

# **NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS**

## **Self-Assessment / Introspective Task Force**

Report to the January 2013 NSPE Board of Directors Meeting

Final Report

December 21, 2012

The following report details the work done by the Self-Assessment / Introspective (SA/I) Task Force. The task force was created by NSPE President Dan Wittliff and the NSPE Board of Directors at the 2012 NSPE Annual Conference. The SA/I Task Force is one of six Task Forces to study the NSPE organization in accordance with the Race for Relevance.

Members of the SA/I Task Force are:

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#### **PURPOSE OF THE SELF ASSESSMENT / INTROSPECTIVE (SA/I) TASK FORCE**

1. *Assess relevancy of 'licensure' or the 'Professional' engineer in today's economic world, both internal to the industry and external (the public). Is the "Professional" engineer antiquated, misunderstood, or irrelevant? Determine public perception and understanding of licensure. Determine threats and opportunities related to licensure. Identify and recommend outcomes.*
2. *Relative to licensure and the Professional engineer, determine the areas where NSPE should be exerting its influence and the means and methods to achieve desired outcomes. What are we doing now that is not working? What other things can we be doing to create better outcomes with respect to attracting new members and retaining current members?*
3. *What changes can be made to the Annual Meeting to improve it? Include discussion of making it more attractive to the general membership.*

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SA/I TASK FORCE**

1. All NSPE members should be encouraged to communicate the professional and ethical differences that licensed engineers bring to our profession. NSPE, along with State societies, should support our member's efforts in every way.
2. NSPE needs to promote increasing the number of licensed engineers, making it a given expectation that all engineers should become licensed.
3. NSPE should consider actions and programs within the prescribed categories of its mission statement (i.e. education, licensure advocacy, leadership training, multi-disciplinary networking, and outreach) that enhance the image of our members and/or their ability to ethically and professionally practice engineering.
4. NSPE must effectively work in partnership with the State Societies.
5. NSPE should aggressively support state licensure laws to defend against erosion of licensure on the state level. Methods should be found through which NSPE can help with tracking of legislative actions that threaten the license within each state. NSPE should support each State society in its efforts to protect their state licenses.
6. NSPE should continue to work with other organizations that promote the PE and EI and consider ways in which to increasingly cooperate with these organizations to accomplish mutually beneficial objectives.

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7. The culture of NSPE should continually emphasize that the State Societies, Chapters, Individual Members, Practice Divisions, Regions, Committees, Staff, and Task Forces that make up our organization need to work together to create synergy.
8. NSPE should restructure national meetings to foster in-person debates for discussions of what is important to our society. The NSPE Annual Meeting should continue to contain meetings of the House of Delegates, Board of Directors, and Executive Committee, along with committee meetings. However, issues of governance that do not require face-to-face discussions should be communicated by an alternate method, such as email.
9. NSPE must be a resource to its members and its state societies in the advocacy of the PE license and the protection of the PE license.
10. To address the trend of appointing non-licensed engineers in traditional licensed engineer held positions, NSPE should work to encourage engineers to develop management and administration skills to keep up with the changing demands of business. Work to improve curriculum in college engineering programs and develop continuing education in these areas so engineers will learn new skills to compete for those positions.
11. NSPE should be a voice to educate clients and the public about the differences of responsibilities and consequences between certification and license. In a growing number of instances, PE's are losing their ability to compete for services and are at times being blocked from consideration. Where State societies face this issue, NSPE can be a resource and communicate pertinent information.
12. NSPE should provide assistance for legislative involvement, either directly with funds or with providing information that relates to legislative issues. NSPE should assist in tracking legislation that affects PE licenses in all states. Where states are involved directly in legislative affairs, either with paid staff or society members, NSPE should provide support as needed. In states that do not have paid staff or members directly involved in legislative affairs, NSPE should identify critical issues and take more aggressive actions where there is collective concern, realizing that legislation in one state can affect other states.
13. NSPE must communicate effectively with State societies. NSPE must be helpful to State societies that are faced with issues that stretch their resources or abilities. NSPE must become the go-to place where State societies and individual members find useful information and advice.
14. NSPE should continue to be the voice of the PE on national issues such as eliminating the industrial exemption and speaking in support of improvements to university engineering curriculum.

