

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC
Annual Meeting 2014

Report of the President

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It is a great pleasure to see you all again as we come together to observe the 90th anniversary of our Association. I mean “association” in both senses – with a capital A, signifying the formal group known as NASM, and with a small a, meaning our interconnections, our *associating* with and among ourselves, a community of music executives sharing perspectives both common and diverse, and trying to address *problems* both common and diverse.

In addition to giving us the opportunity to talk about mutual concerns, these annual meetings provide an occasion to hold a mirror up to ourselves as well as to our profession.

Today I would like to share with you some thoughts about the meaning of our association (with a small a) and about our responsibilities to each other. Those responsibilities are not unique to our association. Indeed, they are an essential part of academic life. I would like us to think about citizenship – within our institutions, and especially within our Association (capital A).

Years ago, when I was getting started in this profession, one of my mentors was Gordon Gee, who at that time was the President of the University of Colorado. I suspect many of you know him. He has had 7 university presidencies in his remarkable career, and has been a unique force in higher education. He once pointed out something that has impressed me deeply over the years. The award of tenure, he said, is the beginning of academic citizenship, not the end. The *beginning of academic citizenship*. In return for recognition within the academy and security of employment, the faculty member invests in the institution, and fulfills responsibility to the institution, by participating actively in its discourse, in its business, in advancing the mission of the college or university. In short, she becomes a *full citizen* of the institution.

What does it mean to be an academic citizen?

First, it means being an active participant in the academic life of the university, both the music unit and the university at large.

It means having the 40,000-foot view, putting aside one’s own narrow interests. It means being aware of, and attentive to, the needs of the *entire* music unit, not merely one’s own department, and to the needs and aspirations of the entire university and intellectual community. And we do that by practicing the first rule of diplomacy, which is to put oneself in the other person’s place, to see the other person’s viewpoint. Let’s not overlook how difficult this can be. To use a cliché, it means “rising above the occasion,” and *that* means overcoming self-interest. Self-interest is deeply ingrained in all of us, and overcoming it goes against human nature. So we may not *think* we’re asking much of our faculty members in assuming academic citizenship, but in fact we’re asking a lot. And we are right to do so, for to the degree that they can succeed in this, in overcoming self-interest, our music units will be better, and our institutions will be stronger.

There's another dimension to the 40,000-foot view, one that we music executives must bear in mind every day. That dimension is time. Not only must we be aware of the larger interests of the university beyond the music unit, but we must always have our eyes on the future. And by future, I don't mean just getting through next week's faculty meeting, or meeting this year's budget, but on imagining and shaping the kind of music unit we want to have ten, twenty, and forty years from now. For the past several years, you have heard this association encouraging us all to consider the skills our students will need when they are at the midpoint of their careers, twenty or thirty years from now. That's what we really mean about the future – the long-distance horizon. This is an awareness that it's nice for our faculty members to have, though perhaps it's not essential for them. It *is* essential for us, who have been chosen to lead the music unit into that future.

There is another obligation of academic citizenship, one that is formally recognized and required at an increasing number of our institutions. It means serving as a mentor to junior faculty members, introducing them not only to what it takes to get tenure, but also to the world of the university generally, and to academic life. This is not merely acclimating somebody to the day-to-day routines of college life. If done well, mentorship realizes and achieves the lofty goals implicit in that word "mentor." We help our faculty members prepare and develop their own futures, their places within the profession at large, seeing and then seeking their place in the professional universe. This is not merely a laudable goal – no, it's a serious obligation we have to help create a better future. Only in recent years has higher education begun to take this seriously and to implement mentorship in a systematic way. But mentors have always been with us, formally and informally. I'm sure all of us can think of individuals who may have changed the course of our careers, sometimes by prolonged interaction with them, sometimes by a chance word or phrase. Whatever the case, helping young faculty members is one way we help shape the future, and we should never underestimate its importance.

So those are our aspirations for the academic citizenship of our faculty members – participating in the academic and strategic life of the institution, keeping the larger view in mind, keeping our eyes on the distant horizon, and helping to create that future by mentoring our colleagues who are just entering the profession. If your institution is like mine, we seldom achieve those aspirations in full. But that does not taint them as aspirations, nor should we give up on them. They are still noble goals, and we should continue aspiring and working toward them.

