Strategic Plan Development
Technical Report
for the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology

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Executive Summary

The Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE) was contacted by the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology’s (SCN) ad hoc Strategic Planning committee in March of 2021 to collaborate on the development of SCN’s mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. COHRE and the Strategic Planning Committee collaboratively decided to collect information through interviews with five members of SCN’s Executive Committee and four focus groups whose participants represented multiple facets of diversity within the field of neuropsychology including but not limited to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, career stage, and practice. The overall guiding questions asked during these interviews and focus groups were:

1. Who are we?
2. What is the state of the field of Neuropsychology?
3. What are SCN’s strengths?
4. What are SCN’s current and future opportunities?

Responses to these questions were then qualitatively analyzed and summarized into distinct themes for both the interviews and focus groups, individually. The resulting seven themes from the interviews are Advocacy & Relationship with the American Psychological Association (APA); Execution and Accountability; Member Engagement; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Member Career Support & Development; Financial Viability; and Identity & Branding.

The five resulting themes from the focus groups had considerable overlap and alignment with those found in the interviews. The five focus group themes are Advocacy & Relationship with APA; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Early Member Career Support & Development; Value Proposition of Membership; and Serving as a Hub of Neuropsychology.

Table 1 shows the themes in responses to interview questions that are shared by board members and focus groups and those that are unique.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advocacy &amp; Relationship with APA</th>
<th>Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</th>
<th>Member Career Support &amp; Development</th>
<th>Member Engagement</th>
<th>Identity &amp; Branding</th>
<th>Execution and Accountability</th>
<th>Financial Viability</th>
<th>Value Proposition of Membership</th>
<th>Serving as a Hub of Neuropsychology</th>
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<td><strong>SCN Board Members</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Focus Groups</strong></td>
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<td>✓</td>
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*Table 1. Shared and unique themes in board member and focus group interview responses*
The present report serves to document and summarize opinions, attitudes, and perceptions about SCN’s current form, its possible future directions, and the environment in which it exists. The report will be used as a reference for the development of SCN’s guiding principles – specifically, its mission, vision, values, and strategic goals.

After thoroughly reviewing the findings of Phases One and Two presented in this report, SCN can initiate the following phases. Phase Three involves developing and administering a survey to collect more information about SCN and to validate the findings presented in this report. Phase Four involves creating and disseminating Pre-Workshop Materials using the findings from the previous phases. Finally, Phase Five involves conducting a series of workshops for the purpose of using all of the information collected to develop SCN’s Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals.
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Introduction

The ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee of the Society for Clinical Neuropsychology (SCN) approached the Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE) to request its aid in the development of SCN’s mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. The mission, vision, values, and strategic goals resulting from the collaboration were to align with and support those of the American Psychological Association (APA) as well as serve SCN’s membership and the larger public. The result will serve as a guiding framework for the organization’s processes, practices, and conduct.

SCN’s Strategic Planning Committee and COHRE agreed COHRE consultants would collect information that would be used at a later date to develop the mission, vision, values, and goals for the SCN Strategic Plan. Four key questions served as the foundation for the specific questions asked of participants during the interviews and focus groups:

1. Who are we?
2. What is the state of the field of Neuropsychology?
3. What are SCN’s strengths?
4. What are SCN’s current and future opportunities?

COHRE employed a multi-phase approach to collecting data in the interest of answering the questions above. Phase One included the analysis of existing documentation from SCN and other relevant organizations. This analysis provided context, historical and current, for the present project and influenced the focus of subsequent data collection efforts. Phase Two consisted of interviews and focus groups involving various stakeholders. COHRE conducted several interviews with current and past SCN Board members. Focus group participants included leadership from other professional Neuropsychological organizations, leadership from cultural specific Neuropsychological organizations, early career Neuropsychologists, and students and trainees in Neuropsychology.

The information collected from the interviews and focus group were then qualitatively analyzed to identify important, repeating and unique themes about what SCN is and what SCN should be, as well as the state of the field of Neuropsychology. Where helpful, paraphrased responses from participants are provided.

A detailed timeline of the events described can be found in Appendix J.
Phase One: Review of Existing Documentation

The project’s first phase consisted of the analysis of historical data. The purpose of the analysis was to provide historic and current context to the project. The findings were used to inform a more targeted focus for future data collection efforts (i.e., SCN Board Member interviews, stakeholder focus groups). Phase one also provided an opportunity for COHRE to compare SCN’s espoused values and goals to those of other neuropsychological organizations.

Review of Historical Data
SCN’s ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee provided COHRE with existing documentation from SCN and other relevant organizations for analysis. The documentation provided included:

- SCN bylaws
- SCN’s policy and procedure manual
- Historical strategic planning materials from SCN, Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP), Society for the Psychology of Women (SPW), and the American Psychological Association (APA)
- Materials focused on anti-racism in organizations

SCN also directed COHRE to the websites for other divisions of APA (i.e., SCP, SPW, the Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race), and other Neuropsychological organizations.

