
Making Membership Attractive to All

Breakout Session Notes

Cultivating Belonging and Volunteerism: Instilling the notion of members' closely identifying with the community as "my society"

Facilitator: Stephen Roberson

- Start with the why – to instill sense of mission. Societies need to be telling the why story effectively.
- Elevate values in the value proposition – enabling members to live their values through a society is a way to instill ownership.
 - Societies should address science, but it's also important to address the human aspect.
 - Values should be constant. How each Societies executes will change, but their values should not.
- Societies should try to understand their members' and prospective members' needs and tailor their offerings to center those needs. Support members as people and help them.
- Societies are looking for better ways to frame and market their value propositions.
- It's very important to be intentional about delivering peer-to-peer opportunities for engagement, such as networking events and informal opportunities within events.
- Part of the value proposition should be that Societies are guardians of rigorous science and the integrity this conveys its membership.
- Engagement with physicists working in industry can be challenging. Societies need to show that they help industry employees to grow through professional development, opportunities, and recruiting new talent.
 - Societies are looking for better ways to market this value to industry to create incentives for their participation.
 - Societies focus on academic audiences can leave members working in industry feeling left out and not seeing the benefits of membership.
- Mentors help define the identity of the next generation of member. Part of that mentoring should include how to be a mentor. They have an opportunity to pass along a sense of responsibility and opportunity.
- Undergraduate students are very eager to contribute, expressing passion, and altruism, however when they move into early career, they are more guarded with their time and more difficult to engage.

Tailoring Value of Membership Post-Docs and Early Career Members

Facilitator: Charles Brown

- How can Societies help change the narrative towards work/life balance in physics? Providing career support to early career members would add value.
 - Societies can help create transparency about careers in physics and what life will look like once students move into their post-docs and early roles.
- Mentorship can expand to cover supporting the individual and the struggles they may face early in their career.
- Many physics graduates don't stay in the field, but they are potentially valuable members. Societies should create an engagement strategy to attract and retain physics graduates as part of the larger physics community and to expand Societies focus to include industry roles.

- Societies are not sure how to work with alternative fields to understand how they can still be a part of the physics community.
- How can Societies listen to the needs of early career members to provide value and sustain membership? Student loan support may be an area to investigate.

Engaging a Broader Global Community

Facilitator: Cortney Bougher

- Societies looking to provide networking engagement opportunities to international students can partner with international societies.
 - Some societies work with the biannual African School of Physics Conference
 - The Geological Society of America actively engages with sister societies in other countries to share news and information, sometimes partnering with cross-country international organizations.
 - Finding the right partnerships can be difficult and the group hadn't found a model where both larger and smaller societies can benefit.
 - APS has about 12,000 members from reciprocal societies, flagged in the registration system.
 - The group suggested offering discounted booths for international societies at meetings.
- Societies can also offer international travel awards to their own members
- APS has a student ambassador program that has been expanded internationally. Ambassadors give presentations at local physics club meetings and distribute swag and information. About 30 of APS's 140 ambassadors are international.
- APS has a new satellite program where researchers in other countries can meet in person and stream talks and sessions.
 - To be successful, the events need to provide a mixture of both in-person and virtual engagement.
 - Satellite sites expand access to content, provide marketing, registration and logistics support. Satellites are included in the marketing efforts for the event.
- The author base for a society's journal may include many international scientists who are not members of a community. Societies are looking at how best to leverage this connection and show the individual benefit that they provide to members
 - Some societies have funding to pay for membership to scientists in underserved communities but have trouble finding potential takers. Marketing and branding challenges make this more difficult.
- Industry sponsorships can help engage with the international and private sector at once.

Engaging Non-Academic Members

Facilitator: Stella Kafka

- Societies want to attract more non-academic members but are not sure how to communicate their value proposition to potential members and to for-profit organizations. They are also looking for new ways to add value for non-academic members.
- Non-academic representation varies widely across Societies. In those with high non-academic memberships the value comes from professional education, credentialing, mentorship and sources of recruitment.
- Societies are eager to reach out to non-academic physicists but don't know enough about those sectors or how to support potential members there.
- Greater online training offers have attracted more global members for some Societies and may be more attractive to industry members who don't have budgets or buy-in to travel to in person trainings. However, many existing Societies members want the networking opportunities that come with in person meetings. SPIE is holding in-person trainings, recording them, and adding those trainings to their video training library, which can satisfy both camps.
- A few Societies offer corporate memberships, but many are interested in exploring this option.
- Developing awards that focus on non-academic achievements can both recognize members and attract new non-academic members. Societies should think about incentives outside of journal publishing

Engaging Student Members

Facilitator: Earl Blodgett

- About 30% of all students don't affiliate with a Member Society (Societies) and SPS can be a vehicle to engage with these audiences.
 - An opportunity exists for Societies ambassadors to attend zone meeting and do personal outreach on behalf of their society.
 - AAS shares the cost of student membership in SPS where a department's contribution for two years is matched by the society. But not all departments can support this investment which causes equity issues.
- Creating an "experiential leadership program" can help market the value of societies to students.
 - Ex: The National Osterbrock Leadership Program <https://aas.org/nolp>
- Students must understand the value proposition of societies outside of simply large annual meetings
 - Consider developing videos from each of the MSs that can be accessible to students, portions of which could also be used in social media outreach (e.g. Instagram).
 - SPS members have access to reporter awards, giving them the opportunity for students to interact with senior leaders.
 - Encourage creation of more internships that engage students in research groups, and consider honorariums that may be attractive to historically underrepresented groups and first generation college students. These internships could be in academic, government (national labs/advocacy), and industry settings.
 - Consider a comprehensive review and reconsideration of the current SPS benefits offered to students in the context of generation Z
- Encourage students have been mentored to "pay it forward" and become mentors to new students pursuing physics and astronomy
- Supporting student chapters can help increase engagement, especially with funding for chapter events.
 - The Biophysical Society (BPS) has a sponsor at each chapter
- There may be valuable in creating a "one-stop resource" for students