

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF DANCE

37th Annual Meeting

September 14 – 16, 2017

Report of the Executive Director

The 2017-2018 academic year marks NASD's 37th 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 reviewing 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.

In August of 2015, NASD announced its intention to begin a multi-year comprehensive review of its standards. This process, now underway, is intended to focus on the following groups of standards currently found in the NASD *Handbook*: Graduate Programs, Undergraduate Programs, Non-Degree-Granting Programs, Two-Year Programs, applicable Appendices, and Purposes and Operations. NASD began this review in the fall of 2015 by opening consideration of its graduate standards; the review of undergraduate standards began in the fall of 2016. Continuing its multiyear review of accreditation standards, in August of 2017, NASD began a review of standards for non-degree-granting programs. Mailings, which included the text under review and instructions regarding the submission of comments, were distributed to accredited institutional members including administrators, faculty, staff and students; non- and potential member institutions; the higher education community including regional, specialized, and national accreditors; related organizations and associations; and the general public. Although particular focus is devoted to the non-degree-granting standards at this time, the standards as a whole remain open for comment. This is particularly important, as there are relationships between and among standards. Consideration of these relationships will be included in review conversations, and used to inform ongoing and later phases of the comprehensive review process.

Subsequent to the comment period, NASD will hold an Open Hearing during its 37th Annual Meeting in Tucson. Feedback collected during the open comment period, as well as that collected during the Open Hearing, will be reviewed by the National Office staff, and considered by the appropriate bodies within NASD. Individuals should feel free to contact the office of the Executive Director at any time if views are held that would assist the Association in this review process and its ongoing work.

An amended *Handbook* typically is released annually just after each Annual Meeting. The 2017-2018 NASD *Handbook* is expected later this fall. Handbooks released just after Annual Meetings include any standards changes approved by the membership, Board of Directors, and/or Commission as appropriate during the most recent meeting, as well as any amendments approved between Annual Meetings. Official notices regarding the proposed revisions to the *Handbook* were disseminated on July 12, 2017 and August 22, 2017. Following these two open and public official comment periods, the proposed revisions are slated for votes by the appropriate bodies 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 supports creativity, enables innovation, and allows 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 approaches to NASD reviews that are thorough, efficient, and suitably dovetailed 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 Jory Hancock and Vice President Martha Curtis are the dance Trustees of the Council, and represented NASD during CAAA meetings held in January 2017. 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 16 institutions accredited by ACCPAS. This undertaking is valuable in that it assists to connect K–12 and higher education efforts. Renee Griswold 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 information gathering process facilitated by the 2016-2017 HEADS Data Survey on January 31, 2017, the resultant Data Summaries were published in April 2017. Additional capabilities and services are added as time and financial resources permit. Periodically, minor adjustments to the Data Survey are made that are intended to clarify the submission process, thus ensuring the collection of accurate and helpful data. Data Survey changes typically are followed by associated changes to the Data Summaries. Comparative data in the form of Special Reports are a feature of the HEADS system and can be valuable resources for administrators. These Special Reports and their possible uses will be discussed during an Annual Meeting session and can be discussed at any time with staff in the National Office. 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 2017 Annual Meeting will address issues such as preparing students for the dance careers of today and tomorrow, and the role an established culture plays in the dance program's vision. Forums focusing on topics such as the art of leadership; Title IX, an amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965; equipping students to engage with a multitude of communities; and varying approaches to the technical training of dancers will be offered. Edward Villella will offer keynote remarks, addressing the importance of passing on the art form. The meeting will also provide opportunities for discussion of the topics on the NASD program, and those of interest to attendees. Forums will be held, as will several informational sessions for individuals guiding their institutions through the accreditation/reaccreditation process. Training opportunities will be offered for potential and experienced visiting evaluators. 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 the Pre-Meeting Workshop for New Dance Administrators. This workshop provides a wealth of information and opportunities for consideration of issues and ideas. It is highly recommended for those in their early years of administration. Additionally, NASD will offer the Pre-Meeting Workshop for Seasoned Dance Administrators. This workshop will provide registrants the opportunity to discuss in detail current and salient issues faced by today's experienced 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.