Resulting Themes
COHRE reviewed the aforementioned bylaws, strategic plans, and other materials to identify recurring themes. Seven broad themes emerged: Membership, Technology and Innovation, Diversity and Inclusion, Financial Viability, Member Career Support, Advocacy, and Science-Practitioner Gap. After identifying the themes, COHRE defined them by summarizing the goals, initiatives, and statements of SCN and other relevant organizations. Many of the themes influence and contribute to each other. The themes and their definitions can be found in Table 2 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Theme</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Recruiting and engaging new and existing members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and Innovation</td>
<td>Embracing a relationship with technology and biotechnology to better position the field of Neuropsychology in the present and future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion</td>
<td>Fostering inclusiveness, transparency, openness, and accountability in the quest to enhance the diversity observed in the field of Neuropsychology and actively combat racism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Viability</td>
<td>Achieving and/or maintaining financial stability to support the function of other SCN objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Career Support</td>
<td>Providing information and resources to membership that aid in professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Promoting the importance and legitimacy of neuropsychological health and the neuropsychology profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science-Practitioner Gap</td>
<td>Bridging the disconnect between what is researched and what is applied in the practice of neuropsychology to improve the field’s cohesiveness and resulting interventions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Themes identified in the review of historical documents and their definitions
Phase Two: SCN Board Member and Focus Group Interviews

The project’s second phase consisted of interviews involving current and past SCN Board members and focus groups involving leadership from other professional Neuropsychological organizations, leadership from cultural specific Neuropsychological organizations, early career Neuropsychologists, and students and trainees in Neuropsychology. COHRE utilized these methods to gather qualitative data. The purpose, process, and findings of the interviews and focus groups are outlined below.

SCN Board Member Interviews
The purpose for conducting individual interviews was to collect qualitative data regarding the current state of SCN and the neuropsychology profession, SCN’s strengths, and future opportunities for the organization. It was determined at the onset of the project that SCN’s President, President-Elect, Past President, Treasurer, and Secretary would serve as the interviewees for this initiative. This was decided based solely on the assumed experience and insight holding these positions provides – the individual occupying the position was not a factor.

Development of Interview Questions
SCN and COHRE worked collaboratively to develop primary interview questions that would provide interviewees with the opportunity to speak freely about the target topics with little restriction. The primary questions were as follows: Where is SCN now? What do you want SCN to become? What challenges will SCN face in getting there? Supplementary interview questions were collaboratively created to ensure all areas were addressed. A comprehensive list of the primary and supplementary interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Communication to Participants
COHRE produced a communication plan to coordinate efforts for contacting participants with SCN. An email invitation was sent to participants with a link to a web-based scheduling tool to reserve an interview timeslot. A subsequent email was sent to participants confirming their reserved time. One to two days prior to the interview participants received a final email containing the Zoom link for their interview, as well as a handout that detailed the project’s purpose, broad questions that would guide the discussion, and the desired schema for answering questions. The handout also included a confidentiality statement, the project’s next steps, and contact information for COHRE. The email communications templates can be found in Appendix B and the handout can be found in Appendix C.
**Procedure**

Each Zoom interview was allotted 60 minutes. Once the participant was in the Zoom meeting, the COHRE team introduced themselves and reminded the interviewee of the project’s purpose and why they were being interviewed. They were specifically asked to consider all aspects of SCN when answering the questions, including science, education and training, practice, and public impact. They were also told that their answers would be kept confidential, and the only information reported out from the interviews would be summarized at the group level and de-identified.

The note-taking protocol for the interviews was designed to protect the identity of the participants. The Zoom interviews were not recorded, but the interviewees’ responses were typed into a shared document by scribes. The notes from the scribes, as well as those taken by the interviewers were later used for the data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Once all the board member interviews were completed, the COHRE team first analyzed each individual interview to identify the recurring themes within them. Then the interview responses were analyzed across interviewees to identify the themes that emerged in multiple interviews. Members of the COHRE team performed the analysis simultaneously to increase the reliability and validity of the themes identified. The themes that were identified from the review of historical data were used as a guiding framework, but many new themes emerged from the interviews that went beyond those in the historical documents.

In order to identify recurring themes within the interviews, each response to each question was divided into smaller units so that each response unit only contained a single idea. These ranged from a phrase to the entire response. When multiple response units shared a similar idea, it was categorized as a recurring theme. Once this process was completed for each interview, the themes were compared across interviews to determine whether any could be merged and how commonly they were found across the interviews.

