



Advancing Microscopy and Microanalysis

## **Mission**

The Microscopy Society of America (MSA) is a collaborative community dedicated to fostering research, innovation, advancement, and promotion of microscopy

## **Vision**

The Microscopy Society of America enables the discoveries that positively impact the course of humanity

## **Strategic Development Plan**

# MSA Strategic Development Plan

## Mission and Vision

**Mission:** The Microscopy Society of America (MSA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enabling the discoveries that positively impact the course of humanity.

**Vision:** The Microscopy Society of America (MSA) is a collaborative community dedicated to fostering research, innovation, advancement, and promotion of microscopy.

**Leadership:** MSA provides global leadership especially in relation to these areas:

- Uncovering the inner secrets of life and biological sciences
- Exploring the physical and materials sciences
- Discovering the big world of micro through education and outreach

**Core values:**

- Scientific excellence
- Integrity, transparency, and accountability
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Community building

## MSA Strategic Priorities

In August 2022, MSA agreed a new mission and vision, along with commitment to a strategic plan to support the following priorities:

- **Discovery:** Promote use of microscopy and microanalysis techniques as fundamental to scientific discovery, to connect communities
- **Community:** Increase MSA brand visibility concurrent with promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and transparency, while providing for members' professional development
- **Advocacy:** Offer leadership in outreach, advocacy, education
- **Performance:** reporting, accountability, and financial performance

With these points in mind, it is critical that MSA commit to creating a new framework: a 3-year strategic **development plan** that offers tools for organization, for support, for evaluating performance and readjusting as needed, and for reporting.

In summary, MSA needs to continue to evolve with these broad priorities in the context of building upon MSA's successful foundation and both **enhancing and expanding** the microscopy community i.e., MSA will move forward creating a strategic development plan with an organizational framework that will serve as an empowerment engine for current and future leadership.

## Introduction

MSA is a vibrant and robust organization that has grown over the last 80 years to include over 2,144 members and touch many more in the scientific community through our meetings, publications, and programs. We have always stood for the best science and education, strong evidence-based policy, and inclusiveness in the scientific workforce.

The MSA represents a diverse, innovative community working at the interface of the biological and physical sciences. New tools and interdisciplinary collaborations are expanding the study of microscopy and microanalysis, with funding support for the scientific workforce changing the career paths for early career scientists, and therein offers an opportunity for MSA to expand its leadership for both today's and tomorrow's scientific communities.

As such, for MSA to evolve and remain a vital society for our members, we must address the changing times and meet our community's needs. Fortunately, we have many strengths to build on, including dedicated groups of volunteers, worldwide societal alliances, a strong history in the advocacy area, and the broad, interdisciplinary nature of microscopy and microanalysis, with tangible impacts both local and global.

Further, our vision as a collaborative community is dedicated to fostering research, innovation, advancement, and promotion of microscopy. MSA members enable the discoveries that positively impact the course of humanity. As MSA members we punch well above our weight, and we are the linchpins to global interconnected communities. And pragmatically, MSA has been prudent and created a reserve, so we are well positioned to make the investments we need to launch new initiatives that will take us to the next level. With the new Strategic Development Plan as a foundation, MSA will continue to advance scientific excellence, integrity and transparency, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and community building.

