

# From the President

Maureen Stone



Greetings! Because this is my first column in *Acoustics Today* as president of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA), let me introduce myself to those that don't know me. I study the human tongue at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, Baltimore. My focus is on speech motor control and how tongue motion, deformation really, shapes the vocal tract tube during speech. In addition to normal function, I study the effects of tongue cancer surgery on tongue anatomy and motion patterns in order to interpret the resulting speech acoustics and perception outcomes. I have been a member of the ASA since I was a student and have been fascinated and impressed by the remarkably accessible organizational structure. Any member can be active to any extent in this Society.

I am excited about the year ahead. We have a lot of interesting work from the past year to continue, and after such a tough year, this is a good time to take stock of our current policies and approaches. I imagine that we all feel as if we are emerging from a Covid cocoon. Covid caused the ASA to significantly modify its meetings and activities, as you have no doubt noticed. So, as the Society begins to return to its previous routines, this is also an ideal time to consider new approaches to meet our potential as a thriving Society.

## ASA Finances

Let's start by considering the finances of the ASA. The main source of operating revenue is from *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America (JASA)*, and the ASA has used this resource to good effect by sponsoring programs that support our mission: to generate, disseminate, and promote the knowledge and practical applications of acoustics. Naturally, many of these programs are not revenue producing, such as outreach and education nor are they expected to be. However, the growth of *JASA* revenue has not kept pace with our needs, in part because payment structures for journals have changed and in part because our expenses grow yearly. As with all organizations, it is easier to start new endeavors than to end old ones that may no longer be serving the ASA mission. The overall result is that for the past 10 years we have been outspending our revenue.

To address this issue, the ASA Finance Committee, chaired by Anthony Atchley, formed a subcommittee to undertake an in-depth examination of the finances and make recommendations to the Executive Council (EC), which is the ASA governing body. The report concluded that expenses have been growing in every segment of the ASA. There is no one program or operation that we can eliminate that would result in a break-even operating budget; everything must be in our sights. Therefore, to guide the EC's strategic planning and financial stewardship, a financial consultant group was engaged in March of this year and has been working with the ASA staff and officers to optimize the financial operations, long-term budget planning, and strategic use of its reserves.

## Adding Value and Revenue to the ASA

This effort will take some time, but we have begun, and we are establishing plans to turn the financial ship, so to speak, and adjust our financial model into a fiscally stable position. At present, we are introducing new activities and features that will bring value to our members and also additional revenue.

One new source of revenue is "advertorials," such as the one by COMSOL in the Summer 2021 issue (pp. 40-41) of *Acoustics Today*. Advertorials provide information about an organization or product that is more detailed and analytical than in typical advertisements and may lead to collaborations with industry that benefit both academia and industry.

Another potential source of revenue is the ASA Academy, which, as a pilot program, is currently in development under the direction of Michael Vorländer and Task Force B: Better Engagement of Industry and Practitioners, with input from several interested Technical Committees (TCs). The long-term goal is to offer various sorts of continuing education programs in acoustics to acoustician and non-acoustician practitioners in education, industry, consulting, and research and development to provide them with useful in-service learning and advancement in their fields.

Our third endeavor is to offer new ASA meeting sponsorship opportunities, starting with the next ASA meeting in

Seattle, Washington. Susan Fox, our executive director, is leading this work with private sponsors, and Task-Force B is working to find additional interested parties in the private sector. We continue to seek new ideas.

Of course, in addition to increasing revenue, we also need to reduce our expenses where possible over the coming years. Our ASA meetings are among the most important and popular features of the Society and directly serve our mission. We love them, and we want to continue them as they are, if at all possible, but this comes at substantial and increasing overall costs as prices rise each year. Our meetings are rarely cost effective and usually lose money. We are revisiting the costs of our currently planned meetings, and we will continue to look for additional ways to generate new revenue (such as meeting sponsorships) and to reduce expenses going forward to stabilize our budget while not reducing the overall value of our meetings to attendees.

## Meet Me in Seattle

Turning to the Seattle meeting, I hope you are as ready and excited for it as I am! Seattle will be our first live meeting in two years, and we want it to be as terrific as our previous in-person meetings. We are, however, aware of the Covid-19 and Delta variant challenges that await us this fall, including the possibility that the State of Washington will prohibit live meetings. We are currently developing contingency plans that would allow us to switch to an all virtual format and still hold as complete a meeting as possible.

Although we know that virtual meetings in the Fall 2020 (Acoustics Virtually Everywhere [AVE]) and Spring 2021 (Acoustics in Focus [AiF]) had many positive features, several obstacles will prevent us from making Seattle a hybrid meeting. First, the Pacific Time Zone makes it difficult for people outside the United States to access the meeting in real time. For example, 11 a.m. in Seattle is 8 p.m. in Europe and 4 a.m. in Japan. Second, live broadcasts of technical sessions and other events increase meeting planning and expenses substantially, given that a hybrid meeting incurs all the fixed expenses of an in-person meeting *plus* the personnel, software, and hardware necessary to support the virtual components.

