

# —President's Message

*"I have the honor to be, with the highest esteem, your obedient and humble servant."*

—Thomas Jefferson

As I end my service as OSA's president—during a glorious year celebrating the society's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary—I leave with pride in our impactful past and excitement about our potential for the future. On reflection, here are my top three "lessons learned" from the year.

1. The most effective organizations optimally bring together people with many different talents. With OSA's more than 19,000 members, 270,000 people who use our services annually, and 350 student chapters worldwide, there are simply too many moving pieces not to rely heavily on a wonderful and intimate partnership between our best-of-class staff and members.

OSA's staff members work their hearts out for all of us. At the helm is Liz Rogan, a coach in every sense. Liz and her team have no agenda other than to make OSA the best it can be and to serve our community. I am inspired and humbled by OSA's staff, and I have learned so much about selfless leadership from Liz in particular.

2. I was asked to give a toast recently about OSA, and my mind focused on the word "meaningful." We all want to lead meaningful lives—and a large fraction of our lives revolves around our careers. Given that, we greatly benefit from developing meaningful, supportive and warm relationships with the people with whom we interact, and from disseminating the work we do so that it can make a positive impact on other people and on society. Indeed, OSA helps us to have meaningful professional lives—may it continue doing so for generations to come!
3. Perhaps the most basic part of OSA's DNA is the pursuit of excellence. It drives us and binds us. We really don't want to do anything substandard—and our standards are pretty high. Our pursuit of excellence brings professional satisfaction to our members and extreme value to society at large. Yet OSA also has a big heart. The political activist Harriet Woods has been quoted as saying, "You can stand tall without standing on someone. You can be a victor without having victims." OSA's pursuit of excellence goes hand in hand with helping to bring out the best in people by constructive support and encouragement rather than harsh rules and criticism. At such times, I simply love OSA.

I close by expressing my thanks—first to my wonderful wife, Michelle, and our cherished boys, for their support in all my OSA activities, and also to the OSA staff that has gone above and beyond to help me in innumerable ways. I am also grateful to Philip Russell for being a great role model as the 2015 OSA President; and to the example set by my own mentor, 1995 OSA President Tingye Li, of blessed memory, for instilling in me what it really means to be a servant of the OSA community. I look forward to the leadership of Eric Mazur, who I know will be an outstanding OSA President for 2017.

It has been a distinct pleasure and privilege.



OSA

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Respectfully and warmly submitted,

*Alan Willner,  
OSA President*