

**Executive Director's Report**  
**Policy Council Meeting**  
**August 2000**  
**Bergen, Norway**  
by Roberta L. Spencer

## **New Initiatives**

(Please see Attachment I)

### **Conference Management**

Management of our conferences has become a large activity at the Society office. The Society office is working with Pål Davidsen, Ali Mashayekhi and David Ford for the 2000 conference. The Bergen Conference will be the largest outside of North America to date.

Past responsibilities for conference activities have included:

- Design/produce/mailling the call for papers brochures, conference information and registration brochures
- advertising in related journals
- contact conference sponsors
- maintain finances on QuickBooks
- manage registrations
- assist in organizing meetings

In addition, for the Norway Conference, the Society home office has

- received electronically and formatted the abstracts and papers
- developed and managed the review process for abstracts and papers on the web
- produced the printed abstract proceedings and CD-ROM of full proceedings
  - tracked abstracts and papers
  - designed layout of conference sponsor information
  - organized outsourcing for specialty work
- managed the program and session chairs scheduling
- maintained the conference website

There has been a significant multi-year shift in allocation of effort with the Society office assuming more of the conference duties. Allocation of effort for conference management consumes a major portion of Society personnel time. In the past 3 years, time spent on conference management has almost doubled. Outsourcing has also increased as a result of increased conference management. Discussions are underway to look at ways to improve conference operations utilizing more of the web technology.

Working from past conference survey information supplied by Bill Steinhurst, Sustainable Solutions, a management consulting firm based in Massachusetts, has assumed the task of measuring member satisfaction and service quality for the Society on an on-going basis. The firm will offer this service for free and begin by measuring attendee satisfaction at the Bergen conference. A summary of the information received from Sustainable Solutions, along with a report on the Society's efforts to respond to the feedback, will be made available to the Society's membership on a regular basis. The survey represents the Society's commitment to quality service to our membership and conference population.

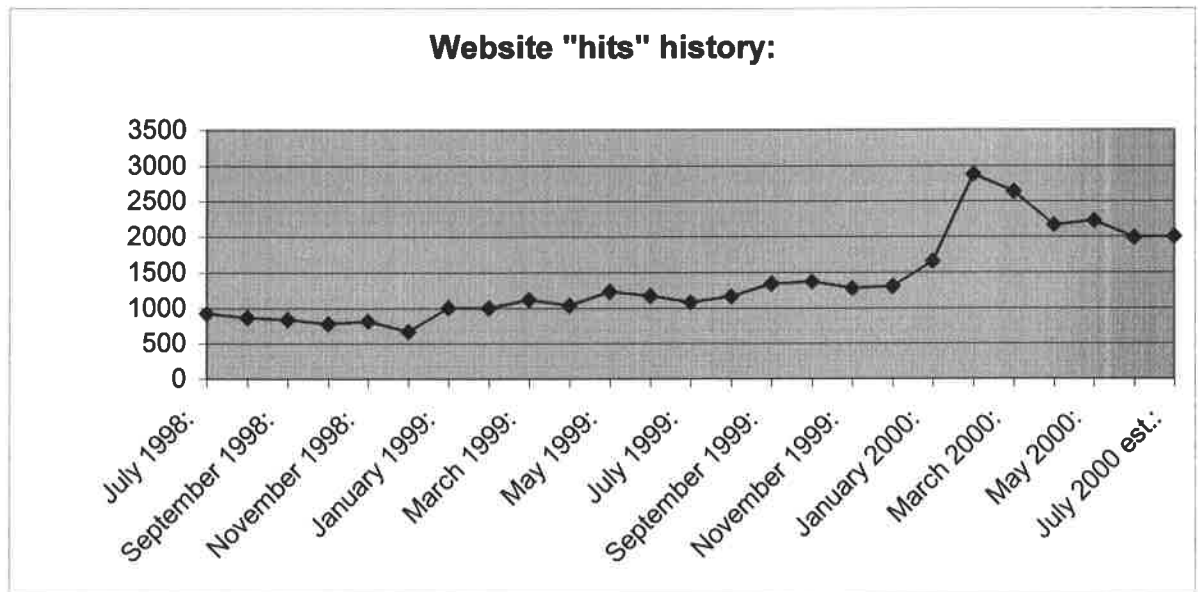
Planning is ongoing for the Atlanta 2001 Conference. The dates are July 23 – 27, 2001. Please see the Call for Papers.

