My first ASIS&T Annual Meeting was in 2010 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. While it was not strictly the start of my ASIS&T service experience, it did serve as a catalyst towards my eventual service to the Association. Three experiences that began in small ways during my first ASIS&T Annual Meeting and extended further helped build my interest in becoming involved with ASIS&T and are ones I would encourage new members and attendees at ASIS&T conferences to seek out themselves:

1. **The ASIS&T Leadership Workshop**: The workshops are held late every Sunday afternoon at ASIS&T Annual Meetings. At the one I attended in 2010 it became clear that ASIS&T relies heavily on volunteers; without volunteers, there would be no ASIS&T. I learned there are a wide variety of ways that members can choose to volunteer with committees, award juries, chapters and special interest groups (SIGs) and eventually even the Board of Directors. It was clear, though, that we shouldn’t feel overwhelmed: “start small” was a key piece of advice. We were also encouraged to talk with other members who were active in volunteering and serving, and indeed I met New Leaders and others who were already volunteering as part of the leadership workshop, many of whom I now count as valued colleagues and friends. If you’re new to ASIS&T and are attending the Annual Meeting, go to the leadership workshop!

2. **A feeling of home**: Other doctoral students and faculty at Florida State University had mentioned to me that one would eventually find one’s scholarly home, in both the sense of common research interests and in terms of one conference, association or venue feeling like the place to be. It became clear during my first ASIS&T Annual Meeting that the Association
– and its main conference – were the home for me. The research was certainly interesting. I still remember sessions on collaboration, sociotechnical perspectives, online communities and social Q&A research from ASIS&T 2010 and 2011, along with SIG/SI (social informatics) workshops at both conferences, as sparking and shaping my research interests in these areas. An ASIS&T 2011 panel session on “shaking it up” also helped increase my interest in communications activities, including social media contributions and website work, which would further guide my place within the home of ASIS&T. The formal and informal social events – from receptions to banquets, from hallway conversations to SIG CON – would solidify a feeling that I was among a group of intelligent, friendly, collegial and interesting researchers and practitioners who would become a key part of my academic and professional life. If you’re new to ASIS&T or to the information field, take a look around: attend an Annual Meeting, IA Summit or RDAP Summit, soak in the experience and see if ASIS&T is the home for you.

3. **Networking:** As a doctoral student I was encouraged to network with other attendees and not be afraid to talk to those sitting or standing nearby. A fellow doctoral student and ASIS&T volunteer, Chris Landbeck, told us a story of being in an elevator with Marcia Bates and Michael Buckland and finding out that these luminaries of our field were people just like the rest of us. This happy fact may seem common knowledge to more established ASIS&T members – a group I would now count myself among – but at the time to a brand-new doctoral student attending his first conference, such an elevator grouping seemed like it would be quite overwhelming! Nevertheless, in networking with faculty, practitioners and students at my first ASIS&T Annual Meetings in hallways, poster sessions and after panels and paper presentations, I could see and eventually reap the benefits of talking with others no matter their experience level. By the opening plenary of the 2011 Annual Meeting I thought nothing much of talking to Linda Smith sitting two seats down from me. For new members and conference attendees, particularly those on the more introverted side, don’t feel overwhelmed; again, start small and network with a few colleagues to start with; then move on from there as you get more comfortable. You’ll be talking with the famous faces in no time!

Based on these encouraging experiences and a developing interest in social informatics, I made my own small start by attending SIG/SI’s business meeting near the end of ASIS&T 2011, and I became the SIG’s secretary for a year. Later, at ASIS&T 2012, I moved into the communications role, managing SIG/SI’s website, Facebook group, Twitter account and listserv. I started small, but found my service to ASIS&T continued to grow and build as I was invited to peer review posters, panels and papers for the Annual Meeting; to serve on the 2013 jury for the Cretsos award; and to serve on the task force on ASIS&T’s web presence and as an ASIS&T social media contributor (both under Diane Rasmussen Pennington’s leadership.) The latter two activities were, in a sense, a coming together of my interests and service in online communities, social media and communications, along with my feeling of ASIS&T as a home that I wanted to see be a strong place for all, especially new members and those interested in SIGs and chapters.

None of this would have been possible, however, without those initial experiences of starting small: in attending the ASIS&T leadership workshop, in networking with intelligent colleagues sharing common interests, in finding the conference and Association to be a great place to call my scholarly home and in attending one little SIG business meeting. I’ve found the experience in volunteering with and serving ASIS&T to be very rewarding both personally and professionally. Service is an important part of the information science field and of promoting its development, research, teaching and professional activities. In my service to ASIS&T and the field I look to provide these benefits for many others, and it is a great honor to receive the James M. Cretsos Leadership Award and be recognized alongside a long list of amazing and
deserving former winners. I am also thankful to all who had a hand in my nomination, particularly Diane Rasmussen Pennington who was kind enough to nominate me for the award.

I don’t intend to stop serving ASIS&T, of course! But if you are a newer ASIS&T member or first-time conference attendee who is reading this, I’d like to encourage you to find your space, your home, your volunteering role within the Association. At the next Annual Meeting, IA Summit or RDAP Summit take every opportunity you can to network and talk with colleagues, attend events that interest you (including the leadership workshop at the Annual Meeting,) and seek out those meetings and areas that call to you in research, teaching, service and practice. Start small, but keep building, and I think you’ll find the experience in your new home to be quite the ride. I sure have!