

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF DANCE

35th Annual Meeting

September 17 – 19, 2015

Report of the Executive Director

The 2014-2015 academic year marks NASD's 35th season of service to its members and to the field. Efforts to support and advance the dance profession in the United States remain at the core of the Association's projects. Its work in various areas, including accreditation, professional development, research, and monitoring and analyzing policy surrounding higher education and the arts, is continually being reviewed, discussed, improved, and enhanced. As NASD serves an ever-growing and diverse membership, its projects in accreditation and beyond continue to broaden and evolve. The Association's principal activities during the past year are presented below.

Accreditation Standards and Procedures

Much of the yearly work of NASD involves accreditation. This includes preparation for meetings of the Commission on Accreditation; scheduling accreditation visits; arranging consultations for member and potential member institutions; communicating with institutions preparing accreditation materials; receiving and reviewing accreditation materials; and developing standards, guidelines, resources, and educational programs in support of the accreditation review process. All individuals involved in these activities—including institutional representatives, faculty and staff members, NASD Commissioners, visiting evaluators, consultants, presenters, and National Office staff members—work to make this service a valuable component in the advancement of dance programs in institutions of higher education.

2014-2015 marks the start of NASD's scheduled multi-year comprehensive standards review process. In August 2015, detailed information announcing the review process and requesting feedback was sent to accredited institutional members of NASD, related organizations, and various constituencies. This review process will include a comprehensive look at NASD standards as a whole and by section.

NASD will begin this long-term project by focusing its review on the Association's standards for graduate study in dance. A comment period has been announced; an open hearing on the graduate standards will be held on Saturday afternoon of the Annual Meeting. Registrants are encouraged to provide comment and to attend the hearing. Thoughts, feedback, and ideas are welcomed. In reviewing the graduate standards, careful consideration should be given to their relationship to the undergraduate standards, and their ability to address issues pertaining to the preparation of future dance faculty members.

During this period of specific review of the graduate standards, NASD welcomes comments on any and all standards and guidelines, as well as the procedures employed for accreditation and new curricula reviews. Institutional representatives should feel free to contact the office of the Executive Director at any time to share and discuss views on the standards and guidelines found in the current NASD *Handbook* and procedures documents that may improve the work and effectiveness of NASD. Information, instructions, requests for comment, and ongoing activities pertaining to this comprehensive review process will be available on the Association's website throughout the duration of this project.

Representatives from institutions submitting applications of any kind to the Commission on Accreditation should review and use the standards current at the time of submission. All Self-Studies prepared for accreditation and reaccreditation reviews should be based on the information found in the most recent edition of the *Membership Procedures*. Applications for Plan Approval and/or Final Approval for Listing should be based upon the current edition of the NASD *Policies and Procedures for Reviews of New Curricula*. It is important to note that editorial amendments may be added to these documents from time to time. Therefore, it is important to check release/revision dates before use. Release dates and the dates of any subsequent revisions to any particular edition are noted on the inside cover of each document. Those submitting applications to NASD are asked to ensure that current editions are in hand. Improvements made to these documents throughout the revision process are intended to help make the accreditation review process more clear and efficient.

An amended *Handbook* typically is released annually just after each Annual Meeting. The 2015-2016 *Handbook* is expected later this fall. Handbooks released just after Annual Meetings include any standards changes approved by the membership during the most recent meeting, as well as any amendments approved between Annual Meetings. There are no proposed revisions to come before the membership for a vote during this Annual Meeting.

All current accreditation-related documents, standards, and procedures are available for download from the Association's website at nasd.arts-accredit.org. Institutions are reminded that the NASD framework does allow for flexibility in approach. To discuss available flexibilities that can assist to address local conditions and realities, and for assistance in using the various *Procedures* documents and *Handbook*, please contact the NASD National Office staff.

The Association continues to encourage consideration of the use of the NASD review process or materials in other review contexts. Consolidating reviews may assist institutions to conserve resources and realize economies of scale. Many institutions are finding efficiencies by combining the NASD review with internal and/or other external reviews. The Association is willing to work with institutions and programs to consider options and to craft NASD reviews that are thorough and efficient, meet NASD requirements, and are suitably connected with other internal and external efforts.

The Association is cognizant of the many hours devoted by member and applicant institutions to research, study, consider, prepare, and present accreditation materials for review by the Commission on Accreditation. NASD is deeply grateful for these efforts on behalf of the field of dance and congratulates the institutions and their representatives for the many accomplishments and successes resulting from their work.

