

The Academy of Management
Statement of Strategic Direction
Adopted by the Board of Governors, April 2001

Mission and Objectives

The Academy of Management is a leading professional association of scholars dedicated to creating and disseminating knowledge about management and organizations. The Academy's central mission is to enhance the profession of management by advancing the scholarship of management and enriching the professional development of its members. The Academy's membership consists of scholars at colleges, universities, and research institutions, as well as practitioners with scholarly interests from business, government, and not-for-profit organizations.

The Academy is committed to shaping the future of management research and education. Management is defined broadly to encompass all processes, structures, and behaviors that are related to the work of organizations, as well as the dynamics of industries, economies, cultures, and other environmental forces that affect organizations and their employees.

This mission is guided by the following key values and objectives:

- Develop and communicate high-quality research, practice and teaching of management.
- Advocate and cultivate ethical and responsible behavior throughout all activities related to research, teaching, and practice.
- Provide a supportive and dynamic community for members from all institutional settings, societies, and cultures to share and learn from each other.
- Encourage and respect multiple perspectives from members throughout the world in the development and practice of management knowledge.
- Build cooperative relationships and networks with other associations and institutions committed to advancing the scholarship and practice of management

Strategic Themes

The following four themes are central in guiding decisions about specific activities and services that the Academy undertakes to advance its mission and objectives:

- **Member Needs and Services** – The Academy will focus its efforts and resources primarily on serving the needs of its members as related to research, teaching and practice. Academy members are diverse, and their needs for professional development, training, and expression change over time and differ by professional interests and career stages. Current and future needs of members for the Academy as a whole and for each Division and Interest Group should be ascertained frequently and used as the primary criterion for deciding what initiatives and activities to undertake.
- **Quality, Breadth, and Relevance of Scholarship** - The Academy seeks to advance excellence in scholarship, broadly defined to include research, teaching, and practice. Knowledge advancements in each of these domains are important, and we should not limit ourselves to one domain. We view research as central to informing both teaching and practice, while teaching and practice also inform research. We should always keep in mind that our collective and individual scholarship should remain relevant, responsible, and make a valuable contribution to society and its institutions. We need to find ways to build closer links between research and practice in considering issues of importance to practitioners and in improving the frequency and clarity of our communication with them. We should also link with other organizations and individuals who contribute importantly to management knowledge.
- **Growth and Diversity** - The Academy seeks growth in the development and enrichment of its members, not growth in membership or revenues for their own sake. While most Academy members are academics, we seek and encourage members from all walks of life who are interested in advancing the scholarship of management knowledge.
- **Global Perspective** - The Academy is a member of the global and pluralistic profession of management scholarship. Attention to global issues and concerns is encouraged among all members of the Academy. The Academy fosters alliances with other international and country/region-specific associations that advance a variety of approaches to management scholarship. We value the contributions and multiple perspectives of members from all countries and regions.

Organization and Governance

The work of the Academy is largely carried out by hundreds of member volunteers and leaders. We are a “bottom-up” organization, managed through a representative and elective process. The Academy’s Board of Governors, Council, and Division/Interest Group officers are elected for fixed terms by the membership. Most chairs of Academy, Board, and Division Committees are appointed for fixed terms of one to three years. This produces a continuous turnover and renewal in leadership throughout the Academy. An Executive

Director and staff at the Academy of Management headquarters act to support their work.

The Academy's leaders, officers, and committees must take on responsibility quickly, learning from the past, planning for the future, and giving voice to all of its members. These leaders at all levels of the Academy must continually strive to improve the Academy's services and activities. It is important that the leadership reflect the interests of the diverse membership.

We reaffirm the “Divisional” structure of the Academy. We recognize that the Divisions and Interest Groups are the real “home” for most members—the place where members volunteer and contribute their efforts. It is incumbent on the leadership of each Division and Interest Group to assume responsibility for satisfying their members’ needs by designing and sponsoring an excellent annual program and extending services throughout the year.

Core Services and Major Initiatives

Guided by the Academy’s mission, objectives, themes, and organization, we have identified seven major areas of service provided to members. Within each of these areas, we propose several new initiatives intended to improve the quality of these services.

Several concrete and hypothetical examples of possible action steps are given for each initiative. Many of these examples came from comments to earlier drafts of this statement by Divisions/Interest Groups, Academy Committees, and from several focus groups conducted with members at large. Several examples represent changes already underway in the Academy, while other examples are intended as a springboard for generating further ideas and innovations.

Within their respective domains, Academy divisions and committees are invited to develop specific action plans that are consistent with the Academy's overall strategic direction. We envision a three-year time frame over which to launch these initiatives. Their implementation will require wide participation and leadership from throughout the Academy.

1. **Annual Conference** - Each year we hold a major conference consisting of a variety of important activities, ranging from workshops to paper presentations and job placement interviews. It provides an occasion for members from around the world to come together to build and renew professional and social relationships. Partial proceedings of the conference are made available on CD. To improve the conference, we propose the following initiatives:
 - **Seek innovative ways to make the annual meeting a better venue for sharing and learning from high-quality research** (e.g., circulate

papers on the web beforehand; create more symposia; provide more opportunities for debate of both theoretical and applied issues; hold theme meetings across divisions, etc.)

