Society for Risk Analysis Governance Review Report

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The Society of Risk Analysis hired our firm, Brighter Strategies (www.brighterstrategies.com), to conduct a review of its governance process and make recommendations to strengthen its overall operations. To successfully complete this project, we designed a collaborative approach that evaluated current strengths and challenges. This approach included conducting twenty-nine one-on-one interviews with SRA leadership (including current and past officers, members of Council, regional group leaders, and contracted support), six benchmark interviews with similar professional societies, and a desk audit of SRA's current guiding governance documents. We understood that, ultimately, SRA wished the engagement to answer these three fundamental questions:

1. What is the best governance structure to support the Society's work?
2. Within this structure, how should the Council, contract support, and volunteer leadership interact and communicate?
3. Given all the realities, what will be the strategy and action plan for putting this governance model in place? How do we align roles and responsibilities while continuing to engage with the needs of members?

Based on our wealth of experience doing this work, and supported by research conducted by BoardSource (the leading authority on good governance http://leadingwithintent.org/). The governance best practices provided by BoardSource were tailored to match SRA's specific composition and characteristics. The resulting groups for thematic analysis and the report are structured to focus on three specific and interrelated areas of governance: the people (composition and structure of Council), the work (Council responsibilities), and the impact (strategic vision and organizational performance).
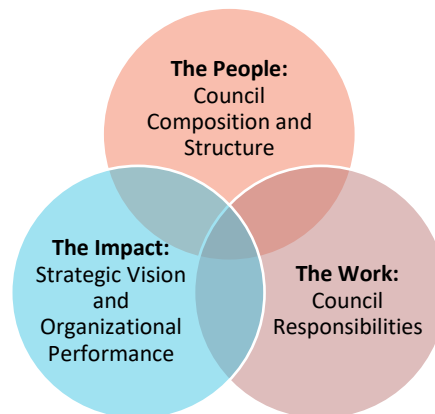
The interview analysis was conducted with the following methodology:

- The transcript notes from each interview were reviewed and descriptively coded using a using qualitative coding software Dedoose.
- Also using Dedoose, the descriptive codes were sorted into the relevant thematic group listed above.
- The results within each thematic group were summarized into key findings, focused on areas in which SRA already excels and areas where SRA has room for growth. No individual codes or comments were included in the summary, only codes and comments in which a trend was visible across multiple interviews.
- Lastly, the original transcript notes from each individual interview were re-read and compared to the summaries produced to ensure accuracy of process.

The recommendation section of the report was generated by Brighter Strategies, based on our wealth of experience working with Associations of all types and promoting effective governance practices. Each recommendation includes a reference to one or more sections of the report which correspond to the thematic areas of analysis, indicating the areas of governance they serve.

SRA is a thriving organization with a well-designed infrastructure, well positioned to continue doing great work. Our suggestions are for adjustments, not an overhaul.

The People: Council Composition and Structure

Council Recruitment and Composition

Effective leadership starts with having the right people in the right places. The most successful boards, or councils, are thoughtfully composed with regard to skill sets, leadership styles, and diversity of thought and background. The Council needs to understand the leadership needs of SRA and seek out leaders who can bring the expertise, passion, and external leadership needed both now and into the future.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
• SRA requires all Council members and officers to be current members of SRA • SRA employs a traditional Nominating Committee approach, inviting the past president to preside over it • The Nominating Committee attempts informally to create equity by alternating nominees according to gender, region, and professional background • The Nominating Committee is seen as doing a good job of drumming up interest and advancing leadership in roles where there is not a lot of member interest	• SRA bylaws adequately lay out the composition of Council (Section VI); however, they would be stronger if the informal equity practices were formally documented • Those interviewed would like to see more than two pre-vetted candidates on the ballot; and they would like more information on the individuals' skills and background • The nominating process is seen as overly selective, as the past president is in a position of power to select individuals they would like to see in leadership roles; it is suggested that the process should be more inclusive and transparent (less, as one interviewee framed it, "tapping on the shoulder of friends and colleagues") • Those who have been involved in the nominating process indicate that open applications yield few applicants. This

	forces the committee to "tap shoulders." The process is not designed that way; it is out of necessity (we believe this is tied to member engagement, which we will discuss later in the report) • There is no requirement that an elected officer be a previous Council member • The culture and leadership of SRA is viewed as US-centric; there is a desire to have dedicated seats for regional affiliates

Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders

Council education should be an ongoing effort that builds on an effective, formal orientation program and is informed by regular Council self-assessment.

