



ALA

American Laryngological Association

Summer 2026 Newsletter

2026-2027 Council

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Jennifer Long, MD, PhD

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Maxine Cunningham, MBA

A Message from the President

Dear Fellows and Members of the American Laryngological Association,

I am deeply grateful and genuinely humbled to serve as President of the American Laryngological Association. Leading an organization that has served as the intellectual home of academic laryngology for nearly a century and a half is both an extraordinary privilege and a significant responsibility. Throughout our history, we have advanced the science and practice of laryngology while fostering a community of scholars, educators, innovators, and mentors. I am honored to follow the remarkable leaders whose vision has shaped our Association and our specialty.

I would like to thank our immediate past president, Dr. Joel Blumin, for his outstanding leadership, humility, kindness, and collegiality. The strength of the Association today reflects his steady guidance. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Jonathan Bock and the entire program committee for creating an exceptional and memorable 2026 scientific program in Phoenix. It was wonderful to see colleagues reconnect and to feel the enthusiasm throughout the meeting.

The Phoenix meeting also gave us the opportunity to celebrate Maxine Cunningham and her 25 years of dedicated service to the ALA. I experienced Maxine's commitment firsthand when I joined the ALA Council. She patiently took my calls and answered my endless questions at all hours of the day, on weekends, and even during holidays. I am forever grateful for her guidance and for keeping me 'on track.'

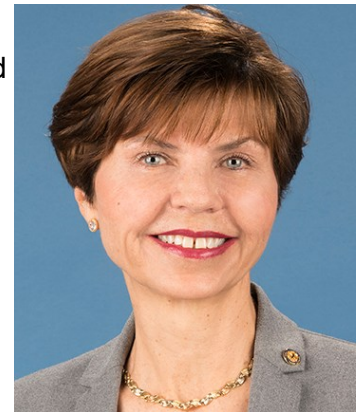
The strength of our specialty has always rested not only in the knowledge we create, but also in our willingness to share it. Our annual meetings are more

than venues for presenting outstanding science: they are where collaborations begin, trainees meet future mentors, established investigators inspire early-career colleagues, and friendships develop across institutions and generations. In an era of instantaneous information and virtual communication, these personal connections are more valuable than ever.

In that spirit, we have begun an initiative to commemorate the giants of our Association and preserve their contributions for future generations. Led by our former Historian, Dr. Al Merati, the project consists of [recorded video interviews](#) capturing personal recollections and important moments in the evolution of our field. Four interviews have been completed and will soon be uploaded to our website. I have been struck by how engaging and entertaining they are, and how vividly they remind us that the history of our specialty is best understood through the people who helped create it. Those conversations also remind us that our greatest legacy is not simply the discoveries we make, but the people we inspire, the standards we uphold, and the opportunities we create for those who follow.

I am particularly excited about the Andrew Blitzer Neurology Lecture, which will be inaugurated at the 2027 annual meeting (see page 3). The lecture will recognize Dr. Blitzer's extraordinary influence while

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creating a prominent forum for advances in neurolaryngology. This addition will enhance the quality and depth of our scientific meeting, and I look forward to seeing it become an enduring part of our program.

As I begin my presidential year, I am energized by the enthusiasm I saw in Phoenix and by the many members who want to contribute to our Association. I hope to channel that energy toward three priorities: **education, engagement, and excellence.**

Education remains central to our mission. Digital technology, simulation, artificial intelligence, and global communication are transforming how physicians learn and how patients receive care. We are well positioned to evaluate these developments thoughtfully and provide leadership as innovation becomes integrated into our field.

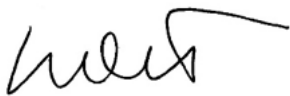
Engagement means ensuring that every member has meaningful opportunities to participate. Through our strategic planning initiative, we have created clearer pathways for members to serve on committees, organize panels, and moderate sessions. It is inspiring to see so many individuals eager to contribute. I encourage every member to become actively involved by attending our meetings, submitting research, volunteering, nominating deserving colleagues, mentoring trainees, and supporting our research initiatives. Each contribution strengthens our collective impact and helps secure our future.

This commitment to engagement extends to those preparing to join our specialty. Another ongoing initiative seeks to better define the laryngology fellowships participating in the match. Providing greater clarity about these programs and what they offer will help prospective fellows identify the training opportunities that best fit their needs and career goals.

