The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Strategic Planning Implementation Strategy
(adopted by Council February 2019)

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) is a professional association that promotes research and education on psychological aspects of critical social issues. SPSSI brings science and evidence to human problems of the group, the community, the nation, and the increasingly important problems that have no national boundaries. SPSSI was founded in 1936, and welcomes membership to psychologists, social scientists, scholars and policy professionals who can address social issues with scientific psychology. SPSSI is an accredited NGO and has maintained active participation at the United Nations since 1991.

This strategic plan sets out SPSSI’s goals for the next 3-5 years. It provides rough timetables and guidelines to build on our science and foster its application—by providing services to members, by enhancing our journals, and by increasing our policy activities at the local, national, and international levels. A primary goal of this plan is to infuse diversity and inclusion throughout the organization. Diversity and inclusion goals are broadly construed, made explicit, and serve as one indicator of success of the strategic plan. The health of the organization depends upon how it serves its membership’s needs and goals; the strategic plan specifies how well SPSSI meets those goals, identifies areas for evaluation and improvement, helps determine current and future program needs, and identifies ways to strengthen our infrastructure and staff capacity.

Goal 1:
Develop the explicit practice of consciously working toward diversity and inclusion in every aspect of the organization and its work. (Diversity & Inclusion)

Because this goal cross cuts across all others, achieving diversity and inclusion demands that we attend to these values in all our strategic activities. This includes (but is not limited to) attention to the composition of our editorial boards, how we identify and act on our policy priorities, as well as the ways we engage our members through conference programming, grants, and communications and outreach.

2019 objectives to be carried out by a temporary task force, reporting to the Executive Committee:

1. Identify and create a task force on diversity and inclusion. We strongly recommend having broad organizational representation on the task force as diversity and inclusion impacts the entire organization. For instance, the task force should include staff, leadership, members, and potentially non-members. It would be especially important to include individuals in organizational roles that can offer elaborated perspectives associated with the following committees: internationalization, diversity, communications, membership, early career, and graduate students.

2. The taskforce will examine current data to get a sense of current representation of the organization along several broad dimensions of diversity. The task force will also develop a survey to better understand the diversity needs and priorities of the organization including a climate and safe space assessments. Throughout the process of understanding the diversity needs and priorities, the goals will be to articulate what groups, identities, and/or perspectives should be the explicit focus of diversity and inclusion efforts. Part of this work will also include an environmental scan and benchmarking based on other successful approaches.

3. By the end of year 1, the goal would be to develop drafts of a diversity statement, action plan, and best practices recommendations. Consistent with the broader diversity and inclusion aims of the strategic plan an explicit goal will be to increase the representation and engagement of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds at all levels of the organization.
2020 objectives:

1. Work toward finalizing the diversity statement, action plan, and best practices recommendations.
2. Identify and leverage opportunities to collaborate with other organizations that have larger representation of groups, identities, and/or perspectives that are less represented within SPSSI. Seek to have collaborative research and policy events (e.g., pre-conferences). The goal will be to create intentional ‘bridges’ with other organizations (e.g., auxiliary membership to SPSSI for members of organizations like Division 45).
3. Work on opportunities to better advertise and emphasize the ways in which current programs and awards contribute to diversity and inclusion. Identify and engage opportunities to increase participation in current programs including award applications among individuals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. The goal would be to signal in words and actions the value of diversity and inclusion to the organization and its work.

2021 objectives:

1. Based on insights gained from the survey and other assessments work on implementation. The goal of year 3 would be to make sure that diversity and inclusion efforts are front facing and visible.

Goal 2:

Improve the visibility, impact, and timeliness of our journals while enhancing their financial soundness and accessibility to scientists, students, scholars, and policy professionals.

Because scholarly publishing is changing, each of the journals must position themselves in a forward-looking way, and adapt their practices to enhance the reach and reputation of our journals. The best way to meet this challenge is to generate the strongest, highest impact, most desirable publication outlets as possible.

2019 objectives to be carried out by Publications Committee and the Editors:

The first year’s goal is for each journal to generate an “innovation plan” for the coming years.

1. The Editors of each of the three journals will communicate with the Publication Committee about how the journal operates now. In conjunction with the Publication Committee, the Editors will prepare an innovation plan, where the Editors will identify the most successful practices and mission of the journal, and identify specific areas for experimenting with new processes or procedures that might increase the impact of the journals, increase availability, and reduce the time between submission and availability of published articles.

The Editors will develop this plan in collaboration with the Publication Committee, and will submit the plan to the Publication Committee by June 1, 2019. It is desirable for these plans to include a timeline with benchmarks for implementation.

