

National Art Education Association

# Leadership LENS

Dear Colleagues:

As NAEA begins a new era of growth and embarks on innovative opportunities, I am confident that through our "synergy of purpose" we can be proud of the significant contributions we all will make to the ongoing development of our profession and the Association.

NAEA President Bonnie Rushlow, your Board of Directors and the NAEA staff are committed to effective communications and transparency toward ensuring an ever greater "member experience." To that end, I hope you will find this inaugural issue of *Leadership Lens* informative and useful in your work as an NAEA leader.

You will receive *Leadership Lens* three times a year to inform you of the actions of the NAEA Board of Directors and the work of your headquarters staff as we address the goals outlined in the [2007-2010 Strategic Plan](#). The following highlights are offered for your knowledge and information:



Deborah B. Reeve, EdD  
Executive Director

## Summer into Fall

Following a highly successful July Summer Board and Management Meeting, the fall meeting of the Board of Directors was held late September in New Orleans. Both meetings were monumental in setting the course of action to support the goals outlined in the new Strategic Plan. The work of organizational transformation has begun — moving NAEA from a traditional nonprofit organizational model to a fast, fluid and flexible entrepreneurial organization — with the end goal of enhancing our stature as a professional association while creating a highly valued member experience!



Prior to both meetings, the NAEA Executive Board and Finance Committee met to carefully review comprehensive financial and investment reports. An accountant representing the firm contracted to conduct the annual audit met with the Committee to review overall financial history and health. The audit process was fast tracked to ensure timely completion of the Association fiscal year audit ending June 30, 2007, and the final audit report was reviewed during the September meeting. We have recently set a new precedent that will require our Past President, who serves as Chair of the Finance Committee, and the President to meet annually with the Auditor in our Reston Offices to review the final audit report before presentation to the Executive/Finance Committee during the fall meeting.

## 100 Day Goals



During the summer months, emphasis was placed on substantive and robust 100 Day Goals:

**Connecting** with staff to fully understand their talents, skills, and capacities; with NAEA Leaders to see first-hand the exemplary leadership that NAEA Directors and Elects bring to the regional conferences; and engaging with state Presidents and volunteer leaders to gain a thorough understanding of issues at the state level and how NAEA might better provide support; and with NAEA Thought Leaders and Foundation Trustees who have provided invaluable leadership and guidance to the profession and the Association over a number of years.

**Reaching out** to peer organizations and corporate supporters through the office of the Executive Director to establish strong relationships and to better understand opportunities for leveraging work toward the advancement of NAEA's mission. Meetings were held with Executive Directors of the Arts Education Partnership, Americans for the Arts, MENC, ASCD, NASSP and NAESP. Meetings were also held with select corporate partners to gain an understanding of potential opportunities for leveraging relationship value through business alliances.

**Examining** the internal systems, operations, business processes and procedures to identify areas for improving effectiveness and to realign budgeting with planning. This has led to reorganization of the staff to increase effectiveness and productivity and an assessment of NAEA's IT infrastructure and resulting implications for new system wide operations including up-to-date association management software and the development of the new website architecture and design.

**Initiating** internal and external analyses of NAEA's positioning and areas of need leading to a cohesive image and message supporting NAEA's mission, vision and goals.

## Organizational Readiness and Execution



As NAEA begins a new era of 21st century leadership, growth and prosperity, the Board took bold action in recognizing the critical need to reinvest in our association. Given the challenges before us as we seek to grow in stature, enhance our value to members and the professional community of art educators, and create a learning organization, Strategic Initiatives have been identified as key priorities that will ensure our success:

- Design and development of an all-new comprehensive and member-driven NAEA website;
- Assessment of NAEA Information Technology Infrastructure leading to recommendations for Web-based technologies that ensure interface with membership data base, e-commerce, and finance/administrative functions;
- Research and development of a comprehensive marketing/communications strategy that will define the "collective voice" of NAEA members and identify core messaging and branding that will strongly position NAEA to pursue a proactive agenda for both research and policy;
- Member and potential member needs assessment; and
- Refurbishment of our 30-year-old NAEA headquarters building that we own and occupy.

For more than ten years, the NAEA operating budget has supported day-to-day operations and maintenance of longstanding programs and services to members with little emphasis on development and growth. NAEA is a financially strong organization with a sound investment policy that addresses short-term and long-term reserves ensuring continued success and prosperity. Compared to other nonprofit membership organizations of similar size, NAEA is exceptional in its accumulated reserve funds. From this position of financial strength, during the July 2007 meeting, the Board moved to reallocate up to one million dollars of reserve funds to maximize our return on investment by funding the Board-approved strategic initiatives outlined above.

As the work of organizational transformation continues, our focus will be purposeful and results-oriented, guided by the Strategic Plan and related Initiatives:



**Building staff capacity and aligning talents and skills with need:** To better serve our state associations and members, the NAEA staff has been reorganized into core teams with primary responsibilities around core areas of work: Executive, Member Services, Publications, and Administration/Human Resources. Additionally, staff will cross team on a project-by-project basis maximizing talent and skill contributions.

