SCN Strategic Planning Committee, Part I

Executive Summary Report

July 26, 2022

Strategic Planning Committee Members:

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- Lynette Abrams-Silva, PhD, ABPP (Co-Chair) – University of New Mexico
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Background of SCN Strategic Planning Process:

In 2020, the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology’s (SCN) Executive Committee (EC) established an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) charged with assessing the SCN stakeholders in order to inform the development of a strategic plan. The SPC was selected by the EC and comprised of SCN members who responded to an open call for self-nominations or were invited to join. The SPC was intentionally comprised of individuals with diverse cultural identities, regional locations, and areas of expertise, working in different settings and representing different career stages. The SPC began its work in October 2020 and virtually met bi-weekly through the spring of 2022.

The SCN EC made several commitments to the SPC at the onset of the strategic planning process. This included a stated willingness to 1) provide full transparency regarding the information learned through this process, 2) consider the information learned as a guide to inform the future direction of SCN, and 3) make significant structural changes to SCN, if required, based on the information learned.

At the outset, the SPC made a commitment to conducting this process in a manner that prioritized equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) at every juncture. This included assuring that 1) outreach for feedback would extend beyond traditional circles and to those who may have been marginalized or excluded by SCN, 2) the information solicited from stakeholders would explicitly include EDI concerns, and 3) that there would be transparency and openness to sharing all learned information within and beyond SCN.

Based on the SPC’s recommendation, the SCN EC hired nationally renowned consultants from the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness to assist in the review of SCN’s historical data and conduct semi-structured, qualitative interviews with members of the SCN EC, as well as four focus groups with diverse stakeholders. These focus groups included 1) students, 2) early career psychologists, 3) representatives from the Hispanic Neuropsychological Society (HNS), Society of Black Neuropsychology (SBN), Queer Neuropsychological Society (QNS), Asian Neuropsychological Association (ANA), and SCN Ethnic and Minority Affairs Committee (EMA), and 4) representatives from the American Academy of Clinical Neuropsychology (AACN), American Board of Professional Neuropsychology (ABN), and American Academy of Pediatric Neuropsychology (AAPdN). Representatives from the International Neuropsychological Society (INS) declined an
invitation to participate and representatives from the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN) were not able to attend.

This process was completed in June 2021 and a formal technical report was drafted by the consultants.

**Interviews & Focus Groups:**

Seven major themes emerged from the consultants’ interviews with the SCN EC:

- Advocacy and SCN’s relationship with APA
- Task execution and accountability
- Member engagement
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Member career support and development
- Financial health
- Identity and branding

Five major themes emerged from the focus group interviews. Each theme had a degree of overlap with the corresponding theme found in the SCN EC member interviews.

- Advocacy and relationship with APA
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Early member career support and development
- Value of membership
- Serving as a hub for neuropsychology

**SCN Strategic Planning Survey:**

The information from a review of historical SCN documents, and interviews with the EC and focus groups, became the foundation for the SCN strategic planning survey. The core goals of the survey were to assess stakeholders’ opinions about the historical and current strengths and weaknesses of SCN, assess the degree to which individuals believed that they and their needs were represented by SCN, evaluate issues related to EDI within SCN, and to identify the areas SCN should prioritize when investing future efforts and resources. The survey was widely promoted and disseminated across SCN’s and most other neuropsychology organizations’ listservs and social media channels from October 2021 to January 2022. Over 1000 people completed parts of the survey, with over 700 people responding to the majority of questions.

*Please note that data/percentages outlined in the below sections correspond to the percentage of individuals who completed each specific question, and not the total number of individuals who initiated the survey.*

**Demographics of respondents.** Of all respondents, 24% identified as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and 74% identified as white. Of the respondents who identified as BIPOC, 35% identified as Latino/a/x or Spanish, 25% as Asian or Asian American, 19% as Black or African American, 9% as American Indian, Alaska Native, and/or Indigenous, 5% as Southeast Asian, 4% as Arab American, Middle Eastern, or North African, and 1% as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Eighteen percent identified as bi/multi-racial and 5% identified as having a race or ethnicity that was not listed on the survey.
Sixty-five percent of respondents identified as Female/Woman, 33% as Male/Man, and <1% as Transgender and/or Non-binary. With respect to sexual orientation, 14% identified with a non-heterosexual orientation and 80% identified as heterosexual. Of those who did not identify as heterosexual, 44% identified as bisexual, 20% as gay, 15% as pansexual/queer, 9% as lesbian, 6% as asexual, and 6% as having a sexual orientation that was not listed on the survey.

