

## Student Council of the Acoustical Society of America

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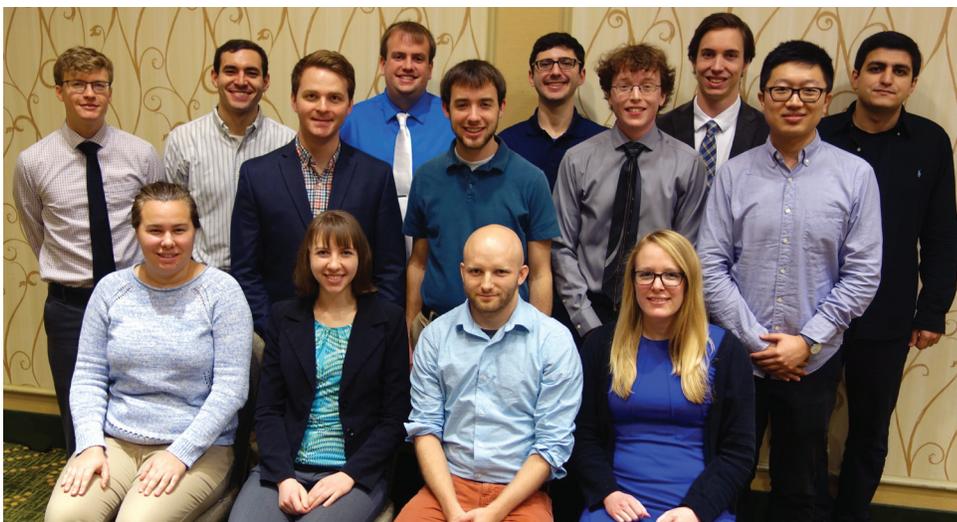
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*The Student Council serves Acoustical Society of America student members by providing a community of support for students and young scientists in acoustics.*

Throughout its 18-year existence, the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) Student Council ([asastudentcouncil.org/](http://asastudentcouncil.org/)) has evolved into an entity that serves both ASA student members and the Society as a whole (**Figure 1**). From a small group of students in 2000 to the highly capable committee it is now, the Student Council has functioned as an effective sounding board for student needs in addition to providing logistical assistance to technical committees (TCs) and the Executive Council.



**Figure 1.** ASA Student Council at the 174th meeting held in New Orleans, Louisiana. **Top row, left to right:** Will Doeblner (PA), Matt Zeh (AO), Brian Worthmann (UW), Martin Lawless (MU), T. J. Flynn (SA), Vahid Naderyan (EA); **middle row, left to right:** Shae Morgan (SC), Matthew Neal (AA), Jon Weber (NS), Tao Sun (BA); **bottom row, left to right:** Camille Pagniello (AB; substituting for Ela Warnecke), Sarah Young (SP), Trevor Jerome (Student Council Chair), Kelly Whiteford (PP).

Students comprise 13% of official ASA membership, not including student non-member conference attendees. Although students constitute a minority of the full ASA membership, from this minority comes some of the most active participation both now and in the future. The Student Council fosters that participation and its efforts are an integral part of a successful transition from student member to full ASA member. But the Student Council has not always existed nor has student involvement been as integral to the ASA as it is now. In 2005, former Student Council Chair David Bradley noted that “throughout its history, the Society has been a strong advocate for students exploring the world of acoustics. However, only recently was that support institutionalized and the responsibility placed in the hands of the students themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Historical information gleaned from minutes of past Student Council meetings, ASA meeting programs, or interviews.

## History of the Acoustical Society of America Student Council

Before the 1990s, students attending ASA meetings were treated just like any other Society member. Limited student transportation subsidies were introduced in 1986 but only if a student lived within 500 miles of the conference, and despite the low-cost student registration fee, many students simply could not afford to attend the conference. This began to change in the 1990s as travel subsidy rules were relaxed and individual TCs began holding receptions specifically for graduate students to meet with senior society members. By 1999, most TCs offered a student reception, often paired with another TC or two, and the Students Meet Members for Lunch program had just been implemented. Janet Weisenberger of the 1999 ASA Executive Council saw potential in the burgeoning student activities and decided that the time had come to streamline the needs of students at ASA meetings.