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15. The following recommendations are made for the NSPE Annual Meeting. They are based on opinions of the SA/I Task Force and from comments heard at recent NSPE Annual Meetings. We suggest that a member survey be developed to analyze if there is resonance with the Task Force's ideas before moving ahead.
- a. Restructure the Annual Meeting to incorporate participation of the general membership. A question should be included on the above mentioned member survey inquiring about participation at differing price levels. This information would be helpful in determining the amount of program that can be included in the Annual Meeting.
  - b. Create an Annual Meeting Committee to plan the upcoming NSPE national meetings. Members of the committee should include a representative from each of the following: the NSPE Board of Directors, the region where the meeting is being held, the state where the meeting is being held, and key NSPE staff. NSPE's meeting planner should be a co-chair of this committee. The other co-chair should be a volunteer/member. It is preferable that the committee stay small in number, say five to seven persons, allowing additional persons to be involved in specific tasks or subcommittees if they are deemed necessary. Additional persons for tasks or subcommittees could include local Chapter members, representatives from adjacent states, or members at large from any location. From year to year, when the Annual Meeting committee is formed, it would be beneficial to include some members from the previous Annual Meeting committee to be members of the planning committee, but remembering to keep the committee small and manageable. It is understood that the planning committee will be looking a minimum of two years ahead in the planning of meetings.
  - c. There should be program events that strive to attract each of the targeted attendees, including all ages of our general membership, State and Chapter leaders, NSPE Board members and Delegates, NSPE committee members, invited guests, sponsors, families, and prospective members.
  - d. Provide multiple education/information tracks covering several disciplines that would interest attendees. Many of the sessions could be presented by society members, when possible.
  - e. Networking and social events can take place around meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Happy hours, ice-breakers, receptions, fund raising, introductions, celebrations, meet-and-greet are all possible venues.
  - f. Include an opening session with an invitation to all attending members, invited guests, sponsors, and prospective non-members, with a welcome message from the NSPE President and local dignitaries.
  - g. Include an evening banquet or event that closes the Annual Meeting.

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- h. Coordinate with the local State, Chapter, and Region to combine or supplement educational programs or other events with their planned programs. Include fundraising activities if desired. The intent is to attract local, state and regional members to the Annual Meeting.
- i. Training sessions should continue to be offered to new and prospective State and Chapter leaders. We should investigate including our society members to lead some of the sessions.
- j. A committee within NSPE should be established to plan training needs for our leaders.
- k. During the Annual Meeting it is important that we set aside times for the Delegates and others to discuss current and future society business, similar to the brainstorming sessions that have occurred near the close of several past Annual Meetings. Sessions should be interactive, with more structured and unstructured discussion opportunities about the many challenges we face.
- l. There should be an informal briefing meeting for Delegates during which time the House of Delegates Meeting agenda items are explained, with some pro's and con's included. This would facilitate a more prepared Delegate for the actual meeting. Governance issues and other items that only need approval by Delegates should be done by alternate communication methods, possibly at a time other than during the Annual Meeting. The length of time set aside for the House of Delegates meeting should be dependent upon the number of agenda items, with time needed to present arguments included.
- m. Schedule presentations by our invited guests during different times at the Annual Meeting, instead of during the Delegates Meeting. A time set aside during a lunch presentation or during a social function might be well received. All guests do not need to speak during the same function. Publicize when they will be introduced and when they are addressing our society. This would allow more attendees to hear and know of their presence. Formal recognition of invited guests should be done at various events. A suggestion is to match an NSPE member with each guest to accompany them and make introductions during the Annual Meeting.
- n. Expand the sponsor display area to include a variety of products and services of interest to the general membership. A greater number of vendors make's for an interesting and educational experience. Many attendees are drawn to conferences and meetings because of the vendors and products being displayed. A list of sponsors and vendors should be displayed prominently and publicized prior to the meeting in promotional material. Members should be encouraged to interact with the vendors.

