Leadership—Reflections on a Year as President

By Alison Grimes, AuD
President

One of the joys of being president is the knowledge that it doesn't last forever! This has been one of the most amazing experiences of my life, and I know that I have personally benefited in ways that were not on my radar screen when I was first elected. What have I learned, and what do I still not know, about leadership, from this experience?

First, now I really get the idea that leaders don't work in a vacuum. If they do, they're called dictators or despots (or clueless) or worse. Good leaders surround themselves with people who know more about a wide variety of issues than they do. Certainly I've been fortunate to have been surrounded and supported by an amazing Board of Directors, by numerous committee chairs and members, and task force chairs and members, who know much more about diverse issues in audiology than I do. Classroom acoustics, intra-operative monitoring, cochlear implants...the list goes on and on. I've been fortunate to have had talented women and men do the heavy lifting—it's easy to say, "let's have a task force on ---" but it is actually much, much more difficult to DO the work!

I also know that a volunteer leader cannot lead without a strong partner in the executive director. And I know that a smart executive director hires and surrounds herself with talented professionals who have a variety of knowledge and skills.

Jim Collins talks about being a “Level 5 Leader”—an individual who “embodies a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will.” Level 5 leaders “look out the window to attribute success to factors other than themselves. When things go poorly; however, they look in the mirror and blame themselves, taking full responsibility.” This is a definition of leadership that was new to me this past year. As I read Good to Great, I reflected on what I've done right, and what I've done wrong, over my leadership experience in this past year, and indeed, in my life. It seems to me that to be able to attain a Level 5 (which I strive for, but certainly fall short all too often) is the hallmark of a true leader. I am thankful for my experiences in this past year, as well as models of excellent leaders with whom I've had the privilege to work, in bringing me a step closer to attaining this goal!
In John Wooden's book, *On Leadership*, he defines the pyramid of success by its building blocks. Two in particular stand out and speak to me: Cooperation ("Be interested in finding the best way, not in having your own way"), and Team Spirit ("An eagerness to sacrifice personal interest for the welfare of all"). Being a Bruin, I believe Coach Wooden to be one of the most amazing examples of leadership living in this country today. Cooperation and team spirit—sounds like effective communication and, in particular, active listening—are also traits that a leader should strive for. These are skills that I’ve had the good fortune to hone in the past year, with help from the team!

What have I learned, and what have I attempted to practice? Or at least been reminded of? "Lead by example." Every parent knows this. What about "Do as I say not as I do?" Not a good leadership quality! Probably the greatest experience I’ve had is the realization that the buck DOES stop here for the bad stuff; the credit for the good can be, and should be, widely spread.

Past president—that’s what I’ll be on July 1. There will be 20 of us when I join their ranks. I count the past presidents as friends as well as colleagues, and I know I will learn from them how the role of past president of the Academy plays out. One thing that I know, my presidential year, 2007-2008, is unlike any other that came before, or will come after. I will remember that the exact issues or landscape of "my" year never occurred in the same way in the past, and will never be precisely repeated. The professional and political climate will never be exactly the same, and as such, decisions that will be made by future leadership will be based on new realities, new facts, and new situations about which I may know very little. It is my goal to stand back and enjoy the ride as they take our Academy in new directions, while being available (if asked) for a historical perspective.

Where will the new Academy leaders emerge from? An organization cannot survive without leaders who are respected by the membership, the communities we serve, our colleagues, and our adversaries. I look forward to seeing my younger colleagues come into their own as Academy leaders.

My time as leader of the Academy has drawn to a close. It’s been a privilege to be your leader. But I don’t kid myself that I did this in a vacuum. Kudos, thanks, and my eternal appreciation to all of you. It’s been an exciting and fun time. Pat, you’re in for a great time!

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Academy Announces Beck as New Web Content Editor
Effective June 1, 2008, Douglas L. Beck, AuD, has accepted the part-time position of Web content editor. Dr. Beck will develop and acquire original, audiology-specific, professional, and consumer-friendly content for the Academy’s Web site, the monthly e-newsletter (AT Extra), and the Academy’s upcoming consumer Web site. Although Dr. Beck will report to the Academy’s executive director (Cheryl Kreider Carey), he will work daily with the director of communications (Amy Miedema) and the Web manager (Jamie Stutt), who will manage the overall design, functionality, organization, and production of the Web sites and e-newsletter.

