

Biopharmaceutical Section Offers Advice on Strategic Planning for ASA Fellow Nomination

Speakers:

Ivan Chan, Paul Gallo, Christy Chuang-Stein, Steve Ruberg

September 17, 2020



A recent article in AMSTATNEWS

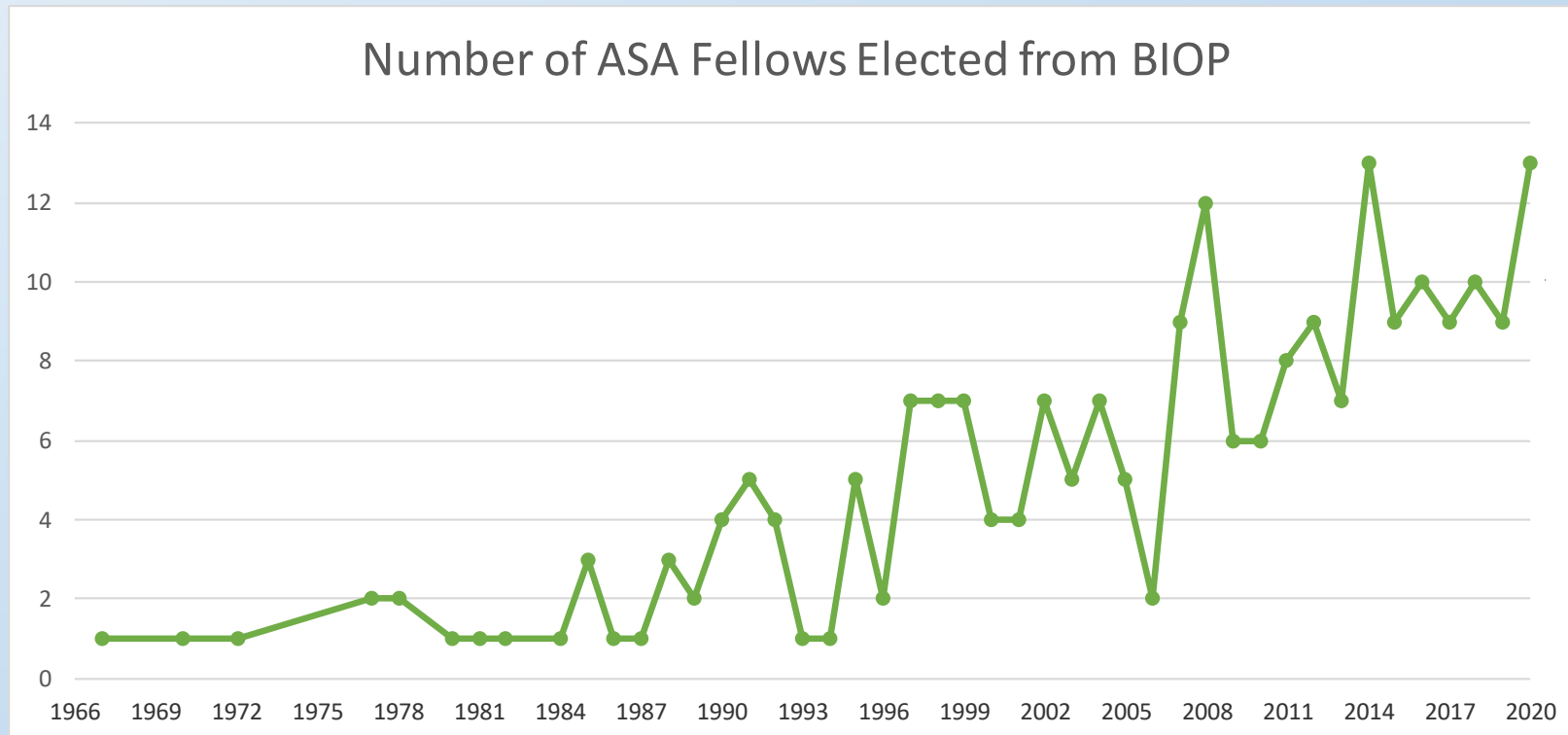
- <https://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2020/06/01/advice-for-asa-fellow-nomination/>

