

COMMENTARY

The American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (ASCPT) - A Rich Heritage En Route to an Exciting Future

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Introduction

In 1900, 20 physicians met in Washington, DC, to form the American Therapeutic Society (ATS) as a means of advancing rational therapeutics through “the application of any method or agency which might ameliorate, cure, or prevent disease.”¹ This mission, articulated over a century ago by the ATS, which eventually evolved into our modern day American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics (ASCPT), has remained a focal point of our mission.

Over the past 20 years, ASCPT has developed several 5-year strategic plans to further build on this mission and to articulate a vision for the Society that would guide us into the future. These plans have been underpinned by a solid set of core principles and tactical plans to ensure that ASCPT progressed as intended.

Our current strategic plan (2015–2020) “ASCPT: Transforming Translation” builds on previous strategic plans and intends to broaden the Society’s reach to those disciplines closely aligned with translational medicine.² As stated in this plan, ASCPT’s mission is to “Advance clinical pharmacology, translational medicine, and therapeutics for the benefit of patients and society.” Our vision to become the authority on the science and practice of translational medicine, by building on a foundation of clinical pharmacology and therapeutics, will require us to build and be recognized for our leadership and influence in these areas. Therefore, it seems completely appropriate in this inaugural issue of *Clinical and Translational Science (CTS)* published under the aegis of ASCPT, to highlight our current strategic plan, given the explicit inclusion of translational medicine in ASCPT’s mission and vision. This mission and vision is presented with our Society’s core principles and goals in **Table 1**.

ASCPT strongly believes in several “Core Principles” that provide guidance and a solid foundation upon which to launch our plans for the future²:

- Clinical pharmacology and translational medicine drive the development and use of therapeutics to enhance patient care.
- The continuum of clinical pharmacology and translational medicine strengthens the discovery, develop-

Table 1 ASCPT Strategic Plan; “Transforming Translation” – Mission, Vision, Core Principles, and Goals

MISSION STATEMENT

Advancing clinical pharmacology, translational medicine, and therapeutics for the benefit of patients and society.

VISION STATEMENT

ASCPT’s influence and leadership make it the authority on the science and practice of translational medicine, building on a foundation of clinical pharmacology and therapeutics.

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Clinical pharmacology and translational medicine drive the development and use of therapeutics to enhance patient care.
- The continuum of clinical pharmacology and translational medicine strengthens the discovery, development, regulation, as well as safe and effective utilization of medications.
- The unique strength of ASCPT lies in its multidisciplinary nature and its ability to be a catalyst for emerging science.
- ASCPT demonstrates the highest standards of ethics and integrity and fosters these values with a commitment to diversity.

GOALS:

Scientific Expertise: ASCPT unifies therapeutic disciplines, convening translational scientists in academia, industry, and government to leverage their diverse expertise.

Catalyst for Innovation: ASCPT fosters innovation and is at the forefront of emerging scientific fields in clinical pharmacology and translational medicine.

Influence and Impact: ASCPT is the scientific resource that influences decision-making on therapeutic usage for patient care.

Education and Communication: ASCPT builds upon its exceptional educational offerings and family of journals to create value for members and new audiences.

Organizational Effectiveness: ASCPT has the infrastructure to sustain its leadership position in the field, secure a strong financial future, and support diversity in its evolving membership.

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Guided by these core principles, ASCPT has developed five major goals, which it is working diligently to achieve within the next 5 years.² Doing so will fulfill our mission and represent a major step in achieving our lofty vision. These goals are highlighted below.

GOAL 1: Scientific Expertise: ASCPT unifies therapeutic disciplines, convening translational scientists in academia, industry, and government to leverage their diverse expertise

As stated above, a core strength of ASCPT lies in our multidisciplinary nature and our ability to be a catalyst for emerging science. In order for us to embrace and lead in the translational medicine arena, it is critical that our programming, publications, and collaborative relationships are relevant and valuable to translational scientists working in academic, industrial, consulting and regulatory settings, and that these individuals consider ASCPT a professional home where their work can be highlighted and they can interact with other colleagues working within the translational sciences, clinical pharmacology, and therapeutics.

In order to achieve this goal, our Society will seek to deepen existing successful partnerships, as well as forge new collaborative opportunities with domestic and federal agencies committed to advancing the global healthcare landscape, and with precompetitive initiatives, industry groups, and other professional organizations. Our acquisition of *Clinical and Translational Science (CTS)* provides an excellent venue for our members and others working in closely aligned fields to advance our mission and vision through the publication of their clinical and translational research. ASCPT further aims to attract informatics and clinical trial design expertise to benefit the research domains of translational medicine, systems pharmacology, and drug development through programmatic offerings at our annual meeting and online.