The Society office is currently updating a *Guide to Organizing an International System Dynamics Conference* written by Jac A.M. Vennix and Loes H. Bultjes in July 1992. Please see Attachment VI and VII for conference planning.

### Web Presence

The Society office website is being maintained at the University at Albany. Jack Pugh, the newly appointed Webmaster, is managing the site. The website has recently been upgraded with better graphics and more information. Additional information under consideration to be contained on the website include the membership directory, the bibliography and more links. Access to some areas, such as the directory, will be limited to current members with passwords. The current site contains brochure information, including how to order past publications and the beer game, and how to become a member. The website contains past, present and future conference information.

In 2000, the web presence has been financially distinguished from the cost center “Core Operations” to track income and expenditure for this class of activities more accurately. To keep abreast of technological advancements, development funding has been placed in the 2001 budget for web presence.



The site address is <http://www.albany.edu/cpr/sds/> The domain name is **systemdynamics.org** and has been reserved.

## **Routine Operations**

(Please see Attachment II)

### **Membership**

Membership continues to grow. Please see Attachment III for full details over time.

### **Services and Recruitment**

Fast, focused and very responsive phone, E-mail and mail coverage are continuously being provided. A sales and contact database has been growing since January 1, 1997. Currently we have over 2850 records of members, non-members and conference registrants who have contacted this office for products or information. An E-mail distribution list, made up of all E-mail contacts, is also being maintained and updated with every contact.

Membership applications processed through this office are increasing as a result of the sponsorship incentive program, membership fees being paid along with a conference registration, or membership fees paid along with purchase of a product.

After the Norway conference, a personal invitation to become a member of the Society will be sent to conference attendees who are not members. In addition, in the fall of 2000 letters to members who did not renew for 2000 will be sent out.

Since June 1998, we have sent out welcome letters to new members of the Society. When the Society office receives new member information from John Wiley & Sons, welcome letters are mailed out. John Wiley & Sons continues to be very helpful and responsive.

### **Sponsorship Incentive**

As of June 30, 2000, a total of 45 new or renewal members have joined the Society for the calendar year 2000 as a result of the Society Sponsorship incentive (June 1999 – 34). A sponsor receives up to three personal memberships with a sponsorship.

### **Membership Directory**

The 1999 membership directory was produced and distributed by the Society office. An update will be done to the membership directory again for 2000. We are planning to produce a hard copy, but also to place the membership directory on the Society webpage.

### **Sales**

#### **Beer Distribution Game, Proceedings, Journal, and Bibliography**

There is great interest in the Beer Distribution Game; sales (dollar volume) are up by 56% from last year at this time. Retail costs have been modestly raised for the Beer Game in 2000. Sales volume by item for the Beer Game is up 23% for the first six months of 2000 as compared to the same time period last year. Beer Game boards sold in 1998 - 839, and in 1999 - 619.

There is less demand for the proceedings and back issues of the *System Dynamics Review*; sales (dollar volume) are down 25% from the same time last year.

First 6 months 2000	First 6 months 1999	Items Sold
404	330	Beer Game boards
25	22	Past Proceedings
31	21	Past System Dynamics Reviews
2	9	Bibliographies
462	382	Totals for First 6 months

Regarding the Beer Game: According to input from a range of clients from large corporations to small consulting firms, there seems to be a strong need for an **instruction video** to “train the trainer.” Raw material exists for this project, but more videotaping needs to be done to produce the training video.

As a convenience to our customers, over the past few years, new products have been added to be sold with the Beer Game. These products are the deck of customer order cards, plastic playing chips, color coordinated order slips and pencils. Including them makes the game more user-friendly and they have been well received. The customer pays postage on all Beer Game sales, modestly increasing Society profits. The profit from the sales “cost center” helps support the core operations offered by the Society office.

