

From the Vice President

J. R. (Josh) Gladden



Hello Acoustical Society of America (ASA) friends and colleagues! I'm privileged to know many of you, but for those I have yet to meet, let me introduce myself. I'm Josh Gladden and have the honor of serving as the current vice president of the ASA. I have been active in the Society since my early graduate student days, starting in 1999, after being counseled by my advisor (Jay Maynard at Penn State University, University Park) that the ASA was the most rewarding society he had experienced in his considerable career. As in many things, Jay's advice was spot on. My technical home is physical acoustics, and I use ultrasonic techniques, such as resonant ultrasound spectroscopy, to better understand novel materials. After landing at the National Center for Physical Acoustics (NCPA) and the Physics Department at the University of Mississippi, University, 16 years ago, I've served as director of the NCPA and (somehow) landed in the Vice Chancellor for Research's chair. Over this time, I was also lucky enough to serve as the chair of the Technical Committee on Physical Acoustics and continue to serve as director of the ASA Physical Acoustics Summer School (PASS). Each step has been a challenge, thrill, and joy, but one thing that has remained steadfast over 20 years is my commitment to the ASA.

And why is that? As I considered various topics for this article, there were many important and timely issues worth writing about: our transition out of the virtual world as we gingerly step back into in-person meetings; the many important issues various task forces and committees are addressing, diversity, equity and inclusion; financial health of the Society; what meetings will look like moving forward; and how we engage and support the membership across their career path, just to name a few. ASA President Maureen Stone has eloquently addressed a number of those issues in her recent *Acoustics Today* (AT) column (available at acousticstoday.org/173ftp), and I would encourage you to engage with those. However, in this brief time I have with you, I thought it would be good to share some personal reflections that I hope will resonate with your experience with the Society, may

remind you of why you devote your time and energy to this organization, and, perhaps, sets some guiding lights for its future health and vibrancy. I've organized my thoughts as a series of value propositions. At the end of the day, each individual member will assess what value does this investment of time and money bring to me and my organization.

At its core, the Society is a reflection of the discipline of acoustics. From the deeply theoretical to the highly practical, acoustics has applications from whales to washing machines, transdermal drug delivery to tornados, and languages to lutes. In a word, acoustics is highly interdisciplinary. As a result, ASA meetings and publications are a smorgasbord for the curious. You never know what fascinating topics are being discussed in each session room as you walk by. Of course, the meeting planner is helpful with so many parallel sessions, but sometimes I like to just randomly pop into a room to see what is happening. Give that a try at your next meeting! So, we are not all engineers, biologists, or physicists and we are not all academics, industry practitioners, or government researchers. We, as a Society, are all of those things.

Value Proposition 1: The ASA Brings Together a High Level of Diversity of Professional Thought and Experience

The ASA is a highly member- and volunteer-driven organization. I am pausing here to highlight the outstanding permanent staff that keep the operations moving forward on a day-to-day, meeting-to-meeting basis. It is small in number but mighty in impact through their incredible skill and dedication. Be sure to say hi to some of our staff at Society meetings and thank them for their amazing contributions, particularly during the pandemic. If I had 10 more pages, I would describe some of the trials and tribulations that they managed associated with the virtual meetings. Aside from this good staff, every committee, task force, working group, council, and leadership position is populated by individuals who are volunteering their time to the ASA and its members. Having been involved with many such groups, I can tell you that the participants are motivated not by how this will look on

their CV or next promotion but because they care deeply about the issue at hand and want to be part of making the Society better. There is devotion and commitment there, and the Society runs on it.

Value Proposition 2: It Is Enriching to Engage with Passionate People and the ASA is Full of Them

And where does this commitment and passion originate? Of course, each member will have to answer that for themselves, and each answer will be different. For me, it comes down to the people and culture. Although each technical committee is distinct in many ways (see <https://bit.ly/AT-TC>), a common thread is a culture of support and respect. I have sent many graduate students to present work that we have accomplished, knowing full well that they will make mistakes. I also have a high level of confidence that the audience will point out mistakes or missed points in a supportive and constructive manner that elevates the student, not tears them down. Indeed, most ASA presentations I have given feel more like a group meeting where the audience is part of your team, offering suggestions and helping think through

the next steps or related consequences. When short comings are identified, it is done in a supportive rather than a condescending fashion. This culture of support extends to the many committees and task forces who come together to think deeply about how we can continually improve the support of our members both as individuals and groups and as a professional community.

Value Proposition 3: Everyone at the ASA Wants to See Everyone Else Succeed

For me, these value propositions undergird why I keep devoting my time and energy to the Society. If you are not a member, I'd encourage you to join us and get involved. I feel confident you will not be disappointed. I am so looking forward to engaging again with my ASA friends and colleagues in-person! I know Covid is weighing heavily on the minds of many. I can assure you, the same is true for the ASA leadership. In the end, I am confident that we made the right call to move forward with a full in-person meeting in Seattle with all the risk mitigation protocols that are in place. And Denver is just around the corner in spring of 2022!

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