



## Focus on the Foundation

William R. Laney, DMD, MS, Editorial Chairman

The financial requisites for most not-for-profit professional organizations minimally include funding for operational expense, operating reserves, and current future special projects. Resources to underwrite these expenses are commonly accumulated from dues, assessments, or voluntary contributions. To remain creditable, organizational budgets are developed by administrative bodies and executive directors to adequately support the requisites established in response to the mandated goals and objectives of the organization. Funding for other than routine, ongoing activities usually must come from other sources. A common vehicle for the generation of additional resources is the foundation.

A foundation is commonly considered to be an organization or institution established with provision for future maintenance. Most professional foundations have altruistic goals and objectives developed for the betterment of humankind. Professional organizations often provide for foundation development to create resources for lay or professional education as well as basic/clinical research. Charitable activities frequently include the provision of education and direct clinical treatment for handicapped, poor, or disadvantaged individuals or groups. Perpetuity of foundation funding is usually assured through endowments created by the sponsoring organization itself or solicited individuals, corporate entities, and other mutually interested groups. Foundation fund-raising is generally enhanced by selective tax relief for both the foundation and the contributors.

The Academy of Osseointegration was originally established as an affiliate of the Delaware-based Osseointegration Foundation but in recent years has become an individual corporate entity. Subsequently, the Osseointegration Foundation has been reorganized as a separate not-for-profit corporation in the state of Illinois with purposes that are exclusively scientific, charitable, and educational in nature. New officers and directors were elected in March 1993 at the Foundation meeting held in conjunction with the Academy of Osseointegration annual meeting in San Diego. Past Foundation activities have included the presentation of pre-Academy meeting scientific symposia (Thursday afternoon), sponsorship in conjunction with Quintessence Publishing Company of an annual award for best scientific paper published in JOMI, and sponsorship with the Straumann Company of an annual ITI Implant Research Grant.

Now in existence for approximately a decade, the Osseointegration Foundation has reached the crossroads: to grow and mature as an effective, worthwhile organization, or exist in name only as an orphan unwanted child of the Academy. The Academy of Osseointegration has realized remarkable membership growth in

recent years and continues to attract health care professionals and industry representatives because of its excellent scientific meetings and related organizational activities. It would seem timely and most appropriate for the Academy now to look outside of its regular programming and planning and give impetus to strengthening of the Osseointegration Foundation and its intended mission. Recent seed incentive funding provided by the Academy has been welcomed and much needed as positive inducement for the Foundation to get moving. New action programs are needed and an aggressive expansion of Foundation resources must be realized for project support and endowment on which future educational and research activities can be based.

Where existent, organization-foundation relationships have proven to be mutually beneficial in most instances. The foundation extension provides an opportunity to expand meaningful programming without compromising the intended purposes and modus operandi of the parent organization. Foundation sponsorship of selected invited speakers; awards for outstanding research, clinics, posters; and incentive programs for students and junior faculty can all contribute to annual meeting enhancement while relieving the Academy of additional expense. Involvement in actual individual or group patient education and/or treatment support is a more complex undertaking, but when funds are available, it provides demonstrable results for both the recipient and sponsor. Among other potential activities these examples signify the symbiotic interplay that can strengthen and increase organizational stature in both the professional and lay communities.

It is most difficult to attract outside funding without the uncompromised demonstration of good intention and commitment from the sponsoring organization and its individual members. The time has come for intensive focus on the Foundation and coordinated leadership that can provide creative, opportunistic planning and take aggressive action to attract the desired response, intramurally from individual members and from extramural sources, for what should be a most worthwhile endeavor.