

Diversity Committee Report Summer Policy Council Meeting 2010

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the System Dynamics Society demographics for 2009 and Diversity Committee activities. Total membership continued to decline from a peak of 1,152 in 2007 down to 1,043 in 2009. The pattern of decline was consistent with previous years. The number of women remained stable and currently represents approximately 16% of the membership. The age distribution of society membership remains relatively stable. Gender diversity at the conferences continues to lead membership with women representing nearly 22% of attendees at the Albuquerque conference. Students represent 27% of the overall membership with 62% of students enrolled in graduate programs.

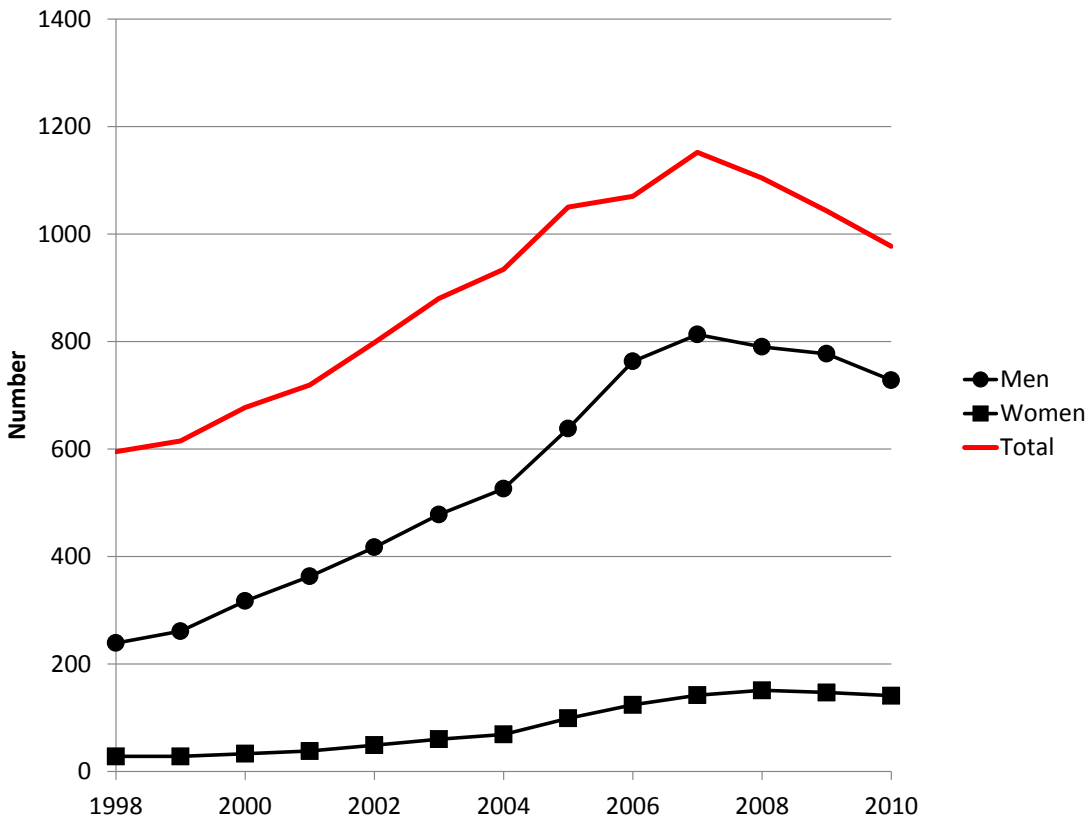
While income data is collected as part of the membership dues structure, the data has not been analyzed due to its members' sensitivity about disclosing income. It is uncertain whether the current dues structure has been effective. It is recommended that the Policy Council sanction a survey study to examine 1) the income barriers to membership and conference attendance, 2) the acceptability and benefits of the current policy among members, and 3) the acceptability and perceived benefit of potential alternative policies.

The Diversity Committee continues to run a membership roundtable at the annual conference. Other initiatives include improving the integration of online resources with the discussion forum, and developing Access reports on the diversity of membership and conference attendance.

Overall Membership Demographics and Trends

Total membership continued declined, dropping from the peak of 1,043 members 2009 (see Figure 1). However, year-on-year tracking of membership renewals suggests that membership will begin to increase in 2010. Based on available information, the number of men in the System Dynamics Society declined while the number of women remains relatively stable.

