

# ASP-ACSM Affiliation: Profession at the Crossroads

## INTRODUCTION

ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1981, the Boards of Direction of the American Society of Photogrammetry (ASP) and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) approved a proposal to affiliate. This action is being taken in order to represent more effectively the interrelated professions of surveying, cartography, photogrammetry, and remote sensing.

The two societies have held their annual conventions jointly since 1955. ACSM and ASP have also jointly sponsored other technical meetings and worked together at the management level to coordinate convention activities through COMPASS, the Committee of Mapping, Photogrammetry and Surveying Societies. ASP, formed in 1934, now has 7,900 members, mostly photogrammetrists and remote sensing specialists, many of whom work in fields related to surveying and mapping. ACSM was founded in 1941

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*ABSTRACT: By approving the ASP/ACSM Statement of Affiliation, the two boards called for the following: the collocation of both societies' headquarters staffs into the ACSM building; the combination of both the education and governmental affairs programs for each society; and the hiring of a professional who is charged with implementing the above items as well as the development of a plan for the consolidation of both societies. The plan is to be reviewed and approved by both boards prior to a vote of the memberships of both societies on those parts of the plan that will require constitutional amendments. Some of the interest in affiliation has been driven by historical efforts as well as the evolution of our two societies into more professional endeavors and governmental liaison efforts. Other areas that may be affected include the paper review process for the journal; paper selection process for technical meetings; regional and local activities; as well as the operations of both headquarters.*

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and has 11,000 members, almost all of them in surveying, mapping, and cartography. Approximately 1,000 members belong to both societies.

An indication of how close the two organizations have become may be seen by examining the objectives of each (Table 1).

The idea of a closer, more formal working relationship between ASP and ACSM has been a topic of discussion for years. At least five formal study groups have addressed this topic. In the 1950's one such study was reported to have been conducted but apparently no formal records are available. William Radlinski, representing ASP, spearheaded an effort to investigate closer ties in 1961. Published proceedings of a Specialty Conference conducted in 1969 addressed the issue at great length. (Such names as J. B. Theis, C. L. Norton, J. P. Burns, D. A. Bucci, Radlinski, H. Gruner, A. J. McNair, W. A. Fischer, and General L. P. Jacobs are sprinkled liberally throughout the proceedings.) Charles H. Andregg of ACSM and Radlinski of ASP participated in the start of another study in 1977-78. William Riordan of ACSM and Alan Stevens of ASP continued in 1979-80 by looking at the slightly less sensitive topic of whether or not the two societies could reside under the same roof sharing common functions, equip-

\* The opinions expressed in this paper are Dr Stevens' own. They do not reflect any official position of the American Society of Photogrammetry or Dr. Stevens' employer.

TABLE 1. ASP AND ACSM OBJECTIVES

ASP Objectives <sup>1</sup>	ACSM Objectives <sup>2</sup>
1. To advance knowledge in the art and science of photogrammetry.	1. To advance the sciences of surveying and mapping and related fields, in furtherance of the public welfare and in the interests of both those who use surveys and maps and those who make them, and to establish a central source of reference for its members.
1a. To provide means for the dissemination of new knowledge and information.	2. To support a program of publications that will represent the professional and technical interests of surveying and mapping.
2. To encourage the free exchange of ideas and communication among those contributing to the advancement of photogrammetry.	3. To speak on the national level as the collective voice of the professions embodied within ACSM.
3. To exert its effort toward the establishment and improvement of standards.	4. To contribute to public education in the use of surveys and maps, and to encourage the further development of surveying, mapping, and charting programs.
3a. To uphold high ethical principles.	5. To encourage improvement of college curricula for the teaching of all branches of surveying and cartography both in the technological sciences and the professional philosophies.
4. To extend and encourage the use of photogrammetry in all applicable fields.	6. To honor the leaders in the sciences of surveying and mapping.
5. To stimulate student interest in photogrammetry.	

<sup>1</sup> ASP objectives as paraphrased from the ASP Constitution.<sup>2</sup> ACSM objectives as found in the ACSM Constitution but reordered for comparison.

ment, and people. The recommendation for collocation was not accepted by ASP's Board of Direction in the fall of 1979.