2. The Publication Committee will submit the plans to the Executive Committee, with accompanying comments if they choose. The Executive Committee will present the plans to Council for discussion for the Summer 2019 meeting, voting explicitly on the items that the Executive Committee, in consultation with the Executive Director, deem necessary. The Publication Committee will communicate with the Editors, and oversee the approved plans.

The exact content of the innovation plans are the responsibility of the Editors and Publication Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee discussed these issues for the individual journals, which the Editors and Publication Committee may use as they prefer.

- Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy (ASAF). ASAF has the potential to be the empirical “front door to SPSSI,” the most accessible journal for readership and publication. An innovation plan might focus on making the journal more attractive to authors.
Editors and the publications committee might consider whether the name of the journal is serving this mission well. Psychology is not in the name, which could contribute to confusion among potential authors. This working group will develop a plan, which may include surveying authors, revisiting marketing strategy, and exploring alternate visionary direction to build interest for potential authors.

- *Journal of Social Issues (JSI)*. JSI is SPSSI's oldest and most important source of revenue. Its impact is good, but there is room for growth. Two main challenges are timeliness (the underlying structure of review is slow) and access (special issue format limits opportunities). These problems with JSI have long been recognized, but SPSSI has not made progress in addressing them. The goals are to make changes addressing the problems of timeliness and access, and to increase impact by considering increasing contributions by authors likely to contribute attention-getting papers.

Editors and the Publications Committee will develop a plan, which may explore changes to address the constraints posed by the format, new topical avenues, and improvements for soliciting authors.

- *Social Issues and Policy Review (SIPR)*, as a review journal, SIPR leads our other journals in citation impact. The strategic planning committee encourages the Editors to build on the strength of SIPR's visibility, develop, and implement strategies to recruit a diverse and inclusive pipeline of high-quality authors to write for SIPR.

Editors and the Publications Committee will explore a plan to include prioritization of focus areas and enhanced recruitment strategies.

**2020 objectives to be carried out by Editors with the assistance of the Publications Committee**

Beginning at the end of Year 1, and carrying into Year 2, implementation of the innovation plans begins. Pending Council approval at the 2019 summer meeting, Editors will be asked to implement the plan. The Publications Committee will oversee these plans, and will work with Central Office on matters of coordination and the use of resources.

The Publication Committee, in collaboration with the Editors and Executive Committee, will specify how the effects of the innovation plans will be evaluated.

The Publication Committee will report on progress toward achieving benchmarks in the innovation plan implementation at each SPSSI Council meeting throughout the three years.

**2021 objectives to be carried out by the Publications Committee with the assistance of Editors**

Beginning in 2020, the Publication Committee will begin to evaluate the effects of implementation of the plans. At the Summer Council meeting in 2020 the Publication Committee will communicate to Council how it will evaluate the effects of the innovation plans. The Publication Committee will provide an outline of how it will carry out evaluations, and at the summer 2020 meeting will make a preliminary report to Council on the innovation plans, their status and outcomes.

Across all three years, the Executive Committee will coordinate with the Publication Committee and Central Office to meet the objectives of Goal 2.
Goal 3:
Continue to be a source of non-partisan psychological science, encouraging evidence-based policy-making and advocacy, building capacity among its members to promote its policy priorities, and using collaborations to amplify its voice and impact, in an effort to promote a more socially just world through its programs.

2019 objectives to be carried out by the Policy Committee:
BUILD – In seeking to honor SPSSI’s legacy and respond to the major social issues of our time, SPSSI will carry out a member-driven process to identify policy priorities, while balancing SPSSI capabilities.

1. In identifying policy priorities, SPSSI will consider:
   a. How broadly or narrowly to define its policy priorities (e.g., “poverty” versus “addressing the structural barriers that maintain homelessness”); and
   b. To what extent SPSSI’s policy priorities might be focused at various levels of governance (e.g., state/local, national, international, institutional)

2. Build relationships with media and those connected to the media (think tanks) to make our research more available to the public.

3. Engage graduate students in educational and training-focused opportunities to enhance their own capacity to do policy work grounded in psychological science (e.g., a webinar on how to secure an internship with one’s local/state lawmaker, social media content on policy-relevant internships and fellowships).

2020 objectives:
ALIGN – SPSSI will align existing policy programs with its policy priorities, seeking to improve the success and impact of its policy programs, and weave its policy priorities into other areas of SPSSI programming.

• “Other” areas of SPSSI programming might include, for example, publications, conferences, awards, and grants

2021 objectives:
EXPAND – Drawing from the insights of its members and existing program evaluation, SPSSI will both re-energize less often utilized activities, as well as pilot new policy-focused activities that align with its policy priorities, capitalize on strategic partnerships, and heighten the success and impact of the organization.

• In this phase, policy-focused activities might include creation of a virtual speaker board, white papers, policy briefs, amicus briefs, visits with state-level lawmakers, expert witnesses in court, op-eds, videos, media training, etc.

