

President's Report, 2005

President's Report

October 20, 2005 The 2004-2005 association year was filled with important activities and achievements of members through committees, task forces, panels, and member participation in programs and services. Volunteerism is alive and well for AAHSL! I want to offer a special thanks to the members of AAHSL's leadership team including the Board of Directors, past-president Roger Guard, president-elect Logan Ludwig, executive director Shirley Bishop and the chairs of committees, task forces, panels, and boards who provided superb support to all components of the Association.

This year we also witnessed the Katrina disaster and many academic health centers and individual AAHSL libraries have provided assistance in a variety of ways. We continue to have our AAHSL colleagues in the affected area in our hearts and minds.

The extensive work of the association is reflected in the annual reports published in the AAHSL/AAHSLD 27th Annual Report 2004-2005. These reports together with other documentation generated by the association's various units are also available on the AAHSL website.

In this report I reflect on some of AAHSL's strategic opportunities and collaborations beginning with the November 2004 Town Hall Meeting and the work of the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Town Hall Meeting: In his president's report for 2004 Roger Guard indicated that a "consensual vision" would emerge from the November 2004 Town Hall Meeting. For the AAHSL leadership team, the consensual vision came in the form of the highest votes for the priorities of the future and these became the primary drivers of 2004-2005 priorities, providing validation of current direction and guidance on potential new initiatives. For AAHSL leadership, this was more than an energizing exercise at an annual meeting, and actions have resulted from the thoughtful and informed input of members. As a reminder, the following is the list of priority items resulting from the Town Hall Meeting categorized by AAHSL standing committee (votes are in parentheses):

- Annual Statistics: Make current and retrospective online statistics more interactive (50); Align more closely with outcomes assessment (38).
- Charting the Future: Programs at annual meeting (41); Database of member activity (36).
- Outcomes Assessment: Develop qualitative guidelines & quantitative standards unique to AAHSL (44).
- Leadership: Build new components - focus on new directors (37).
- Scholarly Communication: Develop models/methods for institutional repositories (44); Member support - website, tool kits, communication (42).

Actions taken by your Board of Directors as a direct result of the Town Hall Meeting and the Board's annual planning meeting have included organizational structure changes

and new directions related to the Web Editorial Board, the Annual Statistics Editorial Board, the Outcomes & Assessment Committee, and planning related to IT support of association activities. It is perhaps not surprising that a number of Town Hall Meeting priorities relate in some way to technology: interactive statistics, member activity database, institutional repository.

The Web Editorial Board has been decommissioned with thanks for a job well done by Ed Tawyea and editorial board members. Jim Shedlock has been appointed the new AAHSL Web Editor. The Board has discussed broadening the scope of this appointed position to include planning and oversight of information technology architecture to support the activities of the association including portal development for various member web-based services, institutional repository planning, database support, and IT support of the Annual Statistics. The Board felt that significant IT changes were needed to support member ambitions for AAHSL and that this could be most effectively achieved with an appointed officer with broad responsibility for planning - a position the Board has referred to as a "knowledge architect". The Board of Directors will serve as the oversight group for association IT activity as the position of Web Editor continues to evolve and funding sources are identified for IT activities.

The Annual Statistics Editorial Board and the Outcomes & Assessment Committee have been combined to form a new committee named the Assessment & Statistics Committee. The new committee offers an opportunity for closer alignment of two important areas -- outcomes assessment and ongoing development of the AAHSL Annual Statistics, an alignment underscored as a Town Hall Meeting priority for the future. The previous groups had both provided excellent leadership to their respective domains and the Board felt that this was an opportune time to bridge the domains and focus on integration and alignment of these two important areas. The new committee is chaired by Gary Byrd and both Gary and Tamera Lee, 2004-2005 chair of the Outcomes & Assessment Committee, have provided excellent insight regarding the organization and operation of the new committee. Members of both committees whose terms did not end in 2005 will continue in the new committee bringing important continuity to the work of the new standing committee.

Member ambitions may require increased funding (or reduced expense in existing areas, or both strategies) to be fully realized. It is in this area that the Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations will assist AAHSL as our association validates programs and services that we feel are most important for the future. Although not all costs of member priority programs are known at this point, it is clear that the current AAHSL budget will not stretch far enough to include all new initiatives.

Blue Ribbon Panel: President Roger Guard appointed the Blue Ribbon Panel in 2004 and charged the panel with "Examining the financial state of AAHSL in light of the Association's vision, goals, and strategies." The Blue Ribbon Panel was superbly chaired by Rick Forsman and members included David Ginn, Carol Jenkins, Brett Kirkpatrick, Ruth Riley, and Virginia Saha. The Panel has issued an excellent report and I hope you agree with me that the group not only met the charge, but went well beyond

in its thoroughness and attention to a multi-year framework for matching member ambition with available resources.

