

AMWA NEWS



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Expertise and Leadership

Elise Eller, PhD / 2022–2023 AMWA President

As I write this, the AMWA Board of Directors (BOD) is preparing to meet in Rockville, Maryland, for its spring board meeting. It's always a pleasure to see my fellow board members and AMWA staff in person. I'm also excited because the AMWA BOD will review and discuss recommendations from the Diversity & Inclusion Assessment Task Force.

The AMWA BOD reviewed preliminary findings from AMWA's 2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Survey at its meeting in January. One of the things respondents felt would be most helpful for AMWA to cultivate a more inclusive culture is to provide programs and resources on DEI topics. Providing education and resources is solidly in AMWA's wheelhouse, and I am pleased that AMWA has already begun to offer this educational content, and we plan to develop more. Our monthly webinar series has included DEI topics, and we had educational sessions, roundtables, and posters related to DEI at the 2022 Medical Writing & Communication Conference. I understand that there are several proposals on DEI topics for our upcoming annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland. I thank everyone who has stepped forward to share their expertise in this area.

Survey respondents also shared what would be most helpful to them as medical communicators. These include resources on using inclusive language in medical communication, on how to develop inclusive health communication, and on health equity and health disparities. If you have expertise in any of these topics or can recommend someone with expertise, please reach out to AMWA staff. We can use you, whether it's a webinar, online learning, or conference content. The *AMWA Journal* is another venue to showcase your expertise.

The survey respondents also indicated that AMWA should strive to have a more diverse representation in leadership and among subject matter experts (eg, *AMWA Journal* article and blog authors, conference and online education presenters). To keep our organization strong, we need to continuously cultivate new leaders and encourage a diversity of voices in our leadership.

Many AMWA leaders got their start at the chapter level—chapters always need volunteers! If you are in a chapter and would like to be more involved, consider volunteering for a task, whether it's printing out name tags for your chapter's conference, organizing a networking or educational event, or serving on a chapter committee. Members can also develop leadership skills by volunteering at the national level, such as volunteering for the *AMWA Journal* or serving on a committee, task force, or working group. As volunteers gain experience, they might want to further develop their leadership skills by chairing a committee, task force, or working group. From there, leaders might want to apply to serve on the AMWA BOD, where they will need to think strategically on behalf of the organization. In short, activities range from the operational and logistical to management to strategic, and volunteers need to consider what skills they have and want to develop further as well as the space in which they feel the most comfortable.

In addition, you can demonstrate leadership by putting yourself forward as a subject matter expert. We have many members who have established themselves as such by authoring articles for the *AMWA Journal*, presenting webinars, leading workshops, or presenting at chapter or annual conferences. Members can also serve as subject matter experts for the Education Committee. By sharing your expertise, you are investing in yourself as well as our profession.

Of course, this wouldn't be a proper president's column without me mentioning this year's Medical Writing & Communication Conference in Baltimore. I've been getting sneak peeks into the content that will be offered at this year's conference, and this year's program promises to be amazing. Our annual conference is where leaders and experts share their knowledge. This is the heart of AMWA. Come experience it this year in Baltimore and be inspired.