

2007 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For the Year Ending June 30, 2007

At this meeting you will be learning of some of the Society's noteworthy accomplishments in the past year. This record of achievement is truly inspiring.

I would like to acknowledge the role of the chapters in making the Society such a distinguished presence in the world community and for their efforts in supporting teachers, students and young career scientists and engineers. Chapter officers are our treasures. Though they haven't the time, they give so generously of it to keep our mission alive and enable the Society to make meaningful contributions in diverse ways.

Sigma Xi is fairly unique in its chapter structure. The chapter model is a powerful one that has made possible a world-wide interdisciplinary community.

For all our strengths, however, we are failing in three critical areas:

1. Initiations - in FY 98 we lost 6,000 members. In FY 07 we lost 2,137 members. The decline is far less dramatic but it is fairly constant.
2. Yearly dues renewal - for every 2 members we initiate, 3 do not renew their dues.
3. Financial stability—operating expenses have been reduced to the point that we are maintaining only very basic services; still, dues do not cover operating costs and we are drawing upon investments from the endowment. This is not a prudent course of action, for the endowment cannot grow in this manner.

What can we do?

- ✓ Find ways to help the chapters increase the number of initiations and the number of membership renewals each year. We have 540 chapters, some very large and some very small. If proportionately, each reached a mutually agreed upon target each year, the cumulative impact would enable the Society to reach and sustain critical mass.

- ✓ Each of us can take personal responsibility for initiations and renewals.
- ✓ Together we must maintain a personal connection with students, to see them through to their first career appointment and full membership.
- ✓ Let's all offer to serve as chapter officers. Help your chapter with programs. Attend and participate in programs.
- ✓ Give to the Annual Fund—any amount. Imagine what 60,000 members times \$25 - \$100 each could do!

Finally, it is imperative that we give thought to our future. We are an honor society and we have a mission that encompasses interdisciplinary collaboration, supporting the next generation of scientists and engineers, and serving as a bridge for the public understanding of science. This is our noble purpose. But we must continuously refine our vision so that it is clear to us and to all others what our unique role is in a changing world.

What will Sigma Xi be known for in the 21st century?

You can write the future that will become our glorious past.

Linda K. Meadows, Ph.D.
Executive Director

