Agenda Item: VI / F.
SAS Regional, Technical, and Student Section Affairs, Report to the Executive Committee
August 28, 2014

Committee Chair: Rob Lascola
Committee Members: Brian Dable, James Patterson

Activity

The Spring 2014 RTSA report described 4 projects that the committee would undertake.

1) *Reinvigorate sections that are currently underactive.*

A letter from the committee and from the SAS Chair was sent to the membership in the August newsletter and was posted on the SAS LinkedIn group. The letter is appended to this report. It identifies the underactive sections and solicits volunteers from the membership to assume leadership roles within the sections. We received several responses, and further approached several individuals who were thought to be candidates to help in this regard. The resulting new information for certain sections, current to the date of this report, is described below. Subsequent information between now and the Executive Committee and Governing Board meetings at SciX will be presented at those times. The letter provided a response deadline of September 15.

- *Atomic:* Paul Farnsworth has agreed to be the second officer for this section and will represent the section at the upcoming Governing Board meeting.

- *Chemometrics:* Barry Lavine, Karl Booksh, and Shawn Chen have agreed to serve as interim officers for this section. They have received a "starter kit" which includes a section membership roster, templates for the section's constitution and bylaws (current versions of these could not be found), a template for the annual report, and a copy of the national constitution and bylaws with sections relevant to the technical sections highlighted. They will conduct an election in the fall and submit an annual report. A version of the "starter kit" will be distributed to all other sections that are getting (re)started.

- *Houston:* Anthony Stender, who was active in the Iowa State student section, will be starting a post-doc at Rice in the fall and expressed interest in helping others who are trying to revive the section.

- *Intermountain:* Joel Harris, Paul Farnsworth, and Peter Griffiths have indicated strong interest in reviving the Intermountain section, which is primarily constituted of members in Utah. Both the U. Utah and BYU student sections are active, which helps maintain professional interest. Bonnie Saylor has forwarded a roster and constitution/bylaws and annual report templates to them.

- *Mid-Michigan:* Shawn Chen expressed interest in reviving this section and has received a roster and other information.

- *Niagara Frontier:* Joe Gardella gave a detailed assessment of the status of this section, which encompasses Western New York (Buffalo/Rochester) and southern Ontario (up to Toronto), but has functionally been based in Buffalo. Section membership has been

adversely affected by the decline of industry, particularly in Rochester. It may be possible to get more interest in the section but it will require renewed efforts to expand activity outside of Buffalo.

- *Pacific Northwest:* Brian Marquardt has agreed to serve as Chair of this section.

- *Snake River:* This section covers the northern end of the Rocky Mountain range (Idaho and Montana). There are very few members living here and it is unlikely that a section can be maintained. The membership may be best served by redistributing them to the Intermountain and Pacific Northwest sections.

- *St. Louis:* David McCurdy provided a detailed description of the activities of this section. It is probable that an annual report will be submitted this year.

Summary – Regional Sections: The Houston, Intermountain, Mid-Michigan, Niagara Frontier, Pacific Northwest, and St. Louis Regional Sections all had members respond to the call for volunteers, and should be given time to reorganize. An expectation should be that these sections will submit an annual report at the end of the year and otherwise meet the requirements to remain an active section.

The Snake River section has too few members to remain viable and should be deactivated. Members in southeast Idaho should be transferred to the Intermountain region. Members in western Idaho should be transferred to the Pacific Northwest region.

The remaining sections on the at-risk list - Penn-York, Piedmont, Rio Grande, and Rocky Mountain – did not have anyone respond to the solicitation. Additional efforts will be made to contact members before and during SciX, and the results of those efforts will be reported at the Governing Board meeting at SciX. Comments on these sections are as follows. The Penn-York and Rio Grande sections do not have enough members to be sustained, and should be declared inactive. The Rocky Mountain section covers an unworkably large area. Members who live in Utah would be better suited to the Intermountain region, while others who live in New Mexico should have a narrower region (or just be at-large members). The Piedmont section is spread out, with a four-hour drive required to cover the core area of the Carolinas. However, there are many active members and students in this region, and a last push before inactivation has the best chance out of these four sections of being successful.

Summary - Technical Sections: The expectation for the Atomic and Chemometric Sections is that they will meet the requirements for active sections.

No response was obtained for the other technical sections. The priority of the Committee to this point has been to work on Regional sections. We propose that another year be allowed to pursue renewal of the underactive Technical sections. Membership levels in most of these sections are high enough to support some level of activity. Further, for most international members, Technical sections are the only opportunity for increased involvement with the Society besides receiving the Journal. As with the Regional sections, the ability of the Society to be a resource for the Technical sections (web site, symposium sponsorship, certification, etc.) will be critical for successful reactivation. However, for Chirality and NMR, the sections are too small to be viable and should be declared inactive.