Excellence remains the defining characteristic of our Association. For us, it means scientific rigor, thoughtful education, compassionate care, and a willingness to reassess emerging evidence. Advances in regenerative medicine, neurolaryngology, office-based procedures, computational voice analysis, artificial intelligence, and multidisciplinary care continue to expand what is possible for our patients. By bringing colleagues together, we can test ideas, build collaborations, and improve patient care.

Thank you for the trust you have placed in me. I am excited to work with you during the coming year and to build on the energy and collegiality that were so evident in Phoenix. Together, we can honor the ALA's remarkable history while building the legacy we will leave to those who follow us. That legacy will be measured not only by the science we advance, but by the colleagues we support, the learners we inspire, and the patients whose lives we improve.

With warmest regards,



Karen M. Kost, MD, FRCSC
President, American Laryngological Association

Proposals for ALA Fellowship

Active Fellows are invited to propose candidates for fellowship (Active, International, Associate). The criteria for fellowship are detailed in the updated 2026 [ALA Bylaws](#). Please make sure the candidates have fulfilled the following eligibility criteria:

- Completion of otolaryngology residency in 2020 or earlier
- Attendance of at least three ALA annual meetings since 2021, and having served as author or co-author of at least one abstract accepted for presentation during that time (either podium or poster)
- Authorship of at least 10 peer-reviewed articles in recognized journals on topics related to laryngology.
- Fulfilling eligibility criteria does not guarantee Council nomination to advance to membership vote.

148th Annual Meeting—CALL FOR PAPERS

Mark your calendars! COSM will convene April 7—11, 2027 in Seattle, Washington. The ALA meeting begins on April 8th with three half-day sessions. The host hotel is the Sheraton directly across from the Seattle Convention Center.

ALA Abstract submission is open now through October 7. You will be able to access the digital submission form on the website, [Submit Abstract | American Laryngological Association](#). Should you have any questions, please contact the ALA administrator at maxine.c@comcast.net.

Establishment of the Andrew Blitzer Neurolaryngology Lectureship

Andrew Blitzer, MD, DDS, FACS, who served as ALA President in 2010-2011, has generously donated \$100,000 to establish the Andrew Blitzer Lecture Fund to encourage future advances in Neurolaryngology and communications about those advances. The agreement states that “the Lecture may be on any aspect of the nervous system and its relationship to laryngeal function (evaluation, diagnosis, management of movement disorders, voice and swallowing abnormalities).” The lecture may be delivered by “a basic scientist, a clinician, a neurologist, an otolaryngologist, a laryngologist, another individual or individuals selected by the ALA Program Chair and President, or a panel of such people.” **Dr. Tanya Meyer**, a former Blitzer fellow and current ALA Historian, will serve as the first chair of the Blitzer Lectureship committee. Dr. Meyer had the opportunity to talk to Dr. Blitzer about his donation.



Q: When did the idea of a large gift to the ALA first come to you, and what was the impetus for your gift?

Dr. Blitzer: The idea actually goes back more than twenty years. In 2004, I approached both the ABEA and the ALA about establishing a Neuro-Laryngology Lectureship because I felt there was a major gap in otolaryngology education. During my training, movement disorders and neurologic conditions affecting the larynx simply weren't taught. Much of what I learned came through my collaboration with neurologists such as Stan Fahn and Mitchell Brin. Over time, I realized that residents and fellows were missing important concepts that could significantly improve patient care. My original plan was to leave funding through my estate, but when I learned that living members could now endow lectureships, I felt it was the right time to help establish it during my lifetime.

Q: What do you hope this lectureship will achieve?

Dr. Blitzer: My hope is that it continues to expand awareness and education in neuro-laryngology and movement disorders. For many years, patients with voice and swallowing disorders that did not fit traditional structural diagnoses were often misunderstood or inadequately treated. I want this lectureship to encourage curiosity, discussion, and collaboration across disciplines. Ultimately, it is about helping future generations of physicians better understand laryngeal function and improving care for patients.

Q: What would you say to young laryngologists starting out their careers?

Dr. Blitzer: Stay curious. The larynx is far more complex than lumps and bumps on the vocal folds. There is still so much we do not understand about nerve function, recovery, dystonia, and many so-called "idiopathic" disorders. The next generation will have access to technologies and scientific tools we could only dream of. Don't let your career become solely about RVUs and productivity metrics. The discoveries that change patient care come from asking questions and remaining fascinated by what you do. One of the reasons I am still practicing at age 80 is that every day I see something new and learn something new.