**Findings**

There were seven major themes that emerged from the five board member interviews. The themes and their definitions can be found in Table 3. All of these themes were brought up in at least three of the five interviews, and they were each mentioned several times by the interviewees. Many of the themes relate to each other, and they were all discussed with varying degrees of positive or negative sentiment. The following paragraphs describe each theme in greater detail, and paraphrased participant responses are included, where helpful.
### SCN Board Member Interview Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy &amp; Relationship with APA</td>
<td>Promoting the importance, legitimacy, and future directions of the neuropsychology profession through SCN’s relationship within APA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Fostering inclusiveness, transparency, openness, and accountability in the quest to enhance the diversity observed in SCN and the field of Neuropsychology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Career Support &amp; Development</td>
<td>Providing information, resources, and training to members that aid in professional development and career support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Engagement</td>
<td>Engaging members through SCN initiatives, activities, opportunities, and communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity &amp; Branding</td>
<td>The purpose of SCN, as it relates to other Neuropsychological organizations, as well as how it is perceived by both its members and non-members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execution and Accountability</td>
<td>Processes, policies, and procedures that preserve and continue organizational initiatives and strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Viability</td>
<td>Achieving and/or maintaining financial stability through recruitment, retention, and deliberate spending to support the function of other SCN objectives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Themes identified in the board member interviews and their definitions

**Advocacy & Relationship with APA.** All five board members spoke about both advocacy and SCN’s relationship with APA. Several ideas emerged with the common emphasis on the value that APA brings and has the potential to bring to SCN and its members. One value mentioned very often is the ability of SCN to advocate on behalf of and lobby for the interests of the field of Neuropsychology through APA. As one board member put it:
Championing and advocating for the field is a strong opportunity for SCN through APA. Neuropsychology often faces challenges that require political capital, and APA can help with these.

Some of these issues include billing codes, reimbursement rates, dealing with insurance, licensure and protecting what it means to be a qualified Neuropsychologist, etc. There was also a recognition that SCN could leverage its relationship with APA to help mitigate some threats facing the field, such as updating subgroup norms in an effort to provide better care for diverse clients, expanding Neuropsychology’s presence within other industries to better utilize its research and findings, and coordinating wide-scale research efforts on current problems like COVID-19. Lastly, several interviewees noted that SCN’s link to APA provides additional engagement opportunities for its members both at the conference and through leadership opportunities.

Despite this potential, there was also agreement that SCN is currently under-leveraging its relationship with APA. This can most clearly be seen by the reportedly low attendance of the APA conference by SCN members. Many interviewees noted that SCN’s relationship with APA is not very strong, and the communication channels are not formalized; instead, they are reliant on personal relationships. The participants noted that this may be problematic given the turnover on the board. There is also a strong perception that SCN cannot get work done quickly with APA because of red tape. One suggestion offered by a participant to improve this situation was to increase efforts to get SCN members and other neuropsychologists into national APA leadership positions. The COHRE team believes this would increase APA’s visibility to the field and to SCN, and it would likely give SCN more recognition within APA.

Regardless of these shortcomings, participants emphasized that there is room for growth for SCN to communicate and advertise its relationship to APA to both members and non-members. This link currently provides significant value to the field and SCN members, and SCN could do a better job demonstrating that value. Implications of this would be not only bringing more transparency to the field about all that is being done to advocate for and further the field of Neuropsychology, but it would also help with member recruitment and retention.

Execution and Accountability. This theme was unique to the board member interviews, most likely because they have more insight into the structure and processes within SCN than its rank-and-file members do. Despite SCN’s desire to be a nimble organization that can address current problems and execute large-scale initiatives for the future, many participants noted that its processes, procedures, and structures inhibit this aim. As one board member said:

The terms for leadership are too short, making it hard to have continuity and follow-through. There are no formal processes for the development of organizational goals. The short tenure keeps people from being aware of previous strategic plans or progress, so
almost no one has familiarity with the board before they are elected, even if they’ve been a member for years.

It was made clear that the short tenures for the leadership may cause problems for creating and sustaining SCN’s strategic direction. Specifically, participants mentioned that it can inhibit leadership’s ability to institute formal goal setting or action planning, given that they may have little prior knowledge coming into the position. Also, it can create problems with accountability for executing plans. This problem is reportedly further exacerbated by the large number of committee representatives who attend the board meetings, who are all competing for a limited amount of time. With so many committees represented in these meetings, participants said very little time is left to make the critical decisions for which the meetings are designed. Several board members thought that having a cohesive mission and a clear strategy would provide guidance for how SCN should be structured in terms of the number of committees and subcommittees, as well as who should actually attend the meetings. COHRE supports this suggestion. Another idea would be to hire a full-time or part-time administrative employee, who could maintain the necessary documents for institutional memory purposes and pass along this information to the incoming leadership team.

