



James P. Walsh, President, Academy of Management; A.F. Thurnau Professor; Gerald and Esther Carey Professor of Business Administration; Professor of Management & Organizations; Professor of Strategy in the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.

President's Message:

A Look Inside Our Invisible College

Scholars have been gathering to collect and advance their insights and discoveries since at least the time of the Renaissance. The *Academia Secretorum Naturae*, for example, was established in Naples 450 years ago. Conceived in 1936, the Academy of Management is a professional association marked by high purpose. With more than 18,000 members in over 100 countries, we come together to develop, advance, record and disseminate our understanding of management and organizations, not just for our own good, but if I can be so grand, for the good of humanity. At a fundamental level, the process of organizing, and the fact of organization, mark and define our social and economic lives. We work to enable organizations to serve our noblest aspirations.

I am honored to serve as the Academy's 65th president. With a personal history in this association that goes back over 25 years, a deep understanding of our accomplishments and capabilities, and a fairly clear-eyed appreciation of our current opportunities and challenges, I could use this opportunity to talk about

the past, present and future of the Academy of Management. This is a typical presidential message and certainly an appropriate one. Nevertheless, I am going to break with that tradition here. Just two months ago, Angelo DeNisi, our now past-president, delivered a compelling address that articulated these challenges and opportunities. There is no reason to cover that same ground again so soon. I want to talk about us instead. Rather than talking about our future, I want to talk about the people who work so hard to ensure it.

Notwithstanding my years of membership, I never quite appreciated all that everyone does to make us who we are. I guess that is not surprising. We do work in an invisible college after all. With three full years of service on the Board of Governor's Executive Committee under my belt, however, I can now fully appreciate what everyone does. Of course, much of this work is done by us, the members. Ironically, while almost all of it is visible, it is largely unseen. And then there is the work done by our professional staff in New York. Their efforts are invisible and unseen. All of this work is awe-inspiring.

It is a good idea to stop every now and again to simply appreciate all that we do. We should never take our efforts for granted. We are a volunteer, member-driven association after all. Without us we are nothing. And so, I want to use my opportunity here to share all that I have observed with you. I will begin by looking at how we sustain our three major activities. We publish our ideas and research findings; we come together to meet face-to-face every year; and we largely self-organize to deliver the services we need. Let's take a look at each in turn.

Our Publications. The Academy of Management offers its members four journals, an annual review series, and the proceedings of our annual meeting. Last year alone, we generated 5,615 pages of insight: *AMJ*, 1,285 pages; *AMR*, 770 pages; *AMP*, 405 pages; *AMLE*, 640 pages; the *Annals*, 605 pages; and the *Proceedings*, 1,910 pages. But of course, this scholarly work does not simply appear out of thin air. All manner of people devoted countless hours to create, produce, and deliver it to us. To begin, 1,145 of our colleagues wrote those pa-

pers (747 of them authored *Proceedings*' papers). We all know what is involved in conducting high quality scholarship. It is certainly not for the faint of heart. These authors deserve our utmost admiration and appreciation. But of course, they do not work alone. Our editorial teams work tirelessly to help them bring us their theoretical ideas, research results, and pedagogical insight. Although the workload can be crushing, we step up to help each other because we know that we must. Scholarship is at the center of our being.

Let's consider all that goes on behind the scenes of these publications. Pardon the repetitive nature of what is to come but I want to be sure that we appreciate what it takes to bring us these publications. Duane Ireland is the editor of the *Academy of Management Journal*. He has 9 associate editors, 155 editorial board members, and 1,271 *ad hoc* reviewers to call upon. Together these folks reviewed 987 submissions last year. Amy Hillman is the editor of the *Academy of Management Review*. She works with 7 associate editors, 136 editorial board members, and 371 *ad hoc* reviewers. They reviewed 488 submissions last year. Garry Bruton is the editor of the *Academy of Management Perspectives*. He works with 3 associate editors, 25 editorial board members, and 51 *ad hoc* reviewers. They considered 165 papers and proposals last year. Ben Arbaugh, the editor of the *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, has 6 associate editors, 91 editorial board members, and 77 *ad hoc* reviewers to call upon. They reviewed 200 submissions last year. Art Brief and I edit the *Annals*. We solicited and developed a dozen critical reviews last year. And after being appraised by our elaborate annual meeting review process, George Solomon worked to publish 318 condensed papers in the *Proceedings*. Under the leadership of our indefatigable editors, over 1,500 authors and reviewers brought this scholarship to us. We are in their debt.