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- o. Consider family participation at the Annual Meeting when selecting the location and venue, including factors such as potential activities, cost, travel ease, points of interest at the location, and time of the year. Activities for children should be investigated. Specific events during the Annual Meeting should continue to be open to spouses and guests, like a closing banquet, luncheon, and evening receptions. Including families at our Annual Meetings will encourage younger members to attend.
- p. Encourage attendance by prospective members by offering interesting programs and inviting them into society membership at every event. Consider offering special incentives to join, like reduced first year membership or company group membership.
- q. Consider combining Regional and/or State meetings or annual meetings of other organizations with the NSPE Annual Meeting with the goal of having increased participation at the meetings.
- r. Our Task Force suggests that NSPE Regions should propose meeting locations within their region. Detailed proposals from the NSPE Regions could be presented to the Delegates and put to a vote at the House of Delegates meeting. A list of criteria should be developed for the Annual Meeting location. Items such as accessibility, travel costs, venue facilities, and how the location meets the Task Force recommendations should be parts of the criteria.
- s. Enact specific changes for the 2013 NSPE Annual Meeting in Minneapolis. Begin the Meeting with an opening/welcome session, including a message from the NSPE President and a local dignitary. Contact local media outlets for event coverage. Coordinate with Minnesota State members to investigate scheduling events or training sessions that could attract state and local chapter members to participate. Depending on the available space at the meeting location, it might be necessary to add additional meeting space at the hotel or at a nearby location. It is preferred that events allow local members to mix with attendees from around the nation. Coordinate with NSPE staff to facilitate changes to the Annual Meeting. Members of the SA/I Task Force can serve on the planning group for the Minneapolis meeting.
- t. For the 2014 and 2015 Annual Meetings, form an Annual Meeting Planning Committee to establish sites and venues for these upcoming meetings. Establish how many days the meeting will span and what activities will be included. Develop a preliminary schedule. This committee should be formed immediately along the terms mentioned in our recommendations.

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#### **Next Steps for the SA/I Task Force**

Members of the Task Force have offered many ideas that can strength the ties within our society and hopefully improve its health. We also express our interest to continue the efforts to implement our recommendations. We are glad to offer our assistance with any of the items. Specifically, we suggest that some of the SA/I Task Force members serve on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee for the upcoming Minneapolis meeting. If changes are to be made at that meeting it is imperative a planning group is formed quickly and work is started immediately. Members of the SA/I Task Force are ready and willing to continue our work in any way, if it is the Board's favor.

Other tasks that can be undertaken by the SA/I Task Force include:

1. Prioritizing the recommendations with suggestions for implementation.
2. Develop associated estimates of cost and staff time needed for each recommendation.
3. Work with NSPE staff to implement the recommendations.

### **Additional Task Force Discussion and Analysis Summary**

#### **1. PE License Relevancy**

The Self-Assessment/Introspective Task Force began our charge by discussing the relevancy of the PE license. It is no surprise that all of the Task Force members believed the PE license remains relevant. Negative reports about engineers or failures certainly affect perceptions about engineers, but lack of understanding about engineers' roles could affect perceptions even more. Threats to the PE license many times result from a lack of understanding of what sets us apart from non-licensed engineers. All society members need to communicate the professional and ethical differences that we as PEs bring to our nation. We abide by the oath of protecting the public's health, safety, and welfare. NSPE, along with State societies, should support our members in every way.

#### **2. NSPE Influence**

Many discussion points from our Task Force included topics that have been on members' minds for some time. Some have been discussed, planned, and even put into words in the past. The common thread that connects all of our discussions is how and what the various levels of our organization (NSPE, State societies, Regions, Chapters) communicate internally to each other and externally to others.

