



SOCIETY OF DECISION
PROFESSIONALS
Clarity & Insight for Decisive Action

NEWSLETTER

Issue 23

December 2021

President's Message by Eyas Raddad

Ending 2021 with Deep Gratitude

Another year is about to close, just as turbulent and chaotic as the one before. The world continues to adapt to the new reality of a shape-shifting pandemic and the constraints it brings about, and so does SDP. And the year folds with much to be grateful for.

SDP made significant accomplishments in 2021, despite the challenges the pandemic presented. The society planned and executed on the second virtual annual DAAG conference, building on the success of the first virtual conference in 2020, and refining our capability to execute this novel format. This was quite a feat, and it was possible only because of the dedication and passion of many volunteers and SDP staff, led by the program co-chairs Elayne Ko and Charles Persinger.

The planning for the 2022 SDP Annual Conference and Workshop is solidly in motion under the leadership of William Leaf-Herman and Gary Summers. In 2022, we are planning to have a mixed format; virtual plus in-person, to return to the intimate nature of the conference for those who are able and comfortable to make it in person. Exciting sessions are planned, and the conference will push into new frontiers and continue to expand the horizon for SDP and the members. More information is available at www.sdpevents.com

SDP started two new chapters in 2021. Jost Püettmann, Daniel Dantine and Christian Diendorfer started the Vienna SDP Chapter. And more recently, the Australasia SDP Chapter was started by Shona Bernard Chandler. They join 6 existing chapters in Calgary, Houston, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver and London, a sign of continued growth of the SDP community in numbers and geography.

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

President's Message 1

Upcoming Events/Links 3

Member Spotlight 4

Certifications 5

Council and Interest Group News 7

Chapter News 8

Word From Sponsor 9

Brain Teaser 10

President's Message, continued from page 1

SDP is also adopting a new vision, to be The Global Forum for Decision Making. A lofty vision that was propelled by the SDP Board, with significant momentum coming from new board members who joined in June. A vision steering committee was formed to nurture the progress towards this vision, and is operating in an agile style, inviting and helping experimentation. A few pilots are already in motion, and the principles of the new vision are already influencing SDP programming. A clear example of such is the second Energy Summit organized by the Houston SDP Chapter under the leadership of Jeremy Walker and Matt Distell.

The SDP Houston Chapter Energy Summit was a virtual November event, and it tested new concepts that are proving highly valuable for our society. For one, the summit was successful at engaging executives in the energy industry in a way that helped decision professionals empathize with the challenges and changing context decision makers are experiencing. It was also the epitome of challenge-based programming and carefully curated quality topics, which has proven its ability to attract more and new attendees and broadened the reach of SDP. The summit was the first SDP event that formalized the role of Master of Ceremony, which certainly played a significant role in enhancing attendee experience.

Indeed, so much for which to be grateful. It takes a village, as they say, and a village it took. I am sincerely grateful to the community of SDP and the tens of volunteers who pour their hearts, time, skills, and passion into creating and sustaining the great community of SDP. And if you ask how all that can happen with quality, the simple answer is our dynamic and action-oriented Executive Director, Hilda Cherekdjian, the glue, and engine of SDP. Thanks, Hilda, for a fantastic year!!

THE FRONTIERS OF DECISION-MAKING: **Innovations & Applications at the Leading Edge**

APRIL 26-29, 2022

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950 North Stafford Street
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**SDP Annual Conference
& Workshops**

(Formerly Known as DAAG Annual Conference & Workshops)

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Expires
Jan 15

Risk Free Registration Process | www.sdpevents.com

SDP Upcoming Events Q1	Date	Time/Zone
Knowledge Sharing Council	5-Jan	4:00/PST
SDP Certification Council Meeting	7-Jan	8:30/PST
Houston Chapter Meeting in-person	21-Jan	9:30/PST
Board Meeting	21-Jan	7:00/PST
SDP Webinar - Brad Powley, Salesforce	27-Jan	TBA
SDP Certification Council Meeting	4-Feb	8:30/PST
Board Meeting	4-Feb	7:00/PST
SDP Webinar - Carol Liffman	Feb	TBA
Board Meeting	4-Mar	7:00/PST
SDP Certification Council Meeting	4-Mar	8:30/PST
SDP Webinar - J Siebert & R Keeney	Mar	TBA



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Useful Links

The SDP Board has posted the Society's Bylaws and Policy and Procedure Manual, which can be found at:
<http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/about/governance>

A listing of courses in decision analysis available to SDP members is at:
<http://www.decisionprofessionals.com/courses/training-program>



Still going on!

