



Society of Toxicology Strategic Plan
Creating a Safer and Healthier World by Advancing
the Science of Toxicology
2008–2012

Executive Summary

Changes in the field of Toxicology have never been greater and the pace of change will only accelerate in the future. The Society of Toxicology is well positioned to thrive as the membership continues to work to advance our **Vision of *Creating a Safer and Healthier World by Advancing the Science of Toxicology***. While advancement of the vision is being accomplished in significant areas, as a Society we must position ourselves to face the challenge of ***Increasing the Impact and Future Vitality of Toxicology***.

This Strategic Plan presents a roadmap for meeting this challenge by setting priorities that:

- Increase Scientific Impact
- Advocate the Value of Toxicology
- Build for the Future of Toxicology
- Expand and Deepen Member Engagement
- Strengthen Organizational Effectiveness

This plan details how each of these five Strategic Priorities will be executed through a series of outcome-oriented Key Objectives that will transform our Society. The Objectives outlined in this plan will be supported by embracing best practices of professional society oversight, engaging Society leadership at all levels and by increasing the involvement of members at all career stages, to ensure the future relevance and global impact of Toxicology.

Vision

The vision of an organization articulates a vision for the future that the organization will play a pivotal role in creating. The vision of the Society of Toxicology is **Creating a Safer and Healthier World by Advancing the Science of Toxicology.**

Central Challenge

The future success of the Society and the discipline of Toxicology will depend on effectively communicating the importance of Toxicology in improving human, animal and environmental health, enhancing research funding for the discipline, and meeting the need to attract the next generation of Toxicologists. We must also begin to expand collaborations with relevant, like-committed societies, in efforts to understand and find our voice in a globalizing world. These significant issues lead us to our Central Challenge, which is to **Increase the Impact and Future Vitality of Toxicology.**

Strategic Priorities and Key Objectives

To rise to, and successfully address, our Central Challenge, our Society must embrace five Strategic Priorities and the Key Objectives that characterize each Strategic Priority.

These priorities include:

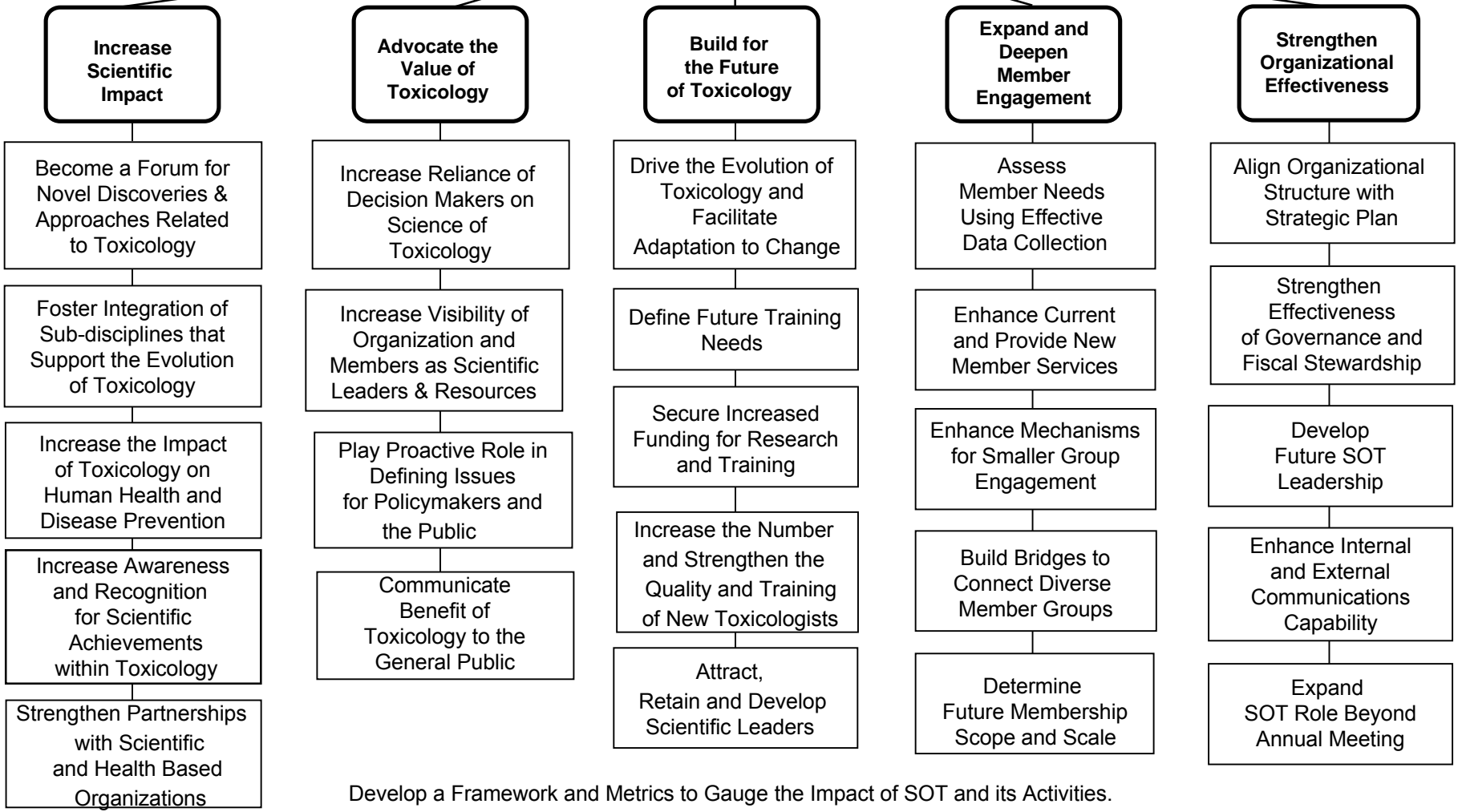
- Increase Scientific Impact
- Advocate the Value of Toxicology
- Build for the Future of Toxicology
- Expand and Deepen Member Engagement
- Strengthen SOT's Organizational Effectiveness

