



SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL ASTRONOMY
IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, INC.
PO BOX 2313
DOLORES, CO 81323
www.scaas.org
Tax id: 45-3412899



September 10, 2024

Business Plan for the Society for Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest, Inc.

Executive Summary

The Society for Cultural Astronomy in the American Southwest, Inc. (SCAAS) is a professional and avocational scientific and educational research non-profit membership organization. The Society focuses on researching and sharing the use of astronomy and traditional knowledge by indigenous cultures of the Greater American Southwest. Respectful cooperation with native cultures and other research/educational organizations is a core value of our Society. This business plan defines our role in a) documentation and dissemination of astronomical and traditional knowledge of indigenous societies in the Greater American Southwest, b) reviewing and addressing emerging needs of the Society's membership, and c) providing clear guidance to the governing board for the future financial and operational stability of the Society.

This Business Plan will assist the Society in analyzing organizational needs and in developing the financial and operational strategies to achieve its goals and objectives. It addresses **Membership, Board Size and Structure** and the need for a **Business Manager** to maintain Society functions, projects and financial viability.

The Business Plan

Mission: SCAAS is devoted to promoting the public understanding and cultural significance of traditional and astronomical knowledge among cultures of the Greater American Southwest, past and present, by supporting research, education and its public dissemination. The Society provides its members:

- A professional forum of conferences and workshops for conducting and presenting research results and seeking constructive inputs.
- Research methodologies and guidelines that are constructive, respectful and collaborative with Indigenous traditional knowledge.
- Opportunities to participate in well-designed research projects, incorporating traditional knowledge and the elements of cultural landscape surveys.
- A quarterly newsletter containing Society news, research results and presentation tips.
- A professional website with links to conferences, books, and other research materials.
- An outlet for publishing peer-reviewed articles, books, and other media.

The Society needs a business plan to: Achieve organizational and financial self-sustainability and longevity. The business plan can:

- a. Attract new members, some of whom can assist in planning and pursuing the Society's projects.
- b. Attract new members for our Board of Directors.
- c. Develop sufficient funding sources to enable the pursuit of a program of cultural landscape survey, including projects incorporating site documentation, development of archival resources and photogrammetric terrain modeling.
- d. Help to develop compelling conferences and workshops.
- e. Provide guidance in editing and updating our By-Laws and website.

Current Administrative Structure:

The Society is governed by a Board of Directors with five to nine members elected from our membership. The Board makes policy and financial decisions on behalf of the membership. A series of committees, each led by a Board member, do the work of the organization.

Our governing structure includes the following Board Positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and "At-Large" Board members. Each Board member agrees to take on specific duties to enable efficient functioning of the Society. In addition, our Communications Director, not a Board position, is responsible for publishing our quarterly newsletter. The Communications Director also maintains our Facebook page.

To assist in the operations of the Society, we have established several committees. Each of our committees is chaired by one or two Board members. The Board needs to create a viable strategy for engaging members in these committees and other activities as may arise. Our committees are:

Awards Committee	Archives Committee
Social Media/Newsletter Committee	Membership Committee
Conference/Workshop Committee	Funding Raising/Financial Committee
Publication Committee	

Society Business Manager:

The day-to-day operations of the Society are currently managed by a volunteer business manager. This person makes sure all state and federal filings are up to date, manages the Society's insurance portfolio and keeps subscriptions to services like Zoom and the membership database up to date, among other duties. This person is now managing our developing field research program in addition to the day-to-day operations. This work now consumes a significant amount of time on a weekly basis and continuing as a volunteer is no longer a sustainable option.

Membership

Society membership is open to any person interested in contributing and promoting astronomy, traditional knowledge and cultural landscape research, regardless of academic degree and/or affiliation. Nevertheless, the Society maintains a high level of rigor and professional standards in research, presentation and peer-reviewed publishing. Members must agree to a Code of Conduct as outlined in our founding documents.

Membership demographics: SCAAS needs to broaden its appeal to attract an increased diversity in its membership. Most of our 80+ members reside in the Greater American Southwest, though a few are scattered throughout the U.S. and internationally. Many members have attended and presented at one of our conferences or workshops. Native American members have attended and spoken at our conferences. Most Native American or Indigenous members have been provided complimentary memberships made possible by the Carol Ambruster Memorial Fund.

Member Communication Services:

The Society's webpage (scaas.org) contains a wealth of information and access to innumerable research articles, conference proceedings, a digital bookstore and other academic works, primarily available to members along with other information about the Society and upcoming events.

The quarterly newsletter is our most consistent mechanism of communicating with members. It is prepared and distributed by our Communications Director and normally features the President's Message followed by updates on our Cultural Landscapes Survey Program and one or more feature articles. It also includes a calendar of conferences and other events relevant to cultural astronomy and concludes with SCAAS financials.

The SCAAS Facebook page appeals to a wide variety of people and serves as an introduction to the Society and the study of indigenous astronomy and associated cultural landscapes. It also serves as a means of attracting new members and an additional fundraising platform.