Regarding back issues of the *System Dynamics Review*: A set of 36 back issues from 1985 to 1998 (Volume 1 - Volume 14) is offered for sale for \$750.00, a savings of \$410.00 over the individual purchase price. The full time student member price for the Volume 1 - Volume 14 set is \$325.00. A minimum number of out-of-print issues has been photocopied and bound for sale, so now all past issues are available for sale. A suggestion has been made for a gradual reduction in price on old issues. If this decision is made, clearance will be sought from the Administration Committee.

Regarding the bibliography: Disks continue to be available. The bibliography has been updated including the New Zealand Conference Proceedings and the *System Dynamics Review* Volume 16, Number 1 - 2000. Jennifer Ferriss, bibliographer, is performing this project. New entries are continuously being made, as the bibliography is always a continuous work in progress.

## Society Sponsorship

In an effort to increase membership, corporate sponsors receive up to three free annual (personal) memberships. We have had success with this new arrangement. Please see Attachment IV for a list of calendar year 2000 sponsor.

2000 Sponsor income: \$17,909  
 1999 Sponsor income: \$12,738  
 1998 Sponsor income: \$11,000  
 1997 Sponsor income: \$4,000

The Society office performs a systematic Society sponsorship program contacting all past Society sponsors and conference sponsors, inviting them to continue their support. In addition, we identify and mail out letters to repeat customers, to organizations with numerous members and to other consulting firms owned by members. This mail-out is not only to solicit, but to also cultivate a relationship, to

involve our members and others in the field. We will continue this program for Society sponsors in October 2000.

## Society Finances

The Society is managed around the three original cost centers: conference, core operations and sales; as well as two new cost centers: publications and web. Please refer to the full report by David Andersen, VP Finance Report.

Due to customer demand, and conference involvement by the Society office, the Society accepts credit card payments. This eliminates significant purchase barriers, especially for international customers. For statistics on credit card sales (including conference registrations), please see Attachment IV-a.

## Allocation of Effort

Daily time sheets are recorded and time is separated into five cost centers at the System Dynamics Society. Breakdown of time for Roberta Spencer, working at 90%, Jennifer Rowe working at 60% totaling 1.5 staff persons:

Roberta Spencer	1998	1999	2000	Jen Rowe:	1998	1999	2000
% of full time	(75%)	(75%)	(90%)	% of full time	(50%)	(50%)	(60%)
Core Operations	41%	50%	39%	Core Operations	41%	54%	39%
Sales	28%	17%	8%	Sales	35%	31%	23%
Current Conference	27%	31%	47%	Current Conference	22%	15%	36%
Next Conference	4%	2%	2%	Next Conference	2%	0%	0%
Past Conference			1%	Past Conference			0%
Publications			2%	Publications			2%
Web			1%	Web			0%

In January 2001, Roberta Spencer will move to 100% - full time.

## Administrative Calendar

Please see the attached draft of the Administrative Processes (Attachment V) to be scheduled into a calendar. Key people will need to comment on the Administrative Calendar and related processes to make it complete. The role of the Executive Director would be to help keep all the Society processes timely. There has been some progress on the Administrative Calendar. As always, input is appreciated.

## Home Office

Operations are intact and continuous. All financial and organizational information is computerized. We have purchased a new computer and the two desktop computers are now networked.

The position of Executive Director has two distinct parts: the first part is maintaining current and routine operations (see Attachment II), and the second part is development and new initiatives (see Attachment I). With the guidance of the Administration Committee, office operations are forging ahead. Advice from the Policy Council on any item is welcome.