The Vision, Central Challenge and Strategic Priorities can be visualized by the Strategic Map that follows. The Map begins with our Vision and the Central Challenge and leads to the five Strategic Priorities, including a list of Key Objectives. The section of the Strategic Plan immediately following the map offers more practical insight into the Strategic Map and Key Objectives. Each Strategic Priority is described in detail, with summarized background information, brief explanations of each Key Objective, and a listing of what pursuing these Key Objectives will mean to you as a member of the Society.

Society of Toxicology Strategic Map: 2008–2012

Creating a safer and healthier world by advancing the science of toxicology

Increase the Impact and Future Vitality of Toxicology



Develop a Framework and Metrics to Gauge the Impact of SOT and its Activities.

Strategic Priority: *Increase the Scientific Impact of Toxicology*

The Issue:

SOT is a broad-based, multidisciplinary organization, whose members share the common goal of “Creating a Safer and Healthier World by Advancing the Science of Toxicology.” Over the years, the Society has instituted a number of activities to facilitate advancements in the field of Toxicology. However, many additional opportunities exist to increase the visibility of scientific advances made by Toxicologists, and to communicate these advances in a way that emphasizes their potential to improve human and public health. Similarly, numerous avenues exist to promote scientific progress within the discipline, with the potential to enhance the impact of Toxicology as a seminal science for human, animal and environmental health.

Key Objectives for this Strategic Priority:

Become a Forum for Novel Discoveries and Approaches Related to Toxicology. SOT will utilize its Annual Meeting, ToxExpo, and its scientific journal, *Toxicological Sciences*, to become the most sought-after venue for showcasing cutting-edge, emerging science related to Toxicology.

Foster Integration of Sub-disciplines that Support the Evolution of Toxicology. SOT will effectively recruit the diversity of science necessary to support and realize the full impact of Toxicology on health.

Increase the Impact of Toxicology on Human Health and Disease Prevention. SOT will take a leadership role in stimulating and fostering research and training as well as broadening appreciation of the role that Toxicology plays in predicting and mitigating toxicity and the prevention of disease.

Increase Awareness and Recognition for Scientific Achievements within Toxicology. SOT will highlight significant scientific achievements of its members and broaden awareness of these accomplishments.

Strengthen Partnerships with other Scientific- and Health-Based Organizations. SOT will work collaboratively to raise the profile of Toxicology externally among peers in other scientific societies and organizations with the long-term goal of increasing the impact on health and disease prevention.

What will this mean for you?

