The Introduction

The Strategic Plan of the Society for Pediatric Pathology (SPP) is a dynamic document that summarizes many of the key initiatives that are either ongoing or planned. The specific topics originate from many sources, some reactive to recent or upcoming events that impact on our members or subspecialty, and others proactive suggestions to improve the "services" provided by the SPP. The plan serves as a guide that can sustain priorities across changes in leadership. Specific topics are discussed and updated semiannually at meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee, which is chaired by the President-Elect and open to all members. Elements of the current Strategic Plan can be organized around some major themes, as follows:

1. Equitable and Efficient Distribution of Labor in SPP Leadership

Leadership positions in the SPP are organized along a somewhat pyramidal architecture with the Executive Committee (President, President-Elect, Past-President, and Secretary-Treasurer) at the apex and other committees (Archives, Bylaws, Distinction and Awards, etc) as the foundation. Council, made up of the Executive Committee, six Councilors-at-Large, and Chairs of the other Committees, fills in the middle. In addition, the SPP has contracts with the USCAP, which manages many activities (membership renewals, CME programs, meeting registration, slide survey billing, ...), Allen Press, which publishes Pediatric and Developmental Pathology and Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology, and GUIdesign, a company that created and helps manage our SPP Website (www.spponline.org). With the exception of a small stipend provided to the Editor of Pediatric and Developmental Pathology, all of the other leadership positions within the SPP are voluntary and rely on the generous spirit and dedication of its members.

In many respects, this organizational framework has served us well, but as the SPP has grown, its educational profile has increased, and logistical / regulatory demands have escalated tremendously. At the same time, clinical and administrative duties of most pediatric pathologists have increased, leaving less time to devote to SPP administration. Despite the “committee-based” nature of SPP leadership, much of the work has historically been done by relatively small number of officers, particularly certain committee chairs and the Executive Committee. For example, Councilors-at-Large have functioned primarily to vote on motions put forth at semiannual meetings with relatively limited duties in between. In contrast, the Chair of
the Education Committee may contributed many hours every week to insure that meetings are planned, CME requirements are met, and other educational programs (e.g., slide survey program) are maintained.

A major goal of the current Strategic Plan is to address this imbalance and develop a more equitable and efficient system for handling recurrent leadership duties, as well as a more robust scheme to address new initiatives. Key elements in the “new approach” are delegation and shared ownership of specific activities. In particular,

a. Each Councilor-at-Large has adopted a specific role as a “liaison” to shepherd Strategic Plan initiatives that require integration between multiple committees or other forms of extra-committee support (Table 1), with involvement of Executive Committee members in selected areas as needed.

b. Committee chairs will be strongly encouraged to delegate specific tasks to other committee members and document the allocation of responsibilities in their Committee Manuals (see below) and Reports to Council. The desired outcomes are ongoing leadership development and broader engagement of SPP members at all career stages.

c. Committee chairs are required to prepare and update manuals that specify chair responsibilities and provide tips for accomplishing recurrent tasks. The manuals will be archived centrally with the USCAP office in a digital system, where access can be regulated to appropriate individuals (e.g., new Chairperson). Most of the manuals have been completed. The digital storage system is in development.

d. Some specific responsibilities will be re-allocated to provide more balanced expectations of the individual committees. The Membership Committee has taken on RRA. The Fellowship Committee has taken on workforce issues. The Archives Committee is responsible for organizing committee manuals.

e. A list of on-going initiatives (see below) will be updated semiannually by the President Elect and Executive Committee and posted on the SPP website.

Table 1: “Liaison” Roles of Councilors-at-Large:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councilor</th>
<th>End of Term</th>
<th>Liaison Role</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ona Faye-Petersen</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Organization of 2015 Perinatal Course: done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Perry</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Delineation of duties in Education Committee: done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Finn</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Digital Storage of SPP Documents: in progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Eldin</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Root-Cause Analysis of Workforce Shortage: in progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Ernst</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>USCAP Central Office / CME support: in progress, with involvement of Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarangarajan Ranganathan</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Website Redesign: in progress, with involvement of Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Education

