



ASIP CENTENNIAL EDITORIAL

The American Society for Investigative Pathology in the Next Century

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In preparing for the 100th anniversary of the formation of the American Society for Experimental Pathology (ASEP) this year, I have been reacquainting myself with the history of that organization, its merger in 1976 with the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists (AAPB) to form the American Association of Pathologists (AAP), and the reincorporation of AAP as the American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP) in 1992. As we celebrate our centennial affiliation with the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), it is important to revisit our roots as well as look forward to what makes ASIP great and what challenges remain to overcome.

The Eclectic Nature of ASIP's Membership

ASIP represents an international group of scientists with membership from more than 30 countries. Our members specialize in varied areas of investigation: different biological systems, organizational levels (eg, molecular, subcellular, cellular, tissue/organ, and organism), or model systems (eg, prokaryotic, eukaryotic, animal, and human). Although the vast majority of our members are in academia, an increasing number work outside traditional pathology departments. Approximately half of our members have a Ph.D. or equivalent, half have a clinical degree (eg, M.D., D.V.D., or equivalent), and more than a quarter hold dual degrees (eg, M.D.-Ph.D.). Just as pathology departments in medical schools have a dual identity in basic science and clinical service, so do our members have split allegiances. This is further intensified by what some consider a lack of pathology identity in graduate education. These factors feed into why experimental pathologists appear to be in a constant state of identity crisis. As a diverse group, how do we define ourselves?

We are experimental biologists with a particular interest in pathogenesis. To a great extent, our identity is the same as it was a century ago when ASEP was established to provide a pathology arm to FASEB. In fact, for the first three decades FASEB consisted of only four societies

representing the physiologists, biochemists, pharmacologists, and pathologists; it was then expanded to include the nutritionists and immunologists. Today, in addition to ASIP, the Federation encompasses 25 societies, and many members of those societies are engaged in studying mechanisms of disease, thus qualifying them for ASIP membership. Indeed, a significant proportion of ASIP members are also members of other FASEB constituent societies, let alone other pathology organizations. So why are we ASIP members? I proffer that our unique interest in studying the mechanisms of disease and translating that information for the good of the public unifies us as a distinct entity with a particular goal of improving global health.

ASIP Membership in Action

"The mission of the Society is to promote the discovery, advancement, and dissemination of basic and translational knowledge in experimental pathology and related disciplines. This shall be achieved by fostering investigation into the pathogenesis, classification, diagnosis, and manifestations of disease through meetings, publications, and educational activities (American Society for Investigative Pathology, <http://www.asip.org/about>)."

Supporting the Biomedical Research Enterprise

Nearly 9% of the dues of a regular ASIP member support the public policy initiatives of FASEB: increasing research funding, supporting career development, and educating the public on the critical role that basic science plays in underpinning medical research. ASIP provides particular expertise in the arena of human subject research protections, with the goal of ensuring that research on human subjects (including their biological materials) proceeds with appropriate safeguards but without insurmountable obstacles. ASIP also pursues public policy initiatives with our sister pathology societies to support pathology-centric issues. With the constant threat of funding cutbacks, as well as restrictions on funding for clinical service,

ASIP must rise to the occasion by educating our political leaders and providing support to sustain our members so they can continue their research.

Promoting Pathology as a Discipline

One can partly divine the priorities of a society by realizing its relationships with other groups and coalitions. As evidenced by ASIP's continued affiliation with five other FASEB societies that meet jointly at Experimental Biology each year, the Society's relationship to these organizations is of paramount importance. ASIP is also affiliated with the Italian Society of Pathology and Translational Medicine (formerly, Italian Pathology Society), the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, and the American Society for Clinical Pathology, as well as with the societies it has managed (see *Nurturing Related Disciplines: Ebb and Flow*). In addition, ASIP is a charter member of the Intersociety Council for Pathology Information (ICPI), which publishes the annual *Directory of Pathology Training Programs*. ASIP and ICPI jointly fund several programs, including the ASIP Summer Research Opportunity Program in Pathology (which is on hiatus this year and will be revamped and reinvigorated in 2014); the publication of popular career brochures *Pathology: A Career in Medicine* (<http://www.asip.org/Career/index.htm>), *Journey to Success: Career Pathways for Biomedical Scientists in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine* (<http://www.asip.org/Journey/index.html>), and *The Road to Becoming a Physician Scientist in Pathology and Laboratory Medicine* (<http://www.asip.org/CareerPath/index.htm>); and various career development programs that are held at the ASIP Annual Meeting. ASIP is also a participating member of the Intersociety Pathology Council and the Council of Academic Societies of the American Association of Medical Colleges and is a cooperating society of the American Board of Pathology. Clearly, ASIP represents the interests of the research-oriented pathologist in groups dedicated to medical school education and postgraduate training in pathology.

Supporting Scientific Publications

A core mission of ASIP is the dissemination of information about the pathogenesis, classification, diagnosis, and manifestations of disease. Since its inception in 1925, *The American Journal of Pathology* was the official journal of the AAPB and also became the official journal of ASEP before the merger of AAPB and ASEP to form AAP. In 1992, ASIP became the owner and self-publisher of the *AJP*, and an editorial office was organized within the Society office. When ASIP made the decision to partner with Elsevier effective January 2011, Elsevier became the publisher, but ASIP retained full editorial control and copyright. Even with the Elsevier arrangement, the editorial office has five full-time employees, and additional support for the *Journal* is provided by the ASIP Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, as well as administrative assistants.

