



Corner

American Academy of Health Physics
 American Board of Health Physics
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Message from the President

I am very proud to have been selected to serve the American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP) as President for 2002, and I thank the membership for investing its confidence in me. I will do my best to help the AAHP to further our goals and support our dedication to professional excellence.

The AAHP is a very successful volunteer organization. It is successful because it has a well-defined mission, strives to understand and meet the needs of its membership, continues to develop and refine its vision and goals, and has a well-ordered process for ensuring the succession of its officers and committee members. Most importantly, however, the AAHP is successful because it is an organization with heart. The AAHP officers, committee members, and general membership demonstrate a passion for the profession of radiation safety. Even more than that, however, is the care we have for the organization and for each other. This passion and caring have enabled the AAHP and the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) to successfully address and conquer many difficulties while continuing to keep the focus unwaveringly on continuous improvement and professional excellence. These gains have been achieved through the personal drive, perseverance, and patience of many dedicated volunteers, an unbroken succession of fine leadership from the Executive Committee, and the invaluable assistance of our Program Director, Nancy Johnson.

Our profession is facing difficult times and the AAHP is affected by these difficulties. Restricted travel, tight budgets, and increased demands for our time on and off the job are affecting the availability of our members to work on committees or serve on the ABHP or exam panels. Participation is also affected by decreasing applications for certification, members retiring from the profession, and pressures on our members to broaden into other safety and health professions or administration. Will we be able to sustain the vitality needed to ensure our continued legacy

of success and excellence? We are at a time when we need increased participation by all members.

The chief duty of the President-elect is to appoint new committee members and chairs. I would like to share a little bit about the process generally used to fill these positions, to make an appeal to the membership for increased participation in committee activities, and to make a suggestion about how to be considered for appointment to a committee position.

When I approached the task of finding new committee members, I referred to a valuable resource—the list compiled from the dues envelopes. This list is compiled from data the members supply when they indicate the committees in which they have an interest. In considering committee members, the incoming committee chairs and I reviewed this list of people who indicated an interest in each particular committee. The committee chair and I made our recommendations based on personal knowledge of the individual and that person's ability to participate and contribute. It is very difficult to make a selection if neither of us is aware of the person's level of interest or ability to contribute. It is particularly difficult because, while we want increased and broader participation from the membership, it is a risky business to fill a position with someone whose availability or ability is unknown. It is this process that generates the condition where we see the same names of individuals appear over time. It is this condition that creates the perception of cronyism, favoritism, and cliques.

So how do we break the cycle? I have several suggestions. First, if you have a genuine interest in working on a particular committee, contact the committee chair and let him/her know of your interest. Find out what the committee does and volunteer to help out *ad hoc*. In this way, your interest and efforts will be known to other committee members, so when one of them is appointed as the chair for the following year, you will be a top

consideration for a position on that committee. Second, you can begin the volunteer process by contacting the President-elect directly, especially if you wish to volunteer but need to determine what the committees do or where the greatest need is for help. Third, you are encouraged to work through your local chapter of the Health Physics Society (HPS), if you have one. As President-elect, I would have welcomed a call from a chapter president telling me about a member who has worked well for the local chapter and who has an interest in an AAHP committee assignment. Last, you can become known by helping out with an ABHP passing point workshop at one of the HPS meetings. While assisting with the workshop you can let the facilitator of the workshop know of your desire to serve on a committee or ABHP activity.

My experience has been that the Academy is an open community that encourages broad participation. Like many other successful volunteer organizations, the Academy thrives on and is strengthened by diversity. Please help to ensure the viability of the AAHP and the certification process through a donation of your time and talents. We need you now more than ever. The President-elect for 2002 is Howard Dickson. Please help to make his job a little easier.

The AAHP is strong and vital. It will continue to fulfill its vital mission with your help. My participation in this organization has been professionally enriching, intellectually stimulating, and a whole lot of fun. I would like to see more members share these experiences. Thank you in advance for your participation.

—Jim Tarpinian, CHP