

—President's Message

This is my last opportunity to speak to you through this column, as my term as Optica President ends with the close of December. Like many who have preceded me in this office, I find this final message a good chance to look back on the year that will soon pass, and to cast an eye toward the future as well.

The pandemic remained an unprecedented global challenge in 2021—more than seemed likely in late 2020. Many of us had hoped that by the middle of this year, hybrid in-person/online meetings would become the norm. That proved too optimistic. We became accustomed to announcements that meetings originally planned as in-person events would shift to all-online formats. Although in-person meetings did take place in some cities and countries, they had significantly fewer and mainly domestic attendees.

Yet I believe there is another way to look at the past year.

The incredibly rapid progress on vaccines against the coronavirus and the development of new diagnostics and treatments have underscored science's power to drive solutions to global problems. And, it is the fruits of optical and photonic science in particular—a high-speed internet, for instance, and bright, high-resolution displays—that have helped enable the remote communication and meeting capabilities that have made the pandemic experience more productive (and more bearable).

Just last month, representatives of the Global Environmental Measurement and Monitoring (GEMM) initiative, a joint project of Optica and the American Geophysical Union, convened a summit in Glasgow, UK, during the United Nations COP26 climate conference. The GEMM summit highlighted the role that dense networks of optical sensors can play in mapping greenhouse gas emissions and informing policy decisions in cities, which account for more than 70% of total greenhouse gas emissions.

Hence, I remain optimistic! I believe the challenge will bring forth more innovation and advancements to our field and for the benefit of humankind.

The biggest highlight this year has to be the launch of our new brand! I am so grateful to all of you—Optica members, volunteers, supporters and staff—for carrying out this monumental, historic task so beautifully and successfully. I was lucky to be able to travel to Optica headquarters in Washington, DC, to celebrate together with 2020 President Steve Fantone, CEO Liz Rogan and the staff at Optica's first 2021 all-staff, in-person meeting on 23 September, and again with some of our past presidents, luminaries, supporters and staff in Palo Alto, CA, on 19 October.

This is an exciting time for our field and organization. Together we made history—we reinvigorated our society with a broadened vision to be inclusive to all fields and geographic locations and a dedication to excellence and quality. And by doing so, we ensure our society will thrive for the next hundred years.

It has been a true honor for me to serve as both the last president of OSA and the first president of Optica. I want to renew my commitment to our mission—advancing optics and photonics worldwide. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to serve our society and its community in the past year. And I wish my successor, 2022 Optica President Satoshi Kawata, the best of luck in leading the society during his presidential term.



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—Connie Chang-Hasnain,
Optica President