Member Engagement. It became clear in the interviews that member engagement is a concern for all five of the board members who were interviewed. The interviewees also were consistent in saying that the efforts to engage students, trainees, and early career professionals was largely working and should be capitalized on, while the engagement of mid – late career professionals was lacking and made for a significant opportunity for improvement. The board members made it clear that the Association of Neuropsychology Students and Trainees (ANST) is a strength of SCN for ensuring that students and trainees obtain a high value for their membership and have plenty of opportunities to be highly engaged. The student leadership program is reportedly another effective way to promote student engagement, and SCN itself also benefits from having this program. One board member said:

SCN should be sure it is engaging the students and learning from their expertise and vantage point to better the whole of the community.

There was also the recognition that there is still room for this program to grow by involving even more students and ensuring that SCN follows through by continuing to secure their seat at the table. Moreover, interviewees also noted that students, trainees, and early career professionals could be further engaged by improving the communication and marketing materials, such as the newsletter.

Despite the strength of SCN’s student, trainee, and early career engagement, the COHRE team was told that the engagement of mid – late career members has room for improvement. Their lower engagement, which the COHRE team believes is related to an unclear or unfavorable
value proposition for mid–late career members as compared to other neuropsychological organizations, is undoubtedly a major contributor to the low membership numbers in this demographic. As one board member described:

*SCN is like a stepping stone where eventually people leave us behind. It does a good job of attracting and engaging early in peoples’ careers, but it doesn’t do such a good job retaining them.*

The comments in this theme mainly recognize that this is something to be improved upon, without providing many ideas for how to do so. One idea that was shared is to provide career development resources beyond the early career stage. This will be described in greater detail later on, but this could contribute to greater engagement in this demographic. COHRE suggests engaging mid–late career members in a mentorship program, which could also serve to provide even more resources for trainees and students. Involving mid–late career members in the training would demonstrate that their knowledge, experience, and membership is valued and would give many a reason to be engaged in SCN. A key takeaway from this theme was best said by one of the interviewees:

*SCN is clearly has a much more engaged and vibrant early career and student population than their competitors.*

The COHRE team believes that this competitive advantage could serve as part of the niche that SCN chooses to capitalize on when they create their mission, vision, and values.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** While this theme was asked about directly by the COHRE team in the interviews, most of the board members also brought it up on their own multiple times beyond the direct question. In their responses, there was agreement that SCN has made promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion one of its central values. Not only that, SCN has also made strides in advancing this value throughout the organization, but interviewees noted that there is still a lot of room for growth to do so, as well. The board members largely agreed that:

*SCN needs to maintain the positive momentum it is building so that diversification becomes embedded in the culture.*

One of the interviewees referred to using the Women in Neuropsychology (WIN) subcommittee as a role model for doing this. Many of the interviewees also highlighted the work that the Ethnic and Minority Affairs (EMA) subcommittee has done on this topic, especially its ongoing training activities and mentor program, but the communication of these resources and the work that EMA is doing and has done seems to be lacking.
One idea that an interviewee had to further promote the work that has been done on making diversity, equity, and inclusion a value of SCN is to formally integrate it throughout all four advisory committees, not just the Public Interest Advisory Committee. Other ideas that were shared would be to institute diversity-focused members onto each committee, elevate EMA to have a larger seat at the table within SCN, increase the number and visibility of minority colleagues on the board, and do a better job of communicating SCN’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and successes. In order for this to work, though, there needs to be enough formalized action planning and procedures to ensure follow through. As one board member emphasized:

_We have made a statement detailing our approach to diversity and included some action items, but we don’t want just a statement. We want to make sure we have actions and procedures, so we don’t end up in a position where we don’t have diversity._

There was also agreement that SCN could be doing more to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field of Neuropsychology and society at large. One of the recurring ideas about how it can help is by leveraging its relationship with APA to update and create subgroup norms for neuropsychological tests. Without these, the practice of Neuropsychology is not being applied fairly to all people and to all groups because the science itself is not as accurate for non-white, non-western individuals. If SCN decides to address this issue, then COHRE recommends that it use its unique relationship with APA to make this one of its initiatives in order to promote the fair treatment of all individuals.

**Member Career Support and Development.** Similar to the Member Engagement theme, the board members interviewed emphasized the fact that a strength and focus of SCN is the amount of career support and development opportunities it provides to its students, trainees, and early career members. However, the COHRE team was told that there is much less support and fewer development opportunities for members after the early part of their careers. Generally, board members agreed that SCN is behind other neuropsychology organizations because it does not offer enough Continuing Education Units (CEUs) at the APA conference or elsewhere. While the market for CEUs is saturated now, as one board member stated, it would be worthwhile to brainstorm how SCN could provide continuing education to its members through workshops, journals, or websites. Despite this limitation, an interviewee emphasized:

_SCN’s strength as an organization is promoting education and early career development._

This is very apparent in ANST, which provides information, resources, and professional connections to prepare younger members for a successful career. The student leadership opportunities provide training and professional development opportunities. SCN also provides information for students and trainees on its website about neuropsychology training programs.
throughout the country. Board members said that the dissertation award and pilot grants also likely keep many younger members engaged and supplied with additional resources to embark on their careers. Moreover, the efforts to support younger members through mentorship have reportedly had at some success.

