

# From the President

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My goals for this column are to promote participation in the leadership and increase awareness of the finances of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA). We are a member-driven Society and you, the members, are better served when this information is easily accessible. I hope you will enjoy participating at all levels of the Society, especially the highest.

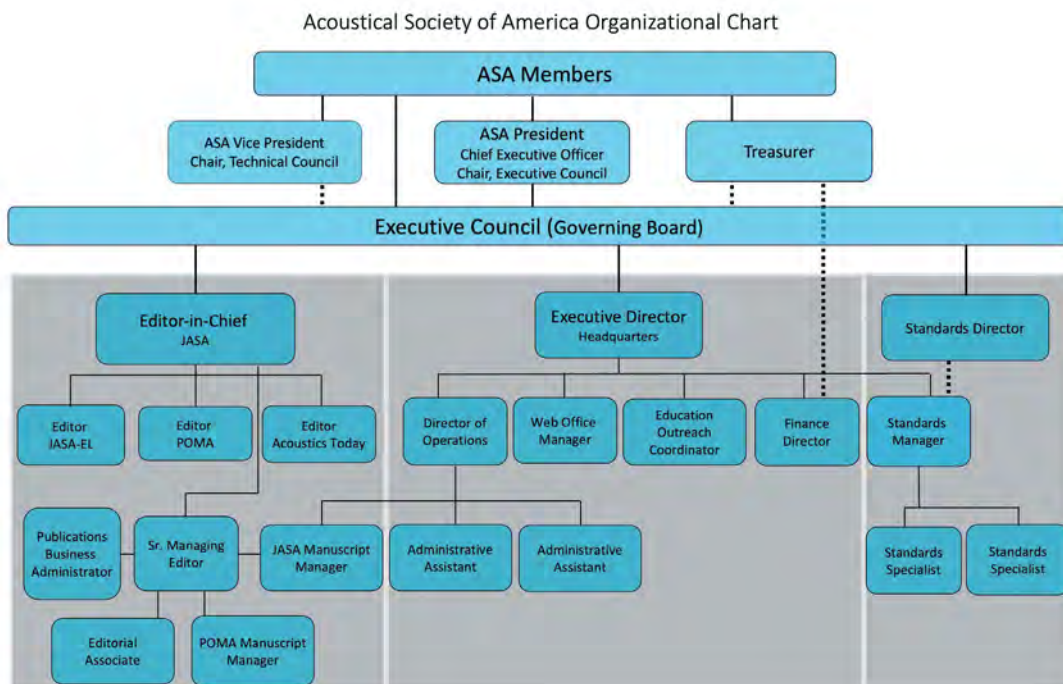
## Participate in Acoustical Society of America Leadership

In my fall 2021 column (see [https://bit.ly/From\\_President](https://bit.ly/From_President)), I discussed ways to become involved in the ASA. Today, I want to build on that by discussing how to move into ASA leadership roles. The ASA governing structure is completely captured in two organizational charts. **Figure 1** illustrates the basic organization chart.

The EC is the governing board of the ASA and is chaired by the president. It has 13 voting members including the 3 presidents (president-elect, current president, immediate past president), the 3 vice presidents (VP) (VP-elect, current VP, immediate past VP), the treasurer, and 6 additional elected members. The nonvoting members include the editor in chief (EIC), the standards director, and the executive director (ED). The EC ensures that the ASA follows its mission, strategizes and plans for the future of the Society, and signs off on financial decisions and actionable items from various committees including medals and awards. It also acts on reports and appointments from the president, the EIC, the ED, the standards director, the VP (as chair of the Technical Council (TC)), and the treasurer.

**Figure 1** shows the employees and contractors who work at the ASA (gray squares). You can see that fewer than 20 staff members run all the operations of the ASA, which

**Figure 1.** Organization chart of the Acoustical Society of America. The ASA members elect the officers and Executive Council (EC) at the spring elections (top). The EC supervises Publications, Headquarters and Standards (gray blocks).