Twenty-two percent of respondents endorsed having a disability or impairment. Of these respondents, 31% identified as having a chronic health condition, 20% a mental health condition, 16% a sensory impairment, 8% a learning disability, 6% a developmental disability, 3% a speech impairment, and 10% percent a disability or impairment that was not listed on the survey.

In terms of SCN membership, 51% were full members, 19% were student members, 9% were fellows, and 19% were either previous or never members. Of those who were previous members, 60% let their membership lapse within the last five years. Seventeen percent of respondents were currently or previously in SCN governance.

There was an even distribution of respondents with respect to career stage. Twenty-six percent of respondents were students/trainees, 22% early-career, 24% mid-career, and 22% late-career. The respondents’ work settings were also fairly evenly distributed, with 35% working in an academic medical center, 28% in a private or group practice, and 26% in a non-academic institution. The majority of respondents indicated that they were primarily engaged in clinical work (88%), though many respondents indicated that they engage in multiple areas of work. Forty percent indicated that they worked in research, 34% in teaching/education, and 14% in forensics. Most respondents work primarily with adults/older adults (71%), with the remainder of respondents working in pediatrics or lifespan.

Of all respondents, 78% indicated they were members of the American Psychological Association (APA), 61% of at least one APA division, and 30% of a State, Provincial and Territorial Psychological Association. Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated that they were members of the INS, 48% of AACN, and 48% of NAN. Six percent and 3% were members of ABN and AAPdN, respectively. With respect to membership in the cultural neuropsychological organizations, 11% indicated that they were members of HNS, 7% of SBN, 7% of ANA, and 6% of QNS.

**Satisfaction with SCN.** Overall, 72% of respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with SCN. Only 3% indicated that they were dissatisfied.

There were no significant differences in degree of satisfaction when examined by gender, sexual orientation, the presence of disability/impairment, or race/ethnicity. The percentage of students/trainees who indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with SCN (78%) was slightly greater than that of respondents at other career stages (early-career: 71%, mid-career: 65%, late-career: 72%).

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they were somewhat or extremely likely to maintain their SCN membership over the next five years (89%). Respondents expressing the opinion that SCN was very or extremely effective in promoting new perspectives within its organization indicated a higher likelihood of maintaining membership. Likewise, respondents who indicated that SCN was very or extremely effective in addressing issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion expressed a higher likelihood of maintaining membership.

**Representation within SCN.** Thirty-four percent of respondents indicated that they felt very well represented by SCN, with an additional 10% indicating that they felt extremely well-represented. Twenty-one percent indicated that they felt either slightly or not well-represented.
There were no significant differences in degree to which respondents felt represented by SCN when examined by career stage, work responsibilities, work population, gender, sexual orientation, the presence of disability/impairment, or race/ethnicity.

When examined by race/ethnicity, 36% of BIPOC and 50% of white respondents indicated that they felt either very or extremely well-represented. Thirty one percent of BIPOC and 16% of white respondents indicated that they felt either slightly or not well-represented. Similarly, compared to white respondents (21%), a greater percentage of BIPOC respondents indicated that SCN was either slightly or not effective in BIPOC representation in its programs, presentations, and initiatives (42%).

**SCN Membership Benefits.** The majority of respondents indicated that they were a member of SCN because membership afforded them the opportunity to keep abreast of professional issues. The greatest number of respondents also indicated that they were a member of SCN for reasons related to advocacy, networking, and professional identity.

An equal number of respondents (22%) indicated that opportunities for networking and professional advocacy were the most valuable benefits of SCN membership currently offered.

Forty percent of respondents indicated that on-demand webinars are the most valuable membership benefit that SCN could offer. Continuing Education (CE) offerings and having access to an active listserv, as opposed to an information only listserv, were each identified by 32% of respondents as potential membership benefits of value. Fifty percent of respondents indicated that they were interested in having SCN offer CEs, if provided at a reduced rate for members. Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that they would be either somewhat or extremely likely to participate in an in-person stand-alone SCN meeting, if offered. A greater percentage of respondents (71%) indicated that they would be either somewhat or extremely likely to attend a virtual stand-alone SCN meeting.

