PHT Future Committee Update  
February 28, 2020; Updated April 15, 2020  
Susan Gleckner



The following captures the work of the PHT Future Committee from its inception in 2019 to now (April 2020).

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Introduction

Early in 2019, the Pharmaceutical & Health Technology Division of SLA found itself at a crossroads. PHT faced a lack of volunteers for key leadership positions (its 2019 Chair resigned due to a job change, the Chair-Elect was unfilled), and membership was declining. (These issues are not unique to PHT.)

To address these immediate matters, the possibility of a **merger** was initially broached by PHT leadership (Past-Chair Mindy Beattie and Tony Landolt) and the Biomedical and Life Sciences Division (DBIO) leaders. In a May 2019 survey, the PHT membership supported this idea. Over time, the BIO Division requested PHT’s decision, and SLA also wanted an update. With no Chair, PHT floundered a bit.

Facilitated by Janet Weiss, a group of interested PHTers got on multiple calls to arrive at a “**No**” for DBIO, and “**No**” for any merger. That PHT group evolved into a longer-ranging “PHT Future” Committee, lead by Susan Gleckner in concert with 2020 PHT President Caren Torrey, to get the PHT ship on course, and to strategize the Division’s future path, while addressing its most pressing issues.

To concentrate efforts on planning the 2020 Spring Meeting, the PHT Future Committee was put on hold in January 2020. However, in March 2020, the PHT Executive and Advisory Board saw fit to continue the Committee’s charge.

**All PHT members are welcome to join in these conversations** (contact [Susan Gleckner](mailto:sjg398@msn.com)).

Committee Members

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aubrey, John | Corbett, Susie | Haythorn, Mark | Morris, Jack | Torrey, Caren |
| Beattie, Mindy | Eberle, Matt | Landolt, Tony | Parker, Julia | Webb, Diane |
| Chandler, Nena | Edwards, Betty | Mirabile, Karen | Shortlidge-Cox, Amy | Weiss, Janet |
| Chou, Blanca | Gleckner, Susan |  |  | …and others |

The group met four times: first “formally” on 11/4/19, and then on 11/25/19, 12/9/19, 1/6/20.

Where we left off (Jan. 2020)

* PHT Future Meetings were suspended
  + - To concentrate efforts on the Spring Meeting, which became a priority, timewise
    - The immediate problem of lack of volunteers for 2020 was addressed by filling all Executive Board and key Advisory positions
* For the reasons above, and due to changes wrought by the SLA restructuring announcement in January, a decision was made to not pursue a merger with another Division at this time.

Major issues still loom for PHT

Two issues that introduce uncertainty for PHT were identified

* 1. Volunteer gap
  2. Effect of SLA’s restructuring in 2020 and beyond

*More detail follows below*

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1. Address the volunteer gap
   * A succession plan for leadership roles needs to be implemented and deemed reliable over time
   * All Exec Board positions have been filled for 2020, as well as most Advisory positions.
   * PHT has retained the Treasurer position for 2020, despite its “elimination” via the SLA Restructure. (Treasurer, Betty Edwards, has volunteered to also be Secretary for 2020.)
   * Will someone step up to be President-Elect for 2022?
   * Candidate pool is reduced due to membership decline.
2. Effect of SLA’s restructuring in 2020 and beyond

* Exec Board
  + Will the reduction of roles on the Exec Board to president, vice president, and secretary mean the PHT President have more responsibilities?
  + PHT has retained its Treasurer position for 2020 since it still has its own treasury (through Dec. 2020).
* Financial
  + Since planning for PHT’s April 2020 Spring Meeting was well underway, SLA granted PHT continued control of its treasury through Dec 2020.
  + PHT has always enjoyed strong sponsorship relationships with its vendor-partners. How might this change when SLA takes over sponsorship tasks in 2021?
* Spring Meeting
  + The PHT Spring Meeting is valued as a key benefit for PHT members.
  + SLA made possible the rescheduling of the PHT Spring Meeting from April to November (due to the coronavirus pandemic), averting financial penalties. PHT will manage the planning of the now-named PHT 35th Anniversary Meeting.
  + SLA has indicated that the annual PHT Spring Meeting will continue in 2021 under SLA’s management re: logistics, sponsorships, and finances. Specific changes relative to vendor sponsorship remains to be seen.
* Programming
  + Responsibility for programming remains with PHT, so the SLA restructure should have no effect on this.
  + For the 2020 SLA Annual Conference, PHT has co-sponsored some programming and networking sessions.
  + There has been talk about presenting webinars throughout the year.

