

—President's Message



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It carries risks of misunderstanding in some areas, where the unification to a single global standard may seem like a form of colonization. Globalization must instead be a diversification and decentralization based on democracy. We believe that unexpected new scientific ideas emerge in an environment that can embrace the diversity of local cultures, customs and styles.

Companies that have successfully globalized are rooted in different parts of the world. They adapt to each region, and develop and offer menus and services suited to local residents. True globalization and diversification of this sort is a time-consuming task for any scientific society—and I believe Optica will continue to succeed in its vision of advancing optics and photonics worldwide.

While it is a global society with an increasing set of online services and events, Optica still needs to operate in the physical world—and it continues to do so through its headquarters in Washington, DC, USA, as well its European presence. During 2020 and 2021, when I served as the society's Vice President and President-Elect, the pandemic prevented me from visiting headquarters and meeting the organization's staff and officers in person. Toward the end of last year I had booked a flight for Washington to attend Optica's year-end governance meetings and staff holiday party—yet those plans, too, went away when Japan changed its quarantine period and my flight was canceled.

As President, I still hope to visit Optica headquarters at the end of March, to attend the Optica Leadership Conference and the second board meeting of the year. Meanwhile, I again invite you to send your comments on this and future messages to me at ideas@optica.org.

As it does every year, this February issue of *Optics and Photonics News* presents the most recently elected class of Optica Fellows. I congratulate and thank them for their contributions both to Optica and to the science of optics and photonics.

I am pleased to note that more than half (54%) of the newly elected Fellows are from outside of the United States. This result agrees well with the demographics of Optica membership. More than 58% of the society's members now are located outside of the United States. Some 84% of downloads of Optica journal articles are from countries other than the United States, and 87% of the first authors of Optica journal articles have no affiliation with an institution in the United States. Clearly, what was originally called OSA—the Optical Society of America—has become a global organization, Optica, the society advancing optics and photonics worldwide.

This diversification of Optica partly reflects the larger, increasingly global nature of science and technology. More and more, our members living in different regions are developing networks that cross international borders and oceans—and are exposed to different perspectives. Digital and internet services, such as virtual webinars and online meetings—which we have tested many times during the pandemic—are accelerating global activities of members far from the United States.

Yet everything has two sides, and globalization is no exception.

—Satoshi Kawata,
Optica President