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.

# APPENDIX G: GUIDING PRINCIPLES & BOUNDARY STANDARDS (FEBRUARY 2020)

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Guiding Principle 1: What We Are

SRNT is a scientific society whose mission is to stimulate the generation and dissemination of new knowledge concerning nicotine and tobacco in all its manifestations, from cellular to societal, across research disciplines, with the ultimate goal of reducing the harms of tobacco and nicotine-containing products around the globe.

SRNT is the professional society for those working on tobacco and nicotine scientific questions in pre-clinical, clinical, public health, epidemiological, and policy/regulatory research domains.

SRNT is dedicated to the field, and to supporting and developing the careers of researchers in every discipline.

SRNT welcomes as members those working in adjacent communities (tobacco control, cessation, etc.) who are interested in the latest, cutting edge research on nicotine and tobacco.

Boundary Standard 1A: SRNT is an International Organization

Despite a large majority of members from North America, SRNT is a truly international organization as evidenced by:

• an international membership with more than 40 countries represented;
• international representation on the Board of Directors, the Journal leadership team, the SRNT University leadership team, and throughout Network leadership; and
• welcoming international participation in all volunteer activities and sponsored programs.
PURPOSE AND ROLE, CONTINUED

Boundary Standard 1B: Organizational Priorities

SRNT’s primary responsibilities are to (in order of priority):
• SRNT members
• The broader scientific society (including non-member researchers)
• “Adjacent Communities” (including, but not limited to, the tobacco control, treatment, community intervention, harm reduction, and policy/ regulatory/advocacy communities)
• The general public

Boundary Standard 1C: Focus on Nicotine/Tobacco

SRNT’s research focus will remain nicotine and tobacco. While a minority of respondents (34 percent) support the idea of SRNT expanding its mission/purpose to include research on cannabis because of areas of commonality between nicotine/tobacco and cannabis research, adding cannabis as a new focus would represent “mission creep” and dilute the focus of a Conference and Journal that are increasingly rejecting quality research. SRNT should consider cannabis researchers to be an Adjacent Community and work with them according to the concepts outlined in the Edge Zone white paper.

Boundary Standard 1D: How Decisions Are Made

SRNT makes decisions about Society activities based on the fit with the mission and the sustainability of programs; what is realistic, useful and sustainable (financially and otherwise); and provides a clear benefit to membership or organizational goals. Elected and appointed officials will set aside personal or work-related bias when considering issues of importance to the broader, diverse membership of SRNT.

Rationale

The overwhelming response from the membership via the Membership Survey was for SRNT to retain its unique role as a scientific society first and foremost, including a top priority to be a voice for the scientific community.
Guiding Principle 2: SRNT's Unique Role

As a scientific society, SRNT has a unique role, a unique identity and purpose, and a unique agenda within the broader public health/tobacco control community. The role of a scientific society is not interchangeable with that of organizations operating in adjacent or "sister" communities. SRNT’s unique role is to focus on science. Please refer to the white paper, “The Edge Zone Effect,” which articulates how SRNT interacts with adjacent communities while retaining its unique identity.

Boundary Standard 2A: Acknowledging Boundaries between SRNT and Adjacent Communities

While members of SRNT work within adjacent communities and ally organizations, the scientific community—as represented by SRNT—is not interchangeable with those groups, nor does SRNT automatically share their respective identities, agendas, and goals (as articulated in Boundary Standard 2C). However, SRNT may support the work of, or partner with, adjacent communities in support of their goals and agendas.

Specifically, SRNT may work closely with, but is distinct from:

- the treatment/medical/cessation community
- the tobacco control/advocacy community
- the harm reduction community
- regional community-intervention communities
- the regulatory/public policy community

Boundary Standard 2B: Partnering with Adjacent Communities

When interacting with or responding to requests from adjacent communities, SRNT will stay true to its role as a scientific society, providing information to help inform policy, implementation, or other activities.
Adjacent communities need to be proactive in communicating needs or requests for support to SRNT; SRNT may not know of issues/concerns if those are not communicated.