Q: What would you say to Senior ALA fellows who may be thinking about making a lasting gift to the ALA?

Dr. Blitzer: A meaningful gift should reflect what mattered most to you during your career. Rather than giving simply because someone asks, support something that changed your life, your practice, or your patients. Whether it's education, research, trainees, or a particular disease area, the most enduring gifts are those that align with an individual's passions and values. When people support what they truly care about, those contributions have the greatest impact and the longest legacy.

The ALA Council is grateful for this generous gift, which ensures the latest advances in neurolaryngology research and innovation are brought to the ALA Annual Meetings for generations to come.

Welcome 2026 New ALA Fellows!

The Association welcomed nine new Active Fellows and one International Fellow with their induction on April 22, 2026 during the business meeting in Phoenix. Congratulations and we look forward to their contributions in the coming years!



Milan Amin, MD
NYU Langone Medical Center
Active



Boris Benssianov, MD
SUNY Downstate
Medical Center
Active



Neel K. Bhatt, MD
Univ. of Washington
Active



Brad A. deSilva, MD
Ohio State University
Medical Center
Active



Karuna Dewan, MD
Louisiana State Univ. —
Shreveport
Active



Margaret Huston, MD
Washington University
Active



Stephanie Misono, MD
University of Minnesota
Active



Gregory Postma, MD
Medical College of GA at Augusta
Active



Maya Sardesai, MD, M.Ed
Univ of Washington
Active



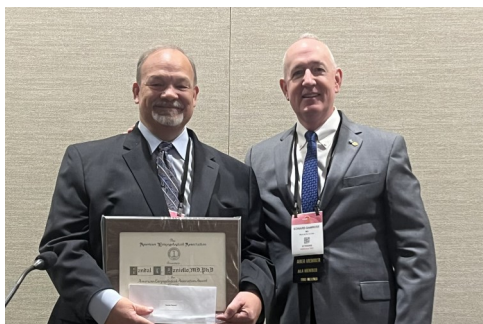
Antonia Lagos-Villaseca, MBChB, MD
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
International

ALA Annual Meeting Recap —April 22-24, 2026—Phoenix, Arizona

President Joel H. Blumin began the meeting by welcoming all attendees to the 147th Annual Meeting. He introduced and paid tribute to **Dr. Gerald Berke** as his Guest of Honor. Dr. Berke, as a part of the exceptional faculty at UCLA, possessed a unique passion for laryngeal physiology and understanding of the physics of voice production that translated to his main clinical and research foci being laryngeal function and the professional voice. Dr. Blumin stated he was very pleased to bestow this honor upon him.

Presidential Citations were presented to individuals who were vital to his career growth while he was at UCLA and his current affiliation at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Dr. Blumin presented the Presidential Citation to Drs. Jonathan Bock, Dinesh Chhetri, Seth Dailey, Nikki Johnston, Albert Merati and Maxine Cunningham. Dr. Blumin recognized the program committee, Dr. Bock, chair; Drs. Keith Chadwick, Thomas Carroll, Rebecca Howell, Matt Naunheim, and Ruth Davis for their dedication in curating cutting-edge research for the scientific sessions.

Dr. Blumin chose as the topic for his presidential address, **"Cyclical Coherence, or The Patterns We Leave Behind"**. Each half day session incorporated a panel discussion with topics that the program committee placed strategically in the session. Dr. Gaelyn Garrett presented the Baker Lecture, **"A Joyful Journey"**. Dr. Nikki Johnston, as the State-of-the-Art Lecturer, discussed **"Repurposing and Reformulating Fosamprenavir for PPI Refractory LPR and GERD: Randomized, Placebo-Controlled, Double-Blinded Phase II Clinical Trials"**.



Awards were presented during the scientific sessions and at the President's Reception. The American Laryngological Association Award was presented to Dr. Randal Paniello by Dr. Ed Damrose. The Gabriel Tucker award was presented to Dr. Christopher Hartnick. Dr. Michael Benninger was awarded the James Newcomb Award and Dr. Ingo Titze was the recipient of the deRoaldes Award. For the Eugene N. Myers MD International Paper Award, Dr. Jeon Seong was the recipient; Dr. Chloe Santa Maria was presented the Robert H. Ossoff DMD MD Best Paper by a Post-Graduate Member Award, and The Casselberry Award was presented to Dr. Seung-Won Lee for his manuscript. Dr. Katherine Gonzalez received the Resident Research Award with the Young Faculty/Practitioner Award presented to Dr. Bharat Panuganti.