The screenshot shows the AMSTATNEWS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for ASA, Amstat News, ASA Community, World of Statistics, and STATtr@k. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with 'This is Statistics' and 'ASA Leader HUB'. The main header features the 'AMSTATNEWS' logo and the subtitle 'The Membership Magazine of the American Statistical Association'. A dark navigation bar contains links for HOME, ABOUT, EDITORIAL CALENDAR, PDF ARCHIVES, ADVERTISE, and STATISTICIANS IN HISTORY. The article breadcrumb is 'Home » Biopharmaceutical, Featured, Member News, Section News'. The article title is 'Biopharmaceutical Section Offers Advice for ASA Fellow Nomination', dated '1 JUNE 2020' with '567 VIEWS' and 'NO COMMENT'. The author is 'Alex Dmitrienko of Mediana, Ilya Lipkovich of Eli Lilly, and Paul Gallo of Novartis'. A blue callout box on the left contains the text: 'Nomination Process You can learn more about the nomination process by visiting the following websites:'. The main text on the right begins with 'Being elected an ASA Fellow is an important milestone in the career of a professional statistician. ASA fellowship has been an honor for numerous members of the Biopharmaceutical Section (BIOP). Figure 1 presents the number of elected ASA Fellows (total and BIOP members) since 1967.'



Some Statistics

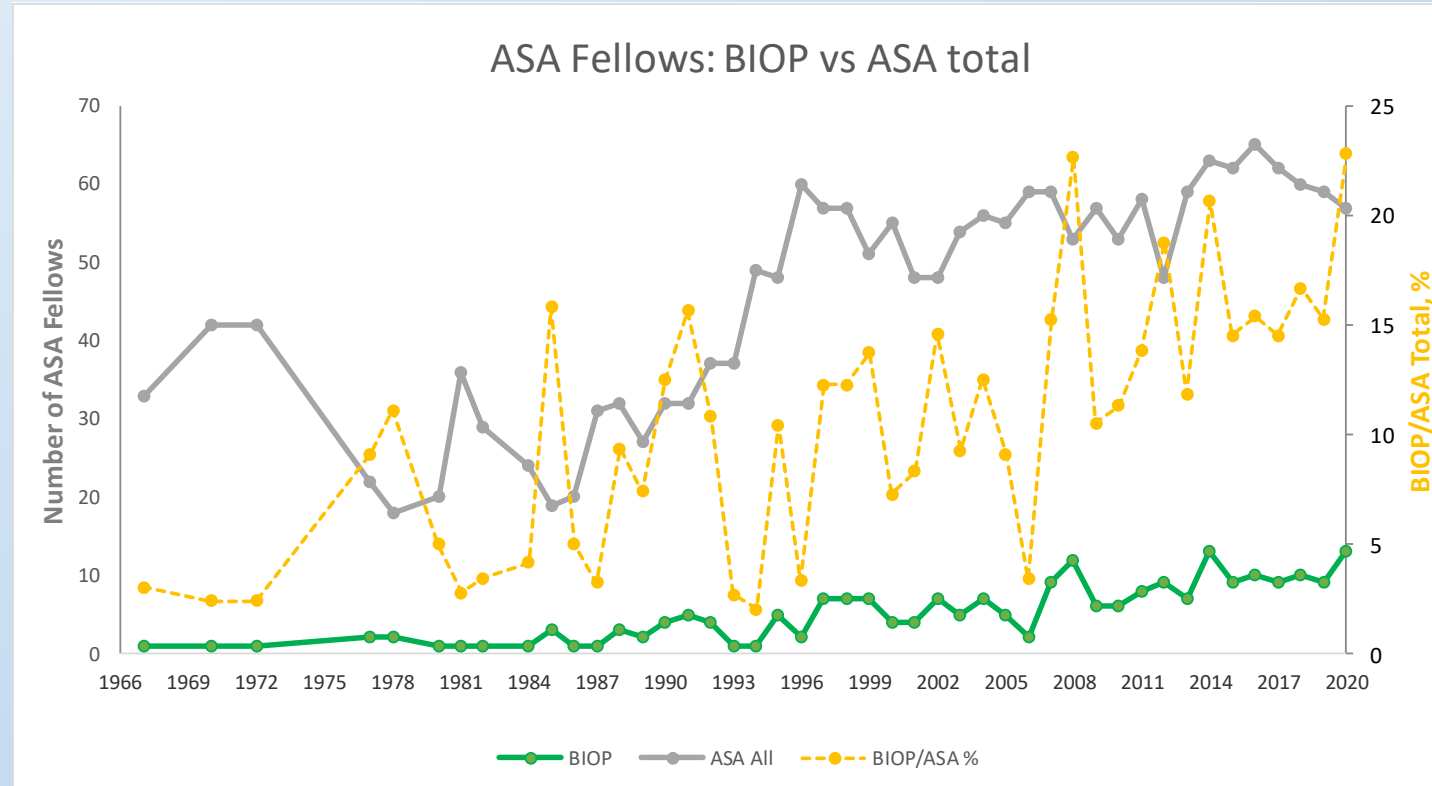
- <https://community.amstat.org/biop/awards/asafellow>





