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## *Mineral Sciences for All!*

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### **Mineralogical Society of America Strategic Plan**

**Mission.** The Mineralogical Society of America (MSA) is dedicated to promoting the study of minerals and advancing mineral-based sciences. Our mission is to foster scientific research, education, and collaboration among professionals, students, and mineral enthusiasts.

**Vision.** MSA envisions a world in which the study of minerals plays a vital role in scientific progress, environmental sustainability, economic stability and security, and societal well-being. We strive to be the leading global organization that advances mineralogical knowledge and serves as a hub for the mineral sciences community.

**Who We Are.** Modern society has benefited greatly over the past century from the discoveries and contributions by members of the Mineralogical Society of America (MSA). The need for new and continuing discoveries increases as the human population grows and requires ever more resources to maintain a technologically based society and to advance our understanding of processes that shape our planet and other bodies in the solar system.

For more than a century, MSA has advanced minerals-based science to promote the understanding and use of minerals in other sciences, industry, the arts, and daily life. MSA encourages fundamental and applied research about natural materials; supports the teaching of mineralogical concepts and methods; and works to raise the understanding of society on issues involving minerals and their uses.

MSA is a community of over 1600 scientists and enthusiasts. We deliver a wide variety of programs, products and other services through a strong partnership among its members, other societies, and its professional staff based in Chantilly, VA. MSA publishes journals, magazines, and books, and offers workshops, lectures, web-based information about minerals, awards, grants, and symposia for professionals, students, and the public.

Membership in the Society is open to all people interested in science-based study and appreciation of minerals. Members are from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, several territories, and about 40 countries. As approximately half of MSA's membership lives and works outside the United States, we are truly an international organization. We seek to have a membership that reflects the diversity of the general population and addresses the needs of the widest possible audience.

**Strategic plan 2024 – 2029.** During the past year, a specially appointed task group of MSA members engaged in discussions that reviewed the operations and goals of the Society. This task group identified priorities needed to assure the continued strength, efficiency, and growth of MSA. The process included discussions with and input from members of Council, Executive Director Ann Benbow, and numerous other MSA members. The resulting plan, guided by the goals listed below, proposes five focus areas and related initiatives to be implemented during the next five years. The MSA members responsible for each initiative will be charged with developing timelines, expected outcomes, and indicators of success for the initiative.

### **Goals**

- 1) grow and diversify the organization and its membership;
- 2) increase efficiency and effectiveness of operations;
- 3) improve and innovate to meet the Society's mission and needs of both longtime and new members.

**Focus Area 1: Program and mission review:** Evaluate existing MSA activities and other aspects of the Society.

**Initiative 1:** Establish a **task group** charged with evaluating whether MSA effectively implements and communicates programs that are central to its mission and vision. The task group would operate for a specified period of time (e.g., one year). Activities of the task group could include:

- (a) reviewing current Workshop, Short Course, Distinguished Lecturer, Awards, Grants, and Education programs and procedures as well as MSA operations and staffing to determine if they are set up to most effectively accomplish MSA mission and goals for the next five years. Based on its review, the task group will recommend to Council new descriptions and goals for these programs if needed, including metrics by which effectiveness of each can be measured and improved.
- (b) determining whether MSA statements of mission, vision, and goals reflect the priorities and needs of the Society moving forward. Based on its review, the task group may propose modification for discussion by members and Council and approval by Council.
- (c) evaluating how best to support educators, including providing information and resources for K-12 and higher education students and teachers. The task group will consider information and recommendations provided by recent MSA groups working on these topics and will make recommendations to Council for improvements and/or new initiatives.

**Focus Area 2: Communication:** increase awareness of the importance of minerals and mineral sciences and promote and develop MSA's communication efforts within MSA and to the public.

Initiative 1: Formalize a **Communications** committee to promote and develop MSA's communication efforts to MSA members and non-members, including students and the public, via the web, social media, and press releases.

Initiative 2: Hire a part-time communications specialist to work with the MSA Executive Director to coordinate and implement strategies developed with the Communications and other committees and to help establish procedures to more effectively promote and broadly disseminate research highlights from MSA publications; for example, by working with authors on brief, engaging, and understandable press releases or social media posts that highlight research to a broad audience.

**Focus Area 3: Membership**: create a larger and more diverse membership and provide more effective support for members at all career stages.

Initiative 1: Re-establish the **Membership** committee and charge it with proposing and implementing strategies to increase and diversify MSA membership. Possible considerations could include new member categories for educators and enthusiasts, special sessions at meetings that highlight a range of mineral sciences research, new or revamped member benefits (including restricting MSA awards to members), and more effective retention methods. The committee would receive its charge from and report annually to Council, with the expectation that supported ideas would be enacted.