Continuous—and collective—learning opportunities will help deepen Council members' understanding of SRA and the environment in which it works, as well as their individual roles and responsibilities. This understanding will increase their effectiveness and value to SRA.

By investing time and resources in Council education, SRA will be able to deepen their commitment to the society, strengthen their understanding of their role, and cultivate a culture of ongoing improvement.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
• SRA bylaws (2007) are well written and lay out the legal/formal processes of the Council and Standing Committees • All the Standing Committees (with the exception of the Regions Committee) have a charter that provide guidance on the role of the committee • Past leaders attempt to pass information to new leaders (although the process is informal) • The inclusion of the incoming president, current president, and past president at the weekly Executive Committee (EC) meetings creates some organizational continuity	• There is no formal orientation or onboarding program for Officers, nor for Council members. Most spend their first year trying to figure out their role (one interviewee said "Joining Council is like walking into a movie thirty minutes in— you're missing information and don't know what's going on") • There is a high dependence on passing knowledge from the predecessor of a position, which happens in an individualized way for each position • There is no formal orientation or leadership manual for any volunteer leadership role

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SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow

- BAI's background and longevity with SRA allows for "on-the-spot" historical reference and education

Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions

Structure—of the Council as a whole and its relationship to Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions—is an important part of an efficient and successful governance process. A strong structure can prevent many dysfunctions, not the least of which can be a lack of strategic engagement from members.

SRA offers members a variety of ways to be engaged:
- Ten Standing Committees according to their bylaws
- Seven Standing Committees not in the bylaws (Chapters and Sections Committee, Education Committee, Audit Committee, Student and young Professional Committee, Council World Congress Committee, Risk Analysis Science Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee)
- Sixteen Specialty Groups, each with their own website
- US-based Regions (National Capital Area, New England, Research Triangle, and Upstate New York)
- International Regions (Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand, and Europe)

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
Committees: - Standing Committees (with the exception of the Region Committee) all have charters - Council has attempted to link the work of committees to that of Council by requiring Committee Chairs to be Council members - The Conference and Workshops Committee and the Specialty Groups Committee have established goals, objectives, and standard operating procedures	Committees: - Committees vary in effectiveness and activity - Committee reports on progress seem to be intermittent and dependents on the active engagement of the Committee Chair - Most committees do not have clearly articulated goals or objectives, nor do they have written standard operating procedures; this creates role confusion and the constant "recreating of the wheel" for volunteer leaders - The requirement for committees to be chaired by members of Council is viewed as a challenge and potentially undermines committee effectiveness as Council members are typically new to that committee's work

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- There is no formal process (or entity) in place to evaluate the composition, quality of work, or effectiveness of committees
- There is a general belief that there are too many Standing Committees and that several could be sunset
- There is a general lack of visibility into the work of the committees. Specifically, the transparency and process used by the Nominations Committee and the Awards Committee were brought up multiple times

Specialty Groups:

- Respondents love the diversity of the Specialty Groups and that there is no limit to the number of groups a member can participate in
- Members sign up for Specialty Groups when they sign up for membership; therefore, one must be a member to be in a Specialty Group
- SRA has a process requiring at least 25 members expressing interest to form a new Specialty Group
- SRA provides funding to Specialty Groups for the Annual Meeting and student merit awards

Specialty Groups:

- Specialty Groups vary in effectiveness and activity; some are only active around the Annual Meeting
- Specialty Groups have their own officer/leadership structure, dues structure, and voting process, which causes confusion and makes them feel cliquish or clubby
- Specialty Groups tend to keep their own member information; there is little reporting or accountability to SRA
- There is no process to evaluate or sunset a Specialty Group
- Although members can join any number of Specialty Groups, the sessions at the Annual Meeting are concurrent, so members are forced to prioritize

Regions:

- SRA uses an affiliate model, which means that Regions are their own legal entities, with their own leadership structures, dues structures, and other characteristics; this mitigates overall risk to SRA
- Informal rules of engagement have been written recently, by Big Voice, for US-based Regions
- When individuals sign up for SRA membership, they are given the option to

Regions:

- SRA contractors and volunteer leaders do not appear to understand that Regions are autonomous affiliates and not chapters; as a result, the relationship (exchange of information, flow of decision-making, access to resources, etc.) between SRA and Regions has historically been tenuous

also sign up for Regional membership; SRA collects the dues	• There are no operating agreements or contractual requirements identifying what constitutes a Region or what its benefits from or responsibilities to SRA are • SRA treats US-based Regions and International Regions the same, when in fact they are very different and should be treated as such

Assessing Council Performance

We believe in the power of performance assessment. We have seen it catalyze positive change at the Council level, strengthen Council-leader partnership, and lead to greater organizational impact. Self-assessment enables the Council to hold itself, its members, and its processes accountable, to identify gaps between current performance and expected or hoped-for performance, and to chart a course of improvement, refinement, and/or further progress.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
• The general perception is that Council is relatively well run (one interviewee said, "I give them a solid B"; another said, "It's well run and disorganized at times—just like any other volunteer organization") • The Council has an Executive Committee (EC) that functions at a high level and is effective at running core organizational operations • SRA invested a significant amount of time and resources into this governance review, which is a great start and appreciated by those interviewed	• There are no systems to regularly evaluate Council, Council members, or the EC • Respondents feel that Council Members are "hit or miss"; many cited the role as a CV/resume booster • Respondents believe that the real decisions happen in the EC and the Council is there to "rubber-stamp" the decisions (one interviewee said, "If you want a decision made, you need to go through the EC to set it up for Council, but don't make it look obvious") • When interviewees were asked how Council or the EC could improve, the most cited term was "increased transparency"

The Work: Council Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of Council

A strong understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Council members is necessary for effective work. A lack of understanding of what is—and is not—a part of a Council member's essential roles can lead to several dysfunctions, such as micromanagement, rogue decision-making, lack of engagement, and more.

Because doing a job well is impossible if one does not know what the job is, the Council must take the time to ensure that every Council member fully understands what is expected and needed of them and then hold all members accountable when they get off track.

This starts with an understanding of the fundamental legal duties of each individual Council member, which include the following:

- Duty of Care—Each Council member has a legal responsibility to participate actively in making decisions on behalf of SRA and to exercise his or her best judgment while doing so.
- Duty of Loyalty—Each Council member must put the interests of SRA before their personal and professional interests when acting on behalf of SRA in a decision-making capacity.
- Duty of Obedience—Council members bear the legal responsibility of ensuring that SRA complies with the applicable federal, state, and local laws and adheres to its mission.

A standing committee on **governance** typically plays a key role in ensuring that the Council is well aligned with its roles and responsibilities, which requires a combination of ongoing **education** and development and regular performance assessment.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
- In the broadest perspective, the roles and responsibilities of Council vs. EC (policy vs. operational) are clear to most who are involved in volunteer leadership - The bylaws adequately lay out the roles and responsibilities of officers (Section VIII) - Previous treasurers have developed written guidelines that include tasks, duties and timelines; these are shared from predecessor to incumbent	- The roles and responsibilities of Council and the EC are not understood by those who are not in leadership (one interviewee said, "It's a big black box") - Volunteer leaders, and other members, are unclear as to who to go to for what; most cite starting with the president or a previous president - The more nuanced details of what a Council member does specifically are not clear (even to Council members) and have not been articulated; as a result, some are over-engaged, and others significantly under-engaged with the work of Council

	• The president is viewed as having all the power (one interviewee said, "If you have a great President, it's great, and if you don't, it's not")
	• Interviewees believe that although the president should put their mark on SRA, the strategic plan should ultimately guide the president/Council
	• While agreement is not unanimous, there is a leaning that the president should serve a term of two years to ensure better continuity of strategic priorities
	• Interviewees believe the president-elect should focus their first year on shadowing and supporting the president and the strategic plan; the planning of the Annual Meeting would be better suited to the outgoing past president or to a Program Committee
	• There is no Governance Committee (Standing Committee) to support the work of the Council

Strategy and Planning

A strategic plan or framework serves as a roadmap and as a tool for assessing progress. Working side by side with contracted staff and volunteer leadership, the Council can play an active and substantive role in developing, approving, and supporting SRA's strategic planning.