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**Attachment I –**

<b>Possible New Initiatives</b> Not Routine Processes	<b>Developments</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
A. Make Contacts and Increase Support to Special Interest Groups, Sponsors and Chapters K-12, Universities, Consultants, Systems Thinking, etc.	<i>Contacts made for sponsorship, conference - more time needs to be invested here to inform these organizations of how we can help them network, and to cultivate relationships. Chapters may need more support at start up or with membership drives.</i>	<b>Perform routinely</b>
B. Link to Annual Research Conference Define Society's Home Office Role for conferences	<i>Conference involvement is becoming more defined and reactions by future hosts have been welcoming. Management by home office has become a major cost center.</i>	<b>Define home office role, as well as roles by conference chair and program chair more clearly</b>
C. Update conference guide	<i>Currently underway, existing guide has been reviewed; all past conference correspondence and dates have been gathered.</i>	<b>Revise continuously as each conference progresses</b>
D. Develop Electronic Presence	<i>New Webmaster Jack Pugh has advanced the web presence. Funding in 2001 will progress this effort.</i>	<b>In development</b>
E. New product to broaden sales possibilities beyond "Beer Game"	<i>Jay Forrester's System Dynamics Seminar tapes will be a very nice addition to our list of products. Jay is continuing to work on the very time-consuming editing.</i>	<b>In development</b>
F. "Own" membership process	<i>We currently have all membership information in a database as a result of the membership directory.</i>	<b>Estimate labor, benefits to Society and members</b>
G. Active job exchange message board	<i>8 entries are on our website as a result of volunteer Kristine Kelly, done in conjunction with the Bergen conference.</i>	<b>Determine if this is something worthwhile for the Society and its members</b>
H. Upgrade equipment and furniture in office	<i>New computer purchased in June 2000, computers are now networked.</i>	<b>Get quotes and build into 2001 budget</b>

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**Attachment II -**

**Routine Operations - Other Processes**  
(not tied to Administrative Calendar or Research Conference)

Help manage and update Society information vehicles, including brochure and website

Order and market Beer Game

Inventory and fill orders for back issues of Proceedings

Inventory and fill orders for back issues of *System Dynamics Review* (Before Wiley)

Respond to general member inquiries/ member services

Membership maintenance and recruitment

Reconcile membership issues/discrepancies with John Wiley & Sons

Help VP Meetings with Chapters and Special Interest Groups

Archive Systems: records retention and preservation

Maintain checking account and accounting for funds with University

Society sponsorship solicitation

Produce membership directory on a yearly basis

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**Attachment III -**

**System Dynamics Society Membership**  
(according to membership directories)

**Membership over time:**

At the **half year mark:**

**For full calendar year:**

June 30, 2000 - 755

June 30, 1999 - 655

June 30, 1998 - 600

**1999 - 995**

1998 - 808

1997 - 680

1996 - 572

1995 - 504

1994 - 484

1993 - 487

1992 - 406

1991 - 418

**Geographic Distribution for 1996 through 1999 - 55 Countries Including:**

<b>Country</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>
Argentina	4	4	6	8	Kuwait	0	0	0	2
Australia	17	15	21	31	Lebanon	0	0	0	1
Austria	1	1	1	2	Malaysia	0	6	7	8
Bangladesh	1	1	1	1	Mexico	3	2	4	6
Belgium	1	1	2	4	New Zealand	4	5	5	10
Brazil	2	5	7	8	Nigeria	1	1	1	1
Canada	15	23	24	33	Norway	9	16	22	32
Chile	0	2	2	2	Peru	1	1	0	0
China	6	3	4	5	Philippines	1	1	3	3
Columbia	4	4	5	5	Poland	3	4	3	3
Cote d'Ivoire	0	0	1	1	Portugal	3	2	4	5
Croatia	1	1	2	2	Russia	0	1	2	2
Czech Rep	0	0	0	1	Saudi Arabia	0	1	1	1
Denmark	4	4	3	3	Singapore	2	1	1	3
Finland	2	2	2	3	Slovenia	0	0	0	1
France	4	5	6	8	South Africa	2	1	1	1
Germany	14	21	23	34	Spain	21	24	22	26
Greece	2	3	4	5	Sweden	6	8	9	10
Hong Kong	0	0	0	2	Switzerland	15	16	17	18
Iceland	0	0	1	1	Taiwan	4	6	7	6
India	2	2	1	2	Thailand	2	1	2	2
Indonesia	4	6	7	15	The Netherlands	12	18	21	24
Iran	0	1	1	1	Turkey	1	7	6	17
Ireland	0	0	1	1	UK	44	65	89	104
Israel	2	1	1	2	USA	297	323	386	451
Italy	17	23	28	28	Venezuela	2	1	1	1
Japan	31	33	32	36	Vietnam	1	0	1	1
Korea	4	8	7	12	<b>Totals</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>995</b>