Dr. Beck will also work with Dr. David Fabry (content editor of Audiology Today) to develop timely, coordinated, and value-added information, news, and resources for the Academy membership and consumers.

Dr. Beck earned his master's degree at the State University of New York at Buffalo (1984) and his doctorate from the University of Florida at Gainesville (2000). He started his career at the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles where he was involved with cochlear implant research and intra-operative cranial nerve monitoring. In 1988, he became an assistant professor of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery and director of audiology at Saint Louis University. While in St. Louis, he co-founded the Missouri Academy of Audiology and served as president for two terms. In 1997, he co-founded a private audiology-based dispensing practice. From 2000-2005, he was president and editor-in-chief of three health-based Web sites: www.audiologyonline.com, www.speechpathology.com, and www.healthyhearing.com. During the past five years, Dr. Beck has taught many graduate-level audiology classes for the A.T. Still University Audiology distance education program (Mesa, Arizona) including Neuro-Anatomy, Neuro-Physiology, and ABR.

Dr. Beck joined Oticon Inc. in 2005, where he serves as director of professional relations and is involved with writing and speaking in support of Oticon’s innovative professional and student-oriented educational programs in the United States and overseas. Since joining Oticon, he has authored and co-authored articles relating to amplification topics such as advanced hearing aid technology, multi-channel non-linear amplification, directional concepts, t-coils, open-ear fittings, severe and profound hearing loss, and FM. He has also published on many non-amplification topics, including ASSR, intra-operative cranial nerve monitoring, auditory processing disorders, electroneuronography and facial nerve diagnostics, motivational interviewing, and others.

Dr. Beck has been a member of the Academy for 19 years and has served on a multitude of committees and subcommittees during that time.

The Academy is honored to have Dr. Beck join our team in support of the world’s largest professional organization of, by, and for audiologists.
they plan to bring to the Senate floor during the second week of June. Dialogue between the Senate Democrats with the White House and Senate Republicans has broken down over potential cuts to Medicare Advantage plans that the Administration feels would force a veto from the President.

The proposal that Democratic staff of the Senate Finance Committee shared on June 2 would forestall scheduled cuts for a period of 18 months to practitioner billing under the Medicare Part B fee schedule. It would provide a positive .05% update for 2009. In addition, it would correct a statutory problem with the Physician Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) by adding “audiologist” to the list of practitioners eligible for the bonus payments. It would also increase the bonus payments under the PQRI to 2% for 2009 and 2010.

Additionally, the plan provides bonus payments for practitioners that participate in e-prescribing initiatives, increases payments to primary care physicians, requires accreditation of imaging facilities by 2012, extends the exceptions process to the therapy caps for a period of 18 months, revises payment to certified registered nurse-anesthetists in teaching facilities, and allows separate billing of speech-language pathology services.

It is not expected that this bill will achieve the 67 votes needed in the Senate to override a veto. Thus, the Senate will need to come together on a package of potential fixes that the White House will approve. Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee would like to do more than merely extend expiring provisions. The Academy has been invited to a follow-up meeting with Senator Baucus, chair of the Finance Committee, planned for June 5. Please contact Phil Bongiorno, senior director of government relations, pbongiorno@audiology.org if you have any questions.

**Academy’s Annual Report**

As we conclude our fiscal year (July 2007-June 2008), we have prepared an Annual Report to best illustrate our Academy accomplishments, committee accomplishments, and financials.

The past year, the Academy has worked to increase membership, maintain financial stability, enhance our public awareness initiatives and advocacy efforts, and develop our educational offerings. [Here are some of the highlights from this year.](#)

**Board of Directors Approve Salary Supplement Policy Resolution**

The Academy Board of Directors recently approved a policy resolution urging school districts providing for or considering salary supplements for school-based audiologists to recognize board certification by the American Board of Audiology (ABA) (“Board Certified in Audiology”), thus allowing those audiologists certified by the ABA to become eligible for such salary supplement programs.

