



# **SoLAR Strategic Plan**

April 2021 — December 2022

[www.solaresearch.org](http://www.solaresearch.org)

## The Challenge

We are experiencing an unprecedented increase in the quantity and quality of information and data available not only to us, but also about us. We must adapt individually, institutionally and culturally to the transition in technologies and social norms that makes this possible and question their impacts and implications for learning and knowledge building.

## Vision

SoLAR's vision is to be recognized as the leading organization promoting research and implementation of Learning Analytics (<https://www.solaresearch.org/about/what-is-learning-analytics>).

## Mission

SoLAR's overall mission is to advance the field of learning analytics globally by:

- Fostering the highest standards of academic research in learning analytics;
- Creating opportunities for the diverse stakeholders in learning analytics to communicate, collaborate, debate and support the implementation and adoption of learning analytics;
- Promoting the development of open educational resources in learning analytics; and
- Raising awareness of learning analytics amongst policy and decision-makers in educational institutions, professional and government contexts.

## Members

SoLAR members are academic researchers, practitioners, product developers, institutional leaders, government policy analysts, educators and students in the interdisciplinary field of learning analytics.

## Goals - April 2021 to December 2022

1. Increase the **diversity** and **inclusivity** of the SoLAR Community
2. Expand **impact** and increase **understanding and use** of learning analytics
3. Communicate the **value of membership** to all members
4. Increase overall **engagement** within the SoLAR Community

## Enablers

In combination with or in addition to the **SoLAR Executive**, Working Groups assist in furthering the vision and mission:

- a) **Communications and Website** oversee the internal and external communications of the Society
- b) **Education** promotes the development of high-quality Learning Analytics educational resources
- c) **Events** encourage and support the community in hosting learning analytics related events to further the mission of the Society (includes LAK and LASI programme/organizing teams)
- d) **Inclusion** develops and implements initiatives aimed to promote, elevate and foster an open, diverse, and inclusive environment
- e) **Journal** creates and disseminates new tools, techniques, study transformations, and provide ongoing evaluation and critique of conceptual, technical and practice outcomes.
- f) **Membership** works on initiatives to expand membership benefits and increase overall membership for the Society.
- g) **Special Interest Groups** promote and support the establishment of SIGs within the Society
- h) **IAALDE** increases the visibility and impact of research produced by member societies

# GOAL 1: Increase the diversity and inclusivity of the SoLAR community

SoLAR should be as diverse and inclusive as possible. This is critical to (i) our aspiration to be a truly international society, (ii) maintaining the intellectual health of the field, and (iii) preventing groupthink. We need to continue to diversify in aspects such as geography, gender, ethnicity, discipline, methodology etc.

Goal 1: Increase the diversity and inclusivity of the SoLAR community				
Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
1.1 Promote regional/ local events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote LA in underrepresented regions by actively reaching out to members</li> <li>Promote local LASI events and SIGs</li> <li>Collaborate with an industry event</li> </ul>	2 events held in 2020  Total of 335 participants	Increase number of events by 50% from 2020  Initiate and support two events in regions that are underrepresented  Increase number of participants by 20%	Events
1.2 Cooperate with other societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote transition pathways from other research fields</li> </ul>	Member of IAALDE	Establish and sustain a formal cooperation with another organization	Executive
1.3 Host online events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist local areas in hosting or guesting SoLAR open educational resources such as the webinar/ podcast/blog series</li> </ul>	10 webinars (participants - min. 127, max. 726)  10 podcast episodes (plays - min. 96, max. 469)  8 blog posts	Maintain webinar and podcast series   Increase the participation in online events by 10% from 2020	Communications  Education  Events
1.4 Promote active development of graduate students and early career researchers (ECR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SoLAR Scholarships for Doctoral Consortium students</li> <li>LAK Conference Scholarships for ECR</li> <li>Erik Duval Scholarships for LASI graduate students</li> <li>SoLAR Membership Scholarships</li> </ul>	DC - 8  Conference - 33  LASI - 20  Memberships - 3	Maintain financial support for scholarships	LAK  LASI  Inclusion  Membership