Figure 1 Membership by Year and Gender



Membership by Gender and Year

Figure 2 shows the composition of membership by gender and year using several estimates, including the 2004 report to the Policy Council based on gender imputation from names, 2005 membership survey, and data from the revised membership forms asking for demographic information. The number and percentage of women members has plateaued at approximately 16% (see Figure 2 and Table 1). Reporting of gender on membership forms has continued to increase with 88.6% of members reporting gender (see Table 1).

Figure 2 Composition of Membership by Gender and Year as Percentage

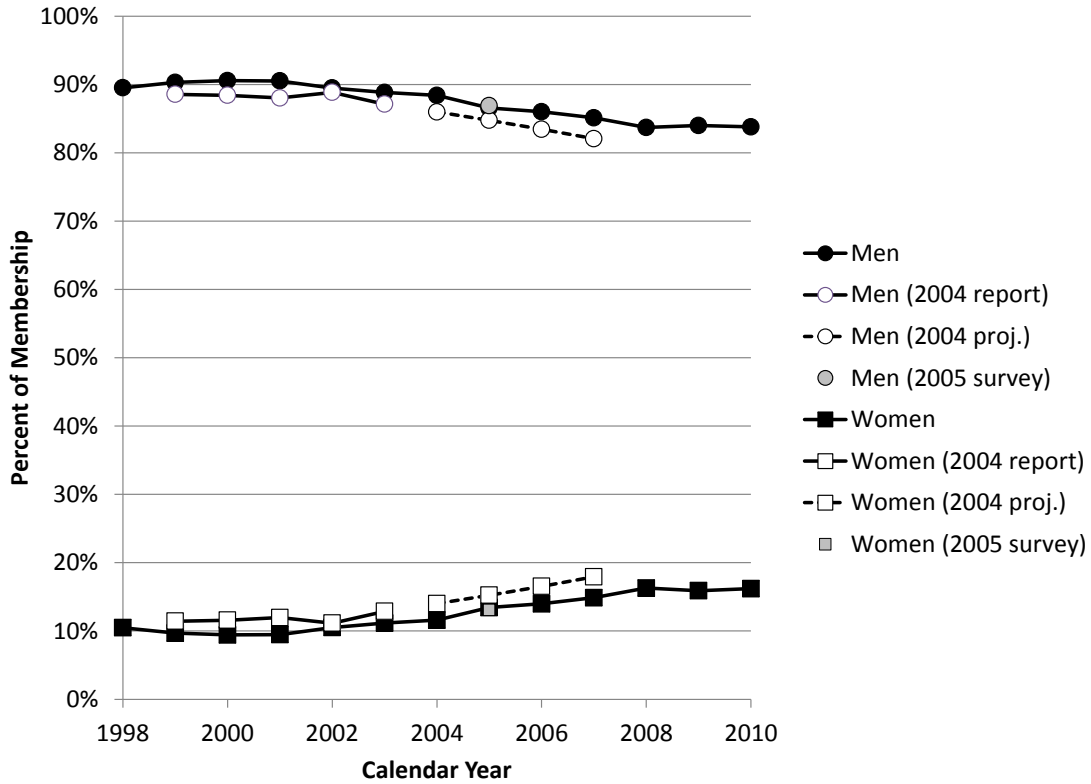


Table 1 Membership by Gender and Year

Gender	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 ³
Women ¹	33 9.4%	38 9.5%	49 10.5%	60 11.2%	69 11.6%	99 13.4%	124 14.0%	142 14.9%	151 16.0%	147 15.9%	141 16.2%
Men ¹	317 90.6%	363 90.5%	417 89.5%	478 88.8%	526 88.4%	638 86.6%	763 86.0%	813 85.1%	790 84.0%	777 84.1%	728 83.8%
Unknown ²	327 48.3%	318 44.2%	332 41.6%	342 38.9%	339 36.3%	313 29.8%	183 17.1%	197 17.1%	163 14.8%	119 11.4%	108 11.1%
Total	677	719	798	880	934	1050	1070	1152	1104	1043	977

¹ Reported by frequency and as a percent of known gender. ² Reported by frequency and as a percent of total membership. ³ Based on membership data as of June 25, 2010.

Membership by Age

Membership tends to be evenly distributed between ages 30 and 59, but lagging in the under 30 groups.

Conference Attendance by Gender

The proportion of women attending the Albuquerque conference in 2009 decreased from the Athens conference in 2008, but increased slightly from the Boston in 2007.

