

Reviewing the path and planning for the future: S Rathinam Communication secretary

I was appointed as Communications Secretary in 2022. This post was created to assist the Honorary Secretary with their ever growing workload as well as to redefine the role and importance of communication from the SCTS. The SCTS has always valued communication with its membership and endeavours to cater to its needs.

As well as overseeing the various communication strands of the SCTS, the communications secretary and the sub-committee would help with the SCTS Annual Report, Annual BORS report and Unit Engagement events. I look back at the last four years of how this role has evolved and the committee's success as I hand over the reins to Prof Indu Deglurkar who will be the new SCTS communication secretary by the time this issue is printed.

Committee Members:

A big thank you to all the committee members during my time leading this subcommittee. We have made progress with various plans, however, there are still projects which are a work in progress. All of this will not be possible without the support of the committee members as well as the secretarial staff in the office.

Terms of Reference:

We created a term of reference for the Subcommittee in 2024; the Committee still has the founding members with a recent call to refresh the committee. We have had a few meetings in the last year but still have delivered on our communication strategy.

Communication Strategy:

I think as a team we have delivered most of the strategic objectives set in 2022.

- Oversee all aspects of communication of the organisation
- Interact with the various co-chairs of the committees of SCTS
- Ensure members and public are kept up to date with the developments in the Speciality
- Newsletter and Monthly Update
- To streamline the content in the weekly updates
- To offer a monthly focused communication "From the Chest"
- Bulletin: Review arrangements with publishers regarding tariff and revenue from advertisers
- Create a single focused brochure highlighting sponsorship & strategic partnership opportunities for industry
- Engage with a journal to publish SCTS Abstracts: JTCS
- The Living Textbook of Cardiothoracic Surgery: Archive all the SCTS university

Bulletin:

We have reduced the number of print copies with an electronic offering to be more sustainable. Dio has taken over from Indu as Editor. We continue to engage with Open Box as our publishing partner and have extended the current contract with them. We changed arrangements with them to only paying for the production process whilst generating advertising revenue for SCTS and thereby making a profit.

From the Chest:

The FTC has highlighted the softer side of our members as well as highlighted the heritage of various units. The Escapists Club offers insights into Surgeon's passions, inspirational stars and various articles as a soft edition complementing our SCTS Bulletin.

Publishing SCTS Abstracts in JTCS:

We have negotiated an arrangement with JTCS which allows us to publish our annual meeting abstracts as a supplement. There are ongoing discussions to resurrect the Perspectives in Cardiothoracic surgery, the monologue of best lectures of the SCTS University.

BORS and Executive Reports:

The SCTS will not deliver on its charity charter and vision if we don't engage with our members. The Unit Representatives act as a conduit between the Executive and the individual units and the communication committee has been integral in coordinating the board of representatives' report. We have highlighted and shared best practice and have also surveyed unit practise on sustainable surgery.

The fantastic work which all the committee chairs deliver for the SCTS is collated in the annual report.

Social Media:

Our social media presence has significantly improved over the last few years, including the media wall and juicer which brings all social media posts by SCTS on to our website. Our social media platforms have proved to be integral to the London to Brighton ride promotion and raising the profile of the SCTS.

Website:

The website is about to undergo an overhaul as it has been nearly 5 years since we last did a major reorganisation. We have, however, in the last few years added various new sections to the website.

Tribute boards:

It is really sad when we lose very valuable senior colleagues and we have ~~created profile~~ created profile pages for colleagues, peers and the public to leave kind words about deceased members. It is staggering to see how many we have lost in the last few years.

Member Wellbeing:

We have created sections for member well-being on our website including resources support and guidance on dealing with Bullying and Harassment.

Position statements:

SCTS has maintained itself as the main advocate to our patients with disease of the chest, heart and lungs. There have been issues and challenges which have faced our specialty both in terms of professionalism as well as patient care and this has prompted the SCTS to have guidance documents and position statements which are hosted on our website in a dedicated section.

Change is the only constant

In my time with the SCTS executive over two decades I have been associated with excellent, motivated individuals in the senior leadership team and the executive. It has significantly changed and evolved for the better. As various surgical societies and organisations talk about an inclusive culture, our charity leads by example as reflected in our current senior leadership team and executive.



External Collaboration:

One of the responsibilities of the Communication secretary is liaising with other organisations and promoting collaborative working. I had the privilege of representing SCTS in the Stake holder meeting organised by the Royal College of Surgeons of England to explore a Collaborative International Strategy to support training, education and professional standards in the international arena. SCTS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Society of Thoracic Surgeons to work in close collaboration. We have worked closely with international partners in India, Egypt and ESTS for collaborative ventures and shared learning.

“Every beginning has an end and every end is a new beginning.”

After spending nearly 10 years as SCTS Tutor and Education secretary, the Communication Secretary role was a new challenge which I embarked on four years ago. I have completed many of the strategic points which we planned, there are still some in the process. But every journey has to come to an end and to hand the portfolio to someone who will build on and make things even better. I wish Indu the new communication secretary all the very best in her tenure as the Communication Secretary and I am sure she will make a grand job of it. I thank all of you for your support and feedback which has allowed me to deliver the role.