SRNT will partner with adjacent communities on projects of mutual interest and benefit that foster creative thinking, problem solving, and solutions; setting boundaries that emphasize each group’s unique contribution.

**Boundary Standard 2C: Taking the Lead on Activities Beyond the Research Community**

Practical application of the evidence on behalf of adjacent communities is beyond the scope of SRNT’s mission; SRNT may initiate but does not carry out activities without the express interest and participation of adjacent communities.

**Boundary Standard 2D: What SRNT Is Not**

In line with Boundary Standard 2A, SRNT is not, nor does it act in the capacity of:
- an NGO
- a funder of research
- a regulator
- an advocate for its adjacent communities
- an advocate for the general public
- a treatment organization
- a tobacco control organization
- a harm reduction organization
- a public health organization

This does not represent an exhaustive list but rather a list of examples of adjacent communities with complementary roles to that of SRNT as a scientific society. Similar to Boundary Standard 2A, SRNT may work closely with, but is distinct from, the above noted communities.
Rationale

The membership Survey results and deliberations of the Work Advisory Group made clear that SRNT’s unique role is presenting rigorous science that enables people to make a judgment about how they view and use the science. “No group does what SRNT does in presenting science on nicotine and tobacco; this is a unique position that SRNT needs to keep.”

Guiding Principle 3: An Open and Scientific Forum

SRNT is a convener, bringing together researchers from multiple countries, from diverse backgrounds, across multiple disciplines, who represent a diversity of viewpoints on issues of concern to the nicotine and tobacco research community.

Boundary Standard 3A: Peer Review

SRNT does not disqualify science based on its funding source. SRNT provides the structures by which Conference abstracts and Journal papers are subjected to rigorous peer review prior to presentation, publication, or dissemination. SRNT does not endorse any research presented via any of its forums, nor does the peer review process validate or refute reported scientific findings.

Boundary Standard 3B: Transparency

In all appropriate venues and programs, SRNT will enforce rules on transparency of funding sources and conflicts of interest.

Rationale

The SRNT 2025 process (Leadership Interviews, the Membership Survey, and the deliberations of the Work Advisory Groups) has clearly identified SRNT’s role as a convener of scientific experts to bring the best scientific evidence. SRNT provides a platform for peer-reviewed science—not an endorsement of findings—and provides the audience the opportunity to have an exchange of
ideas. Specifically noted: “SRNT is a unique society that enables a multi-disciplinary platform for scientific discussions to occur. At its core is the value of primacy of scientific rigor.”

Guiding Principle 4: SRNT is Dedicated to Open Science without Bias

SRNT supports, without bias, the generation, dissemination, and facilitates debate of rigorous science to address challenging public health questions regardless of the direction the evidence leads. SRNT is dedicated to presenting balanced views on unresolved scientific issues and makes every effort not to take positions that support one view over another, thus promoting scientific dialogue and empowering members to make their own informed decisions. Regarding communication beyond the membership, SRNT will follow the evidence, disseminate balanced information based on evidence, and will be clear when the evidence is not conclusive.

Boundary Standard 4A: Convening Experts Versus Endorsing Positions

SRNT does not endorse the science presented at the Conference or in the Journal, but ensures excellent science is presented through the peer review process. SRNT’s role is not to form opinions that are politically charged, but to convene experts to bring the best evidence and discuss the process in a respectful, scientifically-informed manner.

Boundary Standard 4B: SRNT Members Taking Positions

SRNT’s non-bias on contentious issues does not prevent individual members of SRNT from taking positions on issues that are important to them. However, SRNT members may not make statements on behalf of, or as representatives of, SRNT without express permission from the Board of Directors.
Rationale

The deliberations of the Work Advisory Groups based on the Membership Survey and Leadership Reports concluded that SRNT’s role is not to form opinions that are politically charged, but to provide the venues for the best evidence to be presented without being partisan or taking positions.

Guiding Principle 5: Advocacy

SRNT is the voice of the scientific community and may advocate for the science by providing evidence to educate decision makers or joining with advocacy organizations on positions that are consistent with the evidence base. SRNT does not engage in lobbying local or national legislators on specific bills/legislation, nor does it direct SRNT members to lobby legislators.

