

VISIONS COMMITTEE REPORT 2002

Summary and conclusions

The Vision committee was been appointed to address some specific future-oriented issues for the Society of Social Studies of Science. They included the question about name change, globalization challenges, the need to reintroduce matters of policy and politics, the need for more engagement with scientists and engineers, the role of 4S in career development, and fund raising in benefit of the society.

The committee generally perceives the development of STS and 4S as positive and promising, also outside North America and Western Europe. To our Society, this is definitely not a moment of crisis, but of opportunities. We note that the growth of the field of STS may place new demands, but may also offer interesting options.

4S has till now been a rather modest in its aspirations as a professional society, focusing on the facilitation of scholarly communication. However, we believe that it is important to reflect upon and discuss the process of institutionalizing STS. This includes a deliberation of possible strategies to develop the society. The committee presents two possible institutional futures for the Society, one that is basically a continuation of the present trajectory of development and one that caters the ambition of developing 4S into a stronger professional society, with more explicit aims to professionalize the field of STS. We do not want to suggest that one or the other of these future developments is more attractive, but rather to emphasize the need to discuss such issues in order to have a reflexive position in relation to the matter at hand. Thus, while the committee has focused its work on concrete issues, we would like to emphasize the importance of a broader debate.

The committee agrees that the challenges that were put forward by former President Sheila Jasanoff are very pertinent in relation to the present situation of the society. Briefly, our responses may be summarized in the following way:

- Name change: We do not propose a name change, but to change the self-description of the Society on its home page: *The main purpose is to bring together those interested in understanding science, technology, and medicine, including the way that they develop and interact with their social contexts.*
- Globalization: Broader participation should be sought for. In this respect, three issues seem particularly important. First, the matter of meeting location and cost of travel. Here we propose that meetings continue to be held in North America and Europe, mainly because of travel costs for the present strongholds of 4S membership. However, we also suggest that the society should explore possibilities that intergovernmental organizations might support travel for members from other regions. Second, the matter of nation- or region-specific

theme panels. We think it is important for the society to be open and inviting, in particular to members outside North America and Europe. The society might want to do so by setting up sessions that are particularly targeting some nations or regions, but this has to be done with care in order to avoid the potential danger of ghettoisation of such issues. Third, we think it is important that program committees routinely should be reminded about their responsibility to make meeting programs attractive to a broader constituency of potential 4S membership.

- **Reintroduction of policy and politics:** Here the committee recommends that the Society should work to make us recognized as a community that may contribute scholarly on important questions in relation to justice, democracy, development and the state. Here, we think it is important to balance top-down and bottom-up initiatives. It might be fruitful to expand discussion of political issues salient to the Society as a whole, including the set-up of a committee on “Science and Public Policy”. In general, scholars should be encouraged to organize panels around topics of politics and policy as well as having plenary sessions at the Society’s meetings that emphasize the importance of linking the STS field to important normative concerns. Also, ST&HV might be encouraged to solicit special sections on important public issues.
- **Engagement with Scientists and Engineers:** Such activities should be increased as part of a growing interest in interdisciplinary collaboration. Moreover, the committee sees it as important that this is pursued bottom-up rather than as top-down initiatives. However, it is also of interest to have more sustained exchanges with opinion-makers in science and technology, including journalists.
- **Career development:** The committee is in agreement that more efforts should be put into this area. Our suggestions for activities include:
 - To strengthen student preparation for the job market, for example by sponsoring career development workshops at future meetings of the Society.
 - The society needs to make efforts to strengthen the profile of the STS field among academic leaders in other disciplines.
 - The 4S website as well as Technoscience should be used to enhance the efficiency of the job market in the field.
 - Some efforts need to be put into clarifying similarities and differences across nations and regions in terms of the STS job market.
- **Fundraising:** The committee found this to be an important, but difficult issue. One simple suggestion for fund-raising would be to offer members opportunities to check off additional donations together with their dues. Another idea was to

establish a kind of institutional membership for centers, programs and departments. The committee would also suggest that a search should be performed to find sponsors to endow more of the Society's prizes.

