



# Taking the Long View in a Time of Great Uncertainty

## Turning the Corner

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In many ways, this year's successful Annual Meeting (the 55<sup>th</sup>!) gave hope that the Institute has "turned the corner" with respect to many of the challenges it has faced in recent years. Among the indicators of this turnaround were improved attendance at this year's event in Atlanta, with participants from thirty-two countries; more than 400 papers in more than sixty technical sessions; and a record-setting attendance by students and student presenters (more than fifty student papers were judged this year for the J. D. Williams Student Paper Award competition). These positive signs have not happened overnight or by accident, but rather, they represent strategic actions and on-going efforts of Institute leadership, INMM Headquarters, and the membership to promote the importance of the Institute's mission, enhance collaborations with other organizations and governmental entities, and seek support for the Annual Meeting wherever their spheres of influence reside. Efforts continue by the Executive Committee (EC), seen here in their all-day Saturday session at the Annual Meeting, to enhance these strategies to elevate the visibility of the Institute, and to make the Annual Meeting an extraordinary experience for its members. Of note, this year's EC meeting had representatives from almost all of the Institute's fifteen student chapters (four shown in Figure 2.)—all of whom actively participated in the discussions during the meeting.



The enthusiasm and interest shown by the students this year was contagious as they engaged in hallway discussions and asked questions in the technical sessions as well, picking up the "gauntlet" thrown down by the Institute to ensure the legacy of nuclear materials management is sustained.<sup>1</sup>



### Partnership for Nuclear Security Opens Doors for International Students

The positive turnaround was exemplified by the presence of The Partnership for Nuclear Security (PNS)<sup>2</sup> personnel from the Department of State and CDRF Global. PNS seeks to promote a self-sufficient nuclear security culture, ingrained in partner countries' nuclear technical organizations by encouraging responsible science and nuclear security-related

best practices. PNS has partnered with INMM on a number of projects in order to establish sustainable linkages between nuclear technical professionals and their counterparts at U.S. and international institutions. PNS supported efforts at INMM to build nuclear security in PNS partner countries by bringing more than seventy experts to the 2014 Annual Meeting. The experts included representatives from student and national INMM chapters in India, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa who shared their strategies for promoting nuclear security culture and the safe and secure management of nuclear materials in a series of side meetings convened by PNS, and through technical papers delivered at the conference.

The delegation of attendees included participants from three PNS-sponsored projects:

- Graduates from the Texas A&M University (TAMU) Nuclear Security Certificate Program
- Students from the Indian Nuclear Security Training Series (NSTS)
- Officers from various PNS partner INMM national and student chapters





The meetings facilitated by PNS during the Annual Meeting allowed attendees to build relationships with international nuclear security experts and enhance the capabilities of their INMM chapters to promote nuclear security best practices. This included a Sunday workshop (shown in photo), prior to the start of the Annual Meeting, on chapter sustainability planning, where INMM chapters from PNS partner countries and members of the Executive Committee worked on chapter sustainability ideas and discussed best practices for promoting nuclear security culture through INMM chapters. A special panel comprised of Amanda Sayre, student liaison, Willem Janssens, chapter Relations Committee chair, and Jack Jekowski, chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, provided insight into the activities of the Institute. Other members of the Executive Committee in attendance discussed resources available to international INMM chapters, and identified avenues for chapters to develop closer links to the nuclear security community. Each of the PNS-sponsored chapters presented on current and future efforts to promote nuclear security culture and drafted INMM chapter sustainability action plans. PNS also announced the launch of the INMM Chapter Nuclear Security Activity Grant<sup>3</sup> Competition. This competition will provide INMM chapters in PNS partner countries with support grants to implement nuclear security activities in their home countries. During the week, PNS also hosted a technical paper session on nuclear security best practices and concepts of nuclear security culture.

Three newly founded INMM chapters were commemorated during the meeting by PNS:

- Pandit Deendayal Petroleum Univer-

sity (PDPU) INMM Student Chapter

- South Africa INMM National Chapter
- Ibn Tofail University INMM Student Chapter

In addition to these three new chapters, PNS also honored representatives of the Gadjah Mada University INMM Student Chapter, whose application was pending vote by the INMM Executive Committee at the time of the reception.

