TOWARDS TRUE DIVERSITY IN STEM

SACNAS Five-Year Strategic Plan: 2016 - 2021
Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) has a bold vision—achieve true diversity in STEM. **True diversity means the field, including leadership positions, proportionately reflects the demographics of the population.**

SACNAS is the nation’s largest multicultural and multidisciplinary STEM diversity organization and has a 40+ year history of direct service, advocacy, and thought leadership. SACNAS is broadly inclusive with a specific focus on Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans, which represent the largest growing minority demographic and the most chronically underserved population respectively. We have nearly 6,000 members, 115 student and professional chapters, and serve a larger community of over 20,000.

There is so much critical work ahead. Analysis of national data on diversity in the STEM workforce and for STEM degree attainment by underrepresented minorities (URM) shows that, over the last 40 years, the situation has not improved significantly, particularly in consideration of the projected demographic shift that will result in current minority populations becoming the majority by 2050.

Our efforts toward improving STEM diversity are also threatened by the looming dramatic cuts in government funding for scientific agencies. Many of the support systems that have been established over decades of collective effort will disappear.

The 2016 – 2021 Strategic Plan unites our deep experience, knowledge, and success in a proactive and assertive plan that will induce the type of sweeping change envisioned when SACNAS was originally founded.
Since our founding in 1973, SACNAS has changed lives. We have opened the doors of opportunity and access to thousands of students and professionals by helping build their confidence, introducing them to a network of mentors, and creating space for them to learn about graduate schools and careers. Now it is time to turn this individual impact into large-scale impact, creating a critical mass of STEM leaders from underrepresented communities.
PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Board of Directors, staff and SACNAS members participated in a comprehensive, thoughtful, and transformative strategic planning process facilitated by the Center for Nonprofit Management that included the following:

- Convening a Strategic Planning Task Force to co-plan and oversee the planning process
- One-on-one, in-person interviews with internal and external stakeholders
- Online membership survey with 384 completed surveys
- Review of internal organizational documents, including the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan Vision 2020, financial and organizational structure information, conference materials, and other organizational materials
- Research, analysis, and updating of our understanding of economic, social, and cultural external environmental changes
- Development of an environmental scan and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)
- Facilitated meetings and full-day retreats with the board of directors
- Meetings and discussions with staff
- Development of a framework of organizational goals, strategies, and recommendations
- Preparation of an implementation plan for the strategic-plan
- Board review, approval, and adoption of the full strategic plan

The strategic plan, covering the period 2016 to 2021, was created through a series of full board retreats, Strategic Planning Task Force working sessions, and staff working sessions. Key findings from the research and retreat discussions were closely considered; significant internal and external issues and factors were integrated into the process and the Vision 2020 document, which served as a launching pad. The board engaged in multiple discussions, addressing key issues facing SACNAS, STEM, the membership, and considered history, current environment, and future opportunities in developing the future direction for SACNAS. From these discussions, the following key areas of focus emerged:
Increase Relevance – SACNAS must grow and evolve to remain relevant to all its key constituents – students, faculty, academic administration, and professionals.

Focus on Target Audiences – SACNAS serves several key stakeholder groups, with a focus on undergraduate and graduate students in STEM fields, and will continue to consider how to successfully engage and support other target audiences.

Increase Inclusivity – Inclusivity will be expanded in three target areas:
  - All scientific disciplines
  - Students studying for master’s degrees as well as PhDs
  - While the academic sector is a high priority, SACNAS will also encourage and support students in seeking employment in government and corporate sectors

Build on History and Brand – SACNAS has earned a distinguished reputation through its dedicated work over the past four decades. This reputation will be leveraged into a more cohesive and recognizable brand nationally. Doing so will further its success, widen support across sectors, and deepen impact.

Expand Opportunities – The annual conference has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of SACNAS. Beyond the conference, SACNAS will explore and develop additional programmatic opportunities to increase connection with and support of SACNAS’s membership. These additional opportunities are intended to ensure program focus, content, and quality meet the wide range of needs of SACNAS’s multiple stakeholders and ultimately increase its success and impact.

Diversify Funding Streams – Grants and conference sponsorship will remain critical to SACNAS’s success. Leadership will explore other options for funding, encouraging members, promoting affiliation, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

The SACNAS vision, updated mission, and five clear goals emerged from the key areas of discussion.
VISION: Achieving true diversity in STEM.

MISSION: Subtle yet significant modifications were made to the SACNAS mission to more accurately reflect key areas of focus.

Original mission: SACNAS is a society of scientists dedicated to fostering the success of Hispanic/Chicano and Native American scientists—from college students to professionals—to attain advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in science.

Updated mission: SACNAS is an inclusive organization dedicated to fostering the success of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans, from college students to professionals, in attaining advanced degrees, careers, and positions of leadership in STEM.