A good strategic plan articulates organizational priorities as well as programmatic and operational goals and has clear metrics and timelines. What is most important is that the Council be part of the strategic plan and that the plan reflect a shared vision of the organization's role, values, and priorities.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
General strategy and operations: • SRA has a strategic plan that was written and approved in 2018 • SRA developed a Strategic Initiatives fund	General strategy and operations: • There is no clear implementation plan aligned to the strategic goals and priorities • There is no mechanism to track or evaluate the success of the plan

• BAI, the Secretariat, is a long-standing partner supporting the operationalization of the strategic plan
• Big Voice is seen as a strategic asset; Members appreciate the frequency and quality of communications/newsletter
• SRA has a new membership database (Naylor) where it can track member information
• Big Voice has developed training on how to use Naylor and on how to update the website pages
 	
International role:
  • SRA has intentionally reached out to international colleagues to form a worldwide consortium on risk analysis
  • World Congress, which occurs every few years, is seen as a significant and important strategic initiative to bring geographic equity and promote inclusivity around the world
	• The plan does not appear to drive the work of Council, the Secretariat, or the Standing Committees
	• The Naylor system is not used by all parties (Committees, Regions, Specialty Groups, etc.)
	• There is no central repository for working documents (there are a series of Google docs, owned by a variety of people; BAI has some documents but not everything); this significantly affects institutional memory and the success of strategic initiatives
	• The website, which houses some documents, is a work in progress and is not complete
	
	International role:
	• As mentioned earlier, SRA is seen as being a US-centric organization; interviewees would like a more intentional international strategy and focus
	• Although the Annual Meeting in the United States is SRA's main conference, there is a push to re-envision World Congress making it the larger unifying event
	• Whereas SRA has attempted to rotate leadership between a US and a European president, interviewees would like to see more diverse representation from other parts of the world

Oversight, Accountability, and Financial Stewardship

The Council is responsible for ensuring that the organization is appropriately stewarding the resources entrusted to it and following all legal and ethical standards.

The Council has a fundamental legal responsibility to provide oversight and accountability for the organization. Generally referred to as a Council's "fiduciary" responsibility, the Council must ensure that the organization is appropriately stewarding the resources entrusted to it and following all legal and ethical standards.

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SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
• State law requires at least one annual Council meeting: SRA currently meets in person twice a year (pre-COVID-19) and engages in quarterly calls • SRA is financially secure and can invest in initiatives as it sees fit • SRA is fiscally responsible; finances and coordination between the treasurer and BAI are executed consistently and to a high quality • The journal, *Risk Analysis*, is a strategic asset; financially, the recent contract positions SRA well	• General oversight is affected by the lack of institutional memory and the turnover within volunteer positions • Lack of objectives, orientation materials, and clarity around new member roles make it difficult to ensure accountability • Much of the accountability for day-to-day operation of the organization falls to BAI; Outside of the EC meetings there is no way to ensure that items do not fall between the cracks

The Impact: Strategic Vision and Organizational Performance

Council–Secretariat Partnership

The partnership between the Council and the Secretariat is critically important to the success of the organization. A strong and healthy partnership provides flexible and resilient leadership that contributes positively to SRA's overall impact. A weak or dysfunctional partnership impedes the effectiveness of both the Council and the Secretariat and puts SRA at risk in numerous ways.

As we learned through our interview process, there are several concerns with the current management relationship. The work performed by the Secretariat is inconsistent. As one interviewee said, "When they are on, they are on. And when they aren't, it's dead silence." Interviewees agree that the work produced tends to be of high quality but that it is almost never timely.

Council–Secretariat Relationship Excels	Council–Secretariat Relationship Has Room to Grow
• There is a newly revised detailed statement of work that outlines the responsibilities (work tasks) of the Secretariat • Weekly EC/Secretariat meetings are effective • BAI has long-standing institutional memory	• Most interviewees (including members of the Secretariat themselves) cannot clearly articulate what does and does not fall under the Secretariat's role; this leads to varying expectations of what job they are supposed to be doing • There are varying understandings of the specific duties assigned to the Secretariat (the statement of work is new and does

• BAI is very good at providing operational/policy guidance based on bylaws and past precedence • BAI is seen as fiscally informed and provides sound financial counsel • BAI plays a central role in planning and executing the Annual Meeting and was complimented by most interviewees on their ability to pivot during COVID-19 • In years when SRA has experienced less-engaged presidents, BAI has stepped up to ensure SRA continued to function	not appear to have been shared widely); additionally, the scope of work is not reviewed annually • There is no working agreement for how the specific tasks will be accomplished (i.e., timelines, quality, clarity around deliverables, FTEs, or other operating norms) • The Secretariat is unresponsive and exhibits poor staff/time management; they are seen as falling short specifically in the areas of Specialty Group management and member engagement • The Secretariat takes on more tasks than those for which they are contracted, which further contributes to the impression of being unprofessional or unresponsive

When examining a shift away from the current model, the SRA Council must determine if they believe they would be better served by changing management models and employing a more fully dedicated staff or if they can build upon the findings in this assessment to create efficiencies and improve the relationship with BAI.