[SMDM 43rd Annual Meeting On Demand](#)

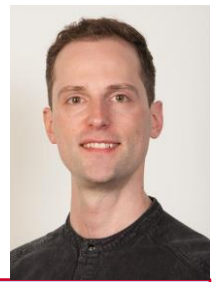
Toronto, ON, Canada
October 22, 2021 to Jan 6, 2022
The meeting theme is *Individual and Society in Health Care Decisions*

Meeting co-chairs: Negin Hajizadeh, MD, MPH and Victoria Shaffer, PhD

Do you know of upcoming professional events that might be of interest to other SDP members? If so, please email the SDP newsletter at newsletter@decisionprofessionals.com



Member Spotlight: Adam Cassady



Most of the SDP profiles have been about people who work in energy and pharmaceuticals. Today's profile is about a person using DA/DQ to improve decision-making in government.

Like many, Adam Cassady wasn't looking for a structure to improve decision making, but when he found Decision Analysis, it was transformative in the way he viewed the world. Originally from Alberta, Adam started his career as an environmental consultant in oil and gas. But the contentious and reactive nature of environmental remediation, plus fluctuations in the industry, pushed him to a public policy career to proactively improve decision-making in complex environments.

His introduction to DA came while completing a Master of Public Policy and Global Affairs degree at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Robin Gregory, the lead author of "Structured Decision Making: A Practical Guide to Environmental Management Choices" and professor at UBC, introduced Adam to the decision sciences in 2017. Almost immediately, Adam found what he was looking for—DA as a framework to help define objectives, design alternatives, and estimate consequences and trade-offs in cross-sectoral, complex and uncertain environments.

Today, he is a senior policy analyst for the Government of British Columbia (BC) working in the Population and Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health in Victoria, Canada. In this role, he supports analysis of, and adaptation to, the impacts of climate change and industrial development on the health of British Columbians. A very complex and uncertain environment indeed.

Framing and clarifying the decision context of complex policy problems have provided the highest benefit in his work. DA has helped him incorporate qualitative and quantitative information that prioritizes the fundamental values and objectives of stakeholders and partners. Additionally, he finds that DA improves the transparency and defensibility of decision-making, which is particularly important in public-sector decision-making.

Adam has found DA methods extremely helpful for improving decisions in his personal life as well. During the early months of COVID, he and his partner faced several options that involved large risks (moving across the continent) and rewards (new career opportunities), under considerable uncertainty (a global pandemic). By articulating their values and designing a consequence table, their choice to move across the continent, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, was improved.

As a member of the SDP Vancouver chapter, he enjoys the benefits of shared learning with other DA professionals working in a variety of fields and engaging with guest speakers and practitioners. Monthly meetings involve discussion of war stories where decisions have broken down or not gone as planned. This has been particularly useful as he continues to explore practical applications for DA in the real world.

When he's not doing DA, Adam enjoys skiing, cycling, curling, and is a compulsive maker of things, from wine to wood burning.

Recently Certified Decision Professionals

Since our last Newsletter (Sept, 2021), we have 14 new certifications to announce, including one at the Lead Practitioner level (Congratulations to Fadi Najdi) and 13 at the Associate level. One of the Associates is from Chevron (Andrew Bennett) and 12 of the Associates are from CNOOC (Mike Chandler, Neil Chatralia, Chris Draper, David Dutton, Dave Findlay, Sine Gabbott, Kevin Gallagher, Karize Oudit, Daryon Shahbahrami, Eimhear Sheehan, Andy Shepperson, Maria Trujillo; see the picture below).



Top row (left to right) – Neil Chatralia, Dave Findlay, David Dutton, Mike Chandler
Middle row (left to right) – Sine Gabbott, Chris Draper, Kevin Gallagher, Karize Oudit
Bottom row (left to right) Eimhear Sheehan, Andy Shepperson, Maria Trujillo, Daryon Shahbahrami



Fadi Najdi, Lead Practitioner (left)

This brings our 2021 total to 27 certifications distributed as follows:

Associate: 17

Practitioner: 1

Lead Practitioner: 3

Fellow: 6

Total: 27

Certifications in 2021 (cont'd)

As we head into the end of the year, we would like to send a shout-out of congratulations to all of the people who have been certified—we are proud of your achievements and excited to have you as part of the community of Certified Decision Professionals.

You may have noticed that over the past several years, the number of people who have been certified has been increasing and wondered what is behind it. About five years ago, several members of the Board of Directors discussed why many members of the society who were quite active (even several BOD members!) hadn't taken the time to become certified. Several key issues were identified, including a low awareness of certification and a lack of understanding how to apply. Additionally, the group believed that the more people who were certified (as long as we maintained the high standards that we have always had), the more compelling certification would be to people who were considering applying. The more that certification was recognized as a meaningful professional credential that was the norm for people in our discipline, the more desirable it would be for people to apply, and the more value that it would have when granted.

