2011 SES Annual Report

Under its Constitution, SES is required to hold an annual meeting. This year's meeting took place on August 16 in conjunction with the 60th annual SES conference. Following is the report of the Society from SES President Paul J. Crosta.

Since 1947, SES has been instrumental in supporting the standards professional as a neutral-based organization for standards training and education. As we move to complete our 64th year as a Society, I’m proud to say that the organization is stronger than ever. There’s a quotation that reads, “Some people dream of success, while others wake up and work hard at it.” I truly believe that statement characterizes the attributes of the members of our Society, past and present. I’m encouraged to see new members, new appointments to the Board, and more importantly, new and innovative ideas.

Along with those new ideas are fresh changes. And so, as times have changed, we too have adapted and responded accordingly. One of those changes, implemented just about two years ago, involved our rebranding from the “Standards Engineering Society” to “SES – The Society for Standards Professionals.” This change came about from the notion that SES has transitioned from an organization once comprised mainly of engineers, to one that’s now comprised of a variety of standards professionals, from engineers to standards librarians to document control managers. This has had an immediate impact in attracting other standards professionals who once thought the SES was an organization solely for engineers. As an organization, we will never forget our roots or the engineers who founded (and continue to shape) SES. Yet, our ability to adapt to a more encompassing group of professionals, as reflected in our mission and our rebranding, will further strengthen and expand our core membership as we reach new heights.

For those of you who were at last year’s annual conference in Boston, I spoke about the Society’s focus on three main goals for the year: 1) expansion of membership; 2) expansion of the AStd and CStd certification programs; and, 3) increased products and services to our membership.

While most companies and organizations are showing decreases in this economic downturn, SES has not only maintained its core individual member base, but has increased its organizational member base to a high of 21 organizations, which I believe is indicative of the quality of core programs and services SES provides. In the future, we will be looking to cultivate these relationships—as well as other constituencies—to expand our information networks, and ultimately provide more value to all SES members.

In the previous issue of Standards Engineering I spoke about a newly signed Memorandum of Understanding between SES and ANSI (American National Standards Institute), facilitating complimentary reciprocal affiliations between each organization. Simply put, an SES individual member is eligible to become an ANSI affiliate member with related benefits. Conversely, the technical contact of an ANSI full member is eligible to become an SES member with related benefits.

As a result of this membership reciprocity, there is the potential of almost doubling the current SES member base to allow for a wider breadth of member participation on committees, board positions, and training events. I’d like to thank ANSI Chairman of the Board, Art Cote and ANSI President and CEO, Joe Bahtia for their support of this program, as well as George Gulla and Brian Meincke from ANSI for their support in completing this MOU. I’m proud to say this partnership not only highlights the joint commitment on behalf of SES and ANSI to support the standards professional, but further underscores the strength of our relationship as we move forward in time.

One service we will be marketing to these new members is our AStd and CStd certification program. As part of its mission to provide professional development and certification, SES established this program to recognize those who have demonstrated a high degree of professional competence in different areas of standards and standardization.

At the beginning of my tenure as President, I posed a challenge to the Board to ensure renewed focus and attention to those programs. I felt this was a two-step process: The first step was appointing Michael Woodford as the Certification Chair, who, along with the Certification Committee, have really strengthened the program for the better and done just a marvelous job. Collectively this group has made tremendous strides in ensuring a balanced, objective, and impartial certification program. Their dedication resulted in the successful processing and verification of certification applications and examinations. As a result, our certification program is running better than ever. The second step was the grassroots marketing effort, as many of our organizational members have been instrumental in supporting their employees as they prepare for AStd or CStd certification. Over the past two years, we have seen a three-fold increase in total certifications. We are excited about keeping up the intensity of this program, and in the future we will be investigating the potential for other related benefits.
During my opening remarks at the annual conference, I briefly discussed the SES Virtual Community. This Virtual Community is the culmination of ideas centered on the notion of providing online standards education content to our members. Over the past two years we’ve been successful in utilizing this new technology to simulcast our conference. Since that time, we have further expanded that technology to create the SES Webinar Series. Kicked off in January, we’ve had wonderful enthusiasm in the online attendees to the three webinars we have hosted thus far: Don Snyder and Dan Ryan from ULE; Amy Marasco from Microsoft; and Ross Dowling from Boeing, with another two webinars planned for the rest of this year. The SES Education Committee has done a fabulous job getting this program up and running and we look forward to it continuing as a mainstay in our education lineup for the near future.

