

The Changing Face of ASSE



Rick Pollock

While writing this message, I debated what title to use. As I've written several times, ASSE is in the midst of change. Membership demographics are shifting and the ways members engage or recognize value has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. This is why our practice specialties have grown so much and why more members are gravitating toward common interest groups (CIGs). In fact, more than 60% of ASSE members elect to pay more to belong to one or more practice specialty or CIG.

This shift is likely to continue. Technical education and professional networks that help solve industry-specific problems are increasing in value. However, these changes have highlighted the ineffectiveness of our current governance structure, which is based on a geographic model in which chapter meetings are the main point of member contact.

ASSE's Board of Directors (BOD) has been studying these trends for several years. The BOD is focused on aligning the Society's strategies and resources with the needs of members and the profession. The goal is to deliver greater member value, and as a board to become more strategic, efficient and effective. It is the later focus that has led to a review of our BOD governance model.

From Good to Great author Jim Collins defines a great organization as "one that delivers superior performance and makes a distinctive impact over a long period of time." In business, the common measures of great

performance are market share, customer satisfaction and financial results. For a membership organization such as ASSE, performance is assessed relative to how well we achieve our mission, serve members, grow, and maintain financial stability and sustainability.

The critical question for taking member value from good to great has changed over the past few decades. Great organizations no longer look at lagging indicators such as how many members attend chapter meetings, but govern for a sustainable future by asking "How effectively do we deliver on our mission and vision, differentiate ASSE, increase our value as a profession, and provide a positive, career-enhancing impact for members?"

Working with a respected association consultant, the BOD and a highly diverse group of more than 50 members met in early 2012 to discuss the current situation and available opportunities. This group re-

viewed an environmental scan and Society trends, and read materials related to association governance. We discussed issues of alignment, representation, resources, membership needs, current methods of providing value and external factors such as association governance trends.

What's clear is that forward-thinking associations now favor a smaller, more efficient and effective governance structure that is focused on being strategic and sustainable. For ASSE, the new vision provided by a governance change in the Society will create:

- A smaller (10 members versus 16), flatter, more strategic BOD that can effectively recognize and capitalize on emerging opportunities that best serve ASSE's mission and vision.
- A governance structure that is directly accountable to the membership, that is more representative of the assorted and varied voices of members, and that addresses professional needs.
- A BOD that by its makeup is better qualified and represents how members engage with the Society and derive value, which will allow more members the opportunity to grow into leadership roles.
- A council structure that is more effective in providing support and value to various membership groups, and that is focused on operational aspects and strategies for achieving our goals.
- A volunteer leadership structure that provides more efficient engagement opportunities with improved support.
- An organizational structure that engages members beyond where they live, and focuses on who they are, what they do, where they work and the solutions they need.

• An organizational structure that is based on trust, respect and the common good, that values strong communication, and that provides pathways for constructive feedback which in turn creates a positive culture for volunteer leaders and ASSE members.

During the coming months, you will hear more about the vision for governance change. I hope you will attend meetings or participate in a webinars that will explain the proposed changes. This is a transparent process, with the shared goal of creating a new governance structure that is more efficient, effective and strategic. We need your feedback and I urge you to participate. Thank you.

Richard A. Pollock, CSP

ASSE is striving to create a structure that engages members beyond where they live and focuses on who they are, what they do, where they work and the solutions they need.

"Change is the law of life and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."

John F. Kennedy

We Want to Hear From You



Share your thoughts on the board restructure initiative on Rick's blog at www.asse.org/getconnected.

Also be sure to visit our dedicated website at <http://restructure2013.asse.org>.