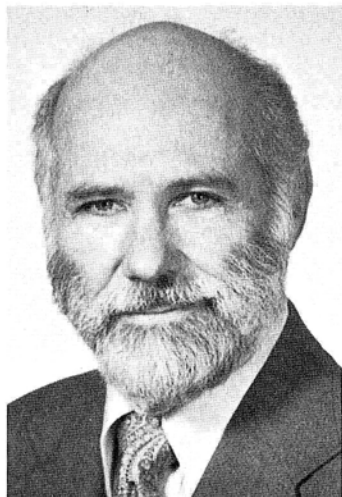


# Long-Range Planning for APS

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*Where are we going?  
Where can we go?  
Where will we go?  
And how?*

An exciting mission is in progress. It could help our Society evolve in unanticipated ways and we are establishing APS goals and ways to achieve them. This will take time and effort, but it is worthwhile and we are under way.

Our Society is in a growth phase filled with opportunity and uncertainty. The need to plan comprehensively was recognized during the APS

presidency of L. H. Purdy, who appointed a Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC) under the chairmanship of Paul H. Williams. The charge of this committee was to consider all aspects of APS operations and governance with a long-range view, and to report to the Council and to the Society. This editorial shares progress to date with you.

The LRPC is using the Strategic Planning Process (1):

1. Establish APS's purpose. Conclusion: to foster the science and practice of plant pathology.

2. Analyze the internal environment and capabilities of APS.

3. Analyze the external environment and constituency of APS.

4. Establish 8 to 10 key issues of concern to APS. Conclusion, with no priority: Meetings, Publications, Communications, Headquarters, Training, Scientific Excellence, World Problems, Fiscal Sufficiency, National Plant Health.

5. Establish 3 or 4 scenarios for each key issue.

6. Create 2 or 3 alternative strategies for each scenario.

7. Test the viability of alternatives in light of our purpose and environment.

8. Assess the implications of remaining strategies.

9. Choose strategies.

10. Identify the tactics (actions) required.

11. Design and implement a plan.

At a 2-day marathon session in February 1981, Williams led the LRPC through stages 1-5 of the Strategic Planning Process. Wiley Garrett's Presidential Address, "APS—Planning Our Future," was based on this information (see *PHYTOPATHOLOGY NEWS*, September 1981). In New Orleans last August, the LRPC worked out stages 6-9. Council requested that it also be presented here. The LRPC must yet tackle stages 10 and 11.

To generate key issues and then select among them, the LRPC used a modification of the Nominal Group Technique (2). Fifty-one issues were generated, described, and voted on in a manner designed to retain the best among many diverse ideas. Of course, other issues also are worthy of consideration. Some considered but not retained as key issues were membership recruitment, public perception, additional member services, the election

process, international relations, and priorities for research and education.

Scenarios representing extremes were developed around each key issue to require consideration of diverse goals. As details of strategies and tactics were worked out for the possible implementation of each scenario, some were obviously unacceptable and rejected. For example, the scenarios to drop all publications, to stop communications, and to do nothing in education and training were summarily rejected. But other questionable scenarios will be retained during the planning process so that we can consider a variety of options.

The following review of key issues, scenarios, and strategies represents the current status of the LRPC's planning for the future of our Society. There is no order of priority.

## Key Issue: The Role of the Annual Meeting

Scenario 1. *Continue As Is*

Strategy: Provide optimum environment for members to do what they want.

Scenario 2. *Discontinue Annual Meeting*

Strategy 1: Exploit electronic and/or paper communications.

Strategy 2: Substitute divisional, societal, and/or specialty meetings.

Scenario 3. *Meet Less Frequently*

Strategy 1: Regularly.

Strategy 2: Irregularly (according to need).

Strategy 3: Joint with other societies.

Scenario 4. *Continue Annual Meeting with Significant Modifications*

Strategy 1: Emphasize nonoral communications.

Strategy 2: Remote communications (video conferencing).

Strategy 3: More for dollar.

## Key Issue: The Role of Publications

Scenario 1. *Continue As Is*

Strategy: Provide society-controlled means of communications in the most economical way.

Scenario 2. *No "In-House" Publications*

Strategy: Contract out all publications.

Scenario 3. *Pursue an Aggressively Expanded Publications Policy*

Strategy 1: Aggressively expand publication activities in the area of plant health.

Strategy 2: Emphasize new forms of publications.

Scenario 4. *No Publications* (rejected)

## Key Issue: Keeping Abreast of Advances in Communications Methods and Technology

Scenario 1. *Remain As Is*

Strategy: Utilize primarily presently conventional forms of communications.