Some of our task force members began by wanting to review the NSPE vision and mission statements. Although this might be a good starting point, we recognized there was considerable study done on these statements a couple of years ago. It is not the desire of our task force to revisit these statements. However, we note there seems to still be many opinions about what should be in the statements, the biggest issue being whether NSPE should be representing all engineers or just licensed engineers (e.g. "big tent"/"smaller tent"). Based on advice from 'The Race for Relevance' (RFR), organizations might be better served by focusing on the smaller population, in this case the 'licensed engineer' and those engineers interested in becoming licensed. Resources available within an organization can probably be spent more effectively serving a smaller group. But even with that being said, there is still a message that should be communicated to the larger engineering community: NSPE at other levels of our organization needs to promote increasing the number of licensed engineers, making it a given expectation that all engineers should become licensed.

Consequently, our vision should remain: "NSPE is the recognized voice and advocate of licensed Professional Engineers."

And our mission continues to be: "NSPE, in partnership with the State Societies, is the organization of licensed Professional Engineers (PEs) and Engineer Interns (EIs). Through education, licensure advocacy, leadership training, multi-disciplinary networking, and



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outreach, NSPE enhances the image of its members and their ability to ethically and professionally practice engineering.”

One need not look any further than these two statements to identify NSPE’s purpose, that being the recognized voice and advocate of licensed professional engineers. And what does NSPE accomplish by doing this? It enhances the image of its members and their ability to ethically and professionally practice engineering. As we consider actions and programs for NSPE, we can start by looking at our mission statement within the prescribed categories, i.e. education, licensure advocacy, leadership training, multi-disciplinary networking, and outreach. We should then test whether or not the proposed actions enhance the image of our members and/or their ability to ethically and professionally practice engineering. If the proposed action does not help, or possibly even hurts the licensed engineer, then we should not attempt it. The mission statement contains broad categories, but it does provide a starting point from which NSPE’s focus can emanate.

There are a couple of other key phrases in our mission, such as “NSPE is to work in partnership with the State Societies”, and the statement that we are “the organization” of licensed PE’s and EI’s. These are important distinctions because they tell us how we are to act and conduct business. Our members recognize the partnership between NSPE and the State societies. Since licensure is a state issue, the partnership should be deferential with regard to each State society. NSPE should aggressively support state licensure laws, defend against erosion of licensure on the state level, help with tracking of legislative actions that threaten the license within each state, and support each State society in its efforts to protect state licenses. The Task Force members unanimously agree that one of the most pressing issues we face in each of our states is the threat against our licenses. It could be that one of the best ways to enhance the image of the PE is to stop the erosion of our licenses.

One interesting side note about the NSPE mission statement is that it does not bind States to work in partnership with NSPE when the state initiates actions, unless of course the individual State has a statement that complements NSPE’s statement. This gives the State societies flexibility and freedom to act in the best interest of the members within their state and to address issues directly affecting them. The current National-State agreements that most state societies and NSPE have signed form a basis for partnerships.

The second point from the statement is that NSPE and the State societies consider themselves a unique organization of licensed PE’s and EI’s. Although we are the only organization that uses the term ‘Professional Engineers’ in our name, there are other organizations that are also very interested in licensure and developing EI’s. NSPE should continue to recognize these groups and consider ways to cooperate with other societies to accomplish our objectives. NSPE currently has MOU’s with many organizations and as such,

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these organizations have been recognized. The MOU's are being evaluated by the Strategic Partnership Task Force.

The SA/I Task Force is an NSPE task force looking at issues with sensitivity toward improvement of the National/State relationships. NSPE is a federation of State Societies. The State Societies are made up of Chapters, Individual Members, Practice Divisions, and Regions. We identify actions and behavior that can improve relationships and outcomes of the many parties that make up our society by thinking of ourselves as one united organization with common goals.

Communication between NSPE, State societies, and individual members has to add value to the partnerships. Information exchanged has to be perceived as adding value. It is important to have feedback from members. Surveys are the quickest source of feedback, but other means are also valuable. In-person debates are needed. Convening discussion groups or task forces can accomplish this. Additionally, NSPE should foster these debates by restructuring national meetings to allow for discussions of what is important to our society. Consequently, issues of governance, which the SA/I Task Force defines as elections, approval of by-laws changes, etc., should be communicated with an alternate method, such as email or another internet based media.

