

Message from the President

Strategic review process

It is almost half way through my year as ERS President and time to take stock of where we are and where we are going.

The ERS has been undergoing a critical review process this year, covering every aspect of the Society's life. Several working groups are busy discussing and preparing strategic reviews. To date, the Membership, Marketing and Scientific Departments have made their recommendations and the remaining reviews will be completed by the summer. The results from all the groups will be collated and a final document will be presented in Stockholm. Such an evaluation process was necessary due to the rapid growth in the Society's activities, specifically the major pillars of the society: Science, Education and Advocacy.

Our activities outgrew the structures we had in place to deal with them. This is particularly true of our scientific activities. The ERS recently decided to create a new post of Research Director who, it is hoped, will drive forward the future strategy on research activities, including the Fellowship programme and EU initiatives, such as the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research.

The publications survey results, where members were asked for their opinions in key strategic areas, will

help to guide the future direction taken. Similarly, the membership survey, which is currently being carried out, will help formulate policy in this area. All members are encouraged to participate and make their views heard.

Advocacy, particularly in relation to the EU, is another area in which the Society has raised its profile and activities. We are increasingly asked for our advice or opinion, often at short notice, on matters related to respiratory health, environmental or tobacco policy. It is important for the ERS to give a considered response and the process to enable us to do this is being built into our advocacy strategy. We are also developing a number of position papers, voicing ERS opinion in key topical issues.

HERMES

The educational activities of the ERS are also moving forward. The first phase of the HERMES project, with the development of a respiratory medicine syllabus, has been completed. To date, the syllabus document has been translated into 21 languages. In cooperation with the Forum of European Respiratory Societies and ERS National Delegates, our priority is to ensure that the document is disseminated and used at the National level. The next stage is the development of a European curriculum for respiratory medicine, the curriculum Task Force



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was initiated in November 2006 and has started work on this. The curriculum will be developed based on the educational needs identified in the syllabus. It is hoped that a European examination in respiratory medicine will be organised in time for the 2008 ERS congress in Berlin. This will not serve as a validation exam, but rather as a recertification or demonstration that minimal knowledge qualifications are attained. In the long-term, expectations are that the EU will support the harmonisation of training and a certificate/diploma in Europe. The ERS would be in a very strong position to become the natural and recognised partner if we have a reliable exam available.

It is likely that other changes in the structure of the Society will be needed to effectively deal with our increasing activities. This is clearly a time of review and change within the Society. We hope that the ideas that result from this strategic review will allow the Society to continue its development.

William MacNee
ERS President

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