



Transitioning Strategy into Tactical Implementation: From a “Top Down” to a “Bottom up” Organization

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It is not the strongest of the species that survive, or the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.
— Charles Darwin

Our organization has embraced the boldest initiative in its quarter century existence through the development of a 5 year Strategic Plan. This Plan is designed to modernize, galvanize and inspire the Society towards a uniform vision. Thus, it is only fitting for us to recall our raison d'être as articulated in our new mission statement:

“The International Society of Heart and Lung Transplantation is a multidisciplinary, professional organization dedicated to improving the care of patients with advanced heart or lung disease through transplantation, mechanical support and innovative therapies via research, education and advocacy”

In the past 29 years, the Society has established itself as the premier portal for scientific exchange in thoracic transplantation, fueled the careers of scores of young scientists through research grants and supported the propulsion of outcomes based knowledge in the field through the avenue of our Registry. The successful stewardship of our core mission must undoubtedly be credited to the numerous volunteers and leaders in our Society who donate their time in service to the Society.

Under the leadership of president Robert Robbins (2006-2007) and subsequently through the keenly focused direction of president Paul Corris (2007-2008), a strategic planning process was initiated and progress made in achieving its key organizational goals. Out of this plan emerged a number of comprehensive and exciting goals and objectives designed to enhance our educational offerings, improve and formalize our internal and external communications, envision and embody an advocacy role for the Society, and ultimately improve the care of patients with end stage heart and lung disease. I look forward to sharing with you later this summer the formal Strategic Planning Report that provides implementation details and timelines for the above broad goals.

As the Strategic Plan for the Society crystallized, we soon recognized that the Society's organizational infrastructure would need to be remodeled to assist the Board in achieving these new mandates. Much effort went into re-engineering the infrastructure for the Society, and we now stand at the crossroad of tactical integration of these key initiatives which include the following 4 sentinel targets:

- Empower the membership by providing a uniform structure for the various disease-therapy based Councils and grant the Councils more authority and responsibility
- Integrate Councils into the overall Society leadership by incorporating Council representation on all key ISHLT committees
- Delegate implementation of the Society work to the key Committees
- Focus the Board on strategic management, fiscal stewardship, and prioritization of the longer term agenda

Thus, it goes without saying that this represents a paradigm shift for the ISHLT in that the traditional “top down” approach will yield to a more “Bottom up” tactic. Much of the work of the Society will now be done at the Committee, Council and Council Workforce level. This, in turn, will entail more and expanded opportunity for member involvement in the leadership of the Society. I therefore would like to take this opportunity to encourage all members to become actively involved in those Councils and Workforces that they have an interest in.

The Councils have already organized themselves into uniform structures with elected officers who will serve on the key committees. An *example* of the power of this organizational model is with respect to the annual scientific meeting program committee. For the first time ever, this key committee will include elected representatives from each and every council, including the newly created young investigators council. This will ensure an “agenda balance” that allows council scientific mandates to have a clear voice within the framework of the Scientific Program for our meeting in Paris, France in April 2009.

Membership involvement is the key to the success of this new infrastructure so we must all get involved. In order to facilitate this transition an online discussion forum on our web site is being organized for each Council and Committee to facilitate discussions and collaborations among members. Details about how to participate in these will be sent to all members as soon as the Communications Workforces have set them up for their individual Councils. We are committed to moving these goals forward and such change will undoubtedly emerge from clear and consistent communication.

In my next series of bulletins, I shall update you on specific ongoing society activities this year including the development of *new post transplant care guidelines*, efforts to *globalize the mechanical circulatory support database*, progress on the *search for our Journal's new editor*, *advocacy* issues confronting the field as well the exciting developments for our renewed strategy to develop *the annual scientific program*.

Until then, I leave you with a simple message. Organizational models and theoretical strategic plans will not transform our society.

ONLY YOU WILL