

# THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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Let me begin by first expressing gratitude to outgoing President Bill Yost, both personally and also on the behalf of the ASA membership, for his exceptional leadership during the past year. I can attest that Bill was tireless in his dedication to the Society. During his tenure as President, he worked on a number of significant issues facing the ASA including assessing the financial health of the Society, the role of the ASA with respect to public policy, the challenges presented by open access to *JASA*, and ASA's role in improving primary and secondary education in science and technology. Bill set an excellent example for all future Presidents to follow.



As I write this, I am about a month into my one-year term as ASA President and am already worried about running out of time. A year is not a very long term so it is important to set priorities to have a hope of accomplishing anything. One of Dick Stern's priorities as President was to set up the ad-hoc Vision 2010 Committee. This Committee was tasked with developing a vision for the Society's future and to generate a set of recommended actions to get us there. The Vision Committee, chaired by Dick Stern, began its work during Ilene Busch-Vishniac's presidency. Bill Kuperman further facilitated the Committee's work by hosting a retreat prior to the San Diego ASA meeting. One of Bill Yost's priorities was to ensure that the Committee finished its work. As you can see, it took a sustained effort across several presidencies to bring this effort to fruition. One of my priorities is to act on the findings of the Committee.

The Report of the Vision 2010 Committee is published in this issue of *Acoustics Today*. It addresses a range of issues pertinent to the future of the Society, summarized in fourteen recommendations. To move ahead effectively, the Society needs to prioritize these recommendations. We need your help to do this. I urge you to read the Committee's report and let us know your thoughts. Do you agree or disagree? Are there particular themes that strike a resonance with you? Are there themes missing? One of the true strengths of the ASA is that it is membership driven. This is an opportunity for your voice to be heard and for you to shape the future of your ASA.

This is an exciting time to be in a leadership position in the Society. No doubt, we will continue to face important challenges that require our attention to ensure the health and vitality of the ASA. At the same time, we are in an excellent position to couple our members' intellectual capabilities with the Society's financial resources to further benefit our members and also to look outward. The question is what should our priorities be?

Consider *JASA*. *JASA* is the Society's only revenue generating cost center and we rely upon income from sales of non-

member subscriptions to subsidize other Society activities. While this income is not likely to disappear overnight, increasingly vocal demands for open access to peer-reviewed research papers derived from federally-funded research grants and the long-term, gradual decline in library subscriptions means that this income cannot be counted on in perpetuity to keep the Society financially viable. How should we handle this situation? The answer depends on our priorities and our vision for our journal. One possible vision is that in the future we want *JASA* to be free and open-access—no page charges, no subscription fees, a resource for the entire acoustics community. However,

fiscal responsibility dictates that a vision alone is insufficient. We also need to construct the financial avenue to attain this vision. One possibility is to raise an endowment large enough to both eliminate our financial dependence on *JASA* and to make it free and open. Of course undertaking such a fundraising effort is not something to be taken on lightly and will certainly be a long-term proposition. However, if it is our vision and a high enough priority, we could be a long way down the road toward achieving it before the Vision 2020 Committee is formed.

Another Society priority could be to help those just starting their careers to make the transition from student to professional more easily. One of the strongest (dare I say, loudest) messages that we received during the Vision 2010 process was the need to address this issue. For many just starting out, reality hits when they register for an ASA meeting for the first time as a non-student. Going from paying no registration fee as students, new professionals are confronted with registration fees in excess of \$300. In addition they have to worry about travel and housing costs for the first time. While this is standard operating procedure for those for us who have been around for a while, for many students these details are transparent. An increasing number of Societies are subsidizing the first few years of membership and conference participation for new professionals. Should we do this? If so, what is its priority and how should we pay for it?

These are two examples of what we could do; others can be found in the Vision 2010 Report. What are your ideas? What do you want our Society to be? The answer must come from you, the membership.

Long-term goals are just that and many presidents will come and go before they are reached. All I can reasonably expect to do during the remainder of my term is to lead us a bit farther down the path towards our shared vision for the ASA. But I need your help. A first step is to read the Vision 2010 Report and send your suggestions comments to [president@aip.org](mailto:president@aip.org).

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as President of your Society.