#### BACKGROUND

During 1981, talk of "affiliation" had been conducted by a number of ad-hoc groups. For lack of any clear indication of exactly who these people are, we will credit the two presidents, George J. M. Zarzycki and Joel L. Morrison of ASP and ACSM, respectively. Specifically, they and both presidents-elect met on June 2, 1981, to discuss areas of mutual concern. Dr. Morrison then sent a memorandum to Dr. Zarzycki on June 16 outlining potential areas of cooperation. From this exchange emanated a draft "Statement of Affiliation" in August. After several revisions by trusted advisors and the respective executive committees, both boards approved the following at the 1981 fall meeting in San Francisco:

American Society of Photogrammetry  
American Congress on Surveying and Mapping

#### STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION

"The American Society of Photogrammetry (ASP) and the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) hereby agreed to affiliate in order to represent more effectively the interrelated professions of photogrammetry, surveying, remote sensing, and cartography.

"Immediate steps will be taken to accomplish the following:

- Collocate the respective headquarters of ASP and ACSM to utilize common management facilities and services.
- Establish a single governmental affairs program and a single education program.
- By March 1982, prepare a plan for consideration by the respective Boards for an orderly consolidation by March 1984 of other organizational entities and programmatic concerns that will result in benefits to both associations.
- Select and employ an executive to manage the affiliation using existing staff of both organizations.

"The responsibility for effecting the above tasks is given to COMPASS, the Committee of Mapping, Photogrammetry and Survey Societies, which is to be reorganized to include the Executive Committees of both

associations. COMPASS will provide policy guidance and direction to the executive who is selected to manage the affiliation.

"Nothing in this statement shall be construed as a basis for a transfer of assets or loss of identity. Wherever funds are required to effect the above tasks, they will be provided on an equitable basis by each association."

ASP's board had only one dissenting vote, while ACSM's vote was unanimously in favor.

Since the adoption of the agreement, the new COMPASS has met and agreed to meet again in January, 1982, to review a first cut of the plan which is to be developed by March 1982. It also hired William A. Radlinski to formulate the plan for consolidation. "Rad" had previously resigned his position as Executive Director of ACSM.

This author is a member of both ASP's Board of Direction and Executive Committee, as well as COMPASS, and voted for the affiliation proposal for several reasons. First, the proposal called for collocation of the two societies' headquarters and, as one-half of the 1979-80 study group looking into the matter, I saw the merits to both societies in office operations and overall economy. Second, selected elements of the two societies are very close technically and professionally and need a more official relationship—specifically, in governmental affairs and educational efforts. Third, no real plan for consolidation had been developed as of that time. Most concerns passed on to me by members and directors are based on how a "merger" might look and its resultant unacceptability. To vote "no" at this time would have been premature. Lastly, we need a professional whose time is specifically dedicated to the critical task of formulating a meaningful plan. If that person had to address both the rigors of current society business and the drafting of this plan, both would be less than our best efforts.

During the last two years, I've been asked many questions as to the wisdom of affiliation. Most of these stem from the same basic question: "What is the advantage to ASP?" I will try to address this question and other questions and comments relative to affiliation.

*Question:* What is the benefit to ASP?

Unfortunately, this usually means financially, and it is not completely clear to me, as yet, how the finances will work out. However, I choose to identify potential benefits to the society in four separate areas: professional, technical, regional, and in office operations. I will try to elaborate on each.

#### PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Within the last few years the professional activities of ACSM have been formalized into associations under the ACSM umbrella (Figure 1). ASP's professional development follows closely, with the addition of the Professional Practices Division in October 1980 (Figure 2). In addition to the critical issues such as certification, mapping standards, etc., active involvement in congressional activities would ultimately protect the professional photogrammetrists, as well as the land surveyors, now and in the future. ASP's Professional Practices Division already is working closely with ACSM in this endeavor.

*Question:* Won't this cause a dues increase?

