As this is my last opportunity to talk to you in this forum, I would like to cover a few topics.

First, I would like to welcome the newly elected officers and thank all those who have volunteered. Our new officers and directors are:

- Executive Vice President: Russell Mitchell, C.S.P.
- Director of Media and Publications: Michael H. (Mike) McKelvey
- Director of Intersociety and Government Services: Paul Sorensen
- Director of Member Services: Linda M.S. Thomas

I would also like to thank the past directors and officers who have served, many of whom continue to serve us well and faithfully. I offer a special thanks to Saralyn Dwyer, Melissa Emery, Odell Farrell and our next President, Dr. Charles (Chuck) Muniaik.

Thanks as well to Odell Ferrell and Gabriele Schedl for running in the election. We appreciate your willingness to participate and look forward to other ways to utilize your talents and abilities. I’d like to invite those leaving office and those who ran for office, but are not engaged in a position, to consider taking on roles in your respective chapters and/or assisting in the many other unelected positions within our Society. There are several Operating Vice President positions opened by this transition, by the way. We look forward to continuing to work with you all in new roles.

I’d also like to solicit your support for our awards process. Someone you know should be nominated for an award. Even if you believe there might be someone going farther, doing more or driving for better results, please submit the names of the best folks you know so that the process can sort out who is worthy. Without nominations, people are not considered, the process breaks down and we all miss opportunities to celebrate dedication and innovation within our field.

The International System Safety Conference (ISSC) is fast approaching, including submission deadlines. Please take the time to submit an abstract and get yourself into the program. I always look forward to the ISSC, and we need your support to make it a success. Making the presentation tracks robust and varied depends on the participation of our members. Along with the upcoming Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, we also need support for the 2018 Conference. If you are not the paper-presenting, tutorial-delivering type, consider the other important work that brings our Conferences to fruition. Conference chairs, hosting chapters, technical editors, activity staff and a wide variety of other roles need to be filled — one of them by you, perhaps.

My tenure has seen a number of interesting developments. We’ve made some improvements as we have sought to maintain our fiscal integrity and driven for greater accountability. Our focus on ensuring that our funding provides the best utility for the Society — and that it serves our membership — will continue as Chuck takes the reins. We have embraced virtual meetings with the addition of “Join.me” accounts to support Executive Committee meetings and the important work of its various subcommittees. Currently, we are using Join.me to support Conference projects and coordinate efforts to make sure the Albuquerque event goes smoothly. Join.me is a virtual meeting platform that provides high-bandwidth communication connectivity and meeting-support functionality, such as the ability to record meetings to help develop the minutes and verify that we have not missed any action items. This is the same tool used by the Virtual Chapter, and we are grateful for the chapter’s continual innovation on the Society’s behalf.

As we reflect on our path forward, let us consider the theme of our next conference: “Pushing the Boundaries of System Safety.” We have just begun to reach for a new level of outward engagement that I hope and believe will continue. The work we are doing with Arizona State University’s Global Center for Safety Initiative (GCASI) to influence the way engineering is taught so that it includes system safety is exciting. It also has the potential to deliver on our core values of making the world a safer place by being dedicated to the safety of systems, products and services. As we influence the process of educating engineers, we “stack the deck” in favor
of safer systems. Charles Hoes and Russell Mitchell continue to press our engagement with the GCSI and influence the direction of this work.

These represent some opportunities to realize an expanded paradigm for the Society, one that includes more industries and influences more design processes. At our Conference this year in Albuquerque, we will have a panel to explore these and other innovations that can bring more value to our members, our communities and our employers.

With fond regards,
Rod