ACGIH®
Transition Plan
2012-2015

Approved November 6, 2011 by the ACGIH® Board of Directors
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Introduction

Since its founding in 1938, ACGIH® has been a member-based organization with the core purpose of advancing occupational and environmental health. In the last decade, however, the organization has had to re-think its purpose, mission and organizational structure in light of significant ongoing changes in the profession, marketplace and economy. This document describes the organization’s efforts since 2006 to continue to serve its core purpose while also ensuring its long-term sustainability.

Background

**ACGIH® Five-Year Strategic Plan (2006)**

The ACGIH® Board of Directors approved a strategic plan for 2007–2011 that identified the organization’s core purpose as the advancement of occupational and environmental health. Three long-range goals were developed:

*Goal A: ACGIH® will be its members’ dominant resource for the integration and exchange of scientific and technical knowledge.*

*Goal B: ACGIH® will be a leading source for information and knowledge about occupational and environmental health.*

*Goal C: ACGIH® will be a powerful force for creating an environment to improve worker health.*

To assist in fulfilling these goals over the next five-year period, the Board of Directors established several task forces.

**Membership Task Force (2007)**

In 2007, the Board created a Membership Task Force, which was asked to develop an action plan for implementing Goal A. The task force developed a survey conducted at the 2007 AIHce and coordinated focus groups conducted throughout 2008. Their key findings included:

- The key value of membership was belonging to an organization that defines the science of the profession. For active members who were supervisory professionals, ACGIH® represented the opportunity to influence the profession and to interact with professionals nationally and internationally. Non-active members tended to be people who, given their demanding work schedules, did not personally participate in ACGIH® membership activities and were generally unaware of their membership status.
- The key tangible benefit of membership was access to the scientific documents ACGIH® developed, and the key intangible benefit was the “halo” effect of being part of the authoritative scientific organization in the field.
• Non-active members wanted more practical benefits, e.g., more web-based information and archived material regarding scientific data; more online communication of internal policies, activities and upcoming committee openings; discounts; and a greater local presence. Active members were primarily concerned with enhancing the nature of ACGIH® and of the profession itself, e.g., exploring opportunities in China and Eastern Europe and “improving the process of creating the TLV® [book] by having a division of labor by discipline.”

• Some Associate and Regular Members objected to the current membership structure as being unfair or as impeding Associate Member growth and participation. Ensuring perception that ACGIH® scientific publications were unbiased was paramount. Without that perception, members felt that on-the-job credibility was jeopardized.

• The structural divisions of ACGIH® membership were considered clear demonstrations of safeguarding data objectivity. Differences between types of members centered on the degree of structural division needed. Non-active members (Regular and Associate) wanted to maintain the current restrictions and felt that conflict-of-interest processes were too “arcane” to be an acceptable substitute for clear-cut membership divisions and restrictions. Active members were confident about the conflict-of-interest processes and the reason for amending them to allow Associate Members to chair all committees except the “vital” ones – the TLV®, BEI®, and Nominating committees.

• All members, however, thought that Associate Member rights should be better communicated and that participation of Associate Members should be actively encouraged.

• Members were also concerned about challenges to organizational growth and proposed short-term solutions such as lobbying and promotion and long-term solutions such as aggressive private sector outreach including soliciting articles, attracting youth to the profession and to ACGIH®, international growth, niche marketing (e.g., control banding), and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). However, the prevailing sentiment was that it was better for ACGIH® to be a small but elite organization than to make any changes where growth would appear to compromise the science they need for on-the-job credibility.

