



Global Headquarters
331 S. Patrick Street
Alexandria, VA 22314 USA
1-703-647-4900
Fax: 1-703-647-4901
www.sla.org

BOARD DOCUMENT

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Anne Caputo, Chapter Cabinet Chair
Libby Trudell, Chapter Cabinet Chair-Elect

DATE: 19 January 2007

RE: Chapter Modeling Initiative Report

At the charge of the Board of Directors, Chapter Cabinet Chair Anne Caputo and Chair-Elect Libby Trudell, have worked with SLA staff to review constraints of Chapter infrastructure, to investigate alternatives, and report back to the Board by the January 2007 Leadership Summit.

The 2006 Membership Survey indicates that 67 percent of SLA's members are satisfied or very satisfied with their chapters. More than 2/3 have attended at least one chapter meeting in the past year.

Membership in a chapter is one of the three key communities (association, chapter and division) which form the basis of SLA membership. In examination, we considered what the basic components of a chapter are, what the basic chapter standards are to ensure a relatively common experience for all members and what is already in the chapter recommended practices. First, a chapter is a local community where a face-to-face network experience can be attained. Boundaries may vary but, in general, are best defined as within an acceptable travel distance for a meeting. Chapters should provide both educational and social interaction. And, there should be effective communications. The existing model, as outlined in the Chapter Recommended Practices, was completely reviewed and streamlined in 2004. Staff and cabinet chairs may need to re-enforce these practices as some chapters are clinging on to the former model. We think it is advisable to keep the best practices for number of positions chapters choose to have to serve their members rather than mandating elimination.

In reviewing the final report of the Chapter Modeling Task Force and working with staff, we planned a session at the Summit to explore how chapters can operate more effectively. Recommendations may come out of this exercise and will be shared.

Below are findings of the Task Force on Chapter Modeling and how staff are already addressing the issues:

1. Restructure smaller or struggling chapters in the United States into larger chapters to reduce burden of locating leaders.
SLA and its organizational structure are member driven. Neither the Board nor staff plan a mandated merger or dissolution of chapters. Procedures are outlined for creation, merger and dissolution. Cabinet chairs and staff are available to counsel throughout exploratory discussions and action. Already being considered is the consolidation of the Michigan – Western/Upper Peninsula with the Michigan Chapter. Discussions continue with the proposed merger of the Connecticut Valley with the Boston Chapter.

2. Provide teleconferencing abilities. A contract has been signed with Webex and staff are exploring how to allow and bill units to utilize this service for collaboration.
3. Reduce and restructure positions within the chapter. Only four positions are required by the chapter governing document: president, president-elect, secretary and treasurer. Reducing any further is not advisable. Other positions are outlined, but not required, in the Chapter Recommended Practices but only as examples if needed to serve the membership and their needs.
4. Outside the United States, create smaller chapters than currently exist. Do not cross country boundaries. Hire local staff to advise on issues and translate materials. This will require further examination including human and financial resources, legal responsibilities, etc.
5. Provide more support for programming and membership drives. Staff has developed a master recruitment package which can be tailored with an insert specifically for the unit. These will be rolled out in 2007. Click U Live! is designed for chapter programming. The creation of a speakers bureau is planned for 2007. A guest lecture series is anticipated for universities and student groups.
6. Investigate the creation of an "Idea Bank" of chapter programming ideas. We plan to try a "Show and Tell" for knowledge sharing of good ideas and best practices for units in Denver. A new association management system is being implemented which will provide a more robust tool to assist unit leaders; this will be previewed at the Summit and a focus group will provide input.