In response to these issues, the certification council made efforts to raise awareness of the program and to clarify the application process. As more people applied, we had a few people who reached out who were interested in DA and had taken courses and learned the academic side but hadn't yet made the jump into practice. Then, Eric Bickel (now at UT) suggested that we create a certification level that would recognize people who had completed some significant amount of coursework. The certification committee studied the issue, made a proposal to the BOD, and launched the new Certification earlier this year. Since then, we have found that it addresses an unmet need of several of our sponsors who have internal training programs—to provide external recognition of skills taught in these internal courses, and the value of these internal DA programs.

Each time we recognize people who are certified, whether through the newsletter, or by having those who are certified stand for a round of applause at the conference the more awareness we create, the more desirable certification becomes, and the more people who aren't yet certified think "Hey, maybe I should put my application in." We also hope that those people who are certified at the Associate, Practitioner, or Lead Practitioner level will consider leveling up to the next level. And if you are a Fellow, we hope that you will think about people you know who are up and coming, and that you will encourage them to apply for certification at whatever level is right for them.

This is one of those rare occasions where you can do something that benefits yourself, the SDP, and the entire community of Decision Professionals. Certification is a benefit of membership, and if you are a member, your certification applications is free—all you need to do is fill out the forms appropriate for your level and send them in.

The Certification Council is ready and waiting for your application—[click here](#) to find out how to apply.

Council Focus

Membership & Communication Council:

In the last issue of the SDP Newsletter, we shared with you our leading initiatives: Internal Network of DA Group Leaders and Mentorship. Below is our update:

Internal Network of DA Group Leaders: *We have contacted those selected to charter this initiative, and we plan to have this group active at the beginning of 2022.*

Mentorship Program: *We have drafted our invitation email for the reinvigorated mentorship program, and are fine-tuning the questionnaire to facilitate the matching of mentor and mentee. Before the end of December 2021, we plan to send all SDP members an invitation to participate in the mentoring program.*

Interest Group News

Pharma Interest Group:

The Pharma Interest Group has been relatively quiet for 2021, and we are looking to reinvigorate our approach for 2022.

We will alter the format of the Pharma Interest Group in 2022.

Instead of relying on external speakers as the primary source of content, we will shift to making it more of an informal group conversation. Hopefully this will draw more participants into the Pharma Interest Group. These discussions may lead to inviting external speakers from time to time if we would like to further understand an interesting topic.

Please join us in 2022!



Chapter News

Calgary Chapter:

*The Calgary chapter kicked off the 2021/2022 season in October with a discussion on Chapter strategy and vision to land near- and mid-term chapter goals. This was followed by an engaging talk titled “Hope is Not a Strategy”, a re-cap of the DAAG session by the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides, describing the application of Decision Quality to mountain guiding. The chapter also hosted its second book club meeting, reviewing the book “Calling Bullsh*t” by Carl Bergstrom and Jevin West. The SDP-Calgary Book Club has provided an exciting social opportunity for our chapter in 2021, and we intend to continue it in the new year with several book ideas already in mind.*

To wrap up the year, we will be hosting an in-person gathering for the first time since late 2019 to celebrate the holiday season.

Vienna Chapter:

The Vienna Chapter was founded exactly a year ago, in December 2020. Because of the Covid 19 situation the first real meeting took place in the summer of 2021. Real meetings take place every two month, with more virtual meetings planned for 2022.

*In September, a hybrid meeting was organized together with the London Chapter.
In November, Carl Spetzler visited the Vienna Chapter.*

Besides the focus of DQ/DA in the business world, one important focus area of the chapter will be the development of DQ workshops for young adults

Vancouver Chapter:

The Vancouver Chapter meets monthly, with around 15 people attending from a wide range of sectors: public transportation, mining, insurance, health policy and natural resources management. These diverse perspectives have led to animated discussions on topics such as using decision analysis to inform public policy re: Covid-19 (Feb 2021), the intersection of risk management and decision science (Oct 2021), the use of different facilitation tools (Mar 2021) and water-use planning (Nov 2021). Though we have missed the rapport generated by meeting in person, holding our meetings via Zoom has provided opportunities for a joint meeting with the Seattle Chapter (Jun 2021) and, more generally, for people to participate from further afield.

A Word From an SDP Sponsor

In every issue of this newsletter, we include a message from one of the SDP sponsors, whose support contributes significantly to the ongoing success of the Society.