There was significant variability amongst respondents in how personally useful they found various existing SCN member resources (i.e., SCN newsletter (Neuroblast), social media, website, listserv, and training directory). Variability was observed overall and between respondents at different career stages. Irrespective of whether respondents found these resources personally useful or not, most indicated that they were important to the specialty.

**Challenges Facing Neuropsychology.** The majority of respondents indicated that one of the most important issues facing neuropsychology is outdated normative reference data (64%). Other most important issues identified by respondents included a lack of diversity in neuropsychology (50%), insurance reimbursement (41%), poor understanding of neuropsychology by those outside the specialty (36%), inadequate understanding of how diversity affects assessment outcomes (34%), and challenges associated with tele-neuropsychology (33%).

A greater percentage of BIPOC than white respondents identified a lack of diversity in neuropsychology (69% versus 42%) and an inadequate understanding of how issues of diversity affect assessment outcomes (45% versus 41%) as one of the most important issues facing neuropsychology.

With respect to career stage, a greater percentage of students/trainees (70%) identified a lack of diversity in neuropsychology as one of the most important issues facing neuropsychology, compared to respondents at other career stages (early-career: 54%, mid-career: 40%, late-career: 27%). Similarly, a greater percentage of students/trainees (45%) identified an inadequate understanding of how issues of diversity affect assessment outcomes as one of the most important issues facing neuropsychology, compared to respondents at other career stages (early-career: 35%, mid-career: 30%, late-career: 26%).
**Work-Related Challenges.** When asked what the most significant work-related challenges are, the most frequently endorsed responses were 1) fair compensation for the level of expertise and work performed, 46%, 2) burnout, 41% 3) work-life integration issues, 36% and 4) outdated tests and/or testing methods, 34%.

The most commonly endorsed work-related challenges did not significantly vary depending upon race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or career stage, but there were some differences in the percentages of respondents within each group that identified each as a significant challenge.

BIPOC respondents identified the need for mentorship as the fifth most significant work-related challenge. The percentage of BIPOC respondents who identified the need for mentorship as a significant work-related challenge (31%) was greater than that of whites (12%).

A greater percentage of respondents who identified as female/woman, when compared to those who identified as male/men, indicated that burnout (44% vs. 33%), unreasonable productivity demands (29% vs. 20%), and limited opportunities for career advancement (22% vs 12%) were significant work-related challenges.

With respect to career stage, a greater percentage of students/trainees identified burnout (54%) as a significant work-related challenge than respondents at other career stages (early-career: 39%, mid-career: 45%; late-career: 30%). A greater percentage of students/trainees also identified the need for mentorship (35%) as a significant work-related challenge (early-career: 17%, mid-career: 10%, late-career: 2%).

**Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.** Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that SCN was very or extremely effective in addressing issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, while 16% indicated that SCN was slightly effective or not effective in doing so. Similarly, 44% of respondents indicated that SCN was effective in demonstrating a commitment to being an anti-racist and anti-oppression organization, whereas 18% indicated that SCN was slightly effective or not effective in doing so.

A greater percentage of BIPOC identified respondents (29%) indicated that SCN was slightly or not effective in addressing issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion than white identified respondents (12%). There were no other significant differences when examined by other demographic variables.

Thirty-two percent of respondents who identified as BIPOC, 28% with a sexual orientation(s) other than heterosexual, and 27% as having a disability/impairment indicated that SCN was slightly or not effective in demonstrating a commitment to being an anti-racist and anti-oppression organization. In comparison, 48% of respondents who identified as white, 16% as heterosexual, and 25% as not having a disability/impairment indicated that SCN was slightly or not effective in demonstrating a commitment to being an anti-racist and anti-oppression organization.

Thirty-one percent of respondents indicated that SCN was very or extremely effective in promoting new perspectives within its organization. Twenty-two percent of respondents indicated that SCN was slightly effective or not effective in doing so. A similar number of respondents indicated that SCN was either slightly effective or not effective in promoting the participation of diverse individuals within its governance.