Our Task Force identified a few topics that are affecting members in several states. It is the thought of our Task Force that NSPE can not only be a voice for our members but also be a resource to State societies that face issues related to the PE license. NSPE can help with issues in States that do not have the resources to do so. Information regarding states that have previously faced specific issues needs to be consistently disseminated to all state societies. It is noted that NSPE's Legislative & Government Affairs (L&GA) Committee has been working on a "Grassroots Program" that addresses this concern. Many times an issue in one state affects us all, like the erosion of the engineering license. For example, NSPE could track all State legislative actions, advising those states that have the ability to affect legislation, and stepping in to help those states that do not have the ability to affect legislation. The scope of services is certainly limited by available resources, but the intent is to alert state societies to issues that have occurred in other states and that could affect them. The topics that this Task Force discussed follow.

- Appointment of non-licensed engineers in positions of public policy making and management of engineers.

This trend has been developing for the past several years. Traditionally, licensed engineers held such positions. The trend toward utilizing non-licensed engineers is most likely based on the need to have individuals with business, legal, or administration acumen. Moreover, this trend is a result of the consolidation of

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management positions and the emphasis to squeeze more and more out of shrinking resources. The perception is that professional engineers don't have the skill set that is needed to lead these efforts. We could look at this situation as losing part of the engineer's turf. However, in many instances, it may be that PEs have not kept up with the changing skill requirements that are required in order to be considered for these positions. To keep up with these changing demands, NSPE can work to encourage all PEs to develop management and administration skills. NSPE can also advocate to all state registration boards to accept continuing education programs related to the development of such skills as qualifying Professional Development Hours (PDHs). Working to improve the curriculum in college engineering programs is one way in which NSPE can help. It is noted that NSPE has supported increasing the requirements for eligibility for sitting for the PE exam to include a master's degree or an equivalent amount of professional development coursework and programs. ABET has been analyzing how to include more management and administration training in the engineering students' curriculum. However, universities are constantly moving toward requiring less and less course work in order to get a BS in engineering. NSPE is on top of this issue and needs to stay there.

- The changing environment of design, review, and approvals by non-licensed individuals.

There is increasing preference, and even requirements, for individuals with specific certifications to complete certain tasks. Although certifications provide a path for individuals to specialize in their skills, they also promote the perception that a person without a certification no longer has the skills to perform the work they have competently done for years. Some organizations have even discontinued requiring or allowing PE's to perform the work. Specialized certifications seem to be replacing the PE license. The issue we face is how to protect the PE license.

An underlying perception in the general and business public is that utilizing an individual with a certification will be less costly than using a licensed engineer. There is a need to educate clients and the public about the differences of responsibility and consequence between certification and license. NSPE has been actively addressing this issue and needs to continue to increasingly do so. Where State societies face this issue, NSPE can be a resource that communicates useful information to States.

- Legislative involvement.

States with larger membership numbers have paid staff that monitor legislation and at times, lobby within their state government. Others do not have the funds or personnel to follow affairs closely. There is interest from some on our Task Force that NSPE provide assistance for legislative involvement, either directly with funds or with providing information that relates to legislative issues. We recognize that available resources limit the amount of work that can be done to continually monitor affairs in all states. A balance would be to collect information from state paid staff in states that self-monitor and combine it with NSPE monitoring in the remaining states and make the information available to all states.

Where NSPE is aware of similar issues in other states, they could provide background and contact information. This is especially valuable where several states are affected by similar legislation, noting the example where erosion of the license in one state can lead to erosion of the license in other states. NSPE should track legislation that affects PE licenses in all states. As stated previously, information regarding states that have previously faced specific issues needs to be consistently disseminated to all state societies. And it was noted that NSPE's Legislative & Government Affairs (L&GA) Committee has been working on a "Grassroots Program" that addresses this concern. Where states are involved directly in legislative affairs, NSPE should provide support as needed. In states that do not have direct involvement, NSPE should identify critical issues and take more aggressive actions where there is collective concern, realizing that legislation in one state can affect other states.

The three areas described above are examples of ways in which NSPE can better work with State societies. The point is that NSPE should do what it can with its available resources to assist State societies that are faced with issues that stretch their resources or abilities.