Our Annual Meeting. Notwithstanding the worst economic climate in three generations, over 10,000 people traveled from 64 countries to attend our annual meeting last summer. In fact, registration was up 8% over the previous year. As Susan Jackson, the Program Chair, observed in the *Academy of Management News*, more than 10,000 individuals made this meeting possible. 8,380 people presented their ideas in one form or another (as authors, session chairs, facilitators, discussants, and caucus organizers). And of course, just as our publications need colleagues to review and develop our work, so too does our annual meeting. Sixty-one Program, PDW, and other Chairs worked with over 5,200 reviewers to bring us our best work. Of course, these efforts were complemented by the contributions of the members of the Local Arrangements Committee, the Greening Committee, the Placement Committee, the Director of Sponsorships, all manner of award committees, and our professional staff. And of course, the meeting could not happen without the contribution of our sponsors, local institutions and exhibitors. Everyone deserves our gratitude.

Our Services. The Annual Meeting may be the AOM's annual capstone event, but it is just the capstone. Volunteers work year 'round in a more dispersed fashion to make us all better. I have already mentioned our editorial work. But of course, our placement committee connects job seekers with potential employers. Last year, we enabled 1,795 job-seekers to consider one of the 573 jobs that we helped to advertise. These job seekers had access to positions from 81 non-US employers in over 27 countries. The scope of our placement operation is quite international these days.

Twenty-four divisions and interest groups comprise the Academy of Management. They range in size from smaller groups like Management History (394 members) and Careers (650 members) to such large communities as Business Policy and Strategy (5,202 members) and Organizational Behavior (5,836 members). Each group has its own elected slate of officers, officers who often serve their members for anywhere from three to five years, rotating through their various assignments. At the moment, over 280 people serve us in these 24 groups. These folks work as division officers, division representatives, secretaries, treasurers, historians, webmasters, listserv managers, newsletter editors, and more. At the Academy level, 14 colleagues serve on the Board of Governors (also giving us anywhere from three to five years of their lives...after almost always having served us as a division, affiliate or associate officer and as some kind of editor). And people staff a host of standing committees and task forces. The members of our Ethics (11 members), Membership (15 members), International Theme (6 members), Teaching (2 members), Practice (10 members), and Mentoring (2 members) committees, as well as the two people who serve as our Historians, all deserve our appreciation. And of course, we form task forces as needed. At the moment, the 30 members of the Board of Governor's Strategic Planning initiative, the 12 members of the International Meeting Task Force, and the 11 members of the Annual Meeting Welcoming Task Force deserve our thanks.

I venture to say that even the most oblivious among us know that many of our colleagues generously volunteer their time and talents to serve us. But I can say with confidence that very few of us have any idea of what goes in our New York headquarters. Working side by side with our professional staff has been the greatest joy of my time as an Academy Officer. While they are not members of our association, they knock themselves out for us. I will try to chronicle just a smattering of their recent initiatives here. In so doing, I hope I can communicate just how fortunate we are to have them by our side.

Support for our strategic planning efforts. Our staff has been central to any success we have had in our strategic planning process. As I said, thirty-one of us are involved in this effort. The staff has been working hard on this initiative for well over a year now. Among their many contributions, they compiled copious member data, conducted a membership survey, and then combed through our archives to produce an historical record for ten strategic issues. In the end, the staff wrote thirteen really insightful papers to inform our discussions. Their work has been stunningly good.

