For the last decade, the Poultry Science Association (PSA) Board has been acutely aware of the decline in our membership. These changes are thought to be related to consolidation of industry and the merging of university departments, concomitant with a decrease in the hiring of faculty with poultry expertise, (Beck, 1992; Vizzier-Thaxton et al., 2003). This trend in declining membership is not unique to the PSA. Our sister organizations—the American Dairy Science Association and the American Society of Animal Science—have noted similar trends.

At the same time that the numbers of academic poultry science positions have been declining, the poultry industry has consolidated and experienced phenomenal growth. Increasing consumer demand for poultry products has triggered the poultry industry’s expansion. Our industry, however, is not without challenges and is facing such contemporary issues as production efficiency, food safety, emerging diseases, biosecurity, air and water quality, waste management, and animal welfare. Although the poultry industry is capable of solving part of these issues in-house with their own expertise, there is also the need for unbiased scientific voices backed by solid science to address these challenges. Universities are also responsible for educating the next generation of leaders. It is time for enhanced joint ventures between university and industry—a meeting of the minds leading to an action plan.

Such a plan was developed in 2005. Six months of research was conducted in which data were collected from PSA members, emeritus members, students, and external stakeholders, including self-assessment benchmarking by Board members. With this information, university, government, and industry scientists, including our future leaders (authors of this paper), came together at a working retreat to develop a 5-yr strategic plan for the PSA. The interaction was dynamic with many ideas and specific plans generated. The session ended with excitement and enthusiasm, knowing that we could make a difference in our future because we had a plan that we could control. Details of the 2006 to 2010 PSA strategic plan can be found at the PSA web site (http://www.poultryscience.org/Strategic_Plan_2005.pdf), and the entire plan will be published as the first article in the January 2006 issue of Poultry Science. The 2005 fall issue of the PSA Newsletter identifies parts of the strategic plan that our membership is currently working on to move our Association to a new level of excellence.
Highlights of the 2006 to 2010 strategic plan for the PSA include a new mission statement. Our mission is to be a global scientific society dedicated to discovery and dissemination of knowledge generated by poultry research that enhances human and animal health and well-being and provides for the ethical, sustainable production of food. The Association’s vision is to be a pre-eminent global organization of poultry scientists and industry leaders, firmly grounded in scientific endeavor related to the biology and the production of poultry. Increased membership diversity will be pursued by recruiting people of varied geographic, gender, cultural, and scientific backgrounds, including health and medicine, leading to a diverse leadership. The PSA will serve as the central clearinghouse for poultry science information and provide through its Foundation significant financial support to students and young scientists engaged in poultry science research, teaching, and outreach education. The PSA, in partnership with the Federation of Animal Science Societies (FASS), will be a highly credible, well-respected, powerful force that is able to influence policy makers at the governmental level for the benefit of animal agriculture by delivering sound scientific information. The strategic plan highlights strategic directions to be implemented as well as assessment of progress. It will take the vision, energy, and dedication of PSA leaders and members worldwide to ensure that the plan is well implemented, monitored, and altered appropriately, keeping it a living plan of action. It is a plan that will allow the Poultry Science Association—as a conduit for science based poultry information—to more effectively serve both society overall and the international poultry industry in particular.

REFERENCES