



2020-2022
Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

In December 2018, Jose I. Suarez, NCS board president, Sharon C. Allen, NCS executive director, and Kevin Hurley, strategic facilitator, met to discuss and identify goals of the strategic planning process. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that it would be inclusive, collaborative, and allow for an exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives.

It also was important to determine NCS's current position and establish clarity around what strategic priorities had been achieved to-date. To that end, a survey was sent to strategy session participants and other key NCS stakeholders to gather insight into organizational strengths and areas of opportunity. The survey results, along with a progress report for NCS's current strategic plan, were shared with participants in advance of an in-person strategy session.

The strategy session was held at SmithBucklin's Chicago HQ on March 11-12, 2019. Participants included NCS officers, executive committee, board of directors, ex-officio board members (past presidents), and NCS staff.

The session was designed to facilitate hands-on discussion, interaction, and engagement. Participants determined three strategic goals and divided into working groups to develop specific goal statements, objectives, and action items for each of the three areas.

The strategic facilitator worked with NCS staff to draft a written plan from the strategy session outcomes. NCS's executive committee reviewed an initial draft to ensure that the outcomes accurately reflected the work conducted in the strategy session. From there, an updated draft was sent to all participants to review and comment.

The resulting 2020-22 plan includes three strategic goals focused on the following areas: (1) Research and funding; (2) education, training, and leadership; and (3) brand strength. NCS's previous strategic plan directly and indirectly addressed these areas through various objectives and actions. Those objectives and actions will have been successfully integrated into NCS operations by December 2019.

The current plan will continue to build upon the momentum of the previous plan and includes new areas of specific focus. These will require time, effort, and energy to achieve by December 2022.

The NCS staff will maintain a strategic plan progress dashboard to share with NCS leadership quarterly, at a minimum. NCS staff and leadership will engage in ongoing dialogue about strategic priorities, action items, and progress toward achieving the goals outlined in the plan.

The strategic planning process consists of four key areas:

- I. Determining NCS's current position*
 - II. Developing the strategy*
 - III. Building the plan*
 - IV. Managing performance*
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Introduction

The NCS board of directors, committee chairs, and a group of former board presidents developed this strategic plan during an in-person meeting on March 11-12, 2019. The plan provides a roadmap for the next three years (through December 31, 2022) that leverages NCS's leadership and resources to impact change and accelerate growth for the association.

The planning group agreed on three strategic goals that will have a significant impact for NCS and position the organization to meet the future needs of neurocritical care. The planning group also created outcome statements to focus the organization's work toward these goals. Members of staff subsequently identified action steps to achieve those goals and objectives based on conversations during and after the strategy session.

Strategic Plan Definitions

This plan includes strategic goals, objectives, and action steps, defined as follows:

Strategic Goals: A broad end or outcome statement based on a critical issue that requires attention, focus, and action. It has a significant and meaningful impact on the association's ability to fulfill its mission.

Objectives: A precise, measurable statement or statements of what will be done to support the achievement of a strategic goal.

Action Steps: Specific tasks or projects to achieve the objectives and overall strategic goals.

Situational Analysis

As a basis upon which to build the strategic plan, NCS leadership identified and examined internal and external factors and trends that will most likely have a significant impact on the association in the next three to five years:

- The most important factors include gaps in education and board certification; rising treatment and reimbursement costs; a perceived lack of recognition of the field; a lack of adequate research funding; barriers to international participation and recognition; and an increased demand for quality metrics and performance indicators.
- There is a definite need for neurocritical care and also an increased demand for specialists in this area.
- Threats to NCS include a lack of research and related funding, lacking a strong pipeline of future board/committee members, and potential displacement by other societies.
- There are opportunities to increase membership engagement, to look at the NCS governance structure, and collaborate with other organizations.

NCS Strengths

A strong strategic plan is grounded in the organization's mission and vision and built on its inherent strengths. The board identified the following as NCS's core strengths:

- Dedicated, committed, passionate volunteers
- A passion for the field among a multidisciplinary members around the world
- The ability to create valuable education, programming, and resources—online, via the journal, and via in-person meetings
- Generating and promoting standards of practice

Future Planning

To stay focused on achieving its strategic goals, NCS's leadership and staff must work together to monitor and track progress, and adjust the plan based on environmental changes or barriers to success. Recommended best practices include:

- Developing a quarterly progress dashboard
- An annual strategy session to review action items
- Develop new items (as appropriate)
- Ensure that the plan remains relevant

2020-2022 NCS Strategic Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Research & Funding

NCS will lead high impact research that advances patient outcomes by building the infrastructure and community to drive science in neurocritical care.

Strategic Goal 2: Education, Training, & Leadership

NCS will provide its members with education, training, and leadership development to ensure continued delivery of high quality neurocritical care.

Strategic Goal 3: Brand Strength

NCS will be the recognized worldwide leader in neurocritical care through global collaboration and knowledge translation to provide optimal patient outcomes.

Objectives and Action Steps for Goals

Strategic Goal 1: Research & Funding

NCS will lead high impact research that advances patient outcomes by building the infrastructure and community to drive science in neurocritical care.