- **Foster a climate that encourages interaction and seeks innovative ways to make the annual meeting more engaging** (e.g., design a conference within a conference; hold a second winter conference; provide more virtual spaces for members to interact; arrange special sessions/conference for doctoral students to share papers; hold orientation and “get acquainted” meetings for new members and attendees from around the world; provide additional incentives to Divisions and Interest Groups for innovation; share best practices across Divisions, etc.)
- **Seek innovative ways to make the annual meeting more developmental for members** (e.g., hold PDW sessions for mid-career professionals on up-dating methodologies and finding new research interests; organize more symposia and paper sessions on teaching and practice; create forums for “work in progress”, etc.)
- **Develop innovative ways for research presented at the annual meeting to make a greater impact on organizations and the larger society** (e.g., seek feedback from practitioners about issues in need of research; include more practitioners in Division programs; provide summary of practice implications from journals on website, etc.)
- **Continue to use opportunities at the annual meeting for recognizing the many members whose important contributions make the Academy successful** (e.g., recognize contributors and their many roles through web, posters/pictures, plaques, and select an educator of year from each division, etc.)
- **Continuously improve the operations of the annual meeting** (e.g., hold extensive debriefing of the annual conference with division and interest group program chairs; make the meeting more cost effective; conduct better briefing for incoming program chairs, etc.)

2. **Journals and Other Publications** - We publish three major journals of the highest quality, *Academy of Management Review*, *Academy of Management Journal*, and *Academy of Management Executive*. A fourth journal, the *Academy of Management Learning and Education Journal*, is anticipated to come on stream January 1, 2002. In addition, a quarterly Newsletter contains news, events, and activities of the Academy. Divisions and Interest Groups also produce newsletters. To improve the journals and other publications, we propose the following initiatives:

- **Create new forms of information dissemination and publication of management knowledge that meet member needs** (e.g., consider establishing Academy of Management Press; explore branding opportunities with publishers; assess need for more journals commensurate with growth in membership; establish task forces to prepare “white paper” series on issues in need of research, the relevance of our research to practice, and an evaluation of management trends and practices; explore possibility of establishing Division journals or "field journals" like ASA and APA have; create Division-published debate forums, etc.)
 - **Add services to the Journals** (e.g., establish advance publishing of future journal issues on the web; create greater diversity in editorial boards; give greater attention to relevance and readability; create web links to other journals; develop web-based summaries of research; place a summary of each article up-front in journals; require section on managerial implications for each article; publish each year a list of important issues for advancing the management profession as gathered from research institutes and surveys around the world; publish more critical essays; journal editors hold session at every annual meeting to help young authors; establish link on website to share works-in-progress and getting mentor feedback, etc.)
3. **Career Services** - Each year we make available to members and universities extensive resources for facilitating the job placement of all members, from those just beginning their careers to those who are more established in the profession. We should consider the following initiatives:
- **Provide website service for a wider range of job placement information throughout the year** (e.g., expand information about job opportunities at institutions around the world; add post-doctoral, visiting, and sabbatical opportunities, provide information about salary ranges for various jobs, etc.)
 - **Provide a market clearinghouse that links Academy members with prospective employers of job opportunities and assignments** (e.g., course and training openings at corporate universities, consulting needs and project requests, applied research opportunities, etc.,)
 - **Improve current job placement activities at the annual meeting** (e.g., provide clearly defined and ample space for career placement interviews; develop and communicate appropriate etiquette and norms for job seekers, etc.)
4. **Website** - We anticipate that the website will become more feature rich and act as an increasingly important hub for providing member services and

networking activities. To improve our website, we propose the following initiatives:

- **Enhance the user friendliness of the website with a broader range of services.** (e.g., consider establishing MyAcademy.Com that serves multiple purposes for members and allows for greater customization; create method to volunteer for various Academy activities; establish linkages to affiliated professional associations and divisions; list job openings; establish feedback mechanism such as “Ask the Division Chair or the AoM President;” provide orientation for new members; publicize RFPs and other research funding opportunities; establish hyperlinks to data resources and non-Academy publications, etc.)
 - **Explore peer-to-peer or other networking opportunities that the web could provide for members** (e.g., self-organizing affinity groups; designate keywords to identify members with similar interests; form discussion boards; etc.)
 - **Create a web-based Academy knowledge base** (e.g., share data bases and research instruments; provide synopsis of findings on different subjects; establish commonly used theoretical definitions, etc.)
5. **External Relations** – The Academy collaborates with other professional associations in three ways: it has (a) membership in an international federation (IFSAM), (b) relationships with *associated* societies that have a very loose cooperative agreement with the Academy (including BAM, ASAC, ANZAM), and (c) relationships with *affiliated* groups that have a much closer working relationship with the Academy (including the five U.S. regional AoMs, the Asia AoM, and the Iberoamerican AoM). The Academy also contracts with a public relations firm to provide media coverage for Academy-published research. The proposed initiatives below focus on improving our public relations and fostering collaborative relationships with complementary professional associations.
- **Enhance our public relations effort to explain and communicate better what the Academy does to a wider audience of institutions and society** (e.g., tell our story better on our web site; expand media coverage; develop literature tailored for different audiences, etc.)
 - **Encourage member involvement and participation in the professional services offered by collaborating associations** (e.g., attend conferences; subscribe to journals; get involved as volunteers.)