SRA's partnership currently consists of an outsourced association management company (AMC) model. There are of course other partnership models for running the Society, and they all have their benefits and risks:

1a The Association Management Company (AMC) model: SRA's current model, a shared resource approach with no direct employees
1b The Outsourced Management model: a hybrid model where the organization has a mixture of both direct employees and support from external vendors and contractors
1c The Stand-Alone model supports nearly all direct employees, with very few contractors/vendors.

Benefits of the AMC Model	Risks of the AMC Model
• Lowest risk model (liability is absorbed by the AMC) • Often the cheapest model as there is shared resource allocation (economies of scale)	• Higher likelihood of trust issues • Conflict of interest of staff (they are pulled in multiple directions as SRA is not their only client)

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• Assess to a larger variety of professional staff • Ability to flex staffing needs during busy times	• Less control of staff (staff oversight and decision-making belong to the AMC and not to SRA)
Benefits of the Outsourced Management Model	**Risks of the Outsourced Management Model**
• There is a single dedicated individual (CEO/Executive Director) that is managing the operations of the Society on behalf of the Council • Hired staff can advocate for the best interests of the organization when dealing with vendors	• Lower risk model than a Stand-Alone, but there is some liability as the Society is now an employer • There can be disconnects between staff and hired contractors • Education and training must be provided for the hired staff • Employer/employee issues may be present
Benefits of the Stand-Alone Model	**Risks of the Stand-Alone Model**
• Staff work together to fulfill the goals of the organization • Staff reports directly to the Council through the Executive Director • Staff is aligned and working in unison as one cohesive team	• Highest risk model (retaining staff and liability)

To explore the feasibility of alternative management models, one would first start with a full financial analysis, which includes an understanding of the total fees paid along with the FTEs allocated to those fees. An FTE, or Full-Time Equivalent, generally equates to 2,080 hours minus vacation time and holidays. The challenge in doing this sort of financial assessment is that BAI does not have a set number of FTE's assigned to SRA's work, nor do they track time. We know the approved contract for 2022 is $262,654. Additionally, SRA is paying Big Voice $115,000 for communications support. If we were to assume these are the "people costs" of running SRA, that total would be $377,654. SRA's approved revenue/budget for 2022 is $1,061,373, making these costs 35 percent of the overall budget.

One of the best measures for understanding if the fees currently paid are in line with industry benchmarks is to compare the management fees with the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) *Operating Ratio Report*, 16th Edition, which provides a benchmark of expenses as a percentage of revenue. SRA's current cost of 35 percent is in line with the ASAE-reported operating ratio of 25–44 percent for 501(c)(3) international membership organizations with $1 million to $2 million in revenue.

The short financial answer is that the management fees SRA pays are in line with what other organizations of similar size spend on management. The question then comes down to the value

SRA feels it is receiving for these fees. One of the biggest benefits to remaining with BAI is the organization's long history in the scientific community as well as the tenure of the staff. Should SRA choose to leave BAI, there is a significant risk of a loss in institutional memory and knowledge.

Culture and Dynamics

The culture has a significant influence on the way SRA carries out its work and shapes its performance.

How the Council members and other volunteer leaders communicate with each other, work as a team, and make decisions all define the culture of the organization. The nature of that culture has a significant influence on the way the governance structure works and shapes SRA's performance.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow
• SRA has many very active and engaged volunteers throughout the Society	• As in many volunteer lead organizations, there is a perception that 20% do 80% of the work • Volunteer leaders cite frustration with their lack of understanding around role expectations, a lack of guidance on where to access to resources, or to what supports they have access • Volunteer leaders would like SRA to develop a culture that rewards service, and not just tenured experience; suggestions around incentivizing volunteers (i.e., discounted conference rate for conference volunteers) and providing more resources were widespread • Interviewees cite cliquishness (the assignment of volunteer leadership roles based on personal connectivity or popularity) as opposed to skill or interest in the position

Advancing the Profession

SRA's 2018 Strategic Plan lists three goals:

1. Enhance Risk Science and the profession
2. Influence and strengthen impact globally

3. Expand the organizational capacity and efficiency of SRA, in part by increasing memberships, member engagement, and member involvement

SRA's stated plan for advancing the profession are as follows:
- Develop the profession's competence, capability, and range of skills
- Promote recognition of these qualities
- Consolidate the profession's central role to the success of the individuals, organizations, and society in tackling risk problems
- Promote public perceptions of risk analysis as a science and profession.

