



Are We Ready?

Now that the hype associated with the year 2000 has subsided and we have another few months before the official start of the new millennium, it is a good time to ask if The Electrochemical Society is ready for the challenges that lie ahead. The popular press frequently refers to the ever-increasing rate of change that we are experiencing. While one can have doubts about whether or not life is really changing faster than it ever has, there is certainly some truth to the notion. Moore's law shows us that the complexity of semiconductor chips is changing at an exponential pace. And few would deny that these changes have ushered in a new era of information technology that may bring as sweeping a change as did the "iron age" or the industrial revolution centuries earlier. Those changes will be especially significant for ECS, whose mission is largely involved with information dissemination.

Few of us are able to comprehend truly long-range trends. I sometimes find it hard to predict beyond the next few days. In my field, respected members of the technical community seek to define long term roadmaps for the directions that semiconductor technology will take. Yet even with the collective wisdom of a \$150 billion dollar per year industry, we cannot really predict what will likely happen a decade from now.

If it is so difficult to predict the directions of change, how can ECS continue to provide the benefits that its members want? One of the many important recommendations of the most recent long-range planning committee is that the Society and its Divisions and Groups should implement both a strategic planning process and a continuing program of evaluation. The planning process is vital to helping us identify membership trends and emerging technical areas for the Society. Previously, much of the task of identifying new tech-

nical areas was carried out by the New Technology Subcommittee; now that process is being broadened, and each of the Divisions and Groups are specifically being asked to help respond to changing technical directions and needs. Because evaluation should "start at the top," each of the Society-wide committees is being asked to perform a program of self-evaluation. This evaluation process involves articulating the specific mission of each committee, the skill mix that its members should possess, how its work meshes with other committees, and how the committee's role might evolve in the future. Thanks to the hard and diligent work of members of the long-range planning committee, we now have the tools to begin this process; the Society owes them a great deal of gratitude, and I would like to add my personal thanks.

We have a clear statement of our mission and a clearer understanding of who we are, via our new logo and tagline (See the Toronto Meeting Highlights on page 8). We have the people, supported by a dedicated and professional headquarters staff; we have the facilities, having recently occupied new space in Pennington, NJ; and we have a plan—or at least a plan to have a plan.

Are we ready? You bet we are!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "C M Osburn".

Carlton M. Osburn
President