Summary - Student sections: Student sections were not part of the reactivation call. The Committee and the SAS Student Representative were able to obtain new information about some

sections. We have compiled a list of faculty advisors, which is included as a footnote to the membership table at the end of this report. The faculty advisors were encouraged to remind the students to submit an annual report; only two of the eight sections submitted a report in 2013. The faculty advisors contacted at the time of this writing also expressed interest (or at least willingness) to be included on emails from the SAS Office to the section officers, to help them keep appraised of their section's obligations.

- *Arizona State:* Per discussion with Mark Hayes (ASU faculty advisor), there are no students in the section and it should be considered inactive. The numbers in the membership table below are probably legacy from earier registrations.

- *University of Idaho:* There are no students listed as being part of the section. Per discussion with Peter Griffiths, within a year there will no longer be any faculty at Idaho doing research in spectroscopy. Therefore, the section should be considered inactive.

- *University of Utah:* Per discussion with Joel Harris, there is an active student section despite there not being any members listed in the database. It is possible that there are members of the student section who are not student members of SAS. Whatever the cause, this section should not be deactivated.

For reference, Article XII, Section 6 of the SAS Bylaws, which discusses inactivation of Regional sections, is included. The language for a Technical section (Article XIII, Section 5) is similar.[1]

SECTION 6. INACTIVE STATUS. If neither the Regional Section chair nor secretary responds to two successive yearly requests for completed Regional Section Questionnaires listing new Regional Section Officers and activities of the section, then the Executive Director, or his/her surrogate, shall attempt to make contact with the Section. If contact cannot be made or if after contact is made, it is the Executive Director's opinion that the Section is no longer functioning and will not function within the next year, then the Executive Committee shall be so notified. The Executive Committee may, if they deem it advisable, vote to place the Section on inactive status. This action may be reversed by a simple majority vote at the next Governing Board Meeting.

(a) FUNDS. An inactive Section's funds or assets, after discharging of all just debts, shall be held by the Society Treasurer for five (5) years if the section is a Chapter. At the end of the five (5) year period the assets are to be disposed of as outlined by the inactive Section's Constitution and Bylaws, or in the event that no disposition of funds is specified, or the inactive Section's Constitution and Bylaws are not in the possession of the Society, the assets will revert to the general fund of the Society. If the section is an Affiliate, the funds or assets are disbursed according to the rules of that Affiliate. No money from an affiliate is returned to the Society unless directed to do so by the Affiliate.

(b) REMOVAL FROM INACTIVE STATUS. A petition of ten (10) or more SAS members, upon approval by the Regional, Student, and Technical Section Affairs Committee, needs only a simple majority vote of the Governing Board, or between Governing Board meetings the Executive Committee, to remove the Section from inactive status. If this takes place within five (5) years after being voted into inactive status, all of the Section's assets are to be returned. If a longer period of time has transpired, the Society Treasurer, on approval of the Governing Board, or Executive Committee between Governing Board meetings, may grant the Regional Section seven hundred and fifty (750) dollars to provide immediate operating funds.

(c) MEMBER STATUS. If a Section becomes inactive, the membership will be given the choice of transferring to the active Regional Section or Technical Section of the member's choice.

[1] Art. XIII, Sec. 5 differs from Art. XII, Sec. 6 in that, in the former, there is no discussion of the disposition of funds for an affiliate section. Inclusion of such language should be considered for the next Bylaws change.

2) *Update RTSA-related website content.*

This effort is a lower priority than identifying leaders of the moribund sections, and has not yet been promoted. This work will pick up in the next 6 months. Success for this effort will require that the sections provide content to put onto the website. For those groups which already have websites, such as Coblentz, New York, and Pittsburgh, a brief description of the section and a link to the website is probably sufficient. For other groups that do not have sites set up, the SAS section pages would be a handy way to host section information. The Committee will work with the Web Editor to make a simple, standard template that will maintain a consistent design.

3) *Develop "snapshot" or "status board" to quickly access section health and activity and prioritize RTSA committee activities.*

The status board is emerging, now that the Committee is addressing activity issues and has information to populate the board. The board will continue to develop and become a useful tool for managing section activity.

