

Diversity Committee Report Winter Policy Council Meeting 2014

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

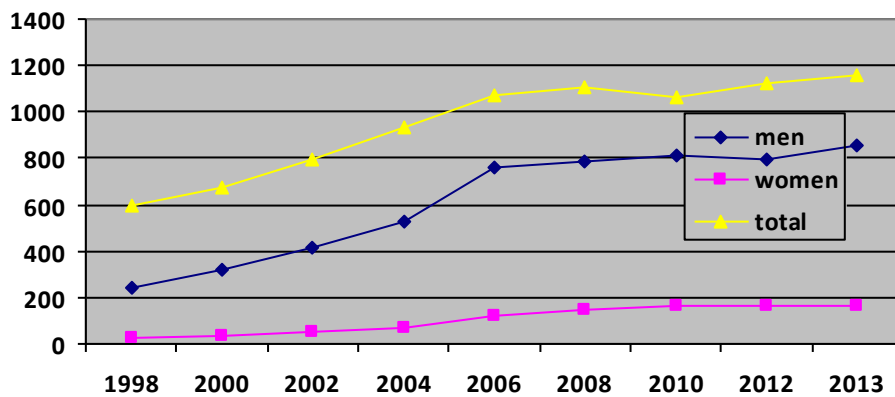
This report provides an overview of the System Dynamics Society demographics for 2012 and 2013 membership and Diversity Committee activities. Due to a change of the reporting moment from the summer to the winter policy council, this report includes two years instead of one year. Total membership increased from 1125 members in 2011 to 1159 in 2013. Overall, the reporting of demographic information remained high at 89%. Statistics that the percentage of women is slightly declining since 2011 and with 16.4% nearly back at the level of 2008, while the age distribution has remained relatively stable. After a small drop, student membership appears to be declining from a peak of 21.3% in 2007 to 17.9% in 2013. The Diversity Committee foresees in the institution of confidential persons as of next conference.

This report summarizes membership demographics for the System Dynamics Society through the 2012 and 2013. It is important to note that some new members and conference participants elect to not disclose demographic information the first year they join the society or attend a conference, but in subsequent years voluntarily provide demographic information. As a consequence, the percentage of missing data for a particular year tends to decrease with each additional year. However, no substantial differences were found in the trends based comparisons with previous years.

Overall Membership Demographics and Trends

Total membership increased slightly from 1125 in 2011 to 1159 in 2013 (see Figure 1 and Table 1), with an increase in both men and women.

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 continued to increase from 11.8% in 2004 to 17.5% in 2011 (see Table 1).

Table 1 Membership by Gender and Year

Gender	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013
Women ¹	56 11.2%	73 11.8%	134 14.6%	158 16.3%	163 16.6%	174 17.5%	161 16.9%	167 16.4%
Men ¹	445 88.8%	547 88.2%	785 85.4%	813 83.7%	817 83.4%	823 82.5%	792 83.1%	854 83.6%
Unknown ²	296 37.1%	314 33.6%	151 14.1%	135 12.2%	87 8.2%	128 11.4%	129 11.9%	138 11.9%
Total	797	934	1070	1106	1067	1125	1082	1159

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 2013 membership data as of February, 2014.

Membership by Age

Analysis of data from the 2013 snapshot suggests that the membership of the System Dynamics Society is slowly ageing (see Table 2). Membership in the age group under 25 and 25 to 29 decreased and the membership in the age group 60 or older increased. Probably the most important reason to consider is a shift in age distributions due to missing data. In contrast to gender, which is relatively stable, members must update their age related information each year for the reported distribution to be accurate. Hence, inconsistent patterns of members reporting age categories could lead to year-to-year fluctuations in the age distribution.