Some Statistics (cont.)

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fellows_of_the_American_Statistical_Association





Speakers

- Ivan Chan
 - VP and Head of Statistical Sciences, AbbVie
 - ASA Fellow (2011), SCT Fellow (2011), ASA Fellows Committee (2018-2020)
- Paul Gallo
 - In pharma industry since 1981; Senior Biometrical Fellow in the Novartis Statistical Methodology Group
 - ASA Fellow (2014), ASA Fellows Committee (2016-2018; Chair 2018)
- Christy Chuang-Stein
 - Retired as Vice President and Head of Statistical Research and Consulting Center at Pfizer after 30 years in the pharma industry
 - ASA Fellow (1998); ASA Fellows Committee (2008-2010)
- Steve Ruberg
 - Been in the pharma industry since 1981; technical and administrative leadership roles
 - ASA Fellow (1994); ASA Fellows Committee (2012-2014)



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

Ivan Chan, AbbVie

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ASA Committee on Fellows 2018–2020



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

Nomination should consider significant contributions in the following areas:

- A. Statistical applications and computing, data collection, and statistical consultation
 - 1) Effectiveness and results
 - 2) Processes and methods
- B. Administration of statistical activities
- C. Teaching and dissemination of statistical knowledge
- D. Statistical research
- E. Service to the ASA
- F. Other service to the statistical profession

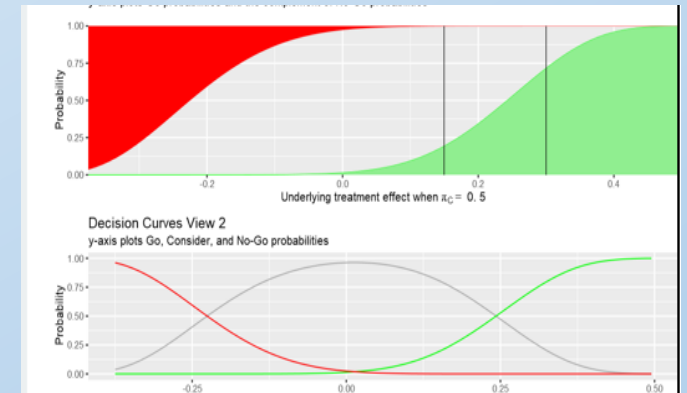


ASA Fellows Nomination Process

- A. Statistical applications and computing, data collection, and statistical consultation
- 1) Effectiveness and results
 - 2) Processes and methods

Tips

- Describe the insights provided and impact of contributions
- Examples of excellence include application of innovative methods, efficiency improvement, championship on use of statistical methods
- Tell the story of challenges, results achieved, and impact
 - E.g.: quantitative decision making, biomarker development, clinical trial methodology, drug approval





ASA Fellows Nomination Process

B. Administration of statistical activities

Tips

- Appropriate for contributions made in the leadership of a statistical organization
- Significant organizational leadership through support of research, innovation and growth of statisticians
- Recognition of creating positive environment that foster scientific excellence, innovation and influence of statistician