Another online technology we’ve embraced is that of social media. Over the past two years, SES has been moving forward with its social media initiative, which has been predicated on three main goals:
1. Provide accessible and sustainable venues to educate the standards professional and stimulate discussion on topics of standardization;
2. Expand the SES member footprint both domestically and globally; and
3. Provide both static and real-time updates of SES news and information to members and constituents.

I’m happy to report we have been successful in achieving these goals, as SES now has a defined presence within the social media domain. To that end, SES also has formulated and adopted an official Social Media Policy to guide most, if not all, aspects of the overall policy management of our social media platform content:
- Facebook (group: SES – The Society for Standards Professionals)
- LinkedIn (group: SES – The Society for Standards Professionals)
- Twitter (twitter.com/SES_Standards)
- Wikipedia

These channels provide for networking relationships to US and international standards-related organizations, as well as up-to-date details on upcoming events or seminars. If you haven’t done so yet, I would encourage you all to enroll as a member of each group.

While we increased our presence virtually on the web, we also increased our presence in physical location this past year. Last year I put a challenge to out to the Board to re-establish the Washington, DC section, which had become inactive some years ago. In past years, this section met every few months and provided an active forum for guest speakers and discussion on a regular basis. On a deeper level, it provided important feedback to the SES Board to some of the regional concerns. This, combined with the fact that the leaders of those local sections could be groomed for future SES Board positions, made this a worthwhile endeavor.

I’m pleased to say the DC chapter was re-established in March of this year with the co-chairs Dwayne Brown and Kerri Conn (who both did a wonderful job). I had the pleasure of attending that historic meeting, and found both a number of SES members and other industry professionals in attendance, which was very exciting. More importantly, though, I found it refreshing to see new faces at the meeting, which I’m confident will foster new ideas, and add new talents to our Society.

And speaking of talents, our bi-monthly journal–Standards Engineering–is one item where we see the culminations of extraordinary talents: from writing to the editing. The journal has always been one of SES’s proudest achievements. And while we’ve always received compliments on the journal, most recently we have heard more and more positive remarks and interest from the international standards professionals, which, I believe, points to the cutting edge concept, writing, and layout.

I’ve always believed Standards Engineering to be the premier neutral-based periodical focused on the standards professional and standards training and education. In saying that, I need to acknowledge the efforts of our Editor, Diane Thompson, who has played a key role in elevating the journal to the highest of standards. And clearly, I’m not alone in my thinking as Diane was most recently chosen as the recipient of the ANSI President’s Award for Journalism, which recognizes a journalist whose work helps to illuminate the role that standardization and conformity assessment activities play in improving the health and safety of Americans and in strengthening the competitiveness of US business in a global marketplace. And so, I ask you to please join me in congratulating Diane on this highest honor.

The accomplishments we’ve had this year, from both an operational and financial standpoint, cannot be mentioned without highlighting the time, dedication, and hard work by the Board of Directors of this Society and their relevant committees. Thank you all for your valuable time and input. SES is a better Society because of your efforts and we thank you.
As many of you are aware, this is a transitional year for the Board, and so my tenure of President has all but ended, as I soon turn the ceremonial gavel over to the new President, Ellen Emard. If it’s true that time flies when you’re having fun, then my two-year tenure lasted for just a blink of an eye.

As I look back on my presidency, I mostly will appreciate the fine men and women in SES with whom I’ve had the pleasure of working. Earlier, I noted that SES has been a thriving Society since 1947, one that’s contributed significantly to the standards professional. That success is a direct result of the leaders and members—past and present—who have defined this organization’s storied history. As volunteers, these members have selflessly put forth and continue to put forth countless hours of work—often at personal sacrifice—to create a better Society and contribute to the greater good of standardization.

I’m honored to have been your President and I’m honored to have worked with what I feel are some of the great leaders and great minds in the field of standardization. And so, as I transition to Immediate Past President, I look forward to supporting the new generation of leaders stepping forward as SES Board Members. And so, I will be forever grateful for the special opportunity you’ve given me to contribute as President and for your support over the past two years. Thank you so much.

Now, as one of my final acts of President, it is my duty to proceed with the Transition of Elected Officers. There were six positions open for election on the SES Board of Directors. The results of those elections are as follows: President - Ellen Emard; Vice President - Sonya Bird; Treasurer - Ed Mikoski; Secretary - Rich Forselius; Council Director, Education - Ashley Griggs; and Council Director, Membership - Matt Williams. On behalf of the SES Board, I congratulate you all on your new positions and wish you the best of luck moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul J. Crosta, AStd
SES President