While SCN provides career support and development for students, trainees, and early career professionals, the board members who discussed mid – late career support and development all agreed that this area presented an opportunity for growth, especially in relation to its effect on member engagement and retention. One board member saw this particular area as an opportunity for SCN to distinguish itself from the other neuropsychological organizations:

*SCN could serve to clarify how later stage professionals can continue to develop. SCN could help with salary negotiations, networking, coordinating letters of recommendation, professional wills, legacy planning, custody of records, figuring out ways people can impart knowledge on younger professionals. None of the other organizations do that as far as I’m aware.*

This board member thought that these types of career support efforts and resources could become a niche for SCN within the neuropsychological community.

**Financial Viability.** This theme was also unique to the board member interviews, given that they have much more insight into the membership, finances, and budgeting of SCN than the samples used for the focus groups. There was broad agreement among the board members interviewed that SCN’s most immediate problem is the fact that it is losing members and losing money. Most of the comments on this theme reference the fact that this is a problem that must be addressed, and some comments speculated about possible factors contributing to the problem. However, few comments gave substantive ideas for ways to fix or address the problem.

Several of the interviewees noted that the APA conference attendance was low, and this was likely due to the value other neuropsychology organizations provide through their conferences, such as more CEUs, exams, an emphasis on Neuropsychology, and the ability to focus on either research or practice. In other words, the other organizations seem to have a stronger value proposition for their members than SCN. Board members said SCN can partially improve their standing by better communicating and advertising the benefits that they provide to members. Related to this, COHRE uncovered confusion about the fact that SCN members do not have to also be members of APA. While COHRE recognizes that clarifying this nuance risks diminishing SCN influence within APA, it could improve SCN’s membership, since overall dues would be viewed as being cheaper. Ultimately, it was unclear how great of a barrier APA dues posed to SCN membership, but COHRE recommends that SCN weigh the positives and negatives associated with publicizing the distinction between SCN and APA dues.

SCN’s weak value proposition to its members seems to be most clearly observed for the mid-career members, who reportedly constitute the bulk of those not renewing their membership.
This has the implication of putting SCN in a difficult position because a lack of funds limits the resources and engagement opportunities that they can provide to their members, thus impacting the membership numbers. Two ideas that were raised to address this were to raise membership dues or possibly host webinars and charge participants. Although difficult, this issue is obviously one that SCN will need to tackle in the short term if it is to continue provide its current resources and benefits for its members.

Interviewees raised another way to address its financial issues is for SCN to reevaluate its spending. Before that, though, SCN will need a clear mission, vision, and values to guide the allocation of its funds so that they are spent strategically and based on its priorities, rather than haphazardly. This way of budgeting also communicates to its members what SCN values.

**Identity and Branding.** It was clear from the interviews that SCN is struggling to differentiate itself from other neuropsychology organizations. While the other organizations have occupied various niches within the field of Neuropsychology, one board member said:

*Finding SCN’s identity may be difficult because APA is huge.*

In other words, because APA encompasses so much in relation to the field of Psychology, SCN has struggled to identify a focused identity within it. Instead, one board member said that SCN has become a “jack of all trades and a master of none.” While it was trying to maintain this identity, it seems that many of the other organizations have grown increasingly specialized and effective at delivering their particular benefits to their members.

Two of the board members’ who specifically addressed SCN’s future identity differed in their visions for it. On the one hand, one said:

*SCN should be the premier neuropsychology organization that has the most to offer its members.*

On the other hand, SCN could occupy a unique niche within the field that no other organization occupies or does well. The other board member thought:

*SCN’s sweet spot is early career professional development. . . That is not a prominent theme in any of the other organizations. . . It sets SCN up to have a unique niche.*

Some of the board members also acknowledged that SCN struggles with a branding issue. Many of its members seem to not know that various subcommittees, like ANST, EMA, or WIN, belong to SCN. There is so much confusion and so many subcommittees that one board member even said:

*It is possible for even the president to be unaware of all of the subcommittees.*
COHRE proposes that this problem can also be addressed with a clear mission and focus, but SCN could also work to clarify their communications and marketing materials to all align with a consistent SCN brand identity.