Dr. Blumin presenting the deRoaldes Award to Dr. Ingo Titze at the President's Reception.



Dr. Blumin presenting the Mallet to Dr. Kost, incoming ALA President, at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting on April 24.



Laryngologists inducted as new members of the Triological Society on April 23, 2026 in Phoenix

Celebrating Maxine Cunningham's Quarter Century with the ALA



A surprise greeted Maxine Cunningham, ALA Administrator, at the Council Dinner on April 21. To mark Maxine's 25th year with the ALA, a custom frame signed by Council and past presidents was presented to her, along with a cake for the occasion.

Maxine has greeted annual meeting attendees since the turn of the century. This has turned into a family affair. This year, Maxine was joined by Derrick, her son, and Keia, her grand daughter, in Phoenix.



2026 Council Spring Meeting Recap

President's Report—Dr. Blumin expressed his gratitude to Council for the support he received during the past year and that he was honored to have served as the President. He stated he was recognizing Dr. Gerald Berke as his Guest of Honor, as he was his fellowship director at UCLA.

Secretary's Report- New Post-Meeting ACS CME Evaluation Form - Dr. Mau informed Council that he and Ms. Cunningham have created an electronic evaluation form in Survey Monkey. This will replace the paper form that attendees have had to fill out in past years. Ballot Voting Options—Council discussed whether the option to mark "Abstain" should be removed from future ballots. Council noted that abstentions may reflect insufficient familiarity with a candidate rather than opposition, and "Abstain" votes have created confusion in calculating the percentage of affirmative votes for any given candidate or ballot issue. This year some members marked "Abstain" for all fellow candidates. After discussion, Council approved a motion to remove the abstain option from future ballots and instead instruct members to simply leave a vote blank if they do not wish to cast a vote on a candidate or an issue. Bylaws Revision on PGM Eligibility - The proposed change to Post-Graduate Member eligibility to include board-eligible applicants was approved by the membership. In the past, laryngology fellows took oral boards in the second half of their fellowship year, so that by the time they applied for ALA PG membership, most if not all were board certified. With the new practice-based Oral Certifying Exam that requires case collection over a 9-month period during independent practice after fellowship, laryngologists now do not become board certified for 1-2 years after fellowship completion. The bylaws revision was crafted to allow new laryngologists to join PGM without that waiting period. This does not affect eligibility to be proposed for ALA fellowship, which still requires board certification.

Treasurer's Report- Dr. Buckmire reviewed the issue of delinquent dues. Two members tendered their resignations that were related to not bringing their dues current. Council approved their requests. Two other members will receive letters notifying them of the suspension of membership due to outstanding delinquency in dues.

Editor's Report—Dr. Ongkasuwan reported on the 2026 Laryngology Fellowship match. There were 22 applicants with 20 applicants who matched and two who apparently didn't submit a rank list.

Historian's Report- Dr. Merati discussed his initiative to interview past ALA presidents. The first interview with Dr. Marvin Fried, ALA President 2009-10, was already live on the website. This important and enlightening project will continue with more interviews over the summer and fall. Dr. Merati shared that Dr. Harvey Tucker will be well remembered for his outstanding contributions to the Association. He requested a moment of silence in Dr. Tucker's memory.

PGM Updates— Dr. Bill Gao, as outgoing Chair of the PGM Steering Committee, reported that the mentorship program between active fellows and PGM members remains strong. A proposal was made to add an in-person mentorship event or online mentor profiles. Fourteen new post-graduate members were added to the roster. The Symposium, sponsored by Dr. Berke, was held on Thursday, April 23, with panelists Drs. Woo, Johns and Childs leading the discussion on "**Facets of Building a Clinical Practice**" and moderated by Dr. Gao. As Dr. Gao will conclude his term as PGM Chair, Council approve the appointment of Dr. Rapoport as chair with Drs. Dhar, Lauren Tracy, Mike Yang, and William Tierney added to the Steering Committee.

ALA Post-Graduate Members Corner

The PGM category continues to experience robust growth, with 10 PG members inducted in 2025, bringing the total to 104 at the end of 2025. Fourteen new PG members were inducted in Phoenix. Since 2014, 48 PG members have advanced to become Active Fellows.