Strategic Decisions Group: 40 Years of Innovation, Insight, and Impact.

Strategic Decisions Group ([SDG](#)) is pleased to be a charter sponsor of the Society of Decision Professionals. Our firm shares SDP's mission of creating greater value for organizations, individuals, and stakeholders by bringing decision quality to important, complex decisions.

In this, our 40th year, SDG continues to push the frontiers of decision theory as applied to strategy consulting, motivated by the complex, real-world issues faced by our clients. Our team of decision professionals is committed to providing strategic counsel to help companies across the globe make better business decisions from the top of the organization to the front lines. This commitment starts within our own walls, where we cultivate an environment of support, encouragement, and lifelong learning. Over the last 40 years, we have helped more than 800 client organizations strengthen their businesses through the application of decision analysis and decision quality. We invite you to explore four decades of impact—seminal papers, case studies, and milestones that track the evolution of our profession—when you visit our [40th anniversary landing page](#).

SDG continues to evolve with our clients by anticipating and addressing challenges and opportunities that will come from ever-changing markets. Today, SDG increasingly supports clients as they incorporate ESG (environmental, social, and governance) factors into their decision making. More and more, investors, and consequently, corporate decision makers, are applying these non-financial factors into their analyses and decision processes as they explore strategic opportunities.

A career at SDG offers the unique opportunity to make a real difference—both on client projects and in helping to shape the firm's direction and culture. We are growing our staff in all regions and invite you to [learn more about a career at SDG](#).

Congratulations to David Matheson winner of the September Brain Teaser. Honorary mention to Pat Leach who responded correctly 12 minutes after David, and Steve Beggs who responded correctly a few days later.

The answer to the "Old Friends Kids' Ages" September Brain Teaser

This teaser is an exercise of mining for scarce, critical information, while discarding unuseful information. The table to the right is the orderly structuring of Bob's three kids whole number ages that multiplied equal 72. John advised that he did not have enough information when looking at the license plate. Since all the answers are unique except the two highlighted in red, it must be one of these. The final piece of info is when Bob states he has an older child, clinching ages 3, 3 and 8. The final note intends to make clear that cases with twins are rounded to the same age, i.e., equal age meaning no single older child. Also that early term pregnancies are precluded, intending to mean that different pregnancies cannot round to the same age.

Kids Ages	Product	Sum
1x1x72	72	74
1x2x36	72	39
1x3x24	72	28
1x4x18	72	23
1x6x12	72	19
1x8x9	72	18
2x2x18	72	22
2x3x12	72	17
2x6x6	72	14
3x3x8	72	14
3x4x6	72	13

Click [Here](#) to download the Sept Brain teaser questions and solution.

THE DECEMBER BRAIN TEASER

Instructions: You can win "bragging rights" by being the first to submit the correct answer of this brain teaser to the newsletter editors ([SDP Newsletter: Brain Teaser](#)). We will announce the winner in the next issue. Our new Brain Teaser Editor is Tony Fernandez.

Big Exploration: This company is very successful doing aggressive offshore oil exploration. They do some things similar to industry, but others their own way, for instance they have their own unique decision criteria. You are a new DA recent hire facing your first significant challenge answering to the VP of exploration and appraisal (E&A). You learn that this is a "test of fire" and predecessors that have failed this challenge have been relegated to minor roles. The stakes are high.

Each E&A program consists of one exploration and one appraisal well each costing PV \$100 MM. The prospect's exploration well has 25% chance of success into appraisal; 75% chance of immediate exit. The potential appraisal well has 75% chance of success into development; 25% chance of immediate exit. The development case has a wide distribution of economic outcomes due to critical unresolved uncertainties like future prices and resources. The company has split the development case distribution into a downside case covering the lower 25% with some critical downside uncertainties. The forward NPV of this downside case is \$0 MM - excluding incurred E&A. The other 75% of development case distribution is called the Economic Success Case where uncertainties play out favorably. The company uses a decision criteria of 2 times the PV cost of the full E&A program to justify the investment, for instance, if the full E&A program costs \$200 MM, the company needs a minimum of \$400 MM at the front of the rolled back decision tree. You are asked to lay out a simple decision tree and determine the forward breakeven NPV of the Economic Success Case (excluding incurred E&A) needed to achieve the mentioned target return for the E&A Program? The VP will use this info to decide whether to proceed with this exploration prospect.

Note: This structure could just as well apply to mining, pharma and tech development. All the PV cost and NPV numbers are consistent apples-to-apples to be used directly in the tree without any adjustment. This teaser is intended as a pencil and paper exercise, or simple Excel with Goal Seek.