The first ASA Student Council met at the 139th meeting of the ASA in Atlanta, Georgia. Present were one student per TC and an Executive Council advisor. Their first order of business was to organize all of the multitudinous student receptions into a cohesive event. Although students were still sorted by TC at the beginning of the reception, they naturally mingled by the end.

Over the next few years, the Student Council honed student events to both simplify activities and expand student opportunities. Brian Anderson, the 2003-2004 Noise Student Council representative, has stated that the purpose of the Council was to “provide a place for students to get to know one another and feel more welcomed within the Society.” And that is exactly what happened. The Student Reception became an all-TC event with students and Society fellows attending. An informal student outing was organized to facilitate a social, relaxed environment, and a website and email newsletter were established to easily disseminate student information. TCs gave out Student Paper Awards and a Mentoring Award was established, with David Blackstock as the inaugural recipient.

The first student chapter was officially approved in spring of 2004 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and soon student chapters were started at Brigham Young University, the University of Kansas, and the University of Hartford. Student participation in the ASA began to thrive as the Student Council continued to focus on “disseminating information of concern to students, advocating participation of students in Society activities and meetings, and promoting Society membership benefits to potential student members.”

Over the last 10 years, the Student Council has continued to promote the interests of students at the ASA as well as the benefits of the ASA to the students. The number of student chapters nationwide has swelled to 15, and the “Students Meet Members for Lunch” program has grown every year, with students and senior ASA members taking the opportunity to mentor and be mentored (Blackstock, 2015). A raffle was instituted to award students a spot to attend the Society Luncheon with a Society fellow from their TC. More and more opportunities have become available for students to discover the impact of attending ASA meetings and how their lives can change as a result. In fact, two-thirds of the former Student Council representatives are still active members of the ASA and former members Preston Wilson, Micheal Dent, Tyrone Porter, and Joshua Bernstein have become ASA Fellows. Although not every Student Council representative has gone on to an acoustics career, it is clear that strong participation in student activities and utilization of networking and other ASA opportunities has been proven to build careers for many participants.

## Current Work of the Acoustical Society of America Student Council

Activities offered by the ASA Student Council exist to serve three primary objectives: (1) to promote awareness of the ASA to up-and-coming undergraduate and graduate students; (2) to support these students with social, academic, and professional development events during the biannual meetings of the ASA; and (3) to prepare students for future careers in acoustics. Additionally, the Student Council serves as a liaison to the various TCs and subcommittees, providing a voice for student needs and concerns. In doing such, the Student Council aims to bolster a community for students to learn, share, and enhance their experiences within the broader acoustics community.

### *Promoting Awareness of the Acoustical Society of America*

The ASA Student Council promotes awareness of the ASA through a number of channels, both during and outside ASA Meetings. The most prominent of these channels is the ASA Student Council website. On this website, students find resources detailing the structure of the ASA and the role of its 13 TCs, links to various graduate programs specializing in acoustics, an updated listing of job opportunities ranging from internships to full-time appointments, and general news from the acoustics community. And although the Student Council website is the best place to

keep up to speed with upcoming events at ASA meetings, students can also follow the Student Council through its Facebook ([www.facebook.com/ASAStudents](http://www.facebook.com/ASAStudents)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/ASAStudents](http://www.twitter.com/ASAStudents)) accounts.

### ***Events During Meetings of the Acoustical Society of America***

Much of the work of the Student Council focuses on events and special sessions held during the biannual meetings of the ASA. On the first day of each meeting, a new student orientation is held to introduce first-time ASA attendees to Student Council members and provide a snapshot of upcoming events. During this meeting, students are provided tips for maximizing their experience at the meeting, and they are provided color-coded nametag stickers representing their preferred TC to help promote conversation and discussion throughout the week.

To promote a robust sense of community for students within the ASA, the Student Council hosts a number of social events at every meeting. The first of these events is a student meet and greet held on the first evening of each conference. Students are provided light refreshments and encouraged to simply mingle with each other in a low-pressure environment. As the name implies, the meet and greet is a fantastic way for students to meet peers both in and outside their specialized areas while acclimating to the busy environment of a large academic conference. Each ASA meeting also features a student outing to a venue within walking distance of the conference center in addition to a student reception, hosted with the support of the National Council of Acoustical Consultants. Together these social events provide a jumping board for students to make lasting connections that will benefit them long into their professional careers.