I believe there is a direct analogy with institutional membership within NASM. We often talk of what it means to be in NASM, and we encourage active participation. And as your presence here and at our various sessions indicates, we're succeeding – you *are* participating, and helping to direct the future of our profession. This is due largely to the mutual respect we all hold for each other, and to the collegiality that we as an association have inculcated and nurtured for nine decades.

Still, it is worthwhile to look more specifically at what we mean by association membership. What we really mean is association *citizenship* – what it means to be a *citizen* within NASM, and what that citizenship entails. We are all members, but we all need to be *citizens*, as well.

For me, the analogies with faculty academic citizenship are quite direct.

First, to be a citizen within NASM means being engaged in the *full range* of NASM activities. It means attending the annual meeting, reading and commenting upon changes in the Standards and By-laws, helping to welcome new institutional members, learning from presentations at the annual meeting, and applying what we learn at our own institutions.

Those are all standard activities. Indeed, most of us take them for granted, and I think we do this quite well. But true citizenship goes deeper, implying a kind of obligation. Citizenship is more comprehensive,

more global in its reach. Like academic citizenship, it requires certain things of us as individuals – and, in this case, as institutions, and as the representatives of our institutions, and – even more importantly – as citizens within the art and profession of music.

Citizenship involves our joint commitment to the art of music in its many guises – music in higher education, music in P-12 education, and the role of art music in our society. It means recognizing *and understanding the value of* musical roles and programs far beyond what our own individual institutions may have. It means recognizing and *valuing* the diversity within our Association – the *many* kinds of programs under the NASM umbrella, not merely the programs your institution or my institution may have. Citizenship recognizes our *mutual obligation* to promote excellence in music, wherever we as individual institutions may be on the spectrum. Now, excellence is defined in many ways. The range of our collective musical activities is enormous. Last year I talked about our great kaleidoscope of musical activity, every part complementing and enriching every other part in the vast mosaic of musical education. Each of us is proud of our place and role in this mosaic, as we should be. But at the same time – and this is an essential obligation of citizenship – we realize the value of the *other* parts of this mosaic, and we learn from them. We realize our own institution is only one part of that mosaic.

Given this diversity, no institution or set of institutions has a monopoly on excellence. NASM is a collective community of musicians dedicated not only to achieving excellence in all areas of music, but also to promoting and nurturing the role of music in our society. *That* is our shared purpose. It's a huge umbrella, and there is room under it for all of us. NASM's strength is our *citizenry* – our community of musicians, and the diversity within our Association. Just as our nation benefits richly from its ethnic and demographic diversity, so do we benefit from our kaleidoscopic array of programs, interests, and specialties.

The word “community” is essential to this notion of Association citizenship. Just as individual faculty members participating in the academic life of their institution must see beyond – and reach beyond – the interests of their own departments, so must we, as institutions within NASM, have the 40,000-foot view – the totality of music in education, and in society. *Your* institution and *my* institution may specialize in a given area, but as Association citizens we agree to see and to value it *all*, and to recognize, respect, and embrace the differing roles and missions we all have. Collectively, when we do this, we practice that first rule of diplomacy – putting ourselves in the shoes of somebody else. That's essential to Association citizenship.

Why am I emphasizing citizenship and diversity and mutual respect? Because it is often all too easy to lose the bigger picture. *Academic* citizenship requires keeping our eyes on the horizon, getting the bigger picture of a music unit's needs and the still wider picture of an institution's needs. Seeing the world through our own narrow focus is human nature, it's the default position, and it's something we can and should and must try to overcome.

It's the same in our Association. Some institutions, some of us, sensing the importance of our own programs and quality, may be tempted to assume that *our* own definition of excellence is sufficient unto the profession. We may even lose interest in areas of the profession, and in the activities of this Association, that do not apply directly to us. When that happens, we lose the sense of diversity that we all collectively represent, and whether we know it or not, we put on blinders, and we retreat to that default position of seeing the world through our own narrow focus.

