

## SAS Regional and Technical Affairs Committee Report 2010 Raleigh, NC

### Poehlman Award

This year's Poehlman award winners are New York and New England. They both have excellent activity with their members and solid leadership. They have educational outreach that exemplifies the SAS mission to advance and disseminate knowledge and information concerning spectroscopy. The reason for co-winners this year is that the New York and New England sections have gone well beyond other sections in disseminating knowledge and information concerning spectroscopy. Both section have introduced web based section meetings and have invited other section to join these webinars. For these and other reasons, the Regional/Technical Section Affairs committee has chosen both sections to be co-winners of the Poehlman award.

### International Regions

Below is a letter to Bonnie showing some of the concerns facing the international regions:

Bonnie,

As you know, we have spent a great deal of time researching various approaches and issues relative to international sections. Information was gathered from ASAE, from other non-profits that have international sections (International Erosion Control Association, International Society for Performance Improvement, Optical Society of America), and from our auditors. Generally, SAS has two options for its sections: either they can be "internal" (operating as part of our corporation or "external" (their own corporate entities, not under SAS control or financial responsibility). In our documents, we refer to the sections that are under the SAS corporation as chapters and those that are separate entities as affiliates. (Please note that this terminology is not universal. Other non-profits may call all of their related sections "chapters" even though some or all of them are completely separate entities.) For consistency in this memo, I will use the terms as SAS has defined them.

Following please find a summary of our options and recommendations concerning international sections. The bottom line, for the reasons described below, is that it probably makes most sense for all the international sections to be affiliates, not chapters.

If a section is a chapter, it would have more burdens or requirements in terms of its relationship with SAS. The auditors confirmed that everything that I outlined previously (an SAS officer as signatory on the bank account, detailed financial reports so that we could include their income and expenses in our corporate statements, etc) would have to be implemented. Essentially the chapter's money is "our" money, so all of the same requirements for the way we treat bank accounts and document income/expenses in the US would apply to our money being handled by the international chapters.

Having a chapter outside the US would also require additional work by the SAS office. "We" would now be operating in a foreign country and would have to follow that country's requirements for registration and reporting. Since those requirements vary drastically by country, it could be a monumental task to try to research and comply with the regulations in multiple countries. *Every non-profit that I spoke to had no international chapters, only affiliates.* The primary reason that each organization cited for that policy was the complexity that would be involved in trying to deal with various international regs.

If a section is an affiliate, the requirements for dealing with SAS are much less of a problem. In order to give them money, we have to have some documentation on file indicating that their purposes and mission are in line with those of SAS. (That is probably already taken care of by SAS's policy for

establishing sections.). Each year the affiliate would also have to send us some report indicating how they spent whatever money we gave them. No receipts would be required. If they spend the money across multiple years, they just show the portion of the money that they spent in that year, and continue reporting annually until our grant is used up. We don't need to see any reports on money that they raise themselves.

From the section's perspective, the down side of being an affiliate is that whatever registration or reporting requirements there may be in that country would be the responsibility of the officers of that section. I asked each of the non-profits referenced above if they assisted their international sections at all in figuring out what those requirements are, and they all said no due to manpower and time constraints. *Their international sections are on their own in terms of how they get set-up and maintain themselves relative to legal and financial reporting requirements.* This was true even for OSA which seemed to have the largest staff and provide the most money to its sections.

I know that our immediate concern is the section in the United Kingdom. However, to give you a broader picture for purposes of establishing policies, I want to pass on some comments shared by the other organizations relative to differences that they have seen in various countries. The level of difficulty encountered by affiliates in establishing and maintaining an organization seems to vary widely by country. Generally, western European countries were better in terms of allowing the creation of volunteer organizations and having established procedures and understandable regulations governing such organizations. Some eastern European or Middle Eastern countries were much more difficult in terms of figuring out what the requirements were or the level of bureaucracy or regulations the affiliate had to deal with. In a few countries, the obstacles are so high, the local volunteers have had to resort to different strategies in order to meet their purpose. For example, the ISPI members who wanted to set up an affiliate in China worked on it for over a year but could not get past that country's complicated regulations. They ultimately decided to set themselves up as a project under one of the founder's company rather than start an organization. OSA has had a few cases where its affiliate could not establish a bank account in the name of an organization due to the country's banking regs. So, for those cases, they had to develop a form letter that all the affiliate officers sign saying that if money is given to one officer that it will be used for the purposes of the affiliate. OSA then makes the check or wire payable to the individual officer.

One final point is that the other organizations that I contacted were relatively cooperative in sharing information. In the future, perhaps that could help the founders of our potential affiliates if they are in a country where another group already has an affiliate. For example, if John has any questions about what government regs he may need to deal with in the UK, and if OSA already has a section there, perhaps he could get some insights from the OSA UK affiliate officers about how they have done it.

In summary, I believe having all the international sections be affiliates is the most feasible option for both SAS and the affiliate. That will force the volunteer officers of that affiliate to do the research on whatever regs there are in that country, but given our time and manpower limitations, that burden would probably have to be at the local level in either a chapter or an affiliate scenario.

I hope this information is of some help to you. If anyone has any questions, please let me know.

Best regards,  
Mary Anne

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Question like these are going to need to be resolved before we can move to other regions.