

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF ART AND DESIGN
SEVENTIETH ANNUAL MEETING — MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
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Report of the President

Kristi Nelson

Good morning. I want to begin my remarks today by expressing my appreciation to the Membership of NASAD for giving me the honor of serving as your President for the past three years. I have been associated with NASAD for a long time, and have had the opportunity to meet so many of you and to work with you in various capacities. It has been a continuous learning process that has been consistently rewarding in so many ways. I take a lot of pride in the 70-year history of NASAD and feel good about its accomplishments and those of our institutions and our colleagues. I am very confident that as artists, designers, historians, and administrators we are well prepared to face the many challenges that confront us in higher education today. We can take pride in our continuity, our history (which I talked about last year), and our members. It is our members that constitute the heart of NASAD and to all of you I extend my most sincere appreciation for all of the good work that you do in your institutions on behalf of your faculty and students to advance art and design and the disciplines they contain.

NASAD is a nurturing and facilitating force in the preparation of artists and designers. I very much enjoy the diversity of our membership, the range of schools and programs, and all of our different missions, educational approaches, and accomplishments. It is a growing organization. Today we have 326 institutional members, and 63 additional institutions are somewhere in the process of going through the accreditation process. These institutions will be writing Self-Studies and hosting site visits over the next 3 or 4 years. The continuity and success of NASAD depends on the work of volunteer contributions of administrators and faculty in member institutions. The Association remains deeply appreciative of the work of visiting evaluators who play a vital role in the peer review process. I know how busy everyone in this room is, but I can't stress enough how important it is to maintain a strong peer review system. When you are asked to be trained as an NASAD evaluator, I hope that you will accept and participate. And, I hope you will express any interest you have in serving NASAD to the Executive Director.

NASAD's goal is to continue to evolve the Association's work, consistent with the nature of the way art and design work. We are interested in maintaining the conditions that support creativity. We are interested in a creative spaces, creative habits of mind, and creative energy. We are committed to respecting and using organizational techniques in creative ways, and to pursuing creative purposes in art, design, scholarship, and teaching. We are not so interested in organization for its own sake, but organization in order to enable us to do something to further art and design on our campuses.

Now, at the beginning of the 2014-2015 academic year, most of us are settled into our routines and are addressing the series of challenges and opportunities that we know lie ahead. There are many things about the future that we do not know, but we certainly understand broadly many of the forces impacting decision-making on our campuses, even if we do not exactly know how they will play out in detail. In various portions of this meeting, we will be addressing “the future”: what does that mean for art and design and how do we deal with it our home institutions. How do we talk about it? How do we as art and design administrators lead? What is our role as leaders and administrators in art and design? What role does creativity play? How do we nurture the various parts?

Many of us are exploring new programs, new learning models, the potential of online learning offerings, curricular reform, student life and services. We are all asked to consider in varying measures depending on our missions diversity, inclusion, access, affordability, research, professionalism, ethics, partnerships, community, shared governance. These can be daunting, yet exciting challenges. I hope that you, like me, really enjoy being in higher education. Most of us have committed ourselves to working in this kind of environment because we get a great deal of personal satisfaction from being around students, we enjoy seeing them learn, we love the process of learning. We all respect the value of a college education – no matter the level of achievement.

We are all facing questions about the future of higher education. There are major national and international waves that have the potential to upend established ways of teaching and learning. That is why I think it is so important that we have these conversations here at our annual meeting this year. You are all familiar with these “waves.” I would like to point out just three of the large questions facing high education.

The first has to do with funding. Many are trying to solve the funding crisis confronting higher education: how do we continue to fund technology, salaries, and increased administrative costs without putting the entire burden on students? Student debt has become a conversation that we all have at our dinner tables these days. Is a university degree still a good investment? Recent research suggests that conventional wisdom is still true: a university degree pays handsomely in the US and Euro zone.

Secondly, technology is changing higher education’s traditional business model. Online learning, MOOCs, etc., have expanded access to higher education in ways not possible just a few years ago. Institutions will be affected in different ways. There will be some winners and some losers; some institutions may need to reinvent themselves. Technological innovation will have a major influence on teaching methodologies in the coming years. How will we support faculty used to teaching one way, and in whom we will need to invest so that they can learn new methods. And I would be remiss if I did not mention how distance education is becoming increasingly global with universities in the US and overseas leveraging technology to expand the reach of higher education.

