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When President Obama appointed Jane Chu, Chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts, one of her first acts was to invite leaders of the many arts organizations to an introductory meeting.

She invited each organization to submit their mission and image on a slide and organization after organization recited their mission – more or less, business as usual; but when it was NAEA’s turn, everything changed - our mission caused people to stop, take a step back and think!

Mission: NAEA advances visual arts education to fulfill human potential and promote global understanding.

You see - our mission is why we do all of the things that we do. Advancing our mission is about realizing our vision - what the world would look like if our mission were fully realized.

Vision: The power of the visual arts to enrich human experience and society is recognized and celebrated throughout the world.

Last year, after a year of input from members, the Board adopted a new 2015 – 2020 Strategic Vision: This vision represents the collective ideas of members who contributed to the identification of priorities that are charting our course through 2020. A course that is, indeed, advancing our mission toward achieving our vision.

A recent article in Harvard Business Review describes 'leadership' vision as an essential means for focusing attention on what matters most; what you want to accomplish in your life, what kind of leader you wish to be. They go on to say a useful vision has to be rooted in your past, address the future and deal with today's realities. It represents who you are and what you stand for. And I would venture to say that is true not only for individuals - but also for organizations.

In its many forms, vision without action is futility. We all know idea people – I would venture to say most of us are idea people; and we also know those who can bring these big ideas to life while others never seem to realize their ideas before moving on to the next big idea.

There is a Japanese proverb that says, "Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare."

As artists and art educators, we simply abhor a vacuum. Creativity and the act of making meaning are such a part of our DNA. We strive

to translate vision into tangible action...

to give form to the unformed...

to turn the evanescence of imagination into the perceptibility of actual image.

A strategic vision without the tangible, purposeful actions necessary to make it real is merely an exercise in frustration...a situation that I know a community of enthusiastic, energized educators like those comprising the Delegate Assembly will never accept.

As part of my own mindfulness practice - I often begin my day in reverie — reflecting upon and anticipating all the day holds. And a lot like painting - it's important to step back – to see from some distance before you begin working up close again.

A few weeks ago, in preparation for our time together this morning, I began thinking about

all of the ideas that had been realized since this Delegates Assembly last gathered almost a year ago in New Orleans.

All of the actions that had taken place by members, and so many who have answered the call of leadership service including our

National Board of Directors and elects,

Regional Division Directors,

Issues Group Chairs,

Editorial Board members,

Research Commission,

PMC,

Standards and Model Cornerstone Assessment Writing Teams – and

State Association Presidents and Board members – just to name a few.

And, I would be remiss not to include our talented and mighty NAEA staff of twelve impassioned professionals who work on your behalf every day.

Yes - What has been accomplished since we last met is truly remarkable. Just since last March:

- Launched NAEA's School for Art Leaders - Graduated our first 2015 Class
- Introduced SummerStudio – a new 4-day professional development offering focused on Design
- Hosted the 2nd Annual Back-to-School Virtual Conference
- Introduced Virtual Art Educators – a rich archive of webinars and convention presentations for easy member access
- Significantly expanded the series of webinar offerings in direct response to hot topics
- Provided site-based training in use of the new art standards to art educators in two school districts
- Received our first federal grants – one from NEA and another from IMLS totaling almost \$550,000
- Received grant funding from Kress Foundation – another \$40,000
- Launched a large national research study led by the Museum Education Division
- Hosted our first L2L Regional Webinars with state association Presidents and elects – will be held quarterly throughout the year
- Hosted our first Delegates Assembly Orientation Webinar
- Launched a brand new, next generation web site and refreshed logo
- Rebranded NAEA's collective identity in tandem with the redesign of the website.

- Expanded the reach of Art Ed and Studies and member access to digitized copies of all back issues of both publications through a partnership with Taylor & Francis
- Redesigned NAEA News and published a new book: *Culturally Sensitive Art Education in a Global World: A Handbook for Teachers*
- Relocated NAEA's physical footprint – fulfilling a vision for living our mission in multi-functional space;
- Hosted an Open House and first ever Student Art Exhibit for local colleagues, friends, students and parents, and elected officials.
- And while reallocating Board-approved investments in these new efforts, we achieved our highest assets in the history of NAEA and continue to grow membership by about 5.5%.

We ALL can take great pride in what has been accomplished. Out of these 18 significant accomplishments – any organization would be proud to claim just 2 or 3!

And this brings us back to the 2015-2020 NAEA Strategic Vision. Believe me, it is far from an empty promise or pro forma exercise. Rather, the Strategic Vision is the dynamic blueprint that is guiding our work and growing our association to meet the needs of members through a deeper, wider, more inclusive and more diverse art education community.