Improved SRA member engagement can help advance the profession as a whole. Increasing the involvement and numbers of students and early career professionals, as well as increasing member retention and numbers of international members, can all help advance the field. Member engagement thrives on frequent and open communication, opportunities specifically tailored to students and early career members, and easy-to-understand member benefits.

SRA Excels	SRA Has Room to Grow

• There is significant enthusiasm for the strategic role SRA can play in promoting the profession of risk analysis and helping risk professionals share their expertise as it relates to pressing world issues	• Interviewees believe there are missed strategic opportunities to
	  o Tie the work of Specialty Groups to the strategic plan
	  o Track and enhance member engagement
	  o Engage US-based Regions in professional advocacy and sharing of risk practices
	  o Engage International Regions in sharing risk practices
	  o Recruit and engage graduate students (I.e., more involvement in presenting research, mentoring program at the Annual Meeting)

Benchmark Analysis

In addition to conducting internal interviews with members of SRA, we also spoke to six scientific associations to establish a benchmark comparison of successful governance practices. The purpose behind these conversations was to probe beyond the structures and bylaws available on these organization's websites and to better understand which aspects work well or do not work well from their insider perspective. These were the organizations that we interviewed (in no particular order):

- The American Epilepsy Society (AES)
- The Decision Analysis Society (DAS)/INFORMS
- The International Society for the Advancement of Cytometry (ISAC)
- The Society for Judgment and Decision Making (JDM)
- The American Public Health Association (APHA)
- The European Safety and Reliability Association (ESRA)

In addition, we attempted to contact but were unable to schedule interviews with two additional organizations:

- The Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)
- The Society of Toxicology (SOT)

Each of the organizations we interviewed had key similarities and differences with SRA, outlined in the matrix below. Per the request of the participating organizations, the responses are not identified by the name of the organization.

	Size of Organization (Membership and Budget Ballpark)	Administrative Structure	International Membership	Length of Volunteer Leadership Terms	Regionally or Topically Organized Subgroups	Nominating/ Election Process
Org A	2,000 members Annual budget between $125k and $250k (depending on the year)	100% volunteer led	Yes	1-year president's term (3-year total); 3-year board member term; Indefinite treasurer's term (has been consistent role since 2002)	None	Open call for nominations, public elections for all members
Org B	600 members Has only a small annual budget that is handled independent of	Part of a parent structure of similar associations and receives administrative	Yes	2-year president's term (6-year total); 3-year terms for secretary,	None	Open call for nominations, public elections for all members

	its parent structure (amount of which was not disclosed)	support from that structure; otherwise, 100% volunteer		treasurer, and Council members		
Org C	23,000 members Annual budget of $16 million	Operates with a professional staff of about 70 members; many staff roles are to serve as liaisons and support for the many topical groups	No, US based	1-year president's term (3-year total); 3-year term for other officers; between 2–4-year terms for board members/other governing body; 3-year terms within standing committees	Topically organized subgroups, section model: • Each has its own officers and internal elections, overseen by the org. • High-level responsibilities set across the organization • Effort toward uniformity of sections • Regionally organized subgroups, affiliate model: • Legally separate entities • Hold MOUs with the organization and pay dues	Vote for officers is conducted within a 300-member governing group that is representative of the org, including regional groups, topical groups, and other areas
Org D	Organizational membership, 18 universities Annual budget $11k	100% volunteer driven	Yes	2-year officer's terms, including president, with possibility for one renewal (2- or 4-year total); no formal succession plan between vice president and president	None	Open call for nominations, vetted by general secretary and voted on by an assembly consisting of one representative from each member organization
Org E	1,200 members Annual budget of $2 million	Operates with a professional staff of 5 employees Formerly had administrative	Yes, but with a strong US focus Sometimes struggle	2-year President's term (6-year total); 2-year terms for other officers	None	Nominations committee or petition with signatures to run for leadership position, public

		functions outsource to an association management company	getting international participation	and members of Council		elections for all members
Org F	4,200 members Annual budget of $9 million	Operated by a staff of around 20 employees	No, US based	1-year terms for president (4-year total with two years as president elect); 3-year terms for board members	None	Nominating process is written as policy with pre-requisites for positions; elections operate on an uncontested slate put forward by current leadership and voted for approval by members

The organizations fell across several spectrums including size, scope of member activities, the presence of subgroups (either by topic, or by region), the structure for administrative support, and international activity. Larger organizations tended to be operated by professional staff groups and offered more activities to their membership on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Smaller organizations tended to be operated based on 100 percent volunteer leadership and focused nearly solely on delivering their annual conference.