Projects

NASD participates in the Council of Arts Accrediting Associations with NASAD (art and design), NASM (music), and NAST (theatre). The Council is concerned with issues that affect all four disciplines and their accreditation efforts. NASD President Madeleine Scott and Vice President Jory Hancock are the dance Trustees of the Council. CAAA sponsors the Accrediting Commission for Community and Precollegiate Arts Schools (ACCPAS), which reviews arts-focused schools at the K–12 level. Currently, there are sixteen institutions accredited by ACCPAS. This undertaking is valuable in that it assists to connect K–12 and higher education efforts. Nina Nelson is the dance appointee to ACCPAS.

The Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS) project continues to be refined and improved. Participation by member and non-member institutions remains strong. Following the close of the 2014-2015 HEADS Survey, the resultant Data Summaries were published in April 2015. Additional capabilities and services are added as time and financial resources permit. Minor adjustments were made to the

Data Survey tool prior to the November 2014 launch. Associated changes were also made to the 2015 Data Summaries. Such modifications are intended to clarify the submission process, ensuring the collection of accurate and helpful data. Comparative data in the form of Special Reports are a feature of the HEADS system and can be valuable resources for administrators. The 2014-2015 data submission process closed on January 31, 2015. The current year's Data Summaries and access to Special Reports are now available. NASD welcomes thoughts and feedback regarding the HEADS project.

The NASD Annual Meeting provides various opportunities for the discussion and dissemination of current information surrounding dance study, higher education, administration, and other related fields. A large number of individuals participate in the Annual Meeting program each year, producing sessions that provide helpful and thought-provoking ideas. The 2015 Annual Meeting will address issues such as developing and articulating student competencies, essential aspects of the student experience, student recruitment and retention, envisioning the faculty of tomorrow, the "care and feeding" of the dance administrator, and collaboration between professional training schools and colleges and universities. NASD will also provide opportunities for discussion of the topics on the NASD program, and those of interest to attendees. Member roundtables will be held, as will several informational sessions for individuals guiding their institutions through the accreditation/reaccreditation process, and for new visiting evaluators and those slated to conduct evaluative visits. Informative sessions addressing NASD annual reporting requirements, administrative resources, and federal issues for dance administrators will also be offered.

NASD will continue its long-standing tradition of offering a Pre-Meeting Workshop for New Dance Administrators. This workshop is well attended each year, and highly recommended by those who have participated. In response to feedback offered by past attendees at Annual Meetings, NASD has added a Pre-Meeting Workshop for Seasoned Dance Administrators. This workshop will provide registrants the opportunity to discuss in detail those current and salient issues faced by today's dance administrators. The Association is pleased to welcome each registrant and grateful to all those who developed specific agenda material for the Pre-Meeting Workshops and Annual Meeting, as well as those who serve as moderators and recorders.

In June of 2015, the U.S. Secretary of Education renewed the recognition of NASD. This recognition, originally received in 1983, enables free-standing accredited institutional members of NASD to designate NASD as their gatekeeper for the purpose of participation in federal financial aid programs. This action was the culmination of several years of work, which included the preparation of materials that successfully addressed current law and regulation, as well as efforts by the membership to review and amend *Handbook* language to ensure ongoing attention to federal requirements. NASD offers appreciation to the membership for its participation in the *Handbook* review and amendment process in this regard.

Policy

The Association continues to follow and monitor carefully various federal and state initiatives and issues.

In June of 2014, guidelines pertaining to K-12 arts education, a sequel to the National Voluntary Arts Standards project completed in 1994, were released. In any discussion regarding these guidelines, it is recommended that a careful and thorough review of the guidelines be followed by cautious consideration and steadfast resolve on the part of educators to ensure that arts study remains focused on the discipline and the development of student competencies and skills.

The education community anticipates the pending reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) and Higher Education (HEA) Acts in the coming months. These Acts govern the administration of federal student aid programs. Both Acts were first authorized in 1965. The ESEA was last reauthorized on January 8, 2002 and scheduled for reauthorization in 2007. The HEA was last

reauthorized on August 14, 2008 and scheduled for reauthorization in 2013. Both Acts have expired and are now overdue. Ongoing discord among policymakers, and past difficulties in reaching consensus and therefore conclusion, have delayed reauthorization. As the 114th Congress began its work in January of 2015, members moved swiftly to open conversation, requesting and collecting feedback regarding the laws and their application, and regulations and their interpretation. It remains to be seen how quickly the reauthorization of each will progress. NASD continues to be attentive to issues such as gainful employment, state authorization, testing and its use in the evaluation of teachers, federal overreach, and varying interpretations of regulation. NASD remains committed to and supportive of institutional efforts that enhance and advance our systems of education—efforts that promote not only the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also ensure breadth and depth of offerings and opportunities that promote and spur creativity and innovation. Protecting and maintaining institutional autonomy and freedoms vital to the success of our educational systems remain paramount.

