



Interest Group Best Practices

Purpose. SGIM Interest Groups (IGs) are member-led communities that create connection, leadership pathways, and value for the Society. These practices are intended as practical guidance, not requirements, and recognize that IGs operate without dedicated staff management or ongoing project support.

What Healthy, Impactful Interest Groups Do

The most impactful IGs typically do three things well:

- Build community by creating consistent opportunities for members to connect, share expertise, and form professional relationships.
- Develop future leaders by engaging trainees, early-career faculty, and new SGIM members in meaningful roles and mentoring relationships.
- Produce something of value for members and SGIM, such as annual meeting sessions, workshops, webinars, scholarship, advocacy activities, mentoring, resources, or collaborations.

IGs should periodically identify the outcomes that best fit their mission. Useful indicators may include participation, leadership development, programming, collaborations, scholarship, advocacy, mentoring impact, or other member-facing resources.

Leadership and Succession

- Maintain at least two and no more than four co-chairs whenever possible.
- Encourage co-chairs to serve at least two years, and ideally three years, while creating regular opportunities for newer leaders to join the team.
- Identify and mentor prospective co-chairs annually to support healthy succession and leadership continuity.
- Maintain a balance of experienced and newer leaders whenever possible.
- Keep the GIM Connect community, leadership roster, and community administrators current so members can find and contact the group easily.
- Seek diverse leadership and membership representation across career stage, geography, practice setting, discipline, and background. Intentionally engage trainees, early-career faculty, and members new to SGIM.

Membership Engagement and Member Value

- Aim for more than 20 engaged members. “Engaged” may include participation in annual meeting activities, GIM Connect discussions, webinars, projects, mentoring, regional activities, or other IG work during the year.
- Offer clear ways for members to connect, learn, mentor, collaborate, contribute, or lead.

- Use the annual meeting and year-round activities to recruit new members, welcome newcomers, and identify emerging leaders.
- Consider occasional regional programming or representation, such as workshops, roundtables, or trainee engagement, when it advances the IG mission.

Communication and Community Building

- Use GIM Connect as the primary platform for group communication and encourage members to join and manage their community notifications.
- Communicate with members at least quarterly, even when there is no major event to announce. Short updates, member questions, relevant resources, and opportunities to participate can sustain connection.
- Assign one co-chair primary responsibility for communication and community engagement, with clear back-up support from the other co-chairs.
- Share opportunities for collaboration, scholarship, leadership, advocacy, mentoring, and broader SGIM engagement.
- Consider a brief demonstration of GIM Connect at the annual meeting and use a QR code or sign-up prompt to make joining the community easy.

Annual Meeting Practices

- Send a pre-meeting agenda one to two months in advance to build interest and invite participation.
- Reserve time for introductions, discussion, recruitment, and a closing review of action items.
- Leave the meeting with clear next steps, named responsible individuals, and a plan for follow-up.
- Use a roster and prompt participants to join the GIM Connect community during the session.
- Discuss priorities for the year ahead, including potential annual meeting programming, webinars, projects, or partnerships.

Collaboration, Alignment, and Consolidation

- Maintain a clear mission and purpose statement that helps members understand the IG's distinct focus and minimizes unnecessary duplication.
- Review related Interest Groups, committees, commissions, and other SGIM initiatives for opportunities to collaborate, share programming, or coordinate priorities.
- When missions overlap substantially, explore shared programming, formal partnerships, subgroup arrangements, or other structures that reduce duplication and strengthen member engagement.
- Maintain awareness of external organizations and partners with overlapping priorities. Route requests for formal external collaboration through the appropriate SGIM Council liaison or Council process.

Year-Round Planning and Lightweight Self-Review

- Co-chairs should meet in late summer or early fall to set priorities, assign roles, and establish a communication rhythm for the coming year.
- At least annually, review membership engagement, leadership succession, communication activity, accomplishments, and collaborations.
- Update the mission, goals, leadership roster, community administrators, and action plan as needed.

- Use the review to decide what to continue, expand, change, combine, or pause.

SGIM Support Tools and Low-Lift Engagement Prompts

Interest Groups are peer-led and should not rely on staff for ongoing management, project administration, or routine outreach. SGIM staff will, however, use shared tools to make year-round engagement easier and more visible.

- GIMConnect platform automation rules may support targeted, low-lift prompts such as welcome messages for new community members, reminders to complete a profile or notification preferences, and invitations to participate in a discussion or upcoming activity.
- Automation can also support periodic “quiet community” or non-activity alerts to IG leaders, prompting them to post an update, pose a member question, highlight an opportunity, or plan a check-in.
- Use automation thoughtfully: set reasonable frequency limits, keep messages brief and actionable, and avoid duplicate outreach from multiple SGIM sources.
- Where available, review basic activity and conversion reports periodically to see whether prompts are producing participation and adjust the approach accordingly.
- SGIM will annually review the participation rate of interest groups, to recommend sunset, consolidation, or prompt engagement.

This guidance is intended to support healthy, member-driven communities and should be applied flexibly based on each Interest Group’s mission, size, and stage of development.