Contents

[Summary and conclusions](#)

[Contents](#)

[1. Introduction](#)

[2. Prospects for 4s and Science and Technology Studies \(STS\)](#)

[3. Two possible institutional futures for 4S](#)

[4. Name change](#)

[5. Globalization](#)

[6. Reintroduction of Policy and Politics](#)

[7. Engagement with scientists and engineers](#)

[8. Career Development](#)

[9. Fund-raising](#)

1. Introduction

The former President of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S), Sheila Jasanoff, appointed in the spring 2000 the following ad hoc committee to consider some specific future-oriented issues for the society:

Steve Fuller (chair)

Knut H. Sørensen (co-chair)

Jose Lopez Cerezo

Clark Miller

Nelly Oudshoorn

Wes Shrum (ex officio)

Sheila Jasanoff (ex officio).

The committee was charged with the following issues:

- Is there a need to change the name of the Society, and if so to what?
- Globalization - what steps could or should the Society to encourage a wider international participation without losing intellectual coherence?
- Reintroduction of policy and politics - how could the big normative questions about science, society, technology, justice, governance and development be put back on the STS agenda? Do we need more activities related to this in the Society?
- Do we want more engagement with scientists and other technical practitioners, and in case how and how much?
- Should 4S play a more active role in promoting the careers of young scholars, and if so, how?
- Could the Society engage more actively in fund-raising, and if so, how?

Some members of the committee met to discuss these issues at the joint 4S/EASST meeting in Vienna 2000. Here, it was agreed to add a more general but brief assessment of the development of the field of STS. Otherwise, the committee has interacted through electronic means of communication. A draft report was presented and discussed at the 4S meeting in Cambridge, MA, in 2001.

This interaction has brought forward some broader concerns related to the role of 4S, compared to other societies. Some reflections related to this topic have been added as part of the introduction of the report.

2. Prospects for 4s and Science and Technology Studies (STS)

4S as well as the field of Science and Technology Studies are of fairly recent origin. True, it is possible to identify earlier pioneers. To some extent, the classic social theorists like Marx, Weber and Durkheim were concerned with some STS-like issues, and the efforts of intellectuals like J D Bernal, Michael Polanyi, Robert K. Merton and Thomas Kuhn have been paving the way for STS type inquiries.

From such an extended timeframe, the development of STS has happened quite rapidly and with considerable success. Since the 1970s, many leading universities in North America and Western Europe have established research and teaching programs in the field, many of which are located in institutionalized STS departments. Several journals have been set up, including *Science, Technology & Human Values* and *Social Studies of Science*. A considerable number of conferences on STS topics are organized every year. Moreover, STS issues have been taken up by many research-funding agencies, including NSF and the European Union's Framework Programs.

Thus, one could argue that STS, quite successfully, has managed to get institutionalized on a rather broad front even if setbacks have occurred. For example, some teaching programs have been reduced or even terminated, and on some occasions research funding have been cut. The so-called Science Wars was perceived as threatening by many people in our field, but less so outside North-America and the UK.

However, STS has never been an exclusive academic concern. In fact, the impetus to bring forward critical inquiries into science and technology around 1970 was increased political concerns about modern science and technology. These concerns were voiced by students as well as the new social movements, and they influenced the emerging agenda of STS in a substantial way. On the other hand, the relationship between academic and political interests was not without strains. Arguably, STS academics have over the years performed substantial boundary work to allow STS as an academic practice to be distinguished from political debates about science and technology. This has resulted in a debate about this relationship, which prevails and which is important to continue (see section 6 of this report).

Presently, it seems that the field is still growing. This expansion is not just within the traditional core geographical areas. There is growing interest in STS, at least in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Pacific area, including Australia and Japan. For example,

the journal *Science, Technology, and Society* is published in South Asia. Japanese scholars have recently created a new professional society focusing on STS. The growing interest in STS is also reflected in the membership of 4S, which grows in absolute numbers but also in the proportion of members outside North America and Western Europe.

4S has grown and flourished in parallel with STS. This means that the society has been able to define itself as an attractive meeting place also to new people and communities in STS. In many ways, this is an encouraging observation because it means that the society has been perceived as being open to both new and old debates and concerns that have been raised in the STS field.