It might. However, many professional societies, including ACSM, have a differential dues structure that permits those specifically involved with and interested in a governmental liaison activity to pay at a higher rate than others not so inclined. Officially participating in these activities may allow members to deduct the dues and any excess contributions on their income tax.

In addition, affiliated societies offer a significant advantage in that Congress and any lobbyist will be much more responsive to an organization representing 16,000 to 18,000 people than one of 7900, the current membership of ASP.

*Question:* What are the advantages to those of us who don't run a mapping firm and/or may not be interested in professional activities?

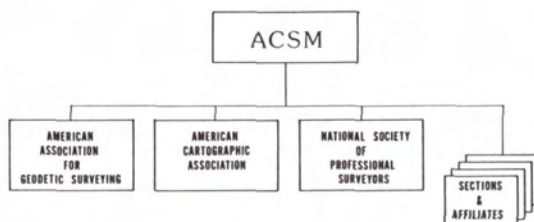


FIG. 1. Organization of professional activities in ACSM.

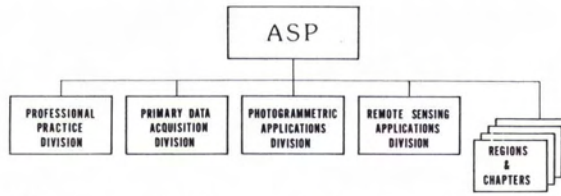


FIG. 2. Organization of professional activities in ASP.

It is difficult, at best, to come up with an *immediate tangible* benefit to everyone. In fact, it could cost us more initially. We have already committed \$4,000 to governmental liaison activities, and I personally feel it is only the beginning. (The \$4000 represents less than 1 percent of the 1981 annual budget.)

However, professional activities benefit all of us—if not directly, certainly indirectly. It protects and improves our name, our image, and the profession in general by

- improving and policing the standards by which we work;
- improving the educational programs that produce photogrammetrists, remote sensing specialists, cartographers, surveyors, etc.; and
- improving our credibility with those who buy our services and with the public in general.

More and more government mapping and related activities are being done through contract. This, of course, is a direct tangible benefit to those of us in government who are involved in these activities, and indirectly, in that we pay for it with our tax dollars.

“The What If Scenario.”—Dangerous at best but—recall the recent events in ACSM where they came dangerously close to splitting into two or three separate organizations because the professional activities did not appear to receive proper attention. ASP could find itself in a similar position because the Professional Practice Division is becoming a strong entity that also needs the proper support. *If* worst comes to worst, both societies could find themselves split into four or five *separate*, small, and weak entities. Affiliation could offer a unique umbrella-like relationship under which all could reside and still remain strong individually and in total.

Unfortunately, most of the questions in this area are financial in nature. Personally, I feel that ASP dues are extremely low compared to the dues structure of the medical, legal, and other engineering professions. I am certain one will find that ASP offers a great deal for the money.

Stepping back for a minute from the financial question, ACSM President Morrison suggests the following definitions:

Profession—A body of knowledge useful to mankind.

Professional—One entrusted to preserve the body of knowledge by expanding, updating, and creating new methodologies for the betterment of mankind.

Morrison further suggests that we should consider what you, the professional, can do for the profession? Asking “What I get for my \$30.00?” is similar to comparing our profession to a bag of groceries. Improved professional and governmental liaison activities protect all of us from the misrepresentations and overstatements of “the snake-oil salesman.” Improved professional and governmental programs benefit remote sensing specialists and cartographers, as well as photogrammetrists, surveyors, and map makers in general.

#### TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

For years those reviewing papers for the journals of either society have seen the same basic technical content reaching across division lines within each society as well as across society boundaries. For example, a paper on global satellite positioning finds a home in remote sensing, surveying, photogrammetry, cartography, and geodesy. The same basic geometry applies to locating and adjusting a pixel of a Landsat imagery on the ground as does control extension in cartography and photogrammetry. The use of the computer in locating, identifying, and plotting ground features applies to virtually all divisions of ACSM and ASP.

