



# The Hidden Strength: Aligning ASA's Culture with Financial Stewardship

Crystal Wright, MD, FASA

**P**icture our organization as a magnificent iceberg drifting through the ocean. The enormous visible part above the waterline represents our discernable achievements – mission statements, public initiatives, and daily operations. However, other substantial components – unseen beneath the surface, and comprising our deep-seated values, beliefs, and cultural foundations — truly drive our strength and direction. As I step into the role of Treasurer, I am honored by the opportunity to steer our organization into its next chapter.

My experience as your assistant treasurer has given me a profound understanding of our financial structure and the underlying cultural currents that shape ASA. Just as an iceberg's true mass lies beneath the surface, our organization's most significant attributes are found in the depths of our culture, influencing every aspect of our journey. I have an “underwater” view of our iceberg, gaining insight into how our culture influences our financial health and strategic direction. Beyond the numbers, this depth will guide our strategies to ensure our continued relevance and stability.

Our finance team is a pillar of strength, committed to excellence and strategic insight. We are embarking on several key initiatives designed to enhance our financial stability and promote growth. Strategic expense management will ensure that our operation budget is aligned with our organizational priorities and delivers real value. The Program and Resource Prioritization Initiative will optimize resource allocation to maximize impact and efficiency. With the help of a third party, we have strengthened our project and product management processes to ensure that our resources are allocated effectively and yield meaningful results. Our Strategic Revenue Growth Program will also identify and pursue new revenue opportunities to support our long-term goals.

As we look ahead to the future, our focus remains on fostering sustainable growth and financial stewardship within ASA. With recent changes in our ASA Finance Team, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the magnificent internal staff behind the numbers and reports. Mark Manka was appointed



Chief Financial Officer in March of this year, following five years of dedicated service in Finance at ASA. His vision for the team is centered on providing the highest quality service while enabling data-driven decision-making to achieve optimal results. This vision also includes actively supporting initiatives focused on revenue growth and increasing the relevance of ASA to our members.

Along with our new ASA Assistant Treasurer Robert Thomsen, MD, Mark Manka, and a dedicated Finance Team, we are committed to ensuring that ASA's financial operations are robust and transparent. That dedicated team consists of:

- Carolyn Arnold, Operational Accounting Manager
- Eric Fall, Senior Financial Planning and Analysis Manager
- Cheryl Forsberg, Senior Accounting Manager
- Christine Gryszkiewicz, Senior Accounts Payable Clerk
- Daria Harasimowicz, Senior Accountant
- Kyle Kane, Senior Accounting Analyst

- Kathleen Marine, Senior Accountant
- Cathy Martin, Senior Accounts Receivable Clerk
- Justin Nelson, Senior Financial Analyst

The ASA Section on Fiscal Affairs will play a pivotal role in overseeing the organization's financial health, ensuring that our strategic initiatives are supported by sound financial management. By closely monitoring and guiding our practices, the ASA Committee on Finance will ensure the board meets its fiduciary responsibilities, positioning ASA for continued success and resilience in the ever-evolving landscape of our profession. Committee members are:

- Christian Diez, MD, FASA
- Jiapeng Huang, MD, PhD, FASE, FASA
- James D. Kindscher, MD, FASA
- Lori Hill Marshall, MD, FASA



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- R. Paul Rieker Jr., MD, MBA
- Travis J. Teetor, MD, FASA

As we move forward, my goal as Treasurer is to align our cultural strengths with a forward-thinking strategy. This involves acknowledging past financial successes while steering boldly toward our future. Yet, strategy alone is not enough. Execution is key. Therefore, we will focus on actionable steps that align our cultural values with our strategic goals. We will examine how our cultural identity intersects with our strategic initiatives, ensuring that every action we take honors our history and positions us for future success.

In practical terms, this means:

- *Reinforcing our cultural foundation:* We will continue to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and excellence in anesthesiology.
- *Aligning strategy with cultural insights:* Our cultural understanding will inform our strategic initiatives, ensuring they resonate with our members and stakeholders.
- *Driving financial relevance:* We will make data-driven decisions to strengthen our financial position while staying true to our cultural values.

As we embark on this journey together, I encourage you to engage with our mission, challenge assumptions, and contribute to shaping a culture that not only endures but thrives in the years to come. It's what lies beneath the surface that truly matters, and from this depth, we will draw the strength to lead, innovate, and remain relevant.

Thank you for your continued dedication to ASA. I look forward to working with you as we navigate the waters ahead — both above and below the surface. ■

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