

Message from the Executive Director

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Scholarship. A word we all use but how is it actually defined? To the basic scientist the meaning is clearly ingrained from our graduate student days that scholarship equals publication. And not just any publication, but specifically within certain journals of our discipline. For decades, survival at the bench has seemingly necessitated becoming narrower and narrower in our expertise, cornering the market on a specific niche in the scientific research world. We publish in evermore specialized journals with an extensive list of co-authors, each of whom is an expert in an area adjacent to our own. How long can this specialization continue before serious consequences ensue? Ask the dinosaurs! How ironic that in all other aspects of our lives, the opposite is true. Career expectations are expanding and if we are to succeed, our definition of scholarship must do likewise.

The focus of this message is a wake-up call to all medical science educators, be they basic scientists or academic clinicians, to look around them at the world in which we live today. No longer can we blindly accept the doctrine in which we were trained that scholarship equals *only* research publications. The demands on medical faculty have forced us to broaden our outlook, to venture out of our laboratories and into the active milieu of the modern medical center. As faculty members, we are expected to be competent leaders in educational reform and creating institutional policy. It is assumed that we can move effectively between lecture format and small group teaching, all the while understanding the dynamics of adult learning. We are expected to competently and compassionately advise medical students on problems which ten years ago did not even exist. These plus a host of other skills that our graduate advisors could not have anticipated have now become the norm.

Yet beyond our narrowed disciplines, most of us are not experts! How then can we develop these new skills? Where can we go for a credible source of requisite knowledge? Whether visiting medical schools throughout the United States or traveling to countries abroad, I find such questions and insecurities are becoming a dominant concern. That is precisely why the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE) is so timely and necessary to medical academia today. As a professional development society, IAMSE strives to provide information, training, and opportunities for scholarship to meet the expanding roles of each individual member.

This journal, *JIAMSE*, is one such opportunity. Between these electronic pages are ideas to stimulate and inform. Medical education is evolving at an accelerating rate, and we as basic science educators cannot afford to be left behind. Many of you share my personal bias that it is we the practitioners who must guide those changes which impact most directly upon our disciplines. Reading *JIAMSE* and assimilating new ideas can educate the mind. Publishing in *JIAMSE* the educational techniques you have developed and honed is another step toward broadening your sphere of scholarship.

We live and work in ever expanding careers and to succeed, scholarship outside the research laboratory must keep pace. Through IAMSE and *JIAMSE*, we will continue to provide the means for individuals to redefine this term as they continually strive to redefine themselves.