The major observations of the Panel included the following:

- AAHSL is currently in a stable fiscal position to support existing programs to which it is committed for the next 2-3 years
- There is strong evidence to suggest that new funding sources will be required as the membership examines the services and programs that will be necessary to fulfill the Association's mission and vision in the future
- The size of the reserve fund currently maintained at 50% of annual operating budget could go as low as 30% of operating budget to fund start-up services
- Current AAHSL full institutional membership dues at \$1500/year are .05% of member annual library budgets (average budget is \$3M)
- Core AAHSL services should rely primarily on support from member dues for stability and sustainability over time
- AAHSL is not large enough or in a position to create substantial cost-recovery income from services to non-members
- Income potential from fee-based services for members such as workshops and special reports is currently limited but should be investigated further for feasibility and desirability
- AAHSL can expand its partnership activities and leverage resources via collaboration with key strategic partners
- AAHSL should develop a multi-year strategy to pursue initiatives with NLM
- AAHSL should retain a simple dues structure and two tiers of membership
- Periodic reviews of finance policies, provision of periodic updates to members tied to the budget, and more detailed budget reports and projections distributed in advance of the annual meeting should be implemented
- Members should decide whether to continue to draw down the initiative and operating funds to meet agreed upon program expenses, or seek to increase membership dues to slow and offset the draw-down of these funds

The agenda for the 2005 annual membership meeting includes time for a dues discussion following the presentation of the Blue Ribbon Panel Report & Recommendations. The Town Hall Meeting member priorities and the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel both suggest that business as usual (that is, continuing to draw down the reserve funds) in support of Association core programs is possible for the next 2-3 years, but this strategy has some risks related to our ability to implement new programs including any new programmatic activities related to new directors, providing post-NLM support of Leadership Fellows activity, and supporting an enhanced IT environment for association activities.

Strategic Collaborations: Effective strategic collaborations with the Medical Library Association (MLA), Association of Research Libraries (ARL), National Library of Medicine (NLM), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and the Association of Academic Health Centers (AHC) appeared to be particularly effective during the past year. Following is a brief review of these major collaborations. Full

reports of AAHSL's organizational units may be found in this Annual Report publication and on the AAHSL website.

- AHC: The collaboration with AHC is the newest strategic collaboration and is still evolving. AHC is a small and nimble organization with a collegiality that feels similar to AAHSL. AAHSL leadership attended both the spring and annual (fall) 2005 meetings of AHC and Logan Ludwig participated in a special strategic planning session at Vanderbilt University in August 2005. This strategic collaboration is still evolving as AAHSL completes its first full year of affiliated membership with an association that is inclusive of all health professions. Planned collaboration includes the contribution of a database record reflecting health sciences librarians and AHC library directors for AHC's health professions website (in partnership with MLA), and AHC participation in the 2005 Leadership Fellows Capstone in November.
- AAMC: The continuing strong collaboration with AAMC included excellent AAHSL representation on the Council of Academic Societies (Byrd; Bader) and the jointly sponsored Matheson Lecture and annual meeting reception with the Group on Information Resources. AAMC staff also regularly participates in the Leadership Fellows program. AAHSL played a central role in CAS' Scholarship Dissemination Task Force chaired by Gary Byrd and Shelley Bader. The task force using a project advisory committee undertook the CAS Journal Study. A summary report authored by Byrd of the CAS Journal Study and the Kaufman-Wills "The Facts about Open Access" Study will be distributed to CAS members in advance of the 2005 AAMC annual meeting and has been shared with AAHSL members. AAMC staff did a truly extraordinary job of keeping member societies informed about the Katrina disaster and AAHSL used AAMC's communications to keep AAHSL members informed.
- NLM: Funding for the highly successful Leadership Fellows program has been continued for another 3 years by NLM and an evaluation methodology for the program has been developed. This program has strengthened AAHSL's collaboration with NLM. AAHSL has provided strong support for the NIH Public Access Policy implementation on PubMed Central and open access publishing issues in general. Support of NLM and NIH for the development of chemical databases (challenged by the American Chemical Society) was also strongly supported by AAHSL. Much of the effort of crafting AAHSL public statements was accomplished by AAHSL's hard-working Scholarly Communications Committee and key documents are posted on the AAHSL website.
- ARL: AAHSL's relationship with ARL continues into a fourth year on the Leadership Fellows program in which ARL staff provide coordination and programmatic support. ARL is also a collaborator on issues of open access publishing including AAHSL participation in the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and the Alliance for Taxpayer Access (ATA). Scholarly publishing issues and OA are coordinated for AAHSL by the Scholarly Communications Committee.
- MLA: MLA remains a key strategic collaborator with overlapping memberships of AAHSL members in MLA and joint funding of a lobbyist firm in Washington, D.C. The Joint Legislative Task Force of AAHSL and MLA is a long-term highly successful collaboration. In the spirit of the important collaboration with MLA, MLA President M.J. Tooley initiated an e-mail dialog during the Katrina disaster to keep AAHSL, MLA, and

NLM leadership informed about the disaster particularly from a library or knowledge perspective and to attempt to initiate help to those affected.

I would judge the past year as a "high voltage" year with open access and NIH chemical database issues, actions and counter-actions regarding the NIH Public Access Policy, issuance of the CAS Journal Study summary report, excellent work and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel, renewal of the Leadership Fellows support for another 3 years by NLM, Dr. Elias Zerhouni's acceptance of AAHSL's invitation as the 2005 Matheson Lecturer, changes in the AAHSL committee structure, and the Katrina disaster. Our highly collegial organization has taken all of this in stride and has collectively accomplished a great deal. Please accept my thanks to all members for your dedication to AAHSL and the good work our Association does on behalf of academic health center libraries.

J. Michael Homan
AAHSL President 2004-2005