It’s a privilege to serve as ASIS&T president this year, and I wish to thank all members of ASIS&T for bestowing this honor on me. As some of you know I first began my professional career and Ph.D. studies in computer science and switched to information science in order to pursue my interest and passion in investigating the interplay of people, information, technology and social structures. As a result of this switch, I was introduced to ASIS&T for the first time and was pleasantly surprised by the welcome, encouragement and support ASIS&T members provided. I continue to be grateful for the welcome, encouragement and support.

On behalf of ASIS&T I’d like to thank Linda Smith and previous past presidents, as well as Dick Hill and the headquarters personnel, for all the work they’ve done and continue to do on behalf of ASIS&T. Linda and Dick have been especially gracious in answering my questions throughout the past months.

I also wish to thank everyone who has volunteered to serve in ASIS&T in the past and during this coming year. ASIS&T is your association; you can help shape it and shape the benefits you receive from it. Thanks to everyone who responded to my recent call for volunteers. I’ve contacted many of you directly, and Dick and I are in the process of asking this year’s committee, task force, jury, SIG and chapter chairs to contact you as well based on your interests with respect to volunteering.

Each recent past president of ASIS&T has advocated...
internationalization of our association. Throughout ASIS&T and beyond there is increasing recognition that interesting and valuable practices and research occur worldwide, and our discipline continues to have an important role to play in that wide arena. As many of you know I’m the first person living and working outside North America to be elected president of ASIS&T, and internationalization will continue to be a priority this coming year.

In countries other than the United States, belonging to an organization that is named the American Society of Information Science and Technology can – in the worst case – be politically infeasible and, at best, challenging to justify. Names matter. What if our acronym, ASIS&T, stood for the Association for Information Science and Technology? That is, what if the “AS” in our acronym could stand for association, followed by IS&T for information science and technology? I hope we can have a discussion this year, and possibly a vote, regarding keeping our acronym but changing the words behind it and explicitly signalling that we are an association for individuals and institutions from all countries around the globe.

Networking internationally is increasingly important in academia, companies and other organizations because innovative practices, quality research and similar challenges occur across geo-political boundaries. Collaborating across boundaries can enhance what we do. Thus during the coming year we will investigate ways ASIS&T can provide more opportunities for members to network with colleagues from different geographical locations and across different topics in our discipline. Various options include holding geographically distributed satellite annual meetings that are interconnected via technology or holding an annual meeting outside North America. Increased travel costs to some geographic locations can be balanced by less expensive hotel, food and wifi access costs. In addition grants may be available from the hosting country to support the annual meeting. Mei-Mei Wu from National Taiwan Normal University will be leading this investigation.

Another planned activity is a review of our awards, bylaws and communication practices to identify North American biases and to suggest alternatives. Many award criteria and bylaws were established before ASIS&T had a significant number of international members, and they may not be in concert with current practices outside the United States. For example, an eligibility requirement for our Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Scholarship is a dissertation proposal accepted by the student’s institution. However, in many countries, Ph.D. programs in our discipline do not require a dissertation proposal or have a proposal approval process. What other rules may not reflect practices in other countries and limit participation? Several members have volunteered to help us identify these types of issues and to suggest possible alternative approaches.

As an association and discipline we have much to be proud of. On the occurrence of ASIS&T’s 50th Anniversary in 1987 President Ronald Reagan described the value of our discipline [1]. He wrote:

By advancing the gathering, storage and transfer of information, you’ve touched the lives of virtually every citizen and led the way to wider opportunity for all of us. That’s because our scholarship, domestic prosperity and competitive stance in the world marketplace depend as never before on our considerable information technologies and on how we use them. Your vital role in our increasingly efficient and wide diffusion of knowledge has been a tribute to you and a real blessing for our Nation.

Our discipline does not often receive this type of recognition and praise. Too often our discipline is less visible and subsequently less appreciated than other disciplines. For example, government funding agencies in a variety of countries either do not recognize our discipline as a discipline or classify it as one sub-discipline among many belonging to a larger discipline. Many of you may have experienced this first hand. One of the first times I was a co-principal investigator on a multi-disciplinary collaborative research grant, a new program director from the
funding agency emphatically questioned why an information and library science researcher was working on the grant.

There continues to be a need to more effectively advocate on behalf of our discipline – on behalf of information professionals, information science research and information science education. Plans are underway to investigate this issue during the coming year with the goal of developing recommendations for the board and membership regarding ways we can more effectively advocate on behalf of our discipline. Sandra Hirsh and Prudence Dalrymple along with Marcia Bates will be leading this effort in collaboration with the Task Force on Information Professionals.

All associations should continually review and ensure the benefits they provide to both individual and institutional members are relevant, and ASIS&T is no different in this regard. Thinking outside the box and building on members’ innovative research and practices can lead to new, innovative individual and institutional member benefits. The ASIS&T webinar series introduced this past year is one such example, and my thanks to all involved in that effort. I hope members will contact me with proposals regarding innovations to provide new benefits to members and be a showcase for innovation in our discipline. We innovate for other disciplines and other organizations; can we innovate for our own?

At our next Annual Meeting in 2012, we celebrate our 75th anniversary. Robert Williams and Toni Carbo are chairing a task force that will be hosting several special anniversary events at the conference. The co-chairs for the 2012 conference hail from three continents: Crystal Fulton lives and works in Ireland, Julie Hershberger in North Carolina and ShanJu L. Chang in Taiwan. Both the task force and conference co-chairs look forward to your participation in the conference. In order to accommodate authors who are required to obtain a visa to attend a conference in the United States and who can only obtain a visa after their submission is accepted, the submission and acceptance dates are a month earlier for the 2012 Annual Meeting. The earlier dates also eliminate personal challenges that emerged in the past when authors, chapters and SIGs in the United States attempted to finalize their submissions over the Memorial Day holiday which co-occurred with the submission deadline. And the later meeting date provides more time for ASIS&T headquarters to assemble the conference program. This is an excellent example of how, when we take into account the needs of some, many others also benefit.

In conclusion I very much look forward to working with the committees, task force groups, conference co-chairs, the Board, the executive office and most importantly, with members, throughout the year. I value your confidence in electing me president and your generosity in contributing to ASIS&T and our discipline. Thank you.

Resource Mentioned in the Article