The Society of Women Engineers' (SWE) current structure and governance are the result of numerous decisions made over a number of years, and these decisions were made with the best intentions and the best information available at that time. Times change, however, and it’s important to periodically step back and look at how things are going and whether best intentions and the best information available at that time. Times change, however, and it’s important to periodically step back and look at how things are going and whether

Future growth of the organization

Future growth of the organization is currently an important stage in its growth as it looks to expand its reach globally and effectively serve members both domestically and abroad. SWE has also struggled in recent years with developing and maintaining a successful leadership pipeline to identify and engage volunteer leaders at all levels of the organization. The existing governance structure, while it has been effective for the organization in the past, has been perceived to be a limiting factor in both attracting volunteer leaders and sustaining the engagement of members. A Funding Request was submitted to the Special Project Reserve for this purpose. A Funding Request was submitted to the Special Project Reserve for this purpose.

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A small task force was established to work with McKinley on activities, review recommendations, and provide feedback. The task force consisted of those listed.

Background
Development of a flexible SWE governance structure that supports globalization and inclusion is a strategic objective that supports a key Society strategic goal. As such, the primary goals of the effort were to evaluate SWE's current governance structure, benchmark comparable organizations on potential adaptations of SWE's leadership structure, and develop:

- New, clearly defined roles and responsibilities for volunteer leadership, which ensure that volunteering to serve is an attractive and smooth process,
- A framework for succession planning and cultivation of new leaders, and
- An appropriate process to identify, select and engage volunteers who can effectively lead the organization to serve as an attractive and smooth process.

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- An appropriate process to identify, select and engage volunteers who can effectively lead the organization to serve as an attractive and smooth process.
McKinley Advisors was chosen to conduct the research and investigation and develop recommendations. McKinley works exclusively with associations and has specific experience providing this type of service, including enacting new governance and leadership models for other non-profit organizations and optimizing organizational performance. Their clients include American Institute of Architects, Pennsylvania Institute of CPAs, American Association of Engineering Societies, and American Society of Civil Engineers.
McKinley reviewed available data and conducted benchmarking to evaluate other organizations' effective governance and engagement to the extent applicable, and included National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and American Institute of Architects (AIA).

In-depth interviews with SWE staff and volunteer leaders focused on SWE's governance and volunteer opportunities, to gain insight on perceptions of and experiences with the governance structure, assess the strength and challenges of the current governance model, and identify opportunities for SWE to create a more effective and inclusive model to attract and retain current and future leaders.

Regional governance teams were involved in discussions with the senators and current BOD members. McKinley also facilitated in-depth discussions with the senators and as a committee of special task force in regional or Senate positions, and/or past or several SWE Fellows. All had served at the Section level, many in multiple positions, and included long-term SWE members with average membership tenure of 20 years, and included interview participants from across the country and the globe, and were primarily engineers (IEEE), and American Institute of Architects (AIA).

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Process Used

- Developed SWEE-specific recommendations
- Conducted in-depth interviews with volunteer leaders across the US and institutionalized with background information the leadership provided
- Conducted interviews with volunteer leaders from all regions
- Reviewed and analyzed available data

McKinley proposed a number of recommendations and options to optimize SWE’s governance structure. These recommendations will be reviewed in more detail in the coming months by sub-teams in order to thoroughly vet the ideas and develop specific recommendations. These recommendations will be reviewed in more detail in the coming months by sub-teams in order to thoroughly vet the ideas and develop specific recommendations.
Refer to more detailed information in Background Document.
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Sub-groups are being formed to take an in-depth look at the recommendations and determine an appropriate path forward, including an implementation timeline. These sub-groups will be staffed with current Senators, Region Governors and BOD members. In addition, input will be solicited from specific long-time SWE members to help identify and overcome potential barriers to success.

HQ will be evaluating channels for more effective communication throughout the organization, programs and mechanisms will be developed for ongoing communication from/among Sections, the BOD, and HQ. In-person and virtual town-hall meetings will be held.

HQ will be evaluating channels for more effective communication across the Society.

By facilitating ongoing communication among all levels of the governance structure, SWE will be better positioned to identify opportunities for collaboration and decrease redundancy.

Governance structure. This will build on the current Leadership Coaching Committee (LCC) model. Focus on improving the value, consistency and accessibility of volunteer leadership training will significantly increase the efficiency and productivity of the organization.

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