A greater percentage of students/trainees (35%) indicated that SCN was very or extremely effective in promoting new perspectives within its organization compared to respondents at other career stages (early-career: 22%, mid-career: 25%, late-career: 26%). A greater percentage of respondents who identified as BIPOC (32%) or of a sexual orientation(s) other than heterosexual (28%) indicated that SCN was slightly
or not effective in promoting the participation of diverse individuals within its governance, compared to white (14%) and heterosexual identified respondents (16%), respectively.

The majority of respondents indicated a belief that mentoring/nurturing of BIPOC participation (80%), more active BIPOC recruiting (76%), and providing education opportunities for potential BIPOC leaders (65%), would be very or extremely effective in increasing BIPOC participation in SCN governance. Compared to white respondents, a greater percentage of BIPOC respondents indicated that they believe more active recruiting of individuals who identify as BIPOC (58% vs. 34%) and anti-racism training for existing SCN leadership (34% vs. 15%) would be extremely effective in promoting BIPOC participation in SCN governance.

The lack of a critical mass of visible BIPOC members in SCN was the most commonly identified barrier to achieving greater BIPOC participation in SCN governance (63%). A comparable percentage of BIPOC (69%) and white (61%) respondents indicated that a lack of critical mass of visible BIPOC members in SCN was a barrier to achieving greater BIPOC participation in SCN governance. In contrast, greater percentages of BIPOC than white respondents indicated that barriers to BIPOC participation include SCN’s lack of demonstrated sensitivity to issues of concern to BIPOC identified individuals (61% vs. 39%), ineffective communication of opportunities (42% vs. 16%), and ineffective communication of a sense of belonging (41% vs. 17%), value (37% vs. 15%), and respect for BIPOC contributions (16% vs. 4%).

The largest percentage of respondents (39%) identified the creation of culturally reflective normative data as the most important equity, diversity, and inclusion collaborative effort in which SCN could engage. A greater percentage of white respondents (43%) compared to BIPOC respondents (27%) indicated that the creation of culturally reflective normative data was the most important equity, diversity, and inclusion collaborative effort in which SCN could engage.

**Areas to Prioritize Efforts & Resources.** The majority of respondents (72%) indicated that SCN should prioritize its efforts and resources at increasing neuropsychology’s value to society. The other most highly endorsed areas of prioritization were increasing collaboration with APA (47%), improving EDI within neuropsychology (39%), and supporting training and education for students/trainees (31%). In accord, 32% and 20% of respondents indicated that SCN could better represent them via stronger advocacy and greater diversity, respectively. The identified areas of preferred prioritization are congruent with the majority of respondents’ expressed desires for SCN to become an organization that prioritizes advocacy, is equitable, diverse, and inclusive, serves as a unifying voice for neuropsychology, and addresses both practice and education/training needs. Although the majority of respondents (51%) indicated that SCN’s ability to engage in advocacy and collaboration with the APA distinguishes itself from other professional neuropsychological organizations, only 11% of respondents indicated that SCN was very or extremely effective in leveraging its relationship with APA.

The percentage of respondents who indicated that SCN should prioritize its efforts and resources on improving EDI within neuropsychology was greater for BIPOC (56%) than white (35%) respondents, female/woman (44%) than male/man (30%) respondents, respondents who identified having a disability/impairment (46%) than those who did not (37%), and respondents who identified of sexual orientation(s) other than heterosexual (63%) than those who identified as heterosexual (36%). The percentage of respondents who indicated that SCN should prioritize its efforts and resources on improving EDI within neuropsychology was also related to respondents’ career stage. Fifty-four percent of students/trainees and 46% of early-career respondents indicated that this should be a priority, compared to 38% of mid-career and 23% of late career respondents. A greater percentage of students/trainees (51%), retired (56%), and late-career (31%) respondents indicated that SCN should prioritize its efforts and
resources in training and education for current and future students/trainees, than did mid-career (20%) or early-career (15%) respondents. Twenty-three percent of mid-career and 25% of late career respondents indicated that SCN should prioritize its efforts and resources in leadership development training across the career span.