**Focus Group Interviews**
The purpose for conducting focus group interviews was to collect qualitative data regarding the current state of SCN and the neuropsychology profession, SCN’s strengths, and future opportunities for the organization. SCN’s Strategic Planning Committee identified four distinct groups with unique perspectives of SCN and the field of Neuropsychology. Those groups consisted of leadership from other professional Neuropsychological organizations, leadership from cultural specific Neuropsychological organizations, early career Neuropsychologists, and students and trainees in Neuropsychology. Members across all groups represented multiple facets of diversity within the field of Neuropsychology including but not limited to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, career stage, and practice.

**Development of Focus Group Questions**
The focus group questions were based on the same core set of primary questions used in the board member interviews. Supplementary interview questions were created to ensure the unique perspectives of each group and its members were captured. A comprehensive list of the supplementary focus group interview questions can be found in Appendices D-G.

**Communication to Participants**
COHRE produced a communication plan to coordinate efforts for contacting participants with SCN. An email was sent to participants with an introduction to the project’s purpose and an invitation from Dr. Scott Sperling (Co-chair of the SCN Strategic Planning Committee and project champion), as well as a link to a web-based scheduling tool to reserve a participant slot. A subsequent email was sent to participants confirming their reserved time. One to two days prior to the interview participants received a final email containing the Zoom link for their interview, as well as a handout that detailed the project’s purpose, broad questions that would guide the discussion, and the desired schema for answering questions. The handout also included a confidentiality statement, the project’s next steps, and contact information for COHRE. The email communications templates can be found in Appendix H and the handout can be found in Appendix I.

**Procedure**
Each focus group interview was allotted 90 minutes. Once the participant was in the Zoom meeting, the COHRE team introduced themselves and reminded the interviewee of the project’s purpose and why they were being interviewed. They were specifically asked to consider all aspects of SCN when answering the questions, including science, education and training,
practice, and public impact. They were also told that their answers would be kept confidential, and the only information reported out from the interviews would be summarized and de-identified.

The note-taking protocol for the focus groups was designed to protect the identity of the participants. The names of the participants were not recorded. The Zoom interviews were not recorded, but the interviewees’ responses were typed into a shared document by scribes. The notes from the scribes, as well as those taken by the interviewers were later used for the data analysis.

**Data Analysis**
As soon as possible after each focus group was completed, the COHRE team reviewed the notes from the session and developed a summary of the information participants provided. A technical malfunction occurred within the digitized document containing the scribed notes from one focus group rendering a portion of the document unreadable. The hand-written notes from the interviewer were used in the analysis for some of the questions from that interview. The consultants reviewed all the materials and met multiple times to identify major themes from the participants’ input.

**Findings**
There were five major themes that emerged from the four focus groups. The themes and their definitions can be found in Table 4. All of these themes were brought up in all four focus groups, except for the Hub of Neuropsychology theme, which was brought up by two of the focus groups. Each of the themes were commented on multiple times within the focus groups in which they were raised. All five of the focus group themes have some degree of overlap with corresponding themes found in the board member interviews. Notably, Execution and Accountability and Financial Viability were not brought up in any significant way in the focus groups. While there was some constructive disagreement within each focus group about the themes, the opinions and perceptions of SCN among the participants were largely aligned. Please note that interpretations of the findings ought to be made with the understanding that the data were collected from a relatively small sample of participants. The following paragraphs describe each theme in greater detail, and paraphrased participant responses are included, where helpful.
Table 4. Themes identified in the focus groups and their definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy &amp; Relationship with APA</td>
<td>Promoting the importance, legitimacy, and future directions of the neuropsychology profession through SCN’s relationship within APA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</td>
<td>Fostering inclusiveness, transparency, openness, and accountability in the quest to enhance the diversity observed in SCN and the field of Neuropsychology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Member Career Support &amp; Development</td>
<td>Providing information, resources, and training to early career members that aid in professional development and early career support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Proposition</td>
<td>The return on investment for members and the clarity with which it is communicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hub of Neuropsychology</td>
<td>Acting as the centralized resource for the field of Neuropsychology whereby Neuropsychologists can be directed to all relevant information and resources pertaining to the field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advocacy and Relationship with APA. The need for advocacy for the field of Neuropsychology in general was a common theme throughout the focus groups. Advocacy on behalf of the field of psychology is seen as a particular strength of the larger APA, and as a result, contributed to the agreement across all focus group’s that SCN’s relationship with APA provides value to SCN membership. Some of the leaders of other neuropsychological organizations went even further in describing their perception of advocacy as the primary function and utility of SCN. As in the board member interviews, dissatisfaction was expressed with the degree to which SCN leverages this relationship in addressing the challenges faced by the subfield of Neuropsychology.