Boundary Standard 5A: Advocacy, Allies, and the Field

SRNT may support the advocacy efforts of adjacent communities, as well as anti-tobacco lobbying organizations, by representing the evidence related to specific questions. SRNT will, as necessary, advocate on behalf of the nicotine and tobacco scientific community for science funding in general, and for recognition of the important role science plays in any discussions of policy, regulation, or legislation.

Boundary Standard 5B: Taking Public Positions

On a case-by-case basis, SRNT will consider endorsing or supporting already accepted and/or non-controversial evidence-based guidelines, or declare a position on an issue based on clear, verifiable science that SRNT can disseminate on behalf of its membership. Otherwise, SRNT acts as an independent facilitator of scientific debates rather than the standard bearer of a particular issue other than research itself.
Boundary Standard 5C: Stating the Facts

Upon request, SRNT may share pertinent evidence with groups or decision-making bodies. If the science is strong and conclusively answers a specific question, SRNT may state “this is what the evidence suggests” without further opinion or position. If the science is inconclusive, SRNT may state “this is what we know and this is what we don’t know, based on the evidence” or “the evidence supports both Position A and Position B.”

Rationale

*The deliberations of the Work Advisory Group based on Membership Survey results determined that SRNT’s role is not to make policy statements, but to report on the scientific evidence. If the science is strong enough, SRNT will say “this is what we know” without further opinion on the evidence presented.*
Guiding Principle 1: Membership in the Society

Consistent with existing SRNT policy regarding Tobacco Industry employee ineligibility for membership in the Society, ENDS companies that are wholly or partially owned by the traditional tobacco product manufacturers will be considered to be the part of the Tobacco Industry and therefore ineligible for membership.

ENDS companies that have no financial connection to the Tobacco Industry will not be considered to be part of the Tobacco Industry, therefore non-Tobacco Industry-affiliated ENDS employees will be eligible for membership.

Individuals who consult for the Tobacco and ENDS Industries remain eligible for membership, pending an additional level of review.

Boundary Standard 1A: Responding to New Information

Per SRNT Bylaws, the Board of Directors may change membership eligibility as necessary, based on new information.

Boundary Standard 1B: Tobacco and ENDS Industries Consultants

Individuals who consult with, but are not employed by, the Tobacco and ENDS Industries are eligible for membership in SRNT. However, Tobacco and ENDS Industries consultants will be subject to an additional level of review at the time of membership application or annual renewal. Applications will be considered through a transparent process, based on standards to be developed for determining eligibility/ineligibility that will be applied consistently for all applicants. The review process will take into account the nature of the consulting work and the nature of the consultant’s relationship with the Tobacco and/or ENDS Industries.
Boundary Standard 1C: Articulating the “Why”

When considering engagement levels across SRNT programs and activities on the part of individuals who consult with Tobacco and ENDS Industries, 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 and transparent 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.

Boundary Standard 1D: Conflicts of Interest Regarding Participating in SRNT Membership Activities

Individuals who consult with the Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries consultants— are they or are they not part of the Tobacco and ENDS Industries for which they consult? While many survey respondents believe that individuals who consult for Tobacco and ENDS Industries should be treated no differently than those who are actually employed by Tobacco and ENDS Industries, 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. 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.
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. All Conference submissions are subject to peer review. Funding sources will not be the basis for decisions to accept or reject submissions. All presenters and authors must comply with SRNT policies regarding disclosure of funding sources and conflicts of interest.

Boundary Standard 2A: Peer Review

Per feedback provided throughout the SRNT 2025 review process, research funded by any Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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.

Boundary Standard 2B: Presentation Eligibility

In codifying SRNT’s current informal policies regarding presentation of accepted Tobacco and ENDS Industries-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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries submission is deemed to be of significant importance to the broader research community.

