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System Dynamics Group  
E40-294  
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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Participants in 1981 System Dynamics Research Conference

FROM: John Morecroft

RE: Interest Group on Conference Continuity and  
Professional Society

I would like to bring together an interest group to discuss the topics of conference continuity and formation of a professional System Dynamics society. I will act as group chairman and I have attached two proposals that should serve as a basis for discussion. The interest group will convene on Thursday, October 15, in the evening, following the address by Jean Lebel. The location will be announced during the conference.

## PROPOSAL FOR CONFERENCE CONTINUITY

In arranging this year's conference both David Andersen and myself have kept clearly in mind the concept that this be the first in a continuing series of conferences. I have below made a number of suggestions for ways of establishing a conference series. These will form the basis for discussion in the interest group. What I would like to come out of the interest group meeting is a resolution that another conference will be held, a selection of the most viable alternative form of conference, and a firm date and location to be announced before the end of this conference.

### Suggestion #1: Repeat of 1981 Conference one or two years from now.

I put this alternative first not because it is necessarily the best, but because it is clearly viable. The suggestion is to repeat what we have done this year, in the same location one or two years from now. The principal features of this alternative that should be born in mind for later comparison are: (1) small size conference aimed only at system dynamics community; (2) no affiliation with any other conference organizing body; (3) established track record.

### Suggestion #2: Similar Conference at New Location

The second suggestion is to retain a similar type of conference aimed exclusively at the system dynamics community, but to transfer to a new location and new organizing committee. For example, either the Dartmouth or MIT group might consider hosting the conference and providing the administrative support necessary to support the activity.

### Suggestion #3: Merge with Larger Conference Series

The third suggestion is to join forces with a larger regular conference series along the lines adopted at the AFCET conferences or at last year's IEEE conference. If we adopt this suggestion we must, of course, think carefully about the most appropriate conference

series to align with, and the relative advantages/disadvantages of becoming part of a larger gathering.

One final point covering all suggestions is the need to consider whether we want an annual or biennial conference.

I hope you will take the time to consider the suggestions and make your views known in the interest group.

## PROPOSAL FOR PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY

There has been discussion from time to time, in various parts of the system dynamics community in favor of establishing a professional society. The conference gives us a timely opportunity for reviving the discussion and converting it to a more concrete plan of action.

Out of this interest group meeting, I would like to obtain broad agreement that a society is a good idea, and then have the participants propose a working committee to review the idea in more depth before the next conference. The working committee should probably comprise senior tenured faculty in the field, and should establish a firm deadline for reporting their suggestions (for example at the time of the next System Dynamics conference).

I realize that the idea of a professional society is one that is probably still some time away, and that there may be strongly differing views about its constitution. Nevertheless, I feel we should take this opportunity to achieve some consensus upon the idea.