The Membership Task Force submitted a final report to the Board of Directors in late 2008 with the following recommendations:

1. Evaluate the value of conducting a full member web-based survey.
2. Develop a web page for committee member recruitment.
3. Establish an Early Career Professionals Outreach Committee to develop and direct opportunities to engage, mentor, and encourage active participation by young professionals.
4. Maintain the current membership structure with some incremental changes.
5. Retain the current internal ACGIH® committee policy that allows Associate Members to participate on committees.
6. Develop more on-line scientific content for members.
7. Develop an outreach program to market membership internationally.
**Organizational Infrastructure Task Force (2007)**

An Organizational Infrastructure Task Force was asked to develop an action plan for implementing Goal B. This task force discussed how to effectively organize, focus and expend ACGIH®'s resources and actions to maximize effectiveness. They submitted a preliminary report to the Board in June 2008 and final recommendations in August 2008. The Organizational Infrastructure Task Force recommended two new organizational components:

1. A Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) to provide input, ideas and direction on the most important scientific issues requiring solutions, recommend new scientific products and identify sponsors for new product development. This “big picture” strategic group would serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. The SAG would be comprised of senior professionals with diversity of perspective and breadth of knowledge about emerging issues and best practices.

2. A Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) accountable to the ACGIH® Board of Directors that would be responsible for developing products identified by the Scientific Advisory Group. The TOC committee, comprised of ACGIH® members with technical and leadership expertise, would identify a Scientific Product Group (SPG), the actual working unit, to develop each product.

**Board Strategic Planning Task Force (2009)**

In 2009, the Board created a Strategic Planning Task Force to develop recommendations for future ACGIH® structure/organization changes. Initial discussion focused on integrating the recommendations from the Membership and Organizational Infrastructure task forces. Three models were considered:

1. Membership-based organization (current model)
2. Membership organization with membership uncoupled from products
3. Scientific organization not based on members.

This task force recommended that the Board:

1. Establish a Transition Team or teams to implement the new structure in an incremental manner.
2. Identify and address specific steps to increase involvement of Associate Members, which might require changes to the bylaws.
3. Evaluate and plan for transition to a Scientific Organization that might not be membership-based.

**Proposed ACGIH®-AIHA Alliance and Other Organizational Alliance Discussions (2009)**

Also in 2009, the Board created a joint task force with AIHA to discuss a new strategic alliance between the two organizations. The Boards of both organizations agreed to a set of guiding
principles for this discussion:

- **ACGIH®**: Developing the underlying science of Industrial Hygiene, focusing on the development, communication and maintenance of professional guidelines.

- **AIHA**: Supporting the professional practice of Industrial Hygiene, focusing on member services, continuing education, technical affairs and committees and laboratory quality assurance programs.

The joint task force met in person four times over the next six months. Discussions were temporarily suspended in early 2010, to give ACGIH® time to explore a different organizational model. For much of 2010 ACGIH® expanded its alliance discussions to include a broader group of professional/scientific organizations including occupational medicine physicians, safety professionals, occupational health nurses, toxicologists, health physicists and epidemiologists. ACGIH Board leaders talked directly with leaders of numerous professional associations to explore possible alliances.

The result of these discussions was a decision by ACGIH® that it needed additional time to consider how best to transform its organizational structure. In October 2010, ACGIH® and AIHA announced that they had ended their formal discussions about a strategic alliance.

**Transitioning to a Scientific Organization (2010)**

The ACGIH® Board took its first step toward transitioning to a scientific organization with a recommendation to its membership for a new purpose for the organization as defined in the organization’s Articles of Incorporation. In late 2010, 94% of the voting members approved a new organizational purpose:

- **To advance occupational and environmental health. To accomplish this purpose, ACGIH® shall provide educational programs and scientific and technical knowledge regarding occupational and environmental health to the public;**

- **To hold annual and such other meetings as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this organization.**

**Transition Plan (2011)**

In 2011, the Board of Directors began to create a transition plan for becoming a scientific charitable organization. With the assistance of a consultant, the Board identified some important changes to the current Strategic Plan, including:

1. A new core purpose statement:

   *To develop and disseminate guidelines to advance the science for the prevention of*
ACGIH® achieves this purpose by:
• Using processes to ensure independent scientific decision making.
• Facilitating multidisciplinary, multi-professional collaboration and discourse.
• Leveraging partnerships with Allied professional organizations.

2. A new set of ACGIH® value statements:
• The health and well being of workers.
• The independent, scientific decision-making process.
• Inclusive of perspectives that are multidisciplinary and multi-professional.
• ACGIH® conducts its business for the benefit of the public by working with public health and safety professionals.