On the other hand, one should be careful not to make too much from the parallel development of 4S and STS. As a society, 4S has taken a quite modest role in its efforts to support the development of STS. The activities of the society have basically been oriented towards providing arenas and means of communication for STS scholars, above all by organizing annual meetings (including efforts to provide economic support for the participation of students), hosting a scholarly journal (STHV), publishing a newsletter and supporting some other initiatives of getting STS contributions published, like the STS Handbook. In addition, relations to neighboring professional societies like EASST, SHOT, HSS and others have been maintained, although at a modest level.

4S has been reasonably successful in its role of moderating STS communication and debate, as is also reflected in the steady increase in its membership. But even here there are still many challenges to 4S. Most prominently, one could wish for greater geographical expansion to avoid an overly strong North-American/Western European dominance.

However, it may be that 4S need to expand its concern to cater for a broader set of concerns with which a professional society may be expected to meet. The committee has discussed this and is in agreement that this debate has to be pursued by the society and its Council. The committee sees its tasks, in the way they were formulated by the Society's President, to be to contribute to create a focus in a debate that in principle is quite complicated. We face differences of opinion with regard to the need for radical changes of 4S, as well as disagreements about what kind of strategies to be pursued.

The issues at hand could be described as a process of increased institutionalization of STS. This institutionalization related to many issues, not just to the shape of 4S, but to the way universities, research institutes and funding agencies relate to the field. Some of the challenges arise from task to integrate the needs of new generations of STS candidates, who have degrees in STS and thus follow of different trajectory of training and careers than those whose basic education come from some established discipline. They may for example require stronger organizational support in order to reproduce their professional identity, and their careers may be dependent on the field's and the Society's ability to provide a more stable definition of the field and its competencies (see also section 8). This may also challenge the Society to adjust to the fact that STS has come a

long way in getting normalized and standardized. While many may carry the ideal that 4S and STS more generally is an a-canonial community with a principled openness towards new approaches and concern, it would appear to counter the ideals of reflexivity to carry on these ideals in a naive manner. In fact, there may be some need to debate this situation and look for alternatives to traditional strategies of boundary work.

One of the interesting aspects of STS, shared by fields established in the same time period, like Women's studies and Environmental studies, is the flexible relationship towards other disciplines. STS departments as well as 4S meetings typically have a lot of people who would identify themselves in a dual fashion, as STS but also as anthropologists, historians, philosophers, sociologists, etc. Also, many people trained in STS, might also have identities related to these other disciplines.

This means that STS displays a rather peculiar disciplinary and non-disciplinary dynamic. As mentioned above, this is to some extent is challenged by the increasing number of people that have an STS degree as their main academic training. These young STS scholars may bring not only new, disciplinary intellectual perspectives to the field but also new kinds of career development issues. To 4S, this challenge means that the Society will continue to need to reach out to other disciplines while also building its capacity to serve those trained in STS. This may not be easy, although one might argue that sociologists to some extent has succeeded in doing this. However, the experience of sociology warns us that there are costs, above all in terms of an uncertainty about the “core” of discipline. This uncertainty tends to unleash periodically quests to provide such certainty, quests that tend to make intellectual concerns that are considered marginal, to be perceived as being outside the discipline.

A related, but reverse problem has been experienced in Spain and Latin American countries. Here, the rigid departmental division in the University system creates many difficulties to the constitution of interdisciplinary programs and the take-off of STS research projects addressing case studies.

On this basis, the Visions Committee sees the challenges put forward by the President of the Society as pertinent issues that needs to be debated in order to help 4S to develop as a professional society. We believe that there are good and pertinent arguments that underline the importance of such a debate. However, there is no crisis related to these concerns. We do not perceive 4S as being struck by great problems, but rather being in a situation where there is a set of important, positive concerns that the Society needs to act upon. The challenges, originally put forward by the President, and added upon by the committee indicate that there are important avenues for the further development of 4S that we believe represent positive and constructive possibilities.

3. Two possible institutional futures for 4S

As the field most intimately concerned with understanding the institutionalization of knowledge, it should come as no surprise that 4S itself faces strategic alternatives similar to those that have faced the fields we have studied. Below are two ideal types of significantly different alternative futures for 4S. Of course, our actual future is unlikely to match either type. However, the value of beginning a discussion with the pure forms is to bring out the underlying principles they represent, as well as to suggest where tradeoffs are likely to be made, either by decision or default.

