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Taking the Leap and Getting Involved as a Student in the Acoustical Society of America

Are you an undergraduate or graduate student with an interest in any aspect of acoustics? Are you a graduate student who has attended a meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA)? Perhaps you are an investigator interested in learning about the opportunities within the ASA available to your students? In this essay, we will outline numerous ways to get involved in the ASA as a student.

The whole process of navigating scientific societies such as the ASA can sometimes seem daunting and overwhelming for students, especially first-time conference attendees. You may have spent months or years preparing your research for a poster or presentation, and you are feeling nervous. The nervousness can affect the amount of time you spend planning your schedule to optimize your conference experience from both academic and networking perspectives. Travel funding can be difficult to obtain as a student researcher, adding to your stress levels.

What you will quickly discover, however, is that the ASA welcomes, supports, and values student members and does all that it can to make student participation at the meetings a really meaningful and valuable experience. Just to start, student members of the ASA can apply for travel subsidies and grants to alleviate some of the financial burden. These subsidies are designed to allow students to extend their conference attendance from the one day they present their research to several days or even the entire week. More time at the conference means more time learning from and interacting with experts in your field of acoustics. As a student member of the ASA, you are also eligible for its many scholarships and fellowships. Furthermore, if you will be presenting your research at the conference, you can opt to be considered for the Best Student Paper competitions, which include cash prizes. More information about all of these opportunities are available on the ASA student web page (ASAStudents.org).

At the fall and spring meetings of the ASA, there are several student activities geared toward meeting new people and learning more about the Society. The first afternoon at each conference is packed with activities for students. First, there is an orientation presentation, which highlights the events and opportunities available specifically for students at the conference. Immediately following the presentation, all students are invited to attend the Student Meet and Greet for hors d'oeuvres, to mingle with other students in acoustics, and to pick up the exclusive ASA Student swag item such as headphones or a mug. The evening concludes with the Student Outing, another opportunity for peer-to-peer networking and camaraderie at a local gastropub.

The second and fourth evenings of the conference feature more food and networking opportunities at the ASA Social Hour where students can mingle with more senior members and develop networking opportunities. The third evening features the Students Reception, which is yet another networking event that brings students and potential employers together. This event also features food and drink in a relaxed

atmosphere as well as a raffle to attend the Society Luncheon and Lecture. For more information about student activities at the meeting, see Flynn and Young (2018) in a previous issue of *Acoustics Today*.

Another amazing program that students can sign up for is Students Meet Members for Lunch. This program matches a student and an ASA member with similar interests so they can get to know each other over lunch. These events are described in more detail by Blackstock (2015) in a previous issue of *Acoustics Today*. Be sure to follow the ASA Student Council on Twitter and Facebook (@ASASTudents) for updates on these events and other news.

The Technical Committee (TC) meetings also provide excellent opportunities to learn about news from previous ASA meetings (e.g., award winners from the Best Student Paper competitions) as well as learning about other symposia or workshops that may be relevant to your TC. It is also useful to attend the TC meetings adjacent to your primary research interests to get to know other acousticians and form cross-TC collaborations.

There are other events, some of which require the purchase of a ticket, which provide excellent opportunities to meet experts in your field. The Women in Acoustics Roundtable Discussion and Luncheon are two opportunities for men and women interested in any area of acoustics to speak with successful women who have paved the path for other women (more by Ronsee and Neilsen [2017] in a previous issue of *Acoustics Today*). The Society Luncheon hosted by the College of Fellows is another opportunity to have lunch with a Fellow in your TC and ask them questions about any stage of your academic or industry-based career. The Fellows are generally more senior members of the ASA who have made significant contributions to their discipline and can share a lot of information about the field.

Another opportunity to keep an eye out for is one of the smaller satellite meetings, often sponsored by the ASA and usually associated with one or two TCs and focusing on one main area of acoustics. For example, the 4th Acoustic Communication by Animals Symposium was held in Omaha, NE, at the Henry Doorly Zoo in 2017. Another example is the Physical Acoustics Summer School hosted by the University of Mississippi, Oxford. Ask members at your TC meeting if there are any upcoming symposia that might be of interest (or attend the TC meeting at the next conference). Regional or student chapters of ASA (discussed by Good and Mauck [2018] in a previous issue of *Acoustics Today*) are another great way to connect with local

acousticians in your area. A listing of these chapters is available at ASACHapters.org.

Other ways to engage with the Society as a member are by reading issues of *Acoustics Today* and *Physics Today*, both of which are included as part of your ASA membership. Articles in these magazines are typically written by established investigators who describe their research in an approachable manner. You can also subscribe to the Acoustics list-serv to get updates on the most recent articles published in *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.

If you are in an earlier stage of your career, perhaps an undergraduate or a student in a master's program looking for doctoral programs in acoustics, you can check out the ExploreSound site (exploresound.org) as a way to search for programs that might fit your graduate study interests. ExploreSound is not just a site for early-career students, however; it is also a site that can help senior doctoral students find postdoctoral opportunities. This site is also useful for anyone looking for collaborations.

The networking opportunities available to students through the ASA can help you to develop better research questions, learn about the most recent research in your field, find a postdoctoral position or future job opportunity, and hopefully help lead to a fruitful career in acoustics. For more information about networking, see the essay by Neilsen, Ronsee, and Zhao in this issue of *Acoustics Today*.

