

Affiliate Societies Council (ASC), Inc. Strategic Plan

Mission

- Provide the forum and means for professional organizations and independent professionals in science, technology, engineering and math/medical (STEM) and related fields to pursue common educational, professional and community goals by collaboration through sharing information and resources
- Provide education opportunities for youth in STEM related careers
- Offer professional development programs to those working in STEM fields
- Recognize distinguished individuals for their accomplishments in STEM fields
- Promote public awareness of accomplishments and educational opportunities in STEM fields

Values

- The ASC honors and respects the individual diversity and interest of each of its members
- The ASC will make every effort to coordinate with initiatives of its members that overlap the ASC programs and activities
- All ASC members have equal opportunity to participate in all ASC programs
- Membership in the ASC is open to all organizations and independent professionals in STEM and related fields regardless of race, creed, religion or national origin
- Program and actions will be in consonance with the ASC Articles of Incorporation and applicable IRS Code for a 501 (c) (3) organization

Vision

- The value of professional societies in STEM and related fields is widely recognized
- Individuals in STEM and related fields recognize the value of participating in professional societies
- The ASC is the forum of choice to stimulate strategic partnerships among professional individuals and societies in STEM and related fields
- The ASC is the organization of choice for professional societies to pursue common educational goals
- The ASC is the organization of choice to undertake programs for the common purposes of more than one society

Goals

- Increase awareness of the value of the ASC, which results in increased ASC membership
- Identify reliable and sustained financing of the ASC
- Increase communication and collaboration with members
- Develop enhanced benefits for members
- Increase involvement in K-12 educational initiatives
- Strengthen professional development programs
- Increase collaboration with local colleges and universities
- Strengthen the ASC infrastructure
- Activate the board of advisors

Prioritized Actions

In order to accomplish the stated goals, certain changes should be made to the committee structure established in the Bylaws. Our existing Finance, Professional Development, and Engineer and Scientist Recognition committees should remain unchanged. Our Publicity committee should be re-established. Our Career Guidance committee should become the “STEM” committee. New standing committees should be formed for Membership and Funding. A new committee for Young Professionals could be established as either an ad hoc or a standing committee. Recommended duties and responsibilities for the affected committees are described below:

A. Membership Committee

Background

The ASC, like many technical and professional organizations, has suffered a significant downturn in membership during the past decade. New members are now much more difficult to attract and current members are not easy to hold on to. We rely on our membership as our source of energy and ideas. Our member societies provide the volunteers who run our programs and lead our organization.

The tasks involved, such as contacting new or renewing members, sending reminders, and maintaining records, have in the past been done by office staff. No written procedures are presently available for guidance. No one is currently working on improving member benefits. The implementation of membership tasks has become lax. As a result, our roles have slipped to a critical level at just ten paid memberships out of 40 societies that are associated with the ASC.

In order to build the ASC back to a strong, healthy organization, we need to focus hard on building our membership. A membership committee should be created and elevated to the level of a standing committee.

Recommendations

Establish a Membership Committee to accomplish the following:

1. Clarify all ASC membership categories as to qualifications, dues, and privileges. Use the bylaws as a baseline. Consider adding corporate memberships. Individual membership should allow for people who don't belong to a local professional organization.
2. Build up our member benefits. Define programs, activities, professional discounts, etc. that would enhance the value of a membership in the ASC. Advertise these benefits.
3. Develop written procedures for collecting dues and maintaining membership records. Recommend who should be contacted and when. Define the forms and form letters to be used. Assure that accurate records are maintained regarding contact information, current membership status, and any member services being used.
4. Strengthen contacts with the delegates to our member societies. Work with them to build closer relationships with the organizations they represent. Identify ways the ASC can help these societies operate more effectively and ways their members can become more involved in the ASC.
5. Increase the membership of the ASC. Reach out to local professionals and professional societies, students and student organizations as well as to individuals and organizations involved with all the ASC programs.

B. Funding Committee

Background

The ASC Strategic Planning Committee reviewed the financial condition of the ASC in terms of supporting the organization and its programs. Previously financial support was provided by the Engineering and Science Foundation, but that financial support had declined and ended in 2007. The remaining funding sources are membership fees, seminar registrations, banquet fees, TechFest grants/donations and undesignated donations.