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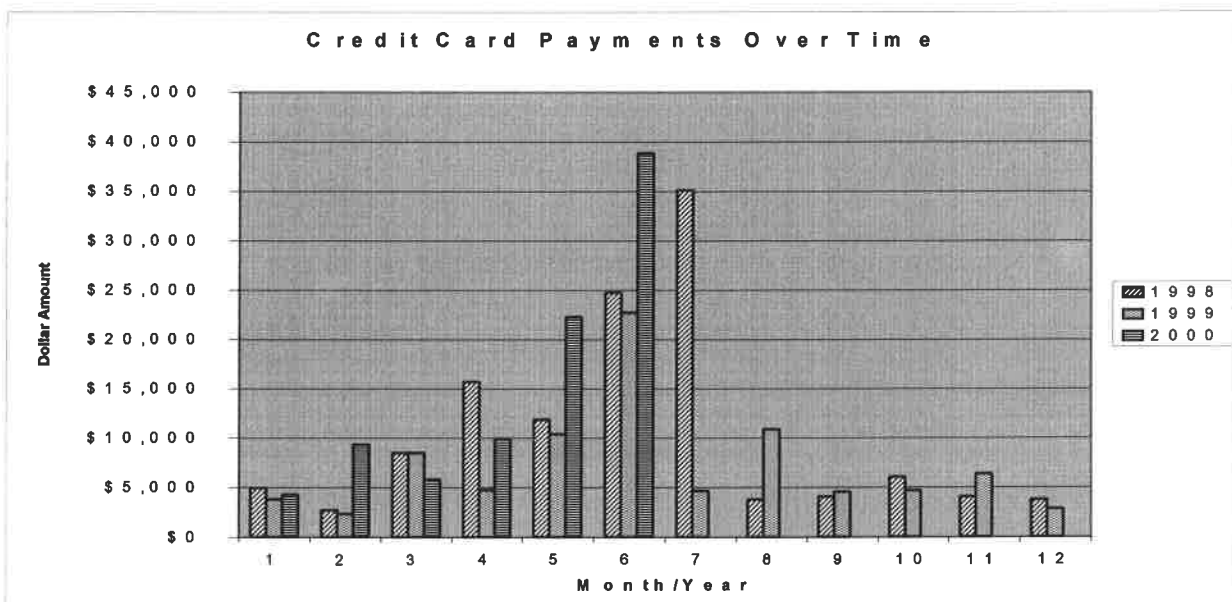
**Attachment IV**

**Calendar Year 2000 Society Sponsors**

A.T. Kearney Inc.  
Amber Blocks, Ltd.  
Andersen Consulting  
BRB Consulting  
Cognitus Ltd.  
Decision Dynamics, Inc.  
Jay W. Forrester  
Hall, Vasil & Dowd, CPA's  
Hewlett Packard Company  
High Performance Systems, Inc.  
Intel Corporation

MIT System Dynamics Group  
Pegasus Communications, Inc.  
Powersim  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Pugh-Roberts Associates  
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and  
Policy, University at Albany  
SDSG, LLC/The Strategic Decision Simulation  
Group  
Ventana Systems, Inc  
Vestec, AS

**Attachment IV-a**



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**Attachment V -**

**Administrative Processes**

(To be added to, rationalized, and scheduled to an annual calendar.)

Business Processes Tightly Linked to Administrative Calendar:

**Tax Filings**

Manage agenda and follow-up for Winter Meeting of Policy Council (Jan, Feb)

Manage agenda and follow-up for Summer Meeting of Policy Council at Research  
Conference

Manage agenda and follow-up for Fall (?) Meeting of Policy Council

President's Newsletter (two times per year)

Manage Nominations and Elections Procedures (October/November)

**Awards:**

Jay W. Forrester Award Selection Procedure

New Awards Such as Best PhD dissertation??

Manage Society Sponsors

Annual Membership Billing

Annual Membership Directory

Manage Conference Site Selection (3-4 years in advance)

Update Bibliography

Executive Director's report

VP Publications report including Editor's Report, Website Report, President's Newsletter, Publisher's  
Report, etc.