Future Number One

4S largely continues its current role of providing a clearinghouse for information relating to the field of science and technology studies, focusing mainly on the organization of the annual conference and the publication of the journal, *Science, Technology & Human Values* and the newsletter, *Technoscience*. The society will also continue, on an *ad hoc* basis, to engage in ‘extension’ initiatives that enable the field to gain wider exposure without pretending to speak on behalf of all of those who see themselves as part of the field. Examples of such initiatives include *The Handbook of Science & Technology Studies*, published by Sage, and the uptake of invitations by various colleges, universities, and research funding agencies to publicize STS-related work.

Future Number Two

4S scales up its operations to engage in the official regulation of STS knowledge production, so as to become *the* ‘professional association’ of STS. This may involve the following: (1) A consolidation of already existing, largely regional, societies concerned with STS. This would mean incorporating their interests, even when they deviate significantly from those of the pool of people from which 4S’s governance structure has been so far drawn. (2) An explicit outreach to first-order practitioners of science and technology to participate in the governance of STS, which may mean a re-drafting of the 4S constitution. (3) A more concerted effort to establish a distinctive ‘STS stance’ on public policy issues relating to science and technology, as well as to defend (and, when necessary, oppose) STS researchers who find themselves in controversial situations.

When we evaluate these two options, we find a number of arguments that support as well as oppose each of them. Arguments in favor of future number one are:

- Future Number One is a good long-term strategy to get to Future Number Two.
- STS is too heterogeneous a field to submit to ‘professionalization’.
- 4S is doing perfectly well as it is, and should continue in that vein.

However, there are also arguments opposed to future number one:

- It makes no explicit attempt to expand beyond 4S’s core constituency to encompass others who consider themselves STS practitioners.

- It does not encourage 4S members to think of 4S as their primary professional affiliation.
- It leaves open the opportunity for others, especially ‘Science Warriors’, to ‘professionalize’ the field (e.g. in terms of ‘science communication’) in ways that might disadvantage current STS practitioners.

If we look for arguments in favor of future number two, we find at least the following:

4S has sufficient funds to be more ambitious in its aspirations.

- This strategy could bring an official end to the ‘Science Wars’ by reconstituting STS with the inclusion of scientists and technologists who have previously regarded the field as hostile to their interests.
- It would encourage 4S members to regard STS as their primary professional affiliation because 4S would begin to provide members with the institutional support traditionally associated with professional bodies.

On the other hand, there are the following arguments opposed to future number two:

- It presupposes an idealized view of professional societies that has never been, nor could be, realized in practice and would only squander resources, if attempted.
- The resulting efforts at greater inclusiveness could produce a 4S quite alien to those who have been so far most closely associated with it.
- As 4S acquires a public presence, internal disagreements would become more visible, as policy decisions are taken that present 4S with a ‘collective face’.

The committee is not in agreement about the relative importance of these arguments. However, we believe that it is important to continue to discuss these issue, also because the future development of 4S may lie somewhere in-between the two scenarios rather than in the one or the other. The future strength of our society lies in our ability to deliberate and maneuver in the face of such challenges.

4. Name change

On several occasions, members of 4S have raised the issue whether the name of the Society is representative of its activities. In particular, it is pointed to the large portion of the membership that engages primarily with technology or medicine. One specific proposal for a new name is International Society for Social Studies of Science, Technology, and Medicine. Some have also voiced skepticism towards the use of ‘social’

in the name of the Society because it may be interpreted as privileging some approaches to the study of science, technology, and medicine.

Some advantages of such a name shift are obvious. First, it might signal more broadly the wider scope of intellectual concerns of the membership of the Society. Second, a name shift could be seen as an acknowledgement of the importance of the work done in technology studies and with respect to medicine.

However, the majority of the committee is in favor of retaining the established name. The main reason for this is pragmatic. The current name already has a history, it is established as a kind of 'brand', and the acronym is quite neat and efficient. Some more principled arguments could also be given, for example that 'science' carries an important normative meaning as an ideal of knowledge production.