In terms of budget size, SRA is almost evenly positioned between the large- and small-size organizations. In terms of organizational activities, SRA's resources are split in a way that simultaneously prioritizes the execution of the annual meeting, while also carrying a large number of Specialty Groups as well as Regional Groups. The result is that the organization is spread thin. SRA is reaching for a higher level of activity and is doing so with less administrative and financial resources than comparable benchmark organizations.

Across the organizations several elements of effective and ineffective governance emerged.

Effective Practices within Benchmark Organizations	Ineffective Practices within Benchmark Organizations
• Having 2-year or longer terms for the president and other officers. Ensuring that these terms turn over at different times to prevent total loss of knowledge • Ensuring that each committee has a clear and valid charge and something that requires active work. Building all	• Having a one-year presidents' term (unless supported by strong professional staff) • Having too many committees or specialty groups that do not serve a clearly articulated objective for the organization • Allowing for too much concentration of key functions, such as financials or

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committees to have a recurring renewal process to evaluate if their work is still relevant. Using temporary groups (taskforces) as a substitute whenever possible

- Ensuring that the central governing body (council/board) is representative of the organization's membership
- Prioritizing transparency, openness, and inclusion in governance processes. This fosters member engagement
- Conducting voting for elections online over a 48-hour window that coincides with the annual meeting to maximize participation and engagement
- For associations with many specialty or regional groups, having sufficient internal resources (staff capacity) to support them adequately
- For smaller associations, keeping the focus of the organization on executing the annual conference
- For associations with highly specific needs around Board composition, using uncontested elections for officer positions to ensure qualified candidates and streamline representation needs

nominations, onto a small group of volunteers
- Having fragmented digital communication across multiple platforms, sharing information and documents by emails, which get lost

Recommendations

As a result of the complete governance analysis, including the document review, internal interviews, and benchmark organization interviews, we identified several recommendations that we believe will create a stronger, more sustainable SRA. Many of these recommendations cut across the specific and interrelated aspects of governance we considered in our analysis and are labeled based on the connection to the area(s) of governance they serve.

Recommendations Suited for Immediate Implementation

These are recommendations that we believe SRA can implement with a minimal amount of effort. Quickly executing on these actions as will create quick wins and help build momentum around the governance updates.

1a Update/ensure all Standing Committees have charters *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

1b Develop and distribute member orientation materials to include the following:
   - An organizational chart that articulates the connections between Council, EC, and Standing Committees. Ensure that it is updated with position-turnover and relevant contact information *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*
   - A "Who to Contact for What" cheat sheet *(Committees, Specialty Groups and Regions)*
   - Council Resource Guide (videos and written materials) that capture roles and responsibilities, Council Member "Facebook" (biographical information about each member and a photo), frequently asked questions, etc. *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

1c Conduct an annual Council member orientation/re-orientation training *(Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders)*

1d Commit to using Naylor as a repository for all organization documents, or find an alternative service in which all documents can be stored; the solution must be a comprehensive document storage system that is co-owned and operated by SRA volunteer leadership and administrative support *(Strategy and Planning)*

Recommendations Requiring Medium Effort and Planning

These are recommendations which we believe will require at least some degree of advanced planning before they can be executed. They include some central elements that will strengthen the organization's structure and effectiveness.

