SAS Publicity Committee 2011 Report **October 5, 2011**

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Instead of meeting in person or through a conference call, in 2011, the SAS publicity committee met by compiling suggestions, thoughts and comments into a Google document. This allowed the committee members to brainstorm and contribute their ideas at their leisure. The comments have been compiled below.

Comments from SAS President Curt Marcott:

There are three main keys I see to growing and publicizing the Society:

1. Keep offering discounted student memberships and make a better effort to maintain these new members as they move on to jobs that may not be 100% spectroscopy.
2. Expand our membership base internationally.
3. Take advantage of our new and improved website, publicizing its benefits.

If you haven't used your new member login yet, I encourage you to explore the website and the member benefits it offers, which include updating your own profile, joining and paying dues online, the search function, and access to all current and past Journal issues without the need to log on to Ingenta. I think the website is absolutely key to being able to convince non-US spectroscopists who are looking for a sense of community to join SAS.

As you know, we officially opened the first Regional SAS section outside the US this year. I attended the grand opening in Manchester on May 17, where they had a one-day symposium with over 20 vendors/ sponsors and over 110 attendees. Dave Butcher put a nice write-up with more details and pictures about the event in the SAS Newsletter, which you can access from the website. I showed some screenshots from the website during my inaugural address and pointed out, using the "search" function, that there were only 40 UK members of SAS. Today there are 100 UK SAS members, All 48 students in attendance received SAS student membership funded using the sponsorship money from the event. I think the UK experience is a great model for growing in other countries/regions. Perhaps David Joyce on your committee, who is from the UK, can add his thoughts.

At the ICAVS-6 conference in Sonoma County, CA in June, SAS partially sponsored the poster sessions and 9 Student Poster Awards. The winning poster presenters were each presented with a certificate and a one-year SAS membership, which included a free hardcopy of the Journal. Each student poster award winner then presented a brief 10 minute oral presentation of their work to the entire conference. In addition, sponsors stepped forward and the remaining 28 student members were offered free one-year student memberships with internet only access to the journal. Almost all the students in attendance at ICAVS-6 were from outside the US and had never heard of SAS, We also had an SAS booth near the registration desk all week which was manned by our first SAS Student Ambassador, Mark Boatwright from Kansas State. SAS payed for his conference registration so he could attend the conference and help spread the word about SAS.

I have been traveling internationally a lot this year and discovered there are spectroscopists in India interested in starting an SAS section there. It would be great if we could get this going before next August, as the ICORS meeting with be in Bangalore. This Raman meeting typically has over 500 attendees, most of whom will not be SAS members. I think SAS should try to have a presence at that conference, as well, like we did at ICAVS.

I am currently in South Korea and will be giving a talk today at Kangwon University where Professor Young Mee Jung (an SAS member) will be hosting me. All 5 of her graduate students were at ICAVS and were awarded free one-year student memberships. I think Korea, China, and Japan are also good candidates for future regional SAS sections. I will be going to China and Japan in December.

Hopefully, this background will be helpful as your committee brainstorms other ways to publicize SAS.

Comments and Suggestions from Committee Members:

- Retaining graduating students is important. We would like to encourage them to continue their SAS membership after graduation. This may be accomplished by allowing them to fill out a form at conferences, offering a reduced rate their first year into their career, and publicizing our social networking sites.
- It was suggested that we should have a designated event at FACSS where the members of the various regional sections and/or technical sections can meet each other face-to-face. It might spur local activity for the society which might in turn help us draw in coworkers and/or students who might not otherwise travel to FACSS/Pittcon to see the main SAS events. Just having a designated point during the SAS reception (even 20 mins) for the sections to "meet and greet" might achieve some effective networking. Also, publicizing the section activities to the general society membership might motivate relatively non-active sections to become more active if they see what their peers are doing.
- It was brought to the attention of a committee member last year at FACSS that Alexander Scheeline had written one of the most highly-dowloaded papers in Applied Spectroscopy history, but that the publicity committee had not communicated this at all to the members or externally. Perhaps we should think about mechanisms to disseminate information about society activities/publications externally. For instance, we could send summaries/abstracts of cover articles (as a start) to NPR Science Fridays or certain scientific or news periodicals
- It was suggested that some events may not be getting completely communicated even to current members. A solution may be more of a 'push' to relevant people via email or social networks. Though it is possible that messages from a central body such as SAS sent en-mass can quickly be blocked by spam filters. Could cross publicize our events via some of our sister organizations mailing lists? (RSC or CPAC perhaps)?
- A 'product marketing' exercise on the society was suggested - looking at the current member demographics and perhaps at who we wish to attract. What benefits tangible and otherwise do we bring to our members, which are unique and perceived as valuable, which other communities would also find these benefits valuable? For instance, I (D.Joyce) am something of a 'corner case' being from an IT and Software background - however on a number of occasions prior to becoming a member I had purchased journal articles - it was not emphasized on the Ingenta site what good value membership is for those needing access to the journal. Perhaps we could entice those with an initial interest in the journal to join for a limited period to gain better access for research purposes - with

the goal to broaden our church - this must be analyzed against any potential loss of revenue.

- Sponsors such as Thermo should be encouraged to link back to the SAS site from their own sites - this improved our Google rating and should improve traffic. As product manager of GRAMS I (D.Joyce) have spoken to our sales team and we would be willing to extend a modest discount say 10% on our software products to SAS members. I am sure other sponsors and vendors would be able to do likewise however I acknowledge this is easier with intangible products such as software - as opposed to hardware. The GRAMS team would also be able to provide free vouchers for search credits on the Thermo's FTIRSearch.com and RamanSearch.com sites - if we made these to the tune of $50 it should help offset any 'sticker shock' of the SAS fees. We could look at reverse links to the SAS site to drive traffic.
- We need to ensure we keep in touch with members and also those who let membership lapse. I suggest that we try to drive students to our Facebook site - they will all have FB accounts and will most likely keep these through many changes of email address. If they 'LIKE' the SAS page and we continue to post relevant and interesting information it will ensure that we maintain ties. (Our postings will appear on their 'wall').
- We should encourage students to graduate to Linked in - again this binds them to us through job changes - whilst giving them a way to network in our field. These 'routs to market' are international as are the benefits of electronic membership. I wonder if we need to think about some 'local language' translations for the main pages of the site to help us with searches from non-English speaking areas.
- The FACSS web site is indeed becoming rich in resources - however I think that in order to draw in new blood that the activities and news should be re-broadcast on public networks like Facebook and Linked IN to generate outside interest.