A desire for a more proactive approach by SCN in pushing for advocacy on behalf of the field of Neuropsychology was conveyed several times throughout the focus group interviews. Among the focus group members in various stages of their career, the lack of formalization of
what it means to be a Neuropsychologist was discussed as a particularly salient threat to the field. SCN could be pushing for APA’s assistance in protecting the term “Neuropsychologist” and standardization in the requirements to be classified as such. Standardization in qualifications requires standardization in training. A few focus group members noted that as it stands, Neuropsychology does not have a seat at the table when accrediting trainings or internships.

There was widely held frustration that the ability to administer assessments alone could be conflated with the ability to interpret the results. The overestimation of the value of information obtained from preliminary screening tests further obfuscates the functional role of Neuropsychology within the broader medical community and society as a whole.

APA’s power in advocacy was viewed as a necessity for diversity efforts in the field of Neuropsychology. The lack of culturally informed norms was repeatedly presented as one of the most pressing issues facing the field today. Without accurate norms, even the ability of the most extensively trained neuropsychologists to provide adequate medical care is at risk.

Focus group members were generally satisfied with the work being done by APA in terms of advocating for billing and coding. However, the delay in enactment devalues its positive impact for members. It was suggested this could be minimized if SCN were more proactive in its influence with APA on these types of issues.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** As in the board member interviews, the COHRE team asked directly about this theme in the focus groups, and it prompted much discussion. The discussion paralleled the board member interviews. For instance, many focus group participants highlighted the need to update subgroup norms to ensure the equitable treatment of clients from all different backgrounds. Many also mentioned the work that EMA has done to institute a diversity-focused mentorship program, although they admitted that more work was needed. Specifically, it was suggested that the program needs more non-minority members to demonstrate true interest in and emphasis on the program from prominent members within SCN. There was also agreement that for SCN to demonstrate that diversity, equity, and inclusion are core values, diversity-focused members need to be integrated onto more committees and give the diversity-focused committees more of a priority so they can be better heard.

Because of SCN’s recent progress related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, many participants said SCN was doing a good job of promoting change on this issue. However, the participants representing culturally specific neuropsychological organizations said that SCN’s diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts were just getting started and much more progress was needed. This gave the COHRE team the impression that there is a gap of understanding between the Executive Committee and focus group participants about how successful SCN really is when it comes to diversity and how much recognition is going to the parties responsible for the success. Shrinking this gap involves going beyond tokenism and communicating to SCN’s members that it is committed to taking this value seriously. Related to this was the recognition by participants that there are very few non-white members on the board.
Similar to an idea presented in the board member interviews, one participant said that SCN could leverage its position within APA to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives within the field of psychology. They noted that this has the potential to go a long way in updating many subgroup norms. We also heard that SCN can do a much better job communicating all the initiatives that are ongoing to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion interests. Many of the other ideas proposed within this theme came from the focus group with leaders from culturally specific neuropsychology organizations. For instance, participants in this focus group brought up the issue of the lack of diverse practitioners who could be representatives for traditionally underrepresented groups. They said that increasing their presence could go a long way in making members of underrepresented communities feel more comfortable in and trusting of the field of Neuropsychology. Beyond this, though, they noted that there needs to be an emphasis placed on the creation of new, culturally sensitive tests and measures. Similar to the issue of outdated and irrelevant norms, ensuring that all tests and measures that are used with clients of underrepresented groups are sensitive to the cultural context in which they exist makes it so they are treated more fairly and ethically.

Many ideas were also shared about how SCN could increase their efforts to support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. One idea is to use the success of ANST to recruit potential neuropsychologists at the graduate and undergraduate levels with an emphasis on diversity. Another is for SCN to lead a field-wide push for tackling these issues, given their relationship with APA. As one participant said:

Sometimes when we combine resources and funding and people and brainpower, we end up with a really good product. Maybe SCN is poised to promote collaboration among these organizations. SCN is a good candidate to coordinate this because they are part of APA, which is the bigger umbrella.

Additionally, one participant noted that any cross-organizational collaborations are likely to be much more successful if they are based on formalized procedures and communication channels, rather than personal relationships, and the COHRE team agrees. Adding to this idea, COHRE recommends that SCN explore the possibility of leveraging its APA connection to influence the neuropsychological testing organizations to fund grants for research on updating subgroup norms.

Early Member Career Support and Development. As was found in the board member interviews, SCN’s strength in training and early career development was echoed throughout each of the focus groups. ANST was viewed as playing a significant role through the resources and guidance provided. One focus group member went as far as mentioning the loss of ANST would be the greatest threat if SCN were to cease to exist. On multiple occasions, the list serv was mentioned as a particularly valuable resource as it is a central location where student-relevant information can be found. SCN’s support for students and early career neuropsychologists was
widely recognized by members of all groups and appreciation of the value of that support was evidenced in both the student and early career focus groups.