In 1998, *The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics* was launched, with support from ASIP and the *AJP*, as the official journal of the Association for Molecular Pathology (AMP, an ASIP affiliate society). The *JMD* continues to be co-owned by AMP and ASIP and managed through the *AJP* editorial office, though it, too, is published by Elsevier. The arrangement between AMP and ASIP to co-own and manage the *JMD* has been mutually beneficial to both societies.

Nurturing Related Disciplines: Ebb and Flow

For several decades, the ASIP executive office has functioned as a multisociety office and has provided management expertise to other organizations with overlapping interests. Until 1990, ASIP shared its executive office exclusively with the Universities for the Advancement of Research and Education in Pathology (UAREP). Dr. Frances Pitlick, my predecessor as ASIP Executive Officer, was hired in 1987 to divide her time equally between ASIP and UAREP. In 1990, the Association of Pathology Chairs (APC) joined the office. In the 1990s, the North American Vascular Biology Organization (NAVBO), AMP, the Association for Pathology Informatics (API), and the International Society for Biological and Environmental Repositories (ISBER) were also organized in the ASIP/UAREP office. In 2000, the Intersociety Committee on Pathology Information (now known as the Intersociety Council for Pathology Information) moved from an independent location to the ASIP/UAREP office. Little did I know when I was preparing to become ASIP's Executive Officer in 2001 that I would be directing eight organizations.

ASIP has managed several pathology organizations through the years. In 2003, UAREP was dissolved and formal management agreements were established between ASIP and the remaining groups in the office (APC, AMP, API, ISBER, ICPI, and NAVBO). That same year, ASIP revised its Bylaws to establish Divisions, which were defined as semi-autonomous organizations that were not separately incorporated and for which ASIP would have a fiduciary responsibility. API and ISBER were invited to join ASIP as Divisions and did so in 2004 and 2005, respectively. The Pulmonary Pathology Society (PPS) joined ASIP as a Division in 2006. NAVBO (which was never a Division and was independently incorporated) separated from ASIP management in 2006. My former colleague Richard Lynch (ASIP President from 1995 to 1996; deceased 2009) predicted that as ASIP helped these specialty organizations grow and develop, they would naturally want to become completely independent and would eventually separate from ASIP. Indeed, API chose to separate from ASIP in December 2008 and has become an independent organization. PPS followed suit the following year. As a Division of ASIP, ISBER membership increased 270%, attendance at its annual meeting increased 150%, corporate support increased nearly 600%, and its annual operating expenses nearly tripled, positioning ISBER to become financially independent.

And as predicted, ISBER has decided to become independent and will separate from ASIP effective June 1 of this year.

The independently incorporated societies managed by the ASIP office have also grown in size and complexity. AMP membership, for example, has grown from 254 in 1995 to greater than 2000 in 2012; meeting attendance has increased from less than 100 at the first molecular diagnostics workshop in 1992 to greater than 1500 in 2012; and the number of exhibit booths was an astounding 234 last year. Given the increasing complexity of managing the independently incorporated societies in the ASIP executive office and the consequent demand on executive staff to provide services, the ASIP leadership made a strategic decision in 2012 to encourage the development of independent office operations in the future. AMP is currently organizing a newly independent executive office, which will be operational in January of next year. (This is separate from the AMP-ASIP co-ownership of the *JMD*, which remains intact.) APC moved into its own office in January 2013.

Thus, this centennial year is also a transition year for the ASIP executive office, in which we are positioning ourselves to dedicate full effort to ASIP core missions in 2014. (ASIP will continue to manage ICPI, including the Intersociety Pathology Council and the publication of the *Directory of Pathology Training Programs* as well as the annual meeting of the National Association of Medical Examiners.) The ASIP leadership has approved additional resources for the ASIP executive office for the development of enhanced membership programs and additional educational offerings.

ASIP in the Next Century

The challenges that ASEP, AAPB, and AAP faced in the 20th century are strikingly similar to those that ASIP confronts today. In the 1960s and 1970s, the leaders of

AAPB and ASEP faced declining membership as newly formed specialty societies siphoned off members, and the remaining members complained that they were too busy or overburdened by financial challenges to attend multiple scientific meetings. Today in the 21st century, there has been a further balkanization of pathology societies. Funding for scientific research has waxed and waned over the decades. Periods of increased funding (eg, the Nixon war on cancer in the 1970s and the doubling of NIH funding in the late 1990s) have been followed by cutbacks to the detriment of scientific infrastructure, multiyear research projects, and the stable cultivation of the next generation of scientists to foster the scientific enterprise.

Even with these challenges, ASIP is fortunate to have a solid membership base of dedicated and experienced experimental pathologists, including 21 scientists who have been ASIP members for at least 50 years and another 75 who have been members for at least 40 years. We have built sufficient financial resources to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next century by investing in the core missions of the Society so we can deliver enhanced membership services and expand our educational offerings. As summarized in Kevin Roth's¹ Editorial in this issue of the *AJP*, the ASIP membership can take advantage of innovative technologies in medicine and science to "build on the scientific foundation laid by our predecessor"^{1,p1051} societies. ASIP will depend on the continued participation and expertise of its membership to sustain these efforts in our next hundred years.

Reference

1. Roth KA: The American Journal of Pathology centennial project: the centennial celebration is over, but the science moves forward. *Am J Pathol* 2013, 182:1050–1051