business meeting and in the newsletter, requesting those interested let the Nominating Committee know (a paper form was created and distributed for self- and colleague-nomination).
3. Maintain a master list of the names of all potential candidates that the above recruitment process and past nominating committee discussions have compiled.
4. Present a slate of candidates to the Policy Council by 31 December of each year, including a bio of each of the candidates as supporting information.

This year's committee, of which Jim and I were both members, found working with a large list of potential candidates, while successfully enlarging the pool of qualified candidates, created two challenges: 1) ensuring diverse representation of membership within the list, and 2) logistically narrowing the group of potential candidates to a final slate.

While the nominating committee agreed that use of the master list should be continued, we also agreed to the need to improve the logistics of using it and increase the membership representation within it. The learning curve this new process created had a negative impact on our ability to meet the December 31 deadline. Jim and I will be working together after the conference to make further refinements and recommendations for the use of the master list as well as schedule guidelines for the nominating committee under this new process.

Conference fee structure

The VP Member Services is a member of the conference fee structure committee led by Andreas Grossler.

Conference review process

The VP Member Services supports the conference review process committee led by Martin Schaffernicht.

Proposed projects

Membership recruitment project: Increase membership in underrepresented groups to capitalize on the new dues structure.

Renewal improvement project: Increase the percentage of members who renew (currently 78%).

Transition office to Krys Stav (Agata to stay on as AVP): Deliver a document (already in draft form) that captures the current and proposed projects for the office as a support for institutional memory. This document could be considered a best practice for project management and transition, so if anyone is interested in a copy, please let us know.

These proposals (and potentially others) will be presented and discussed at the summer PC meeting.

Reporting SIGs and committees

SIGs

Two new SIGs were accepted this year, the Model Analysis SIG (SIGMA) and the International and Intra-national Conflict SIG (IINC SIG).

The reports from all of the SIGs will be summarized and available July 7th.

Diversity Committee

Peter Hovmand, chair of the Diversity Committee, is submitting a separate report.