

Education, Outreach, and Public Understanding Ad Hoc Committee:

Ad Hoc Committee members: Lees Stuntz, Chairman; Katherine Dykes, Leonard A. Malczynski, Rogelio Oliva

Policy Council, January, 2012**Central Recommendation to the Policy Council:**

The Ad Hoc committee believes that the issues of Education, Outreach and Public Understanding are actually within the constitutional mandate of the System Dynamics Society and should have a central role in discussions of the Society going forward. We suggest that we are on the voyage David Lane delineated in his Presidential Address: (We want system dynamics to be) “Accepted by the public as an approach for illuminating policy questions.”

Therefore, we think it appropriate that the Policy Council and/or the membership should consider the role of the SDS in Education, Outreach, and Public Understanding and commit to a policy based on the constitutional mandate. With such a policy in place, a successor to this committee could make progress on recommending the path for the SDS to take. We suggest that the Policy Council should decide if it wishes to make a policy or defer to the membership. If the membership is to make the policy or policies involved, the current Ad Hoc committee, with replacements for the retiring member, Rogelio, and the member on leave, Katherine, would undertake to create a survey for the membership.

Recommendations to the Policy Council based on Ad Hoc committee deliberations:**Education:**

1. The SDS should encourage, but not take responsibility for, system dynamics education of interested students and citizens. The SDS should create a concerted effort (following up on what is already being done on the website) to:
 - a. Highlight links to others, including K-12 efforts, self-study or distance learning programs as well as regular college and graduate courses. (*Note: Len Malczynski has offered to research accreditation and curriculum committees for B schools, public administration and public policy programs to see if there is any leverage with those committees to increase courses in SD at those venues.*)

- b. Encourage communication and interaction amongst students through the Student Chapter and through other methodology and social networking, as yet undefined, but possibly under the aegis of the Student Chapter.
- c. Create a path for interested citizens to learn about the power of SD by recommending various resources, online and otherwise. These resources might include K-12 materials, Donella Meadows's writings, software manuals, introductory books such as *Thinking in Systems* and *Tracing Connections*.
- d. Work with the SD K-12 community to support the K-12 efforts and increase the use of SD for students ages 5-18.
- e. Last, and not least, consider expansion of educational outreach to develop an outreach initiative in education to create more opportunities for SD learning and membership. However, this recommendation is secondary to the previous ones, and should only be considered if time, money and energy are available. Suggested actions include:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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)
- iii. Create connections between existing groups and interested individuals through web-based initiatives.
 - 1. 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.).
 - 2. 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 (including Outreach):

If a policy is established that we have a constitutional mandate to promote public understanding, the committee suggests a working definition of

success in this area can be described as parents knowing and understanding enough about SD that they want their children to be exposed to it in K-12 schools.

Creating Public Understanding is about marketing SD. There is plenty of material already available. The committee suggests that the SDS start by creating a plan for disseminating to the general public the value of the use of SD in developing a systems perspective to include:

1. The goal of the plan.
2. The basic outline and strategy including:
 - a. Creation of a budget and funding
 - b. Generation of the manpower/materials for a campaign. Ideas:
 - 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.
 - c. Implementation of the plan. Ideas:
 - 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.

What the committee suggests the Policy Council do:

1. Decide who decides on policies about Education and Public Understanding, and whether the SDS has a constitutional mandate to promote each of these efforts.
 - a. If the PC is the appropriate place for a decision, set a time frame for that.
 - b. If the total membership is the deciding body, delegate a committee to complete a survey before the ISDC.
2. Endorse the recommendations of the Committee on Education and put them into effect.
3. Constitute a committee to define a plan for disseminating to the general public the value of SD **in developing** a systems

perspective. This committee should have broad representation of those who are committed to system dynamics as well as those who are conversant with and committed to the SDS. [See # 1 above]

4. Constitute a committee to define a plan for building and growing the SD academic community. This committee should be constituted by academics who are committed to system dynamics as well as those who are conversant with and committed to the SDS. This committee should coordinate with the public outreach community. *(Note: Len Malczynski has offered to research accreditation and curriculum committees for B schools, public administration and public policy programs to see if there is any leverage with those committees to increase courses in SD at those venues.)*