## Goal 1: Increase the diversity and inclusivity of the SoLAR community

Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
1.5 Create a database of learning analytics related expertise in the community from different regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage 1 - Executive and Working Group team members to commence database</li> <li>• Stage 2 - Request and actively seek input from community members</li> </ul>	20 listed in 2020	Grow database pool by 20%	Communication Education
1.6 Promote inclusive learning analytics research and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain web page that establishes SoLAR's commitment to tackling discrimination</li> <li>• Maintain a list of educational resources that raise awareness and promote work that contributes to inclusive learning analytics</li> <li>• Invite contributions specifically targeting inclusive LA research &amp; practice from the community to existing communication channels including JLA and LAK21</li> </ul>	<p>All Working Groups have non-Executive members</p> <p>72% JLA authors first time authors</p> <p>BLM statement published with resources page</p>	Continue to deploy actions across other elements in SoLAR to actively promote education measures against discrimination	Communication Inclusion Education
1.7 Recognize the importance of open, accessible, reproducible, repeatable and replicable data and analyses approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the diversity of epistemological, ethical, and legal challenges and opportunities that such approaches face</li> </ul>	Motion approved to develop plan of action	<p>Plan of Action with implementation recommendations presented to Exec Nov 2021</p> <p>Start implementation Dec 2021</p>	Executive

# GOAL 2: Expand impact and increase understanding and use of learning analytics

While knowledge of learning analytics is growing, we need to keep alive the discussion about its challenges, opportunities and relevance to practice ensuring this understanding is accessible to target audiences.

Goal 2: Expand impact and increase understanding and use of learning analytics				
Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
2.1 Maintain the Journal of Learning Analytics as scientific research publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate publication processes for improvement</li> <li>Mentor new authors</li> </ul>	72% first time Authors (39)  <b>Authors Demographics:</b> 49% USA 36% Europe 5% Australia, 5% Canada 5% China  <b>Downloads</b> 3,828 on 7(1) Per article: 638  For past 12 months Avg article downloads per month -5468	Increase readership by 10%	Journal Inclusion
2.2 Promote and sustain collaboration with EdTech industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create relationship with new industry partners</li> <li>Sustain relationship with existing industry partners/sponsors</li> <li>Grow Practitioner Track at LAK</li> </ul>	Avg Prac Submissions 21 for past 2 years	Sponsors confirmed for LAK22  Increase Practitioner Track submission by 20%	Executive
2.3 Make leading research more accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain range of scholarships</li> <li>Maintain webinar/podcast/Nexus series</li> <li>Publish Position Papers</li> <li>Establish and maintain PhD Thesis Hub</li> </ul>	Scholarships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DC - 8</li> </ul> Conference – 33 LASI – 20  Memberships - 3	Maintain financial support for scholarships  LAK Proceedings Open Source  10 Theses uploaded to the PhD Thesis Hub	Journal LAK LASI Events, Inclusion Education Communication

## Goal 2: Expand impact and increase understanding and use of learning analytics

Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
2.4 Develop mentorship and training opportunities for writing for publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Run workshop(s) at LAK, LASI and/or online</li> <li>Create mentor database and match to mentees</li> <li>Launch early and mid-career researcher development workshops</li> </ul>	<p>Workshops developed</p> <p>Mentor and mentee database created</p>	<p>1 Event by March 2022</p> <p>2 Events by Dec 2022</p> <p>5 mentors and mentees matched</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Communication</p>
2.5 Develop training opportunity for quality reviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training developed and run</li> </ul>	Recognition of Quality Reviews	<p>Guidelines established for quality reviewing</p> <p>Improved feedback from authors and reviewers</p>	<p>LAK Programme Chairs</p> <p>JLA Editors</p> <p>Executive</p>
2.6 Develop mentorship and training opportunities for leading analytics teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch Senior Leadership meet-ups and/or workshops</li> </ul>	9 participants LASI workshop	<p>Feedback from participants</p> <p>1 Event by March 2022</p> <p>2 Events by Dec 2022</p>	<p>Education</p> <p>Executive</p>
2.7 Create and sustain bridges/linkages with sister research communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate on government/industry Position Papers</li> <li>Discuss focus for future Position Papers</li> </ul>	1 Position Paper 2020	Increase joint paper publications	<p>Education</p> <p>IAALDE</p>
2.8 Provide specific Open Educational Resources to increase understanding of learning analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open access to Position Papers, research, recordings on website without firewall</li> </ul>	<p>2 Position Papers</p> <p>LAK Proceedings</p>	1 new Position Paper annually	<p>Communication</p> <p>Website</p>

# GOAL 3: Communicate the value of membership to all members

SoLAR is a membership-based society. In order to grow, we must provide inherent value to our SoLAR members to continue the growth of the community. SoLAR membership provides not only funding opportunities but collaborative opportunities across institutions and continents.

Goal 3: Communicate the value of membership to all members				
Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
3.1 Articulate values linked to SoLAR membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase member engagement with SoLAR</li> <li>• Provide “spotlight space” on website to expand research from members</li> <li>• LASI member scholarships</li> </ul>	LAK21 and LASI21 activities	Maintain membership numbers and geographic distribution  5 bios in spotlight space	Membership  Executive  Website
3.2 Increase engagement with Institutional Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide regular exchange opportunities</li> <li>• Create an Institutional Member only channel for communication and match making</li> <li>• Extend Institutional Membership (1) to LA scholars in under-represented regions with whom you are working, or (2) to scholars who do not yet have any collaborations, to bring them into the SoLAR community</li> </ul>	1 institutional roundtable meeting per year	2 meetings for Institutional Members  Communication channel created  6 Nexus blog posts from Institutional Members  10 extended memberships	Membership  Education  Communication
3.3 Broaden Working Group memberships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute call for participation</li> <li>• Recognize commitment and efforts of Working Group members</li> </ul>	10% Working Group Members are non-Executive members	20% Working Group members non-Executive members	Executive  Working Group Leads
3.4 Position paper topics relevant to institutional members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite Institutional Members to suggest topics for Position Paper</li> </ul>	Topics initiated by Exec members	1 topic suggested by Institutional Members	Membership  Communication  Education



# Goal 4: Increase overall engagement within the SoLAR community

We should not be closed to ourselves. How can we better engage with other organizations, groups, etc. to better promote learning analytics?

Goal 4: Increase overall engagement within the SoLAR community				
Priorities	Actions	April 2021 Measures	December 2022 Targets	Enablers
4.1 Promote participation of members in Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear information on how to get involved</li> <li>• Identify clear benefits for engagement with Working Groups</li> <li>• Run community surveys to see who would be willing to participate and then engage with them</li> </ul>	Diversity of participants' demographic distributions	20% Working Group Members are non-Executive members including from diverse regions	Communication Membership Inclusion
4.2 Organize joint events or in-cooperation events with other societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the engagement with IAALDE</li> <li>• Expand the engagement with ASCILITE through MoU</li> <li>• Explore other organizations to propose in-cooperation</li> </ul>	Joint papers with IAALDE  Best paper exchange  LA SIG with ASCILITE	Maintain current engagement and increase as possible	Executive IAALDE
4.3 Increase two-way communication with SIGs and sub-groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask sub-groups to report back on their activities to SoLAR instead of existing on their own</li> </ul>	Annual reports of SIGs	SIG's reports included in AGM report	SIGs Executive
4.4 Continue current initiatives aimed at the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue newsletter, podcast, webinar</li> <li>• Continue website (job listings, resources, etc.)</li> <li>• Invite member input</li> </ul>	4700 receive newsletter  Stats for webinars and podcasts as above	Increasing participation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website activity</li> <li>• Newsletter reads</li> <li>• Numbers in webinars and podcasts</li> </ul>	Communication



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