Initiative 2: Formally establish an Early Career Committee to promote and coordinate activities that encourage, welcome, and support student and early career MSA members and possible future members.

Initiative 3: Establish MSA student chapters. This could start as a three-year trial program that will encourage and broaden student interest in the mineral sciences and MSA and provide mentoring opportunities for students by other students and MSA members. The student chapters could be coordinated by a member of the Early Career Committee. MSA would actively campaign for donations to set up a designated fund for student chapter activities.

**Focus Area 4: Publications**: Enhance MSA operations and support related to publications.

Publication of *American Mineralogist* and short course volumes is consistently ranked by members as MSA's highest priority activity. Publications are considered a top member benefit and derived income provides important financial support for the Society. It is essential that MSA ensure the vitality and integrity of these and other publications. Current and future challenges from open access requirements, increased submission rates, transition to paperless publication, archiving responsibilities, use of artificial intelligence in research methods and writing, and staffing priorities and succession planning require vigilant attention and timely response and support.

Initiative 1: Replace the current one-person Publication Director (the MSA Vice-President) with a **Publications** committee to consult with and support the publication and editorial staff and to enhance communication of publication-focused staff with Council and members. The committee will consider current and possible future needs and trends related to publications. The committee will consist of the Managing Editor, the science editors of the *American Mineralogist*, the Chair of the Short Course Committee, the MSA Vice-President, the Executive Director, and three other MSA members appointed by Council for three-year terms.

**Focus Area 5: Governance and operations:** Reconsider MSA’s governance and administrative structure to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Initiative 1: The MSA Executive Committee will review the current MSA governance structure and propose an updated structure to Council for consideration and vote. The proposal will consider the new committees described in initiatives under Focus Areas 1-3, the structure and operations of existing committees, and mechanisms for ongoing and/or future strategic planning.

Initiative 2: The MSA Executive Committee will establish a formal process of orientation for new members of MSA governance about their responsibilities and the activities of MSA. This group will update “job descriptions” for officers and Councilors and provide these to potential candidates before they agree to stand for election. Executive Committee members will provide orientations (via virtual meetings) to newly elected officers and Councilors before their terms begin.

Initiative 3: The Executive Director will provide monthly updates to members of MSA governance to keep them apprised of MSA activities. Two or three interim Council meetings, to be called by the President, will be held annually to update Council and permit in-depth discussions and votes on timely topics between the Spring and Fall regular meetings.

Initiative 4: Council meetings will incorporate a consent agenda strategy to encourage advanced preparation for meetings and permit more time for planning and strategy discussions at the meetings.

Initiative 5: Include discussion of the Strategic Plan as an agenda item for each Council meeting for consideration of updates and discussion of implementation and possible revisions. In any one year, one or more Focus Areas/initiatives may receive priority attention. The Council will receive a report by an agreed upon date from relevant stakeholders on the status of each current Strategic Plan priority and determine if the initiative is on track, needs additional resources and time, or has been successfully completed. The Executive Committee and Council may decide at any time in the next 5 years to set up a group or committee dedicated to strategic planning, including looking beyond the current plan.

Initiative 6: The task group that is reviewing MSA programs will also evaluate administrative operations and make a recommendation to Council regarding changes or other improvements, such as whether additional staff are needed.

**Focus Area 6: Fundraising:** develop and implement new strategies and priorities to raise funds for MSA’s programs and initiatives that support and align with the goals in the strategic plan.

Initiative 1: Assign a **Development** task group of MSA members knowledgeable in fundraising to evaluate MSA’s existing fundraising strategies and recommend priorities and next steps for future fundraising efforts. This group will operate for one year and will identify sources of funding (e.g., members, grant-making institutions, corporate and private foundations, mineral collectors and dealers). This group, in consultation with MSA Executive Committee, will also evaluate whether MSA needs to hire external expertise to assist in its fundraising efforts and, if so, will make a recommendation to Council.

Initiative 2: The MSA Executive Committee and Council will use the results of the Development task group and other information to evaluate the funding needs of MSA programs, both existing and proposed, and establish priorities.

Initiative 3: The MSA Executive Committee, in consultation with other individuals and committees with relevant information, will develop a case statement for MSA to be used in fundraising efforts.

Initiative 4: The MSA Executive Committee and Council will consider establishing an MSA Foundation with the sole function of raising funds for MSA's programs and initiatives.