

Welcome to *The New Anatomist*

Anatomy is currently undergoing another period of renaissance and rejuvenation after a period when anatomists were in serious danger of belonging to an endangered species. It is fascinating to take a broad look at the waxing and waning of disciplines and to try to determine why they periodically undergo involution and then often suddenly burst into bloom (or occasionally disappear). The broad field of anatomy has certainly seen its share of such cycles, and several times the field has rebounded shortly after it has been declared moribund. The past few years have seen such a resurgence, and the mood of pessimism and despair that characterized more than a few anatomical gatherings of the early 1990s has rapidly given way to discussions about how best to capitalize on the new-found momentum of the field.

To what can one attribute such turnarounds in a field? Sometimes it is a response to an external crisis. Look what AIDS and the emergence of drug-resistant strains of bacteria has done for the field of microbiology. However, if a field has no new solutions to the crisis, the turnaround will have no staying power. Typically a turnaround involves a combination of new technologies, new approaches, and new outlooks.

In the case of anatomy, the most recent rebound has been in response to new opportunities in a variety of areas. The techniques of molecular

biology and new developments in imaging technology have changed the way many of us conduct our research. The availability of massive computing power and the rapidly emerging networking capabilities that link computers together have provided anatomists the wherewithal to undertake research and educational projects, such as the Visible Human Project. The same technology provides the American Association of Anatomists (AAA) new outreach capabilities through its efforts on the World Wide Web.

Most important in any turnaround is a change in outlook. Strongly contributing to the most recent nadir of anatomy was a focus that in many anatomy departments, and in the AAA itself, was often turned inward and concentrated on preserving the status quo rather than reaching out to grasp new opportunities. Recent years have seen a significant change in outlook among many anatomists. In domains as diverse as curricular reform, public policy, and styles of conducting research, successful individuals and departments have embraced the new—sometimes even at the expense of letting go more of the old than might have been desirable. Those who have not done so are often struggling for survival.

The New Anatomist is a product of this most recent resurgence of anatomy. It is intended to serve as a mirror reflecting new developments in the field and a forum for the discus-

sion of important issues. Its content and format are broad. Although formally bundled with *The Anatomical Record*, *The New Anatomist* is intended to serve a different purpose. In addition to providing timely reviews and tutorials on important scientific topics, *The New Anatomist* will stress the interconnectedness of anatomy with other scientific disciplines, curricular evolution, and the domain of public policy. The AAA is proud to introduce this publication as another voice of the new anatomy. We look forward to your comments and contributions.

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