Glossary of Terms
for ARSC Operations Manual

Terms listed here are defined and elaborated specifically for the purposes of the ARSC Operations Manual, toward consistent usage and understanding.
Definitions of terms have been adapted from Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition and the online Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary.

**Code**
A system of principles or rules.

**Description**
A statement or account giving the characteristics of someone or something. Kind or character, especially as determined by salient features.

**Effort**
The total work done to achieve a particular end.

**Function**
An act or operation expected of a person or group. An activity, process, or task that produces a desired outcome, end, or product.

- [Functions describe how objectives can be accomplished.]
- [Functions—being action-oriented—are best described in text that begins with a verb.]

**Goal**
An aim accomplished only by prolonged, ongoing effort.

**Guideline**
An outline of policy or conduct. A rule or instruction that shows or tells how something should be done.

**Initiative**
An introductory step. A specific project intended to accomplish a given objective. [The term initiative is typically used at the outset of a new, short-term project; it is not appropriate for an ongoing program.]

**Metric**
A standard of measurement for performance or effectiveness.

**Mission**
A broad, high-level overview of the purpose of a committee, functionary, or program.

**Mission statement**
A declaration of core values, guiding principles, and long-term goals. [An ideal mission statement is short, memorable, and timeless.]

**Objective**
An end attainable in the near term.

- [Objectives describe what is to be accomplished, not how it will be done.]
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- [Desired outcomes, results, and accomplishments are examples of objectives. Those things should typically be described with nouns and noun phrases, rather than verbs.]
- [Activities, processes, and tasks are not objectives; they should be listed under Functions.]

plan
A method for achieving an end. A detailed formulation of a program of action. [Plan always implies mental formulation and sometimes graphic representation.]

policy
A definite course or method of action, selected from alternatives and in light of given conditions, to guide and determine present and future decisions. A high-level overall plan, embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures of the organization.

position
The role a person has in an organization. An employment for which one has been hired.

principle
A fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption. A rule of action or conduct.

procedure
A series of steps followed in a regular definite order. A traditional or established way of doing things. A particular way of accomplishing something or of acting.

program
A plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal.
- [A program may consist of a series of complex projects, calling for expert support of diverse activities, across multiple disciplines.]
- [Successful programs require the ongoing management of cyclical, iterative, recursive, and transactional processes.]

project
A planned undertaking.
- [Project often stresses imaginative scope and vision.]
- [A well-defined project has a clear purpose, predictable start and end points, and a measurable outcome.]

resource
A source of supply or support—usually used in plural. A source of information or expertise.

responsibility
A duty or obligation for which one is held accountable. [Particularly applicable to Elected Officers.]
An obligation to carry an assigned task forward to a successful outcome. [Appropriate for Committee Chairs and committees.]

role
A part performed in a particular activity or process. A designation denoting an associated set of required knowledge, skills, and responsibilities.
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rule
A prescribed guide for conduct or action. A regulating principle.

stakeholder
A person or organization having a legitimate interest in a given enterprise or endeavor. One who affects or can be affected by an organization’s actions.

standard
Any definite rule, principle, or measure established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example.

strategy
The art of devising or employing plans toward a goal.

value
The monetary worth of something. Something (such as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable. In Ethics, any object or quality desirable as a means or as an end in itself.

values
In Sociology, the ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard. “These values may be positive, as cleanliness, freedom, or education, or negative, as cruelty, crime, or blasphemy.”

vision
A desired future condition. An anticipation of that which will or may come to be.

Document Revision and Distribution History

• 20140503: Original Glossary document compiled by Bill Klinger and e-mailed to then-ARSC President Patrick Feaster, for review and comment.

• 20140514: Bill handed out paper prints of the Glossary to each ARSC Board Member at the Spring Board Meeting in Chapel Hill, along with sample Committee Descriptions and the existing set of Job Descriptions for the various Elected Officers.

• 20150503: Bill split the definition of responsibility into two parts—one for officers; one for committees. Sent the revised Glossary document to Patrick Feaster.

• 20190629: Bill supplied the Glossary to ARSC Executive Director Nathan Georgitis.

• 20191215: Bill added definitions for: plan, procedure, program, and project. Refined several other definitions.

• 20200308: Bill added definitions for: code, description, effort, mission statement, policy, position, principle, resource, rule, standard, strategy, value, values, and vision. Revised the elaborations for: function, objective, and program.