

EDITORIAL
President's Column

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Many thanks to Donna Phelan and the organizing committee for an invigorating and informative Annual Meeting. The participation did justice to the excellent program of speakers—it was great to see so many of you there.

Those of you who attended the meeting heard a brief review of how our actions this year were guided by our strategic plan and the key themes critical to ASHI:

- To engage in community and consensus building.
- To be a primary resource for educational products and programs in immunogenetics.
- To see post-transplant monitoring brought into place.
- To increase and diversify membership.
- To be a primary resource for maintaining and improving clinical laboratory practice in immunogenetics.
- To continue to bring innovation to the field of immunogenetics.

Peter's columns in the past year have kept you up to date on our accomplishments. I'd like to point us towards our efforts in the coming year.

To Engage in Community and Consensus Building

This last year saw ASHI looking outward, moving forward in its young adulthood in the altruistic citizenship described by Charlie Orosz. The board continued the development of the External Affairs division to focus these efforts.

Sister Societies

There will be opportunities for EFI and ASHI to continue collaborating in the areas of accreditation and standardizing response to regulatory agencies. ASEATTA, EFI and ASHI will continue to support the International Summer School.

HRSA Collaborative, Team ASHI

This forum is one our most effective ways to reach our clinical colleagues, both transplant teams and organ procurement organizations. Efforts this year focused on education, providing information about how improvements in testing are facilitating organ allocation and enabling transplantation of the sensitized patient. We will continue to be a member of the leadership council. The Team ASHI Forum on our website will serve as a notice board and clearinghouse for efforts at the local level.

NMDP

Our liaisons to and from the NMDP have been very active and will continue to keep our two organizations aligned in areas of accreditation, standards and providing education and training to international colleagues.

OPTN/UNOS

The partnership to develop the guidelines and guide the move toward antibody specificity as the basis for allocation will continue with education and workshops on developing the knowledge to use the new tools of solid phase testing.

Future

In the coming year, we will collaborate with the American Association of Blood Banks to develop standards for immunogenetics testing in transfusion medicine: molecular typing and antibody identification for HPA and HNA. Plans are underway for closer ties to FOCIS, ASHG, ASBMT, AST, ASTS and clinical pathology colleagues.

To be a Primary Resource for Educational Products and Programs in Immunogenetics

ASHI U

These programs will launch this year and provide the beginnings of our web-based education. Sign up both to participate in the first modules and in developing the next; be part of an energizing group and help build our future. ASHI U will be integral to our participation in the international transplant community.

Web and Discussion Forums

The revisions to the website continue and the forums are live. Check here often for news and updates. We occasionally send out blast e-mails with important news—have your firewall configured to accept mail from info@ashi-hla.org.

Regional Workshops

The format of reprising annual meeting themes will continue this year with three new sites chosen and scheduled.

To be a Primary Resource for Maintaining and Improving Clinical Laboratory Practice in Immunogenetics

Two papers were prepared for publication; watch for them. The first paper evaluated population frequency of HLA alleles in order to give guidance for high resolution typing. The second reviewed where we are and where we are going with antibody specificity identification—the use of solid phase tools, the format of organ allocation algorithms.

To Continue to Bring Innovation to the Field of Immunogenetics

As Peter discussed in his last column, basic research and application of new technology are integral to ASHI's mission to "advance the science, education and application of immunogenetics and transplant immunology." We provide that forum where basic researchers find translational researchers to bring new advances to the patient. The relationships built through the efforts of External Affairs will work toward that goal in addition to continuing to feature basic research at the annual meeting. We will be working with EFI to translate advances in genomics and proteomics to the clinical laboratory.

As you can see, we have been busy and plan to continue at that pace. I want to thank Peter Nickerson on behalf of all of us at ASHI for ably leading us for the last term and a half. I also want to thank everyone who contributed to our successes this year and those who have volunteered to be part of the fun this coming year.

My challenge to membership is to get involved. Visit the website often to see what is new and to stay in touch. Volunteer for committees that interest you; avail yourself of the educational resources; be prepared when consulting with clinical colleagues. Remember, service to our patients is the core of what we do. Remember, "We are here to help."