

MESSAGE FROM THE P R E S I D E N T

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A year or two ago I was reading some early to mid '80s back issues of *JNMT* and I reread the Technologist Section president's first column. Just out of curiosity I then read the same column for the next two presidents. While the content was a little different for each of them, they all listed similar issues on which they planned to focus: increase membership, produce good continuing education programs and meet the needs of the grassroots technologists. I could take one of their columns today, massage the wording a little, put a new name and face in the heading and produce an article that sounds quite current. Are we just not making any progress or will these issues always be with us, no matter how successful we are?

I think these issues will always be important, but I also think that we, as a successful professional association, will be looking at things very differently than we did in the mid '80s. They'll be different than they were in the early '90s. With the transformations in how health care is organized, delivered and paid for come concurrent transformations in how the various constituencies will deal with these changes. A few years ago there was much uncertainty in the allied health professions, including nuclear medicine technology, in terms of employment, necessary skill mix and educational growth needed to deal with the environmental changes. Today our profession has matured considerably in how we meet the challenges of health care reform. We are ready to create our future, not just respond to what comes our way.

Over the next few months you'll be hearing about some of the projects proposed by the various committees within the Technologist Section—projects and programs designed to benefit you in your everyday job. You'll also hear about plans to retool our strategic plan, building on our past successful planning with updates based on new knowledge of our environment and what you, the membership, need from your association.

Another significant change that is being proposed is a restructuring of the current bylaws to more accurately reflect how our organization wishes to do business successfully in today's environment. You'll see more details in future issues of *JNMT*. But today I would like to present an overall vision of where we would like to be tomorrow.

First, I expect we will begin to think differently about the role of leadership in the organization. In the same way that we have become used to collaborating more in the

workplace, our organization's leadership, whether at the national level or the local, grassroots level, also needs to adopt a collaborating mentality. Leadership no longer means controlling an agenda or programs for personal or political gain. Leadership styles that encourage and facilitate professional growth of the members and the profession itself are attributes more consistent with today's workplace.

For that reason, two of the common themes we felt were important in the restructuring process were: (a) to improve the mentoring process and (b) have leadership accountable to the membership for the success or failure of the organization in achieving its goals. For any organization to thrive on a long-term basis, there must be a constant influx of new people and ideas in leadership positions. While some people are willing step forward and assume leadership positions on their own, a more formalized structure would ensure greater depth and preparation of our new leaders. To ensure survival in the current marketplace, the leadership of the Technologist Section must be responsible to its members for developing appropriate goals that aggressively direct the profession in the health care environment and for making periodic progress reports to the membership.

We have already begun the process of encouraging our new leaders by meeting with the chapter presidents at the annual meeting and planning to meet with them more frequently at their chapter meetings. It is important for us to hear your concerns at the chapter level, and it is even more important that you be successful as a chapter. The chapter presidents' meeting was one of my favorite functions of the annual meeting and I was delighted to hear the enthusiasm expressed by those who attended.

Almost everyone in a leadership role will have an opportunity to share their goals and accomplishments in *Uptake* or *JNMT*. And, as mentioned previously, an updated strategic plan will be developed later this fall to competitively position the organization in the health care environment. While there are many exciting directions that our profession can take, I am most interested in developing advanced practice for nuclear medicine technologists. Now this is what is meant by "creating your own future."

The second type of change in the proposed restructuring is in the organizational structure. Three important concerns driving these changes are the need to: (a) respond faster to changes in our environment, (b) improve communications

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and (c) work in a more cost-effective manner. The marketplace is changing rapidly and we do not have the luxury of waiting for national meetings to convene twice a year to make important decisions. To respond in a timely fashion while lessening the chances of miscommunication or none at all, we need to improve communication pathways up to leadership and the staff, down to the members and across to ourselves among the various committees and work groups. We also need to take advantage of new ways of communicating by e-mail, the Internet, fax, even teleconferencing.

In an environment where continuing education funds are cut, travel funds are almost nonexistent and institutional support of personnel to pursue professional opportunities is lessening, the Technologist Section must consider less expensive ways of doing its work. This may mean less emphasis on national meetings for educational programs and more grassroots programs. Some committee work may be more efficiently conducted outside the usual national meeting time constraints.

How will this affect the organization's governing board, the National Council? The council's role would change from a managing role, such as that of a chief technologist, to a more administrative role, similar to a hospital administrator. Just as hospital administrators do, the National Council will focus on the vision, direction and policy of the Technologist Section and set the tone for how we operate. In other words, they look at the big picture. This does not mean council members do not carry individual, managerial roles within the organization. It simply means that they spend more time in the council meetings leading instead of managing. This will be a difficult transition for some members as many of us are comfortable in old roles; they are what we do at home in our jobs. But this is also the direction that other successful, effective organizations are moving in today. We can let others transform us by continuing to do what we've always done or we can take control of our destiny by transforming ourselves according to our shared vision of the future.