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“So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish”¹

Two years ago, in my first column as president of The Oceanography Society, I commented that the times were changing. In this last column, I say how true that still is! TOS has always been a commendable organization, unique in its focus on all aspects of ocean sciences at the intersection of academia, government, and the private sector. It is filled with dedicated volunteers, and it produces a great journal. But in the past, I worried about TOS—just a few years ago, its membership was aging and shrinking by attrition, and its finances were not as solid as I would have liked. Change was needed.

I’m happy to report that TOS is now healthier than ever and on an upward trajectory. This year, we celebrated our thirtieth anniversary and honored our founders—their wise perspective and encouragement motivated us to think anew about the future. Thanks to some policy adjustments and attention to recruiting, our membership is growing rapidly. In just the past two years we’ve added nearly 1,000 new members. TOS is now larger than it has ever been, with 2,480 members, more than half of whom have joined in the past three years. This growth has transformed TOS into an energetic, youthful organization—now we truly do represent the future of oceanography. We have added mentoring programs, our COSTARS fund now assists students and early career scientists with travel and training, and we’ve established a new committee that is examining education issues. The ranks of our donors and sponsoring members have grown. And we’ve revamped our membership options for businesses and organizations, adding members there as well.

TOS is realizing its original intent of becoming a diverse international organization. We now have members in 65 nations (including some with no marine coastline). Our gender balance is changing too. Prior to 1990, TOS was 89% male. Now we are 54% male overall, and TOS members born since 1960 are 45% male, so we will very soon achieve gender parity. TOS is striving toward equal opportunity in our senior leadership as well. That is obvious in this year’s ballot for Council members and officers. **Please remember to vote.** For the first time in 2017 and 2018, our Munk and Jerlov Awards went to women. We are making progress.

Growth has also cured our budget insecurities. TOS is now financially stable and is adding programs to serve our expanding membership. Along with our partners AGU and ASLO, TOS continues to co-host the biennial Ocean Sciences Meeting (held in Portland, Oregon, in February 2018, and now set for San Diego, California, in 2020). TOS also hosts smaller topical meetings such as Ocean Optics (October 2018 in Dubrovnik, Croatia, with 2020 to be held in Norfolk, Virginia). We will be sponsoring or contributing to additional meetings, such as the Ocean Observing meeting in 2019 (September in Honolulu, Hawaii) and the 13th International Conference on Paleoceanography (ICP; September in Sydney, Australia). Indeed, the paleoceanography community has invited TOS to host its future meetings, and we have agreed (stay tuned for ICP-14 in 2022). These mid-sized meetings offer a good way for TOS to serve its members and build communities. We invite your ideas as we explore more options.

We have implemented several important policy changes. Notably, a new policy is going into effect this month on professional integrity, ethics, and conduct. While TOS has always been a welcoming organization with the highest ethical standards, we now have codified our expectations to ensure that TOS will remain an organization in which all can join in the intellectual excitement and important work of understanding the ocean.

In a few weeks, Martin Visbeck, head of the physical oceanography research unit at GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel, will start his term as the fifteenth TOS president. Welcome, Martin! This is the first time the TOS president’s office will reside outside the United States, another positive step and an opportunity for TOS to continue growing its international profile and to better realize our founders’ vision of TOS as a global meeting place for oceanographers of all nations. TOS looks forward to engaging with new international programs focused on the role of the ocean for sustainable development.

Many thanks to our growing family of TOS members, to the TOS Council, and especially to TOS Executive Director Jenny Ramarui and to *Oceanography* Editor Ellen Kappel for making TOS function so well. There is much more work to be done. Let’s get to it!


Alan C. Mix, TOS President

¹ Adams, D. 1980. *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. Harmony Books, 292 pp.