4) *Obtain information to determine if the large number of underactive sections can be traced to the RTSA selection process, and if a change in the selection process is warranted.*

A series of questions intended to obtain this information will be included in a larger SAS membership survey. The survey was originally intended to be distributed this past summer, but has been delayed. Roughly, about half of SAS members in the US who reside in the territory of a regional section do not join that section. Many members do not affiliate with more than the one "free" section that comes with membership. The survey questions are intended to determine if those who do not join a regional section make that choice because of (perceived or real) section activity, not wanting to spend extra for a second affiliation, or another reason.

There are several reasons why some sections are less active, such as geographic spread, loss of spectroscopy jobs in the area reducing the potential membership, and competition from other professional societies such as ACS local sections. Still, low membership is the greatest challenge to the sections. Almost all the at-risk sections are the smallest in SAS, and are far below whatever critical mass is required to keep section activities going. The loss of one or two leaders is enough to shut down these groups. A larger pool of people is required to absorb those losses when they occur.

I would like to have a discussion with the Executive Committee and Governing Board to consider ways to increase the Regional section membership. The starting point would be to reconsider the way that members join Regional sections, specifically to <u>assign</u> members to the local section they reside in, in a manner similar to the assignment done by the ACS, while also allowing members to select a "free" technical section affiliation. Some administrative considerations for implementation would include the following:

- Specific geographic regions would have to be defined for each section. Some affiliates already have these regions. The RTSA Committee is drafting a map which shows rough geographic boundaries based on the locations of declared members. The Regional sections would have to agree to the final boundaries.
- Persons who do not live within the boundaries of a Regional section would be assigned to an at-large section. Outside the US, members may be assigned to continental at-large sections. (Arrangements for appropriate representation on the Governing Board would have to be considered.)

- Dues would be increased to help bring more money to the sections and faciliate activities. An initial estimate is to raise dues by $5 US, which is half the cost to join an additional section. It is hoped that this increase would have minimal impact on overall membership levels.
- The formulas for dues distribution may have to be re-examined and tweaked slightly. It is not the intent of this proposal to have a funding redistribution away from successful sections. The information exists in the membership database to predict the new section membership numbers, and before/after comparisons can be made. If these calculations can be done before the physical meetings of the Executive Committee and Governing Board at SciX, the results will be presented as an addendum to those bodies. Charges and distribution to At-Large "regions" may require special consideration, if their numbers are disproportionately large.

Increasing membership rolls can only be a part of the solution. It is apparent from comments (direct discussions, LinkedIn forums, etc.) that traditional section activities, such as regular meetings with Tour speakers, need to be supplemented with new ideas to help members meet Society goals at the Regional level. Otherwise, we will just be formally counting a larger number of people not being active. Each section must determine what is relevant and important for its membership and allow those activities to define the meaning of the section's existence. Maintaining the tradition of giving a national- or regional-level award, organizing a symposium, participating in specific outreach activities, or even just having a regular dinner meeting, can provide the momentum to keep going during leaner years and be the base to support growth in better times. The following is a partial list of ideas intended to spark discussions. Many of these examples may be pursued already by several sections, but perhaps there are other sections who have not considered them.

- It should be easier for each section to see what other sections are doing. The RTSA Committee and the Newsletter Editor will start featuring Regional and Technical Section activities in the monthly newsletter sent to the membership. Annual reports, which include yearly activities summaries, should be available on the SAS web site (financial information can be scrubbed if necessary).
- Collaboration with other organizations, such as ACS local sections or university departments, can be a way to leverage limited resources or reach new audiences. Inclusion of student SAS sections in regular Regional section activities benefits both groups. Regular members will appreciate talking with and advising younger scientists, and the students will gain from meeting scientists outside their particular university.
- All Student sections are especially dependent on the energy of a few students and/or faculty advisor. Expanding student sections to include members from several universities and colleges will help provide continuity over the years, exposure the students to new environments (each department has its own culture!), and provide a way for students from smaller institutions to participate.
- The role of webinars or virtual meetings in new Regional Section activities has been discussed for a couple of years, and at least one section (New England) has successfully carried out a virtual meeting. The technical information and lessons learned from this experience should be disseminated to other sections, preferably within a few months, so that they may have time to plan and budget for conducting their own meetings.

Recommendations for Committee / Proposed Steps Forward

These actions should be pursued in addition to the regular activities of the Committee.

