

# Academy Connection

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# President's Message



## ANALYSIS BY DESIGN—"THE COMMISSION"

by Michael R. Sesemann, DDS, AACD President

There are certain times in an organization's history that are very defining—times when it becomes evident that underlying issues require clarification and resolution. These times are important and they are an organization's necessary response so as to responsibly evolve in an ever-changing environment. The resulting transformations keep an organization strong, focused and positioned for its future.

Over the past few months, several important issues from the past have once again presented themselves for discussion. These issues have direct influence in defining the AACD's character. While the resulting dialogue represents legitimate attempts by members to influence and guide our Academy toward a more successful future, the discussion can spark passionate debate.

Most often, organizations rely upon their bylaws to guide their government through difficult dilemmas; but these events have led us to understand that our governing documents are occasionally unclear, making definitive interpretation somewhat challenging, and therefore making issue resolution very difficult. When there are no clear-cut answers, debates can become more emotional than constructive, which is what we have experienced over the past few months. The issues of prominent concern include:

1. Eligibility to serve our Academy as Vice President, President-Elect and ultimately President.
  - a. Expanding the two-year Board of Directors (BOD) service requirement to include other areas of service such as American Board of Cosmetic Dentistry (ABCD), Board of Trustees (BOT) and/or Committee service to increase the number of eligible candidates.
  - b. Eliminating the Accreditation requirement so that eligible General members can become a candidate for Vice-President.
  - c. Broadening eligibility beyond dentists and laboratory technicians.
2. Eliminating the Academy membership requirement as a prerequisite for pursuing Accreditation.

Though the topics appear to be distinctly different, the root cause of the discourse was always the same—our bylaws were not clear as to how the leadership should delineate and resolve certain present-day topics when two differing points of view were held.

Recognizing the need for extraordinary study of these critical issues without the emotional overlay, I chose to appoint a special ad hoc committee, the Review and Advisory Commission, whose duty would be to examine all of these issues in full context and then report its findings to the BOD and our members.

The Commission comprises AACD members who represent different eras, interests and areas of our Academy. Their charge is to examine and deliberate all facets of these various propositions and any ancillary issues, like only a focused entity can. Their purpose is to put forth a comprehensive report to our membership. With this information, background and thoughtful evaluation in hand, the membership will be in a better position to decide how to proceed, knowing that the matters in question have been thoroughly discussed and evaluated in an open, honest and healthy forum.

On January 13, 2010, the BOD met in a special meeting to discuss the formation and funding of the Review and Advisory Commission. After a thorough and comprehensive discussion, formation and funding of the Commission was passed by a unanimous vote. The first of those meetings will be held on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 during the Chicago Mid-Winter meeting. All members of the AACD are welcome to attend.

I encourage each and every one of you to make plans to be at our Membership Meeting in Texas on April 27, 2010 when the report will be formally released. It will be a defining moment for this Academy.

I want to emphasize, however, that it will be up to the members of this organization to choose the path it eventually travels. To aid in this effort you will want to be as educated as possible on the issues and not rely on second or third-hand information that has been filtered through the perspectives of others.

In previous years, our leaders would resort to highly political machinations to resolve issues like this in the Academy. Through person-to-person communication outside of the business meeting, support for, or against a particular issue would take place "to win" the argument in discussion. Those types of power struggles would create hard feelings that needed to heal, but more importantly this type of interaction and polarizing spin tainted the potential for an unemotional, comprehensive study of the data. My objective with this approach is to have a

*continued on page 4*

*Analysis By Design- "The Commission"...continued from page 2*

complete examination of *all* of the data while trying to minimize the injection of politics. The Board of Directors agreed.

I commend the leadership shown by all of our elected officials in approaching such important matters for the Academy in such an analytical and civil way. It is a far cry from the business meetings of old which long-time members describe as "going deep

into the night" and resulting in "blood on the walls." Those times may have been needed in a young organization, but we owe it to ourselves to improve our processes from those experiences.

I appreciate everyone's passion for the AACD and I encourage everyone to study the report when it is released so that you can be fully informed regarding decisions ***you will make*** about the course of the Academy. It is an

excellent way to proceed and it speaks well of the temperament, maturity and strength of our organization to choose our way through strategic analysis instead of emotional arguments.

My best to you and yours,

*Michael*