Conference Attendance by Gender

Conference attendance by gender increased again in women attending the conference, upwards from 11.5% in 2011 22.8% in 2013 (see Table 3). However, it is important to note that the percentage of conference participants where gender is unknown is much higher than membership (41.8% unknown for conference participants vs. 14.9% for membership) and is sufficiently large that one should view small changes in the gender of conference participants with caution. The difference in reporting between conference participants and members can be explained by the greater tendency of new members to not report gender, and that people renewing their membership tend to eventually report their gender.

Table 2 Membership by Age Group and Year

Age	2007	2009	2011	2012	2013
Under 25 ¹	1.1%	1.4%	1.8%	1.9%	1.4%
25 to 29 ¹	5.1%	4.9%	7.1%	6.9%	6.3%
30 to 39 ¹	20.8%	19.8%	22.0%	22.0%	22.2%
40 to 49 ¹	24.1%	25.3%	24.9%	24.1%	24.3%
50 to 59 ¹	27.0%	25.9%	23.0%	22.9%	22.6%
60 or older ¹	21.9%	22.7%	21.2%	22.1%	23.2%
Unknown ²	14.4%	10.7%	12.6%	15.1%	14.9%

¹ As percent of known ages

² As percent of total membership

Table 3 Conference Attendance by Gender and Year

	2007	2009	2011	2012	2013
Women	80	65	61	54	72
% ¹	20.6%	22.5%	11.5%	18.8%	22.8%
Men	309	224	238	233	244
% ¹	79.4%	77.5%	79.6%	81.2%	77.2%
Unknown	168	194	251	168	227
% ²	30.2%	40.2%	45.6%	36.9%	41.8%
Total	557	483	550	455	543

¹ As percent of known gender.

² As percent of total membership

Students

Students represented an estimated 18.1% of the membership in 2013, showing a stable pattern after decline from a peak of 21.3% in 2007. The vast majority of students were enrolled in doctoral programs (11.5% of membership) followed by students in masters programs (4.9% of membership).

Table 4 Student Membership by Year

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Doctoral	121	111	121	100	97	93	102
% ¹	14.5%	13.9%	13.5%	11.7%	11.5%	11.6%	11.3%
Masters	38	31	42	41	41	39	46
% ¹	4.5%	3.9%	4.7%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	5.0%
Undergraduate	9	13	8	6	4	6	6
% ¹	1.1%	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Other	10	5	4	9	8	6	10
% ¹	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%	1.1%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%
Total students	178	160	175	156	150	144	164
% ¹	21.3%	20.1%	19.6%	18.3%	17.8%	17.9%	18.1%
Unknown	316	306	149	215	280	659	742
% ²	27.4%	27.7%	14.3%	20.1%	33.1%		

¹ As percent of members with known student status.

² As percent of all members.

Diversity Committee Activities for 2012-2013

Beginning with the Athens Conference, the Diversity Committee has focused increasingly on understanding the trends in the international diversity of the System Dynamics Society by considering relationships between conference locations, chapters, and nationality of members. These analyses have been used to support discussions in the Policy Council for selecting conference locations and how to promote system dynamics globally. In that respect the South African Chapter and the Asian System Dynamics Conference are examples from an increasing diversity in the field. The Policy Council has acted to improve chapter development through the allocation of chapter development fund.

There was also discussion of how to improve diversity in the nomination process. This has been a recurring source of discussion in the PC, but ultimately one of the primary constraints involves ensuring that there is an adequate diversity in the leadership pipeline. Existing efforts to build chapters and regional activities can support this leadership pipeline, but most importantly, the opportunities and ways of getting involved in SDS need to be broadly communicated to members. Such efforts to broadly orient new members to opportunities in response to other issues (e.g., newcomers welcome) have been very successful.

At the Boston Conference the Diversity Committee was informally approached about harassment of first year women attendants to the conference. The Policy Council takes this very seriously, although no

formal complaints were made. The Policy Council asked Peter Hovmand and Inge Bleijenbergh to serve as confidential persons for next conferences and both accepted this responsibility. The presence of confidential persons should be communicated clearly prior to next conferences.