ALA Mentorship Program—Dr. Bill Gao and Dr. Sarah Rapoport (incoming PGM Steering Committee chair) matched the 2025 PGM inductees with Active Fellows, bringing the program to 73 mentor-mentee pairs.

2026 PGM Symposium in Phoenix was held on the morning of April 23. Panelists Drs. Lesley Childs, Mike Johns, and Peak Woo shared their wisdom on “Facets of Building a Clinical Practice”. The symposium was once again made possible by an endowment from Dr. Gerald S. Berke.

2026 PGM Best Paper Award was presented to Chloe Santa Maria, MD, MPH, funded by an endowment from Dr. Robert Ossoff.

We thank Dr. Gao for his outstanding leadership of the ALA PGM Steering Committee over the past few years and look forward to his continued contribution as a future Active Fellow. We welcome Dr. Sarah Rapoport as the new chair!



2026 ALA Post-Graduate Member Inductees



Joseph Chang, MD



Christina Clark, MD



Tyler Crosby, MD



Eliana DeVore, MD



Alexandria D'Oto, MD



Victoria Gau, MD



Nancy Jiang, MD



Kevin Liang, MD

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Ioan Lina, MD



Jake Morgan, MD



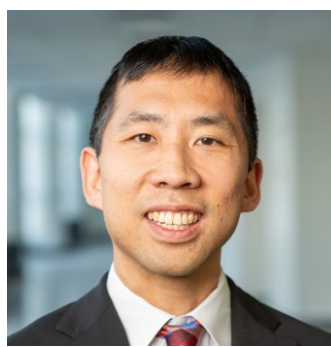
Christine Ng, MD



Bharat Panuganti MD



Vanessa Torrecillas, MD



Kenneth Yan, MD

ALA Historian Project

Initiated by our immediate past Historian, Dr. Al Merati, this series of one-on-one video interviews features Council members interviewing major figures in laryngology. The interviews are intended to preserve personal recollections, document the history of the ALA, highlight pivotal moments in the evolution of our field, and capture the perspectives of the leaders who helped shape it. The first video featuring Dr. Marvin Fried, is live on the [ALA website](#). Others will be posted in the coming months.



Dr. Merati with Dr. Marvin Fried (ALA President 2009-10)



Dr. Merati with Dr. Mike Benninger (ALA President 2011-12)

The ALA has partnered with **Stroboscopy.org**, a non-profit organization started by a group of early career laryngologists who have created an outstanding repository of high-definition videos as an educational resource for residents, fellows, and any anyone interested in learning about the interpretation and analysis of laryngeal video stroboscopy.

The atlas covers the entire breadth of laryngeal video stroboscopy, starting with variations of normal physiology followed by individual sections covering the entire spectrum of laryngeal pathology such as benign lesions, manifestations of systemic disease, malignancy, and pediatric voice disorders. **Stroboscopy.org** even has a section covering the variety of office procedures in laryngology.

Please visit [Stroboscopy.org](#) to simply browse or contribute your own videos and encourage your trainees to do so. Authors of the top three 2026 submissions received complimentary registration to the ALA annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona: **Pratima Agarwal (resident, Cleveland Clinic)**, **Isabela H. Schettini (laryngology fellow, Brigham and Women's Hospital)**, and **Daniel Fink (faculty, University of Colorado)**. **Congratulations!**



Advancing Research

ALA/ABEA Laryngology Research Collaborative (LRC)

One of the outcomes from the ALA Strategic Plan was creation of the Laryngology Research Collaborative (LRC), with its leadership drawn from the research committees of the ALA and the ABEA. The LRC held its second annual meeting on April 24, 2026 in Phoenix. Panelists Alex Gelbard, Milan Amin, and Rebecca Howell shared their experience on conducting Multi-institutional clinical trials in laryngology. Despite a late Friday time slot, the meeting was well attended, including new laryngologist-investigators who may consider to start such studies.



The LRC plans to meet at least yearly at COSM to support early career laryngologists and to serve as a platform for the community of research scientists in laryngology.

The LRC is part of the new BRIDGE initiative hosted by the ABEA and ALA. Please visit the website at <https://laryngologyhub.org>



ALA Research Grants

The ALA now offers research funding awards through three mechanisms: the **ALA/ALVRE Research Grant**, the **Seymore R. Cohen Research Grant** (neurolaryngology or pediatric laryngology related), and the **ALA Post-Graduate Member Research Grant**. Each provides up to \$15,000 for a one-year, non-renewable award. The PGM Grant is awarded to a current PGM in good standing. Early career investigators with research proposals with good scientific potential for future NIH funding are particularly encouraged to apply for these awards.