1. Develop the tools described above to facilitate Regional and Technical section activities, both formally active and re-invigorated. Development of the SAS web site as a resource for this information is important.
2. Identify and approach persons to assume leadership of Technical sections.
3. Continue to support the re-invigoration efforts of those working with Regional sections.
4. Develop a specific proposal, by the end of December, for changing regional/technical membership affiliation and work out the implications of the changes. Questions to be considered include:
    a. What changes to the bylaws would be required?
    b. What are the financial outcomes of dues changes?
    c. What is the timetable for implementing a change?
    d. What approval is required? (EC, GB, or both?)
    e. Are there specific criteria for considering the change to have been a success, and is there a time frame by which the criteria should be met?
    f. How do we provide services to
5. Develop a mission statement which defines the roles that Regional and Technical sections should have in SAS. The mission statement will incorporate input from the Executive Committee and Governing Board, as well as from the general membership. There have been some comments made in previous discussions (e.g. on LinkedIn) which question whether the sections are still relevant. The mission statement should convincingly answer those questions, and in so doing will perhaps motivate more of the membership to be active in the sections.

Actions for EC/SAS

These discussions should occur at the EC meeting at SciX, and perhaps during teleconferences beforehand if there is specific information that should be brought before the Governing Board.

1. Discuss allowing inactivation of the Penn-York, Rio Grande, Rocky Mountain, and Snake River Regional sections and the Chirality and NMR Technical Sections.
2. Discuss affiliate status and 501(c)3 registration of Northern California section.
3. Discuss aspects of the membership proposal.
4. (Constitution and Bylaws Committee) – Note footnote on p. 3 of this report.

Items to be voted by EC/GB

1. EC: Vote on inactivation of sections listed in EC Action Item 1.
2. EC: Possible vote on path forward with Northern California section, based on discussion in Ec Action Item 2.
3. EC and/or GB: Vote on membership proposal. (Due to the timing of obtaining input and writing the proposal, any vote would probably occur electronically, after SciX.)

Respectfully submitted,
Regional, Technical, and Student Section Affairs Committee

Demographic Information

The latest membership numbers are current as of 8/20/14 and include members within the three month grace period for renewal. Information for section officers is current as of annual reports submitted at the end of 2013. These tables do not reflect developments for specific sections that are described above.

Regional Sections

Name	A/ C/I	A R	Membership Trends				Elected Officers			
			Aug-14	Feb-14	Sep-13	Mar-13	Chair	Chair-Elect	Secretary	Treasurer
Arizona	I									
Balt-Wash	A	Y	47	53	54	50	John Canham (a)		Kris Patterson	Jeb Taylor
Chicago	A	Y	46	51	59	62	Fred Swiecinski		Alyison Leigh	
Cincinnati	C	N	17	18	16	14				
Cleveland	A	Y	18	19	16	13	Brian Perry	Tom Steele	Sara Freeman	Bob Williams
Del. Valley	A	Y	30	29	25	25	Cecil Dybkowski	Lois Weyer	David Russell	David Russell
Detroit	C	Y	16	15	11	9	Patsy Coleman	Ian Lewis	David Coleman	David Coleman
Houston	C	N	13	16	13	14				
Indiana	C	Y*	20	20	18	17				
Intermountain	C	N	6	9	8	6				
Kansas City	I									
Mid-Michigan	C	N	14	14	13	10				
Minnesota	C	Y*	21	23	25	22				
New England	A	Y	56	59	68	70	resigned		Ellen Miseo	Stephen Williams
New York	A	Y	61	60	61	48	Eugene Hall	David Tuschel	Deborah Peru	Richard Castino
Niag. Frontier	C	N	6	6	4	4				
No. California	A	Y	29	33	31	30	Steve Barnett	Steve Rabin		

Ohio Valley	C	Y	9	17	17	12	Paul Hsu		Hans Stauffer	
Pacific NW	C	N	12	15	15	11				
Penn York	C	N	3	6	6	3				
Piedmont	C	N	19	20	24	29				
Pittsburgh	A	Y	36	23	25	22	Manny Miller	Stephanie Wetzel	Karen Johnson	Karry Holzworth
Rio Grande	C	N	8	9	9	7				
Rocky Mtn	C	N	16	14	19	20				
St. Louis	C	N	26	29	28	28				
Snake River	C	N	4	6	6	5				
UK	C	Y	46	47	51	48	Pavel Matousek	Caroline Rodger	Andy Brookes	John Chalmers

