

## An evolution during a century of leadership, scholarship, mentorship, and fellowship



In 1918, before prosthodontics was a specialty, a group of 31 visionary prosthetic dentists met at the Congress Hotel in Chicago as the culmination of 5 years of deliberations and formed what would become the world's longest standing prosthodontic academy, the Academy of Prosthodontics. The details of the genesis and subsequent progress of the academy have been documented in detail in the 7 Academy of Prosthodontics Centennial Invited Editorials that have preceded this one. This summative piece will instead focus on the strategic nuances of that evolution and its future direction.

The Academy of Prosthodontics started as an organization based only on techniques, which was the need of the profession at that time, as the fledgling specialty of prosthodontics established its presence in the health community. Initially, the academy was rather inward looking with scientific meetings focused on devices, materials, and geometry. Indeed, its archives show that the initial forays of the academy into the realm of multidisciplinary collaboration were less than auspicious. However, as the specialty and indeed the health professions evolved into a patient-centered approach on to which was layered an evidence-based approach, the academy was always in the forefront of developments. Its members recognized and embraced the fact that prosthodontics is the crossroad of the different clinical disciplines of dentistry and a key element in most pathways of complex oral health care.

The scientific meetings of the academy in the current era feature as many or more renowned speakers in other dental specialties and the basic sciences, and indeed the medical specialties, as in pure prosthodontics. As the evidence base in areas of genomics, bioengineering, and neuroscience continues to develop, the academy will continue to be in the forefront of the major shifts in care approaches that will further enhance the rehabilitative outcomes of our patients.

To fulfill the ever-evolving leadership roles that the academy fellows have held both within the profession

and beyond, there has been an evolution of credentials and competencies in academy fellows throughout its first century. The pioneers of the academy exercised their vision through a competency lens developed primarily in their private practices from their predoctoral dental education. However, as the complexity of the specialty and general global context developed, their successors completed postdoctoral degrees in their clinical discipline as part of their specialty training and took on leadership roles at their institution and in national and international organizations. The next evolution in the competencies of academy fellows has already begun, with many now holding doctoral degrees in the basic sciences underpinning prosthodontics and graduate degrees in nondental domains which enable them to lead organizations and institutions around the world in the complexity of the modern health executive environment.

The geographic scope of the academy has also evolved since the time of the founders. Initially, the academy comprised only North American members (the inaugural president, William Giffen, hailed from Mayfield, Ontario, Canada). The academy broadened over the course of its first century to include prosthodontists in a diversity of senior leadership positions engaged in service, policy, scientific, educational, and clinical domains throughout the world. While we are ever proud and cognizant of our strong roots in the North American Midwest, the academy is now a global organization, administratively based in San Diego, California.

As it continues to build a global footprint, we are proud to develop the next generation of leaders in prosthodontics around the world, both through the internal mentorship program for junior academy fellows and the external Future Leaders in Prosthodontics program, which currently boasts participants from every inhabited continent. This allows the academy to be a major force in the leadership and scientific

evolution of the specialty for the benefit of our patients worldwide.

The summer of 2018 marks the 100th year of the Academy of Prosthodontics. To celebrate this moment and the subsequent century of leadership, scholarship, mentorship, and fellowship by the academy, we returned to Chicago for the Centennial Scientific Meeting, May 9 to 12, 2018, at the Sofitel Chicago Magnificent Mile. The fellows of the Academy of Prosthodontics were proud to share this landmark scientific meeting and social program with the global prosthodontic community and celebrated the centennial of the academy in the great city of Chicago, where it all began.

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