On the other hand, we believe that the self-description of the Society on its home page could include medicine. A simple change to that effect would be to amend the self-description in the following way: *The main purpose is to bring together those interested in understanding science, technology, and medicine, including the way they develop and interact with their social contexts.*

5. Globalization

The globalization of science and technology raises important questions for the future of 4S and STS. Intellectually, globalization raises difficult questions about how science and technology circulate in transnational contexts. From a professional standpoint, globalization also prompts us to question how 4S can reach out to communities of STS scholars in other parts of the world. Do we want to become a truly global society? If so, what would this mean in terms of meeting locations, subjects of discussion, membership expansion, etc.? If not, do we nonetheless want to find ways to communicate with like-minded scholars in other parts of the world about scientific and technological subjects that affect all of us in one way or another?

The committee has deliberated a wide set of issues that ranges from principled intellectual challenges to very pragmatic and mundane questions. In doing so, we have been cognizant of the extent to which economic considerations very much restrict the scope of otherwise interesting actions. Three issues particularly stand out for attention:

- a. Meeting locations and related costs of travel issues.

To make 4S into a more international society raise the issue of geographical location of meetings as well as the need to find economic support that allows more people to travel to these meetings. Currently, the committee suggests that meetings continue to be held in North America and Europe, mainly because other locations means that travel costs will be considerably higher and make participation in particular from students much more difficult, in the areas that are

the strongholds of 4S membership. This means that travel costs remain a problem for participants from other regions. However, there may be some international intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO, IOS, CYTED and others may be willing to sign institutional agreements to support such travel.

b. Establishing nation- or region-specific theme panels.

To make 4S and its meeting more international, we need to consider whether the Society presently is sufficiently open and inviting. One way of actively inviting people from other regions than North America and Western Europe would be to set up sessions at our meetings that are particularly targeting some nations or areas, for example with some of the Society's more established scholars as commentators.

However, some members of the committee are hesitant towards this because this may lead to a kind of ghettoisation. At least, one needs to be careful in the way such events are framed. A possible benefit could be an increased sensitivity towards the way national and/or regional intellectual traditions and concerns may influence the way studies of science, technology and medicine is conducted and presented.

One may also note that there is a difference between organizing such panels “top down” and “bottom up”, meaning that the Society should support initiatives to organize panels that cater for particular regional or national concerns. Moreover, there may be issues that have a broader interest and that provide opportunities of broader exchanges. We should encourage efforts to find such issues.

c. Program committees' role and responsibility

While the exploration of travel funds needs to be done by the Society's leadership, the making of meeting programs that are attractive to a broader constituency will mainly be the responsibility of the program committees. We suggest that program committees as a matter of routine is reminded of this. One should also consider having more program committee members outside N. America and W. Europe.

6. Reintroduction of Policy and Politics

Issues of policy and politics related to science and technology (S&T) have an important place in the work of many, if not most, members of the Society. Much of the field's research, for example, explores aspects of S&T that intersect with key notions in political discourse, such as race, gender, ethics, and values. More fundamentally, the centrality of S&T in modern life often means that building a critical understanding of S&T is itself an important political agenda. Despite 4S's broad engagement with questions of politics, however, few individual 4S members enjoy strong reputations outside the field as experts on the politics of S&T; neither do the Society nor the field as a whole. The Visions

Committee recommends that the Society work to make us recognized as community that may contribute scholarly on important normative questions in relation to justice, democracy, development, and the state.

We recognize that from a “bottom up” perspective, normative considerations frequently enter into individual research presentations at 4S. Many scholars have specific activist agendas that infuse their work with policy implications or are generally concerned with how scientific and technological institutions intersect with political and economic institutions. From a “top down” perspective, recent 4S meetings have also included plenary sessions that focused, e.g., on “Science and the State” and on the broader place of the field in public life. The Visions Committee recommends that both type of activities continue and be encouraged in the future.

However, the Committee also recommends that 4S work in the middle ground to better integrate these approaches. Generally speaking, the field embodies considerable expertise on normative topics of interest to other disciplines, policy officials, and the public at large. Nonetheless, while these issues appear frequently in individual presentations, they too rarely bind together panels at 4S meetings or broader discussions that take place in the Society. Thus someone looking at the program for a 4S meeting who had not previously encountered our field might not immediately see the relevance of our work to public life. There is also a general feeling among some in the field that, while S&TS does a good job of grappling with normative considerations as they appear in predominantly scientific and technological settings (e.g., the laboratory, research funding institutions, etc.), too little of our research pursues the same kind of rigorous and detailed empirical investigations as science and technology enter into other prominent political institutions, such as legislatures, courts, and executive agencies. Since the panels of 4S meetings basically reflect what the membership wants to present, one cannot press such concerns upon the membership. However, one has the option to use plenaries and subplenaries to pursue the issues, in the hope that they will spur greater interest in presenting such issues in the normal panels.