The ASC Executive Committee oversees the organization finances and is maintained by the Treasurer. No concerted effort has been done by the ASC membership to provide the needed funding sources for the ASC programs, except for the annual TechFest event. The ASC Strategic Planning Committee reviewed this issue extensively and recommends that a Funding Committee be established for developing reliable and sustained funding with the five-year goal of an endowment sufficient to annually fund the ASC programs.

Recommendations

During the Committee meetings, various funding efforts/activities were discussed and recommended. The conclusion was that a standing Funding Committee be established. The recommended actions/goals of the Committee are:

1. Establish a plan of action and goals. Identify fund sources and opportunities.
2. Set priorities and time schedules.
3. Outline a five-year operating plan.
4. Initiate a plan for establishing an endowment.
5. Solicit funds through grants, donations and individual contributions.
6. Solicit In-Kind and non-cash donations from organizations/businesses.
7. Evaluate the feasibility and advantages of utilizing professional fundraisers.
8. Prepare promotional, marketing and solicitation pamphlets and materials.
9. Coordinate its activities and accomplishments with the Finance Committee, Treasurer and the ASC Chair.
10. Prepare verbal and written reports for the General ASC meetings and a written report on its yearly activities/accomplishments at the ASC Annual meeting.
11. Consist of a Chair and three to six members that meet periodically (preferred monthly) and conduct fund raising planning and individual contacts.

C. STEM Committee

Establish a committee for:

- Collaborations with local school districts, colleges and universities as well as with STEM-related and community organizations, which will enhance the perceived value of the ASC membership
- Increase participation in activities such as Science days, Mathcounts, FIRST robotics competition, etc.

Background

The ASC has long been involved and committed to increasing the awareness of and the

excitement in STEM areas in our youth as well as in parents and teachers. Career Exploration Weekend, Mathcounts, Science Saturday and Teacher workshops are examples of the programs supported and carried out by the ASC and its volunteers over past years. With the creation of TechFest in 2003, the ASC took a giant leap into the world of “selling” to youth, particularly in the first through ninth grades, and their parents the value and importance of studying science and math.

The success of TechFest rests on three primary factors, namely 1) funding, 2) volunteers and 3) a dedicated team of organizers who developed and implemented the program and the concepts on which TechFest is based. The funds initially came from the Engineering and Science Foundation, which has been progressively replaced since 2005 by contributions from more than 20 organizations. The volunteers come from the ASC professional societies, Sinclair Community College, universities, WPAFB, companies, museums and a variety of other organizations who want to have an impact on the future of American youth in their development towards STEM careers. All of the core members of the TechFest Team have been with this program since the early years. They carry the integrated experience and knowledge gathered over six years as well as the year-long focus and work on making each TechFest program successful.

This “troika” that has made TechFest a success hangs on dedicated volunteerism. That is, volunteers who dedicate their time, energies and/or funds provide the three “horses” that pull the TechFest “wagon.” As time progresses, there is always a strain on any organization, which is especially the case when the organization is made up wholly of volunteers. Because of this strain, there is an increasing probability that there will be an attrition of individuals and sponsors from the TechFest volunteer rolls. Although it has been possible to find replacements in past years, there is no guarantee that this can be done in the future. Clearly, TechFest is currently the flagship program of the ASC, which makes this issue of considerable importance to the future of the ASC. What is needed, however, are strong STEM activities in addition to TechFest, which are supported by “new” sponsors.

The long term value of the ASC rests primarily on successful relationships with its affiliated societies and its outreach programs. The key outreach area for years to come is the creation of

interest and excitement in our youth for STEM and STEM-related careers. The ASC provides an ideal organization to bring together engineers and scientists for helping youth and teachers to understand the breadth and depth of opportunities in STEM and STEM-related careers for K-12 students.

TechFest is only one way of doing this, however, the experiences garnered from TechFest can provide invaluable insights as to how to set up other types of educational outreach programs. A key element in making these programs successful is the collaborations with educational organizations and initiatives. The vision here is that the ASC can establish viable dialog with education administrators and teachers in local school systems, colleges and universities wherein the ASC brings to the table professional societies and other interested professionals, which includes both active and retired professionals, who share an undying interest in the future of our technological society.