PNS also announced the launch of the Nuclear Security Multimedia Competition, an open competition to promote nuclear security culture and best practices among educational institutions, nuclear facilities and research laboratories through illustrations, posters, infographics, videos, mobile applications and games.<sup>4</sup> Winners will receive a guest lecture from a nuclear security subject matter expert at their institution or textbooks, training tools or a remote lecture from an international expert.

### Other Student Activities

The Texas A&M students also drew crowds this year in the poster session where they provided a preview of a Non-Destructive Assay (NDA) training video that was developed for NA-70 to help acquaint non-technical personnel with the important mission of that discipline at Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites. The entertaining eight-minute, professionally edited, video has subsequently been posted on an NNSA YouTube site for viewing.<sup>5</sup> If there is successful feedback from this initiative we may see more educational resources like this made available through our student chapters. This year Amanda Sayre stood in for Steve Ward to help guide the students through their time at the Annual Meeting, and also worked with the J.D.

Williams Student Paper Award Committee, led by Jim Andre from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, standing in for Glenda Ackerman. Amanda did a remarkable job of gathering feedback from the students that will be helpful in future years as we continue to adjust our strategies for the Annual Meeting to make it a highly desirable event for a growingly diverse membership. Also, the Student Activities Committee has “institutionalized” the T-shirt booth near the registration desk—and any student chapter now, within the rules set up by the Committee, can raise money for their chapter through the use of this resource. Texas A&M was the early innovator so far in this new venture, but we are excited to see other chapters beginning to use their imagination in this endeavor to raise funds for their chapters. New research in the area of networking and making large conferences more amenable to engaging strategic conversations will be the topic of a future column, as INMM Fellow Paul Ebel works with the Strategic Planning Committee to develop new strategies to better engage the new generation now inheriting the mission of the Institute.<sup>1</sup>



### As the World Holds its Breath

Previously, we have attempted in this column to identify many of the global “externalities” that impact the mission of the Institute, from the efforts by the Obama Administration to muster world-



wide support for reducing the threat posed by unsecured nuclear materials to the growing unrest and challenges posed by crises from Africa to the Far East and now to Russia. This year, 2014, seems to have become a seminal year for such crises as the world continues to deal with an economic downturn and hostilities that touch virtually every nation. Although technology advances at an ever-increasing pace, the fleeting promises for a bright new millennium, characterized in Peter Schwartz's *Wired Magazine* article of 1997, entitled the "Long Boom"<sup>6</sup>, have long since faded, as the realities of a conflicted world emerge. It is through the international dialogues and collaborations that we witnessed at this year's Annual Meeting that we might hope to see a turnaround toward a safer and saner world, but in the interim we all have a long road ahead of us to do what we can in our spheres of influence to help guide the next generation into this challenging world they are inheriting.

This column is intended to serve as a forum to present and discuss current strategic issues impacting the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management in the furtherance of its mission. The views expressed by the author are not necessarily endorsed by the Institute, but are intended to stimulate and encourage *JNMM* readers to actively participate in strategic discussions. Please provide your thoughts and ideas to the Institute's leadership on these and other issues of importance. With your feedback we hope to create an environment of open dialogue, addressing the critical uncertainties that lie ahead for the world, and identify the possible paths to the future based on those uncertainties that can be influenced by the Institute. Jack Jekowski can be contacted at [jjjekowski@aol.com](mailto:jjjekowski@aol.com).

## Endnotes

1. See "Throwing Down the Gauntlet to the Next Generation of Nuclear Stewards – the Enduring Nuclear Legacy" *Journal of Nuclear Materials Management*, Volume 42, No. 4, pp. 86-89.
2. See <http://www.pns-state.net/en-us/> for information on the program and <http://www.pns-state.net/en-us/news/103-2014-inmm-annual-meeting.html> for details of the PNS activities during the Annual meeting.
3. See <http://www.pns-state.net/en-us/inmm-chapter-nuclear-security-grants.html>.
4. See <http://www.pns-state.net/en-us/nuclear-security-multimedia-competition>.
5. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbYIn9aaOjk&feature=youtu.be>.
6. See <http://archive.wired.com/wired/archive/5.07/longboom.html>.