



Lauren C. Rowland Joins ASOA As Executive Director

John Ciccone

Lauren C. Rowland joined ASOA as executive director in early December 2011. *Administrative Eyecare* spoke with her shortly after her arrival to gain some insight into her leadership style.

AE: Can you tell us about your background?

LR: I'm a graduate of Virginia Tech with a degree in sociology and have been in association management for 30 years. I started out as an assistant at a trade group, and since that time I've managed, as deputy executive director or executive director, several trade and professional organizations. My most recent position was with GAMA International, an international insurance/financial services trade association, where I served as senior director of operations and chief of staff. [With respect to] medical organizations, I served as the executive director of the International Society of Analytical Cytology as well as the American College of Medical Physicists. So my experience includes management as well as the HR [human resources] and operations side of managing an organization. Recently, I took the exam to earn my Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential through the American Society of Association Executives.

AE: That's an interesting point because ASOA offers the Certified

Ophthalmic Executive (COE) credential, which is to ophthalmic practice management as the CAE is to association management—a recognition of professional accomplishment—and something you'll be promoting here.

LR: Yes, and there are many parallels. It's been a year-long process to prepare for the exam. In my case, I took a course in organizational behavior at a local university to finish out my professional development requirements. Like the immersion preparation courses ASOA has for the COE, I took a similar program through ASAE to get myself "in the zone" for the CAE test. So I understand what COE candidates experience and see the value it brings to an administrator's career and medical practice.

AE: The economy is in the tank and it doesn't look as if it will get better in the near future. Aside from finance, what challenges will small societies like ASOA face?

LR: Obviously, membership. When the economy is bad, memberships in outside organizations are one of the first things to go. It's very important to make sure that our value to our members is communicated and [communicated] on an ongoing basis. I believe that membership recruitment does not have an end point; we always have to be growing. I think the other piece of that, looking forward, is the need to look at our members' customers. If

we're able to anticipate patients' needs better, then we'll be able to anticipate our members' needs and be a step ahead in the process.

Beyond membership and promoting awareness of its value, there is the specter of legislative and regulatory reform. This is going to have an enormous effect on practices and the entire medical industry as well. The question for many medical practices is how to position themselves for the future. They must do this in the face of many uncertainties. For example, what will be the impact of Accountable Care Organizations and the IPAB [Independent Payment Advisory Board], which has the job of reducing the rate of growth in Medicare?

Again, it's all a question of value, and I think that it is important to innovate and offer new products and services to members to help them navigate the uncertainties they face. **AE**

Listen to the full interview in the Winter edition of *AE eZine*.



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