



Early-Career Initiatives

Last spring, Acoustical Society of America (ASA) Past Vice President Lily Wang gave a presentation at the American Institute of Physics (AIP) Assembly of Officers meeting describing the initiatives of the ASA in support of our early-career members. These initiatives evolved from the work of the ASA Strategic Leadership Plan for the Future (<http://acousticalsociety.org/SLP>) Task Force 2, Member Engagement and Diversity, which she chairs. As part of our effort to keep members informed of the progress from our strategic planning initiative, I thought it important to share this with you. What follows draws heavily from her presentation.

The plan's Membership Engagement and Diversity goal is stated as follows:

ASA membership reflects societal diversity and the evolving multi-disciplinarily of acoustics, ensuring its continued relevance to academics, industry, government and practitioners across the globe and engaging acousticians throughout their entire careers.

This goal has two priority objectives. One is to expand the promotion and participation of early-career members (defined as before tenure, principal, or senior status). The second objective is to increase remote connectivity to ASA meetings. The Executive Council approved \$50,000 in funding to support these objectives in 2016.

The reason that early-career membership engagement became a focus of the strategic plan resides in the numbers. A snapshot of our membership data reveals that out of a total membership of 6,476 acousticians, 5,626 report their age. Of that group, 170 identify as being "early career," which means that they are 40 years old or younger and not student members. This equals approximately 3% of our membership, about the same percentage of early-career members who attend our spring and fall meetings.

At the Spring 2016 meeting in Salt Lake City, the Education Committee and others helped organize an early-career member booth and took on the task of organizing an Early-Career Acousticians Retreat (EAR) that was recently described in the

Winter 2016 issue of *Acoustics Today* by Tessa Bent (<http://acousticstoday.org/edec>). The retreat began Friday evening after the ASA meeting with a dinner presentation by Executive Council member Ann Bradlow, "What is ASA and How Can ASA Work for You?" The participants then broke into a World Café (<http://www.theworldcafe.com/>) breakout session to discuss how best to serve early-career needs within the Society. The evening concluded with a reception with the ASA leadership in the president's suite. The next morning, attendees participated in a leadership workshop presented by Dr. Greg Northcraft, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who talked about "Management of Information, Management of Motivation," and concluded with lunch.

There is clearly a need for retreats such as this within the ASA, as evidenced by strong demand for participation. The ASA received 126 applications for the 30 all-expense-paid slots, with an additional 15 invited to participate at cost.

The retreat earned strong postmeeting evaluations.

- The information presented in the workshops helped prepare me for future leadership roles: average rating 4.3 (from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree).
- Attending EAR changed the likelihood of my attending future ASA meetings: average rating 3.8 (from 1 much less likely to attend to 5 much more likely to attend).
- The World Café discussions also yielded good evaluations with four key results, two of which are currently underway and the remaining two under further consideration.
- Increase networking at ASA meetings, e.g., through speed-dating networking sessions (underway).
- Establish a permanent ASA Early-Career Committee (under consideration).
- Live stream and record meeting sessions (underway).
- Develop more local chapters (under consideration).

To assist early-career members in attending ASA meetings, the Executive Council approved on a trial basis for 2017 funding for early-career travel grants. The Executive Council allocated \$15,000 each for the spring and fall meetings, which resulted in 30 awards of \$500 each. To be eligible, a member must be within 10 years of his/her last degree, with priority given to those who present a paper, chair a session, and/or hold a leadership position within the Society.

In addition, the Executive Council established a 2017 fundraising campaign building around the 40th anniversary of the Hunt Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (<http://acousticstoday.org/hunt>). The goal is to raise \$300,000 to endow two ASA Early-Career Leadership Fellows at \$6,000 each (\$3,000 for travel to attend ASA meetings and a \$3,000 stipend). The Early-Career Leadership Fellows will also be offered opportunities to learn about ASA leadership, including mentorship, and will be asked to lead ASA early-career initiatives.

Another prime initiative, live streaming of meeting content, also helps to serve our early-career members and others unable to attend the ASA semiannual meetings in person. To date, we have live streamed content from four meetings: Jacksonville (Fall 2015), Salt Lake City (Spring 2016), Honolulu (Fall 2016), and Boston (Spring 2017).

Because streaming is new to the ASA and managed entirely by member volunteers, we have not charged for registration during this trial period. Although streaming is directed at ASA members, non-ASA members have not been prevented from registering and participating. The number of streamed sessions grew exponentially, from the start in Jacksonville with 7 technical sessions to 29 in Boston. In total, we have

reached 660 remote attendees out of 977 who initially registered for streamed content, a retention rate of 68%.

There are definite benefits to offering streamed content: positive feedback from remote participants, reaching those who cannot attend the meeting in person, and posting recordings of broad interest to the ASA YouTube channel (<http://acousticstoday.org/asatube>). However, there are a couple of drawbacks as well: federal government or consulting/industry members express concern about live streaming affecting their ability to attend meetings because employers may see that as a cost-saving substitute and, at the moment, this effort is entirely volunteer driven, which cannot be sustained over the long run. The subcommittee tasked with this initiative is currently working on envisioning how to sustain the effort beyond the 2017 meetings.

It is successes like the above that make the Strategic Leadership Plan for the Future the vibrant document that it is. Although the four goals contained within it remain steadfast, initiatives fulfilling those goals will change over time. We will continue to report on these and other initiatives that support the profession and the aspirations of our members.

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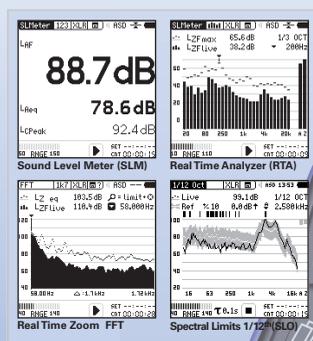
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