MATERIALS RESEARCH SOCIETY
Advancing materials. Improving the quality of life.

3.4.5 Intersociety and Inter-organizational Communications and Interactions

Purpose: This policy provides the philosophy and guidance for intersociety and inter-organizational communications and interactions

Applies to: Volunteers, HQ

PURPOSE/SCOPE

MRS communicates and interacts with other professional societies and organizations on many levels. This policy is intended to provide guidance for these exchanges, to define various types of interactions and metrics to evaluate them, and to establish authorities for each type of communication or interaction.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "communications" shall refer to preliminary and informal discussions of mutual interest and/or expressions of the desire to interact; "interactions" shall imply the implementation of actual projects or programs.

COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERACTIONS

1. "Operational" -Interactions: "Routine" interactions related to MRS programs, such as meetings or advocacy programs

2. "Strategic" communications: Related to the development and execution of MRS strategic objectives and initiatives.

3. "Protocol" communications: Communications between MRS leadership and that of other organizations.

There are also a variety of "interaction modes" available to MRS. Different modes can be used for different projects, and this policy shall attempt to standardize the nomenclature for communications and interactions in order to better communicate to internal and external stakeholders.

As identified in the MRS Partnership Task Force Report, 2011-2012, five important modes of interaction are: 1) No interaction; 2) Competition; 3) Service Exchange; 4) Collaboration; 5) Partnership.

Additionally, three metrics will help to evaluate and determine the appropriate interaction mode in a situation, and thus to plan for effective inter-organizational communications. They are: 1) Added Value; 2) Organizational Identity; and 3) Mutuality.

Metric Definitions
Added value arises when results are achieved that could not be achieved if the organizations continued to work separately (i.e., each party believes that the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts.)
Organizational identity refers to that which is distinctive and enduring in an organization.
Mutuality represents the degree of equality in decision-making among the interacting organizations, as opposed to domination of one or more of the participants. Mutuality does not imply equal power relations, but refers to mutual dependence, and entails respective rights and responsibilities of each party to the others delineated to maximize benefits for each party. A high degree of mutuality is *not* required for all types of interactions, but for some it is essential.

The following table illustrates the method by which interactions may be judged.

Interaction Mode	Interaction Characteristics			
	Added Value	**Organizational Identity**	**Mutuality**	**Comments**
No interaction	Low	Retained	-----	Should be a conscious decision not to interact
Competition	Low	Retained	------	Good if serves community, Bad if not
Service Exchange	High	Retained	Some	Typically a vendor" interaction
Collaboration	High	Retained	More	
Partnership	High	Retained	High	

GUIDELINES

Communications with other professional societies and organizations shall be carried out within the existing structure of MRS according to the following guidelines:

Operational Interactions:	• The operating committee in a specific programmatic area and/or HQ will communicate with other organizations as needed to execute an operational function, consistent with approved Board guidelines for interactions.

Strategic Planning and Communications:	• The MRS President, MRS Executive Director, Executive Committee designee, and/or a Board-commissioned entity (e.g., Committee, Task Force or individual) will represent MRS. • During planning for, or when launching, an initiative: o Strategic planning may be handled by an appointed task force or a standing group (operating committee and/or HQ), charged with a specific task, for a limited scope and time. • Additionally, on an ongoing basis, the Board should remind HQ and/or operating committees that they may consider collaborations when developing plans to execute a Board-initiated strategic initiative.
"Protocol" Communications:	• The Presidential Line and/or the Executive Director will typically represent MRS and periodically report activity to ExeCom.

AUTHORITY

Authority to utilize the various interactions modes to further the Society's mission and to better serve the materials community is given below.

Mode of Interaction	Authorized to Undertake
No Interaction	Operating Committees and HQ
Competition	Operating Committees and HQ
Service Exchange	Operating Committees and HQ when within constraints of Board-approved Budget. Board approval needed for special budgetary issues.
Collaboration	*Individual Project:* Operating Committees and HQ when within constraints of Board-approved budget. Board approval needed for special budgetary issues. *Long-term Project with significant impact on Society "Brand" (e.g. joint "society-level" meeting; joint journal, etc.:* MRS Board of Directors
Partnership	MRS Board of Directors

OVERSIGHT

The Executive Committee is charged with ensuring that communications with other organizations are encouraged and are "healthy." The Executive Committee will receive periodic briefings from the Executive Director on the status of Society collaborations, partnerships, and other strategic and protocol communications with external organizations.

Deliverables: N/A; Review policy every three years or as needed
Who: Executive Committee

When: At least 8 weeks before the Board meeting at which amendments should be considered. To: ExeCom/Board
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