NSPE has to be the "go-to place" where State societies and individual members find useful information and advice.

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Additionally, the Task Force believes that NSPE needs to continue to be the voice of the PE on national issues such as eliminating the industrial exemption and speaking in support of improvements to university engineering curriculum.

#### 3. Annual Meeting

It is the consensus of the Task Force to expand the Annual Meeting to include participation of the general membership. Invitations for past meetings have stated that all members are invited to attend, but other than the networking and camaraderie opportunities, there has not been much to attract or to engage the general membership. Recent meetings have mostly focused on governance, leadership training, and NSPE committee meetings (e.g., LQPC, L&GA and NSPE-PAC). These are important to our society, but only target a small portion of our membership. The Task Force recommends restructuring the Annual Meeting to involve and to engage the general membership. Our recommendations follow.

The Task Force recommends the appointment of an Annual Meeting Committee to plan these important meetings. Members of the Committee should include a representative from each of the following: the NSPE Board of Directors, the region where the meeting is being held, the state where the meeting is being held, and key NSPE staff. NSPE's meeting planner should be a co-chair of this committee. The other co-chair should be a volunteer/member. It is preferable that the committee stay small in number, say five to seven persons. Additional persons can be assigned to specific tasks or subcommittees if they are deemed necessary. Additional persons for tasks or subcommittees could include local Chapter members, representatives from adjacent states, or members at large from any location. From year to year, when the Annual Meeting committee is formed, it would be beneficial to include some members from the previous Annual Meeting committee to be members of the planning committee, but remembering to keep the committee small and manageable. It is understood that the planning committee will be looking a minimum of two years ahead in the planning of meetings.

The charge of the planning committee, with general guidance from the NSPE Board of Directors, is to be responsible for all aspects of the Annual Meeting. The overall format of each year's Annual Meeting will certainly evolve from year-to-year and there would be flexibility to customize parts of the meeting. A theme could be adopted for each meeting,

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reflecting the attributes of the meeting's location or to underscore a particular area of emphasis of our society.

The targeted attendees include our general membership as well as State and Chapter leaders, NSPE Board members, House of Delegates representatives, NSPE committee members, invited guests, sponsors, families, and prospective members. Because there are a wide variety of targeted attendees and numerous events during the Annual Meeting it is desirable to offer pricing options that allow per event and single-day registration. Specific suggestions for each attendee category follow.

**General Membership** – This category refers to members that would not be attending as Board members, House of Delegates representatives or Committee Members. The general member could be attending an Annual Meeting for one or several reasons. Some of the most likely reasons are continuing education, either for license requirements or for personal growth, leading or presenting an education session, networking, camaraderie, and vacation or travel interests. Our goal should be to include a variety of events, addressing multiple purposes when possible. Suggestions are to provide multiple education/information tracks covering several disciplines that would interest attendees. Many of the sessions could be presented by society members. Networking and social events can take place around meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner. Happy hours, ice-breakers, receptions, fund raising, introductions, celebrations, meet-and-greet are all possible venues.

An opening session to welcome all attending members, invited guests, sponsors, and prospective non-members with a welcome message from the NSPE President and local dignitaries would be a great start to the Annual Meeting, as would an evening banquet that concludes the Annual Meeting. The banquet could be held the evening before the last events, if desired, to avoid an additional night stay for participants' travel plans. NSPE should work to get media coverage of our Annual Meeting, including interviews with the NSPE officers as well as our Executive Director.

To involve and attract local members at the Annual Meeting there can be coordination with the local State, Chapter, and Region to combine or supplement their educational programs or other events. For example, a planned State or Regional education or leadership training event can instead be held during the Annual Meeting, or a local fundraising event, like the golf events organized by local chapters in the past, could be held during the Annual Meeting.

**State and Chapter Leaders** – The leadership training that has been provided at recent Annual Meetings is very valuable. Similar training sessions should continue to be offered to new and prospective State and Chapter leaders. We should always look to engage NSPE members as leaders of or presenters for these sessions. Our members include many individuals with ample experience and they could provide less generic perspectives.