VP Finance Report

Notices in journals - for what and when

Update SDR - SDS publications for sale page

May 15 Federal (no fee) and State (\$100 fee) review to be filed

By November 15 - File a list of officers and policy council members with the MA Secretary of State - a  
one-page form that gives officers and date of annual meeting for the past year. Clerk has to be  
resident of MA

Work with Administration Committee to refine processes.

Who does what/when?

How often are tasks/issues updated?

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## **Attachment VI**

### **Description of Division of Key Duties and Responsibilities**

Draft – to be negotiated between Executive Director, Conference Chair and Program Chair

### **Description of Conference Support by System Dynamics Society Office**

The Executive Director of the Society will be the primary manager for the conference and will oversee the logistical support for the conference working through the home office. In this capacity, the home office of the Society will be acting as a sub-contractor for the conference. The Society's home office will provide a bundle of logistical and support services to the conference chair much the same as a conference-organizing firm might. These services will be delimited in advance and will be accompanied by a full conference budget. With respect to overall conference budgeting, once the conference budget is agreed upon, the Society's home office will review and approve any changes to the budget. Because a number of the functions associated with the conference are repeated from year to year (e.g. locating mailing lists, contacting exhibitors) over time having the Society's home office involved in these functions will lead to more consistency and more successful conferences.

#### **Duties:**

- Contact sponsors/exhibitors (in the names of the Conference and Program Chairs)
- Manage collection of sponsor/exhibitor fees
- Contact conveners
- Design, print and mail Call for Papers, Registration Brochures 1 and 2
- Maintain conference bookkeeping in Albany
  - manage registrations prepaid and on-site
  - reconcile conference profit and loss within 3 months of conference end
- Manage conference website at home page
- Arrange for conference evaluation
- Management of on-site personnel at Registration/Information Desk
- Working with President, Secretary and Editor, manage agendas of Policy Council Meetings, Editor's Meeting, General Business Meeting and Conference Planning Meeting for following year's conference
- Working with Past President, coordinate elections
- Create participant's list
- Create registrants' personalized information packets to be handed out at conference
- Review changes to the budget
- Support VP Meetings in crafting budgets and memorandum of understanding
- Create conference printed proceedings
- Create conference electronic proceedings (if any)

## **Description of Local Host Duties and Responsibilities (Conference Chair)**

As in the past, the designated conference chair will retain overall responsibility for the content of the research conference. The home office will be the financial manager of the conference. Final decision making on all aspects of the conference will rest with the conference chair, although specific duties will be primarily delegated to the Society's home office and to the program chair.

### **Duties:**

- Over-all leader and final decision maker
- Assemble conference committee
- Contact with hotel site, pre-conference, during and post-conference including AV equipment organization, computer equipment, room arrangements (booking)
- Arrange financial support from local sponsors
- Contact local organizations for sponsorship/ exhibitors after original mailout
- Contact with sponsors/exhibitors for exhibit space (working with conference venue personnel)
- Contact with exhibitor supplier
- Planning of conference banquet and any social programs
- Devise conference schedule
- Print conference final program
  - scientific program from program chair
  - manage and coordinate special sessions and events
  - schedule Policy Council, General Business and Editor's Meetings with Society Office

## **Description of Program Chair Duties and Responsibilities**

The program chair has overall responsibility for the scientific content of the research conference. The program chair assembles a program committee and is responsible for reviewing and accepting all papers to be presented at the conference. The program chair is also responsible for designing the scientific program of plenary and parallel sessions. In all of these duties, the program chair will receive support from the home office and will work closely with the overall conference chair.