Similarly, the question of which committee of what division of which society has jurisdiction over papers submitted for the fall and spring meetings is a continuing problem for the technical program coordinators. It also creates frustration for authors who would like to see their paper in a certain session and can't get it in. In addition, meeting attendees often find simultaneous presentations of similar content and/or many sessions of “cats and dogs.”

Affiliation could lead to better coordination of the publications review process as well as technical programs and presumably result in an improvement in both.

Typically, a society is strong because its local/regional activities are strong. With exceptions, this is not the case with ASP. All too often the success of the regional activities is a function of the personalities of the officers. For this reason, many regional programs lack continuity and become very weak. Much the same can be said of ACSM sections.

Affiliation offers a unique opportunity to conduct activities jointly at the local level, causing a strengthening of already functioning regions and perhaps the creation of new local chapters where there is not presently enough support for either organization alone. Joint activities have proven extremely successful in many regions already and could result in substantial improvement in membership and program activities.

ASP regions have evolved by chance. Boundaries have been determined arbitrarily. A reorganization also offers the opportunity to realign ASP/ACSM boundaries, maximizing participation from both, and hopefully, attracting new members.

#### OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Having served on the committee looking at collocation of our two societies in 1979-80, I can attest to the fact that some tangible savings can result. The committee approached the study by looking at the office staff, equipment, mailroom facilities, and membership/computer activities. Findings identified potential savings in the mailroom by combining both societies' activities into one. The common use of copying machines is another area where savings can be realized. Both societies already purchase paper together in carload lots for publication of their respective journals, and they also use the same commercial printer. One person responsible for seeking advertisements in all journals may offer further economy.

Both societies use a computer for keeping membership records. The difference is that ACSM owns its own where ASP buys services from a commercial firm. The committee stopped short of examining all computer activities in detail, but it was generally agreed that ACSM's use of the computer was less than completely effective, and ASP's use of an outside firm was cheaper but probably slightly less flexible.

Currently, opinions vary, but some say that the added membership of ASP (7,900) could make the ACSM computer cost effective, but this remains to be proven. Others say that both societies could buy into an outside service. Whether these or other options would be cheaper and allow for appropriate flexibility still needs to be studied.

Advantages resulting from the common use of office staff is an unknown. If an affiliation plan calls for a "loose" design where both societies keep all parts and personnel intact, we could run into jurisdictional disputes; for example, "Is the mailroom person working for ASP or ACSM in this special mailing?" To overcome problems of this type will call for a complete shuffling of the two societies' office staffs and/or a strong overall executive manager, not two separate organizations, i.e., an apparent loss of identity for what we know as ASP. Is this good or bad? Moving ASP in the ACSM building (Figure 3) offers the advantage of decreased rent (approximately \$2 per square foot less than that projected for ASP's current building (Figure 4)). According to the 1979-80 study, it may also cause some apparent inefficiencies, at least at first, for two reasons. First, our current location is a one-floor operation facilitating the large volume of bulk mail. The ACSM building will require the movement of mailbags up and down stairs. Second, management and supervision is much easier in a one-floor operation as opposed to the multifloor arrangement required in the ACSM building.



FIG. 3. ACSM headquarters building.



FIG. 4. ASP headquarters building.

*Question:* With so many ASP members common to ACSM and vice versa, won't there be a loss of dues income if we combine into one organization?

Possibly. However, it's a common misconception that many hold dual membership. Actually, only about 19 percent of the ASP members belong to ACSM, and about 11 percent of the ACSM members claim dual membership (1,000 members belong to both). One also must consider that within the two year period before and after ACSM's reorganization, their membership climbed from about 7,000 to approximately 11,000. A large part of this was driven by their increased emphasis on governmental activities.

*Question:* At one time ASP was considering buying its own structure. What has happened to that activity?

This is an extremely involved analysis of options: buy?, rent?, buy a larger building and rent space out?, move in with ACSM?, etc. Essentially, ASP does not currently have the capital to purchase its own structure. Building costs in the Washington, D.C. area run about \$100 per square foot, or approximately \$300,000 to buy one appropriate for ASP's current and immediate future needs.