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

C. Teaching and dissemination of statistical knowledge

Tips

- Describe the significant contributions exceeding those that would be expected of the position occupied
- Outstanding mentoring or outreach activities
- Short course teaching
- Statistical editorial service for non-statistical journals



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

D. Statistical research

Tips

- Describe the innovative statistical research
- Highlight the significance and impact of research
- A long list of publications is good but not sufficient justification for election



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

E. Service to the ASA

Tips

- Services to the ASA are expected
- Election to national office speaks for itself
 - E.g.: Biopharm Section leadership, Co-chairs of ASA sponsored meetings
- ASA Chapters or committees – should include responsibilities and impact
- Editorial service to ASA journals (e.g., JASA, SBR)



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

F. Other service to the statistical profession

Tips

- Include services to the other statistical and related professional organizations
- Highlight the leadership roles and impact



ASA Fellows Nomination Process

Nominator and Letter and Recommendation

- Work with the nominator early to plan the nomination package
- Identify 3 recommendation letters from experts who know your contributions
 - Cover different areas of contributions to strengthen the nomination
 - Good to have letters of recommendation from ASA Fellows

ASA Website (<https://www.amstat.org/ASA/Your-Career/Awards/ASA-Fellows>)

- Provide additional information
- Submission opens online from October 1 through March 1



Insights into the Fellows Selection Process

Paul Gallo, Novartis

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ASA Committee on Fellows 2016–2018



Fellows selection

- The Fellows Committee works very intensively each spring
- 100-150 nominee packages need to be thoroughly reviewed and discussed
 - We get to know the nominees quite well (*on paper!*)
- Many candidates seem comparably qualified overall
 - Natural, because people tend to be nominated at a point of their careers when they first become viable candidates for fellowship
 - *The challenge:* everyone's got a different mix of skills, attributes, accomplishments, impacts
- **Make your case clearly, concisely, convincingly!**



Fellows Committee activities

- 9 members, rotating in 3-year terms
- Membership spans different employment sectors, backgrounds
- Individual initial review and evaluation during March / early April
- Initial compilation led by Chair
- Culminating (*normally*) in an all-day f-t-f meeting at ASA HQ
- Many candidates are discussed individually at length to ensure correct interpretation and understanding
- Committee members assist each other in understanding candidate attributes from the varied sectors and spheres of experience



Section IX: Supporting Statements

These may be summarized as follows:

- A. Statistical applications / consultation: Effectiveness and results
- B. Statistical applications / consultation: Processes and methods
- C. Administration of Statistical Activities
- D. Teaching
- E. Research
- F. ASA Service
- G. Other (includes non-ASA service)



Section IX suggestions

- Few candidates will have outstanding achievements in all categories
- Usually, cases hinge on a nominee's strongest 2 or 3 areas
- Not all categories need to be filled out; leaving a few blank is not uncommon
- Website instructions indicate a 4 page limit
- In my experience, a bit of overrun is not a concern to the committee
 - But please, not 20 pages! (*we've seen this*)
 - This tends not to help the case



Not a job description!

- Thousands of ASA members have positions that their skills and experiences have led them to, and doubtless excel in their role
- But listing background details that qualified them for their role, or the typical tasks they perform effectively in those roles, may not distinguish them from many others who hold similar positions
- What has a nominee done or achieved that's particularly noteworthy, influential, impactful?



Details!

- Nomination packages often include many vaguely-described virtues, platitudes:
 - “explains complex ideas very clearly”
 - “a great motivator of their staff”
 - “gets to the heart of the matter”
- Which may all be very true, and relevant, but . . .
- Keep in mind that all packages champion their subject, and will convey such attributes
- Can you describe specific details to illustrate why the candidate is particularly influential in this regard? (Perhaps testimonials?)



