

President's Message

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The Times They Are a-Changin'

Stanton K. Shernan, MD, SCA President



Many people may believe that the major role of the SCA President involves the essential operations and management of the Society. While this area remains an important presidential responsibility, SCA is very fortunate to have a professional management team whose principal obligation is to guide the Board of Directors (BOD) and Executive Committee through its fiduciary and primary responsibilities associated with the Society's mission. The most significant challenge of the President is essentially to focus the BOD on SCA's goals and directives while developing newer strategic initiatives. In addition, the SCA President is responsible for communicating to the membership the activities of the BOD as they apply to the Society's mission.

Traditionally, the President's Message included within the SCA Newsletter has been used as a primary means to communicate with the membership about the activities of the Society and, perhaps more importantly, the vision of the President. I believe it is now time to change this format and start something new by taking advantage of this

highly visible media platform to permit other extraordinary leaders within SCA to present their perspectives in areas of their expertise, which are also directly related to current and future Society strategic initiatives. I will also continue to provide more traditional visionary messages at times throughout the year.

For this first opportunity, I have asked Sasha K. Shillcutt, MD MS FASE, a current member of the BOD and Vice Chair of our SCA Annual Scientific Program, to comment on SCA's initiative to expand our commitment toward diversity in leadership and representation within the Society. Sasha is a tenured professor and the Vice Chair of Strategy and Innovation in the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. She has been awarded the American Medical Association's Women Physicians Section Inspiration Award by her peers. Her greatest passion is empowering and encouraging others to achieve well-being in their professional and personal lives as reflected in her lectures to executives and physicians on the topics of professional burnout, resilience, and gender equity. Her TEDx talk titled Resilience: The Art of Failing Forward has been viewed by thousands of people, and she has led numerous conferences and retreats for women through her organization, Brave Enough. Please welcome Dr. Shillcutt.

SCA is strategically focusing on developing the next generation of physician leaders in cardiac anesthesiology. From the Board of Directors to Committee Leadership, our goal is to develop and advance strong physician content-experts and influencers within our subspecialty. One specific aim for the future is to cultivate and broaden the diversity of our membership, so that we may elevate the practice of cardiothoracic anesthesiology. The connection between diversity and excellence continues to emerge in the literature in medicine. The SCA Leadership recognizes that in order to accomplish our goal, we must start by diversifying leaders within our organization.

We are focusing on several key areas to grow SCA's diversity. We have evaluated the representation of gender in speakerships during our Annual Meeting & Workshops, Thoracic Symposium, and Echo Week. We recognize the importance of having experts from our broad membership on the stage. From 2016 through 2018, significant data-driven changes have been made to ensure that both expert women and men are represented as panelists and speakers at our programs. Additionally, SCA re-evaluated how speakers are nominated and selected. This review resulted in the diversification of our program's speakers and leaders, allowing us to recruit the most qualified individuals.

SCA Leadership strives to serve its membership in the best way possible and we recognize that we must understand who we are as a Society. In August, a survey to query the demographics of our membership will be sent. The survey will allow us to



further evaluate our diversity metrics and provide valuable information for us to begin a transparent evaluation of assuring the Society continues to reach their goals. I encourage you to participate in the membership survey, as the results will help give us a better understanding of how to continue to best serve all our members.

SCA is expanding on their initiative to develop physician leaders by mentoring and sponsoring physicians within our organization. The Board voted to approve two new positions to the Board of Directors, specifically for early career cardiothoracic anesthesiologists, aimed to grow leaders from the ground up. The SCA Leadership recognizes that in order to have the best innovation, ideas, and strategies, we need to hear from voices that represent our diverse membership. Beyond these two positions, we are planning two different leadership-directed educational sessions at the 42nd Annual Meeting & Workshops in West Palm Beach, FL, in 2020. I hope to see you there!

As a physician leader who began my career in SCA, I am honored to be part of an organization that recognizes the importance of developing the next generation of leaders. As a society, we are committed to furthering the diversity within our organization. All voices not only must have a seat at the table, but all voices should feel comfortable enough to have their voices heard. Data shows the most innovative and financially stable organizations have diversity in their leadership, and we aim to demonstrate this from the top down.

Our message for 2019 is clear: When we diversify, we are stronger. We hope you will join us.

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