### **Duties:**

- Assemble Program Committee
- Receive abstracts/papers
- Review and assign abstracts to categories/sessions
  - Initially and for plenary decisions
- Serve as contact person for all paper related questions
- Supply information for website - list of papers
- Create conference scientific program and forward to local host
- Schedule session chairs

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**Attachment VII -  
Conference Planning Schedule (revised 03/03/00)**

**General Conference Overview      Time Line for 2000 Conference**

***UP TO TWO YEARS BEFORE CONFERENCE***

reserve hotel/banquet/conference site  
start to prepare social program  
secure a travel agent for the conference  
look into airline deals

**1999**

***AT NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE***

hand out call for papers/preview sheet  
promote next year's conference  
have pre-conference meeting - create and sign memorandum of understanding

***SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 99***

pre-conference planning meeting on site  
call for papers mail out  
email distribution of call for papers/list serve  
information to publications - call for papers  
contact sponsors (vendors), continue process until conference  
continue to prepare social program  
invite keynote speakers  
monitor budget  
form abstract review committee  
prepare review process and guidelines for abstracts  
form review committee for papers  
prepare review process and guidelines for papers  
close out previous year's conference finances  
send JWF Award speech/presentation to Graham for SDR  
mailout President's Newsletter #2 with next year's conference information  
update website

***NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 99***

email distribution of call for papers/list serve - reminder

invite session conveners  
notify authors of receipt of their abstract  
create author e-mail distribution list  
create master abstract spreadsheet with author/reviewer information for program use  
review abstracts  
prepare guidelines for final paper to be included on the CD  
update website with information and abstracts received (published and unpublished sites)  
assist program committee with management of abstracts

## **2000**

### ***JANUARY 00***

January 15 deadline for abstracts submissions  
assist program committee with management of abstracts  
create report of conference status for February Policy Council meeting  
talk to President about President's Newsletter  
draft 1st registration brochure, produce final copy  
get labels for 1st registration brochure from mailing partners  
look into customs information for sponsors/vendors (maybe obtain a customs broker)  
look into visa information  
talk to Usman Ghani and this year's Consultants' Roundtable host  
update website

### ***FEBRUARY 00***

February 1 deadline for tutorials/workshops submissions  
produce brochure, ready envelopes and labels  
mail out 1st registration brochure - early February to arrive mid - late February  
find printer for printed abstracts proceedings after comparing costs  
find CD manufacturer after comparing costs  
produce President's Newsletter #1 with information about conference  
assist program committee with management of abstracts  
assist conference chair with schedule  
update website

### ***MARCH 00***

March 1 deadline for abstract acceptances  
March 1 deadline to send invitation to submit full paper for plenary  
mail out letters of (non) acceptance with guidelines, with reminder of deadlines for final paper  
e-mail distribution of 1st registration brochure  
bulk mailout to universities of 1st registration brochure  
arrange for draft of conference evaluation  
mail out President's Newsletter #1  
contact exhibitor supplier for exhibitor needs  
update website

### ***APRIL 00***

April 15 deadline for completed papers submission  
April 15 deadline for receiving CD materials  
check on progress of Forrester Award  
plan for planning meeting for next year's conference  
send out tentative schedule with PC meetings, editor's meeting, curriculum committee, chapter presidents, next years conference planning meeting  
decide on plenary and parallel papers  
send out form requesting special AV or other equipment  
arrange for on site photocopier  
update website

### ***MAY 00***

mail out of 2nd registration brochure  
produce next year's preview sheet/call for papers  
e-mail distribution of 2nd registration brochure including travel information and instructions  
track coffee/tea/lunch/dinner/other reservations and activities  
send out letter of acceptances of paper for plenary/parallel session presentation  
order satchels, folders, pens, pads of paper, etc.  
update website

### ***JUNE 00***

electronic CD papers and artwork to CD maker (remember to include ISBN)  
produce printed abstracts (remember to include ISBN)  
create email distribution list of registrants  
schedule registration desk helpers  
send out hotel reminder  
order award winner plaque  
delivery of CD for approval  
updated conference schedule mailout with new information  
check authors to registrants  
check registrants who claim to be members  
buy supplies for badges, etc.  
update website

### ***JULY/AUGUST 00***

email/fax of newest information  
delivery of CDs and printed abstracts  
produce preliminary participant list for folder  
produce participant list for updating at conference  
produce registration check in lists  
produce on-site registration form  
make badges  
make sign posts  
stuff satchels/folders on site and stuff registration envelopes  
distribute next year's call for papers  
update website for current and make new website for next year