

Leading ASSE Into the Future: Board Restructure

Think for a moment about all the things that have changed in your life in the past 18 to 20 years. The list is likely quite long, with new changes occurring almost daily. Similarly, the environment in which ASSE operates has changed radically since 1995, which is when the Society last changed its governance structure.

ASSE is poised to become a truly global membership organization, influencing safety worldwide while giving members a richly connected network of peers and a vast warehouse of knowledge to draw upon. However, its governance structure creates challenges that hinder the Society's ability to be truly nimble, flexible, efficient and effective. By enacting meaningful changes to this structure, ASSE members have a unique opportunity to help the Society prosper and advance the profession well into the future.

A Systematic, Member-Driven Approach to Change

Proactive preparedness and continuous improvement are foundational principles of safety. This initiative embraces those ideals. In March 2010, the Board of Directors (BOD) recognized a need to examine its structure. So, it formed an advisory task force of member leaders, which was expanded in January 2012 to a study group of more than 50 member leaders and members-at-large, facilitated by an expert in association governance. This group discussed current trends, member demographics, business factors, political/social values and the global climate. It also performed a comprehensive condition assessment and reviewed the Society's goals. Based on this collaborative and iterative process, the group drafted a consensus model for a new structure that was subsequently updated based on feedback from several volunteer groups.

In May 2012, a smaller group met to review and update the draft model, which was subsequently presented to the BOD in June 2012. Between June 2012 and January 2013, the BOD continued to deliberate and consider additional input on the draft model. In February 2013, the board and its governance expert discussed further updates and the board approved in principle a revised draft model to distribute to the full ASSE membership for discussion and feedback. This model, FAQs about the process, an explanation of key changes and addi-

A Changed World

- In 1995, **49%** of safety professionals had unrestricted access to the Internet and **33%** had no access. Today, more than **99%** have access.
- Since 1995, **ASSE membership** has grown by more than **15%**.
- Since 1995, the number of ASSE's **practice specialties** has grown **112.5%**.
- In 1995, the practice specialties produced fewer than **200 pages** of content. In 2012, these groups generated nearly **3,600 pages** of technical content.
- The number of ASSE members who belong to at least one practice specialty has **grown by 34.7%** since 1995.
- **Common interest groups (CIGs)** did not exist before Women in Safety Engineering was formed in 2003. Today, more than **5,100 member** belong to ASSE's four CIGs.
- In 1995, **sustainability** was not an issue for SH&E professionals. Today, 39% of members report an **increased role** in sustainability.
- In 1995, SH&E professionals focused primarily on safety and **OSHA compliance**. Today, their expanded responsibilities include security, **business strategy and global management**.

A Greater Voice for Members

As you consider this information and review the supporting data, you may think of the adage, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Yes, ASSE has experienced much growth and success in the years since its last governance change. The Society is strong. That is why now is the ideal time to apply some new wisdom, "If it ain't broke, break it." Being proactive in changing its structure will enable ASSE to maximize its resources, create more leadership opportunities, increase diversity and bring new voices to the decision-making process.

The reasons for change are many. For example, ASSE's current governance structure is regionally focused and chapter-centric, yet members are shifting from geographic engagement to industry-specific and common interest methods, and they are engaging

virtually more than face-to-face.

As ASSE membership continues to diversify, the new model will provide for more balanced representation of the Society's evolving membership. It will allow for more efficient use of volunteer resources to better focus on both strategic and operational issues. Collectively, this will create new opportunities for a larger pool of skilled and experienced members to engage in ASSE leadership, which will better support members at the chapter level.

In addition, the new model aligns with the Society's strategic plan. Its adoption will position ASSE to be more responsive to its strategic plan and will enable the Society to more proactively respond to the changing environment of a global and technically driven profession. The proposed model will also bring direct member voices to the BOD. The addition of five directors-at-large (ASSE members) will give all members a direct vote and clear representation on the BOD. Adding a public director will bring a different perspective to the BOD's deliberations as well. This practice has been adopted by many similar organizations, including BCSP and IOSH, and would enable ASSE to access an expertise/experience not commonly found among the membership.

Next Steps

The Society is actively engaging regional operating committees, chapters, practice specialties, members and other constituent groups to gather feedback on this model. As this issue goes to press, a webinar is being developed to explain the changes and their benefits, and to answer key questions. Regular communications are being delivered in various other communications channels as well.

Please bookmark <http://restructure2013.asse.org> and regularly review the latest information about this initiative, discuss it with fellow members and share your feedback.

Key Differences

- Decrease BOD from 16 to 10 members.
- Add one public member.
- Elect 8 BOD members Society-wide.
- Separate governance function from operations function.
- Eliminate the Executive Committee.
- Expand regions (anticipated) for additional chapter support.

tional information about this initiative are now posted at <http://restructure2013.asse.org>.