

From the CEO

Leadership Development CSA Style

By Barbara Baldwin, M.P.H.



Often members join organizations to engage in volunteer work they find personally and professionally rewarding. A common complaint, however, is that gaining entry into these activities seems to be a secret known only to those who already are part of the “inner sanctum.” As a consequence, people who have much to contribute become discouraged and disengaged before ever being truly involved.

For some, leadership means becoming president of the organization. In the past, a member might “pay his dues” for ten years or more by starting as a CSA delegate, becoming a district director, perhaps chairing a visible committee, being elected to an officer position and delegate to the ASA, and eventually running for president. The landscape of volunteerism is changing, and many younger members who have talent and energy do not want to spend an inordinate number of years to reach top leadership positions.

Nominations Process No Longer Serves the CSA

The Committee on Nominations has been the gateway to higher positions within the CSA, centering on the Committee’s annual preparation of a slate of candidates for open office, ASA delegate, and ASA alternate delegate positions. The Committee typically met prior to the April Board of Directors meeting to discuss candidates and develop the slate. Some characteristics of the Committee’s nomination process included:

- Nomination of one candidate for each open position. Of note, medical associations’ elections typically are the result of pre-nomination agreements among those who aspire to the highest position. On occasion, agreements are made to step aside in order to avoid a contested election.
- Discussion of candidates’ qualifications behind closed doors without the benefit of interviewing the candidates. It is noteworthy, however, that in the past few years, candidates for CSA president were interviewed by the Committee.

From the CEO (cont'd)

- Minimal efforts at outreach to members who have leadership potential but have not yet appeared on the radar screen of the current leadership.

When the Committee on Nominations met in December 2007, members discussed the limitations of the Committee's charge and process, and recommended to then-President Virgil Airola that changes be made to broaden the charge of the committee to include leadership development. Dr. Airola appointed a Task Force on Nominations—Drs. Michael Champeau (chair), Linda Hertzberg, Johnathan Pregler, and Mark Singleton—to review the Committee's memo and develop recommendations for consideration by the House of Delegates.

A New Approach to Leadership

The Task Force report included several recommendations that were adopted by the 2008 House of Delegates. The Committee is renamed the Committee on Leadership Development and Nominations, its size augmented to seven members, and its composition to include the immediate past president as chair, with the remaining members to have staggered three-year terms. Moreover, its mission is redefined, as follows:

- The long-range identification and development of future CSA leaders by providing education and mentoring in leadership skills, and the construction of a slate of candidates for the various elected positions each year.
- Convening at least three Committee meetings per year, preferably in conjunction with CSA Board of Directors meetings and the ASA or the CSA Annual Meetings. The Committee's charge is to give guidance and feedback to those individuals who declare an interest in elected office. Members indicating an interest in participating in leadership are given the opportunity to attend informal interviews and discuss the responsibilities of various positions.
- Producing and updating a document listing the names of all CSA members who have declared an interest in an elected office that will serve as a guide to the CLDN in their mentoring role. The CLDN will give formal feedback to those individuals, at least yearly, regarding both their performance in their current role and their progress in the acquisition of those skills needed to advance within the CSA's leadership.

The Committee on Leadership Development and Nominations Begins

Committee Chair Virgil Airola held a conference call on July 13 to begin planning the Committee's activities. The Committee includes Peter Sybert, CSA Assistant Treasurer; Steve Jackson, *CSA Bulletin* Editor; James Moore, Vice Speaker of the CSA House of Delegates; Neal Cohen, CSA Delegate to the ASA and Vice Dean for Academic Affairs at UCSF; Patricia Kapur, CSA Delegate to the ASA and Chair of the UCLA Department of Anesthesia; and Paul Yost, CSA Director of District 13.

In discussing opportunities for CSA members to position themselves for elected leadership, the Committee identified opportunities inside and outside of the CSA that can afford members the training they need to acquire the skills and experience needed to become a successful leader. These activities include serving:

1. On visible CSA Committees and Divisions, including the Legislative and Practice Affairs Division, Educational Programs Division, Committee on Public and Professional Communications, and Finance and Administration Committee
2. As a contributing editor for the *Bulletin*, and authoring articles
3. As a delegate or alternate delegate, attending and participating in the CSA House of Delegates annually
4. As a CSA district director
5. As a delegate or alternate delegate to the California Medical Association in the Specialty Delegation or the Hospital-Based Physician Forum
6. As a delegate or alternate delegate to the ASA
7. On ASA committees, particularly highly visible committees such as the Committee on Economics, Committee on Performance Outcomes Measurement, Committee on Practice Management, Committee on the Anesthesia Care Team, Committee on Standards and Practice Parameters, and Committee on Quality Management and Department Administration
8. On major committees in institutions in which one practices, such as Credentialing and Privileging Committee, Medical Executive Committee, and the Quality Improvement Committee

The new Committee's charge represents a commitment to ensuring that the CSA leaders have the skills and experience to advance our society's mission.

Any member who wants to receive information on how to become involved in the above process may contact the CLDN through the central office. I can also be of assistance at bbaldwin@csahq.org.

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