SACNAS is the largest multicultural and multidisciplinary STEM diversity organization in the country. Although our focus is on Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans, we are broadly inclusive of ethnicities and cultures (see recent participant data).

The original name of the organization was “Society for Advancement of Chicanos & Native Americans in Science.” Over the years, as times, demographics, and language have evolved, SACNAS inserted the word Hispanic into its name to reflect a broader and more inclusive ethnic demographic within underrepresented minorities. Hispanic was specifically chosen because it is the designation used by the United States Census Bureau. Recently, the order switched from Hispanics/Chicanos to Chicanos/Hispanics to honor the roots of the organization and highlight the historical, cultural, and social references of the word Chicano.

At the time of SACNAS’s founding in 1973, science was a broad term that encompassed all disciplines. With the rapid expansion of the engineering and technical sector in the 1990s, STEM became a more common way of defining the scientific endeavor. Changing the word from science to STEM modernizes the organization with relevant language and more accurately reflects the discipline diversity within SACNAS (see recent participants by discipline).
### GOALS

**Goal 1: Expand and Improve Programs and Services**
Create a broader portfolio of programs and services to support the needs of members. Expansion of national programs will support undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral students, and early- and mid-career professionals with the tools, strategies, and empowerment to advance into positions of leadership and be successful in STEM careers.

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<td>Expand educational and career opportunities at the annual national conference to enhance skills, networking, and mentoring experiences that lead to educational and career advancement.</td>
<td>Provide educational and career opportunities, tools, and resources to target members throughout the year to provide the skills and experiences that lead to advancement.</td>
<td>Formalize regional meeting program structure to support student membership engagement in educational, career, scientific, and leadership development.</td>
<td>Formalize the professional chapter program structure to engage professional members in developing their careers.</td>
<td>Increase Native American student and professional engagement throughout all program, volunteer, and leadership opportunities</td>
<td>Enhance cohort leadership development training by advancing the suite of specialized leadership development programs and opportunities (ALI, LPSLI).</td>
<td>Provide all target members with leadership training, including tools, skills, and experiences to advance into scientific leadership positions in STEM.</td>
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**Goal 2: Strengthen Member Networks**
Foster the SACNAS community and build on the network of members locally and nationally.

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<td>Formalize the chapter program structure and its strategic expansion to enhance localized engagement and educational, scientific, and career opportunities for members throughout the year.</td>
<td>Increase membership base to grow member engagement and loyalty and to ensure organizational viability and sustainability.</td>
<td>Connect career services and advancement opportunities to members.</td>
<td>Develop a comprehensive volunteer program structure to increase member engagement and create opportunities for giving back.</td>
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**Goal 3: Broaden National Presence and Voice**
Increase organizational voice and commitment to STEM diversity across all sectors.

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<td>Develop a plan for SACNAS to become a vital resource, expert, and leader in the national conversation and movement to diversify STEM.</td>
<td>Impact policy decisions to improve diversity in all STEM sectors to include traditionally underrepresented populations with a specific focus on the target populations of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans.</td>
<td>Position SACNAS to serve as a valuable STEM diversity resource for decision makers within STEM agencies at the state and national levels.</td>
<td>Create a plan to become a resource for industry on recruitment, hiring, and retention issues to produce a diverse STEM workforce.</td>
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**Goal 4: Invest in Organizational Capacity**
Optimize human capital, including board, employees, and partners.

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<td>Continue to formalize the finance department to non-profit, best-practices standards.</td>
<td>Continue to formalize the human resources department to non-profit, best-practices standards.</td>
<td>Create a culture of teamwork and productivity with a highly functioning, cohesive staff by developing supportive policies, procedures, and activities.</td>
<td>Continue to build a highly functioning board reflective of non-profit best practices.</td>
<td>Develop the grants administrative and management structure.</td>
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**Goal 5: Invest in Infrastructure**
Ensure investment in technology, marketing, and fund development to support programs, people, and presence.

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<td>Develop a financial resource development plan to diversify funding streams and position SACNAS for long-term sustainability.</td>
<td>Within the financial resource development plan, create an individual and member fundraising plan to increase member engagement and financial resources, cultivating a culture of philanthropy.</td>
<td>Upgrade the Career Center infrastructure to support an enhanced program and increased sales.</td>
<td>Create an integrated, multi-pronged marketing and branding strategy to increase visibility and recognition of SACNAS.</td>
<td>Develop a cloud-based, fully integrated system that supports organizational growth.</td>
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SACNAS has developed a comprehensive implementation and assessment strategy for the plan, starting with achievable year 1 and 2 goals. All efforts within the organization are anchored within the framework of the strategic plan and ongoing data collection and analysis are integral to meeting the plan’s goals. While implementation is an iterative and evolving process, the goals are the key focal point for all our work moving forward.