

THE VICE PRESIDENT'S VIEW

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I had the unique experience of serving as the ASA chair of the 4th joint meeting of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) and the Acoustical Society of Japan (ASJ) in Honolulu and at the same time, as the Vice President of the ASA. Holding these two positions simultaneously provided me with an unusual vantage point from which to serve members of the ASA as well as to observe the detailed workings of an ASA meeting. My experiences were both rewarding and gratifying and left me with a very positive impression of our society and its members. I also was able to witness the mutual cooperation between the ASA and the ASJ and am very appreciative of our fine relationship. The Honolulu meeting was a great success thanks to the local organizing committee members, the ASA headquarters staff, the good working relationship between the ASA and ASJ, and the cooperative nature of our membership. Approximately 1,770 people registered for the meeting, making it the second largest ASA meeting, the largest being the joint meeting of the ASA and the European Acoustics Association in Berlin in 1999.

I am continually impressed with the commitment and dedication of our members, realizing that the ASA functions mainly as a volunteer organization with a handful of extremely qualified and equally dedicated professionals who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of our Society. The members of the local organizing committee for the Honolulu meeting, as with all our other meetings, showed a high level of commitment and dedication with a "let's roll up our sleeves and get to work" attitude. It took many meetings to plan and organize a large meeting and many hours interacting with hotel personnel and other service providers. Committee members gave their time freely, squeezing in meeting responsibilities between their work responsibilities without begrudging this intrusion into their normal schedule. At the conference, they were often seen hustling around fixing unpredictable problems and issues that always pop up at meetings. Doing the best possible job seemed to be the unstated motto of the committee members. I am extremely grateful to the members of our local organizing committee.

Our student council is maturing well and the two main student activities at meetings, the student icebreaker and student reception, have also been proceeding well. It is a joy to see our student members interacting and networking with each other, engaging the more senior members, and integrating into our Society. The Executive Council has placed a high premium on establishing a student-friendly environment at our meetings and I see this investment paying off as the "new generation" becomes more involved in our Society. The future of the ASA is in good hands as these young colleagues continue to "come on line" and begin to participate in the functioning of ASA which includes not only presenting papers but participating in technical committee meetings and other organizational functions.



It is heartening to see that the number of named prizes and awards in different technical areas continues to grow with the addition of two more prizes since 2000. These prizes are but a small reflection of how senior members of the ASA cherish the role of the ASA in their careers and are willing to play an on-going role in the growth of the society.

One of the major roles of the Vice President is to lead the Technical Council, consisting of the chairpersons of the 13 technical committees. The Technical Council plays the leading role in establishing the technical content of our twice yearly meetings, taking the responsibility for arranging special sessions, appointing session chairs, and being aware of new developments within their technical areas.

Members of the Technical Council are also the ones who are in closest contact and relationship with our members through their technical committees. Members of the Technical Council are also responsible for promoting growth within their specialty areas by wise use of technical initiative funds, allocating special travel grants for invited speakers and participating in the organization of special symposiums, workshops and innovative ways to promote acoustics and the ASA.

Promotion of acoustics and the role of the ASA in this special field of science is actually the responsibility of all the members. I recently participated in a survey conducted by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academies to obtain an assessment of research doctorate programs in our universities. The areas of science were divided into different categories and sub-categories. Much to my surprise, acoustics was not listed under physics, not under engineering, not under biology and not under psychology. In fact, acoustics was not mentioned in any sub-categories. Are we so specialized that no sub-categories would be appropriate or are we merely taken for granted? Much of the work that we do affects our quality of life yet the public and important decision makers are unaware that acoustics is a bona fide field of science that is responsible for a variety of advancements in technology. There are so many examples in our everyday lives in which the fundamentals of acoustics have been applied to make our lives better and more enjoyable. It is easy to take for granted the quietness of a well-made automobile, a modern train or subway, or a good concert hall. We all have examples in our own technical areas. My point is that we all need to promote the field of acoustics as a valuable scientific discipline which cuts across so many technical areas and affects so many aspects of our ordinary life.

In closing, I would like to say that I am extremely happy to be a member of the ASA and very glad to be able to serve you, our members. Our society is doing well because of many good things that have been on-going for many years, and mostly because of the dedication of our membership. It is a pleasure to be associated with such fine colleagues.