The SRNT 2025 Strategic Review is a 15 month-long process that the Board of Directors has undertaken in order to identify and address factors that we believe will impact the Society over the next 7 - 10 years. The goal is to arrive at member-informed conclusions, recommendations, and ultimately, Board actions that will set the stage for SRNT’s future relevance, integrity, and sustainability.

The Guiding Principles and supporting Boundary Standards are the distillation of and key outcomes from the SRNT 2025 discussions, interviews, and the 2019 Membership Survey (hot link to the timeline document).

**2025 Strategic Review: INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION**

*Chair: Jennifer McClure*

**Guiding Principles & Boundary Standards**

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“Industry” Defined

There are three major industries whose work and interests intersect with that of SRNT: the pharmaceutical, tobacco, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) industries. SRNT membership has been closed to employees of the tobacco industry since 2010, but has remained open to employees of the pharmaceutical industry; to date, the Society has not had a policy governing ENDS industry membership. Conference attendance and submission/presentation/publication of science through SRNT vehicles have been open to employees of all three industries.

Based on consistent feedback from members through the 2019 Membership Survey, leadership interviews, and Work Advisory Group meetings, employees of the ENDS industry will no longer be eligible for society membership as of January 1, 2021. However, ENDS industry employees will continue to be allowed to participate, with restrictions, in the conference and submit research to the society journal.

Existing policies governing the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries, respectively, remain unchanged. Thus, for the purposes of this document, “Industry” will refer collectively to the Tobacco and ENDS industries unless otherwise stated.
Guiding Principle 1: Membership in the Society

Consistent with existing SRNT policy regarding tobacco industry employee ineligibility for membership in the Society, individuals employed by companies within the ENDS industry will no longer be eligible for membership in SRNT.

Individuals who consult for Industry remain eligible for membership, on a case-by-case basis, pending an additional level of review.

Boundary Standards

1A: Responding to New Information
Per SRNT Bylaws, the Board of Directors may change membership eligibility as necessary, based on new information.

1B: Industry Consultants
Individuals who consult with, but are not employed by, Industry are eligible for membership in SRNT. However, Industry consultants will be subject to an additional level of review at the time of membership application or annual renewal; applications and renewals will be considered on a case-by-case basis taking into account the nature of the consulting work being conducted, the nature of the consultant’s relationship with Industry, and the nature and role of the individual in the academic or broader research community.

1C: Articulating the “Why”
When considering engagement levels across SRNT programs and activities on the part of individuals who consult with Industry, the Board will make decisions based on the current or future problems posed by such engagement—to the science, to the members or conference attendees, and to the Society itself. Decisions will be based on clearly articulated rationales. Any new policies that result in a negative impact on current members of SRNT will require additional review and consideration on the part of the Board.

1D: Conflicts of Interest Regarding Participating in SRNT Membership Activities
Individuals who consult with Industry and who are members of SRNT are eligible to fully participate in membership activities. In keeping with existing Board policy, the SRNT President will carefully consider members’ conflicts of interest when considering appointments to committee or other leadership positions. Likewise, when considering the makeup of SRNT workgroups or other project participation, conflicts of interest will be carefully considered.

Rationale
The Membership Survey did not provide clear direction one way or the other as to the difficult question of Industry consultants—are they or are they not part of the industry for which they consult? While many survey respondents believe that individuals who consult for Industry should be treated no differently than those who are actually employed by Industry, many others felt strongly that the reason(s) researchers might choose to consult, as well as the percentage of time/resources spent on consulting, needed to be carefully considered when determining levels of participation with SRNT. This is a gray and difficult area that needs to be handled with thought, both in regard to how consultant membership may affect SRNT and how SRNT’s policies may affect well-respected researchers who, for their own reasons, have chosen to consult with Industry. Therefore, the Work Advisory Group’s recommendation is to focus on impact and threats (current or future) rather than on the emotion of this particular issue, and to do so through an ongoing process of transparent review.
INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION: Guiding Principles & Boundary Standards

Guiding Principle 2:
Submission, Presentation, and Publication of Research

In support of the Society’s intention to provide a multi-disciplinary platform where diverse viewpoints are presented and discussed, SRNT allows conference and journal submissions regardless of funding source. Acceptance of research for presentation/publication will be determined solely by the peer review process. All presenters and authors must comply with SRNT policies regarding disclosure of funding sources and conflicts of interest.

