



STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2018

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Introduction & Summary

This strategic plan is a living document originally created in January of 2015. This document is intended to provide organizational guidance as well as to communicate our efforts and vision to potential supporters.

By the start of 2015, we've already been able to document a high number of accomplishments, even with severely strained resources. Our website is a wealth of electoral system information that leads near the top of the page in Google searches. We are recognized as the go-to experts on electoral systems having worked directly with legislators and organizations on the subject. We've also presented to conferences and organizations across the country. Our communications have already resulted in several organizations and political parties implementing our recommendations internally. We look forward to helping more organizations switch to smarter voting methods. And we look forward to our communications expanding so that more people learn about the better ways to conduct elections.

This document also lays out our plans in the current and upcoming years. Particularly, we have plans to coordinate our fundraising and bring in additional sources of revenue. We expect this to help expand our outreach to increase our messaging so that we can connect with more potential supporters and organizations. Our long-term goal is to be the main resource on electoral systems for the public and private sector and to increase implementation of smarter voting methods on a large scale.

Thank you for your interest in The Center for Election Science. We look forward to your support!

Organizational Description, History, & Problem/Solution Statement

The Center for Election Science is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that works to improve the electoral systems that drive our group decision making, whether it be in civic groups or government. We advance this mission by providing resources to conduct better elections, educating the public, and advocacy.

We originated from online advocates with backgrounds including mathematics, political science, engineering, and law. Years'-long participants from an online forum on voting methods merged together with co-founders from The Center for Range Voting. Once organized, a board was formed and we incorporated in 2011 as The Center for Election Science. We have since added an advisory board and hired a half-time executive director.

The problem we seek to solve is our broken electoral system, the very way we make collective decisions within our organizations. We seek to improve multiple aspects of our electoral system, but we focus on its most destructive current feature: plurality voting, our choose-one voting method. This voting method often causes the wrong winner to prevail and gives an inaccurate reflection of support for the remaining candidates. This voting method also discourages new ideas because it causes people to fear wasting their vote. The consequences of this method's use pervade not only our civic organizations, but our own government. Our current voting method can cause us to pursue incorrect policies while also preventing the correct policies from being raised.

Our solution to our choose-one voting method is to replace it with better single-winner methods or where appropriate proportional methods. Examples of alternatives include approval voting, score voting, majority judgment, party-list PR, and various cardinal-based PR methods. When looking at alternatives, we consider factors including expected utility gain from voters, proportionality (when applicable), simplicity, practicality, the effect on election behavior, the effect of tactical voting, and other issues. This guidance helps us to make best-practice recommendations and push for implementation of particular systems where they are best suited.

Environmental Analysis

Internal Environment

Our organization is growing in its volunteer base to address some of the capacity issues that are taken for granted by older organizations with existing funding streams. While the organization has had success with small grants from foundations, overall funding is currently very low. Fundraising will need to expand to address large capacity gaps. Attendance at events and internet presence has increased our visibility. Still, our visibility requires substantial improvement. Our strength lies with our expertise on voting methods, particularly in the use of cardinal-based methods. Our advisory board of experts has helped to affirm our position on this topic.

External Environment

Our barriers include attempting to change the voting methods of a system that is entrenched, both in culture and current law. A status-quo bias and the public's current failure to appreciate voting methods are serious obstacles to overcome. There is a large base of misinformation on voting methods that makes much of our work difficult. Some of this stems from the counterintuitive nature of voting theory and nuances within the subject area. Consequently, voting methods—despite being the most important area—is often the last to get attention. In a positive, however, there is potential for collaboration on some issues. Some organizations are starting to see voting methods as an issue. This may offer opportunity for collaboration.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Leader on voting methods, able to explain voting topics to a general audience.	Weak funding sources
Large pool of academic talent, including leading voting theorists.	Small e-mail base (<500).
Large potential impact of reform.	Community not yet engaged.
Website highly ranked as voting method resource.	De-facto mission not prioritized in public eye
	No infrastructure for supporting voting community involvement.
Opportunities	Threats
Software on group decisions & polling, more resources for elections, giving talks, spreading alternative methods to groups, networking with similar orgs	Lack of financial diversity.
Become go-to publishing venue for voting theorists.	Competition of other inferior alternative voting methods
Become go-to resource for voting info and tools.	
Become go-to community for people interested in voting.	
Large potential audiences (schools, colleges, businesses).	