The SPP submitted its application for re-accreditation of our CME program to the ACGME in mid-2013. The application was prepared by Drs. Szabo and Teot (Education Committee) with help from the USCAP Management Service. The application process exposed opportunities to improve how we collect, maintain, and access CME-related documents, and the need to clarify our expectations for support from the USCAP office. Response to the ACGME and an effort to standardize CME documentation are high-priority efforts to be led by Drs. Szabo, Hawkins (Chair, Education Committee), Ernst (CoL Liasion), and the USCAP office, with help from Dr. Teot (former Chair, Education Committee). The USCAP Management Office has reorganized, with Annette Dixon now responsible for SPP Management and educational programs support. Others in the USCAP Management Office who provide support to the SPP include Carolyn Lane for membership, Nancy West for meeting planning, and Travis Newman for finances. Further refinements and improvements are in progress.

b. Delegation of Duties within the Education Committee have been refined. The demands on the Education Committee, and particularly the EC Chairperson, are enormous, in part because of ever-growing regulations from ACGME. It is vital that we find ways to share the workload in a manner that does not compromise the integrity of the activities. Deb Perry (CoL Liasion) worked with Dr. Hawkins and Szabo to develop such a process. Sunita Park will be responsible for developing workshops, with backup by Rafaella Morotti, and Miguel Guzman will be responsible for developing symposia, with backup by Carole Vogler. Dr. Hawkins has provided a detailed outline of duties as described above.

c. The 2014 Joint Interim Meeting with the Pediatric Pathology Society in Birmingham, England (September 4-6, 2014 was a great success.

d. The CAP Learning Portal is in progress. The SPP has partnered with the CAP to provide practice guidelines for specific topics in pediatric pathology via the web-based CAP Learning Portal. The first such contribution from the SPP was in 2013 and dealt with Placental Pathology. Dr. Linda Margraf is organizing this program on behalf of the SPP and will coordinate the next module on Pediatric Gastroenterology.

e. Educational Outreach is in progress. SPP members and educational programs are potentially valuable resources for other organizations in search of expert information related to a variety of topics. To facilitate dissemination of pediatric pathology knowledge, the SPP Membership and Website Committees will work together to allow members to post self-described “areas of expertise”, lists of prior workshops, etc. as part of their online membership profiles. In addition, upon completion of an SPP Workshop, workshop directors will receive letters suggesting they consider submitting their presentations elsewhere. Further work will be coordinated with website redesign.

f. SPP International Educational Outreach in progress. The SPP is a constituent member of IPPA (the International Society for Paediatric Pathology). The relationship between the SPP and IPPA will be reinforced through addition of a report on IPPA as a standing agenda item for the SPP Council and Business Meetings and SPP support for a scholarship to the annual IPPA Advanced Course in Paediatric Pathology. Both were approved at the September 2014 SPP Meeting, via the Strategic Planning Committee and the SPP Council. Website links are in progress.
g. 2015 Perinatal Pathology Meeting (Chicago, IL).
   Drs. Ona Faye-Petersen (CoL) and Linda Ernst (CoL), along with the Education Committee,
   have organized a SPP Perinatal Pathology Course, which will be held April 17-19, 2015 in
   Chicago. The meeting appeals not only to members of the SPP, but also to a broad audience
   of obstetricians, general pathologists, ultrasonographers, and other specialists.

3. Website Redesign: in progress, slowed due to USCAP website challenges.
   In this digital age, our Website is critical to almost every aspect of our Strategic Plan. However,
   by contemporary standards, the SPP website needs redesign so that it is more attractive, more
   easily managed, and user friendly. Our web-based services are a hybrid system. The SPP
   maintains its own website (www.spponline.org), but our site contains links to services provided
   by the USCAP online management service, which handles membership profiles, dues payment,
   slide survey program, etc. The USCAP recently updated their online services with some
   unanticipated glitches. An effort is underway to address these issues.
   With regard to our own website, Drs. John Hicks, Rob Ruiz, Glenn Taylor, and the Website
   Committee are working diligently on a redesign proposal. Dr. S. Ranganathan (CoL liaison) will
   work with other committees to help to prioritize Website changes and develop mechanisms to
   insure regularity and timeliness with regard to aspects of the Website that require recurrent
   revision (e.g., updated list of officers, award winners, etc).
   George Clay (GUIdesign) is the current SPP Website designer and provides advice on Website-
   related matters, and redesign aspects. GUIdesign and USCAP Management have been
   collaborating on this. The need for a strategic plan for the SPP Website was raised.

4. Document Handling
   Numerous documents are produced, collected, revised, and accessed by SPP leadership in the
   course of a year. Some of these documents are essential for CME accreditation or other
   regulatory mandates. Others are part of our legacy and have historical or sentimental value.
   Another set of documents are reference materials used in by SPP leaders to guide policy
   development and manage the day-to-day activities of our group. Unfortunately, we do not have
   a good system for centralized storage of these documents so they are updated as necessary and
   readily accessible. In particular, the SPP will benefit from Committee Manuals that outline
   responsibilities of Committee Chairs and provide helpful tips regarding specific activities.
   Two initiatives address these needs.
   a. Dr. Laura Finn (CoL liaison) is working with the USCAP Central Office and Dr. Tatevian (Chair,
      Archives Committee) to create a digital repository for SPP documents. Ideally, this will allow
      for controlled access to documents, easy retrieval, and regular updates. In progress.
   b. The Archives Committee has collected Committee Manuals from nearly all existing chairs
      and is in the process of developing a system for regular updates to these manuals.

5. Financial Development
   The ad hoc Development Committee has been reconfigured and is led by Dr. Beverly Rogers.
   Other members include Sarah Johnson-Welch, Sara Vargas, and Jon Rowland (Finance Chair), Raj
   Kapur (Pres) and Charles Timmons (Sec Treas). The mission of this group is purely strategic, as
   they develop proposals for the conservative growth and allocation of SPP funds.
   This Committee has met (by teleconference) on a regular basis for several months. They have
   developed a simplified framework for understanding and visualizing the status of SPP finances
and introduced this model to Council in Birmingham. In the coming months they will work on recommendations for SPP financial priorities, including special projects.

6. **Publications**

Based on recommendations from an SPP “Publications Retreat”, which was held prior to the 2013 Interim meeting in Salt Lake City, several changes will be implemented to our two publications, *Pediatric and Developmental Pathology* and its supplement, *Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology*. The PPS is also engaged in planning the changes.

a. Advertisements will be solicited for *Perspectives in Pediatric Pathology* to offset publication costs.

b. The Editorial Boards of both publications will be reconfigured at the discretion of the Editors-in-Chief and with approval by the Publications Committee. Input will be solicited from the PPS.

c. A proposal was advanced to Council regarding the transition to online versions of both publications as part of membership subscriptions, with options for print or e-book versions of either publication at an extra cost. The latter changes will provide for a more favorable flow of funds and eliminate or minimize costly expenditures needed to support recent editions of the supplement.

7. **Research**

The Research Committee (Dr. Jason Jarzemowski, Chair) is considering changes to the language used in rules for Abstract submission (e.g., what is considered “novel” data) and drafted guidelines for a process to be followed when a question is raised during the review process. Dr. Cheryl Coffin (President-Elect) worked with the Research Committee on this topic. The guidelines were approved by the SPP Council in Birmingham. Future consideration will be given to options for how the SPP can provide updates from related organizations (like COG) and to potential review of ethics guidelines developed approximately a decade ago.

8. **Pediatric Pathology Workforce Issues**

Pathology, in general, and the subspecialty of Pediatric Pathology, in particular, faces a shortage of qualified practitioners. The number of trainees in Pediatric Pathology is not expected to meet current or future needs and the pass rate for the pediatric pathology subspecialty board examination in 2013 was the lowest (67%) among subspecialties in pathology. The situation is a potential crisis for our specialty and the SPP, as a shortage of qualified specialists forces institutions to turn to alternative models for pediatric pathology coverage. Many explanations have been put forth to explain low numbers of qualified applicants to pediatric pathology fellowships, but limited scientific data are available to test these hypotheses and develop amelioration strategies. Members of the Fellowship Committee (Dr. Vivek Singh, Chair), including Dr. Raja Rabah, are committed to a rigorous “root-cause” analysis of the factors that influence pediatric pathology fellowship application and successful completion rates. Drs. Karen Eldin (Col liason) and Charles Timmons (Secretary-Treasurer) will help with their efforts. Dr. Timmons represented the SPP at a recent Pathology Workforce Summit (December, 2013; organized by the ASCP and CAP), which is working on the more general issue of shortages of pathologists across all subspecialties. He will be able to align proposals from the Fellowship Committee with the agenda of the former group. A survey has been circulated by Fellowship Committee, results are in, and data analysis is in progress.
Commentary from Members of the SPP

Comments from members of the SPP on any aspect of the Strategic Plan are welcome and should be addressed to any member of the Strategic Planning Committee (Cheryl Coffin, Chairperson). Meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee are held at the Spring (Annual) and Fall (Interim) meetings of the SPP and are open to all members.