Executive Director’s Annual Report—1980–81

The annual reports I have presented to you in previous years have dwelled primarily on the Society’s financial condition and management problems. With each year that passes, however, your financial affairs grow stronger and your managerial problems diminish. Although both of these areas have been dominant concerns in the past, I can give you every assurance that they have become manageable and that as a concerned member you can, with confidence, shift your attention to other areas of greater urgency to AmSECT.

Having given you these comforting assurances, I can also tell you that the 1980–81 fiscal year was fully capable of being disastrous. The recession that began in 1980, and which continues on even now, announced itself to AmSECT in various dramatic ways. For example, the advertising revenue from the Journal went into a precipitous decline almost to the month that the recession began. Thus, what had been a profitable operation for two consecutive years is now only barely breaking even.

As a second example, we had expected revenue from our corporate sponsor program to increase this year. Instead, it remained at the same level as last year. In some respects we were fortunate not to have experienced a decline in corporate sponsor revenue because we are aware that several companies, who themselves were coping with the recession, had to make hard choices regarding the continued support of AmSECT. The recession began. Thus, what had been a profitable operation for two consecutive years is now only barely breaking even.

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As a general statement, virtually every conflict situation was ultimately rooted in a concern over the integrity and/or equity of the certification process the profession has created. Over a period of time we came to understand that certification and its preservation is probably the most important issue to you as a professional group. It affects your economic livelihood, but of no less importance, it affects your own self-image and stature within the allied health field. We understand better now what you have tried to build over the years, and why you seem to be especially sensitive to any proposal that might undermine what you have achieved.

This time last year during our annual meeting in Philadelphia, I held private discussions with a representative of the American Medical Association. I was informed that the AMA was rapidly reaching the end of its patience with the inability of AmSECT and the American Board to complete the procedural work necessary to establishing a new perfusion training
program accreditation apparatus. I shared his frustra-
tion level. However, acting more on faith than on
anything concrete, I assured him that I believed the two
groups would begin to work cooperatively toward a
common end.

I am pleased to report that six months later Am-
SECT and the American Board collaborated success-
fully and all the procedural work was completed. Soon
a new organization called the Joint Review Committee
For Perfusion will assume control of the accreditation
function.

A second volatile and devisive issue is the matter of
the April, 1981 deadline for enrolling in the certifica-
tion program administered by the American Board. On
this matter the organized surgeon groups were partic-
ularly concerned. Yet I can report to you that on Jan-
uary 25, 1981, representatives from AmSECT and the
American Board met together with representatives
from STS and AATS to explain this matter, as one of
several areas of concern to them, I believe I can fairly
describe their reaction to the deadline as one of general
approval and tacit acceptance. As we departed the
meeting room we were applauded, which I mention
only to convey to you some sense of how well the dis-
cussion seemed to have been received.

Both of these cases I have recited would not have
been possible if AmSECT and the American Board had
failed to join together in a common effort. The two
organizations did join hands, which begs the question
of how this all came about.

In my opinion it happened because your President,
Larry Cavanaugh, took the initiative to open lines of
communications with the American Board and, once
opened, tried to sustain them. Working quietly behind
the scenes, he expended a great deal of personal time
and effort to create an environment in which agree-
ments could be developed. His overtures were in turn
reciprocated by the American Board.

Mainly because of President Cavanaugh's states-
manlike activities, some of the accumulated wounds
were quietly healed. In my opinion, in the years to
come, you will remember his presidency as one of rea-
soning, showing clearly what can be accomplished with
patience, moderation, and a willingness to deal with
problems with a modicum of objectivity.

There is one thing I have learned from three years
contact with you perfusionists—you have an absolute
genius for creating crises. I am mightily impressed with
your talent in magnifying insignificant issues to the
proportion of world problems. What's starting to worry
me now is that your National Office staff is beginning
to exhibit these same tendencies.

In any event, let me close on what I hope is a positive
note. While not becoming complacent, take a moment
to enjoy what you have. And here's what you have, after
only nineteen years:

- A society that is growing
- A society that is in a sound financial and admin-
istrative condition
- A Continuing Education program that is imagi-
native, improving, and admired by other organi-
izations
- A profession that is officially recognized as a
member of the allied health family by the Amer-
ican Medical Association.
- An established certification process
- An accreditation process that is positioned to move
forward
- An annual meeting in a beautiful city that has
broken all previous attendance records
- Support from industry and physician organiza-
tions who believe in you and what you are trying
to accomplish.

I congratulate you on what you have accomplished
and for what I believe you are going to accomplish.
Your's is a continuing story, fascinating in its plots and
details. Come to Miami next year and I'll give you the
latest episode!