ASA Service

- The Committee is charged by the ASA Constitution and Board of Directors to give high importance to *service*
- *ASA-related* service is particularly important, though broader service to the profession or science or society is certainly not irrelevant
- Examples:
 - Meaningful ASA chapter, section, committee activity
 - Journal editorial positions (not just reviewing a few papers!)
 - Organization activities for major statistical conferences
 - Impactful statistical outreach to other fields, or to education



Support letters

- Letters that simply re-state details found elsewhere in the package may not strengthen the case
- To me, the most effective letters convey “backstory” or further inside details on a nominee’s influence and impact, from someone in position to know, e.g.:
 - A section / chapter officer attests to and describes the nominee’s *specific* impactful contributions and activities
 - A working group member / leader describes how the nominee was a driver of the group’s achievements, or came up with its key ideas and positions
 - A recognized subject matter expert attests to the novelty and importance of a nominee’s contribution, or influence on future research progress in that area
 - Ideally, span different dimensions of the nominee’s strengths



CV

- Some re-thinking of whether a CV might be revised or re-organized might be worth considering
- Would extensive details that might be relevant for a job search, for example, make it more challenging for a committee member to discern certain details that are most relevant for the fellowship case?



Good Luck !!



The Joy and Role of a Nominator

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ASA Committee on Fellows 2008–2010



Why Being a Nominator

If you make it to the top, remember to extend a helping hand so that others may get to the top too.





How to Become a Nominator

- Volunteer to nominate a fellow statistician.
- Being approached by a fellow statistician to play the role.

In either case, it is beneficial to share your knowledge of the nomination and the fellow selection process with the nominee at the beginning. It is also important to be frank in assessing the probability of success with the nominee upfront.



When to Nominate

- During the upcoming nomination cycle – the candidate has a compelling portfolio already
- In a future nomination cycle – the candidate is a rising star on his/her way to success, but needs a little more time to further strengthen his/her records





Tip #1: Start Early

- Allow time for thorough planning and iterations.
- Is more likely to succeed in receiving agreement from individuals who could provide the best supporting letters.
- Show respect to letter-writers by giving them plenty of time to prepare letters and make adjustments, if needed.
- Can better prepare for the unexpected.





Tip #2: Take the Role Seriously

- Give each nomination the attention and energy it deserves.
- Work with the nominee to decide
 - Areas of strengths to focus on and the list of important publications to cite;
 - Individuals with diverse background to write the supporting letters;
 - How to execute a divide-and-conquer strategy among letter writers.
- Follow up with letter writers on the timeline and core contents of their letters, reminding them the need to focus on the impact and influence of the nominee's contributions with personal stories.
- Touch base with the nominee regularly.



Tip #3: Service to ASA and the Profession

- Service to the ASA includes:
 - Serving on the editorial boards of ASA-sponsored journals;
 - Serving as elected officers of ASA chapters or sections;
 - Contributing substantively to some ASA committees;
 - Playing a leadership role in the planning and conduct of highly visible ASA conferences;
 - Making outstanding contributions to ASA initiatives via innovations and leadership.
- If the nominee needs additional contributions in this area, find ways to help him/her obtain such contributions with a target timeframe.



Tip #4: Optimize the Submission Package

- Work with the nominee to decide
 - How best to utilize contents of the letters in crafting “Supporting Statements”;
 - How to highlight the unique contributions of the nominee;
 - Whether to solicit additional quotes from others in success stories;
 - Whether to ask a trusted friend who knows the nominee well to review the draft package for suggestions.
- Nomination is like playing a bridge hand. Working as a pair, the nominee and the nominator need to bid for the optimal contract and take as many tricks as possible with the hand.



Final Words

- Being a nominator is one of the most consequential mentoring roles one can play for a friend.
- It is a great joy and professionally satisfying to help a fellow statistician elected an ASA fellow.
- Be a nominator, and be the best one you can be!





ASA Fellow Nomination. A Strategic Planning Approach

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ASA Committee on Fellows 2012–2014





Five Steps to a Strategic Plan

1. The candidate must be deserving
2. Define the candidate's strengths
 - Map to the ASA Fellow Supporting Statements
3. Identify ASA Fellows to write support letters
 - Map writers to Strengths
4. Invite letter writers
 - Make it easy for them
5. Identify topics for Supporting Statements
 - More on less



Step 1

The candidate must be deserving.