Over several years now, we have refined our organizational systems and governance structures and removed many of the roadblocks to fuller member engagement. And now - our capacity is in place and it's up to each of us – individually and collectively - to take art education in our nation to the next level – to advance our mission and realize our vision.

And so the question is not *CAN we make it happen?* Because I believe we can!

But HOW can we make it happen?

I think you will agree that NAEA is, at its core, a community of interest.

I believe that one of our strengths is that we are a community of shared values. One of those values is the notion that as we grow our community in terms of member ethnicity, gender, geography, specialization and related factors, the opportunities for intellectual and professional cross-pollination expand and the benefits of membership—whether its new ideas and perspectives, new peer networks, or new opportunities for professional growth--become richer still.

Another of our common values is the idea that when we see a void in the delivery of art education, whether in terms of content, coverage or context, we are moved to fill it. We act, we engage, we challenge the status quo. As a community, we are drawn to new frontiers and new opportunities, not reassured by old boundaries.

Organized around a framework of 5 goals, the *NAEA 2015-2020 Strategic Vision* is our field guide – it shows us the way:

Beginning with ***Community***, we are embracing a view of a dynamic professional community that is more inclusive and more diverse. Dynamic individuals drive and sustain the community they want, need and desire and it is NAEA the organization that is here to offer support – by members for members!

And there is a universe of 93,000 art educators teaching in America's public schools. And about 77,000 of those k-12 art teachers are not part of our community! And why is that?

Is it the cost to join? It's what I often hear, but I don't believe that.

I know and you know that that is just the easy answer and sometimes just as easy for us to buy. But I don't buy it. We've done the research – and NAEA dues are actually among the lowest of national education associations.

Perhaps it's our inability to communicate the value that our community delivers? We hear over and over how NAEA and state conferences, webinars, publications and the vast network of art educators bring both comfort and joy....

- bridge gaps in knowledge and set the stage for new inquiry,
- create powerful mentoring and peer to peer relationships,
- provide the inspiration for classroom innovation,
- increase personal productivity through lesson plans and related content.

Yet the gaps between actual membership and potential members are very real.

To look at it another way - of the 93,000 K-12 art educators across the U.S., only about one in eight are members of our NAEA professional community.

Some of this may have an inevitable age component to it: as baby boomers leave the workforce, a younger generation—completely at home in the virtual community of the social web--may be less likely to feel the need for a real world community.

So as leaders of this organization...as the creators of a more dynamic, inclusive, diverse community ...we must be constantly ready to break the barriers to member growth.

To break out in exciting new directions. Break away from the comfortable and confining. Break through to meet the real needs, interests and challenges faced by art educators. To stretch beyond our own comfort zone.

The Preservice Division is an excellent example of our community “breaking through” to meet an unfilled need.

Designed to carry postsecondary students from the world of academic preparation into the mainstream of our profession - in just three short years, this new division has grown to represent over 10 percent of the association’s membership.

In one bold move, we have not only helped the next generation of art educators get better established and supported, but we have created a talent pipeline that will help assure the relevance of the NAEA member community into the future.

There are other examples as well.

Through our Issues Groups, art educators are empowered and supported in bringing focused attention to self-identified areas of interest and through the Issues Groups, breaking down barriers that have prevented NAEA members from realizing their full potential...and made an otherwise open and receptive community become even more open and supportive.

For women, for ethnic minorities, for LGBTQ individuals, for retirees, for the spiritually engaged, for the socially concerned and for the special needs and the early childhood focused...we now have the structures in place to make NAEA a more member sensitive, member responsive organization....the structures to be more nimble and agile in the face of rapidly evolving member needs.

Community building is not limited to what we do inside the NAEA “big tent.” Our Strategic Vision calls on art educators to be active ambassadors to stakeholders outside of art education.

We seek to create, strengthen and repair the ties that bind art education to the larger world, whether in terms of academic programs, school budget investment, student success, workforce development, social responsibility, technology innovation, or other issues that place our wonderfully creative discipline into its larger and more meaningful context.

And I am proud to say that there are many, many examples of NAEA members rising to this challenge of relevance.

We are also exploring a potential new relationship with Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We all know the limited access to art education in underserved communities. Having more African Americans choose art education as a teaching career can only serve to increase access in communities where it is necessary to do so and to promote greater diversity of artistic perspective and expression in schools where good visual arts programs already exist.

As we grow the NAEA community, both internally and externally, we must be sure to have the technology in place to promote and sustain these efforts.

