



Community Research Project: Initial Findings

Theme III: How do we Broaden our Divisions*?

November 27, 2020

**For those who have been involved with Science Atlantic for a while, we are shifting our reference to our discipline groups to "Divisions" rather than "Committees". The Committees continue; our goal is that, in addition to each school's department representative, others will see a place for themselves in Science Atlantic activities.*

Goal of Breakout Session

Please come up with at least **one action you think Science Atlantic could take** to help answer the questions below. At this stage in our strategic plan, one concrete and actionable suggestion is more useful than five general ideas.

Instructions

1. **Read through the attached research results before you discuss the questions below.**
2. Narrow down to a few ideas (fewer is better!).
3. Think about how one (or more) of those ideas could be turned into actions. Prompts to get you started will be listed on the screen.
4. You will have 30-40 minutes for discussion and to develop recommendations for your action(s).

Keep in Mind

- We want to focus on the findings from the interview participants - none of whom are currently involved with Science Atlantic - to develop ways to get more people involved. Think like someone who doesn't know anything about Science Atlantic.
- Since Science Atlantic is a primarily volunteer organization, recommended actions should be tasks that faculty would be willing to make happen. Staff can provide cohesiveness/structure/communications but not implementation.

Questions

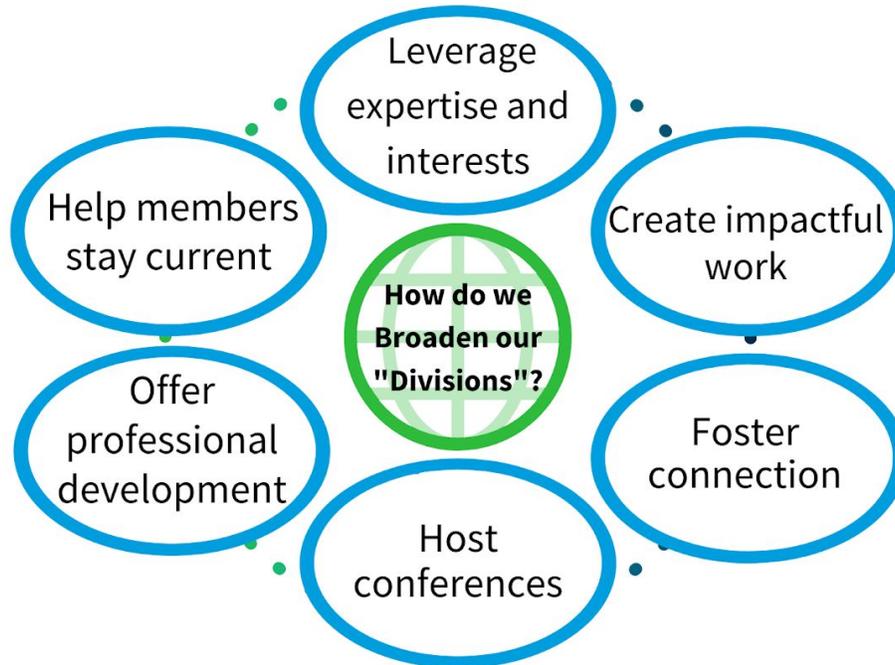
1. **How can we include more people in our organization?**
2. **What could discipline-based divisions do to increase participation?**
3. **What activities could we develop regardless of discipline?**



Community Research Results

Theme III: How do we Broaden our Divisions?

Summary of Findings:



1. Leverage Members' Expertise and Interests

Being able to apply specific expertise and work in areas of interest motivated some participants to engage in volunteer work.

*"I do it all just to be a value, in terms of feeling like I have experience to share or connectivity with my education background or teaching. So **in the past I would sit on various associations or committees based on my knowledge base and experience.**" - Participant 39*

*"There is a Nova Scotia analogue of a committee that deals with endangered species in Nova Scotia and I am a member of that. So **these things reflect my interest in biological conservation issues and environmental issues.**" - Participant 9*



2. Create Impactful Work

Participants mentioned that they enjoy volunteering for associations because they are able to make an impact in their communities.

“Some of the things that we've done have really helped our students to succeed as well. The service work has been quite rewarding in terms of improving the academic life of the university, the employment life for other faculty, and also opportunities for students. That does get quite rewarding when you look back on it.” - Participant 8

“You're helping people, needy families, raising money for playgrounds, stuff like that. Right. It just makes me happy to make people happy, to see them happy.” - Participant 4

3. Foster Connection and Collaboration

Many participants mentioned that the networking component of associations was a major draw. The networking that is facilitated by such associations was cited as being conducive to learning, finding job opportunities, feeling a part of a community and making connections.

Learning	<i>“One positive thing for me about associations is the satisfaction I get from interacting with other people, sharing what I know and also learning from them.” - Participant 11</i>
Finding job opportunities	<i>“Being able to connect people is certainly a very valuable experience and, you know, I find my students are looking for internship opportunities. And so I can rely on my professional organizations to help with that.” - Participant 38</i>
Feeling a part of a community	<i>“I look to that society as really enabling some high level scientific discussions and ensuring that there's a community of research across the country on a given topic.” - Participant 17</i>
Making connections	<i>“My experiences with associations have led to many opportunities for research beyond the volunteering experience. So I've been able to stay connected to people because of it. And I've been able to take advantage of community links that have emerged because of working in the volunteer capacity.” - Participant 10</i>



4. Offer Opportunities for Professional Development

Participants noted that they join associations to be part of their professional development activities.

"They provide professional development, they would be considered experts in the field and I often collaborate with them to get training for our work professionals and volunteers that are working in the community." - Participant 30

*"I sit on the diversity committee at NSCC because I want to ensure that I'm a faculty who can bring inclusivity to the classroom and I can learn ways to do that. So **it's not because I'm an expert, it's just because I want to learn more on how to support my learners.**" - Participant 39*

5. Host Conferences for Faculty

Another benefit of being a part of associations was attending conferences.

"Going to these geological education conferences or higher education conferences, it gives you lots of new ideas that exposes you to people who have gone about things differently. And I always find them very energizing." - Participant 18

"I think some of the positive experiences with them would be just going to conferences and networking. Bringing those tools back to your employer and developing some of the things you've learned from them." - Participant 25

Some mentioned enjoying the discounts on conferences offered by associations.

*"I sometimes join organizations like that because you get **discounts on going to a conference.**" - Participant 29*

*"Because when you belong to these societies, **you can register for their conferences less expensively.**" - Participant 16*

6. Help Members Stay Current in Their Field

Some participants noted that they join associations so that they can stay on top of new research in their field and to be apprised of news in their areas of interest.

"They're the place that you go to when you want to know more about making care safer and it's all evidence-based as well. I have positive experiences with that organization." - Participant 30

*"The Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution, **you can find out what's going on with ecology in Canada and that's also nice to get.**" - Participant 29*