

Diversity Committee Report

Winter Policy Council Meeting 2015

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the System Dynamics Society demographics for 2014 membership and conference. Total membership increased from 1082 in 2012 to 1159 in 2013 and 1143 in 2014. Overall, the reporting of demographic information remained high at 89%. Moreover, updated information on member demographics continued to improve demographic estimates for prior years. Results using revised estimates shows that the percentage of women members is slowly going up again to 18.1% in 2014, after it reached a dip of 16.4% in 2013. With this percentage women members are far from having a critical mass, which may affect the culture and image of the society. The age distribution has remained relatively stable. Students represented an estimated 20.1% of the membership in 2014, nearly equaling the peak of 21.3% in 2007.

This report summarizes membership demographics for the System Dynamics Society through the 2014 calendar year.

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. This report uses data from the 2014 snapshot. Thanks to Erin Sheehan and Roberta Spencer for providing the statistics.

Overall Membership Demographics and Trends

Total membership increased from 1082 in 2012 to 1159 in 2013 and 1143 in 2014. (see Table 1), with an increase in both men and women.

Membership by Gender and Year

Table 1 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, and data from the revised membership forms asking for demographic information. Revised estimates shows that the percentage of women members is slowly going up again to 18.1% in 2014, after it reached a dip of 16.4% in 2013. With this percentage women members are far from having a critical mass, which may affect the culture and external image of the society.

Table 1 Membership by Gender and Year

Gender	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Women ¹	56 11.2%	73 11.8%	134 14.6%	158 16.3%	163 16.6%	174 17.5%	161 16.8%	167 16.4%	184 18.1%
Men ¹	445 88.8%	547 88.2%	785 85.4%	813 83.7%	817 83.4%	823 82.5%	792 83.2%	854 83.6%	832 81.9%
Unknown ²	296 37.1%	314 33.6%	151 14.1%	135 12.2%	87 8.2%	128 11.4%	129 12.1%	138 11.9%	127 11.1%
Total	797	934	1070	1106	1067	1125	1082	1159	1143

¹ Reported by frequency and as a percent of known gender. ² Reported by frequency and as a percent of total membership.

Membership by Age

Analysis of data from the 2014 snapshot suggests that the age distribution of membership remains relatively stable (see Table 2). The largest age group can be found in the 40-49 cohort, with also relative stable large groups in the 60 and older (22.9%), 50 to 59 (21.5%) and 30 to 39% (21.6%) age groups. The number of members below 25 (1.6%) and 25 to 29 (7.4%) fall very much behind. Together they count for only 9% of the total membership.

Conference Attendance by Gender

Conference attendance by gender seems to stabilize around 23%, after a dip of 11.5% in 2011 (see Table 3). However, it is important to note that the percentage of conference participants where gender is unknown is much higher than membership (41.6% unknown for conference participants versus 11.1% for membership) and is sufficiently large that one should view small changes in the gender of conference participants with caution. However, it is noteworthy that the gender misbalance in conference attendance is seems severe than in membership. Improving the gender balance in membership could be potentially reached by persuading women conference attendants to become member of the society.

Table 2 Membership by Age Group and Year

Age	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Under 25 ¹	1.1%	1.4%	1.8%	1.4%	1.6%
25 to 29 ¹	5.1%	4.9%	7.1%	6.3%	7.4%
30 to 39 ¹	20.8%	19.8%	22.0%	22.2%	21.6%
40 to 49 ¹	24.1%	25.3%	24.9%	24.2%	24.9%
50 to 59 ¹	27.0%	25.9%	23.0%	22.6%	21.5%
60 or older ¹	21.9%	22.7%	21.2%	23.2%	22.9%
Unknown ²	14.4%	10.7%	12.6%	9.4%	11.8%

¹ As percent of known ages

² As percent of total membership

Table 3 Conference Attendance by Gender and Year

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Women	80	65	61	72	64
% ¹	20.6%	22.5%	11.5%	22.8%	22.6%
Men	309	224	238	244	218
% ¹	79.4%	77.5%	79.6%	77.2%	77.4%
Unknown	168	194	251	227	202
% ²	30.2%	40.2%	45.6%	41.8%	41.6%
Total	557	483	550	543	485

¹ As percent of known gender.

² As percent of total membership

Students

Students represented an estimated 20.1% of the membership in 2014, nearly equaling the peak of 21.3% in 2007. The vast majority of students were enrolled in doctoral programs (12.8% of membership) followed by students in masters programs (5.8% of membership). Further increasing the proportion of student members may be the way to increase the membership of younger age cohorts.

Table 4 Student Membership by Year

	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Doctoral	121	121	97	102	120
% ¹	14.5%	13.5%	11.5%	11.3%	12.8%
Masters	38	42	41	46	54
% ¹	4.5%	4.7%	4.9%	5.1%	5.8%
Undergraduate	9	8	4	6	7

% ¹	1.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Other	10	4	8	10	12
% ¹	1.2%	0.4%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%
Total students	178	175	150	164	193
% ¹	21.3%	19.6%	17.8%	20.1%	20.6%
Unknown	316	149	280	253	208
% ²	27.4%	14.3%	33.1%	21.8%	18.2%

¹ As percent of members with known student status.

² As percent of all members.

Diversity Committee Activities for 2013-2014

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. The Diversity Committee advocates a diversity of conference locations, including locations outside Europe and the US, to promote attendance from participants from Asia and below the equator.

The last two years the Diversity Committee discussed the role of the gender composition of membership and conference attendance on the way newcomers experience the culture of the society. The Diversity Committee was approached several times by new and more senior women attendants who reported a feeling of alienation during the conference. One time an informal complaint was made about harassment. The Diversity Committee advises the development of a Code of Conduct and is willing to prepare a proposal. Moreover, the Diversity Committee advocates awareness amongst program officers to select enough women role models in keynote speakers, session chairs and administrative functions. Senior society members with administrative roles have reacted positively towards these suggestions.