2a Create a Council Matrix—an inventory of the perspectives, skill sets, and leadership characteristics that are needed, and where there are—or will be—gaps, based on the current composition *(Recruitment and Composition)*

2b Design a broader nominating and selection process that brings more diverse candidates to the table *(Recruitment and Composition)*

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Better process Brighter results

2c Evaluate the current Standing Committees to ensure they are both active and provide value to SRA's membership; we believe seventeen Standing Committees is too many *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

2d Develop committee specific standard operating procedures for Standing Committees *(Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders; Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

2e Remove the requirement that all committees be chaired by Council members. Council members should instead attend and participate in committee meetings in a liaison capacity. Establish a process for committee chairs to be selected from existing members of the committee and serve a limited term. *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions; Culture and Dynamics)*

2f Develop standard operating procedures for Specialty Groups, which includes a high-level officer structure, voting system, and recurring period to evaluate the group's renewal *(Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders; Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

2g Update the bylaws to
- o Require officers to have been Council members *(Recruitment and Composition)*
- o Create Council seats for International Regions that meet certain engagement criteria; allowing Regions to self-select their representatives *(Recruitment and Composition, Strategy and Planning)*
- o Create a Council seat for young or early career professional *(Recruitment and Composition, Advancing the Profession)*
- o Extend the term of the president to two years *(Roles and Responsibilities of Council)*
- o Eliminate the role of the President-Elect as the organizer of the Annual Meeting *(Roles and Responsibilities of Council)*
- o Add/Remove Standing Committees as needed *(Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*
- o Create a Governance Committee responsible for the management and evaluation of SRA's governance structures *(Assessing Council Performance; Roles and Responsibilities of Council; Oversight, Accountability, and Financial Stewardship; Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions)*

2h Expand the work Big Voice began to include leadership guides and trainings for all Specialty Group and US-Region leaders. Ensure that this training is owned under the responsibilities of either BAI or Big Voice rather than being dependent on the volunteer leadership *(Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders)*

Recommendations Requiring Significant Effort toward Implementation

These are the recommendations that will have the biggest impact toward SRA's governance. As a result, they are also the actions that will be major projects to execute.

3a Update the Strategic Plan for 2023 and beyond; utilize a process that allows for member feedback; and create specific implementation strategies that align the plan to the work of both Committees and Specialty Groups *(Strategy and Planning; Advancing the Profession)*

3b Build time into the Council meeting schedule for an annual "retreat" to allow for generative discussion around strategic priorities/complicated issues (as opposed to focusing on regular Council work) *(Orientation and Education of Council and Volunteer Leaders; Strategy and Planning)*

3c Create and execute a member engagement strategy that focuses on member retention and engagement, as well as tracking and rewarding Specialty Groups and Regions for their member engagement *(Strategy and Planning, Advancing the Profession)*

3d Develop incentives for volunteer service through items such as a discounted conference rate for active volunteers or building upon the Outstanding Service Award *(Culture and Dynamics, Advancing the Profession)*

3e Develop two different affiliation agreements, one for US-based Regions (treating them like Affiliated Chapters) and one for International Regions (treating them like Affiliated Partnerships) that explicitly defines financial support, the flow of information, and decision-making rights. (*Composition and Recruitment; Committees, Specialty Groups, and Regions; Strategy and Planning*)

3f SRA might consider rethinking its entire Council structure. Many societies, to allow for more inclusivity, have a larger Advisory Board/Council that consists of representation from Regions, Specialty Groups, and Standing Committees. Then, the Executive Council would consist of no more than 7–9 individuals including the officers. The Executive Council would meet more regularly, and the Advisory Council would meet 3–4 times per year.

3g With regard to BAI:
- Review the current scope of the BAI contract with an eye to clearly defined FTEs and deliverables
- Request that BAI provides specific points of contact to address all SRA needs and institute expectations around a reasonable response time
- Mutually agree to an evaluation process to regularly review BAI's work (we suggest monthly check-ins with a more formal quarterly review)
- If BAI is not able to provide the desired deliverables within the quality and timeframes specified, we suggest conducting a financial assessment to evaluate transitioning to an outsourced management model

Appendix A: Interviewee List

As a part of our analysis and report, we conducted 29 one-on-one interviews with members of SRA volunteer leadership, including current and past officers, members of Council, regional group leaders, and contracted support. These interviews were conducted with the following individuals (listed in no particular order):

George Gray	Ragnar Lofstedt	Katherine McComas
Ann Bostrom	Pia-Johanna Schweizer	Elizabeth (Betty) Anderson
James Lambert	Akihiro Tokai	Natalie Judd
Pamela Williams	Brett Burk	Frederic Bouder
Ortwin Renn	Jill Drupa	Henry Willis
Robyn Wilson	Seth Guikema	Rui Gaspar
Jacqueline MacDonald Gibson	Shital Thekdi	Roshanak Nateghi
Terje Aven	Jacqueline Patterson	Khara Grieger
Benjamin Trump	Richard Reiss	Mariana Cain

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