Opportunities for improvement in the consistency in quality and size of ANST chapters across institutions and regions were mentioned within the student group. There is risk posed to both the perpetuation of the lack of diversity in the field and the loss of high-potential students in areas with less prominent or non-existent ANST chapters. As an example, one focus group member mentioned the concentration of high-quality chapters in a metropolitan area and the near lack of resources just across the state. It was suggested that SCN reach out to the larger chapters, asking them to help smaller, adjacent institutions develop and grow their chapters.

In terms of early career neuropsychologists, the group expressed frustration at the limited opportunities for their ideas and opinions to be taken into consideration. However, there was a collective and positive response to their inclusion in the strategic planning efforts of SCN at the conclusion of the focus group session.

Value Proposition of Membership. This theme has a significant amount of overlap with the Member Engagement and Financial Viability themes from the board member interviews. Moreover, it can be thought of as a larger, umbrella theme that encompasses aspects of all of the other themes collected from the focus groups. It is the basic return on investment analysis that current and prospective members make to determine whether being a member of SCN is rewarding enough to compensate for their membership dues, as well as any additional time and effort that they may contribute to the organization. For this reason, SCN’s advocacy, APA connection, diversity efforts, career support, development opportunities, brand, and identity all are incorporated into the decision of whether or not to be a member of SCN to some extent.

One of the more frequently cited limits of SCN’s value is the lack of benefits that come from attending the APA conference, relative to conferences of more specific neuropsychology organizations. Obviously, each organization and conference has a cost, both in time and money, and people have limited amounts of each of these. Therefore, many participants said they are forced to choose between the organizations and conferences to decide which provides the greatest return on investment. For many, they see the APA conference as not emphasizing neuropsychology enough, nor providing sufficient opportunities for neuropsychology oriented CEUs or board exams. At the same time, a couple participants expressed their appreciation for the collaborative opportunities that APA’s conference affords across different areas of research. Another disincentive to joining SCN was expressed by several participants who were under the false impression that SCN members are also required to be APA members. While it is certainly beneficial for SCN members to be APA members for the purpose of advocating for Neuropsychology within APA, this misconception has the potential to be widespread and might incorrectly discourage prospective SCN members from joining.

As has been referenced previously, the lack of resources and career support for members in the middle of their career also seems to lead many to determine that membership is no longer
worth it. On the other hand, students, trainees, and early career SCN members generally seemed very satisfied with all of the benefits they were receiving from SCN.

Some ideas were shared for how SCN could improve its value proposition. One idea was to create and provide a journal for its members. It also became clear that SCN needs to improve its communications about all the services and benefits it provides its members if it is to promote its value proposition. Many participants expressed confusion about whether various initiatives and special groups were or were not part of SCN. These included ANST, WIN, EMA, and AACN’s Relevance 2050 Initiative. COHRE believes that SCN can do a much better job of helping people make the decision to become a member by more effectively advertising all the ways that they serve their members, such as their advocacy efforts through APA, their strong push for diversity, and their active specialty groups. This could be accomplished through marketing materials, internal communications, or even an infographic on the website highlighting all the various groups that are associated with SCN.

**Serving as a Hub of Neuropsychology.** Across all the focus group interviews, members and leaders of Neuropsychological organizations embraced the idea of collaborative efforts in moving the field of Neuropsychology forward. In general, the focus group members expressed a desire for a centralized portal for any and all resources and information pertaining to neuropsychology. Students and trainees described navigating the multiple listservs provided by the vast array of Neuropsychological organizations as overwhelming.

In one discussion, a focus group member suggested the creation and management of a website where any and all information pertaining to neuropsychology could be found. Some examples of information the focus group members expressed interest in finding on this website were recent research findings, grant opportunities and due dates, and mentor matching across Neuropsychological organizations. The website could provide SCN members and nonmembers specific information as well as links to the sites of organizations where other information and resources may be found. Since SCN is run strictly by volunteers, COHRE suggests students could be involved in the updating of the website to promote student engagement and minimize the cost to SCN.
Next Steps

Now that SCN has collected data from interviews and focus groups, it can implement the additional steps needed to successfully develop a mission, vision, and values, as well as a set of strategic goals for implementing these ideas. COHRE suggests the following steps.

The first step, after thoroughly reviewing the findings presented in this report, SCN can develop and administer a survey to solicit input from all SCN members to order to validate the findings of this report and provide further insights about the current state of the society.

The second step would involve synthesizing the findings of this report with those of the survey and developing Pre-Workshop Materials. These materials could comprise insights about SCN’s current state, its strengths, and its future opportunities. This packet of material would be provided as pre-reading materials for the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals workshops.

The third step would involve conducting Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals workshops. These would be a series of workshops designed to involve many members of SCN. Specifically, they would aim to use all of the information gathered to construct a definition of SCN’s Mission, create SCN’s Vision, establish SCN’ Core Values, and develop Strategic Goals.