1.1. Objective: Develop a fundraising strategy to increase and expand neurocritical care research.

Action Steps:

- Create a research funding advisory group to guide research funding efforts, coordinate efforts with the Neurocritical Care Research Network (NCRN), and establish benchmarks for success.
- Identify foundations that offer grants to fund medical research. Develop an outreach strategy and NCS grant development process.
- Develop a plan to partner and collaborate with leading, well-known healthcare research entities (e.g., NIH) to co-publish, disseminate, and present research.
- Assess the feasibility of developing a program to identify, train, support, and recognize researchers in the field of neurocritical care.

1.2. Objective: Drive the neurocritical care science agenda, prioritize areas of interest, identify key research topics, and strategically allocate funding.

Action Steps:

- Work with the Neurocritical Care Research Central (NCRC) to establish formal processes to identify, prioritize, and fund neurocritical care research.
- Determine the need for, feasibility of, frequency, timing, and associated costs for holding a research-focused conference.
- Curate and disseminate high quality scientific content that demonstrates NCS's relevance and importance.

1.3. Objective: Work with NCRC to grow and support the neurocritical care research community.

Action Steps:

- Develop an investigator toolkit to provide investigators and their study teams with resources to successfully prepare and submit a research proposal.
- Contribute to and help expand an investigator mentorship program wherein experienced researchers are paired with those who are new to developing research and/or the field.

- Develop a research accelerator program to expand the scope, speed the progress, or increase the efficiency and improve final product dissemination of active neurocritical research grants.
- Determine and document specific roles and responsibilities among NCS, NCRN, and NCRC for achieving the objectives in this strategic goal.

Strategic Goal 2: Education, Training, & Leadership

NCS will provide its members with education, training, and leadership development to ensure continued delivery of high quality neurocritical care.

2.1. Objective: Increase awareness and use of neurocritical care best practices, the NCS Guidelines, and NCS educational programs.

Action Steps:

- Develop and implement a plan to include and integrate the NCS Emergency Neurological Life Support (ENLS) Course into allied health training programs (e.g., residency, advanced practice providers (APPs), pharmacy, and prehospital providers).
- Prepare and implement a plan to broadly market ENLS to relevant physician specialists, including intensivists, emergency medicine, neurology, neurosurgery, and anesthesiology.
- Develop and implement a marketing and education strategy to increase awareness and use of NCS Guidelines.
- Develop and implement a strategy for feasibility testing of proposed performance measures and ICU standards.
- Develop guidelines and key society position papers to guide the development and awareness of the field of neurocritical care.
- Assistance with the transition of patient care upon hospital discharge and neuro-recovery

2.2. Objective: Position members for future success by defining, building, and standardizing the content and expectations of neurocritical care training programs.

Action Steps:

- Conduct an educational needs assessment to identify audiences served, in addition to knowledge and training gaps.
- Develop and begin to deliver educational training programs to address the gaps identified in the needs assessment.
- Develop a plan to coordinate with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to influence and provide input into their Milestones and Residency Review Committee.

2.3. Objective: Provide opportunities for NCS members to develop and increase their leadership skills to foster engagement and positively influence the Society's future growth.

Action Steps:

- Maintain an updated leadership onboarding process document for NCS executive officers, board, and committee members.

- Audit the current leadership application process to identify areas for improvement and align individual skills with leadership duties.
- Create and implement an annual performance evaluation process (or scorecard) for board and committees.
- Develop and launch a leadership development program. Actively recruit, train, and develop members to serve on the board, committees, and taskforces. Provide opportunities for former NCS leaders to mentor, coach, and be ambassadors for the Society and the field.

Strategic Goal 3: Brand Strength

NCS will be the recognized worldwide leader in neurocritical care through global collaboration and knowledge translation to provide optimal patient outcomes.

3.1. Objective: Reinforce NCS's position as the community of international content experts and thought-leaders in neurocritical care.

Action Steps:

- Develop a definition of neurocritical care that demonstrates NCS's "ownership" of the field and use this definition to raise brand awareness and support marketing efforts.
- Define target audiences to be influenced. Assess their content preferences and content consumption behavior. Market existing content sources such as the *Neurocritical Care Journal* and *Currents* website. Identify key topics and outlets that showcase NCS's collective knowledge, expertise, and history.
- Create a content strategy that integrates with work being done at in-person meetings and via other NCS educational offerings.
- Curate whitepapers, research studies, and other relevant documents that demonstrate NCS's relevance and importance in the field.

3.2. Objective: Define and prioritize strategic partnerships and cooperative, collaborative opportunities with related organizations and meetings.

Action Steps:

- Define strategic conversations in which NCS members and leadership aspire to participate.
- Establish partnership goals and success measurements.
- Identify key organization(s) to target, develop an outreach plan, and define desired strategic outcomes for the organization(s).
- Identify opportunities for NCS leadership, members, and staff to influence the field, including speaking engagements, networking events, and collaborative discussions with key players.

3.3. Objective: Position NCS as a leading advocate for the value of neurocritical care throughout the world.

Action Steps:

- Maintain an updated NCS marketing plan to increase awareness of the Society's mission, value proposition, and quality outcomes.
- Leverage new and established partnerships to engage in collaborative advocacy efforts.
- Create a plan to educate, engage with, and lobby government officials, key influencers, major insurers, other public and private payers, and the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to demonstrate the field's importance and value.

- Design and deploy resources that educate patients and their loved ones about treatment types, risks, benefits, outcomes, and success stories.
- Prepare and implement a plan to increase connections among the global network of neurocritical care centers.