We just unveiled our newly designed website providing an integrated and streamlined presentation of all member opportunities and learning experiences. In addition, our new business partnership with Routledge Taylor & Francis Group provides easy access to all NAEA journals, newsletter and publications.

Advocacy is the second goal of the Strategic Vision framework. NAEA is a strong partner with other arts organizations ensuring the arts are included in the new Every Student Succeeds Act.

When President Obama signed this bipartisan bill into law last December, many of us may have thought our work might be done. But it's not - Far from it. In many ways, with enactment comes the heavy lifting.

Here's why. Like any major new law, ESSA does many things, including shifting the development of education accountability measures to the states. Particularly important to art education are provisions that:

- include the arts in the definition of a well-rounded education and makes these eligible for Title I funding; provides access to Title IV for Professional Development;
- makes the arts eligible for certain grants programs and avoids the consolidation of arts related grants programs with multiple others;

- supports the inclusion of arts into STEM courses; and
- increases art education transparency by imposing local educational agency reporting requirements.

Just because the arts are eligible for Title I funding does not make them the automatic recipient of such funding. And that is where the heavy lifting for NAEA members comes in.

As a community, we need to articulate and share the most successful strategies and approaches for gaining Title I funding of art education programs at the local and state level.

To facilitate this process, we need to identify and grow the natural constituencies for art education within our respective communities, whether in PTAs, businesses, community and economic development groups, religious and cultural affairs organizations, youth counseling agencies or any other allied fields.

We need to organize our outreach to these groups in ways which avoid redundancy and make contacts timely, compelling and sustainable.

We need to be smart and make data driven appeals for art education funding to school boards and school principals.

We also need to remember that ESSA is important part of our advocacy efforts and so is what's happening in state legislatures across the country. The California Art Education Association, working in concert with groups in the performing arts community, showed what determined advocacy at the state level can accomplish. SB 725, a bill to update state standards in the visual and performing arts, sailed through both the assembly and senate with no opposition. This is an example of how engagement makes good, and I encourage all of us to play a role in advocating for our students, schools and professional community at the state and local level.

We all have anecdotes about the difference that art education makes in the lives of students. We know that art education fosters visual learning, encourages creative thinking and problem solving, develops artistic skill, enhances rates of student retention and graduation. We feel it; we think it; we know it.

But when it comes to influencing the course of public policy, outcomes favor not what you know but what you can prove.

For too long, we have lacked the solid empirical research for making our case to influence policymakers, state education commissions and local school boards.

Our Strategic Vision calls on us to evaluate, develop and increase the ability of members to advocate for visual arts education. We need the data collected, analyzed and compiled in formats that support our advocacy efforts.

That's why NAEA is working with the Americans for the Arts on a toolkit that breaks ESSA down and will help you build the case for Title I support of art education in your school.

We will also continue to publish position statements and white papers, including statements you will be reviewing for consideration on topics like diversity in the profession, high stakes testing and school culture.

Learning is our third goal in the Strategic Vision Framework. As we grow our reach and our voice, we must also be able to help grow the depth, breadth and pedagogical rigor of our profession. Our goal is to provide the exemplary learning opportunities that support your desire to be even more effective educators, artists, leaders and advocates.

The opportunities abound, but let's narrow our focus to two: the School for Art Leaders and Virtual Art Educators.

The *NAEA School for Art Leaders*—or SAL—brings together art educators from all geographic regions and professional divisions to form a cohesive and collegial learning community. SAL content is designed to nurture the leadership skills and strategies needed for art educators to excel as leaders.

Leadership presentations originate from both inside and outside the NAEA member community, helping to assure a learning experience that is as challenging as it is relevant and useful.

The NAEA commitment to a learning community is also well exemplified by Virtual Art Educators. This rich resource provides NAEA members with online access to live and archived webinars, sessions, workshops, and related content, assembled and curated with an eye toward art education teaching and learning.

And *Virtual Art Educators* offers college credits through a partnership with California State University – and that these credits serve as proof of professional development for licensure,

assessment and compensation – making this important initiative a true “win-win” for all concerned.

One of the priorities is to align our learning with trends in education. The National Visual Art Standards are a primary example of this alignment.

What an exciting process developing these standards has been...and how these have quickly become a touchstone for art educators throughout the country.

By design, the new standards are instructional, assessable and aspirational.

They maintain a bridge to the past and chart new pathways to art education in the digital future.

And they are in use today – several states have already formally adopted the standards, others have revised their standards using the new standards as a resource and others are at varying stages of consideration.