Can we hold our annual meeting outside of North America? This question has been top of mind for years. I think it is fair to say that "everyone" is inclined to hold our meeting outside North America sometime sooner than later. And yet, few know exactly what is involved in doing so. Our staff wrote an incredibly comprehensive report that detailed just what it would take to hold the meeting somewhere beyond the borders of Canada and the United States. Their analysis was as compelling as it was sobering. Unfortunately, it is just not feasible right now. As a result, the Board voted to hold a smaller--and hopefully very innovative--meeting outside of North America just as soon as we can. A Task Force is planning this event as we speak.

AOM Connect. We can thank our staff in New York for *AOM Connect*, our new online networking platform. It promises to make a huge contribution to our lives. With members scattered over 100 countries, it is crucial for us to be able to come together virtually. This new platform could be transformative. More than 3,800 members have visited the site since its launch; users are spending significant time there, returning in high numbers and accounting for over 70,000 page views. Over 30 new groups have formed already. I encourage you to visit the site at <http://connect.aomonline.org>

Podcasting. We have been experimenting with podcasts for a couple of years now. Forty-one sessions in Chicago were selected by our Program Chairs to be recorded. More than 1,000 colleagues have enjoyed these sessions after-the-fact. They can be found at <http://www.softconference.com/aom/slist.asp?C=2944>

Volunteer Support. Division officers constantly cycle through different sets of responsibilities. As a result, our association is something of a perpetual training machine. We decided to try to codify at least the basic information that Program and PDW Chairs need in order to do their jobs. Our Meetings and IT folks developed two online training modules this year; thirteen more are in development. They also worked to enhance our now centralized annual meeting review system. Moreover, all four journals now use *Scholar One*, an online submission and review system. *Scholar One* both simplifies the manuscript submission process for members and eases the editor's workload. It also increases security, reduces turnaround times, and improves communication. We are trying hard to use technology to streamline and improve our ability to work together.

Financial stewardship. While we certainly invest in our headquarters' operations, it is clear that we enjoy a fine return on that investment. Thanks to their careful stewardship of our financial resources, we have been able to do all that we do with very infrequent dues increases. Heck, our last one was five years ago! They are always on the lookout to save us money. For example, they were able to negotiate a reduction in our Chicago lodging rates, even after the contracts had been signed years ago, saving our attendees \$117,000. And thanks to some other negotiations on our behalf, our go-green initiatives, and various new mailing and internal efficiencies, they saved us another \$100,000 in

anticipated costs this past year. They really do have our best interests at heart.

This was not an extraordinary year. Everyone regularly makes these kinds of contributions. What amazes me about our staff's effort is that they do this innovative work while all the while keeping our back office running smoothly. Think about it. I began by chronicling the many contributions we offer each other. We do this work every year but the "we" changes constantly. A different set of us steps up annually to serve. The Academy is an ever changing, grassroots, volunteer-based organization. Large numbers of us endlessly move in and out of our many service roles. Our turnover is incredibly high. And yet, we continually serve each other in an efficient and innovative fashion. How do we do it? Of course, our effectiveness is a tribute to our character as colleagues, colleagues who cheerfully and generously give so much to the institution that sustains them. But we do not work alone. Our staff stands with us. They field and collect input from this constantly shifting group of volunteers; they support our myriad governance structures; and they capture and enable the endless array of innovative ideas that come from our members. The "rootwing" idea comes to mind. We usually think of this metaphor in terms of parenting. Parents provide roots for their children so they can confidently fly into the world. Likewise, our staff grounds us so we can soar.

I began by saying that I am honored to serve as the Academy's president. This honor is rooted in the fundamental decency that I see on display every day. I hope that by making our collective efforts visible here, that you too will feel the same sense of honor and indeed, pride that I feel as a member of the Academy of Management. I can't wait to see what we will accomplish together this year!

- James P. Walsh
President, Academy of Management



AOM Connect

Connecting the Academy's Global Community



<http://connect.aomonline.org>