GOAL 2: Catalyst for Innovation: ASCPT fosters innovation and is at the forefront of emerging scientific fields in clinical pharmacology and translational medicine

Achievement of this goal requires fairly substantial changes within ASCPT and in its roles and work in various external communities. Since the launch of our Strategic Plan, the structure of ASCPT has been significantly changed, and the current structure is thriving! We have migrated from our traditional structure comprised of Sections and Special Interest Groups to a structure of three broadly defined “Networks” (Translational and Precision Medicine; Quantitative Pharmacology; and Development, Regulatory, and Outcomes), that capture the historical and current scientific strengths our members have enjoyed, and have extended beyond them, in keeping with our strategic ambitions. These Networks serve as the “Home Base” for our members. Within each Network, “Communities” have been established as member-driven hubs of innovation around specific scientific areas. Communities are dynamic in their existence and will be formed in keeping with the emergence of important scientific fields within clinical pharmacology, therapeutics, and translational

medicine and will be “sunsetted” as interest in a particular area wanes or becomes irrelevant. Although Communities are primarily affiliated with a specific Network, the hope is that they will reach across Networks to create collegial, programmatic, and innovative synergies.

This reinvigorated structure for ASCPT will permit changes in the way programmatic offerings are generated and vetted, resulting in a scalable process whereby Networks and their Members and Communities will work closely with our Scientific Program Committee to develop the best programmatic offerings possible.

As we look more externally, ASCPT aims to take a leading role as a convener at the forefront of advancing bio-innovation on issues that are of interest to the membership. It is our hope that we can leverage our membership to share data and research on issues important to our discipline, in collaboration with our scientific and regulatory partners.

GOAL 3: Influence and Impact: ASCPT is the scientific resource that influences decision-making on therapeutic usage for patient care

Although the knowledge within the membership of ASCPT is impressive, the Society has not done a good job of consistently promoting this knowledge base to external entities involved in healthcare decision-making. As a result, we are infrequently looked to as “the” scientific resource that influences decision-making on the therapeutic use of drugs. ASCPT wishes to change its global standing in this regard and feels strongly that it can and should make substantial and long-lasting contributions to improving the healthcare landscape as it relates to the development and rational use of drugs.

Achieving this goal is more of a “marathon” than a “sprint” and it will require us to develop a roadmap to get us there. This roadmap will necessarily build on a string of successes that will eventually establish a strong reputation for ASCPT with healthcare decision-makers. Among the many potential elements of our roadmap are:

- Developing a forum where scientists, regulators, and patient groups might regularly meet to discuss needs and pressing issues that ASCPT’s knowledge base might help to remediate;
- Outreach efforts to international agencies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to learn about ways that we might contribute on an international level; and
- Development of a “traveling faculty” initiative aimed at educating scientists/clinicians in developing nations on the fundamentals of clinical pharmacology and therapeutics.

GOAL 4: Education and Communication: ASCPT builds upon its exceptional educational offerings and family of journals to create value for members and new audiences

Successful professional organizations, such as ASCPT, continually seek to enhance member value by building on its

programmatic and educational offerings and providing ways for its members to receive this information continually and efficiently.

To this end, ASCPT has added new programming formats and networking opportunities at our annual meeting with much positive feedback. We are also exploring ways to extend the annual meeting experience by providing some of its programming online both during the meeting and throughout the year. In a similar way, we are exploring avenues whereby the mentoring experience for our students can continue beyond the annual meeting.

Building on its two highly successful Journals, *Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics (CPT)* and *CPT: Pharmacometrics & Systems Pharmacology (CPT: PSP)*, ASCPT has acquired *CTS* to round out its Journal offerings. Work is underway to develop our portfolio of Journals in a way that is complementary and offers our members and subscribers a world class differentiated offering in clinical pharmacology, therapeutics, and translational medicine. The scope of *CTS* has been substantially changed since ASCPT acquired it, and is now focused on publishing original research that bridges laboratory discovery with the clinical diagnosis and treatment of disease. Therefore, as a combined offering, our portfolio of Journals provides unparalleled value and publishing opportunities for those working within clinical pharmacology, therapeutics, and translational medicine.

GOAL 5: Organizational Effectiveness: ASCPT has the infrastructure to sustain its leadership position in the field, secure a strong financial future, and support diversity in its evolving membership

Achieving this goal will help us to ensure that ASCPT has the human, physical, technologic, and financial resources to operationalize our ambitious strategic plan. For example, we have substantially broadened our volunteer involvement and leadership ranks on Committees and Task Forces when compared with last year and, as stated earlier, have completely redesigned ASCPT's structure. We are also revamping our electronic offering to ASCPT members, including a redesign of our website to enhance its capabilities and make it more user-friendly. We have also embarked on a communication plan to inform current and prospective members of the exciting changes occurring in our Society.

Summary

The first “foundational” year of our 5-year strategic plan “ASCPT: Transforming Translation” has been truly transformative with regard to the broadening of our mission and vision, the reorganization of our Society to best serve our members, and the substantially enhanced member involvement in leading these positive changes. We have witnessed a significant increase in ASCPT membership in response to these changes, helping to confirm that we are on the right path. Future years of our plan will focus on fully achieving each of our five goals, to create maximum value for our members, and to establish a substantial, contributing role for ASCPT in improving the development and rational therapeutic use of pharmaceutical products globally.

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1. ASCPT History, ASCPT Website: <http://www.ascpt.org/About-ASCPT/ASCPT-History>. Accessed November 3, 2015.
2. American Society for Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics. ASCPT Strategic Plan: Transforming Translation, 2015. http://www.ascpt.org/Portals/8/docs/About%20ASCPT/ASCPT_5-Year_Plan-WEB_FINAL.pdf. Accessed January 4, 2016.

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