Boundary Standard 2C: Clearly Identifying Tobacco and ENDS Industries-funded Research

SRNT will establish guardrails that preserve the integrity and transparency of research presented. To that end, Tobacco and ENDS Industries-funded posters will be clearly identified and may be grouped together.
Boundary Standard 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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries. This Principle and related Boundary Standards also represent a compromise – allowing the presentation of Tobacco and ENDS Industries peer-reviewed research, but not in the highly visible paper or symposium format.*

**Guiding Principle 3: Annual Meeting Participation**

SRNT will not preclude individuals from participating in the Annual Meeting based on Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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 Standard 3A: Restrictions on Conference Attendance and Participation in Specific Scientific Sessions**

In an effort to find a reasonable compromise on the subject of Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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
Tobacco and ENDS Industries participation – the SRNT Board may limit or otherwise restrict Tobacco and ENDS Industries attendance and participation in some aspects of the Annual Meeting.

Likewise, the Board will require that the affiliations of all attendees be clearly identified in order to maintain transparency in all interactions, whether one-on-one or in scientific sessions.

**Boundary Standard 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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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 Tobacco and ENDS Industries 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.

SRNT’s current policies prohibit receipt of funds from the Tobacco and ENDS Industries.
Boundary Standard 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.

Boundary Standard 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.
Guiding Principle 1: Membership

SRNT is an international membership association operating on the global stage. All members are entitled to the same benefits of membership, regardless of location.

Boundary Standard 1A: Membership Benefits

Membership benefits include, but are not limited to:
• Registration discount for the SRNT Annual Meeting (with eligibility for LMIC-designated travel awards; Conference registration is waived for all researchers from LMICs)
• Complimentary online subscription to the SRNT Journal, Nicotine & Tobacco Research
• Ability to participate in any of eight topical Networks
• Full access to all educational content housed on the web-based SRNT University
• Ability to participate in activities such as serving in volunteer leadership roles and on committees, task forces, and work groups
• Ability to comment on issues of concern to SRNT and/or its membership
• Ability to impact the future of the Society through feedback to the Board of Directors and, according to eligibility, to elect members to the Board representing specific geographical regions

Boundary Standard 1B: Focus on Supporting Researchers

Increasing membership should not be the primary measure of success; expecting all nicotine/tobacco researchers, regardless of country, to need the same benefits—or to have the same ability to access those benefits—assumes a one-size-fits-all Society. Cultural barriers, language barriers, financial barriers, technology barriers, and other unknown barriers may reduce the attraction of Society membership, notably for those working in lower- and middle-income countries. In those areas, SRNT should focus on helping researchers access the support they need to succeed rather than requiring membership as the means for accessing support.
GLOBAL PRESENCE, CONTINUED

As part of Phase II of SRNT 2025 to be undertaken in 2020, an LMIC needs assessment survey will be conducted, which will help the Board to focus on actual, rather than assumed, needs and challenges.

Rationale

Deliberations by the Global Work Advisory Group identified that SRNT’s focus on providing better access to resources and information for researchers in LMICs is a higher priority than increasing LMIC membership, which can be problematic because of barriers such as culture, language, viability of attending conferences, etc. SRNT’s focus on building capacity through dissemination of the science to LMIC researchers is of greater benefit than focusing on getting researchers from LMICs to join the Society.

Guiding Principle 2: LMICs and Building Capacity

It is generally accepted that differences in funding levels of research by country result in dissimilar levels of research undertaken across the globe. As a result, researchers in lower- and middle-income countries may require a greater level of support than researchers in higher-income countries. Always bearing in mind the Society’s financial and volunteer resources, SRNT is committed to addressing the very real need for capacity building in LMICs.

Boundary Standard 2A: Researchers are SRNT’s Priority

While there are many needs in the broader treatment and tobacco control communities, SRNT’s priority is nicotine/tobacco researchers. Through SRNT University, SRNT will provide resources to help non-researchers understand research fundamentals, access and understand scientific literature, and incorporate research into their workplace. SRNT University may expand to include training specifically for people working in cessation and tobacco control.

As part of the 2020 LMIC needs assessment survey, non-research professionals will be asked about how the research community can better support their work in adjacent communities.
GLOBAL PRESENCE, CONTINUED

Boundary Standard 2B: Fostering Capacity Building

The Global Research Network is SRNT’s primary arm for outreach to researchers working in LMICs. It fosters capacity building through proactive involvement in regional meetings/events; working with the leadership of SRNT University to develop capacity-building educational modules; and linking LMIC researchers with training, networking, and other opportunities.