Last year, I said that *taken together in the aggregate, we – all of us in this room – are greater than the sum of our parts*. That is true now more than ever. That is why it is essential that we all recognize and understand and value the richness of the mosaic of which we are a part. We all have something to contribute *to each other*. We shouldn't be asking, “What's in it for me?” Rather, each of us – each of our

institutions – is a citizen in the society of our Association, with a shared purpose. If we fail to recognize that, and if we see only our own place on the continuum, without reference to our fellow citizens and what our fellow citizens contribute to our mosaic, then we limit ourselves and the potential of our Association. So let us recognize and celebrate our diversity, our inter-connectedness, and the strength of our common bonds. And let us not only *value* each other's contributions and strengths, but also share each other's problems and concerns. Issues that affect some of our institutions affect us all – perhaps not immediately or directly, but ultimately we all have a vital interest in everything that affects the education of musicians at all levels. Maintaining our inter-connectedness is part of our individual and institutional responsibility of citizenship.

Now, our Association, in turn – our elected officers, your representatives – have an obligation to support the needs and concerns of all our citizens. We, your representatives, have an obligation to support your institutional work. This can take many forms.

Most prominently, NASM has traditionally tried in these annual meetings to address the needs and interests of a broad cross-section of our member institutions. We have particularly tried to focus on problems and issues that we all – or at least a majority of us – struggle with.

We have also tried to help institutions find their *own* ways toward creating their *own* destinies and futures. We strenuously avoid being prescriptive, suggesting instead that it is incumbent on each institution to fashion its curricula and programs according to its own constituency and especially according to its own view of what the future should be. That's part of having our eyes on the horizon – to help each institution decide what its own horizon is.

But sometimes, immersed as we are in the work of our own institutions and immediate surroundings, it's difficult for us to have a sense of what future possibilities may exist. We need examples – case studies – to help stir our own imaginations and fuel our own dreams. Those of us who help design each year's annual meeting recognize this, and three years ago we started giving case studies of curricular change – in music history, music theory, and other areas. We even gave examples of the project-based curricula that Claire Chase told us about yesterday. And we emphasized, then and now, that we were *not* suggesting adoption of the methods and examples that we were giving. Rather, we were simply trying to give a nudge to the imaginations and dreams of *all* our member institutions to help you fashion the best programs to meet your needs and aspirations. These case studies were intended as the intellectual equivalent of seed funding, of venture capital.

As part of showing what is happening and what *can* happen, we have also presented actual music at several of these meetings, to suggest the kinds of innovative activities and outreach our own students – tomorrow's artists – might undertake. And so in past years we presented the Ying Quartet and Eighth Blackbird, and this year we have been inspired by the artistry and creative energy of Claire Chase. Next year, when we meet in St. Louis, the wonderful conductor David Robertson has already agreed to be our keynote speaker, and we hope also to present another music group, one that has expanded boundaries while winning new audiences for the music being composed today. As with our curricular case studies, we present these to share with *all* of our Association citizens – all of us in this room – some of the best that is happening today. And, more importantly, to show what *can* happen. That's really the point.

Some of these activities and programs are already happening now – within our Association's institutions. You, our institutional citizens, are achieving great things – innovation in curriculum, in technology, and in the ways we serve music and in the ways music serves society. Each year NASM solicits program suggestions, and we get many, many thoughtful responses. As you consider future annual meetings, please think of important efforts that should be brought to the attention of all of us. Wonderful innovation is occurring throughout our membership – in public and private universities, and in departments, colleges,

and conservatories small and large. We are a large association, and it simply is not possible for the national office and the Executive Committee to know all the important efforts that are taking place.

In the beginning of our association 90 years ago, several leading universities, schools, and conservatories helped pave the way for units that were just being formed. That is an important part of our tradition, and it continues. Many of you are doing important things. You know who you are. Please share those with us. NASM is not merely an accreditation agency – it should and must be a marketplace of ideas.

We will continue, in our annual meetings, to try addressing common problems that we all face. But we will *also* try to serve our citizens' needs – your needs – by giving glimpses into the future, and helping us all try to create a better future by imagining it first and then finding ways to move toward it.

That is part of our shared bond – part of Association citizenship. As citizens, we all embrace our diversity and the many purposes and programs under our common umbrella. But we also try to support each other in solving problems and finding our way toward a brighter future. It's too easy to be distracted by the pebbles or speed-bumps in our path, and we often end up concentrating on those. Instead, let us keep our eyes on the horizon. When we do that, we lift our eyes, we lift our step, and we go forward with greater confidence. Will there be problems? Yes, of course, as there always have been. But it is only when we let those problems obscure the future that is beyond them that we allow those problems to eclipse our vision and to impede our progress. As citizens together, working together, we will find and secure our artistic future. That is our shared purpose, and that is this Association's commitment to you.