- Excellence in multiple areas of the profession and job
- Sustained performance
- “Area under the curve”

May seem obvious, but ... **Don't**

- “Let's just give it a try and see what happens.”
- Submit year after year
- Annoy the Committee
- Failure can be discouraging to the candidate



Step 2

Define the candidate's strengths

Influence and impact

- Job/work related
 - Initiative, innovation, driving improvements
 - Working beyond job boundaries
 - Documented recognition at the institution(s)
 - **NOT**: Just doing their job year-in and year-out
- Profession
 - Extending the boundaries of statistical science (publications, talks)
 - Involvement in ASA and other statistical organizations
 - The higher the better (e.g. national versus local chapter)
- Breadth
 - Across TA's, development phases, business areas
 - Industry person: Connection to a university
 - Academic: Connection to industry/government applications



Step 3

Identify Letter Writers

Very important to have ASA Fellows

- If not a Fellow, must be a VERY high-level person
- Too many rather than just enough
 - Choose which ones to use
 - Use excerpts from other letters
 - If no letter, get a brief e-mail statement



Step 3

Identify Letter Writers

Map Writers to strengths

	Candidate Strength			
Letter Writers	A	B	C	D
Person 1	X		X	X
Person 2		X	X	
Person 3	X			X
(Person 4)		X		X
(Person 5)	X		X	



Step 4

Invite Letter Writers

Tell them what you want; be specific

Give instructions

Paragraph 1: Introduce how you know the candidate

Paragraphs 2-4: Address the candidate's strengths that you have mapped in Step 3

Paragraph 5: Any other qualities (1 or 2 max) of the candidate worth highlighting (e.g. good team player, open-minded, strong leader, ...)

Paragraph 6: Strong finish; state explicit endorsement of the candidate



Step 5

Supporting Statements

More on less

For each applicable section, pick 1 or 2 outstanding examples

Describe in detail – emphasize innovation, influence, impact – what was above and beyond the usual work
If there are more examples, simply state such at the end of the section

“Dr. A+ has similar accomplishments in TA1, TA2 ...”

Worthwhile to have something in each section

Don't overdo it or exaggerate



Step 6

Fingers crossed

You have put together a stellar package for a stellar candidate

Be optimistic, but temper expectations for the candidate

Final decision: CELEBRATE!
Or plan for when to resubmit



Panelists

- **Brenda Crowe**
 - Been in the pharmaceutical industry since 1997; technical leadership roles
 - ASA Fellow (2017), ASA BIOP Fellows committee
- **Alex Dmitrienko**
 - Been in the pharma industry since 1998; technical roles
ASA Fellow (2009)
- **Bill Pikounis**
 - Nonclinical Statistician since 1991
 - ASA Fellow (2014), ASA BIOP Fellows committee
 - Currently Head of Manufacturing and Applied Statistics, Johnson & Johnson
- **Lanju Zhang**
 - Been in the pharma industry since 2005; technical and administrative leadership roles
 - ASA Fellow (2019)
- **Kelly Hong Zou**
 - Been in the pharma industry since 2008; areas: Statistics, Real World Evidence, and Medical Analytics & Insights roles and leadership
 - ASA Fellow (2012)
 - ASA Volunteer: Chair, SPAIG Committee; Vice Chair, CAS Committee; Chair, HPSS Section; Chair-Elect, TAIG Interest Group



Announcement for Biopharmaceutical Section (BIOP) members

- A working group/panel of dossier reviewers recruited from seasoned nominators has been formed
- Nominators from BIOP are encouraged to send completed dossiers for review to the current chair of the BIOP Fellows Committee: Ilya Lipkovich (ilya.lipkovich@lilly.com)



Panel discussion-1

- Questions for a nominee:
 - How do I know if I am ready?
 - How do I find a nominator?
 - How to best identify the letter writers for my nomination package?
 - Is it recommended to invite at least one letter writer from academia (as opposed to industry or government)?
 - When is the best time to contact the letter writers?



Panel discussion-2

- Questions for a nominator:
 - How to assemble a compelling and comprehensive nomination package?
 - The importance of both career achievements and professional services
 - Is it helpful to create an outline of topics to be covered in each letter?
 - Will it be better if the letters of recommendations focus on the topics not covered in the nomination package or is OK for them to overlap?
 - Is there any special advice you would give to someone about to be a nominator for the first time?



Panel discussion-3

- The advantages of being an ASA Fellow: career, mentorship and service



Q & A
THANK YOU!