

# Dana Meadows Award Fund Proposal

May 26, 2025, submitted by Bob Eberlein – Charter Updated June 17 to emphasize communication

## Revised Charter

Based on feedback from members of the Policy Council, contributors to the fund, and other interested parties, the proposed charter has been revised to include grants to individuals teaching system dynamics and allow awards to be made to recent graduates. The language has also been cleaned up a little bit and a contingencies clause has been added.

Note that the use of the word “shall” when referring to awards means that awards to students have precedence over awards to recent graduates as well as scholarships and grants (which use the word “may”). That is to say, simply increasing the amount of the Dana Meadows Award given at the conference sufficiently would satisfy the terms of the Charter. The current proposal for the additional use of funds is a scholarship, but adding to or revising that to include a grant would not require any change to the Charter. The hope, in fact, is that the Charter never needs to be changed again.

Recommended motion: Moved. that all monies related to the Dana Meadows Award be consolidated into the Dana Meadows Restricted Fund and that the attached Charter be adopted to manage disbursements from that Fund.

The remainder of this report prior to the Charter is repeated from the originally submitted report.

## Background

The Dana Meadows Award has been given to student work submitted at the annual conference since 2001 to honor her life and work. Originally organized by John Sterman, the award was funded by Jane and Allen Boorstein through 2004. That year, the “Dana Meadows Student Paper Award Endowment Fund” was established to ensure the award could continue to be provided annually without the need to outside monies. The funding reached and exceeded the \$60,000 goal with contributions from 50 plus members of the System Dynamics Community, including \$10,000 from Jane and Allen Boorstein.

Since that time the fund, now called the Dana Meadows Award Fund, has been invested and used to provide the annual award payments.

In 2015 Dennis Meadow’s contributed an additional \$30,000 with the intent to recognize women students above and beyond the existing annual award. This money was to be spent over the course of 10 years (that is not treated as an endowment). This fund was called DMA2 to distinguish it from the first fund.

Given the amounts that have been paid out in awards, and the returns on the invested award endowment, the combined total of the DMA1 and DMA2 funds was approximately \$420,000 at the end of 2024.

Though the amount of the award has increased over time, it is substantially below the income being generated on average from the invested endowment. This provides an opportunity to expand the uses to which the fund can be used.

## Proposal

To better meet the goals of supporting students, the following changes are recommended:

1. That the name of the fund be changed to the Dana Meadows Fund, dropping award from the name.
2. That the distinction of the DMA1 and DMA2 monies be removed.
3. That the purpose of the fund be expanded to include both awards and scholarships.
4. That a more formal charter guiding the administration of the fund with specific spending targets be adopted.

These changes would provide more flexibility in the use of the Fund and help ensure that the endowment is put to good and sustainable use. Dennis Meadows has already agreed to remove the distinction between the DMA1 and DMA2 funds, and this proposal in its entirety would be circulated to all contributors of record, including the estates of Jane and Allen Boorstein, for any comments or suggestions. Ultimately, however, it is the responsibility of the Policy Council to adopt a new charter.

# Dana Meadows Fund Charter

## Preamble

The Dana Meadows Fund is intended to encourage and support students and young people doing and communicating work in system dynamics that addresses important societal issues. To do this the System Dynamics Society will draw on the Fund to provide scholarships, awards, and grants to worthy recipients.

## Recipients

Awards, including prizes, shall be given to students of, and may be given to recent graduates from, a program of study at a university or other academic institution for outstanding work, or outstanding communication of work, in system dynamics. Scholarships may be provided to individuals seeking to further their mastery of system dynamics as a student at a university or other academic institution. Grants may be awarded to individuals actively engaged in teaching at primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions to support the development of programs and curriculum material focused on system dynamics.

## Selection

Selections shall be made by one or more committees duly constituted by the Policy Council. The rules under which these committees operate, including eligibility and selection criteria, will be determined by the Policy Council and will be in keeping with the purpose of the Fund and this Charter.

## Budgeting

Each year there will be a budget of five percent (5%) of the principal in the fund as of August 31 of the prior year. Any portion of that budget not spent in a year will carry over to successive years. Should the principal of the Fund drop below \$300,000 (in 2020 dollars as determined by the “All items CPI” as published by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics) the budget will be decreased to maintain that floor. Should the Principal increase beyond \$500,000 (similarly adjusted) the budget will be increased to maintain that ceiling. The division of the budget between different awards, scholarships and grants will be determined by the Policy Council.

## Payments

Payments will be made by the Society Office. When a payment is made that amount, along with any material or transaction cost incurred by the Society, will be taken from the Fund. Society personnel expenses will not be taken from the fund.

## Contingencies and Dissolution

Should any portion of this Charter become, in effect, unnecessary, incapable of fulfillment, or inconsistent with the charitable, educational, or scientific needs of the community served by the System Dynamics Society, it may be modified by the Policy Council. Should the Society be disbanded, the Fund shall be transferred to another charitable organization in accordance with governing law.