Please submit a **Letter of Intent** no later than December 1, 2026 to maxine.c@comcast.net. The deadline to submit a completed application is January 15, 2027, and please email the application to both maxine.c@comcast.net and to Dr. Zandy Hillel (ahillel@jhmi.edu), Chair of the Research Advancement Committee. Additional details may be viewed at <https://alahns.org/research-education/ala-research-grants/>.

The winners of the 2026 ALA Research Grants are:

ALA/ALVRE award: **Sandra Stinnett, MD** *VOICELOAD: The Impact of Neighborhood Deprivation and Allostatic Load on Voice Handicap in Muscle Tension Dysphonia*

Seymour R. Cohen award: **Allan R. Wang, MD** *Low Intensity Focused Ultrasound for the Treatment of Vocal Tremor*

Post-Graduate Member award: **Anumitha Venkatraman, PhD** with PGM Ruth Davis as Co-I *Leveraging Machine Learning Strategies for Predictive Modeling of Laryngeal Microbiome Dysbiosis in Inflammation*



Welcome Our New Council Member

We are delighted to welcome the newest Council member, Jennifer Long, MD , PhD, FACS. She is Professor and Vice Chair of Research in Head and Neck Surgery at the University of California-Los Angeles, where she also completed residency and fellowship in Laryngology and Voice Disorders. She previously obtained her MD and PhD degrees at the University of Minnesota, studying Chemical Engineering as part of the Medical Scientist Training Program. She was a first-generation college student at the University of Toledo.

The ALA played an important role in Dr. Long's early career by awarding her the ALVRE research grant in 2012. That initial support led to her subsequent long-term research program in vocal fold tissue engineering. She has since been funded by NIDCD, VA, and the Broad Stem Cell Research Center to develop a stem cell-based vocal fold replacement tissue.

Dr. Long is dedicated to developing the research pipeline in otolaryngology and laryngology. She is the founding director of UCLA's NIDCD-funded R25 Mentored Research Pathway for Residents and Medical Students in Otolaryngology, designed to engage trainees in innovative research to develop the future cures in our field. She served for 9 years on the ALA's Research Advancement Committee, reviewing grant applications and providing feedback to guide applicants' further research endeavors. She has reviewed for numerous grant review study sections for NIH and VA. Most recently she worked alongside the ALA Council to launch the Laryngology Research Collaborative, which offers mentoring, networking, and skills development for early and mid-career researchers.

In addition to her clinical and research work, Dr. Long is currently enrolled in Drexel University's Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) class of 2027. She is thrilled to join the ALA Council to continue its work supporting and promoting excellence, innovation, and inclusion in laryngology.



2026-27 Council Front Row (Left to Right): Drs. Julina Ongkasuwan, Dinesh Chhetri, Joel Blumin, Karen Kost, Lucian Sulica, Ted Mau

Back Row (Left to Right): Drs. Robert Buckmire, Albert Merati, Michael Johns III, Tanya Meyer, James Burns

In Appreciation

Each year, we recognize the outgoing Council Member who has completed service to the Association. This year, it is one of our most esteemed Past Presidents, Dr. Lucian Sulica. His dedication to the Association in his roles as Secretary and President has been exceptional. With a steady hand and thoughtful leadership, he has helped shape the direction of the ALA throughout his tenure.

To Dr. Sulica, we express our sincere "Thank You" for all you brought to the Council and the ALA!

Nominations for Council and Nominating Committee

Active Fellows are invited to propose candidates for the Councilor-at-Large position on the Council and two positions on the upcoming Nominating Committee. Made up of three past ALA presidents and two Members-at-Large, the Committee is charged with vetting candidates and forwarding its recommendations to Council. The 2026-2027 Committee is chaired by Dr. Blumin, with past presidents Drs. Mike Johns and Lucian Sulica, and Drs. Alex Gelbard and Laura Matrk as members. Interested Active Fellows may self-propose their candidacy to the Committee by emailing the ALA Secretary (Ted Mau at tedmau@stanford.edu) and the Administrator (Maxine max-ine.c@comcast.net) by **August 31, 2026**.