Boundary Standards

2A: Peer Review
Per feedback provided throughout the SRNT 2025 review process, research funded by any for-profit industry will be subject to a higher level of peer review, to be determined by the Board of Directors in consultation with Program Committee representatives and the Journal editorial team.

2B: Presentation Eligibility
In codifying SRNT’s current, informal policies regarding presentation of accepted Industry-funded abstracts at the Annual Meeting, authors will be considered for poster presentation, only; they will not be considered for presentation in oral sessions.

The SRNT President, with input from the Program Committee chairs and the Board of Directors, may waive this provision if a particular Industry submission is deemed to be of significant importance to the broader research community.

2C: Clearly Identifying For-Profit Industry-funded Research
SRNT will establish guardrails that preserve the integrity and transparency of research presented. To that end, Industry-funded posters will be clearly identified and may be grouped together.

2D: Acceptance is Not Endorsement
The presentation of research at the SRNT Annual Meeting or publication through the SRNT journal does not, in any way, suggest endorsement or validation of the findings of a given abstract or paper. Acceptance of an abstract or paper simply means the submission has been subjected to and passed the peer-review process. Disclaimers to that effect will be clearly stated as appropriate.

Rationale
Member survey responses did not provide clear direction for SRNT to ban Industry research from being presented at the Annual Meeting. The Work Advisory Group stressed the need for a higher level of peer review and transparency of funding sources and conflicts of interest for research submitted by any for-profit industry. This Principle and related Boundary Standards also represent a compromise – allowing the presentation of TI and ENDS peer-reviewed research, but not in the highly visible paper or symposium format.
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Guiding Principle 3: Annual Meeting Participation

SRNT will not preclude individuals from participating in the Annual Meeting based on Industry affiliation or source of research funds. However, all Annual Meeting participants are subject to SRNT’s codes of conduct. Transparency regarding conflicts of interest and thoughtfully enacted participation parameters will be enforced.

Boundary Standards

3A: Restrictions on Conference Attendance and Participation in Specific Scientific Sessions

In an effort to find a reasonable compromise on the subject of Industry participation in the SRNT Annual Meeting, and based on feedback from the 2019 Membership Survey — which indicated both a desire for open scientific discussion and concerns related to Industry participation — the SRNT Board may limit or otherwise restrict Industry attendance and participation in some aspects of the Annual Meeting.

Likewise, the Board may require the clear identification of Industry employees and consultants attending the Annual Meeting. Industry interaction during the SRNT Annual Meeting must be transparent in all interactions, whether one-on-one or in scientific sessions.

3B: Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

Per existing Board policy, all Annual Meeting presenters must fully disclose funding sources and conflicts of interest.

Rationale

Membership survey responses did not provide clear direction for SRNT to ban participation from those employed or funded by the tobacco and ENDS industries. There was, however, clear direction regarding the desire for transparency and higher standards for participation by Industry representatives.

Feedback from the 2019 Membership Survey and additional feedback provided by key stakeholders and others interviewed as part of the SRNT 2025 planning process did not indicate a collective will to change current policy for participation by individuals from the pharmaceutical industry. The key to appropriate compromise is transparency and the Board’s authority to place appropriate limitations that support an open scientific forum while respecting attendees who favor restricting interaction with Industry representatives.
Guiding Principle 4: Financial Support of SRNT

SRNT does not engage in quid pro quo with organizations that provide funding to support SRNT, including direct or grant-funded support of the Annual Meeting. Financial support of Society programs does not entitle an organization to special dispensation.

Boundary Standards

4A: Transparency
SRNT will be transparent when accepting funds from external organizations — including the purpose of the financial support as well as the amount of financial support. Acceptance of financial support from any organization will meet the requirements (and limitations) outlined in the SRNT Board Policy 1.7, Receipt of Funds.

4B: Undue Influence on SRNT
SRNT will make every reasonable effort to avoid the perception of undue influence on the part of organizations that contribute funding in support of SRNT’s mission or specific initiatives. Funding organizations will not be consulted when issues of concern to the general membership arise.

Rationale
As a membership association, one member equals one vote. SRNT aims to maintain the highest ethical standards when engaging with external funders on behalf of the membership.
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NOTE ON RATIONALES: 
All rationales underscore SRNT’s unique position as a scientific society dedicated to the research and dissemination of excellent science on nicotine and tobacco.

Results from the Membership Survey informed the Work Advisory Group discussions, both of which informed the development of the Guiding Principles and related Boundary Standards.