

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Roger W. Koment, Ph.D.

During this first year of operation for the International Association of Medical Science Educators (IAMSE), we have successfully completed much of the groundwork that will carry us well into the future. Many of these accomplishments concern the “nuts and bolts” of any beginning organization; and, while most may be of little interest to our members, they are necessary for administrative purposes. Many of these achievements have been inordinately time-consuming for us as volunteer faculty, but they have not detracted from visible progress toward our primary goals. All have provided the foundation to support projects that directly address our mission statement (see inside front cover).

IAMSE is now a bona fide non-profit organization. That means we have successfully negotiated the course to become eligible to receive grants from government and Foundation sources. In this issue of our journal, we gratefully acknowledge Gold Standard Multimedia, Inc., and the National Medical School Review, as the first of our Annual IAMSE Corporate Sponsors (see inside back cover and p.39). The development of both grants and corporate sponsorships is necessary so that we may create useful educational resources while maintaining membership fees at an absolute minimum. The Board of Directors has further addressed the issue of equitable membership fees by creating a rate structure based upon the GNP of each country, as determined by the World Bank (see p.37). The net result of all these actions is that membership in IAMSE has increased to include individuals from the medical institutions of 31 countries.

As the resources and membership of IAMSE grow, so too have the tangible benefits of membership. From its humble beginnings as a simple newsletter, the *Basic Science Educator* has now evolved into an internationally recognized peer-reviewed journal, facilitating communication between teaching faculty across all medical science disciplines. This issue contains contributions from authors in seven countries! Plans for expansion of the Editorial Board are now under way through our search to appoint a Managing Editor and a Production Editor (see p.15), and up to fifteen individuals as additional Manuscript Reviewers (see p.20). This issue also contains the first advertisements for commercial products in medical education. While knowledge of these products is important to each of us as medical educators, fees for such advertising also help to offset the printing and distribution costs of our journal. When speaking with company representatives, remember to thank them for supporting communication between medical science educators with their advertising dollars.

The second tangible product for which our organization has become widely known is a series of biennial international conferences on educational strategies in the medical sciences. Since their inception in 1993, these events continue to grow in reputation, and registrations are always “sold out” weeks before the early deadlines. We continue our policy of selecting one medical school each time to host these events, and for the upcoming Fourth

Biennial Conference, July 17-20, 1999 (see p.26) we were pleased that sixteen medical schools from North America had volunteered to take this role. Such demand for both attendance and hosting serves to underscore the important contributions these conferences provide to individual teaching faculty. IAMSE members directly benefit by receiving a 15 to 20% discount on the registration fees, plus priority access.

A third tangible benefit of IAMSE membership involves the creation of new features on our website, some of which will remain available only to members (see p.30). The first change Ms. Julie Hewett, our new Webmistress, Business Manager, and Association Secretariat (see p.33), has made was to relocate the website to a more proper address for a non-profit worldwide organization, <<http://www.IAMSE.org>>. Projects that involve interaction between individuals through web technology will become a centerpiece of IAMSE's future, and even exceed the growing demands we currently have for both journal and traditional conference access. Faculty development activities over the web are but one idea actively under development. Initially, projects will be led by individuals from the Board of Directors, each of whom has been requested to form working groups of IAMSE members to accomplish their goals. These various projects will provide opportunities to multiple individuals for professional growth and international recognition, as well as opportunities to help guide the role of IAMSE in medical education. We encourage you to become involved (see p.35).

Each of us has been charged with the task of training competent and compassionate physicians for the 21st Century. We are of one voice: science must continue to be the foundation of clinical medicine. We know the challenges which new educational findings and diminishing funds have brought to our professional commitment. However, we also know the benefit of strength in community, common cause, and steadfast adherence to the highest professional standards. IAMSE is the vehicle of this common vision of excellence, and we encourage your continued participation.