The third has to do with the pressure on universities to educate and train workers throughout their careers with an emphasis on preparing graduates for jobs – often

referenced as vocational education. Automation is beginning to have the same effect on white-collar jobs as it once did on blue-collar jobs. According to a study conducted by Oxford University (*Economist*, June 28, 2014), 47% of occupations are at risk of being automated in the next few decades. People will continue to need to retool their skill set throughout their lives.

So how do these large waves affect education in art and design? What does this mean for us in art and design – how are these large national issues impacting us on our home campuses? How do we take advantage of these waves to make sure that need and opportunity come together in art and design?

The theme for our annual meeting this year is “Tomorrow Has Arrived.” Your NASAD Executive Committee took great care in planning our Annual Meeting, which has been designed to help you think about, reflect on, and take action toward the “future.” Here in Minneapolis, we have a small window of opportunity to put all else on a smoldering back burner for several “tomorrows” and discuss issues of importance and relevance. Our pursuits are not intended to lead us to specific answers, rather to a plethora of possible options and various approaches, which added to our already comprehensive lists of ideas and plans, can provide valuable assistance to us as we set our sights ahead.

We really can’t sit back. It is important for all us to engage our faculty and students with these issues now – how do these future issues impact our teaching, learning, thinking, and creating? Creating our future is not a task for the faint of heart; it requires great consideration, thought, collaboration, and action. It also requires patience, fortitude, and the will to try – again, and again, and again.

We have organized Friday and Saturday’s sessions into three parts. Part I will address the “Power of Engagement.” There will be two sessions that will focus on proactive ways to involve, promote, and enhance various levels of engagement on campus, in the community, and beyond. One session will focus on the role of gamification in teaching and learning and its impact on higher education. Another session concerns creativity and innovation – is it inherent or learned? In Part II, which continues after lunch today, we will reflect on “Nurturing the Constituent Parts.” There will be sessions on empowering students to become developers of ideas and creators of solutions, broadening the digital literacy of faculty by promoting intellectual and experimental engagement, the role of community in expanding the resource base, and using the curriculum as a catalyst for maintaining what is fundamental while also finding ways to experiment with new possibilities. The theme of Part III, which begins Saturday morning, is about augmenting teaching and learning through the use of digital systems and tools. There will be two sessions: one that will outline the pros and cons of new and emerging delivery systems and course delivery methodologies and the second which will focus on how digital technology can enhance the learning experience and deepen the student’s engagement with art and design studies and aspirations.

I think we have a dynamite program lined up for you and an exceptional group of presenters and moderators. NASAD is about helping you build relationships that will assist you in your own personal leadership and development. We do this by supporting each other, by working together as a community, by sharing ideas, concerns, and methodologies, and by articulating what we believe. I hope you will find this year's program to be stimulating in a multitude of ways and that you will return to your campuses rejuvenated in thought and in spirit and eager to embrace the "future" now.

I do want to thank you for approving the *Handbook 2013-2014* changes. Many of the changes reflect the need to remain consistent with current interpretations of federal regulations in areas, which are applicable to Title IV gatekeeper agencies such as NASAD when it acts as an institutional accreditor. Whereas many of these are technical in nature, it is essential that our *Handbook* remains current with federal regulations.

I also wish to thank all who are participating as presenters, moderators, recorders, panelists, or who are otherwise serving others in this 2014 Annual Meeting. We are all grateful to have the benefits that accrue from the efforts of our colleagues and friends. We are especially grateful for our member institutions in the Minneapolis area for the consultation and assistance that they have provided to our staff and to all of us.

Again, my thanks to all of you for your presence here in Minneapolis, and for the contributions you will make to each other and to the Association during the course of this meeting. Thank you for all that you do in your institution for your faculty and your students.

I want to close by expressing deep appreciation for all those who have worked for the Association as volunteers over the past year, to our staff in Reston, and to all of you for being here and participating in this important Annual Meeting that is full of issues and actions of deep relevance to what we are all working to do in our institutions. Thank you again for allowing me to serve as your president. It has been an experience that I will cherish for years to come. Working with all of you as made it tremendously rewarding and fulfilling on many professional and personal levels. My best to Denise Mullen, who will assume the presidency at the conclusion of this meeting.

Thank you and best wishes for the coming year.