Background: Academy leadership learned that some school districts around the country have salary supplement programs for audiologists, making eligible only those audiologists who hold a current ASHA-CCC certification. To date, numerous school districts have followed this model for these salary supplement programs. The resolution advocates for an alternative pathway for audiologists with board certification from the American Board of Audiology (ABA) to become eligible for such salary supplement programs. The policy resolution can be viewed [here.](#)

**Hearing Assistance Technology: Academy Guideline Released**

The Academy has just released the guideline titled, "American Academy of Audiology Clinical Practice Guidelines: Remote Microphone Hearing Assistance Technologies for Children and Youth Birth-21 Years." The guideline has been prepared by the Hearing Assistance Technology Task Force: Cheryl D. Johnson, EdD (chair), Vicki Anderson, AuD, Arthur Boothroyd, PhD, Leisha Eiten, MA, Sandra Abbott Gabbard, PhD, Dawna Lewis, PhD, Linda Thibodeau, PhD.
**Academy Recommendations for Audiologist Standard Occupational Classification Move Forward**

In direct response to the Academy’s advocacy efforts to correctly categorize audiologists in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) manual, the Standard Occupational Classification Policy Committee (SOCPC) has proposed revision to the manual reflecting the Academy’s recommendation. [Learn more.]

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**Coding and Reimbursement Update**

**National Provider Identifier (NPI) Update**

As of May 23, 2008, your National Provider Identifier (NPI) is required for ALL billing claims to third-party payors. However, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has extended the deadline for Medicare claims submitted by audiologists until October 1, 2008, to give those who don’t have their Provider Identifier Number (PIN) the time to obtain it. This credentialing process may take up to two months.

Prior to the recent clarification issued with CMS Transmittals 84 and 1470, many audiologists employed by physicians did not have their PINs. With the transmittal clarifications regarding “Incident to” billings, audiology NPIs are required on all Medicare claims. The PIN is required to file Medicare claims and is how audiologists are credentialed within Medicare. This is also in compliance with the unique identifiers as required by HIPAA so that the provider of the service is the provider of record and in claim submissions. Audiologists having an active PIN and NPI should be submitting the NPI only on CMS claims.

Audiologic tests are considered “other diagnostic tests” and were not and are not to be billed “Incident to.” To obtain your PIN, you will need to file the 855I. If you are an employee of a physician, you will need to file the 855R to assign the benefits to your employer. You need to have your NPI to submit the 855I as well as all claims that can be found at [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/).

There is no change in reimbursement rates, as audiologists are paid by way of the same Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) as physicians.

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**Physician Practice Information (PPI) Survey**

Some of our members were randomly selected to participate in the important AMA Physician Practice Information survey. The outcome of this survey will eventually direct CMS to determine reimbursement regarding practice expense and other amounts attributed for audiology and other professions.

If you received this survey, please complete it as soon as possible. This will apprise those who set the rates as to the costs and expenses incurred with operating an audiology practice. The last survey was approximately 10 years ago!

The survey company, dmrkynetec, may be contacting your office via fax, phone calls, and/or e-mails, so you will want to alert your staff. A post card will also be sent in June to attest to your participation. If there are any questions about the survey or the process, please call 877-816-8940 and ask to speak with one of dmrkynetec’s executive interviewers about the 2008 Physician Practice Information Survey.

The Academy thanks those who have already completed their surveys as well as those who are in the process.

Questions concerning coding and reimbursement can be sent to Debbie Abel, AuD, director of reimbursement, at [dabel@audiology.org](mailto:dabel@audiology.org).

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**Mark Your Calendars...New Academy Conferences**

In addition to AudiologyNOW! 2009, the Academy is proud to announce three new conferences in 2008-2009: Future Leaders of Audiology Conference, Summit 2009: Gold Standards in Audiology Education, and the Academy
New Support for PhD Students
The Board of Directors has approved a change in the Academy By-laws to support member audiologists returning to school to get their PhDs. Learn more.

Student Code of Ethics
Beginning in January of 2009, all student members of the American Academy of Audiology will be required to abide by the Code of Ethics. Current student members will also agree to comply with the Code of Ethics upon renewal of their membership for 2009. Learn more.

