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P R E S I D E N T ' S P A G E

by Harry Bruce

EDITOR'S SUMMARY

Member and business concerns, project updates and future plans will be addressed during the annual ASIS&T Board of Directors' summer retreat at the end of July 2014. This is an opportunity for Board members to report as liaisons for committees and task forces, with appreciation for their important contributions to the Association. The Board will continue its focus on membership engagement, drawing feedback from member surveys and interviews and exploring opportunities to enhance membership interaction throughout the year. Members and consultants will report progress to promote those goals through the social media and website redesign initiatives. The Board will also critically evaluate issues related to the ASIS&T Annual Meeting, from its length and structure to perceptions of value by members and guests. The President expresses gratitude to the Board members for their volunteer efforts stewarding the Association and leading preparations for the Annual Meeting in Seattle.

KEYWORDS

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At the time of writing this column I am in the midst of preparing for the ASIS&T Board of Directors' summer retreat. I had hoped that the timing of this column would allow me to provide a report on the outcomes of the retreat, but at this stage I can only let you know what your Board will be discussing. During the year, the Board meets several times via telephone conference. These meetings generally run for 2-3 hours. We also regularly engage with one another via the Board's listserv with concerns brought forward by members of the Board or matters of business that need Board approval, presented by ASIS&T executive director Dick Hill. Our summer retreat is a wonderful opportunity for members of the Board to come together to discuss issues facing our association and to receive updates on a number of major projects that are underway. It is also an opportunity to discuss plans for the future of our Association. This year our Board retreat will be held in Seattle on Saturday and Sunday, July 26 and 27.

The agenda for the Board retreat includes reports from all hard-working ASIS&T committees and task forces. Members of the Board are liaisons to one or more ASIS&T committees; they will provide written or oral reports on the activities of the committees on which they serve. Each committee has been working to achieve goals set for this year. Board members will learn about the progress of each committee toward meeting their goals. Board liaisons will also communicate any issues or concerns arising or additional support or guidance required. This part of our agenda is intended as a celebration of the wonderful engagement and hard work of each committee. We also want to communicate our support and encouragement to committee members and chairs. The success of our association depends so much upon the input and commitment of members serving ASIS&T in this way.

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This year the Board has had a particular focus upon membership, both in terms of increasing the number of ASIS&T members in all constituencies (academic, professional and student) but also in terms of the level of engagement by all members with the association, and the benefits that come with ASIS&T membership. At the Board retreat, we will therefore be discussing at length the insights gained from the membership committee's survey of – and interviews with – ASIS&T members. The committee has been gathering data on the benefit members feel they receive (or don't receive) from their affiliation with ASIS&T; why some members are not renewing their memberships; what the association needs to do to retain existing members and to attract new members from all parts of the world; and how we can encourage more professionals to join our association. Ultimately, the committee will be presenting the Board with a number of recommendations. We hope to put these recommendations into action this year and beyond.

In terms of member engagement, the ASIS&T Board has for some time pondered how we might enhance opportunities for all our members to interact across the year. We have a very successful webinar series, but believe that we have not fully exploited the potential of social media and other web-based communication technologies to help our members feel connected to their worldwide network of ASIS&T colleagues and collaborators. At the board retreat, we will take time to further elaborate and discuss this significant aspect of member satisfaction. Additionally, the Board will receive updates on the progress of work on two important initiatives that we have sponsored this year: the social media initiative and the web presence and website redesign initiative. We have commissioned a number of active users of social media to begin work on postings that will attract the interest of members. We have also hired a consultant to work on a redesign of the ASIS&T website. At the Board retreat, this consultant will be reporting on progress made on the website redesign and seeking feedback from the Board. I am sure you will agree that a complete overhaul of the

ASIS&T website is due. We need to project a web presence that is leading edge. All members of the Board are excited about moving this initiative forward. We expect that we will be ready to make a public launch of the new website at the ASIS&T Annual Meeting in Seattle in November.

Finally, members of the Board will also use their face-to-face time discussing several issues related to the ASIS&T Annual Meeting. We are very fortunate as an association to have a highly regarded conference to which members choose to submit their best work and one where they come to network with colleagues and to meet new friends and share new ideas. That said, the Board is ever mindful of the need to pay close attention to the expectations of all members of ASIS&T when it comes to our Annual Meeting. There will always be ways that we can improve our conference and better match it with the needs of ASIS&T members. For this reason, the Board will focus some attention on issues such as the length and structure of the Annual Meeting, the expectations of SIGs and chapters, acceptance rates, the balance of papers and panels, and enhancing external and internal perceptions of the value and quality of the conference for professionals, students and researchers. This discussion will continue one begun at our retreat last year in Montreal. We aim to make progress on these issues in Seattle.

So the end of the month of July will see members of your Board coming together to work on these important issues facing your association. All your Board members are volunteering their time and talent to the role of stewarding your association. I am honored to have such a fine group of individuals to work with, and I look forward to welcoming them to the University of Washington iSchool later this month. I am also excited by the prospect of welcoming all ASIS&T members to our Annual Meeting in Seattle in November. I guarantee that you will all have a great time in my hometown. Please consider inviting a friend to join us for the Annual Meeting and encouraging everyone you know who works in our field to join ASIS&T.

Best wishes for the summer! ■