Nonetheless, we know there are ASA members for whom virtual sessions are truly an advantage, and for this reason, the Meetings Reimagined Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Scott Sommerfeldt, and supported by the Virtual

Technology Task Force Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Andrew Piacsek, is hard at work considering the options for future meetings, including how to best utilize many of the successful virtual features, new meeting styles and schedules, and how to make our future meetings (including international and joint meetings) revenue neutral or even revenue positive while supporting the ASA mission and bringing value to attendees.

To that end, I am pleased to report that we plan to continue several features from the last two virtual meetings, AVE and AiF. First, holding the Administrative Committee meetings before the main ASA meeting allowed committee members to attend all of the technical sessions at AVE and AiF. We polled the committee members, and many of these committees have elected to continue meeting virtually in advance of the Seattle meeting.

A highlight of the AVE and AiF meetings was the successful introduction of keynote presentations by Past President Diane Kewley-Port, and we will continue to showcase keynotes as we go back to in-person meetings. Although the open TC meetings were broadcast live during AiF to all ASA members, including those who did not register for the meeting, in Seattle, we will return the TC meetings to their usual early evening times, which would make a live broadcast impractical for those outside the Pacific Time Zone.

## ASA Is Your Organization. Participate in It!

As I end this column, let me leave you with some thoughts about how I hope you will get involved in the direction of the ASA. As most of you know, the ASA is largely a grassroots volunteer organization supported by an outstanding staff. This makes serving on ASA committees both rewarding and important. There are many opportunities for ASA members to join committees that actively contribute to the current operations and future direction. I want to particularly encourage new members to consider one of the following ways to become involved in the Society.

The entry level for volunteering is through your technical interest area. When you joined the ASA, you indicated one or more areas of interest and became an interest member, such as a Speech Communication interest member.

Each of the 13 technical interest areas has a Technical Committee (TC), usually composed of a subset of the interest members. To become a TC member, you must

be recommended by the TC chair and then appointed by the President.

The TCs hold open meetings at each ASA meeting, and the technical interest members are invited to attend, as are all ASA members. At these meetings, the TC chairs often need volunteers for tasks and committees of all sorts. Do volunteer for anything of interest to you.

The ASA also has Administrative Committees. To learn about all the committees in more detail, take a look at the new online series in *Acoustics Today* called the “AT Collections” (see [bit.ly/AT-Collections](http://bit.ly/AT-Collections)). The main page has links to articles that describe the work of all the TCs and Administrative Committees in great detail. Check them out to find a good fit for your interests.

I invite and encourage each of you to review the committee opportunities on the volunteer web page (see [acousticalsociety.org/volunteer](http://acousticalsociety.org/volunteer)). Fill out the volunteer form linked to that page and join the great bunch of people who are already active in the TCs and the varied Administrative Committees. Only a few volunteers are accepted to a committee each year, and volunteering for a committee doesn't guarantee you a slot, but you do get on a list for the future.

If you believe you have expertise appropriate to an Administrative Committee listed on the volunteer or “AT Collections” web page, but it is *not* specifically listed on the volunteer form, please write to [asa@acousticalsociety.org](mailto:asa@acousticalsociety.org) or to me at [president@acousticalsociety.org](mailto:president@acousticalsociety.org).

A special opportunity for students is the Student Council (see [bit.ly/Student\\_Council](http://bit.ly/Student_Council)), a great place to meet other students, to network, and to start getting involved in the ASA.

My final suggestion for volunteering is to join one of the four Strategic Planning Task Forces. Information about them can be found at [acousticalsociety.org/Strategy.html](http://acousticalsociety.org/Strategy.html). The Task Forces have a Champions meeting at every ASA meeting, including in Seattle. This meeting is open to all and provides opportunities to learn what they do and their progress and to brainstorm with current members and others who want to bring in new ideas.

I look forward to working with you all this year. Contact me at [president@acousticalsociety.org](mailto:president@acousticalsociety.org) with any thoughts or ideas, and if you see me in Seattle come say hi!

## Core Values of the Acoustical Society of America

(Adopted by the ASA Executive Council, July 19, 2021)

Sound is a ubiquitous phenomenon that permeates the natural and anthropogenic worlds. Thus, the core values that drive the actions, policies, and objectives of the ASA include

- (1) Dedication to excellence as a premier global organization that serves the worldwide acoustics community with integrity and transparency;
- (2) Broad, open, honest, respectful, and accessible inquiry into the science and practical applications of acoustics through thoughtful and tolerant oral and written discourse;
- (3) A welcoming atmosphere of openness and inclusion for all members, potential members, authors, meeting attendees, those who interact with the ASA, and those who have an interest in acoustics regardless of status or capability;
- (4) Advocacy for wide dissemination of acoustical knowledge at the local, state, national, and international levels to generate, promote, and advance the science and applications of acoustics;
- (5) Provision of information and policy reviews to inform societal decision making on how acoustics, acoustical principles, and standards can be used to sustainably improve the human condition and preserve and restore acoustical environments;
- (6) Service to current and future generations through the promotion, publication, and archival documentation of the science and applications of acoustics supported by a fair, deliberative, and rigorous review process; and
- (7) Attraction, development, encouragement, education, and mentoring of current and future generations of acousticians from diverse backgrounds.