The political winds are blowing as states embrace the work while rejecting anything with ‘national’ in its name.

- In Utah, art educator James Rees says the anchor standards have caused him to “reexamine what I teach and why.” As his students go to present and curate their works, James challenges them to reflect more deeply on how the selection of objects and artifacts shapes ideas, beliefs and experiences. James has created a space on Instagram and has encouraged other NAEA members to share their classroom displays;
- In Nebraska, Debra Wehrmann DeFrain reports that the National Core Arts Standards have been a valuable resource in developing the state’s own fine arts standards;
- In Kansas City, the SummerStudio provided “hands on” experience aligning studio design with the new standards;

A \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts is supporting NAEA’s work with teachers in their use of the new standards.

Whether the visual arts standards or other timely topics, we are making learning as accessible as it is productive, utilizing online, offline and blended approaches. And we are constantly exploring ways to leverage social media in the learning process.

By now – I’m sure you are feeling our momentum. But our quest to expand the size of our community and thereby expand the reach and regard for art education must have a strong empirical foundation. I spoke earlier about the importance of data in building our policy positions and advocacy programs.

The Strategic Vision cites ***Research and Knowledge*** as the fourth goal of our strategic vision. I am pleased to report that thanks to the vision and efforts of the Research Commission, much has been happening in this regard. Through the Cyber Café, I’ve been following rich and engaging conversations among school-based art educators who are seeing their work with students through the lens of action research.

This virtual space provides art educators the opportunity to share their ideas about the theory and practice of research through blogs, chat, images, videos and more.

Because the time to press the case for art education is now, we do not want to spend time and resources reinventing wheels.

If the research already exists, we must find it and use it.

We are compiling an extensive archive of relevant research on the NAEA website, and this content will only continue to grow and be made more useful through search and related database capabilities.

Through our partnership with Taylor & Francis, members now have full access to archived digital articles from every issue of the Journal of Art education and Studies in Art Education.

And , we have another significant research project underway.

The *National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services* is a great example of how we are leveraging our work through a partnership with the Association of Art Museum Directors, led by our Museum Education Division. This first of its kind research project is exploring how engaging directly with original works of art in the physical setting of art museums supports student learning.

The Strategic Vision calls for a continuum of other professional learning experiences related to research.

The Research Commission's Data Visualization Working Group is helping to build a culture of research throughout our community by getting to the bottom of such practical matters as the distribution of minority art teachers in the U.S., the ratio of art teachers to students, emerging technologies and other highly relevant, highly informative issues.

Through everything that I have described, you should have a good sense that NAEA is achieving the fifth mandate of the Strategic Vision: ***organizational vibrancy***.

We have achieved a level of member activism and engagement which I think few other professional associations can equal.

We have established a culture that clearly reflects the deep commitment of our members to the art education profession.

And we are putting in place the planning and actions that will help us realize our strategic vision.

Nothing is a better example of NAEA's vibrancy than our public footprint.

Last October, we moved into a thoughtfully designed multi-functional space that not only houses the association staff offices but features a fully functional gallery and art making studio for educator professional development. The headquarters building is as vibrant as the organization it houses. We are truly 'living' our 'mission.'

Another indicator is our virtual footprint - NAEA's newly redesigned website and logo. The website features streamlined menus, easy navigation, powerful search and a responsive design—a design that exemplifies NAEA's commitment to advancing excellence in education.

So let's sum it up.

Community

Advocacy

Learning

Research & Knowledge

Organizational Vibrancy

Our mission is *why we do what we do*.

Our vision is *how the world will look when we achieve our mission.*

And our Strategic Vision *identifies our priority areas of focus over the next four years and sets the stage for success.*

We have the policies, procedures and programs in place to grow our community, advance stakeholder support for art education, enhance the careers of our members and, most importantly, use visual learning and artistic expression to optimize the education of our students.

And finally - The strength of our organization is also reflected in our financial position.

I am pleased to report that NAEA assets have never been higher; our member growth is a very respectable five percent and our member retention is very strong.

But it is now time to bring focused attention to amplifying our voice by reaching out to those 70,000 outliers and welcoming them into our NAEA community.

All that I've shared represents both our momentum and our potential.

As I said at the start - vision without action is a recipe for futility.

Our mission is too important for half measures and tepid activity.

I challenge every member of this Delegates Assembly to stand tall, muscle up and join me in doubling the size of our membership! We can do this! We must do this – and that will be our leadership legacy!

Now more than ever, NAEA and our state associations are positioned for growth in numbers and for the promise of tomorrow.

I thank you for your passion, your creative leadership, your energy and support!

Thank you!