## I. Overview of Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority	Actions
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNITY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MSA will be recognized as a diverse and inclusive global community, providing for professional development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a leadership development program for members</li> <li>• Leverage publications to both identify and to offer opportunities for emerging leaders</li> <li>• Create professional development resources</li> <li>• Develop annual programming to support career development and enhancement year-round</li> <li>• Solicit membership input through periodic surveys, evaluating our efforts</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DISCOVERY</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MSA will promote microscopy and microanalysis as fundamental to scientific discovery, connecting communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue new scientific areas for expansion of membership and/or partnerships</li> <li>• Grow the meeting and sustain membership</li> <li>• Develop partnerships with other organizations to encourage cross-disciplinary and complementary cooperation</li> <li>• Further develop MSA publications to establish MSA as the publishing destination for all</li> <li>• Enhance industry collaborations, advancing opportunities</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADVOCACY</b></p> <p><b>MSA will foster discovery, empowerment, and engagement: expand leadership in science outreach, advocacy, and education, including both public policy and public science literacy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create &amp; define MSA’s policy and advocacy voice</li> <li>• Promote science outreach as a core value</li> <li>• Create microscopy resource toolkits for public audiences, particularly educators</li> <li>• Strengthen MSA’s digital presence as a resource</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERFORMANCE</b></p> <p><b>MSA will invest, grow, and diversify MSA revenue channels, with view toward performance: integrity, transparency and accountability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular evaluations of non-revenue generating programs to analyze competitiveness, member need, and quality</li> <li>• Grow the publishing program in number of titles and content</li> <li>• Invest in &amp; develop a robust learning management system (LMS) database for members and those who aren’t members yet, and catalyzing new memberships</li> <li>• Explore and, if viable, establish new revenue sources, including fundraising</li> </ul>

## II. Strategic Priorities

### 1. Community

- **Enhance the society by ensuring leadership and decision making represents MSA's increasingly diverse membership, their interests, and their priorities**
- **Develop and invest in the MSA brand to become the essential professional (career) development organization for all members in each stage of their career journey**

*Goal: As defined in the two bullets above*

#### **What this strategic priority means to the organization**

- a. MSA has long aspired to be inclusive and to represent a diverse range of scientific fields and backgrounds. To remain a vibrant professional society that is looking toward the microscopy and microanalysis of the future, MSA needs to engage individuals across the entire spectrum of microscopy and microanalysis and the many scientific fields that utilize microscopy.

In a complementary step, we believe that the promotion of inclusiveness and transparency, and communication to the membership about these efforts, will make MSA more welcoming to (and more representative of) a wider range of scientists: encouraging and making it possible for a wider spectrum of members to participate on committees, present at meetings, and assume leadership positions.

- b. In the changing scientific and industry landscape, it is critical that microscopists and their respective career progression have access to resources, services, and

networks that help them advance and be more effective in their professional lives.

MSA is ideally positioned to provide information that raises members' awareness of career options, training that builds members' professional skills across career stages, and offers networking and connections that enable members to pursue diverse career paths that take full advantage of their scientific expertise.

## Key Actions

1. **Create a leadership development program for members**
  - a. seeking volunteer leadership roles within the society
  - b. supported by promotion: a robust nomination, committee, and initiatives recruitment process to increase transparency, member involvement, and inclusiveness
2. **Leverage publications** as a vehicle to both identify and to offer opportunities for emerging leaders
3. **Create professional development resources** (e.g., via an LMS) for
  - a. all member types (e.g., academic, industry; biologists, materials scientists; early careers scientists, mid-career, established)
  - b. affiliate societies (e.g., how to plan a meeting; how to promote a meeting; how to establish a website; conference management - commerce and financial sustainability, etc.)
4. **Develop annual programming to support career development and enhancement year-round (e.g., webinars; mentorship; policy)**  
*NB: Develop (expand and capture) professional development offerings at M&M*
5. **Solicit membership input through periodic surveys to evaluate our efforts**

## 2. Discovery

- Promote microscopy and microanalysis as fundamental to scientific discovery, to connect communities

**Goal:** Position MSA as essential to the biological and materials research communities: promote microscopy and microanalysis as fundamental to scientific research to diversify membership, expand partnerships with related disciplines and societies, and inspire others to see themselves as microscopists

### What this strategic priority means to the organization

MSA's vitality and influence depend on the ability to attract new members while remaining relevant to existing members. As microscopy and microanalysis evolves, so must MSA. Recognizing that science is increasingly a multi-disciplinary endeavor, and that everyone benefits when scientists from complementary fields interact, MSA should

define itself as broadly as possible and position itself as a facilitator of cross-disciplinary interactions.

Important areas for growth are in clinically and industry relevant research. A successful effort to draw in members from new disciplines will result in a win-win situation for the society and its members, old and new.

