



Dr. David A. Heath

As shared in this issue, ASCO is engaged in a [comprehensive strategic planning process](#) for the first time in more than a decade. Strategic planning is always a complex and challenging endeavor, but it is an absolutely essential component for the long-term success of any organization. As we're all aware, health care is in the midst of very rapid change, and as educators of future practitioners, it is our responsibility to remain ahead of these changes so that our students can become productive and successful professionals. Creating a fundamentally sound strategic plan is critical for developing the roadmap that ASCO needs for the future.

In order for us to succeed in the strategic planning process, it is critical to be able to identify some foundational characteristics about who and what ASCO is as an organization. Our March strategic planning meeting in Scottsdale, Ariz., enabled us to make some great progress on many of these fronts, but perhaps the most interesting discussion was around a simple question: Who do we serve? Is it ASCO member institutions, our students, the profession or the broader public well-being? Our current mission statement includes the following; *"The mission of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry is to serve the public through the continued advancement and promotion of all aspects of academic optometry."* This certainly reflects the ultimate beneficiary of what we do, but the range of views that were expressed during the planning meeting was eye-opening for me and reinforced the importance of these processes in creating alignment within organizations such as ours.

There's little doubt that the work we do at ASCO serves many constituencies, and it is important to keep them all in mind as we develop our strategic plan. It is also important for us to have a clear and concise notion of how best to serve each of them. Last month's planning meeting enabled us to take the critical first steps that we needed to take in order to achieve this vital organizational goal. I am

excited to see where this process will take us in the months ahead.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. Heath', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr. David A. Heath