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Leadership training should continue to be offered and encouraged for new leaders and those who desire a refresher course. A committee within NSPE should be established to plan training needs for our leaders.

NSPE Board members, NSPE committee members, and House of Delegates Representatives – Aside from the Board Meeting and the House of Delegates Assembly, there should be meetings/sessions to provide a focused briefing of important agenda items. This briefing meeting could be held during breakfast, where the agenda items are explained, with some pro's and con's included. This would further ensure that each Delegate is totally prepared for the actual House of Delegates Assembly. Again, governance issues and other items that only need approval by Delegates should be done with alternate communication methods, possibly at a time other than during the Annual Meeting. It is important that we set aside times at the Annual Meeting to discuss current and future society business, similar to the brainstorming sessions that have occurred near the close of past Annual Meetings. Sessions should be interactive, with unstructured discussion opportunities about the challenges and opportunities that we face.

Invited Guests – NSPE welcomes invited guests from throughout the engineering community and from around the world. The Task Force recommends that guests address our society at different times during our Annual Meeting and that the number of guest who address the House of Delegates Assembly be limited. Invited guests could provide presentations and remarks during luncheons or during the concluding banquet, for example. A “General Session” dedicated to providing certain guests the opportunity to address NSPE’s membership could also be included. It is recommended that an NSPE member be assigned to each guest to accompany them and make introductions during the Annual Meeting (if this is not already being done).

Sponsors – An expanded sponsor display area that includes a variety of products and services of interest to the general membership would be beneficial. A large number of vendors make’s for an interesting educational experience. Many attendees are drawn to conferences and meetings because of the vendors and products being displayed. A list of sponsors and vendors should be displayed prominently at the meeting and prior to the meeting in promotional materials. There should be incentives for meeting participants to interact with the vendors.

Families – The most important action for attracting family participation at the Annual Meeting is selecting the location and venue. There are many factors to consider including activities that are aligned with the Annual Meeting, cost and time to travel to and stay at the meeting site, travel ease (e.g., availability of direct flights from many cities etc.), points of interest at the location, and time of the year. Activities for children should be considered, especially activities that are fun for children while relating to engineering and what engineers do. Specific events during the Annual Meeting should continue to be open to

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spouses and guests, like a closing banquet, luncheon, and evening receptions. Including families at our Annual Meetings could encourage younger members to attend.

Prospective Members – Our Annual Meetings can be used to attract new members.. Publicity should be geared to this end and programming should be developed such that potential new members would consider joining NSPE.

Some other ideas to consider for the Annual Meeting:

Combine Regional and/or State meetings or annual meetings of other organizations with the Annual Meeting to create synergy, foster partnerships and build registration levels.

NSPE Regions should propose meeting locations within their region. A detailed proposal could be presented to the Delegates and put to a vote at the House of Delegates meeting. A list of criteria should be developed for the Annual Meeting location. Items such as travel costs, venue facilities, and how the location meets the Task Force recommendations should be parts of the criteria.

The Task Force recognizes that ample time is needed to plan an Annual Meeting. But we also feel that changes to the Annual Meeting should take place as soon as possible, starting with the meeting in Minneapolis in 2013. A plan that phases in the recommended changes can be adopted.

Minneapolis 2013 – Begin the Meeting with an opening/welcome session, include a message from a local dignitary. Contact local media outlets for event coverage. Coordinate with Minnesota State members to investigate scheduling events or training sessions that could attract state and local chapter members to participate. Depending on the available space at the meeting location, it might be necessary to add additional meeting space at the hotel or at a nearby location. It is preferred that events allow local members to mix with attendees from around the nation. Coordinate with NSPE staff to facilitate changes to the Annual Meeting. Members of the Task Force can serve on the planning group for the Minneapolis meeting.

2014 and 2015 – Form an Annual Meeting Planning Committee to establish sites and venues for the upcoming meetings. Establish how many days the meeting will span and what activities will be included. Develop a preliminary schedule. This committee should be formed immediately along the terms mentioned earlier in our recommendations.