Scenario 2. *Stop Communications* (rejected)

Scenario 3. *Aggressive Utilization of Advancing Technologies and Methodologies*

Strategy 1: Use and foster advanced electronic technologies.

Strategy 2: Use an appropriate mix of electronic and traditional means of communications.

**Key Issue: The Sufficiency and Location of Headquarters Facilities and Staff in Meeting the Needs of APS**

Scenario 1. *Presently Sufficient As Is*

Strategy: Maintain centralized office with professional staff for administration, publication, and membership services.

Scenario 2. *Return to Volunteer System*

Strategy: Use volunteers to achieve administration, publication, and membership services.

Scenario 3. *Planned Evolution*

Strategy: Develop appropriate facilities and staff to accommodate long-term objectives of APS.

**Key Issue: Fostering Education and Training in Plant Pathology**

Scenario 1. *Continue As Is*

Strategy: Encourage and support more effective teaching without long-range planning.

Scenario 2. *Do Nothing in Education and Training* (rejected)

Scenario 3. *Aggressively Expand Training and Education (In-House)*

Strategy 1: Update established teachers and/or establish collegiate certification.

Strategy 2: Provide resource materials for elementary and secondary education.

Scenario 4. *Policy of Moderate Involvement*

Strategy: Encourage and support with long-range planning.

**Key Issue: The Promotion of Scientific Excellence**

Scenario 1. *As Is Currently*

Strategy: Use of peer review and awards.

Scenario 2. *No Promotion of Standards of Excellence*

Strategy: Abolish peer review and awards.

Scenario 3. *Active Promotion of Excellence*

Strategy 1: Establish minimum standards for professional competence.

Strategy 2: Establish means for recognizing and rewarding.

**Key Issue: APS Response to Challenges of World Population, Food, and Energy Problems**

Scenario 1. *Continue As Is*

Strategy: Provide a forum for exchange of information.

Scenario 2. *Discourage Active Involvement*

Strategy: Turn our attention to scientific matters per se and avoid political and social implications.

Scenario 3. *Establish Policy and Action of Involvement*

Strategy 1: Ascertain the impact of our activities and inform members.

Strategy 2: Publicize to the world the implications of our activities.

Strategy 3: Become politically active on issues concerning our Society.

**Key Issue: Fiscal Sufficiency to Support APS Activities**

Scenario 1. *Remain As Is*

Strategy: Create an annual budget with a minimum long-range plan.

Scenario 2. *Financial Insufficiency* (rejected)

Scenario 3. *Financial Sufficiency Without Cost to Members*  
Strategy 1: Establish long-term plan to be supported by income from APS enterprises.

Strategy 2: Establish long-term plan to be supported by income from endowments.

Scenario 4. *Financial Sufficiency with Cost to Members*

Strategy: Establish long-term plan to be supported by income from membership and other sources.

**Key Issue: The Role of APS in National Plant Health Systems**

Scenario 1. *Present Status*

Strategy: Selectively support and maintain communication with groups of similar interests.

Scenario 2. *Ignore the Possibility of Involvement*

Strategy: Concentrate on problems within our own discipline.

Scenario 3. *Advocacy Leadership Role of APS*

Strategy 1: Establish APS leadership.

Strategy 2: Assume responsibility for APS to contribute to a National Plant Health System.

Scenario 4. *Alternate National Plant Health System*

Strategy: Support other groups.

We share this beginning so you will be aware of the process and have an opportunity to participate. These key issues, scenarios, and strategies are good subjects for discussion with your colleagues. Discuss them. Then please share your views with any of the members of the LRPC: George S. Abawi, Stanley M. Alcorn, J. Artie Browning, R. James Cook, Thor Kommedahl, Steven C. Nelson, James O. Strandberg, Anne K. Vidaver, Paul H. Williams, and me.

Our next step (stage 10) in the Strategic Planning Process will be to formulate tactics (actions) necessary to accomplish each strategy. As tactics and a proposed long-range plan emerge, you will be kept informed and involved. The process should also help us focus current actions and give needed perspective. It, of course, is designed to help us decide future goals with confidence because such a variety of choices will have been considered.

Once the Plan is agreed to, it will serve as a benchmark for Council and the entire APS membership as they consider actions that impact on the future of our Society.

**REFERENCES**

1. Strategic Planning Process—Alice McHugh. 1980. Strategic Planning for Museums. Museum News. July/August pp. 23-29.
2. Nominal Group Technique—A. L. Delbecq, A. H. Van de Ven, and D. H. Gustafson. 1975. Group techniques for program planning. Scott, Foresman and Co., Glenview, IL. 174 pp.