

In June 2009, I had the honor of being elected by my peers of the National Council of Representatives (NCOR) to become its speaker. The awesome task of facilitating 2 annual meetings and 2 mid-winter meetings lay ahead of me. As I pondered my responsibility, I could not help but reminisce about the many years that I have sat at the “table” or in the gallery to watch, to listen, and to participate as the future of nuclear medicine technology unfolded before me. Looking back, I can still visualize those pioneers who set the bar high by encouraging stimulating and sometimes quite heated discussions; I wondered how I was going to meet the challenge.

So much has changed since those early years. Our very structure has been altered to the core. Historically, the general membership-elected president facilitated the NCOR meetings; however, over time the functionality of this design had to be changed to meet the changing political and legal landscape. The creation of the position I now hold was an intricate part of altering our core structure. With that structural change, it appeared that the “voices” of the NCOR may have been muffled or at best quieted. The discussions were not as lively as they once were, and the overall energy around the table seemed lost. The NCOR seemed to struggle with its new identity. Many have asked “Has the NCOR lost its ‘voice’?” Is this structural change the best format to meet the needs of our members? What forces were at play that caused the silence at the table? Was it only an adjustment to the new NCOR governmental format, or was something else at play? In our efforts to effect change—a new direction—had we tossed the baby out with the bath water?

When I stopped to consider these questions, the conclusion I reached was that we needed a few more passionately involved and informed members at the table. The key and foremost objectives for gathering the



representatives twice a year are to discuss common issues, seek solutions to common problems, and become the information highway from national governance all the way down to the local organizations—the grass roots.

The NCOR and the executive board of the SNMTS stand on the shoulders of the chapters and their members. Our mission is to serve you. However, we cannot if we have no knowledge of your needs, issues, and concerns. If newly elected, is your chapter NCOR representative coming to the table equipped with an understanding of the table dynamics—Robert’s Rules of Order? Is your representative versed in the SNMTS by-laws and aware of his or her responsibilities to the chapter?

Facilitating the NCOR meetings is one integral part of the speaker’s responsibilities. The speaker is also charged with assisting the executive board of the SNMTS in opening and solidifying lines of communication between the chapters and the national organization by encouraging participation from all who sit at the table. Assembling an agenda of topics and key issues of interest to all chapters is fundamental. The chapter NCOR must participate in this process in order for it to be successful.

The SNMTS leadership initiated a leadership academy 4 years ago to prepare the next leaders for chapter

and national involvement. Many of the participants of the SNMTS/IBA leadership academy have gone on to become committee chairs, committee members, and elected officers on their chapter. Most are seeking national-level office in the near future. Not all nuclear medicine technologist (NMT) members of a chapter can sit on national committees or run for elected offices, but all members must have a voice in the future of our profession. Issues should be discussed and voted on during chapter meetings so the NCOR representative can bring a consensus from the chapter to the table when discussing those issues. This is one approach to providing a voice to membership. Individual-chapter leadership academies are a tool to assist chapters in succession planning. Using this tool to identify, train, and mentor the chapter’s next leadership is a vital component to survival.

Another common denominator across the chapters has been the declining economy and its effect on the nuclear medicine community. We have all commiserated about the limited access to ^{99}Mo for generators, the decline in work hours, and the loss of jobs. We continue to seek solutions to these pressing concerns while still stretching toward our symbiotic futures. NMTs of the future will hold at a minimum a bachelor’s degree and maybe even a master’s degree. They will be certified in several modalities, not just NMTCB or ARRT, but CT, PET, nuclear cardiology technology, and maybe even MRI and echocardiography. If we do not adapt, we will become extinct. The SNMTS may not be instrumental in getting you your next job, but it will be here to assist you with training, providing educational materials and professional support. We individually must take the initiative and do the rest of the work to stay viable in a changing marketplace.

New technologies are being used heavily to establish lines of communication between committees, the

NCOR, and the executive board. For several sessions, we have lobbied through the advocacy committee for passage of the CARE bill (the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act of 2009). With the executive board of the SNMITS, we have discussed and supported the bachelor's degree for entry-level NMTs by 2015. We have assisted

some states with their CT certification and licensure and with training for the NMT. These types of activities are expected of a professional society for its members.

Your membership in the SNMITS through your local chapter provides many benefits. You receive an advocate on legal issues: national certification, domestic ⁹⁹Mo production, and scope of practice of the NMT. You

have a strong voice on these and other issues at the NCOR table. You have mentors ready, willing, and able to pass the baton in preparing you for the future of our organization.

All you have to do is speak up!

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National Council of Representatives