



Winds of Change

After our meeting in Vienna, I stayed for a few days to enjoy the city. I was sitting at a street-side café enjoying a cup of coffee and a wonderful torte; the winds were picking up, ushering in a change in the weather. As I sat, I thought

about the meeting and how much has changed in the Society since I became a member 28 years ago. First it struck me how the winds of change have sent the Society all over the world, with meetings in Cancun, Canada, France, the Pacific Rim, the many satellite meetings that ECS sponsors around the globe, and now our first meeting in Vienna.

The meeting in Vienna was our second largest. It was a very busy and successful meeting: 3,196 papers, 44 symposia, and 3,260 attendees; stimulating and enjoyable presentations by Dieter Kolb (our Olin Palladium Award recipient), the plenary speaker (Martin Stratmann), the “For the Rest of Us” speaker David Shoemith, and Henry White (the Carl Wagner Award recipient). The meeting also had a special symposium on Interfacial Electrochemistry to honor Brian Conway and his contributions to our science. We were also fortunate to have three separate satellite conferences joining us in Vienna: the 11th International Symposium on Solid Oxide Fuel Cells, the 17th Euro Chemical Vapor Deposition Symposium, and the In Situ Diagnosis of PEM Fuel Cells Conference sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education.

In addition to the meetings, the Society membership and publications have charted new territory in the last 28 years. The statistics are significant, as the following sampling shows: membership has grown from a sleepy 6,000 members to a vibrant list nearing 9,000; and we have added *Interface*, *Electrochemical and Solid-State Letters*, and *ECS Transactions* to our publications. Manuscripts published in the journals increased from 556 to 1,311; the average increase in the biannual meeting attendance was 33%; and the budget grew from \$1.2 million to \$6 million.

The success of the Society, in part, has been our ability to weather all these changes, while still providing successful meetings and publications that disseminate electrochemical and solid-state science and engineering. We effectively moved to electronic platforms for abstracts and publications, a more robust and visually interesting website, and many new electronic tools to make meeting planning and execution more efficient. The winds of change now are requiring other course adjustments that will insure the integrity and continued success of the Society. Recent decisions by the Board of Directors in Vienna, and a subsequent meeting by teleconference, have ushered in several changes of interest to all our constituents. First, the Board approved a revised mission statement which now reads:

The mission of the Society is to advance theory and practice at the forefront of electrochemistry, solid-state science, and allied subjects. To encourage research, discussion, critical assessment, and dissemination of knowledge in these fields, the Society holds meetings, publishes scientific papers, fosters training and education of scientists and engineers, and cooperates with other organizations to promote science and technology in the public interest.

No directional or strategic changes were proposed, a clear indication that our founding mission remains strong and true.

Second, in response to fiduciary responsibilities and its desire to protect the integrity of the Society, the Board voted to include a nonprofit financial professional as a voting member of the Board. I can assure you there was a very thorough, and at times heated debate, but in the end the Board vote was unanimous. This departure from our historical structure is related to the need to address both the size and scope of ECS finances, as well as changes in U.S. law and suggested good practices for nonprofit organizations. An excerpt from “The Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice: A Guide for Charities and Foundations” follows:

Because the Board must ensure that all financial matters of the organization are conducted legally, ethically, and in accordance with proper accounting rules, it should make every effort to make sure that at least one member has “financial literacy”—that is, the ability to understand financial statements, to evaluate bids of accounting firms that may undertake an audit or review, and to assist the Board in making sound financial decisions.¹

Along these same lines, I want to bring to your attention that we now have two new outstanding partners in Withum Smith & Brown (public accounting firm) and TD Wealth Management (investment advisor), which both have an important role in the fiscal management of ECS.

The North Star, as it were, in the success of ECS has been the commitment of our members to present and publish ground-breaking science and engineering, the enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers who run our symposia and serve on our Divisions and committees, a devoted and efficient headquarters staff, and our ability to keep a steady hand on the tiller and an alert eye on the horizon. My thanks to all that have given their time and effort: unfurl the sail, full speed ahead.

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1. The complete document can be found at www.nonprofitpanel.org/Report/index.html.