Gap Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Engagement</u></p> <p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Wordpress platform, modern design, forum supported, 8.8K views/month</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Utilize analytic data, integrate merchandise, professional design, 25K+views/month, pull e-mails</i> <p>Social Media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: 2K+ followers, moderate engagement</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Cohesive social media campaign with greater following</i> <p>Public Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Some radio, niche publications, occational popular media</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Recognized and frequently sought as experts from popular media</i> <p>E-mail List</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: <1K subscribers, general list</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Build list and differentiate based on categories of interest</i> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Fundraising</u></p> <p>Donor Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Little Green Light, mostly automated</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Designated expert for oversight of tool</i> <p>Merchandise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Absent</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Apparel, bumper stickers, et cetera</i> <p>Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Limited in number and size (ongoing transition)</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Increase in number and size</i>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Advocacy</u></p> <p>Civic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Wins with mid-size organizations (Webbies, RLC, FreedomFest), basic resources on site</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Wins within larger organizations with broader targeting, expand electoral resources through site</i> <p>Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Current: Provided educational resources for existing state campaigns</i> ➔ <i>Desired: Change the voting method of an executive office within a locality</i> 	

Strategy

Vision

The Center for Election Science's vision is for smarter voting methods to replace plurality voting in government and civic elections.

Mission

The Center for Election Science advances smarter electoral systems to improve social good in the public and private sectors by providing scholarship, election tools, and informed advocacy.

Examples of smarter alternatives include approval voting, score voting, majority judgment, party-list PR, and various cardinal-based PR methods. When looking at alternatives, we consider factors including expected utility gain from voters, proportionality (when applicable), simplicity, practicality, the effect on election behavior, the effect of tactical voting, and other issues. This guidance helps us to make best-practice recommendations and push for implementation of particular systems where they are best suited.

Strategic Objectives

Messaging, Engagement, & Outreach				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Blog & Article Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Guest bloggers - Board contribution - Editors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write pieces - Edit pieces - Share - Recruit & utilize existing guest writers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 ED blogs - 2 board blogs or co-authorships each - 12 guest blogs 	2015 Year (Repeating)
Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PR Team - PR Software - ED Hours - Press Kit - PR Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply PR Plan - Identify & Target Outlets - PR Training - Perform Interviews - Strategic Press Releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 interviews - 5 CES news stories 	2015 Year (Repeating)
Conference & Public Speaking Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Transportation, lodging, food, & attendance cost - Printed materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor opportunities - Prepare & give presentation - Prepare necessary materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 conference presentations 	2015 Year (Repeating)

Messaging, Engagement, & Outreach (Continued)				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Consulting for advanced list techniques & best practices - MailChimp Fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write & send newsletters - Implement best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 newsletters - Targeted e-mails as appropriate 	2015 Year (Repeating)
Presidential Campaign Polling Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - National Polling Agency (heavy cost) - Media & Crowdfund Plan - Expert Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design poll & methodology - Contract poll - Crowdfund campaign - Writeup & Press - Publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Polling result - Publication - National Press 	2016/2017 Year

Advocacy & Enablement				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Electoral Consulting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Board or Volunteer hours - Possible expert support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify & contact potential large clients - Consulting - Coordinate media teams - Solicit donation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enact cardinal voting methods in two large organizations 	2015 Year (Repeating)
Online Electoral Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Board or volunteer hours - Expert support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design & implement applications for running internal elections - Host 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications for cardinal-based single and multi-winner elections - 10 small orgs use resources to conduct polls or elections 	2016 /2017 Year

Advocacy & Enablement (Continued)				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Whitepaper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Board hours - Expert support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop structure - Extensive research and writing - Appoint experts to specific sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear message on importance of targeted electoral reform - Best practices document 	2017/2018 Year
Implement Alternative Voting Method for Local Government Executive Office Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create c4 with CES as sole voting member (OR collaborate with c4) - Substantial cost - ED Hours - Board & Volunteer Hours - Contractors for signatures - Expert Consulting - Press & Marketing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify strategic target(s) - Develop pre-existing support structure - On-ground volunteer coordination - Advocacy campaign - Signature gathering & organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Locality using approval voting - Local and national press 	2018/2020 Year

Fundraising				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Donation Management & Donor Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Board hours - Specialized online processing and donor management software - Expert Volunteer or Consulting - Significant Research - Donor Relations Written Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create donor relations written plan - Pair board members with donors - Implement fundraising outreach plan - Donor management design & record keeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >25% increase in donations 	2015 Year (Repeating)
Book Auction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Auction House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify auction house - Coordinate with auction house for sale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sell >\$10K in memorabilia 	2017 Year

Fundraising (Continued)				
<u>Program</u>	<u>Resources</u>	<u>Actions</u>	<u>Measurables</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Merchant Provider - Board or Volunteer Hours - Expert Designer Contractor or Volunteer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose merchant provider - Design merchandise - Figure pricing - Record keeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sell >\$500 in merchandise - Online store with CES products 	2017 Year
Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ED hours - Board and Volunteer Hours - Expert Support - >\$8K for contracting out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify contractor - Coordinate with contractor on grantor identification & writing - Record keeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >6 Grant proposals submitted - >\$100K/year in grants 	2017 Year (Repeating)