Two new positions were created to round out the Executive Team: the position of Deputy Executive Director was reoriented to the position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) and filled by Melanie Dixon, who brings strong credentials and nonprofit management experience in the areas of administration/finance, human resources and information technology. She is certified by the American Society of Association Executives and has a solid record of fiscal management and revenue growth. Additionally, we also welcomed Diana Stanley to the newly created position of Organizational Planning and Outreach Manager. Diana brings excellent background and experience in nonprofit management and strategic alliances. In this position, Diana manages our strategic planning efforts and facilitates work with our Board and leaders as well as outreach to external relationships. Kathy Duse continues in her role as Executive Assistant in support and coordination of the work of the Executive Team and has assumed a secondary title as Convention and Programs Coordinator.

Other teams include Member Services, managed by Margi Worrest; Publications managed by Lynn Ezell; and Administration and Human Resources — we are currently interviewing for the position of manager for the Administration and Human Resources Team.



**Working collaboratively in support of state associations toward recruiting and retaining members:** Active membership has remained steady at approximately 20,000 for the past 10–12 years. There is potential for significant membership growth and several targeted membership promotional efforts will be piloted over this year. We will be assessing our new member success rate while studying retention issues. Additionally, in response to state leaders, we will begin providing membership reports in Microsoft Excel format for convenience and timeliness. Overall, we will continue to assess membership systems and processes all toward enhanced service and support to state associations and individual members. A member needs assessment will be conducted with members and potential members to gain a better understanding of current and potential value as we review NAEA services.



**Upgrading and enhancing NAEA's IT infrastructure, including the development of a new website:** The IT assessment, conducted by CELT Corp, is nearing completion and has been integrated with the planning process for the discovery and architectural development of the new website with Mindshare. An IT/Web survey of state associations is underway to further inform planning.



**Developing costs centers for all major revenue sources with projected return on investments:** After membership, other primary revenue sources include publications and the annual convention. **Publications:** All print and electronic publications, subscriptions and advertising sales have been realigned under the Publications Team to maximize opportunities for increased NAEA visibility and sales beyond our own membership.

Additionally, we are working more closely with PMC authors to ensure a smooth and comprehensive process from manuscript to production. Several pilot efforts are underway to streamline production and fulfillment of NAEA publications toward maximizing business efficiencies. **Convention:** As we prepare for New Orleans, we have formed a close alliance with the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau to help boost attendance and showcase New Orleans and its post-Katrina "rebirth." Historically a gathering place for the "creatives," NAEA's presence will bring even greater energy to the city. Under the direction of National Convention Coordinator, Dean Johns, more than 1,000 sessions will be offered with an impressive line-up of General Session and Super Session speakers, Artists Workshops and local tours. Online registration will go live beginning mid November. The first phase of the new NAEA website will also be previewed in New Orleans. We are closely analyzing current systems and processes toward maximizing business efficiencies while enhancing the convention experience.



**Enhancing relationships with peer associations and developing corporate and foundation relationships:** Through representation by the NAEA President as official spokesperson, and the Executive Director as Chief Executive Officer, we are building an ever stronger NAEA presence at key conferences and meetings at the federal, state and national levels. We are actively and strategically cultivating relationships that will advance NAEA's mission and goals.

### Other Highlights from the September 2007 Meeting of the NAEA Board of Directors:



- accepted recommendations for the establishment of a Research Advisory Committee Chaired by NAEA Higher Education Director, Dr. Melody Milbrandt
- established an NAEA Policy Review Committee co-chaired by Susan Gabbard and Dr. Bob Sabol and coordinated with the work of the Delegates Assembly
- accepted the FY 2007 Audit and Audited Financial Statements, the July Financial Reports and Revised 2008 FY Budget as presented
- accepted the Executive/Finance Committee recommendation to exercise Option 1 as presented for reallocating up to one million dollars of NAEA reserves to fund Board-approved Strategic Initiatives
- approved changes to the NAEA Travel Policy to increase per diem to \$64 per day consistent with the federal government rate, effective September 2007
- granted Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design's request to co-sponsor the Creative Educator's Institute to be held July 2008
- requested the President and Executive Director to form a Focus Group to continue study of the Leadership Institute Pilot and its implications for leadership development among volunteer leaders
- accepted the proposal for a March 2008 double issue of *Art Education*
- accepted the recommendations for Class of 2008 NAEA Distinguished Fellows: Dr. Douglas Blandy and Dr. Kristen G. Congdon

- accepted the request for NAEA to be a national signatory to the unified statement on arts education and NCLB as presented by the Arts Education Partnership Legislative Working Group
- accepted the request for NAEA to be a national signatory to ASCD's Statement of Support for the Whole Child
- accepted the PMC Report and new PMC Committee members: Catherine Ross, Dr. Deborah Stickler-Voigt, Dr. Richard Siegesmund and Dr. Sheri Klein

As evidenced by this summary, the NAEA Board of Directors and national staff are engaged in myriad activities defined within the scope of NAEA's mission and goals as set forth in the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan.

If we are to shape visual arts education in the 21st century and grow our professional community, then it will take no less than the best that each of us can offer. I am deeply committed to our challenge and remain grateful to each of you for the leadership you continue to bring to our work as we go forth and reach a new pinnacle of success. Thank you for your leadership and inspiration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deborah B. Reeve', written in a cursive style.

Deborah B. Reeve, EdD  
Executive Director