The Student Council also hosts four special sessions that cycle every three to four meetings. The first of these special sessions, “An Introduction to Technical Committees,” consists of a series of short presentations delivered by senior ASA members and serves to introduce new student members to the breadth of acoustics topics and help them to fit their research interests within the scope of ASA. For the second special session, the Student Council presents a Mentoring Award to a student-nominated ASA member who has shown exceptional skill in acoustics education and preparing students for acoustics careers. Previous Mentoring Award recipients and information regarding the nomination process can be found on the Student Council website ([acousticstoday.org/mentoraward](http://acousticstoday.org/mentoraward)). A Graduate Studies in Acoustics poster session serves as

the third special session, during which students can view poster summaries from the many acoustics research programs throughout the country and speak with student and faculty representatives from these institutions. After the session, the program posters are included on the ASA Student Council webpage as a resource for future inquiring students ([www.asastudentcouncil.org/student-resources/](http://www.asastudentcouncil.org/student-resources/)). The final special session is a Grant and Fellowship Panel for students and early-career acousticians concerned with funding their research interests. The panel itself consists of several ASA members well-versed in grant/fellowship writing and identifying funding opportunities that are sure to be useful to those looking for some additional financial support.

During ASA meetings, the Student Council also acts as a liaison between student members and the Society at large. Student Council members serve as representatives for each of the 13 TC meetings, which students are *highly encouraged* to attend. Nearly every ASA subcommittee also includes a Student Council ambassador, including the College of Fellows, Women in Acoustics, Education, and Technical Council subcommittees. At these meetings, the Student Council provides a voice for the concerns and interests of student members and ensures that its initiatives are coincident with the ASA Strategic Leadership Plan.

### ***Preparing Students for Careers in Acoustics***

It is critical that students have support as they advance through their respective programs and universities into full careers in acoustics. As such, the Student Council hosts and promotes a number of events and resources designed to help students navigate the oftentimes intimidating waters of professional development. One such event is the Résumé Help Desk where students are invited to bring their résumés and CVs and an experienced ASA member will provide constructive feedback to help them with their next admissions process or job search.

Additionally, the aforementioned Students Meet Members for Lunch program, which pairs ASA student members with more senior members for lunch during the ASA meeting, provides a great opportunity for students to ask questions specific to their career goals and personal interests while forming a unique connection with a professional in their field. And, noting that awareness of professional and academic opportunities can be a difficult task, the Student Council also maintains on its website an updated listing of opportunities including internships, postdoctoral positions, and full-time jobs, which students should regularly visit for new postings.

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The Student Council is always looking for new ways to welcome students into the world of acoustics and help them advance toward successful careers within the field. Since its inception nearly two decades ago, the Student Council has made great strides toward realizing this vision, and it is paramount that this trend continues. In this endeavor, key initiatives include improving awareness of the ASA among students, making it easier for students to get involved with the ASA by attending meetings and events, and increasing the scope of professional development opportunities afforded to students. In achieving these goals, the Student Council is fortunate to have the support of the ASA financially, logistically, and as a source of strategic planning through the Executive Council. Society members or students with an interest in the Student Council can visit the Student Council website for more information and for programming or to propose ideas to the Student Council representatives. And, of course, the Student Council hopes to see all of you students at future ASA meetings!

## References

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Blackstock, D. (2015). ASA News: Students meet members for lunch. *Acoustics Today* 11(2), 72-73.

## Sound Perspectives: Public Relations Committee *Continued from page 62*

members navigate an ASA meeting, become familiar with the Society's organization, and encourage participation.

We expect the role of the PRC to coevolve with the changing media landscape. From hosting press luncheons to producing webcasts and videos, the tactics of informing the public about the work of ASA members must adapt to meet society's needs and habits. Fortunately, the increased awareness within the ASA of the importance of outreach ensures that there are multiple perspectives informing the Society's work in meeting this challenge.

## References

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Leshner, A. (2012). Capably communicating science. *Science* 337, 777.