3. A new list of key stakeholder groups:
• Workers
• Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Professionals and their organizations
• Government Agencies
• Industry
• Labor Unions
• The Public

The Board also discussed new criteria for make-up, eligibility and terms for the Board of Directors, its leadership and committees.

In addition, the following activities were identified as important to ensuring transition to a sustainable not-for-profit scientific organization:

1. Developing a new model and business case for its activities
2. Identifying a new model for “member” donors
3. Gathering input from current members about proposed changes in bylaws
4. Communicating board decisions at key points
5. Identifying new resources for new activities, such as fundraising

In June 2011, the Board drafted a bylaws proposal and gathered input from past board chairs and current committee leaders. The Board is currently revising its proposal to reflect comments received. A new proposal is planned for the end of 2011, after which review and input will be gathered from a broader group of members. The Board plans to submit its proposal for membership vote and approval by early 2012.
Acknowledgments

ACGIH® would like to recognize the dedication and vision of the current and previous Boards of Directors over the last six years. Listed below are those boards that were involved in the development of this new Transitional Strategic Plan and those carrying out the previous Strategic Plan that helped shape the future of ACGIH®. Thank you for your service.

**2011:** *Chair:* Lisa M. Brosseau, ScD, CIH; *Past Chair:* Stephen J. Reynolds, PhD, CIH; *Vice Chair:* Bill R. McArthur, PhD, CIH; *Vice Chair-Elect:* Robert F. Herrick, ScD, CIH, MS; *Secretary-Treasurer:* Heather D. Borman, MS, CIH, CSP; *Directors-at-Large:* Stephanie R. Carter, PhD, CIH; Chris Laszcz-Davis, MS, CIH, REA; Robert F. Wheaton, MPH, CIH

**2010:** *Chair:* Stephen J. Reynolds, PhD, CIH; *Past Chair:* Jimmy L. Perkins, PhD, CIH; *Vice Chair:* Lisa M. Brosseau, ScD, CIH; *Vice Chair-Elect:* Bill R. McArthur, PhD, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer:* Manuel R. Gomez, DrPH, MS, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer-Elect:* Heather D. Borman, MS, CIH, CSP; *Directors-at-Large:* Stephanie R. Carter, PhD, CIH; Theodore J. Hogan, PhD, CIH; Robert F. Wheaton, MPH, CIH

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**2008:** *Chair:* Lawrence M. Gibbs, MEd, MPH, CIH; *Past Chair:* Beverly S. Cohen, PhD; *Vice Chair:* Jimmy L. Perkins, PhD, CIH; *Vice Chair-Elect:* Stephen J. Reynolds, PhD, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer:* Manuel R. Gomez, DrPH, MS, CIH; *Directors-at-Large:* Theodore J. Hogan, PhD, CIH; Marie M. Martin, PhD, CIH; Mary O'Reilly, PhD, CIH, CPE

**2007:** *Chair:* Beverly S. Cohen, PhD; *Past Chair:* Robert D. Soule, EdD, CIH, CSP, PE; *Vice Chair:* Lawrence M. Gibbs, MEd, MPH, CIH; *Vice Chair-Elect:* Jimmy L. Perkins, PhD, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer:* Mary T. Giguere, MSPH, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer-Elect:* Manuel R. Gomez, DrPH, MS, CIH; *Directors-at-Large:* Marie M. Martin, PhD, CIH; Mary O'Reilly, PhD, CIH, CPE; Mark R. Stenzel, MS, CIH

**2006:** *Chair:* Robert D. Soule, EdD, CIH, CSP, PE; *Past Chair:* Cindy Coe Laseter, CIH; *Vice Chair:* Beverly S. Cohen, PhD; *Vice Chair-Elect:* Lawrence M. Gibbs, MEd, MPH, CIH; *Secretary-Treasurer:* Mary T. Giguere, MSPH, CIH; *Directors-at-Large:* Michael J. Blotzer, MS, CIH, CSP; Mary O'Reilly, PhD, CIH, CPE; Mark R. Stenzel, MS, CIH