

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

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Several years ago, an ASA President commented to me that, "...nothing prepares you for the onslaught that awaits you." It was therefore with some apprehension that I began my one-year term as ASA President. After about a month into my term I can clearly see that it will be a very busy year, but an onslaught is probably a bit of an exaggeration. This is largely because the President's job is made that much easier by ASA's dedicated staff and the numerous volunteers that make the Society work. Yes it will be a busy year, but I am anticipating a rather enjoyable year.

Before going any further, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work and leadership of our outgoing President, Anthony Atchley. Anthony was an effective and efficient President and it will be a challenge to follow in his footsteps. In his messages to the membership, Anthony mentioned more than once how worried he was that a year is a short time to get things done. A year is indeed a short time, but things do get done. They do so through continuity. Anthony clearly carried on with the sustained effort across several presidencies to bring us farther down the path towards our vision for the ASA and I fully intend to do the same.

Prior to the Salt Lake City meeting, members of the Executive Council and a few guests from the Vision 2010 Committee heard a presentation entitled, "7 measures of success: What remarkable associations do that others don't." In other words what distinguishes remarkable associations from good associations. For example, any association would say that it is there to serve its members. Remarkable associations do not pay lip service to the idea of serving their members. On the contrary, they demonstrate their commitment to members in everything they do. There is constant alignment of products and services with the mission. Remarkable associations do what needs to be done, they are willing to experiment with new products and services and to let go of programs and services that no longer serve or resonate with their members. Another important element that makes associations remarkable is that they are data and metric driven. It might be worthwhile to comment further on this last point. Anyone who has attended an ASA Technical Committee meeting is familiar with the way feedback is solicited from those attending the meeting. Although I am sure that this has served the ASA well over the years, it is becoming abundantly clear that this process will not be sufficient to generate the data we need and how we will measure success in a rapidly evolving world that is becoming more and more complex.



By now the work of the Vision 2010 Committee should be familiar to all (see *Acoustics Today*, July 2006). It addresses a range of issues pertinent to the future of the Society and is summarized in fourteen recommendations. Actions have already been taken to move forward on some of the recommendations. During the Salt Lake City meeting four Task Forces were formed. Basically the fourteen recommendations were "bundled" in four groups. Executive Council member Steve Thompson has been leading an ad-hoc Committee to look into refreshing ASA's web site. Steve now chairs a Web Site Task Force to pursue this more aggressively. Mission Task

Force, chaired by Past President Anthony Atchley, has been charged to make specific recommendations for changes to current practices regarding membership qualifications, member services and member benefits so that the Society better fulfills its purpose. Past President Bill Yost chairs a Task Force to Improve ASA Meetings. Its mission is to recommend to Technical Council innovative ways to improve meetings in order to attract more participation in the ASA and to maintain ASA as the premier society for diffusing knowledge about acoustics and its applications. Finally, an Education Outreach Task Force, co-chaired by Executive Council member Peggy Nelson and Jim Sabatier, Chair of the Education Committee, will be looking into developing education outreach, "K to gray," investing in the future of acoustics with financial support from the Society, using tested models, measuring outcomes and accomplishing increased educational outreach. I am confident that these four Task Forces will greatly facilitate action on the Vision 2010 recommendations.

The financial viability of the Society has been a subject of continued discussion and even concern over the years. However, the Society's financial outlook seems in good shape at this point. For example, our reserve is significantly greater than would be expected for a not-for-profit organization such as the ASA. Thus, the Executive Council is discussing the possibility of re-investment of a certain fraction of the reserve each year to further benefit ASA's members. Each Task Force has been asked to not only develop ideas and recommendations, but to also provide the budget information necessary to attain the desired goals.

From time to time we are reminded of ASA's purpose. For over 75 years it has been "to increase and diffuse the knowledge of acoustics and to promote its practical applications." Although it may seem a trivial exercise, the

Executive Council has recently made the point of reaffirming this purpose. This is with the recognition that the ASA needs to do better at bridging the “academic” and “practical” sides of the Society. Certainly, our Standards program stands out as a prime example of our mission. The new proceedings that our Editor-in-Chief, Allan Pierce, has initiated, is another step towards bridging the two sides of the Society. Allan received many constructive suggestions during the Salt Lake City meeting, but he also heard some concern. Perhaps the loudest concern was over the issue of quality—to ensure that the proceedings are up to ASA’s standards

and that the proceedings do not tarnish the reputation of the Journal. Allan is now busy incorporating the many good suggestions that were made and I am sure that the issue of quality will be adequately addressed.

As I said at the beginning, this is going to be a busy year. I will make as much progress as possible on our long-term goals, but in the end as past presidents know, I am sure that Mark Hamilton will inherit all the unfinished business and he will need to carry on with the portfolio. As always, I would welcome your suggestions and comments which can be sent to president@aip.org.

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