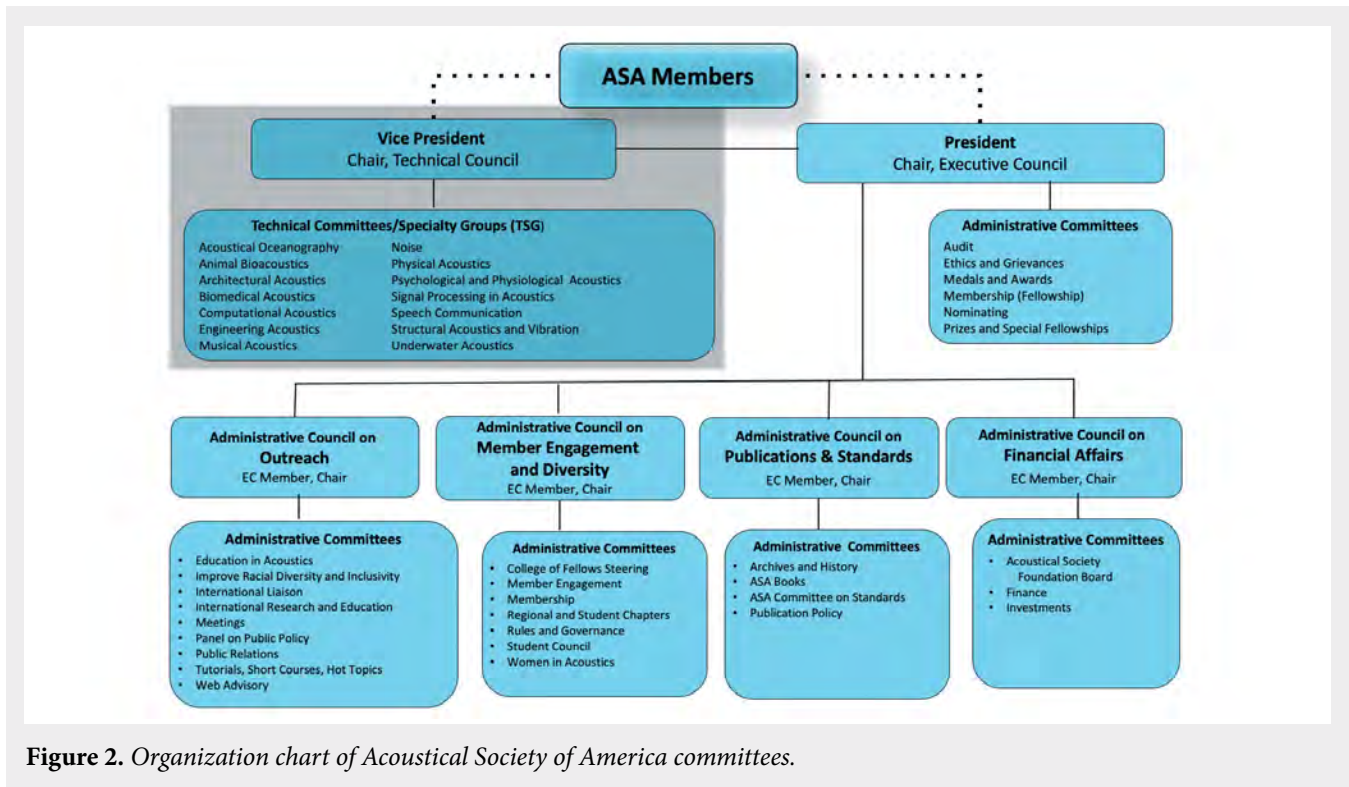


Figure 2. Organization chart of Acoustical Society of America committees.

has almost 7,000 members! This is only possible because of the army of volunteers who carry out the mission of the Society by working on the various ASA committees and in leadership. This volunteer army is shown in the committee organizational chart (Figure 2).

The TC is chaired by the VP and is composed of the 13 Technical Committee chairs who provide direct representation of the Society membership through the open Technical Committee meetings that take place at each ASA meeting. You can find a list of the technical committees and their roles at [https://bit.ly/ASA\\_committees](https://bit.ly/ASA_committees) (see also Figure 2). The term TC is used at the ASA to represent both the Technical Council, and the individual Technical Committees, e.g.: TCUW. In this column I will use it to represent the council and will write out technical committee in full, but this is not usually done, so keep the two meanings in mind in future when you hear or read the acronym.

