

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS TO DATE

By Bartly J. Mondino, MD

On July 14, 2005, the Strategic Planning Committee of the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology (AUPO) met at the Mark Hotel in New York City. The session was chaired by Gary W. Abrams, MD, AUPO president. Committee members participating included Bartly J. Mondino, MD, AUPO executive vice president, J. Bronwyn Bateman, MD, Mark S. Blumenkranz, MD, Susan H. Day, MD, Barrett G. Haik, MD, Travis A. Meredith, MD, Steven M. Podos, MD, John P. Shock, MD, Lisa Brown, AUPO staff. The session was facilitated by Ginger Nichols, CAE, president of GinCommGroup, a Texas-based consulting and training firm. The purpose of the retreat was to reevaluate AUPO's strategic plan and to identify new priority objectives to help the Association achieve its goals. A membership survey was conducted prior to the retreat to identify key areas and issues of concern as well as suggestions for change.

To provide context for the discussions, participants highlighted some of the key changes that had taken place in the external environment since the last strategic plan of AUPO in July 2000. Some of these changes include the following:

- Deterioration in the financial climate
- Increased regulations, including more self-regulation
- Higher public expectations of healthcare system
- Changing concerns about manpower from too many to too few ophthalmologists
- Fewer federally funded research grants
- Decreased importance of ophthalmology in medical centers
- Optometric scope of practice issues
- Concerns regarding relationship between physicians and pharmaceutical companies
- Non-competitive VA salaries
- Declining numbers in some ophthalmic subspecialties such as neuro-ophthalmology and pathology

- Increasingly burdensome RRC requirements for residency program directors
- Compliance with duty hours for residents
- Clustering of NIH institutes

Participants identified AUPO strengths and weaknesses as an organization as follows:

Strengths

- No organizational competition
- Valuable mission
- Financial stability
- Membership includes many talented people
- Members have a strong interest in the organization (as evidenced by the extremely high response rate to the membership survey)
- Vibrant, well-attended annual meeting
- Ability to achieve consensus
- Historically taken the high road on controversial issues
- Program Directors Council as a major new strength

Weaknesses

- Diversity of members makes leadership difficult
- Lack of visibility of AUPO outside of membership means organization has not exerted as much influence as it could or should
- Dissatisfaction among Program Directors regarding not being able to attend the annual meeting unless chair does
- Not enough input from AUPO into Academy's Basic and Clinical Science Course
- Very small percentage of organized medicine
- Perceived conflicts of interest related to pharmaceutical companies and fellowship accreditation issue
- No formal organization of chairs of departments across medicine

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A revised mission statement was developed as follows:

To serve, strengthen and represent academic departments of ophthalmology; to provide support, information and leadership opportunities to departmental chairs, program directors, and other faculty members; to promote excellence in ophthalmic education; to

foster vision research; and to promote ethical delivery of excellent eye care in order to ensure the best possible vision for the public.

Based on five critical issues, the Committee created new goals for AUPO with board members serving as goal tenders:

Goal	Goal Tenders
To help departments of ophthalmology maintain their education and research missions	Gary Abrams, MD Marco Zarbin, MD, PhD
To support through education and advocacy the highest quality resident training and assist programs in influencing and meeting accreditation standards	Susan Day, MD
To enhance the value and influence of ophthalmology departments within their academic institutions	Barrett Haik, MD
To attract, retain and mentor ophthalmologists in academic positions	Travis Meredith, MD John Shock, MD
To make AUPO a more effective organization in meeting its members' needs	Mark Blumenkranz, MD

The Board of Trustees of AUPO approved its strategic plan in October 2005. Goal tenders will be recruiting team members who will be in place by

January 2006 or shortly thereafter. Team reports and review of goals will be made at the Board meeting in July 2006.