Not only do these outreach efforts benefit youth and their parents, but also teachers. Moreover, colleges, universities, companies and government organizations who need young adults to train or who are trained in STEM fields also benefit from these efforts. With careful planning this fact can open doors for collaborations with movers and shakers in all of the above organizations. The key question is how to move beyond TechFest and create new outreach activities that become a significant part of what the ASC does? The charge to this committee, therefore, is to find answers to this question and act upon them.

Recommendations

1. The members of this committee should include one or more individuals who are high level educators in local school systems. At least one member should be from the TechFest core team. Consider making TechFest as a subcommittee of this committee. Invite past awardees to be members of this committee.
2. Organize groups for regular, active participation in existing science, math and technology programs for youth, such as the West District Science Day, Montgomery County Science Day, Mathcounts, Science Olympiad, FIRST Lego League and FIRST robotics competition. It is essential that these participations carry not only the society name but also the ASC name.
3. Develop opportunities for participation by the ASC members in school Science Days and Fairs, which precede county and district events both as judges and resources for students and teachers.
4. Look for opportunities to collaborate with outreach programs of member societies, companies, educational organizations and government organizations. This requires understanding the goals of these organizations and how the ASC can enhance or expand these outreach programs.

D. Young Professionals Committee

Develop a program for young STEM Professionals that will increase their professional society participation and networking opportunities.

Background

The ASC needs young professionals to replace ‘older’ active members as they become less active and to provide the ‘manpower’ for our suggested additional activities. The professional societies have similar issues with recruiting and retaining young members.

Young professionals are busy with friends, family and their careers. They use the internet for much of their professional and social networking. The ASC needs to appeal to them and gain their interest and participation.

Recommendations

1. The easiest way to get young professionals involved is to get them active in their associated professional society as college students. Assist professional societies to become active with their student chapters – such as student paper awards, dissertation awards, have students help with society TechFest booth or professionals help with the college booth.

2. The ASC needs to get local area companies to push ACTIVE professional society membership – some companies will pay for a professional society membership, but they also need to push attending local meetings and getting active in those organizations.
3. Consider sponsoring an event/activity for just 20s and 30s to meet and network??
4. Need to push benefits for young professionals:
 - Informal mentoring of other professionals
 - Benefit from unique educational opportunities - learn from ‘war stories’
 - Keep up with latest technologies – plant tours, demonstrations
 - Networking – isn’t needed just when looking for a job
 - Society leadership is a ‘safe’ place to test out and gain leadership skills
 - Meet new people, network and exchange corporate insight with the future leaders of Dayton’s technology community
 - Gain invaluable professional recognition and visibility
 - Have the opportunity to serve on a society board, gain exposure through participation in the various programs, or contribute talents to the community through service in the ASC
5. Investigate working with the Engineer’s Club on suitable activities.
6. Will need to work closely with publicity committee to orient publicity towards young professionals and publicize in what they read! Consider additions to the website that are accessed only to members for their informal networking.

E. Publicity Committee

Background

The strategic planning group envisions the ASC becoming the focal point of the Dayton area technical community. In order to attract professionals, the ASC must project a professional appearance. If we want the local technical professions and professional societies to understand who we are and what we are about, we need to advertise. Publicity and public relations is all about projecting an image and educating our target audience.

Recommendations

Reinstate the Publicity Committee to accomplish the following:

1. Establish a format and style for documents used for regular correspondence. Maintain the ASC logo. Create letterhead, business cards, and other necessary documents.
2. Design a brochure for the ASC. Include our mission, history, levels of membership, current member societies, programs, and contact information.
3. Write and distribute press releases. Develop relationships with local media - newspaper, radio and television personnel. Post news to our website and any appropriate public blogs. Distribute news to our members for use in their websites and newsletters. Investigate media partnerships for advertising the ASC programs.
4. Assist with flyers and other publicity materials designed for all ASC programs.
5. Maintain a written history of the ASC.
6. Arrange for photographer for ASC events.

7. Maintain the ASC website.
8. Provide a forum for member societies to publicize their activities.
9. It has been said that people need to be offered something seven times before they accept it. Plan for publicizing the ASC many times and many ways each year.

Final Comments

The ASC Bylaws allow for a Board of Advisors. We recommend this board be established and populated with senior, influential individuals, especially those who would assist the ASC in gaining funding and publicity.

The Bylaws should be reviewed within the next six months and updated to reflect the recommended structure of the organization.

Respectfully submitted by the Strategic Planning Committee,

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