The Visions Committee believes there are many options available to the Society to expand the engagement of the field with the rest of the world:

- Expand discussion of political issues salient to the Society as a whole, such as policies relating to research ethics, access to research data, copyright and publication of scholarly work, etc., in 4S Council. Many other societies take formal stands and issue statements about such issues. Perhaps a committee on “Science and Public Policy” could be formed to specifically address such issues, to act as a liaison with other groups that promote deliberations about science and policy, such as the AAAS, and to organize special roundtable discussions at 4S meetings.
- Encourage scholars to organize panels around topics of politics and policy, either focusing on normative themes, such as democracy, justice, development, globalization, etc., or on specific events, e.g., the 2000 U.S. Presidential election

controversy; U.S.-European disputes over GMOs; or the attack on the World Trade Center. Perhaps this could be done by promoting more thematic development, as was done in these years panels on race and science.

- Encourage the Society's journal, *ST&HV*, to proactively solicit special sections related to important issues on the public agenda. For example, both the *Journal of American History* and *Social Studies of Science* sponsored special sections on the 2000 U.S. Presidential election.
- Continue holding plenary sessions that emphasize connecting the field to important normative concerns, including reaching out to prominent scholars in other fields whose work examines S&T in important ways; also find ways to involve these individuals in working sessions, in addition to plenary sessions, to strengthen their sense of engagement.
- Consider co-sponsoring events at meetings of other professional societies, such as the American Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, both to encourage recognition of the importance of our research and to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas.
- Consider sponsoring brown-bag lunch sessions devoted to methodological issues of importance in grappling with the political dimensions of science & technology, such interpreting legal opinions, conducting ethnographies of political institutions and interviews of public officials, and accessing government documents.
- Consider how the STS Handbook might be used to broaden the STS agenda and to address the relevance of STS to issues of public concern.

7. Engagement with scientists and engineers

The committee recognizes the important challenges in communicating with representatives of the communities that we study, like scientists and engineers. However, such interaction has proved to be difficult, and we need to think through the premises on which interaction is performed. Also, it is important to consider what we want to achieve. Do we want to perform controversy in the form of polarized discussions in order to highlight differences of approaches to and ways of understanding, e.g., science, do we want scholarly recognition from outside our own field, do we want internal consolidation, or do we want to explore possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration?

At this stage, it may prove more interesting to pursue the latter agenda. That would mean that we should invite people we know have a positive interest in collaboration and preferably with some experience in doing this. This may make it more attractive to invite

engineers than scientists, also because technology more clearly represents interdisciplinary challenges. However, this would depend on individual members of 4S to do the job of organizing such events. Program committees could nevertheless give special invitation to suggest such panels. A supplementary approach would be to invite sessions where STS scholars exchanged experiences with interdisciplinary collaboration with scientists and engineers, to improve our professional capabilities of working together with other professions. Such capabilities may have a profound impact on the future labor market of STS candidates, since it may help their development of competencies that probably is in increasing demand.

We may also want to have exchanges with opinion-makers in science, technology and medicine, who could be invited to sessions preferably with a policy focus. Also, science journalists may be an important community with which we should have a more sustained interaction. Such journalists may contribute in an important way to an increased exchange between the STS community and decision-makers, scientists and engineers.

8. Career Development

The issue of career development for young scholars in science & technology studies is one of the most important issues 4S (and the field) face. In the past, an ad hoc, student-by-student approach has generally sufficed, as the number of students who graduated was small, their motivation and intellectual agility were high, and they often acquired disciplinary credentials by default. As more and more students gravitate to the field, however, and interdisciplinary training grows proportionately more common, active placement and career development programs grow correspondingly more important.