Collocation within ACSM'S building does not preclude some buying options. Specifically, it may be possible to buy into ACSM's building, and it does not rule out the purchase of a completely different structure for our joint habitation. It also does not rule out both organizations renting from a third umbrella organization.

*Question:* Will affiliation cost ASP money?

Yes, it could, depending on how the affiliation is organized. ASP might be asked to split the costs for an overall executive and secretarial support, educational programs, and professional activities.

We must not forget that a professional society like ASP cannot always conduct programs on a self-restoring basis. Some programs are services for benefit of the membership and the profession.

Some additional comments of concern were expressed by members during the course of the committee's work. Several of these comments, with responses, follow.

*Question/Comment:* I'm concerned about losing ASP's identity.

So am I. But I can't say exactly why. ACSM has already reorganized into an umbrella organization of three separate professional associations (Figure 1). ASP could supply an additional two or three to the cause. How about the National Association for Remote Sensing, the National Society for Photogrammetric Engineering, etc.? Essentially, if one uses one's imagination, it could be possible to *increase our identity*.

One of the most difficult things to do in any organization is to keep everyone happy. We cannot afford to disenfranchise any group. The formalization of our technical division structure and their potential elevation to professional society status goes beyond that problem and offers the potential of attracting many new members from, for example, the remote sensing and practicing photogrammetrist communities. Indeed, we need not stop there. There are other groups of people we could attract such as the map librarians, cartographic information specialists, land data groups, other surveying and mapping entities, remote sensing specialists, and geodesists to name only a few.

*Question/Comment:* ASP has its act together in terms of being well managed, having an effective publications program, and being financially sound. I'm concerned about losing some of these qualities in an affiliation.

The fact of the matter is that ACSM is extremely well managed, their publications program is effective, and their financial position is sound also. Depending on your perspective, it may be more sound than ASP. ASP projects a positive cash balance of about \$138,000 by March 1982. This sounds good until you consider that we are obligated to a \$200,000 to 300,000 bill for printing the second edition of the *Manual of Remote Sensing* as early as January 1983 without a bona fide program for paying for it. (Frankly, this is not going to be a major problem for ASP.) At the same time, ACSM projects a cash position of approximately \$207,000 by the end of calendar year 1981. Actually, individual member's equity is essentially the same for both organizations.

The only point here is that it is extremely difficult to make statements as the above unless one is knowledgeable in these areas. ASP has chosen to invest heavily in publications, and ACSM owns its own building. Comparing the two right now, in my opinion, is a "tossup."

#### SUMMARY

If this discussion has lead the reader to a clean conclusion, I have failed because there are no complete answers yet. We haven't even surfaced all the options.

For the reasons given earlier, the author feels it was necessary to support the "Statement of Affiliation" approved at the spring 1981 Board Meeting. As of this writing, no consolidation plans exist, and I feel that it would have been premature to vote no to the issue. The other elements such as collocation are to ASP's and ACSM's advantage. We have unofficially been working toward it for years.

Also as mentioned, a draft plan for consolidation is to be presented to COMPASS in January 1982 and a more formal presentation to the respective boards in March, 1982, in Denver. Any final plan will ultimately have to be approved by the respective boards and two-thirds of the vote of each membership because it will probably represent a constitutional change.

This is a critical time in our history, and we must be very careful so that we can look back with pride. It offers us some truly unique opportunities and some serious pitfalls. Of interest is the fact that ASP's 50th anniversary is in 1984—the same year that the affiliation agreement calls for the finalization of any consolidation.

The views presented herein are those of the author and not necessarily of the President and/or his officers nor of the Executive Director and his staff. They are fettered, however, by several years of personal experience on the ASP Board and Executive Committee; active participation in both regional activities and the technical division structure; and as a member of both societies. I have talked to many others, and most have strong feelings based on their experiences—both positive and negative.

Your thoughts and/or questions are encouraged. Please relay them to your respective Regional Officers, National Directors, the Executive Director of ASP, or the Executive Manager of COMPASS.

Above all—keep an open mind!

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