Boundary Standard 2C: Undertaking New Activities

The cost and sustainability of new programs, as well as barriers to accessibility and success, must be considered before any action is undertaken. SRNT should not start projects or programs that do not have local interest/support, a plan for financial sustainability, or regional partners/volunteers that will help with implementation and oversight.

The SRNT Board will periodically review the multiple barriers in engaging LMIC researchers, including the cost of membership, the visibility and perception(s) of SRNT, language barriers, lack of funds to attend the SRNT Annual Meeting, and barriers to meaningful participation in Networks.

Boundary Standard 2D: Extending SRNT’s Reach

The Board must rely on non-dues external funding, partnerships, and other creative solutions when considering new programs to build LMIC research capacity. Whenever possible, SRNT will rely on the SRNT University platform or other centralized information resources to provide no-cost education, as well as capacity building activities for researchers working in lower- and middle-income countries.

Rationale

SRNT has long had the goal of increasing its global presence, and the Membership Survey showed significant support for a continued focus on LMICs and research capacity building. However,
GLOBAL PRESENCE, CONTINUED

members were not in favor of paying higher dues to expand current efforts. Therefore, the Board must be creative in funding and use of centralized, web-based programming to address this goal without raising dues for members in high-income countries.

**Guiding Principle 3: Ability to Impact Global Policy**

SRNT recognizes the value of partnering with adjacent communities (e.g., public policy groups and NGOs working to impact policies, regulations, and/or legislation) in LMICs. SRNT will support groups working to enact, implement, and defend evidence-based policies, regulations, and laws, as financial and volunteer resources, and member engagement allow.

**Boundary Standard 3A: Taking Action**

SRNT may take action in countries/regions where SRNT members reside or work based on a specific request or identified need; availability and interest of partner organizations; and the level of volunteer, financial, and staff resources necessary to make a measurable impact.

**Boundary Standard 3B: Commenting on International Legislation**

SRNT will consider endorsing or commenting on legislative and regulatory questions in any country, provided SRNT is made aware of a local need in a timely manner (See Purpose & Role Guiding Principle 5A: Advocacy, Allies, and the Field). Local members or other concerned researchers or advocates may engage the Global Research Network or SRNT’s Nicotine Policy Action Committee to request support in identifying the appropriate scientific response when legislative or regulatory issues arise.

**Boundary Standard 3C: Reliance on SRNT Members for Action**

SRNT members must take the lead on initiating large-scale regional projects such as conferences, creating networking groups, or starting a new Chapter. Such activities are unlikely to succeed
if they are implemented with a top-down approach, and without local support, such endeavors are unlikely to be sustainable. SRNT will not undertake new programs or activities in countries without members who work or reside in-country unless there is a very specific reason that would benefit SRNT or the nicotine/tobacco research community.

**Boundary Standard 3D: Centralized, Customizable Resources**

As a society that relies heavily on its volunteers in order to have a local impact, SRNT will support researchers and, to a lesser extent, professionals working in adjacent fields, by providing a centralized repository of resources including customizable templates, educational programming, and other tools and resources that support local dissemination and other efforts.

**Rationale**

SRNT has limited financial and volunteer resources. And, as learned from the Membership Survey and articulated in the Purpose and Role document, SRNT’s role is to work with adjacent communities and organizations rather than take on advocacy initiatives on its own. The Work Advisory Group identified SRNT’s role as providing resources and information in support of LMIC policy activities, rather than taking on those activities as a Society.

**Guiding Principle 4: SRNT Chapters**

The role of Chapters as an extension of the Society in specific geographic regions is a critical subject which has not been addressed formally since 2010. Since that time, the European Chapter has grown and a new Chapter, SRNT Oceania, has been created. The SRNT Board will appoint a task force to address and document the role of Chapters and the relationship between SRNT and Chapters as part of Phase II of SRNT 2025. The Guiding Principles and Boundary Standards relating to SRNT Chapters will be developed at that time.