- Thematic programming will be developed by the Scientific Program Committee and incorporated into the Annual Meeting.
- A new Contemporary Concepts in Toxicology Conferences Committee is being tasked with the development of cutting-edge research conferences targeting high-impact and high-visibility research areas.
- Effectiveness of the Society in showcasing the impact of Toxicology on human health and highlighting areas of emerging science will be increased.
- Increased recognition of SOT activities as a venue for integrative and emerging areas of science.
- A new Scientific Impact Award to recognize discoveries that impact the toxicological sciences and elevate the image of Toxicology as a vital and fundamental science.
- Creation of a Scientific Liaison Task Force to broaden domestic and international partnerships with other relevant scientific societies and organizations to help strengthen the science of Toxicology and its human health impact.
- Creation of a Disease Prevention Task Force to identify and implement strategies for Toxicologists to play a leadership role in stimulating and fostering research and training in disease prevention at the national and international level.
- Fostering of increased awareness, respect and understanding for issues within each sector of the Society (industry, government and academia) and how we are linked together (i.e., fewer silos).

Strategic Priority: *Advocate the Value of Toxicology*

The Issue:

There is a need to provide integrated and targeted messages to defined audiences on the value of Toxicology as a science. The goal is to increase the reliance of all audiences on sound toxicological sciences. SOT has conducted numerous programs aimed at advocacy to legislators, policy makers, regulators, and to the general public. SOT needs to assess the effectiveness of past efforts, create a plan for new efforts, and develop metrics for assessing the impact of future investments.

Key Objectives for this Strategic Priority:

Increase Reliance of Decision Makers on Science of Toxicology. In order for sound toxicological information to be used in legislation, regulation, and policies, SOT must become known as the primary resource for scientific expertise.

Increase Visibility of Organization and Members as Scientific Leaders and Resources. SOT must expand mechanisms for Toxicologists to be accessible to those seeking accurate scientific information.

Play Proactive Role in Defining Issues for Policymakers and the Public. SOT must inform policy makers and the public of the science surrounding toxicological issues and must be prepared to react quickly and accurately to toxicological issues in the news.

Communicate the Benefit of Toxicology to the General Public. SOT must let the public know that it is creating a safer and healthier world by advancing the science of Toxicology.

What will this mean to you?

- Improved internal communications will increase efficiency and effectiveness of communication between the membership and leadership.
- A new Communications Committee will be formed with primary responsibility for external communications.
- A new communications professional will join the Headquarters staff to help increase the effectiveness of our communications and to help members to be scientific resources.
- SOT will develop consistent and high-impact messages to advance the perception of Toxicology as a highly valued scientific discipline.
- SOT will develop metrics to measure success in advocating the value of Toxicology.

Strategic Priority: *Build for the Future of Toxicology*

The Issue:

The Society of Toxicology currently addresses the needs of its membership by providing a variety of valuable activities. However, it is necessary for the Society and the individual members to plan for the future rather than simply react to changes as they occur. Use of emerging technologies, relevant and forward-looking training, a vibrant and relevant research enterprise, and a supply of talented and well-trained future Toxicologists are important for Toxicology to contribute to the health of humans, animals and the environment.

Key Objectives for this Strategic Priority:

Drive the Evolution of Toxicology and Facilitate Adaptation to Change. The Society will encourage development and appropriate utilization of technical and scientific advancements, and will help engage the membership in these advancements and their applications.

Define Future Training Needs. The new Professional Needs Assessment Task Force will identify and prioritize the various future training needs of Toxicologists, including continued training in the use of new technologies and knowledge bases.

Secure Increased Funding for Research and Training. The new Research Funding Committee will identify, formulate and recommend strategies and mechanisms for increasing conventional and alternative sources of funding for research and training.

Increase the Number and Strengthen the Quality and Training of New Toxicologists. SOT will make a concerted effort to assure that Toxicologists are available to meet future career opportunities including increased entry of young people into Toxicology.

Attract, Retain and Develop Scientific Leaders. The Society is committed to the development of scientific leaders and to recruiting scientific leaders from allied disciplines.

What does this mean for you?

- Implementation of new technologies and scientific advancements will provide enhanced opportunities for Toxicologists to contribute to creating a safer and healthier world in the future.
- Basic training followed by continuous training throughout the member's career (including retooling) will provide new knowledge and skills so that members will remain competitive as the culture and practice of Toxicology evolves.
- Toxicology research will be enhanced through increased funding from traditional and non-traditional sources.
- Toxicology will be an appealing career choice to current and future members of the profession.
- Enhanced leadership will provide scientific advancement and enhanced image to the profession that will be a positive reflection on all Toxicologists.

Strategic Priority: *Expand and Deepen Member Engagement*

The Issue:

The Society is committed to providing the most effective and critical career resources to promote the professional advancement of each and every member, across all career stages. If members believe that they benefit directly from superior services, they also benefit indirectly through their engagement in these services. This interaction propels and sustains professional development. The Society has enjoyed a long tradition of providing outstanding services to its membership. As the field of Toxicology evolves, so must the SOT and its membership, through the breadth and depth of member services. Accordingly, several Key Objectives are paramount if the Society is to meet the challenge of enhancing the professional development of all of its members.

Key Objectives for this Strategic Priority:

Assess Member Needs Using Effective Data Collection. This objective will rest upon enhancement of data collection capabilities.

Enhance Current and Provide New Member Services. The quality and range of services will be strengthened based on high quality member data.

Enhance Mechanisms for Smaller Group Engagement. Support for existing mechanisms will expand and new opportunities that are identified using member data will be pursued.

Build Bridges to Connect Diverse Member Groups. Emphasis will be placed on bringing sectors of our Society that operate independently into productive collaborations.

Determine Future Membership Scope and Scale. The Society will work proactively rather than reactively to understand and foster evolution of our membership, in keeping with our Vision and supporting our Strategic Priorities.

What will this mean to you?

- A new Data Development Task Force will assure that the capabilities and infrastructure are available to the Membership Committee and others to base assessment and decision-making on evidence that provide insights into our membership or issues in other areas.
- An appropriate evidence-based strategy will direct activities that improve current services and create services that respond to evolving member needs.
- SOT will increase emphasis on smaller groups including Regional Chapters, Specialty Sections and Special Interest Groups, as they will deepen member engagement and create new opportunities to interact for members with like needs or interests.
- The programming of annual and other meetings will be designed to bring groups together for cross-fertilization and synergy.
- The Membership Committee, in conjunction with the Data Development Task Force, Council, and others will explore how our Society will change, and be changed by emerging trends in health sciences and demographics, and by our own Strategic Priorities.

Strategic Priority: *Strengthen SOT's Organizational Effectiveness*

The Issue:

For nearly 50 years, SOT has successfully provided quality programs and services to meet member needs. SOT has a strong base of members, infrastructure and resources; however, in an ever-changing environment, SOT must strengthen its organizational effectiveness so it can achieve its vision and make lasting contributions to its members and society.

Key Objectives for this Strategic Priority:

Align Organizational Structure with Strategic Plan. As the discipline of Toxicology evolves, SOT must have the structure to accomplish its Strategic Priorities and Key Objectives and must align its resources to these outcomes.

Strengthen Effectiveness of Governance and Fiscal Stewardship. The future success of SOT requires a culture that drives ongoing adjustment of our governance to reach best practices and demands fiscal responsibility.

Develop Future SOT Leadership. SOT commits itself to cultivating leaders and developing leadership skills to ensure a diverse and talented leadership pool.

Enhance Internal and External Communications Capability. Developing an integrated communication strategy that extends to all aspects of the Society and that raises the visibility and impact of the Society and its members will be critical to the advancement of the discipline of Toxicology.

Expand SOT Role Beyond Annual Meeting. The assets of the Society will be used increasingly outside the Annual Meeting to expand the reach and relevance of Toxicology and to promote our vision.

What will this mean to you?

- As SOT resources are re-allocated to maximize the impact of the Strategic Priorities, new work groups will be constituted and activities with a lower priority will be streamlined or eliminated.
- SOT Headquarters staff will be supplemented with individuals with specialized skills that are necessary to achieve Key Objectives, such as a communications professional.
- The Endowment Fund will continue aggressive solicitation of funds to sustain specific activities, such as student awards, in perpetuity.
- Leadership opportunities and training will be expanded.
- Effectiveness and impact of SOT internal communications vehicles, including the SOT Web site, the *Communiqué* and broadcast emails will be assessed and improved.
- SOT will communicate externally with consistent and compelling messages, with metrics for success.
- The opportunities for the exchange of scientific information—through teleseminars, satellite meetings, on-line courses and other distance learning, and Contemporary Concepts in Toxicology (CCT) meetings will be increased.

New Committees and Task Forces

Below is a table summarizing the new committees and task forces formed in response to Key Objectives of the 2008–2012 SOT Strategic Plan.

COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE	PURPOSE
Communications Committee (CC)	Build internal and external communications to key stakeholders and audiences to advocate the value of Toxicology.
Contemporary Concepts of Toxicology (CCT) Conferences Committee	Identify, develop, prioritize CCT conference programs targeting cutting edge, high-impact and high-visibility research areas.
Data Development Task Force	Identify current and future data that are or will be needed by SOT and to support assessment of the characteristics, nature, composition, trends, and possible future shapes of the Society.
Disease Prevention Task Force	Evaluate current society activities in the areas of prediction and prevention of toxicity and disease and recommend the SOT role in regulatory and risk assessment sciences as well as in increasing human translational prevention research.
Professional Needs Assessment Task Force	Define key areas where the Society can assist members in meeting their professional needs.
Research Funding Committee	Identify, formulate, and recommend strategies and mechanisms for increasing conventional and alternative sources of funding for research and training for members.
Scientific Liaison Task Force	Develop approaches that will improve the ability of SOT to partner with other domestic and international organizations that have objectives consistent with our goal of increasing the impact of the science of toxicology to improve public health.

Living the Strategic Plan

Perhaps the most important aspects of the SOT Strategic Plan 2008–2012 are the next steps, which we as a society will benchmark with milestones and tangible actions. These next steps are already underway. No Strategic Plan can impact an organization unless it leads to positive actions, measurable outcomes, and an assessment of outcomes that feeds back into an ever-improving, ever-evolving process. Thus, the most effective strategic planning is constantly and meaningfully renewed, and this will continue to be the case for the 2008–2012 Strategic Plan as we move forward to accomplish our **Vision of Creating a Safer and Healthier World by Advancing the Science of Toxicology**.

Acknowledgements

Many individuals made important contributions to this Strategic Plan. The planning effort began under Kendall Wallace (2005–2006 President) and included members of the 2005–2008 Councils. The 2005–2006 Council set this strategic planning process in motion by asking whether SOT resources were appropriately and effectively allocated to support our Long Range Plan and Priorities, and launched three Strategy Committees in 2006. The committees were charged with preparing Strategy Reports in 3 critical areas. Their members are acknowledged for their valuable contributions.

Communications (Bernard Goldstein, Chair, Matthew Bogdanffy, Ann de Peyster, Annie Jarabek, and James Lamb, Michael Holsapple and Elaine Knight, Council Liaisons, Shawn Lamb, Staff Liaison).

Member Services (Patricia Ganey, Chair, Jon Cook, Ernie Harpur, Serrine Lau, John Lipscomb, Jim Luyendyk, Jose Manautou, George Corcoran Council Liaison, Betty Eidemiller Staff Liaison).

Science (Cheryl Lyn Walker Chair, Debbie Cory- Slechta, Ron Hines, Kenneth Olden, Lewis Smith, Gerald Wogan, Bernard Schwetz, Janice Chambers, Bruce Fowler, and Yvonne Dragan Council Liaisons, Clarissa Russell Wilson Staff Liaison).

The Strategy Committees benefited considerably from the outstanding reports prepared in recent years by the Liaison Task Force, the Recruitment and Retention Task Force, and the Communications Committee. The members of these groups are gratefully acknowledged.

Valuable comments and recommendations were made by members, committee chairs, specialty sections and regional chapter and special interest group officers at all stages of the development and finalization of the plan.

The working groups consisted of the following: All members of the 2005–2008 Councils, including, Linda Birnbaum, Kendall Wallace, James Popp, George Corcoran, Kenneth Ramos, Cheryl Walker, Gary Carlson, Janice Chambers, Martin Philbert, Norbert Kaminski, William Slikker, Bruce Fowler, Elaine Faustman, Michael Holsapple, Yvonne Dragan, Scott Burchiel, Elaine Knight, Kim Boekelheide, and Denise Robinson-Gravatt. Association Innovation and Management leadership and staff including Shawn Lamb, (SOT Executive Director), Clarissa Russell Wilson (SOT Deputy Executive Director), Marcia Lawson (SOT Headquarters Staff), Betty Eidemiller Headquarters Staff) and Mary Cohen (SOT Communications Consultant) participated at most or all stages of the planning process. In the latter stages of strategic planning, the 2007–2008 Council assembled under Tracks of Work—Science (Denise Robinson-Gravatt, Cheryl Walker), Communications (Scott Burchiel, Elaine Knight), Future (Jan Chambers, Jim Popp), Members (George Corcoran, Clarissa Wilson), Organizational Alignment (Kim Boekelheide, Shawn Lamb, William Slikker).

All those acknowledged here, and others not acknowledged by name, contributed materially to this final product. Their insightful efforts greatly strengthened the final Strategic Plan.