

Report on the Status of Future Conferences

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The purpose of this report is to summarize the status of future conference plans for the benefit of the SDS Policy Council and the next VP Meetings who will take on the role in 2024. Conference sites have been established through 2027 with expected budgets that meet or exceed the minimum expectation that the conference return \$150,000 to the Society to cover \$125,000 in overhead and provide a surplus of \$25,000 for other activities. These budget expectations assume 510 attendees, 260 in person and 250 virtual, with registration fees priced such that the distribution of virtual and in-person attendees does not have an impact on the expected Net Operating Income of the conference.

ISDC 2024

- Timing: August 4-8, 2024 (Sunday-Thursday)
- Venue: Scandic Bergen City, Bergen, Norway
- Organizing Chair: Birgit Kopainsky, Saeed Langarudi, Ali Saysel
- Program Chairs: Susan Howick, Mohammad Jalali, Hazhir Rahmandad
- Budget Expectation: \$150,000 in Net Operating Income to SDS - All contracts signed, large majority already paid.
- Management Complexity: Relatively Low - Vendor contracted for Plenary, Local Laptop Rentals for Parallels, Sound & Presentation Equipment built-in to the venue. A small number of independent vendors need to be directly managed and coordinated by the home office in the lead up to and during the conference.

Summary: The organizing chairs and program chairs are meeting regularly with the office to coordinate conference plans. Registration will open January 16, 2024, the same day that the submission system opens.

ISDC 2025

- Timing: July 20-24, 2025 (Sunday-Thursday)
- Venue: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg, Illinois, USA (near Chicago)
- Organizing Chair: None.
- Program Chairs: Karim Chichakly, Niyousha Hosseinichimeh, Rod MacDonald
- Budget Expectation: \$150,000 in Net Operating Income to SDS - Key contracts signed, only small deposit paid.
- Management Complexity: Relatively Very High - Using Encore equipment and services for Plenary & partial parallels (splitting the plenary room). MPSA equipment rentals for Parallels including: Laptops, Sound and Presentation Equipment (which had known issues in 2023). A lot of independent vendors need to be directly managed and coordinated by the home office in the lead up to and during the conference.

Summary: Oleg Pavlov stepped down from the role of organizing chair as of November 28, 2023. We thank him for his efforts to date. Fortunately, we have already settled the large majority of the onsite contracting (AV, Catering, Venue) and associated site visit in 2022. Program chairs have already begun planning. However, this conference will be a challenge with the current planning and management capacity of the SDS.

ISDC 2026

- Timing: July 20-24, 2026 (Monday-Friday)
- Venue: TU Delft, Delft, Netherlands
- Organizing Chairs: Willem Auping, Floortje d'Hont
- Program Chairs: Hyunjung Kim, David Lounsbury, Jeroen Struben
- Budget Expectation: \$200,000 in Net Operating Income to SDS - Budget parameters agreed upon, major tenets of the space rentals promised in writing by University. Contracting cannot be done until approximately 18 months from the conference start.
- Management Complexity: Relatively Very Low - Fully built-in equipment, and support staff. Only a single, at most two independent vendors need to be directly managed and coordinated by the home office in the lead up to and during the conference.

Summary: We have a letter of commitment from the administration at TU Delft that supports the budget assumptions of the proposal that was approved by the Policy Council in May 2023. The program chairs and organizing chairs have met as a conference team. Preliminary work has been done to find hotel partners (for sleeping accommodations) and banquet locations.

ISDC 2027

- Timing: July 18-22, 2027 (Sunday-Thursday)
- Venue: Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA
- Organizing Chairs: Peter Hovmand, Warren Farr
- Program Chairs are under consideration by the Society Programs Oversight Committee
- Budget Expectation: \$209,000 in Net Operating Income to SDS - Budget parameters agreed upon, major tenets of the space rentals promised verbally by University.
- Management Complexity: Relatively Very Low - Fully built-in equipment, and support staff. Only a single, at most two independent vendors need to be directly managed and coordinated by the home office in the lead up to and during the conference.

Summary: The Cleveland site proposal was discussed at the December 2023 Policy Council meeting and approved by electronic vote on December 23, 2023. There is a lot of upside here as the organizing team has access to non-traditional ISDC attendees and local sponsorship opportunities which are not the norm for the ISDC. We caution the future VP Meetings to carefully consider whether it is more important for this conference to have larger contributions to the bottom line of SDS or whether it is worth taking opportunities to further expand the reach of what may be a seminal ISDC by lowering registration fees and trying to attract an even larger number of people than what we would conservatively expect.

ISDC 2028 and beyond

The next VP Meetings will need to focus on planning for the 2028, 2029, and 2030 conferences. Following our standard rotation, the 2028 and 2030 conferences should be held in Europe, and the 2029 conference should be held in North America. All future conferences should continue to be delivered in a hybrid mode so that attendees may participate virtually or in person, as a means of promoting equity through increased access to the work presented at the ISDC, among the variety of other positive benefits (environmental, etc.) of a virtual option.

When we entered the positions of VP Meetings and AVP Meetings in September 2021, the future conference pipeline was nearly empty. The 2022 conference planning in Frankfurt was going full steam ahead. All that was known at that point about the future was that there was going to be a conference at the Palmer House in 2023 in Chicago because of the deferred 2021 contract that we could not escape. This put the SDS into a terrible position because to effectively plan a conference, we have learned through both experience and our predecessors (including former ED Roberta Spencer and earlier VP meetings such as Bob Eberlein and Jim Lyneis, who left helpful records) that 3 years is needed to be successful. As VP Professional Practice Saras Chung says, "it's like putting on a wedding every single year." Without appropriate lead times, our specific dates become very hard to get, and it gets hard to negotiate favorable terms with vendors, who know when you're on a short timeline that they "have you over a barrel." By negotiating events 2+ years in the future, the SDS is able to carefully control cost, having the pick of the litter in terms of dates and vendors. Maintaining the 3 year planning cycle is of tantamount importance to the overall financial health of the SDS, especially as the SDS appears to be increasingly reliant on the conference to fund its operations. To the future VP meetings, we implore you to continue our practice of attending each year's conference with the goal of finding the organizing team for the conference 4 years in the future so that it can be approved by the Policy Council at least 3 years in advance.

To facilitate the process of recruiting future organizing teams, we have made the current conference resume and pre-proposal template available as supplemental material to this report.