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Education, Outreach, Public Understanding Ad Hoc Committee:
Starting the discussion about what SDS should do in these areas

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Abstract:

There are two areas of focus for this committee 1) Education, which includes Outreach in Education; and 2) Outreach and Public Understanding. Although the Outreach portion is within both purviews, these are two different arenas of activity. This committee has put together some brainstorming results in each of these areas, realizing that we need a catalog of the SD educational programs currently available and readily accessible as well as a survey of interest and desire for new initiatives from the SDS. The committee has defined action items for the February Policy Council meeting and will further refine them at the meeting to be held during the ISDC in July.

Education

The definition of education will be considered, for this report's purpose, as education in the discipline of system dynamics. The Society has in the past addressed the possibility of an SDS sponsored web-based curriculum. Other areas that currently offer opportunities for SD learning and outreach in education include the following:

1. The academic schools that offer SD courses, available in the US and internationally. That list is available on the SDS website for anyone to access.
2. The Web-based curricula, which include the WPI distance learning program as well as Road Maps and the Guided Study programs created by Jay Forrester's Education in System Dynamics Project; the latter are housed on the Creative Learning Exchange's website.
3. The student chapter for SDS offers a forum for communication between primarily graduate students engaged in SD study and research. It hosts the annual PhD colloquium and sponsors a website and newsletter.
4. The K-12 outreach centered at the Creative Learning Exchange.

Questions that could structure our recommendations:

1. Should the SDS offer more academic education for SD?
 - a. Should the SDS sponsor a certification program??

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- b. Should the SDS have free web education available and sponsored?
 - c. Is web education a good way for the SDS to garner some income?
 2. Should the SDS gather the resources that are already available and make them better known through a free library? (How? Does the website already do this adequately?) Are current resources already sufficient?
 3. Should the SDS develop an outreach initiative in education to create more opportunities for SD learning and membership?
 - a. Actively promote SD short courses (similar to MIT executive education) both in the US, Europe, and especially in places like East Asia where interest is growing.
 - b. Reinforce and extend the activity of the education-based chapters (both K-12 and student – which should include undergraduate and MS as well, though the current focus has been on PhDs)
 - c. Create connection between existing groups and interested individuals through web-based initiatives.
 - i. Sponsor a webinar series for the SD community to engage with each other outside of the main conferences (include research talks, short tutorials on various topics, etc.).
 - ii. Promote collaborative projects using the web as a shared resource; include projects that connect diverse groups (i.e., K-12 with graduate and undergraduate students in different regions and interests, etc.).

Public Understanding and Outreach

The need for this has been amply expressed by Jay Forrester and others. Most recently, Kim Warren, in an on-line list conversation, said it well. He expressed the belief that there has consistently been good SD work done in many fields, and its power is evident to the SD community and the small segment of the general community that utilizes SD. However, that is very different from the general public knowing about SD and its power to help inform choices in the public social arena.

This piece of the puzzle is akin (or equivalent to) marketing SD. One reason why SD is not well known is that people in the SD community, in general, are not the types of personalities who are good at or enjoy marketing and PR

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work. It is this fact that has prompted Jay Forrester to express a need (stated in the K-12 context, but applicable more generally) for SD promoters so that the general literate public would have a good notion of what SD is, what it can do, and how it can inform public policy, education, and global decision making. In other words, create a demand for SD.

Questions that could structure our recommendation:

1. Should the SDS get involved in “marketing SD”?
2. If so, how?
 - a. Create a plan for developing a systems perspective in the general public. (Ideas, from Richard Karash: *What to know:* Concepts, theories, and vocabulary, *What to do:* Tools, methods, a kit of “how-to’s,” *How well we do things:* Skills strengthened through practice, repetition, and coaching, *How you hold yourself in relation to your context:* “Stance,” intention, quality of awareness, state of mind, *Who am I that I do these things?:* Being and Identity)
 - b. Implementing the plan:
 - i. Infiltrate the printed media.
 - ii. Infiltrate the social media.
 - iii. Organize volunteers to do the above.
 - iv. Hire a PR/media expert.
 - v. Create a basic educational toolkit for not-for-profits/media including modeling materials for the SD tools.
 - c. How would we generate the manpower/materials for a campaign?
 - i. Coordinate a volunteer effort: hire a coordinator or use a volunteer coordinator.
 - ii. Solicit SD highlights from the whole membership (short, sweet, and to the point descriptions of the power of SD).
 - iii. Mine the literature, especially the *SD Review* to get good examples.

Action items for this committee before the February 2012 Policy

Council meeting:

Education:

1. Mine and report on what has been done and is being done by the SDS, CLE and others. Talk to those who have considered this before and get their opinion.

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2. Create a plan for increased accessibility (if needed) of what is currently available.
3. Create a survey or other tool for discovering what the SDS would like to do in the future in education and public outreach. Decide on which population to survey (Policy council plus past policy council members? General ISDC membership?)