**Strategic Priorities:**

The SPC compiled, analyzed, and discussed the results of the interviews, focus groups, and strategic planning survey over the course of several months. Based on the information provided by the stakeholders, the committee identified five broad strategic priorities for SCN to direct its efforts and resources at improving:

- Neuropsychology’s value to society
- Advocacy and collaboration with APA
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion within the specialty
- Supports, training, and education for students and professionals across career stages
- Communication, information, and resources

**Areas of Opportunity:**

The SPC identified potential areas of opportunity for the SCN EC to address in order to enact transformational change and promote a healthy organization. These areas were identified based on their review of SCN’s historical and current documents, communication with the SCN EC, and analysis of the information provided via the interviews, focus groups, and strategic planning survey:

- Create clearer mission, priorities, and organizational goals
- Address need for clearer structural organization, connection, and communication between committees, subcommittees, and the SCN EC
- Develop clear expectations about leadership and/or committee roles and responsibilities
- Practice excellent communication and transparency between SCN and its members and other stakeholders
- Ensure adherence to the SCN bylaws
- Ensure clarity and adherence to SCN policies and procedures
- Address disenfranchisement

**Strategic Planning Committee Recommendations to the SCN EC:**

The SPC presented the summative findings from the data collection and their recommendations to the SCN EC in April 2022. The SPC discussed the potential barriers to adopting and implementing a strategic plan and outlined the need for all members of the SCN EC to demonstrate humility and active engagement in order to produce transformational change and meet the needs of SCN’s stakeholders. The SPC also made requests of the SCN EC in order to better assure the continuation of active work and completion of the strategic plan, and that the findings and recommendations would be disseminated broadly and in their entirety.

**Requests:**
• Place the Strategic Planning Committee Executive Summary, COHRE’s technical report of the findings from the historical document review, interviews, and focus groups, on a designated page on the SCN website.
• Maintain a designated social media team, similar to the Presidential Task Force on Marketing SCN, who can share responsibility in broadly disseminating the findings from the work completed and ongoing updates about the strategic planning process.
• Provide permission for the SPC to contact leaders from key stakeholder groups (e.g., ANST, Cultural Neuropsychology Council, etc.) to determine if they would be interested in discussing the results of the work completed and/or having members of our committee present and discuss the results with their constituents in a format of their desire (e.g., webinar, town hall, etc.). Continued engagement and dialogue with these stakeholder groups was also requested.
• Support submission of our findings for publication in two manuscripts, one in a broadly circulated neuropsychology journal and one in the American Psychologist.

In addition to collecting and analyzing information from diverse stakeholders, the SPC was initially charged with reviewing and revising, if necessary, the existing SCN mission and structure and developing a strategic plan for both short-term (1 to 2 years) and long-term (3 to 7 years) goals. In light of the information learned via data collection and the process of working with the SCN EC, and after extensive consideration and discussion, the SPC came to agreement that it was not in SCN’s best interests for them to independently devise plans for structural reorganization or to complete the remaining steps in the development of the strategic plan. Rather, it was agreed upon that for SCN to undergo transformational change and best meet the needs of its stakeholders, members of the EC would need to be directly involved in the next phases of the strategic planning process. The recommendation was therefore made to sunset the SPC and for the EC to formally establish a new ad-hoc committee that would be responsible for completing the strategic plan and overseeing its initial implementation. The SPC recommended that this new committee be comprised of a student/trainee and early career representative, a representative with expertise in equity, diversity, and inclusion, two to three elected SCN EC members, and for continuity, the Co-Chairs of the SPC. In June 2022, the SCN EC voted to approve the creation of this ad-hoc committee.

Next Steps:

The newly created ad-hoc committee is charged with evaluating SCN’s mission statement, defining SCN’s operating principles and guiding principles/values, and making recommendations to the SCN EC for structural, policy, procedural, and bylaw changes in order to meet the needs of SCN’s stakeholders and increase its efficiency and impact. It was recognized that the process of structural and policy change, if advised, would likely occur over an extended period of time. It was also recognized that there would be opportunities to make smaller and more targeted organizational changes in the more immediate future and that doing so was advised and in the best interests of SCN’s stakeholders. Lastly, it was recognized that efforts need to be taken to engage a greater sense of investment and active participation from and between members in SCN governance. It was recommended that actions be taken to engage SCN’s elected leaders, the SCN committee chairs, and all those in SCN governance in ongoing dialogue and efforts aimed at developing collaborative goals and specific initiatives that are consistent with the organization’s values, principles, and strategic priorities.