NASD currently publishes advisories, which describe regulations associated with the 2008 law. These may be found within the Publications section of the website and are titled *NASD Advisories on Federal Issues*.

Many policy challenges exist on local, national, and international levels; many exist beyond the horizon but, in time, will come into plain view. Unceasing efforts seem to exist that work to replace current systems, which are based on trust of expert knowledge and experience, and independence of institutions regarding academic matters, with centralized systems focused predominantly on methodologies, techniques, collection of copious amounts of information, and counting. NASD will continue to monitor ongoing events, actively participate in the conversations that address such issues, assist to provide detailed and thorough information, and keep the membership informed as issues and projects progress.

In addition to accreditation policy mentioned above, the Association remains concerned about the nature of discord, which at times does not seem to be guided by an embrace or understanding of issues related to the well-being of all, but rather favors the desires or whims of the few most vocal; the preponderance of data collection and its ability to inform, and the associated issues of privacy and confidentiality; the pace of change enabled by technological advances and the time tax this pace brings to bear on administrators; a growing disparity in educational opportunity at the K–12 level; intellectual property; and tax policy. Many contextual issues that affect NASD schools grow out of large social forces that can be understood but not influenced significantly. Economic cycles and downturns have a profound effect, but no single person or entity controls them. NASD continues to monitor and join with others in addressing policy approaches regarding deductions for charitable contributions on federal income tax returns. Increasing personal philanthropy is a critically important element in future support for education and the arts, particularly in these fluctuating economic times. NASD continues to monitor with concern proposals that would bring increased federal involvement in the activities of and control over nonprofit organizations and philanthropies.

National Office

The NASD National Office is located in Reston, one of the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., and the current terminus of Metro's new Silver Line. The office is about eight miles east of Dulles International Airport, and a little over twenty miles from downtown Washington. We are delighted to welcome visitors to the National Office. Should your travels bring you to the area, please feel free to schedule an appointment with a staff member, or merely stop by for a visit.

The primary purpose of the National Office is to operate the Association under rules and policies established by the membership, the Board of Directors, and the Commission on Accreditation. Its strength rests in its peer governance operations and its peer review efforts. The work of the Association

is carried out by many volunteers—elected officials, evaluators, meeting participants—all willing to donate their valuable time and expertise, all holding and exhibiting unwavering commitment to the field. Although the availability of each member’s time has become ever more precious, the volunteerism in NASD is robust and continues to grow—a testament to the extraordinary spirit and dedication of its members. The work of our visiting evaluators and Commissioners is an exemplary expression of commitment to the field and faith in the future.

This outstanding corps of volunteers is joined by a dedicated and capable National Office staff—Anne Curley, Kyle Dobbeck, Paul Florek, Nora Hamme, Julia Harbo, Jenny R. Kuhlmann, Tracy L. Maraney, Stacy A. McMahon, Erin Moscony, Lisa A. Ostrich, Ben Thompson, and Sarah Yount. As the number of accredited institutional members has grown, so has the work of the staff and the services to NASD over the years. Staff is focused on carrying out the daily work of the Association, developing new and refining old systems, assisting the burgeoning number of institutions seeking accreditation for the first time, and consulting with those seeking renewal of Membership. The staff is diligent in its efforts to assist and serve the institutions, and to carry out the responsibilities of NASD effectively.

As a staff, we are able to see on a daily basis the great foundational strength of NASD. Fundamental to this foundation is wisdom about the need to remain informed, communicate, and work together to build dance in higher education as a whole, as well as in each member and applicant institution. NASD has realized great success in maintaining its focus on issues of importance to institutions and the field, and in working to address these issues. It promotes collegial connections and centers its work on concepts, conditions, and resources necessary for competence and creativity. This foundation, now strongly in place, will serve NASD well as it faces changing and challenging times ahead.

The staff joins me in expressing appreciation for the support, cooperation, assistance, and kindness extended by the NASD membership. It is an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to serve NASD, its member institutions, and constituencies. We hope you will always feel free to contact the staff whenever you think we may provide assistance. We look forward to continuing our efforts together.

Please accept our heartfelt appreciation and best wishes as you continue your work throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen P. Moynahan
Executive Director