The ASA also has administrative committees that support the mission of the Society and report to the EC (Figure 2). Membership on some administrative committees requires specialized knowledge or ASA experience. Administrative committees are also listed at [https://bit.ly/ASA\\_committees](https://bit.ly/ASA_committees).

As a member-driven organization, member input is solicited on many ASA issues at the Society meetings. The

ASA accomplishes this by organizing its meetings into a sandwich structure. On Monday morning, the EC meets to consider and discuss Society business including many items that require membership input. These are discussed by the technical committee chairs (i.e., the TC) on Monday afternoon. The technical committee chairs discuss the ideas at the open technical committee meetings later in the week where they solicit feedback, new ideas, issues, and concerns from their members. Everyone is welcome to attend these meetings. The ideas generated at the open meetings are discussed further by the technical committees at their Friday morning meeting and then brought to the EC by the VP Friday afternoon. Along with their other responsibilities, the EC acts on the new and continuing technical committee items as appropriate.

It is not uncommon for chairs or members of technical committees and administrative committees to later be a candidate for ASA elected office. These committee experiences are not required for officer positions, but the expertise is very useful. To be a candidate for elected office, you must be a full member or Fellow (see <https://bit.ly/3r01Ovt> for an online application to transfer to full membership).

Every year, a new nominating committee proposes candidates for president-elect, VP-elect, and two of the six members of the EC. In addition, any ASA member

may propose names of potential candidates, including themselves, to the nominating committee. Self-proposal of candidates is intended to widen the pool of candidates to as many members as possible.

Now let's turn to the running of the Society and, in particular, ensuring our fiscal health.

## Understanding Acoustical Society of America Finances

ASA finances are managed with an eye toward Society growth and sustainability. We must optimize our current financial position (balance sheet) and configure our annual operating budgets for the long run. ASA finances are overseen by an elected treasurer (Judy Dubno), the ED, and the Finance Director and supported by the ASA headquarters (HQ) staff, all of whom recommend policy to the EC. Four administrative committees (Audit, Finance, Acoustical Society Foundation Board [ASFB], and Investment) provide additional oversight to ASA finances and also recommend policy to the EC. These committees are comprised of ASA members and supported by ASA HQ staff.

The treasurer is the chief financial policy advisor to the EC and is responsible for oversight of the long-term strategic financial matters of the Society and short-term financial policy implementation. The treasurer works closely with the four financial administrative committees, the EC, and the HQ staff on all things financial. The ED provides oversight to the ASA HQ staff to manage day-to-day financial activities, and the finance director provides expertise and guidance to committees on all financial and accounting related issues.

The Audit Committee, composed of three EC members, assists the EC by working with our external auditors to monitor the appropriateness and integrity of the Society's financial reporting, accounting policies, and internal controls.

The Finance Committee assists the EC on long-term financial viability of the ASA by making recommendations on long-range financial decisions. The Finance Committee looked deeply into ASA finances and submitted a report to the EC in December 2020. As a result of that report, it was decided to hire a consultant to review the ASA entire financial structure so that we can move toward a fiscally sustainable model to support operations and programs.

The ASFB manages the Acoustical Society Foundation Fund (ASFF) for the Society, and acquires, maintains, and ensures the correct expenditure of endowment funds and restricted and unrestricted donations. Their monies go entirely toward ASA prizes, awards, grants, fellowships, scholarships, and programs (for more details, see <https://bit.ly/3ta8x90>).

The Investment Committee reviews the financial investments of the ASA and, with EC approval, develops investment and spending policies and procedures for the Society. The Investment Committee works with the ASFB and two independent investment advisors to plan the optimal methods for increasing earnings from our endowment, dividends, and interest while managing risk.

For more information, about these and all the ASA administrative committees see the Rules at <https://bit.ly/3ASARules> and the committee organizational chart in **Figure 2**.

Another crucial piece of information needed to understand the ASA financial structure is the relationship between our sources of revenue and our expenditures. To make this straightforward, I am presenting this as four financial groups: HQ staff, meetings, standards, and publications, although some overlap may occur.