Existing Wins & Activity

<u>Messaging, Engagement</u>	<u>Presentations & Reports</u>	<u>Advocacy & Enablement</u>
<p><i>Social Media & E-mail</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >65K unique website visitors/year - >725 Twitter followers - >1,600 Facebook likes - >360 YouTube subscribers - >55K YouTube views - >1K newsletter subscribers <p><i>Additional Communications</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - >15 published videos including approval voting explainer - Branded print messaging - >60 blog articles - >20 reference articles <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Internal Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval voting app - 2016 presidential polling project comparing alternative voting methods 	<p><i>Conferences & Events</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Left Forum - Equal Vote Conference - Voting Methods & Election Integrity Symposium - RLC Convention - FreedomFest - Science Cafe <p><i>Organizations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>National Green Party</i> - <i>Republican Liberty Caucus</i> - Votenet - Potrero Hill Democratic Club - Log Cabin Club of San Francisco - Harvey Milk Democratic Club - Lansing, MI; Ohio; Florida LWV - Maryland Montgomery County Green Party 	<p><i>Online Election Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sample cardinal-based ballots - Cardinal-based tallying spreadsheets <p><i>Orgs Assisted to Cardinal Methods</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TX & OH Green Party - German Pirate Party - Harvey Milk Democratic Club - Young Democrats of San Francisco - 2015 RLC Straw Poll <p><i>Offered Informational Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014 Colorado HB 1062 - 2013 Colorado SB 65 - 2013 Arizona HB 2518 - Rhode Island Voter Choice Study Commission - Fargo, ND - Oregon Unified Primary Ballot Initiative - NH Legislators

Media

Print

- The Washington Examiner
- MSNBC.com
- The Oregonian
- New Citizens Press
- Independent Voter Network
- Deadspin Regressing
- Ballot Access News
- Democracy Chronicles
- Nonprofit Pro
- Popular Mechanics
- USA Today Magazine
- OpEd News
- Mesquite Local News
- Grand Forks Herald
- Policy Forum of Mills College
- Bangor Daily News

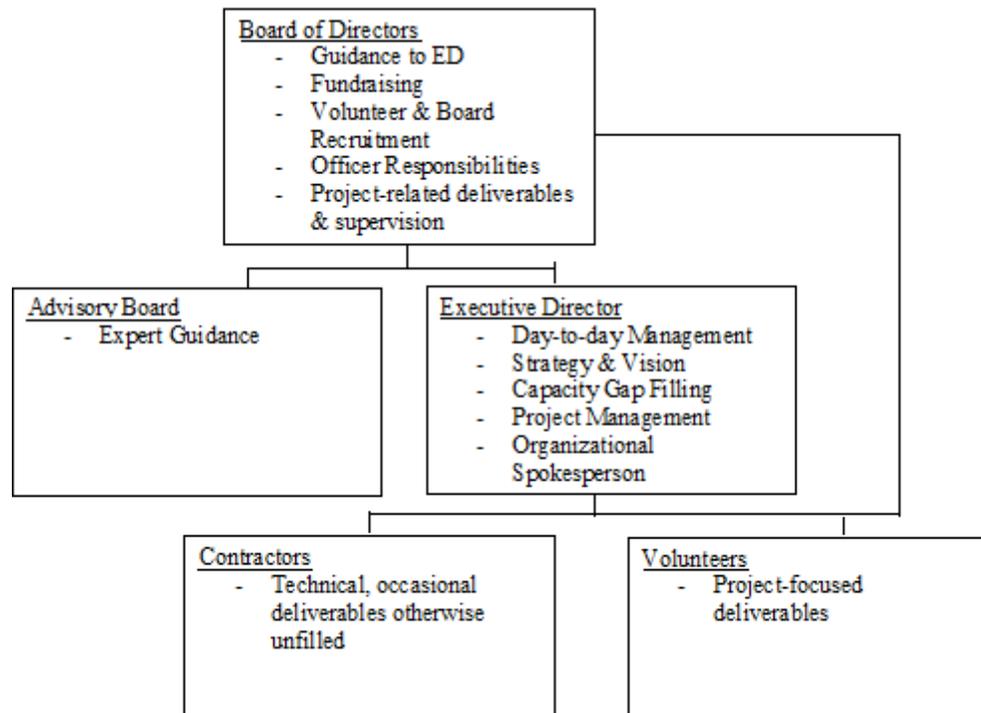
Radio & Podcast

- That Was Zen, This is Tao (NPR)
- Hal Ginsberg Morning Show
- WBEL 1380 The Big
- Phil Hullet & Friends
- Free Talk Live
- Jim Brown's Common Sense
- Doug Stephan Morning Show
- Partyline Radio WILO 1570AM
- KGNU Radio
- Ron Placone's Podcast

Television & Internet Video

- Free Speech TV
- Free & Equal TV
- Third Candidates Documentary (Episode 3)

Organization Structure & Responsibilities



Current Resources

Personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Half-time executive director</i>● <i>6-member board of directors</i>● <i>5-member advisory board</i>● <i>10+ volunteer base</i>

Recent-Years' Annual Budget
<i>\$30,000</i>

Last Updated: 1/26/2017