### Key Actions

1. **Pursue the following scientific areas for expansion** of membership and/or partnership with other organizations. These areas should be reviewed by the Executive Council annually (perhaps alongside M&M programming). Primary areas to be explore:
  - Clinical: microscopy and microanalysis in disease
  - Quantitative approaches to microscopy and microanalysis
  - Instrumentation
  - Artificial intelligence and image analysis
2. **Grow the meeting and sustain members** in those areas by having a sustained focus on selected overarching scientific topics at M&M to maintain core microscopy and microanalysis while expanding into the priority science areas
3. **Develop partnerships with other organizations** (e.g., the *Microscopy Today* Micrograph competition) to encourage cross-disciplinary and complementary cooperation, including the possibility of joint promotions with other societies (e.g., MSA-RMS meetings promotion)
4. **Employ publications development:**
  - New titles and/or thematic issues: to establish MSA as the publishing destination for new or emerging fields
  - *Micrographia* as a publication outlet for worldwide microscopy
5. **Enhance MSA's ability to liaise with the industry sector** and increase our level of sophistication in understanding opportunities and being proactive

### 3. Advocacy

- **Offer leadership: outreach, advocacy, education**

*Goal: Foster discovery, empowerment, and engagement: expand leadership in science outreach, advocacy, and education, including both public policy and public science literacy*

#### **What this strategic priority means to the organization**

The MSA recognizes and commits to the scholarship of engagement and public outreach. We believe that scientists should embrace the idea that they have a responsibility to the public to disseminate knowledge and to be an active partner in

inspiring the next generation of scientists. MSA will be viewed as a leader in science policy, advocacy, and outreach.

#### Key Actions

1. **Create / define MSA's policy and advocacy voice**
2. **Promote science outreach as a core value** of MSA and its members
3. **Create microscopy resource toolkits** to be used with public audiences and particularly educators
4. **Strengthen MSA's digital presence** (social media, electronic communication, and website) to increase reach and impact of the outreach and policy programs

#### 4. Performance

- **Financial performance, reporting, accountability, and adjustments**

*Goal: Invest, grow, and diversify MSA revenue channels*

#### What this strategic priority means to the organization

Sound and growing finances are needed for an organization to flourish. MSA must both grow our traditional revenue sources of membership, meetings, and publications, as well as expand into untapped and new sources of revenue for MSA's future: program growth and reserves.

To both consider and to pursue new opportunities for funding and grow revenue channels, our approach must be carefully considered with key decisions to be made based on existing foundations and compelling evidence.

#### Key Actions

1. **Conduct a regular review of non-revenue generating programs** to analyze their competitiveness, member need, and quality
2. **Grow the publishing program** in number of titles and output
3. **Develop a robust learning management system (LMS) database** that has wide appeal to members and to those who are not yet members, catalyzing new memberships
4. **Explore and, if viable, establish new revenue sources**, including fundraising

#### III. Organizational Support

*Goal: Adequately support implementation of strategy through a number of platform building activities*

## What this means for the organization

For these strategic priorities to be successful, the organization needs to undertake several supporting actions. These are cross-cutting actions that will provide a solid foundation for the rest of the strategic plan.

### Key Actions

1. **Use the new MSA website as an engagement and strategic priorities development tool**
2. **Strengthen digital communication** through improvements and updates to the new MSA website
3. **Track and evaluate performance data for evidence-based decision making**
4. **Construct and implement a regular member survey**
5. **Establish transparent reporting:** publicly accessible, including an annual President's Report (e.g. that will be published on the MSA website and in *Microscopy Today*)

## IV. Strategic Plan Development - Teams

This Strategic Development Plan will require the diligence and candor of several committees, including representatives that are member volunteers, Executive Council members, and members of the MSA management and meeting organization staff.

These planning teams will work together to meet our goals, while keeping our eyes on MSA's horizon and our pulse on the MSA community:

### **EITHER DRAW FROM THE EXISTING COMMITTEES**

### **AND/OR**

### **CREATE COMMITTEES FIXED TO EACH STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

- Community Committee (NB: DEI, career and professional development)
- Discovery Committee
- Advocacy Committee
- Performance Committee