- **Strengthen relationships among collaborating associations to enhance the sharing of experiences and the accomplishment of common goals** (e.g., participate in task forces on common issues; facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among associations' officers; explore ways of reaching out to academics in the field of management who are not currently being served by our network of associations, etc.)
 - **Explore new opportunities for collaboration among professional associations serving related disciplines, e.g., accounting, finance, marketing, public administration, or higher education, in general, e.g., AAHE projects and programs** (e.g., address issues common to business school faculty and other higher-education faculty; share best practices.)
 - **Explore new opportunities for relating to other associations that are interested in the implications and applications of management scholarship** (e.g., explore relations with ASTD, AMA, etc.)
6. **Governance** – The Academy's governance process and organizational structure should support the mission and facilitate the strategic direction. To ensure this and to provide high-quality services, the following initiatives should be undertaken with regard to organization and governance:
- **Continuously seek ways to communicate to members what is happening within the Academy's governance and organization structure** (e.g., Newsletter and website updates; more transparency in decision-making by various groups, etc.)
 - **Continue to increase opportunities for members to participate in the governance of the Academy** (e.g., the Council; task forces, etc.)
 - **Periodically examine the Academy's governance and organization structure to keep it nimble, relevant, and responsive** (e.g., establish task force to review organization processes; invite feedback and suggestions on website, etc.)
 - **Practically explore what can be done to address comments that the Academy is too large and fragmented.**

7. New Services and Member Feedback – The Academy will continually seek to improve the range and quality of its service delivery beyond the main activities listed above. In this light, we should anticipate and remain responsive to member needs through the following initiatives:

- **Develop more frequent and routinely scheduled surveys of members to identify their needs and to assess the quality of various services and activities** (e.g., survey reactions to journals, website, annual meeting, the profession, etc.)
- **Continue to move ahead with recent initiatives designed to improve the scholarship of teaching and practice** (e.g., establish new theme committees; communicate information about developments in distance learning; encourage research on consulting theory and intervention, etc.)
- **Investigate the possible enlargement of personal services to the membership** (e.g. legal information on intellectual property; tenure practices at various universities; web links on AoM website; suggested accreditation procedures for AACSB, etc.)
- **Continuously find ways to improve orientation for new members** (e.g., special publications; sessions at annual conference, etc.)

Board of Governor's Perspective

A few comments are in order to explain the Board's thinking behind the above document, especially as it has been formulated, revised, and guided during this planning process. We view these comments as separate from the document itself. Board members have frequently engaged in lively discussions and debated many issues, and in the end we seem to agree on the following points that resonate not only with the Board but also with many who responded to various drafts.

- We actively discussed the core purpose and identity of the Academy. Here we decided to propose that the Academy of Management is an association of scholars that exists primarily to serve the scholarship needs (research, teaching and practice) of its members. We do not see the Academy acting as an advocate of social and political change, but we do believe that the Academy should serve as a leader in helping to shape the future of management research and education.
- Another key area for our discussions was the meaning of "scholarship." Our conclusion is that we should interpret scholarship broadly to include the overriding goal of advancing knowledge of management research, teaching and practice. In other words, we agree with Ernest Boyer's¹ broad view of

¹ Ernest L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997.

“scholarship” as including the scholarship of discovery, teaching, practice, and integration.

- We also discussed the meaning of "globalization" for the Academy. We are a professional association providing professional development opportunities for scholars interested in the subject matter of management and organizations. Given that the subject matter we study is increasingly taking on an international flavor, it is important that our membership have opportunities to broaden their understanding of global issues affecting our interests. We will continue to welcome scholars with diverse perspectives from around the world who are interested in the mission, services, and activities of the Academy.
- We debated the term "growth" and clarified that the Academy does not pursue growth in absolute size for its own sake. Growth, however, may be an outcome of effectively fulfilling our central mission of providing member services and enrichment.
- We also discussed "who" are we attempting to attract as members of the academy. Here we believe that while we will continue to attract mostly academics, we should also be more open and encouraging to others who share a strong interest in advancing the scholarship of management research, teaching, and practice. We learn a great deal from others who practice and study management but who do not reside in academe.
- Finally, we found it useful to avoid proposals in this document that obligate individual agents or groups within the Academy to take specific action steps (e.g., who or when to start a new book series, to create partnerships with other associations, etc.); rather, we prefer to suggest general but focused initiatives that will later encourage members of the Academy at several levels to create and take actions on their own within this broader framework.