



# President's Message

*International System Safety Society President  
Chuck Muniak*

## Thoughts on the Phoenix ISSC

I have just returned from the 36<sup>th</sup> International System Safety Conference (ISSC) in Phoenix, Arizona, and I want to share some of my perceptions and observations. It seemed to me that, in general, people were more enthusiastic and in a better mood than usual. If anyone has an explanation for this please tell me, as I would like to repeat this.

At the Executive Council (EC) meeting held the weekend before the Conference, we discussed a variety of topics — the most important of which were paradigm shifts, and how we might increase membership and strengthen the chapters.

My summary of the paradigm shifts that are in progress is as follows:

1. The International System Safety Society (ISSS) is working on four important initiatives (standard, curriculum integration, Institute creation and certification).
2. EC meetings are now held monthly, and voting is primarily done electronically.
3. A new website is being developed.
4. The EC has assumed the planning, management and operational control of the ISSC.
5. The *Journal of System Safety (JSS)* editorial board has been strengthened. This has helped the *Journal* and provided a resource for reviewing Conference papers.
6. We are developing alignments with entities such as Arizona State University, as well as others.
7. We are seeking greater efficiency, which will result in lower overhead.

The first paradigm shift noted above is probably the most important. These initiatives have been spearheaded

by the Virtual Chapter and have now been turned over to the entire ISSS for further development. Historically the ISSS has provided a pleasant Conference, as well as a forum to discuss ideas and publish papers on these ideas. This was fine, but if we want to improve the profession,

we must consolidate our ideas into something (i.e., a standard and curriculum) with a good amount of coherence. It is important that the material converges in something that is the "ISSS brand."

There was also a good deal of discussion at the keynotes and elsewhere about how the practice of our profession is in need of improvement. Some of this is due to the fact that it is common for system safety practitioners to learn primarily from on-the-job training. This results in tremendous variability in the practice of system safety and in poor work products, leading to a bad reputation among our corporate

customers. These initiatives should help to alleviate this problem.

On Tuesday evening during the Conference, we had an event at Arizona State University (ASU). This event allowed our members to meet and greet ASU faculty and students. However, the most important part of the meeting was to meet and honor one of our most venerable members, David V. MacCollum. This was a Conference high point for me.

On Thursday night, we held another special event — a retirement celebration for Cathy Carter. At the end of September, Cathy will retire as office manager after 30 years of service to the ISSS. We all give Cathy our affection and appreciation for her long service, and wish her the very best in the years to come.

Regards,  
Chuck

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