These slides were initially developed for a town hall webinar held with Fellows and Past Presidents in May to provide details about the governance structure that has been under review and our path forward. It has been updated to reflect current status as of August 2016. Depending on the audience, you may want to spend more or less time on these. The last couple of slides give an overview of the entire governance update process. These slides were initially developed for a town hall webinar held with Fellows and Past Presidents.
We have enjoyed tremendous success.
• In just the past 10 years, membership has increased by 16,000 members (nearly doubled) and we’re now global.
• In that same timeframe, conference attendance has nearly tripled.
• We've added scores of virtual and face-to-face professional development training, expanded our K-12 programs, grown scholarships, and amplified our government relations and public policy efforts on the national stage.
• The good news is that all the effort we've put in as Society leaders is paying off!
With the good news comes the recognition that we need to evolve.

- The reason people join SWE is not to complete reports, but rather to promote our mission of advancing women in engineering. We want to ensure that our governance discussions reveal this is true for both future and current leaders. This keeps members from participating and as a result many positions are going unfilled or filled by the same people year after year, resulting in volunteer burnout.

- We can and should be providing more meaningful and relevant leadership opportunities and training to our members. This is something SWE has always prided itself on since our founding 65 years ago. We all know that society as a whole has changed, and continuous change is even more rapid. People no longer join associations or are willing to stay as members in an association for the same reasons they did years ago.

- We need to evolve our current structure to become more meaningful and relevant to our members while streamlining our bylaws, policies, and procedures. We have an opportunity to streamline our bylaws, policies and procedures – for not only potential leaders, but also for some of our current leaders, many of whom have never been involved in the SWE national board. If we don’t get on the next step, we risk losing talented members. We need to better train our current leaders and provide opportunities for different volunteer leadership and volunteer leadership opportunities. All of these changes require different volunteer leadership structures and opportunities.

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With this in mind, in FY15 the Board engaged with McKinley Consultants to help determine the ideal governance and volunteer service model to support the organization's growth and globalization goals. The Board, along with SWE's governing and volunteer structure, needed to ensure that SWE members, staff, and volunteer leaders were aligned with the strategy and transitioning to a membership model that maximizes member engagement and volunteer satisfaction.

To represent multiple points of view, a group of Senators, Region Governors, long-term SWE members (average tenure 20 years), and current and past volunteer leaders measured perceptions. Participants included McKinley reviewed available data, conducted in-depth interviews with SWE staff and volunteers, and reviewed data from the SWE database. McKinley also benchmarked and compared other professional associations, helping the Board and volunteers to identify best practices.

Process to Date

Governance Update
These groups focused on several areas using the McKinley recommendations as a guide. More detail on all the McKinley recommendations can be found on the Governance site under Q&As.

- The sub-group recommendations will be the basis for the plan and timeline, but there will likely be adjustments made as the task force brings everything together.

- The sub-group recommendations will be distributed to each member of the FY16 sub-groups.

- A smaller task force has been created for FY17. The members are (with initial assignment):
  - Andrea Clewley (Regions)
  - Stephanie DeCotiis (Senate)
  - Kerrie Greenfelder (Nom Com)
  - Dayna Johnson (Committee)
  - Alexis Micktrick (original TF)
  - Helen Patricia (Bylaws)
  - Sandra Pettit (original TF)
  - Pearl Yamaguchi (Senate Chair Elect)

- The sub-groups held multiple discussions including F2F meetings in Nashville and at Winter Senate meetings in Philadelphia, as well as regular calls.

- We recognize that some of these changes will not please everyone. We ask that you have an open mind and, keeping in mind the case for change that we just outlined, that we proceed together as a high level vision of what the future will look like, incorporating what we have heard works and what does not work.

- All of this collaborative discussion has allowed us to piece together a high level vision of what the future will look like, incorporating what we have heard works and what does not work.

- The combined plan and timeline has been developed in FY17 to develop a summary of recommendations and requirements.

- The sub-groups have wrapped up their work and provided a report outlining what the future will look like, incorporating what we have heard works and what does not work.

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Board – remains the governing body of the Society, elected by the members with some appointed special directors.

HQ – provides support, consistency; performs environmental scans to feed to the strategic planning process; they will do everything they do today and more, to remove administrative responsibilities from our volunteers. This is supported by the feedback from the focus groups.

Strategic Body – may be called something other than Senate; made up of 15-20 members elected to longer terms to facilitate strategic planning focus.

Regions – SWE currently has two different “middle” layers. One is geographic (Regions), another is functional (committees). The future organizational vision simplifies our structure to a single middle layer. The functional approach of committees was chosen over the geographic approach of Regions because we are a global organization and much of the work is already done virtually. Thus permanent geographic boundaries are to be dissolved, with current responsibilities redistributed to HQ or discontinued as appropriate.

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Strategic Body – may be called something other than Senate; made up of 15-20 members elected by the members with some appointed special directors.
Committees – The functional approach of committees was chosen over the geographic approach of regions because we are a global organization and much of the work is done virtually. Committees will be strengthened to provide strong leadership at the regional level; to address concerns of checks and balances, key committee chairs will be elected by membership: Finance, Audit, Bylaws, Ethics, Nom Com.

Sections – looking to simplify the section leadership structure and bylaws while maintaining the local sections to share among themselves.

Bylaws – streamlined, with some items moved procedures as applicable. We are considering whether to have all members vote on bylaws changes in future; approved using "هلام" (non-US non-profit status). The section formation process will be evaluated. (BoD just elected by membership: Finance, Audit, Bylaws, Ethics, Nom Com.)

Collegiates – will be integrated throughout the Society, not just in specific positions, and the functional approach of committees was chosen over the geographic approach of regions because we are a global organization and much of the work is done virtually. Committees will be strengthened to provide strong leadership at the regional level; to address concerns of checks and balances, key committee chairs will be elected by membership: Finance, Audit, Bylaws, Ethics, Nom Com.

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With the formal regional structure being dissolved, services currently provided by the regions have been reviewed in detail. Various stages of rollout through calendar year 2016.

We recognize the need for robust communication between sections and society leadership, and we will continue to incorporate what we hear into our processes.

- The new AMS will allow HQ staff to automate a number of processes that have previously been labor intensive, allowing them to focus more on some aspects of work.
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Leadership – remember, the intent of the restructuring is to improve the overall experience for all our members. While many have had valuable experiences through the existing SWE structure, we all know of the less-than-positive experiences that result from the current structure.

Leadership is committed to taking the time to do it the right way as the implementation plans are developed and the transition of services is managed. Communication will remain a key, maintaining input, testing ideas, and socializing decisions.

Leadership positions remain unfilled or are filled by the same people year after year. While we are anxious to make the changes needed to take us to the next level, SWE has been created for FY17. There is a lot of work ahead to develop a coordinated plan and timeline. Please be patient!

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Ultimately, some of the decisions rest with the Senate (e.g. bylaws revisions) while many others rest with the Board. In order to ensure optimum buy-in, all changes will be vetted and extensively communicated. Even so, it is recognized that some of the changes will not please everyone. It is important to address these concerns in order to make this a success.

Please help us identify concerns that need to be addressed in order to make this a success.

Please remember to visit governance.swe.org to view the Q&A’s already there, and pose your questions to governance@swe.org. Each of those emails are reviewed and responded to.

Thank you for interest and for your support.

Look for periodic updates via All Together, at WES17

Email your questions to governance@swe.org

Contact Email Address

Questions

Dedicated Webpage for More Information

Governance Update