The first group is the ASA HQ staff. The ED and her staff (see **Figure 1**) manage the day-to-day operations of the ASA and ASA outreach programs, with collaboration from many administrative committees. HQ salaries and other expenses are funded in part by the revenue from annual membership dues.

The second group contains the semiannual Society meetings, whether in person or virtual. These are also managed by the ED and her staff, with collaboration from local teams and many administrative committees. Sources of revenue include meeting registration fees, exhibitor fees, and the newly developed sponsorship fees. Expenses include everything related to the meeting, including staff.

The third group contains the standards director and standards office (see **Figures 1 and 2**), also supported by five standards committees. The standards director works with the standards office to support the development of and maintain the national and international standards in acoustics. The revenue from standards royalties and fees pays for a portion of the standards related salaries and expenses.

The fourth group is publications. The EIC is supported by three other editors, several staff, and administrative committees, who manage all aspects of the various ASA publications (see **Figures 1 and 2**). Publications is our largest source of revenue, and the only group of the four that routinely realizes an annual surplus; the other groups have had recurring annual deficits.

The financial picture of the ASA is currently experiencing some challenges, like many other scientific societies, but we are taking major steps to address these. Among many reasons for the annual operating deficits is inflation in salaries and hiring additional staff throughout the ASA. In addition, increasing expenses of operations and programs managed by the HQ staff exceeds revenue from membership dues. The growth in expenses to support our wonderful meetings is rising faster than the revenue, with some meeting deficits exceeding \$100,000. We are just learning about revenue and expenses for virtual meetings, and they are not necessarily revenue positive. Standards royalties and fees are not constant from year to year and tend not to cover expenses for the standards group. In the past, the annual surplus from ASA publications has been used to make up the shortfalls in the other three groups. However, more recently, the publications surplus has not kept pace with the deficits, making this practice unsustainable in the long run.

Although we have substantial fiscal issues, we are working very hard to turn the situation around. Indeed, investment reserves and earnings are very strong, and we are currently working on strategies to reduce expenses and increase revenue over the next few years to provide a more sustainable long-term fiscal model. We have been working with our financial consultants to gain a better understanding of the annual operating budget and define better strategic uses of the investment reserves. We now have a budget dashboard that will provide timely monthly reports of revenues and expenses. This will allow us to better project and control future expenditures and help us align resources to our operating budget. The Meetings Reimagined Ad Hoc Committee is focusing on every aspect of meetings to enhance meeting programs while increasing revenue and reducing expenses wherever possible. We also are creating a Revenue Reimagined Ad Hoc Committee, which will formalize our continuous exploration of new revenue streams to support ASA activities.

On the expense side, the EC is reviewing ASA programs, committee expenses, and other expenditures to ensure they continue to be mission critical and to determine what can be modified to reduce expenses. This will continue over the next few years as we continue to enhance ASA fiscal policies.

## In Summary

This is an exciting time for the ASA. Every member can be an important part of the process of running and steering this ship. I encourage you to make your opinion count by preparing for and joining an administrative committee, attending open TC meetings, and developing your skills at organizing and leading. You will learn about the mechanisms of running a large society, determine what interests you in directing the organization, and work with the ASA team of dedicated, smart, valuable contributors. It is very enjoyable, and you will be making a substantial contribution to the strong and vital Society that is so important to the careers of all of us!

The advertisement features the PAC International logo at the top center. To the left is a QR code with the text "Visit Our Site". Below the logo, the headline reads "HIGHEST STC IN THE INDUSTRY". Two diagrams illustrate wall construction: the left one shows "Cross Bracing Between Studs" with an STC of 81, and the right one shows "No Cross Bracing Between Studs" with an STC of 86. Below these is the section "HIGH PERFORMANCE WALL DESIGNS" with three product highlights: "Product Selector" (a software interface), "RSIC-1" (a fire-rated decoupler), and "Acoustical Design Selector" (a software interface for finding test data). The bottom of the ad contains contact information: "info@pac-intl.com", "866.774.2100", and "www.pacinternationalllc.com".