

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Fulfilling a need; that's what it's all about. In the beginning it was the Basic Science Education Forum (BSEF) which provided the first means for medical faculty to exchange creative and innovative ideas for teaching the sciences basic to medicine. Through the pages of this publication, an internet listserv, and a series of biennial international conferences, the BSEF succeeded in attracting individuals in over 400 medical institutions spread throughout 87 countries of the world! This included every allopathic medical school in North America, as well as most of our osteopathic and podiatric schools. Clearly, there was a need for such communication, and the BSEF was fulfilling that need.

But success had its price. The organization was expanding logarithmically; inevitably, costs of providing needed information and support finally exceeded the resources of our volunteer faculty. Another way had to be found if we were to continue, and on July 1, 1997, that new way was formally announced. The BSEF would undergo internal restructuring to become the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE). A new organization had been born.

The new structure would be supported by a combination of Foundation, Government, and Corporate grants, proceeds from biennial conferences, the production of educational products, and a nominal membership fee. The governance would be established as required by United States law for the operation of non-profit organizations. That meant a system of membership-elected Officers and Board of Directors would be created, and formal Bylaws would be written. To navigate this unfamiliar course with all its potential pitfalls, the decision was made to contract with an associations management company. Associations International, Inc. in McLean, Virginia, was the company finally selected to become our headquarters, handle our financial concerns, and advise us in all business related matters (see p. 27).

Needless to say, birth can be difficult and sometimes painful. But IAMSE continues to take confident steps while keeping the vision clear. Ten individuals were appointed by the President to serve as an initial Board of Directors. Their names, listed on the inside front cover of this issue, reflect the approximate U.S.-to-International ratio of the original BSEF membership.

One of their first tasks will be to create the initial IAMSE Bylaws. This new leadership also faces the daunting task of coordinating production and distribution of resources in medical science education of the highest calibre, and the guiding of IAMSE to become the world's

leading organization for the support of medical science educators. One immediately visible step toward these goals is the development of the *Basic Science Educator* into the only peer review journal devoted specifically to issues of cross-disciplinary medical science education.

Although the infrastructure of IAMSE may have changed from that of the BSEF, importantly our purpose remains the same (see Mission Statement, inside front cover). The new structure of IAMSE will allow us to now achieve many projects only visualized in the BSEF. Examples include, producing the first computerized monograph series titled *Current Topics in Medical Science Education*, and the creation of realtime Faculty Development Workshops available to everyone over the World Wide Web.

And so, as the reincarnation of the BSEF, IAMSE now begins to grow. Its leaders are dedicated to developing this into the premiere faculty organization to provide educational, technical, and psychological support (i.e., Faculty Development) for all those who teach the fundamental sciences. But we cannot do this alone. We need the help and expertise of all those who believe in the medical importance of the disciplines they teach; of those who believe we *can* inspire students with the wonder of scientific discovery; and of those who believe it is *our* responsibility to train competent physicians for the future. Your support through Charter Membership has made it possible to begin organizing the most valuable asset we have, the collective knowledge of our members. IAMSE believes you are committed to grow with us, to share your intellectual and teaching gifts, to reach beyond where you now stand to a brighter and more rewarding tomorrow for your students, your profession, and yourself. Through IAMSE, we will together accomplish the task of successfully fulfilling those needs.