One of the difficulties with career development activities is that job markets differ significantly around the world. What works in the U.S., e.g., may not work elsewhere. In this context, since 4S is an international society, any efforts to promote career development should focus as much as possible on the needs of the membership as a whole and not get disproportionately focused on particular national groups. Despite this limitation, however, the Visions Committee notes that career development activities at professional meetings can be of great value to students and so should not be ignored simply because they will of necessity have some regional specificity.

There are four main approaches that 4S could take to improve career development, regardless of the region or country in question.

- *Strengthen student preparation for being on the job market.* Many U.S. societies, for example, are now offering student-oriented sessions at professional meetings focusing on topics such as: how to develop a CV, write a cover letter, construct a grant proposal, interview successfully, prepare a teaching portfolio, conceptualize a research program, etc. Since job markets do differ internationally, and students are increasingly interested in the possibility of working abroad, sessions on how pursue academic jobs in the U.S., Europe, or some other part of the world might

also generate interest. The Visions Committee recommends that the Council consider options for sponsoring career development workshop at future 4S meetings.

- *Work to increase the profile of the field among academic leaders and in other disciplines.* Much could be done, should 4S so choose, to promote the further institutionalization of STS in university settings. Although many universities have STS programs or departments, many others do not. In the U.S., for example, STS is fairly well institutionalized in parts of the Ivy League, institutes of technology, and in the California system. Elsewhere in the country, however, especially in the land grant universities and other public universities of the Midwest, South, and Mountain West (which educate the vast majority of American college students), STS is under-institutionalized, at best. Expanding awareness of STS among academic leaders was the motivation behind the so-called Dean's Meeting ("Bridging the Two Cultures: STS and the Liberal Arts", funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation) that was held in conjunction with the 2001 4S annual meeting in Boston. The meeting brought together liberal arts Deans with prominent STS scholars to discuss the state of the field. Pending on the long-term evaluation of the success of this meeting, the Visions Committee recommends that the Council consider pursuing follow-up meetings. These might focus on specific regions (around the world or in the U.S.) or specific kinds of universities (liberal arts colleges, research I universities). Or, alternately, the Council might consider developing a "traveling committee" which could visit universities (presumably at their request) to discuss developments in the field with faculty and administrators. In either case, of course, such activities may require new funds. In Europe, 4S should consider to collaborate with EASST to such promotion work.
- *Use the 4S website and newsletter, Technoscience, to enhance the efficiency of the job market in the field.* Currently, the website maintains an "Employables" column and the newsletter lists job postings. However, the website is considerably out of date, neither the website nor the newsletter provide any information on students who are on the job market, and the postings presented focus exclusively on the U.S. If these resources are to be effective, their ongoing operation must have a higher priority. Other societies have developed "fill-in-the-blank" web programs that let universities and students on the job market enter appropriate data themselves. This considerably reduces the demands on the website management team who must then only check the information for accuracy before it is uploaded and periodically remove outdated material.

The Visions Committee also discussed a fourth approach to enhancing career development but recommends against adopting it. Some professional societies, e.g., the American Historical Association, foster interviews at their annual meetings. Generally, this is done to allow smaller schools to visit with a larger number of candidates without having to go to the expense of bringing them to campus. In our case, the timing of the annual meeting is not well suited to holding interviews, being too early in the year for most jobs (in the U.S.). Also, since we are considerably smaller, the amount of tacit

knowledge of potential candidates that circulates among universities is much higher. Adopting the third approach discussed above would further increase this awareness. Finally, trying to hold interviews at meetings is disruptive to the ability of both interviewers and interviewees to focus on the intellectual content of the meeting.

9. Fund-raising

The committee found this charge to be difficult, maybe because we have little experience in this area. We have already mentioned the possibility of raising funds for travel support through institutional agreements between the Society and international intergovernmental organizations.

One simple suggestion for fund-raising would be to offer members opportunities to check off additional donations along with their dues. This could be done as a general strategy or, following the example of other societies in recent years, we could target a specific goal. SHOT, for example, is currently raising funds to endow the editorship of *Technology and Culture*. EASST has institutional membership as well as individual. To have institutional membership of 4S may also be a way for the society to get some financial support from STS departments, centers and programs.

Another possibility is to search for sponsors to endow more of the Society's prizes.