Policy

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

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first authorized in 1965 as part of the "War on Poverty" legislation introduced by Lyndon Johnson in 1964, was reauthorized and signed into law on December 10, 2015 through the passing of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This new law, which took effect on October 1, 2016, rewrites ESEA and replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) that expired in 2007. The law is intended to return decision-making authority and control to states and school districts. Of particular note is the inclusion of the arts in the definition of a "well-rounded education." Such a statement is intended to ensure that arts education programs and teachers are eligible to receive federal funds. As is typically the case after the passing of new legislation, the Department of Education held negotiated rulemaking sessions in March and April of 2016 for the purpose of writing regulation intended to clarify several provisions of the law. Following these sessions, draft regulations were released for comment regarding a variety of topics including accountability and data reporting, assessment, and the classification of funds to "supplement" or "supplant" existing monies. Final regulations published by the Department of Education regarding assessment (December 2016) are currently on hold due to federal action. Proposed regulations regarding the issue of "supplement" versus "supplant" were withdrawn by the Department of Education in early January of 2017. Regulations regarding accountability, state plans and reporting, and teacher preparation were subsequently repealed by action through the *Congressional Review Act* on March 27, 2017.

Although reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) is anticipated, there is no timeline in place or suggested at this time. This Act was last reauthorized in August of 2008 and expired on December 31, 2013. Issues of concern include initiatives pertaining to gainful employment, state authorization, teacher preparation, and misrepresentation. Joining this list are issues such as access, cost and completion, new pathways for collegiate study, student achievement, institutional responsibility, borrower defense to repayment, and institutional obligations under Title IX. 2016 culminated in an unprecedented increase in

regulatory activity and excessive federal overreach as exemplified by the Department of Education's initiative on transparency released on November 5, 2015. This initiative includes executive actions and suggested legislative reform proposals (such as repealing the statutory prohibition on the Department's ability to set and enforce expectations regarding student achievement standards), which provide opportunities to encroach upon the autonomy and freedoms of institutions. Other concerns on the federal level included the desire and push from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to review postsecondary institutions, the Department of Labor's published overtime rule, which was blocked in November of 2016 by a preliminary injunction, and the National Labor Relations Board ruling allowing for unionization of graduate students providing services at private institutions.

In November and December of 2016, the Department of Education released final regulations pertaining to state authorization, teacher preparation, and borrower defense to repayment. However, early in 2017 these regulations were subsequently placed on hold by federal action. On February 24, 2017, the current administration released an executive order titled, "Enforcing the Regulatory Reform Agenda." This order required the Department of Education to convene a task force charged with the responsibility of identifying burdensome Department regulation and guidance and suggesting action as appropriate. In May of 2017, the Regulatory Reform Task Force published a progress report which identified at least 150 rules slated for additional consideration and action. The Task Force specifically identified borrower defense to repayment and gainful employment as regulations that required immediate attention. On June 16, 2017, the Department of Education published a final rule implementing an indefinite delay of the effective date of the borrower defense to repayment regulations, and the establishment of a negotiated rulemaking committee to review and revise these regulations. In June and July of 2017, the Department of Education took a variety of actions pertaining to currently in force gainful employment regulations including: the establishment of a negotiated rulemaking committee to review and revise the regulations; the extension of the deadline from July 1, 2017 to July 1, 2018 for institutions needing to comply with aspects of the regulation; and the announcement of a new comment period and plan to rewrite the regulations.

There is no doubt that the federal landscape associated with higher education has changed dramatically during the last eight months. Members and colleagues should continue to remain abreast of unfolding activities, study federal writings, and offer feedback pertaining to federal requests and proposed regulation. Concerted effort is needed to ensure that neither law nor the regulation that follows restricts the academy from designing and implementing effective programs of study. Protecting and maintaining institutional autonomy and freedoms vital to the success of our educational system as well as our pursuits of creative and innovative undertakings remains paramount.

NASD currently publishes advisories, which describe regulations associated with the current 2008 authorization of the Higher Education Act. These may be found within the Publications section of the website and are titled *NASD Advisories on Federal Issues*. Review is highly recommended.

In addition to accreditation policy mentioned above, the Association remains concerned about implications of tax policy, intellectual property rights, the preponderance of data collection and associated issues of privacy and confidentiality, the disparity in educational opportunity at the K-12 level, and the pace of cultural climate changes enabled by technological advances and their impact. Many contextual issues that affect NASD institutions 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 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. As well, NASD keeps a watchful eye on proposals that would bring increased federal involvement in the activities of and control over non-profit organizations and philanthropies.

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.

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 Silver Line. The office is about eight miles east of Dulles International Airport, and approximately 20 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—Kyle Dobbeck, Erin Fiorelli, Paul Florek, Nora Hamme, Julia Harbo, Linda Kiemel, Jenny R. Kuhlmann, Tracy L. Maraney, Stacy A. McMahon, Lisa A. Ostrich, Ben Thompson, and Sarah Yount. To support the work of accredited institutional members, the work of the staff and the services to NASD over the years have grown. Staff is focused on carrying out the daily work of the Association, developing new and refining old systems, assisting 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