In summary, there are a number of ways for students to get involved in the ASA. Please consider becoming a student member. Graduate students receive a discounted rate for membership fees; they can get print copies of the program mailed before the conference, if requested (to help with planning out your weekly schedule in advance), and automatically get access to the online resources of the Society. Membership is also the best way to get updated on things like job postings, future symposia, and other ways to engage with the Society.

Take the first steps to getting involved in the ASA and reach out to your Student Council representative. Members of the Student Council are friendly graduate students who are informed about all of the upcoming events within the Society. Should you become a member, you can also apply to become a Student Council representative for your TC. Putting forth the effort and getting involved as a student in the ASA will develop strategies for a successful career in your field.

References

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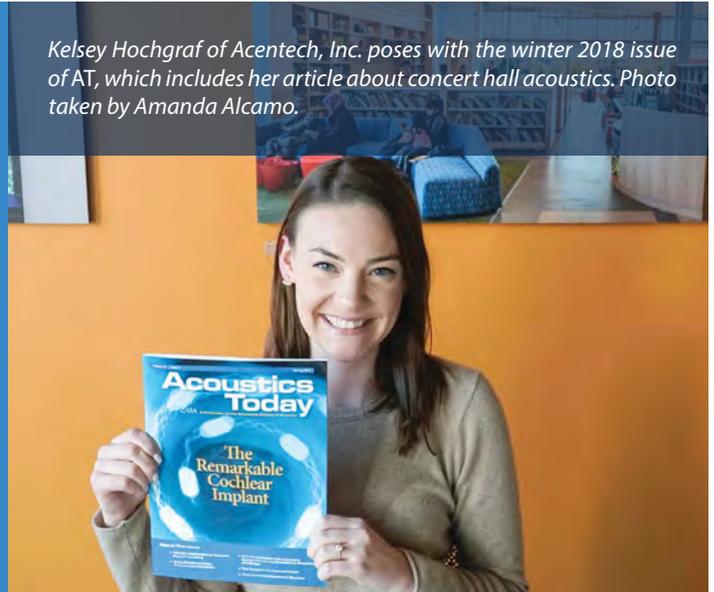
Ronsse, L. M., and Neilsen, T. B. (2017). Twenty-five years of the ASA Women in Acoustics Committee. *Acoustics Today* 13(4), 66-68. <https://doi.org/10.1121/AT.2017.13.4.66>

Where do you read your *Acoustics Today*?

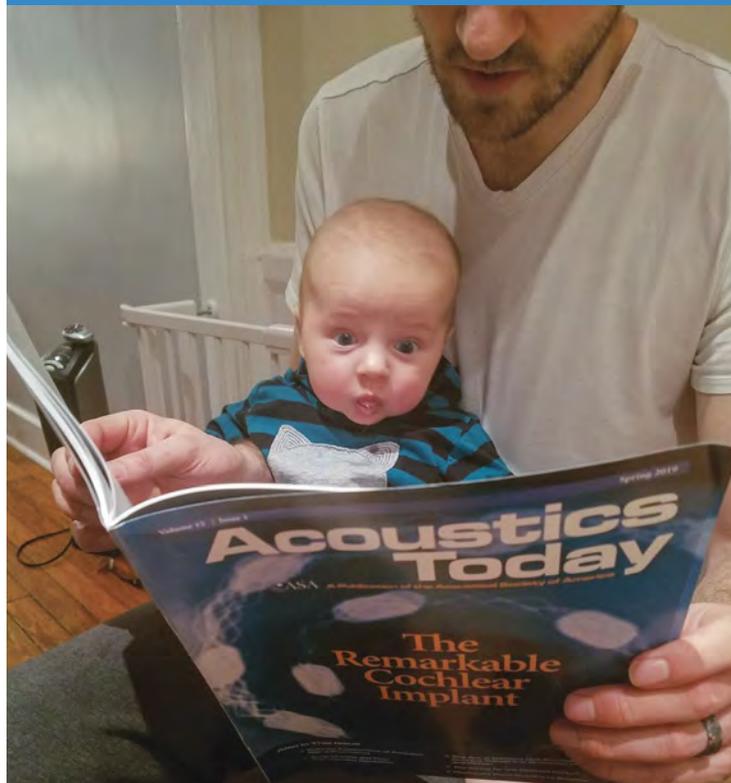
Take a photo of yourself reading a copy of *Acoustics Today* and share it on social media* (tagging #AcousticsToday, of course). We'll pick our favorite and include it in the next issue of *AT*. Don't do social media but still want to provide a picture? Email it to ksetzer@acousticalsociety.org.

* By submitting, the subject agrees to image being used in *AT* and/or on the *AT* website. Please do not include children in the image unless you, as their parent or guardian, can give explicit written permission for use.

Kelsey Hochgraf of Acentech, Inc. poses with the winter 2018 issue of *AT*, which includes her article about concert hall acoustics. Photo taken by Amanda Alcamo.



Dan Russell (Pennsylvania State University) used some of his downtime during the recent ASA meeting in Louisville, KY to visit the Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory. He shows off his winter 2017 cover article about baseball bat acoustics while standing in front of the world's largest baseball bat. Photos taken by Dr. Kenneth A. Pestka II.



It's never too young to start learning about acoustics! Marek Kovacik (Convergent Technologies Design Group) reads to his son, Isaac, from the spring issue of *AT*. Photo taken by Cory Kovacik.