Technical Sections

Name	**A/ C/I**	**A R**	**Membership Trends**				**Elected Officers**			
			Aug-14	**Feb-14**	**Sep-13**	**Mar-13**	**Chair**	**Chair-Elect**	**Secretary**	**Treasurer**
Atomic	C	Y	165	163	175	166	D. Bradshaw			
BioTech	C	N	36	41	52	50				
Chemometrics	C	N	114	107	103	100				
Chirality	C	N	8	7	8	11				
Fluorescence	C	N	47	58	70	67				
Forensics	C	N	41	36	45	45				
Imaging	C	N	91	91	91	81				
Laser Sampl.	C	N	20	14	21	22				
NIR/CNIRS	A	Y	70	70	76	66	Gary Ritchie	Igor Kovalenko	Art Springsteen	Susan Foulk
NMR	C	N	10	11	13	13				
Polymer Char.	C	N	50	59	53	56				
Process	C	Y	31	33	28	33	Jim Rydzak	B. Smith-Goettler	Benoit Inge	E. Botonjic-Sehic
Vibn/Coblentz	A	Y	310	319	334	313	Jim Rydzak		R. Crocombe	Mary Carrabba

Student Sections

Name	A/C/I	AR	Membership Trends				Elected Officers			
			Aug-14	Feb-14	Sep-13	Mar-13	Chair	Chair-Elect	Secretary	Treasurer
Arizona State			4	4	6	4				
BYU			9	6	5	3				
Iowa State			3	3	3	4	Dipak Mainali	A. Augspurger	Aleem Syed	Aleem Syed
Truman State			11	4	3	3				
U. Delaware			11	2	5	3				
U. Idaho			0	0	1	1				
U. Utah			0	0	1	2				
U Wisc-Milw.			6	7	7	6	Ryan Schmeling	Kelly Teske	Xavier Udad	Hannah Wagie

Confirmed faculty advisors:
ASU: Mark Hayes; BYU: James Patterson; Iowa State: Emily Smith; Truman State: David McCurdy; Utah: Joel Harris. We will attempt to confirm the Delaware and Wisconsin-Milwaukee faculty advisors before SciX and update the table accordingly.

A/C/I: A = Affiliate, C = Chapter, I = Inactive. AR: Annual Report submitted? Yes or No. Y* = section has indicated that report is being prepared.
(a): Acting.

Letter to Membership (August SAS Newsletter)

SAS Needs YOU to Revive Regional, Technical, and Student Sections

One of the benefits of SAS membership is affiliation with a regional, student, or technical section of your choice. The affiliation is a way to find and interact with spectroscopists with whom you share common interests. Unfortunately, many of these sections have become functionally inactive in recent years, and a large portion of SAS members are not benefiting from this facet of their affiliation. We have personally received emails and been asked at conferences, "I joined my regional section X and they don't do anything. Why is this an option for me to sign-up? What are my dues being used for?"

The Executive Committee, Regional and Technical Section Affairs Committee, and Membership Committee are developing a number of Society-wide improvements to address common problems for each section. Virtual conferencing capabilities will help alleviate issues where it is difficult for sections to meet in person. We have plans to enhance the content of the SAS website to better meet section needs. We will soon distribute a membership survey, in which members can raise specific concerns about regional, student, and technical sections. The National Office reserves a portion of your dues to be paid to the sections to support their activities.

Still, we need your help—not only to facilitate some of the solutions we are working on, but also to devise and implement solutions to section-specific problems. We are asking for volunteers to serve as officers of the inactive sections. At a minimum, the section needs a Chair and a Treasurer to be viable. With officers in place, each section will be able to actively promote both Section-specific and SAS goals, and use its allocated funds for activities that support those goals. Possible activities include (but are not limited to!) supporting local events or conferences and benefiting from the SAS-organized tour speaker program. Members of the section will get real benefits from their membership, rather than wondering what checking the box during their yearly renewal brings them. Also, members will have a voice at national-level affairs through the presence of a section delegate at SAS Governing Board meetings (currently held at SciX). So, we ask you to please consider volunteering and helping direct a Section for current and future members. If you would like more information, please ask either of us, and we will send you details on the duties of the position(s) and resources that would be available to you. **Please let us know of your interest by September 15.**

Here is the list of functionally inactive sections. Please note that the Society bylaws outline only two section states, Active and Inactive. Without officers, and without having filed a complete annual report, the section is technically inactive. These sections are at risk of formally being declared Inactive by the Executive Committee, at which point reactivation will become a more involved process. So, if you are at all considering becoming more involved, now is the ideal time to do so!

Regional Sections: Houston; InterMountain; Mid-Michigan; Niagara Frontier; Pacific Northwest; Penn-York; Piedmont; Rio Grande; Rocky Mountain; St. Louis; Snake River.

Technical Sections: Biotech; Chirality; Fluorescence; Imaging; Laser Sampling; NMR; Polymer Characterization.

Of course, if you have any suggestions or comments concerning how Regional, Technical, or Student Sections might better serve your needs, we will be happy to hear them. Let us know what's on your mind!

Thank you for your consideration,

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