Committee Outcomes

Internal Merger Discussions

* Previous informal discussions re: merging with the Biomedical and Life Sciences Division (DBIO):
  + Two calls with DBIO and PHT were staged in first half 2019
  + As of Dec. 2019, DBIO thinks PHT is a good fit, for at least the reason of a shared subject area of life sciences.
  + BIO emphasizes teaching, training students, publishing. Faculty is their chief customer; PHT is research-based; commercial; for profit; tools are different (e.g., CI).
  + Leadership volunteers are needed in both Divisions. However, like PHT, DBIO managed to fill its Executive Board for 2020
  + PHT has shared programming with DBIO at the SLA Annual Conference.
  + The PHT Future Comm expressed reservations about DBIO being a good fit:
    - DBIO has been invited to participate in PHT’s Spring Meeting in the past, but has not.
    - PHT membership and programming is geared toward corporate info pros.; DBIO membership is mostly medical schools and hospital librarians.
    - PHT shares some vendors with DBIO, but has many unique ones.
    - Resources in academia are discounted. PHT is viewed as having big budgets. Pricing models are different from PHT, as is budgeting.
* There’s also the precedent of a Division becoming a *Section* within another Division, instead of a full-fledged merger..
* Other SLA Divisions to consider with which to merge: Sci-Tech, CI, LMD
* Comm did discuss potential mergers with other associations, but stopped there (P-D-R, DIA, SCIP, MLA). The P-D-R has eschewed the idea of merging with PHT.
* The SLA Cabinet Chair provided some documentation/guidance about other mergers that have taken place, mostly involving geographic Chapters.

What makes PHT, PHT?

What makes PHT unique? What are PHT’s strengths? How does PHT differ from other pharma/medical device associations?

* Members operate primarily in corporate settings.
* Subject matter; members work in a regulated industry.
* Division addresses multiple job levels/titles and tenures of info pros in pharma and health tech.
* Enjoys a notable partnership with its affiliated vendors.
* Spring Meeting: Many/most members belong or PHT because of the Spring Meeting.

Membership Numbers in Divisions, as a means of comparison (as of 4/15/20)

PHT members (from SLA) 268 (Source: Membership Reports on sla.org)

(43 new members Jan 2019 – Apr 15, 2020)

PHT Community on Connect 259

Biomedical and Life Sciences Division 253

Competitive Intelligence 360

Food, Agriculture, and Environ. Resources 115

Leadership & Management 447

Legal 463

Military 173

Science-Technology 229

(All numbers except PHT are from Membership Directory searches on sla.org)

Other Outcomes

Areas upon which PHT should focus energy

* Planning Spring Meeting ✓
* Filling all Advisory positions ✓
* Annual meeting ✓
* Building up membership
* Strategic planning for PHT
* Staging Connect (online) events after Annual Conference
* Communicating more on Connect
* Holding Open Board meetings ✓

✓ denotes completed or on-going activities

Advisory Board

* Caren Torrey and Karen Mirabile reviewed the position descriptions
* Archives is a low priority
* CapLits newsletter Editor (vacant) – a low priority; put more emphasis on Connect

Next Steps

* Establish a regular series of PHT Future Meetings
* Clarify the role of the PHT Future Committee from that of the PHT Executive and Advisory Boards
* Determine goals for the Committee for 2020. They may include:
* Continue solving the volunteer gap
* Develop a strategic plan for PHT
* Investigate a back-up plan for PHT to continue if its operational state becomes untenable
* Build up membership
* Increase continuing education programs in-conference and outside of meetings
* Pursue member input
* Engage the membership through increased communication
* Determine if/how to record PHT’s on-going history, whether through the CapLits newsletter, archives, or other means
* Assign roles & responsibilities to Committee members

→ To contribute to these discussions and plans around PHT’s Future,

please contact [Susan Gleckner](mailto:sjg398@msn.com).