Top Five Reasons to Support the Academy Political Action Committee (PAC)
1. Make history! By making a contribution of $312 to the PAC during the inaugural year of the Capitol Hill Office, your name will be prominently displayed on a plaque in the office to be remembered for future generations.
2. Get involved! Many audiologists ask how they can help. Making a PAC contribution of any size is a great first step to becoming engaged in the legislative process!
3. Establish the profession as a serious player! For years, physician groups have realized the importance of building a strong PAC and it is time that we follow suit. Involvement by all members is critical in reaching this goal.
4. 100 or bust! In the current Congress, we have achieved an all-time high of 91 co-sponsors on our direct access legislation (H.R. 1665) and our goal is strive for 100 and beyond. Legislatively, reaching 100 co-sponsors shows that a bill has strength (it is supported by almost 25% of Congress). Your PAC contribution directly impacts our ability to reach out to more Members of Congress.
5. Why not? It's simple, it's proven to be effective, it advances your profession, and it gives you the power to make a difference. Don't wait another day. Make your contribution today.

AAA Foundation Annual Fund Update
Is that IRS Economic Stimulus refund burning a hole in your pocket? Your windfall can make a difference in support of the AAA Foundation's philanthropic initiatives in the hearing sciences. Be a part of this year's AAA Foundation success story. Make a gift to the Annual Fund by June 30 and help us exceed our fundraising goal for FY 2008. Contact Kathleen Devlin Culver for information on making a tax-deductible contribution that supports research, education, and public awareness in audiology.

Audiology Today... What to Expect in the July/August Issue
- The "D" Word: An Interview with Marlee Matlin
- A Recommended Protocol for BAHA Assessment and Verification for Individuals with Single-Sided Deafness
- Enhancing Patient Care and Professional Relationships Through Personality Assessment
- Bioacoustics and Canine Audiology Clinic
- Enlarged Cortical Maps Don't Always Improve Perception
- Survey Says: Students Are in Need of More Information About Coding and Reimbursement

Back to Headlines
**Consumer News**

**Decibel Point: L Poses Risk**

Health experts say exposure to loud train noise could lead to hearing loss. Dr. Robyn R. M. Gershon, professor of sociomedical sciences at Columbia University in New York, says health professionals do not give train noise the attention they should, noting that everyday use of personal music players only exacerbates the problem. "Every rider--especially frequent riders, especially the elderly and children--is vulnerable," Gershon says. Audiologist Carrie Birdwell believes short rides on trains are not as damaging as long commutes, but agrees that passengers would be better off if they wore earplugs on the subway. Audiologists say that passengers should not try to drown out the noise by turning up the volume of their music players.

*Chicago Sun-Times (05/27/08) P. 8; Wisniewski, Mary*

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**Seniors' Issues: Hearing Doesn't Have to Hamper Your Golden Years**

Seniors with hearing loss can remedy the problem by having their hearing checked by an audiologist. Research gathered by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates that almost one-third of American seniors between age 65 and 74 have suffered hearing loss. Without a diagnosis, many seniors become isolated because their hearing problem prevents them from participating in social functions and limits their ability to communicate. NIH says people should be screened for hearing loss if they have trouble hearing over the telephone; find it difficult to keep up when two or more people are talking; need to adjust the volume to the point it disturbs others; have trouble hearing because of background noise; or believe people they are listening to are mumbling. Audiologists are trained to test hearing range and can assist if patients need to be fitted for a hearing aid.

*Muskogee Daily Phoenix and Times-Democrat (05/13/08) Benge, Judy*

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**Student Resumes Dos & Don'ts**

Students who have just graduated, list your education first on your resumes. That is the most important asset you have to get your foot in the door. For more tips on resumes and to view posted jobs, visit [www.HEARCareers.com](http://www.HEARCareers.com).

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American Academy of Audiology
National Office: 11730 Plaza America Drive, Suite 300 | Reston, VA 20190 | 800-AAA-2336
Capitol Hill Office: 312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E. | Washington, DC 20002 | 202-544-9334
[www.audiology.org](http://www.audiology.org)  newsletter@audiology.org