

FROM THE DESK OF THE OAS PRESIDENT

Thanks to the efforts of many individuals and groups, the Oklahoma Academy of Science has vastly improved its public electronic presence. I hope you have had an opportunity to check us out. The Academy's webpages at oas.uco.edu have a colorful 21st Century format thanks to UCO's Clock Tower Studio, Dallas New, and David Bass. It is now easy to get to the information you need through one of the five easily located main pages ("about, membership, publications, OJAS, resources"). The design revision was initiated by Clock Tower Studio, whose graduating senior students donated their time to help us communicate within the academy and to introduce ourselves to the outside world.

Although much of the content is the same as on the old site (with updates, of course) many would regard the new site as more pleasant. Personally, content is more important than appearance, but if content can be made appealing to those that judge by looks, so be it. There is some new material. I also suspect that many of you have not visited the site in quite some time. Therefore, I offer a brief verbal tour.

The OAS Home page: <http://oas.uco.edu/> is the "About" page containing our mission statement. On the right hand side it has links to announcements regarding new items. Currently, the first announcement relates to an OAS Facebook page (more about that below). By the time you read this there will be a link to the newsletter you are reading at the moment. Another link leads to a listing of Executive Council members (including section Chairs and Vice-Chairs) with contact information. Perusing that list tells me that four section chairs (sections B, D, J, K) need to get Vice-Chairs in place and notify David Bass of their contact information. The page has the latest information about upcoming events such as the dates and location of the next Field Meeting and the next Annual Technical Meeting prominently listed. I hope that this page will eventually also have links to recent minutes of the Executive Council and of the Academy Business Meeting.

OAS will move most of its traditional 'hard copy' paper communication to electronic distribution of information. This will include the OAS Newsletter, reminders of upcoming meetings, calls for registration and papers, membership reminders and more. Last fall, the Executive Council approved a resolution to distribute the newsletter only electronically. There was to have been a brief overlap time during which print and electronic versions would be produced. Unfortunately, the closing of our principal printing company due to retirement has hastened the plan. There will be no transition period. For receipt of the newsletter and other communications it is thus essential that David Bass, our

Executive Secretary-Treasurer have your current e-mail address. Please send it to him: dbass@uco.edu.

The second page is titled "Membership" and has two parts. The first is a listing put together by Wayne Elisens and Ken Hobson of reasons to belong to the Academy. An electronically completable membership application form follows it. A completed, printed form can be sent with a check to David Bass. Alternatively, Pay Pal can be used to pay the membership dues directly. The option of payment of OAS fees by Pay Pal was instituted recently and is still under evaluation.

The third page, "Publications", features the Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science (POAS), our premiere publication. The POAS link takes you to searchable access to over 80 years worth of the journal at the OSU library. Also available here are links to editorial policies and procedures for POAS and to instructions for poster preparation for the Collegiate Academy competition. This page will be the future home of links to the OAS Newsletters. The "Miscellaneous" heading includes links to the OAS constitution, histories of the OAS and of the Oklahoma Collegiate Academy of Science. Links to the three statements (1981, 2000, 2008) of the OAS relative to the teaching of science are also found here.

The 1981 Statement is particularly worth reading because it not only argues against requiring the teaching of extra-scientific hypotheses or theories as science, but also discusses what makes a good scientific hypothesis. First and foremost, a good hypothesis must be formulated such that serious tests of its veracity can be constructed. Further, the best hypotheses are the ones that pull together the widest number of disparate observations into a coherent whole.

The fourth page "OJAS" deals specifically with the Oklahoma Junior Academy of Science, listing competition rules, prizes, abstract of presentations from 1996 to the present and other items. The OJAS continues to be one of the OAS' strong points.

The fifth and last page heading the OAS homepage is labeled "Resources" and has two lists of links. One is to Oklahoma institutions, mostly of higher learning. The other is to the home pages of the Academies of Science of other states of the US.

The OAS home page also provides a link to the new OAS Facebook page: (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oklahoma-Academy-of-Science/115691961290?ref=ts>).

The OAS Facebook "fan" page provides a place for sharing of photo albums from OAS events and for questions and discussion. There are links to constituent Oklahoma scientific societies and organizations; and contacts with Friends met at previous OAS events. Ken Hobson, who organized the Facebook page, writes: "All internet using OAS members with Facebook accounts should use Facebook to become a 'fan' of the OAS Facebook page. They can post questions, join discussions on the future of OAS, post photos from OAS meetings and enjoy maintaining contact with fellow OAS members."

Instituting a Mail List Serve is under discussion. It has the advantage that individual members subscribe or unsubscribe themselves from the mail list as they see fit. We have a small enough membership to have a moderated list. The moderator checks messages to maintain the quality and focus of the mail list. Send comments on this to both Ken Hobson and David Bass.

Ulrich Melcher