Goal 4:
Conduct process, outcome, and cost/benefit analyses of existing SPSSI functions as well as assess future SPSSI needs. (Program Evaluation)

2019 objectives:

(Analysis/Inventory) – Assigned, prioritized task forces will examine programmatic functions including membership, policy, research support, research activities, and communications. Parallel to this effort, the taskforce(s) will:

1. Consider leadership, volunteer member, and staff contributions to each of the programmatic functions including cost and time commitments.

2. Prioritize needs for evaluation regarding each area of programmatic functions.

3. Determine the adequacy of current procedures including grant, fellowship, and award winner evaluations and enhance the process as needed.

4. Identify any oversight needed by the Central Office in “monitoring” committees to ensure that they accomplish the work assigned to them, or vet new ideas/programs as we are in the process of streaming
and evaluating program offerings.

5. This taskforce will report back to the Executive Committee, which will oversee this taskforce

2020 objectives:

Assessment – SPSSI will develop new measures for any previously unassessed new and old initiatives. This may include:
1. Assigning staff and inviting membership to collect data using new and existing instruments for all programs and projects.
2. Conducting cost/benefit analyses for high priority items from list generated in year1.

2021 objectives:

Continued Evaluation and Consideration of Future Needs – SPSSI will continue to consider effectiveness of existing functions by:
1. Engaging in regular and routine assessment of SPSSI membership, staff and leadership needs, wants, and expectations.
2. Adjusting value assignments to various programs. This will include considering the termination of ineffective programming or allotting additional resources to ongoing successful programming.
3. Tracking membership engagement as it is related to evaluation processes.

Goal 5:
Use program evaluation to meet the needs of SPSSI membership with conference programming, grants & programs, communications, & outreach. (Member Engagement)

2019 objectives to be carried out by the Membership Committee:
Assessment
1. Assess levels of membership engagement among SPSSI constituent groups to help inform and determine membership renewal outreach; explicitly consider undergraduate involvement, members from outside the US, non-members, and others.
2. Examine patterns of how individuals change their membership engagement over time by developing a ladder of engagement.
3. Assess the structure of membership-related committees.
4. Reexamine the join process and renewal process to include a requirement for member information updates. Reexamine all point-of-entry information collection.

2020 objectives
Programming & Branding
1. Undertake SPSSI branding efforts including mission statement, creation of SPSSI materials such as brochures, nametags for staff and board, pull up signs, and other signage.
2. Work with program evaluation group to make program recommendations based on their program evaluation and our assessment of member level of engagement; decide on program expansion or contraction.
3. Work with program evaluation group to streamline a process for improved committee, leadership, and/staff communication.

2021 objectives
Communication & Networking
1. Creative communication to current members informed by strategic planning and program evaluation.
2. Build relationships with other organizations where SPSSI can have a presence or programming track at conferences.
3. Expand our networking and outreach through targeted social media and programming to social scientists and others interested in our issues.
Goal 6:
SPSSI will continue to build capacity related to SPSSI staff, technology, and infrastructure. (Capacity Building)

2019 objectives to be carried out by staff and SPSSI’s Executive Committee:

**Assessment** - SPSSI will consider current operational needs along with current organizational resources to meet those needs, including:

1. Paid staff and volunteer role responsibilities; examining the need for additional staff and the adequacy of staff salary, benefits, and professional development; examining corresponding committee functions and current internal volunteer/staff communications.
2. Current technological capabilities, information, and technological security.
3. Recruitment of appropriate tenant/occupant to rent available space in Central Office.

**2020 objectives**

**Alignment** - SPSSI will align organizational needs with staff, technology, and infrastructure needs and will consider:

1. Identifying opportunities to meet staff and committee development goals; examination of organizational structure.
2. Exploring services to enhance SPSSI’s website and web-based functions including and not limited to staff and current vendor capability, cloud storage, and an audit of technical equipment.
3. Retention or revision of tenant/occupant relationship.

**2021 objectives**

**Evaluation** - SPSSI will determine if plans continue to build capacity by:

1. Assessing adequacy of infrastructure and resources (i.e., staff and volunteers).
2. Assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of technology.
3. Assess adequacy of Central Office workspace, technical equipment, and building usage.

**Oversight and Execution of the Plan**

Oversight of this plan will be conducted by the Executive Committee and Council. At the start of the calendar year, special task forces will be appointed by the President as needed and Chairs of each committee will receive their charge consistent with the goals and directive of the strategic plan. They will be asked to develop detailed implementation plans that outline specific tasks, persons responsible and due dates. It is anticipated that regular updates and reports will be made to Council at least twice during the calendar year. Council will meet at the end of the year to review final progress on yearly objectives and adapt next year’s goal based on progress. Yearly updates on progress and upcoming goals will be made to membership.