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Stephen Smith, Acting Publisher



Editorial

We've Come a Long Way, AIChE

Some of you may know that I was injured near the end of 2004, the year during which I was AIChE President. I am still in the process of recovery, but have returned to work and am again involved in activities related to AIChE. I would like to thank so many of you for your expressions of concern and support. This time of reflection has given me a chance to gain perspective and to see many things with renewed clarity. I remember at the time of my election as President-Elect, I said, "It's a great time to be a Chemical Engineer!" I can say now that this is even more applicable today than it was then. In addition to the exciting molecular-scale developments in which our profession is involved, there are new technologies borne of the integration of traditional chemical-engineering principles with emerging science and "enabling tools" such as nanotechnology, for which our unique skills are in renewed demand. This demand will increase as populations around the world strive to meet the needs of expanding economies, while managing the Earth's resources.

The great progress that AIChE has made during this time of renewal is inspirational. Not only has the Institute regained its stability, but it has demonstrated readiness to take on the challenges of the 21st century — the greatest of which may be communicating to members all the benefits, products, services and resources the Institute has to offer them. Between the enrichment of traditional Institute activities and Internet-enabled capabilities that AIChE has developed over the last two years, it's no wonder that our membership trend is turning a corner. In fact, the number of new members in 2006 (thus far) exceeds that for 2005 by 25%, and we are hoping to see an overall stabilization of membership numbers this year, for the first time in five years.

AIChE's National and Annual Meetings continue to be a vital offering of the Institute. The 2006 Spring Meeting in Orlando achieved new heights in terms of attendance and breadth of coverage. Furthermore, this year's Annual Meeting in San Francisco (Nov. 12–17) boasts a record number of sessions that set a new standard of excellence for diversity, practicality and technological potential.

If you haven't visited AIChE's updated website, you are in for a treat. The site has become an invaluable tool to me, not only as a source of industry news and a way to keep track of colleagues, but increasingly, through the eLibrary, as a technical reference that increases my productivity. To get up-to-speed on how to use the eLibrary, take advantage of AIChE's web seminars ("webinars"), which are offered on a regular basis.

AIChE is also providing web hosting for local sections and divisions, as well as webcasting, blogs, and SharePoint™ collaboration services. This month, video- and podcasting capabilities became available. These resources have a tremendous potential to enhance our professional community by enabling us to communicate in a variety of ways.

Career Services, a time-honored component of AIChE's member benefits, has also been revitalized. To this end, AIChE is hosting a career fair at the 2006 Annual Meeting, and is offering a value-added benefit — through the career development expert, Lee Hecht Harrison — to all members, via our website (visit <http://www.execuplanet3.com/default.asp?epsite=aiche> for details).

Perhaps you have ideas about how AIChE can use its new capabilities to better serve us as members. Please send them to memberideas@aiche.org. I have volunteered to review this feedback and I am committed to working with AIChE's staff to maximize the value this Institute creates for us. My involvement in AIChE's activities adds a dimension of purpose to my profession that is truly gratifying. I look forward to attending the Annual Meeting, and I hope to see all of you there.

Bill Byers, AIChE President, 2004