The proposed Society of Distilling Scientists and Technologists (SDST), to be formed as a non-profit group in 2019, will encourage membership from distillers and scientists associated with: 1) research or quality control operations within the larger potable distilling industry, 2) manufacturers of distilling plant equipment, stills etc., and 3) those supplying scientific and test instruments for the industry and distilling raw materials businesses (maltsters, botanical suppliers etc.). The name has been chosen to include all the sciences that touch upon distilling and distillation – chemists, biologists and microbiologists, physicists and mathematicians and engineers. All the sciences touch upon the vast technical complexity of distillation and should have a body of experts within the broader membership to assist all distillers in the scientific and technical details of our industry.

The mission of the society is to ensure, through consulting and education, the production of distilled spirits of all styles and classes with the highest quality, consistency and potability and with due diligence to the safety of all process operations and to operators within the industry. As a body the SDST will provide for education, a library citation resource service for providing the reference details for essential distilling publications – papers, books and symposium volumes, and a group of experts available to share information to improve the excellence and reputation of new and established distillers. There being a key need for education within the industry, and especially within the growing “craft” portion of the field forms a reason for forming an organization like the SDST. The industry and consumer perception and drive for the highest quality products are constantly and rapidly changing, as are concerns for safety within the workplace. New raw materials and ingredients are being adopted by innovative distillers, product styles growing in number and changing along with alternative spirit maturation programs. The SDST, through a group membership, will be able to respond to these needs and challenges. Moreover, unlike for other potable beverage and food societies which have manuals of methods and defined scientific practices, there is a need to provide distilling laboratory personnel with methods of analysis and measurement commensurate with the products they are producing and as demanded by regulatory authorities and for export purposes. Additionally, the SDST will also work to provide or advise on such methods for raw materials and finished products and sensory evaluation for quality control purposes. Furthermore, the SDST will investigate the possibilities of providing collaborative testing programs for standardization of methods and to implement newer methods, provide a sample analysis program to those wishing to participate in a check sample service to ensure they are providing accurate and precise data to those who need that information for quality assurance and regulatory purposes.

The SDST will also build up a program, to assist academic institutions and other bodies providing or planning on developing educational programs in the fermentation and distilling sciences. There is a keen need for educating distillers and scientists to support the growing industry. This area is not adequately covered outside the brewing and winemaking arenas at least not in regions of the world outside of Europe, South Africa, Japan and Australasia.

Membership will, therefore, be drawn primarily from the Americas but will be open to any employee from within the distillation and allied industries throughout the world.

The steering committee has members actively looking into providing for journal access for publication of peer-reviewed research papers and reviews, and the SDST will actively promote and support project research in relevant areas for safe, potable spirits production and development of new products. An important area for coverage will be in the sensory sciences and the SDST will promote sensory education and evaluation methods for potable spirits, flavored malt beverages and cocktail mixes. It is proposed that the organization will coordinate the procurement of donated funds and the distribution of such funds, under a peer-reviewed grant awards program, to deserving groups proposing significant research or methods evaluation projects.
Such research to be done and evaluated for potential publication in those journals approved by the SDST. A grant review and peer-review editorial body will be needed.

The journal noted above will either be open access or a subscription publication. It will also be considered as a membership accessible organ and with such access covered through annual subscription dues.

Members will also be informed of developments and changes in the industry through newsletters and via an on-line forum. An annual meeting will eventually be in place and the prospect of local/regional meetings will be entertained. Recommendation for courses offered by other approved bodies will be made and webinars prepared and open to members or via individual payment for non-members wishing access to certain topics.

As the program develops, subcommittees are to be formed as required to cover the different areas of value for the membership. We also aim to collaborate with other scientific bodies and societies to best promote the distilled beverage industry from the scientific and technological viewpoint.

SDST will likely be assisted by us joining the Scientific Societies group. This group hosts and manages many of the daily activities of several well respected and internationally accepted scientific bodies. Such activities include handling membership dues and a member database, website hosting – content management, facilitating meetings and other member activities and member communications. Finally, the benefits of a cooperative group of societies will be of huge benefit to the SDST administrative team and its members. A program specific to our needs can be implemented and charged for accordingly. We will need to ensure enough members or sponsorships to cover our own dues with Sci Soc.

It is proposed that there will be a Director (or Chairperson), an Assistant or Deputy Director (Chairperson) and Financial officer and as the program grows, divisional Chairpersons or Managers. The steering committee to decide and define terms and roles.

A suggested dues amount would be $150-185/annum and may include regional dues if regional programs develop. This is the model for several brewing organizations and considerably less than for certain enological societies. In addition, we can be supported by sponsors drawn from the industry. Sponsors to be recognized at all appropriate opportunities and via various means. Individual membership is proposed rather than group membership with dues commensurate with other bodies supporting the brewing industry. Appropriate benefits will come along with the membership including access to publications and educational materials as will come into play as the organization develops.

At this point we seek dialogue and to determine interest into validity of the formation of such a group. Is there enough sustainable interest in such a group and how do prospective members envision its development and what would they seek within and to gain from such a body? How do all interested parties envision the directorship and day to day activities of volunteer board members, committee members and the body membership at large. We will take under advisement the needs and details on points noted above through a conversation with members of the ACSA, the ADI and other interested parties. We will be seeking valued sponsors to support the programs and administration within and for the organization. If indeed there is enough interest and potential support, the steering committee, - of which we invite others to participate - will follow appropriate steps to form a non-profit organization as soon as possible and establish the initial body of persons to run the organization, pending the implementation of a democratically elected governance process to be in place as soon as reasonably possible after the formation of the SDST.

GS. 02/06/19. On behalf of the current steering committee and advisors.

Link to the form soliciting views and interest in this organization: