

PRESIDENT'S SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

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ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE HONOR SOCIETIES

John W. Warren, President

July – 2002

Introduction: A Historical Turn

ACHS has reached a remarkable turning point in its history—thanks to a visionary Council and a dynamic new Board of Directors! By Council approval in February of 2002, the Board of Directors began implementing a new operating structure—a truly historical and positive change for ACHS. In contrast to a governing structure with an Executive Committee and a 67-member board (Council), the newly adopted bylaws provide for a Board of Directors that has increased Council representation in leadership and management. To direct its work the Board approved policies to implement the coherent framework of principles of the Policy Governance® model. Among the significant changes include (a) clarification of lines of authority, (b) communication linkage among the Council, the Board, and the Executive Director, (c) election of the nominating committee by the Council rather than by presidential appointment, and (d) an Executive Director.

When the Board of Directors held its first official Board Meeting in East Lansing, Michigan, on June 11-14, the new model provided the guidelines for all its deliberations. This session marked a major step toward complete implementation of Policy Governance® for the ACHS Board. (After a transition period and the appointment of an Executive Director, the full structure will become a reality.) All members of the New Board of Directors were present: President John W. Warren (Phi Kappa Phi), Vice President/President-Elect – Kay Wilson (Psi Chi), Secretary-Treasurer – Dorothy Mitstifer (Kappa Omicron Nu), Nancy McManus (Pi Sigma Alpha), Dennis Organ (Alpha Chi), Richard Pilgrim (Theta Alpha Kappa), and James A. Viehland (Beta Gamma Sigma). During the four-day meeting, this enthusiastic and energetic team created an impressive agenda of workable programs and projects that evidence a great potential for a more vital Association. Indeed, this promises to be a banner year for ACHS!

Policy Governance® Orientation

The first part of the Board meeting was spent in orientation to and education about Policy Governance® by Mary Pritchard of Northern Illinois University. With her assistance, the Board reviewed and edited the Policy Handbook in accordance with this new governance process. The Board also developed annual goals by reviewing the following sources of information: 2002 Report of the Long Range Planning and Strategic Issues Committee, 1999 and 2002 President's Reports, 2002 Report of the Public Information Committee, and 2000 Scenario Analysis Report. This procedure was effective in developing goals that addressed critical issues and needs of honor societies. The Board also formulated specific actions related to its goals to be accomplished within the current year as shown in the following Board actions.

Board Actions

1. Preparation of an Anti-Trust Policy. Because ACHS as a national not-for-profit organization possesses an exposure to anti-trust violations, the Board developed and approved an Anti-Trust Policy for ACHS. Consequently, the Association must comply with federal anti-trust laws. After an attorney reviews this document, it will be posted on the ACHS Web site. The Board of Directors urges all member societies to adopt these, or similarly stringent, guidelines to ensure that they remain in compliance with all applicable anti-trust requirements.
2. Development of an ACHS List Serve. For improved internal communications and information exchange, Kay Wilson and the staff of Psi Chi agreed to implement and manage this new service for ACHS. Our thanks to Psi Chi.
3. Identification of a National Theme or Project. To depict ACHS more effectively as a cohesive community of national and international honor societies, the Board approved the selection of a national theme or project to focus on a campus or social need and/or problem. Such a program offers numerous opportunities for individual society projects as well as collaborative efforts of ACHS member societies in the honors community. **Watch for a List Serve discussion and for a Request for Proposal for identification of potential collaborative efforts.**
4. Selection Process for the new Executive Director. The Board approved a process for choosing the new Executive Director. As president, I appointed a screening committee, approved by the Board, composed of both Board and non-Board members: Jim Viehland, Chair; William Johnson; Dennis Organ; Diane Selby; John Warren; Kay Wilson. This committee's charge is to develop a pool of candidates and recommend the ones to be interviewed. The Board, then, will conduct the interviews and make a determination as to first choice. Watch for an announcement from the screening committee.
5. Distribution of the "Standards of Excellence Brochure." The Board agreed that this brochure should be printed for distribution to petitioning groups as well as to college and university presidents and other higher-education personnel.
6. Continuation of Compliance Review. It was the consensus of the Board that the Standards and Definition Committee continue the compliance review that began in 2001. Such a review is necessary if ACHS is to be an exemplary model of consistent high standards for honor societies. From its beginning in 1925, ACHS has been decisive in defining and maintaining credible standards for its membership.
7. Consideration of a Registry of Honor Cords and an ACHS Seal. The Board agreed to have Jim Viehland work with vendors and use the annual report list to develop the registry. Jim will also explore the creation of a certifying seal for use on charters and certificates.
8. Determination of Future Annual Council Meeting Sites. The Board approved three potential sites for negotiation of future annual meeting contracts: 2004 in Seattle, 2005 in the Washington, DC area, and 2006 in Boise, Idaho.

Announcements and Additional Discussions

1. Expanding ACHS Alliances. The Board wishes to continue and hopefully increase ACHS connections with both the honors community and the professional arena of higher education. Such allegiances can create a greater awareness of the honor society movement and its mission and also aid the academic community in discerning quality standards for honor societies. As one example, I am pleased to state that ACHS will participate in a program session at the annual NCHC conference this fall with Dorothy Mitstifer and John Warren as ACHS representatives. The Board will continue to seek effective avenues of contact with the professional organizations of college and university administrators.
2. Identifying Future Projects. Two priorities identified for future projects were (a) an award for an article or “white paper” (possible fund development opportunity) and (b) a task force to set standards for chartering campus organizations, working in collaboration with provosts and student affairs personnel.
3. Reviewing Plans for the ACHS Annual Council Meeting in 2003. Program Chair Kay Wilson’s progress report indicated that plans are well underway for the 2003 meeting at the Hyatt Hotel in Savannah, Georgia, February 20-23, 2003. The program promises the delegates much information pertinent to honor societies, a wonderful cultural experience in the locale, and the usual professional dialogue and fellowship with one another.
4. Scheduling a Board Meeting at the Annual Council Meeting. With the new Bylaws process of electing directors at the annual meeting, it will be necessary for the Board to hold an organizational meeting to elect its officers and to prepare an agenda for the upcoming year. Next February, this meeting will be held on Sunday morning until 11:00 a.m. after the 2003 Annual Council Meeting. Candidates will be informed so that travel plans can be made accordingly.

In conclusion, I must add that the ACHS leadership has been extremely active and alert to many timely issues regarding the Association and its role in the honors community. I applaud these leaders, the Board of Directors, for giving so freely of their time while covering their own expenses, for working effectively as a team, for envisioning ACHS as a standard bearer of excellence in a highly complex and changing academic arena, and for holding firmly to high standards for ACHS membership.



Looking forward to seeing all society representatives, officers, and guests at the Annual Council Meeting in Savannah in February!

John W. Warren, President