Students

Students represented nearly 27% of the membership in 2009, with 62% of the students being enrolled in a graduate degree program (see Table 4). However, this distribution varies considerably by age and year. Older students tend to be enrolled in non-graduate degree seeking programs while younger students tend to be enrolled in graduate and undergraduate programs.

Income

Although the membership renewal form has information about income, this variable has been controversial since its introduction in 2005. In contrast, few if any comments have been expressed about the other variables being collected. Income data have therefore not been analyzed as part of this report due to members' sensitivity about income data and questions about the reliability of data.

However, income is a factor in people joining the System Dynamics Society and attending the annual conference. The System Dynamics Society has made numerous efforts to address barriers to attending the conference through student scholarships. The Society has also introduced sliding scale membership fees. These efforts, while intended to increase diversity of the membership, have also caused controversy without knowing if the policies have been effective at reducing barriers. *It is therefore recommended that the Policy Council sanction a survey study to examine 1) the income barriers to Society membership and conference attendance, 2) the acceptability and benefits of the current policy among members, and 3) the acceptability and perceived benefit of potential alternative policies.*

Diversity Committee Activities for 2010

The Diversity Committee continues to host a roundtable discussion at the annual conference to solicit feedback from members. The Diversity committee also plans to improve the integration of online resources into the discussion forum and improve the systematic reporting of diversity data through the development of reports in Access.

Table 2 Membership by Age Group and Year

Age	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010 ³
Under 25 ¹	1.4%	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.3%
25 to 29 ¹	4.9%	6.2%	5.5%	6.6%	7.2%
30 to 39 ¹	24.7%	23.9%	24.7%	20.5%	22.4%
40 to 49 ¹	25.5%	25.9%	26.5%	24.5%	24.5%
50 to 59 ¹	26.1%	25.5%	24.8%	26.4%	25.6%
60 or older ¹	17.4%	16.8%	16.7%	20.2%	19.0%
Unknown ²	18.5%	18.6%	18.5%	12.4%	11.8%

¹ As percent of known ages. ² As percent of total membership. ³

Based on membership data as of June 25, 2010

Table 3 Conference Attendance by Gender and Year

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Women	52	56	71	49	56
% ¹	17.8%	21.6%	20.2%	23.4%	21.7%
Men	240	203	280	160	202
% ¹	82.2%	78.4%	79.8%	76.6%	78.3%
Unknown	193	178	206	176	225
% ²	39.8%	40.7%	37.0%	45.7%	46.6%
Total	485	437	557	385	483

¹ As percent of known gender. ² As percent of total membership

Table 4 Membership by Age, Student Status, and Year

Age	Year	PhD or masters students	Total students	Graduate students (PHD and masters) as percent of all students	Students as percent of membership	Graduate students (PHD and masters) as percent of membership
Under 25	2005	1	1	100%	100%	100%
	2006	8	10	80%	83%	67%
	2007	9	11	82%	85%	69%
	2008	7	12	58%	86%	50%
	2009	7	15	47%	100%	47%
	2010	4	11	36%	100%	36%
25 to 29	2005	10	12	83%	46%	38%
	2006	19	21	90%	57%	51%
	2007	26	35	74%	67%	50%
	2008	25	35	71%	66%	47%
	2009	31	42	74%	70%	52%
	2010	34	46	74%	74%	55%
30 to 39	2005	28	44	64%	29%	19%
	2006	44	70	63%	35%	22%
	2007	47	79	59%	37%	22%
	2008	50	80	63%	39%	24%
	2009	46	66	70%	35%	25%
	2010	50	83	60%	43%	26%
40 to 49	2005	16	36	44%	19%	9%
	2006	23	50	46%	22%	10%
	2007	28	60	47%	25%	12%
	2008	24	50	48%	20%	10%
	2009	33	51	65%	23%	15%
	2010	29	56	52%	27%	14%
50 to 59	2005	15	36	42%	17%	7%
	2006	16	43	37%	18%	7%
	2007	21	49	43%	18%	8%
	2008	20	45	44%	19%	8%
	2009	23	43	53%	18%	10%
	2010	23	36	64%	16%	10%
Totals	2005	78	149	52%	20%	10%
	2006	118	215	55%	24%	13%
	2007	141	256	55%	26%	14%
	2008	136	244	56%	26%	14%
	2009	151	244	62%	27%	17%
	2010	151	253	60%	29%	18%