SCAAS.Connects2U YouTube Channel principally features videos from our 2019 Traditional Knowledge Conference and discussions from our Journal Club with additional links to programs on Southwestern archaeology and anthropology.

Society bi- or tri-annual conferences alternate with research skills workshops. These events bring people together to present their research, learn new skills, learn from one another and perhaps resolve complex issues in cultural astronomy research.

The SCAAS Journal Club hosts a monthly discussion of two related peer-reviewed and published articles. Both authors are invited to attend and comment during the meeting that considers their publication. Attendance averages around 15-20 participants per session and has the potential to help us identify both new members and current members we may want to invite to serve on a committee or in some other fashion.

Board actions which will enhance membership, recruitment and engagement:

1. Retaining current members and attracting new members is of paramount importance, especially those who can assist in planning and pursuing the Society's projects and objectives.
2. Increase the diversity of the Society's membership.
3. Develop compelling conferences and workshops.
4. Enable and support the pursuit of an active research program.

- a. Fewkes Digital Archive Project – This project is an attempt to digitally preserve the works of Dr. Jesse Walter Fewkes that are housed at the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution and are slowly decaying due to age.
 - b. Cultural Landscapes Survey Program – The Society has pursued engagement with Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and other entities to conduct cultural landscape surveys at their archaeological sites.
 - c. SCAAS Digital Archives Project – We have an active committee that is focused on developing the protocols and capacity to archive the data, printed and digital, derived from our Cultural Landscapes Survey Program and related Society research activities.
 - d. The Society needs to work with and through the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, descendant communities and other partners and stakeholders in numerous aspects of our research and programming.
 - e. The Society will consider making a request to current members that they designate the Society as one of their requested beneficiaries at the time of their passing.
5. Write a strategic plan that defines our two, five and 10-year goals with criterion that would enable measuring our progress in achieving those goals.

Financial Organization and Viability:

Our Society is supported by:

- *Yearly membership dues* support the Society's General Operating Fund and pay for the organization's administrative functions and operational costs.
- *Donations* to the Carol Ambruster Memorial Fund (CAMF), which assist the Society and its members to conduct research and attend SCAAS events.
- *Donations to the Bernard Bell Memorial Fund*, which assists the General Operating Fund.
- *Conference and workshop fees* support SCAAS events and assist in publishing research and conference publications through the Society's in-house publisher SCAAS Multimedia Publications and our SCAAS.Connects2U YouTube channel.
- *Grants, contracts and donations* that fund research projects. Donations are especially important for providing matching funds for grants dedicated to a specific Board approved project.

Our plan to address current financial vulnerability:

The Society needs to create consistent income sufficient to a) provide for member services, and b) help fund member research and publication efforts. The Board has concluded that to achieve these goals will require a paid Executive Director/Program Manager tasked with overseeing the day-to-day operations and annual reporting responsibilities, continuous fund-raising and overall management of the organization and its research programs.

To raise the funds necessary to pay for an Executive Director, we propose a process that provides financial stability and enables the creation of an Executive Director/Program Manager position. Initially we will search for and apply for grants and conduct other fundraising activities. This would include, but not be limited to a) build the boiler plate components needed to seek grants, b) research state, federal, regional and local funding sources as well as Foundations that

align with our core mission and select grants to apply for, c) research, write and submit grant applications as appropriate and d) manage the implementation and reporting requirements of the grant, along with the disbursement of funds as necessary to meet the grant goals.

Management:

Until such time as an Executive Director/Program Manager is hired, the management of the Society shall be directed by the Board President and their designation of responsibilities to fellow Board members with consideration of their agreed upon committee assignments. Currently, the Board assumes responsibility of the Society's management and functions. The Board anticipates that the current Committee structure should become a major driving force in achieving the Society's goals. At present, we face these current challenges:

- i. Members pay their dues and gain access to Society resources with little, if any, effort invested into contributing toward meeting the Society purposes/commitments. As a result, committee work is not sufficiently supported by the membership at this time.
- ii. The Society's By-Laws and website need to be updated.
- iii. The Board lacks diversity, particularly with the inclusion of native/indigenous peoples knowledgeable of cultural astronomy.

To meet the above stated challenges, we propose:

- 1) The Board hold a meeting to specifically define the purpose and goals of each committee.
- 2) The Board appoints two or three of its members to review and edit the By-Laws, as necessary.
- 3) Attract a diversity of new Board members after defining roles and responsibilities.
- 4) Our current Board lacks someone well-versed in fundraising. The Finances and Fundraising Committee needs support to develop this capability and conduct the fundraising to meet the Society's goals and objectives.

Conclusion

The Society is healthy and active but also faces some significant challenges. Key among these is reaching financial stability so it can continue working toward its diverse and dynamic goals. This Business Plan lays a lot of responsibility on the current Board; we believe that our goals can be achieved if the Society determines how to a) use its committee structure to share the burden across its membership while also recruiting more members with talent and tenacity, b) create financial stability through accessing funding sources in addition to membership fees and donations and c) define which path forward for central management is most viable and financially feasible. Each of these aspects are intertwined, which is, in part what makes the tapestry of the Society's work so rich.