

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC
Annual Meeting 2016

Report of the President

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It is a great honor to serve as president of the National Association of Schools of Music, and I thank you for this opportunity to offer some remarks.

Like many others in this room, I didn't aspire to academic leadership. I was perfectly happy as a faculty member when I was invited to serve as department chair for a year. With some trepidation, I agreed to take on this responsibility, thinking it would be good experience. As it turned out, I actually enjoyed the year and one thing led to another, and I found myself continuing in that role. The very next year our department was writing our NASM Self-Study and hosting a visiting team – a story that is familiar to many in this room. To all who are in that situation of “taking your turn” or “filling in,” I wish you a productive and satisfying term as music administrator.

For me, that interim year became 25. Little did I know at that time, that I would become a visiting evaluator myself and eventually would chair the NASM Commission on Accreditation. As I was reflecting on this path, I was reminded of several important people in my life – those mentors and role models who have supported and encouraged me along the way. That list includes individuals in this room, but one of the most important influences in my life was my mother. She was president of nearly everything in our small town, including president of the local school board. She worked hard to support teachers and to ensure that our school had a very good music program – and we did. Her example of service to those organizations and causes that she believed in resonates with me today. She was still volunteering into her 90's, when she was recognized with the “Birder of the Year” award for being the oldest active volunteer in the Wisconsin eastern bluebird restoration project.

Volunteers make a huge difference in our world, and especially in the arts. Local arts councils, orchestra boards, professional associations – from small towns to the biggest metropolitan areas, volunteer leaders play a powerful role. I would like to spend a little time acknowledging and celebrating the role that volunteers play in NASM.

When you think of the work that NASM does on behalf of our over 650 member institutions – supported by a staff of only 14 individuals – it is quite amazing. And it is all the more amazing when you understand that our staff of 14 also supports the work of our three sister arts associations in theatre, art and design, and dance – each with similar programs to NASM's.

This work is made possible by the combined efforts of our professional staff, with support of our elected officials and with the generous voluntary participation of our members. We have 65 elected or appointed officials – the members of the Commission on Accreditation, members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and various appointed committees, all who serve in a voluntary capacity for NASM. I offer my deep appreciation to all who agree to have their names placed on the ballot – we are grateful for your willingness to serve. In addition to these elected positions, I would like to review the roles that each of us can play in advancing the work of NASM.

The purpose of the Association as articulated in its Constitution is:

- To advance the course of music in American life and especially in higher education.
- To establish and maintain threshold standards for the education of musicians, while encouraging both diversity and excellence.
- To provide a national forum for the discussion of issues related to these purposes.

NASM's purpose is accomplished through activities in four broad areas that I will review in my remarks: (1) professional development, (2) institutional research (HEADS), (3) public policy, and (4) accreditation. If you go to the NASM website, you will find a brief description of these four areas of work under "About NASM."

Professional Development

The first of these – professional development – is accomplished through our annual meetings, published books and reports, and information provided to leaders of music programs. We come together once a year for our annual meeting to conduct the business of the association, to elect officials, and to share ideas and learn from each other. About 650 individuals have registered for this meeting, and more than 125 individuals have volunteered to present and assist with sessions. We count on you for your expertise, ideas, participation, and willingness to engage in conversations each November. Valuable conversations can happen in planned sessions and pre-meeting workshops, but just as often in the hallways or over coffee with colleagues. Getting to know other music executives is one of the most valuable benefits of this association. I hope you will leave feeling energized and excited by the ideas shared with leaders from a wide variety of institutional types.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have spent hours preparing sessions for this meeting – we are grateful. As you may know if you have been attending NASM annual meetings for a while, we offer many interactive sessions, in hopes of offering opportunities for meaningful dialogue among attendees. Your participation is absolutely essential to the success of this meeting, and your ideas for future meetings are valued and gratefully received.

Policy Studies

Closely related to professional development for music executives is the work NASM does to analyze and publish information on issues in music, the arts, education, accreditation, and cultural development. The NASM website is filled with resources to assist you.

NASM is recognized by the federal government as a discipline specific accreditor, and our staff is involved in ongoing public policy analysis. NASM monitors the development of regulations and laws, and the staff represents us in various ways relative to public policy in higher education. You receive frequent updates about laws and regulations that may impact your institution – most recently a communication about gainful employment, overtime, and music licensing, among other issues. It is not unusual to hear about important issues impacting higher education from NASM, long before conversations have begun on our own campuses.

I encourage you to explore the newly revised NASM website. As you know, such major revisions take a lot of thought and time, and this was not just a cosmetic overhaul. I call your attention to the many resources available there, such as "Assessment and Policy Studies" – worthy of your time and review. We are delighted to offer a website that is much easier to navigate and that will offers new possibilities for professional development and information sharing.

Institutional Research

The third area of work, the Higher Education Arts Data Survey (HEADS), is a joint effort of the four arts partners – the National Association of Schools of Music, the National Association of Schools of Art and Design, the National Association of Schools of Theatre, and the National Association of Schools of Dance. The HEADS Project was established in 1982, and is designed to provide comprehensive data on the arts in higher education. As NASM members, we are responsible to complete the HEADS report each year. As you know, our submissions are due January 31. That data, compiled for 35 years, serves as a great resource for the profession. Thank you for the work you and your staff do to compile the data for these annual reports.

Accreditation

The fourth area of NASM's work (accreditation) is the association's main role and the place where volunteer efforts are most felt. You have heard the report from our Commissions on Accreditation so you know the dedicated service these 21 elected commissioners, plus our three public members, offer to the association. Peer review is at the heart of this endeavor. With approximately 650 member institutions, NASM supports 65-70 visits in any one year, and that work is accomplished through the efforts of 150-200 visiting evaluators who accept invitations to participate in these reviews. Thank you to all who participate in this process. If you are interested in being more involved, please express your interest to the national office.

The result of these efforts – as we engage in self-evaluation and peer review – is quality improvement and support for music study across the country. Our visiting evaluators and commission members see this most clearly as we witness the aspirations and advances made at our member institutions. While recognizing the many challenges we face, our work goes on, and over 100,000 music majors are served by the programs in our member institutions – public and private, large and small. And, of course, hundreds of communities benefit from the presence of accredited university and college music programs, with all the engagement activities, concerts, public service, and vitality that results from your activities. This is grass roots advocacy at its finest and most effective – “a quiet power,” as Karen Moynahan said in her remarks.

All of us have a role to play in advancing this work. As you know, we have begun a comprehensive review of undergraduate standards, and I encourage you to participate in this discussion with a view to the future. What are the threshold standards that will best serve students and the field of music in the 21st century. What should remain, and what might change? A second hearing about the standards is scheduled at 4:30 today, and we need the collective wisdom of all in this room to make wise decisions.

In summary, NASM fulfills its objectives to support and enhance the role of music in society through the work that we do in four key areas: professional development, public policy studies, institutional research, and accreditation. Thank you to all who volunteer your time to advance this work.

In closing, I would like to quote from Sam Hope's Keynote Address at our 2013 Annual Meeting. As you know, Sam was NASM's executive director for 38 years, and he was certainly a mentor to me and, I am sure, for many of you.

Whatever we face, the work of music is our center. It remains our way through, our transcending instrumentality, our guide, our anchor, our greatest positive, our bridge to the world of spirit and light ... The work of music is a gift that we have received, and it produces the gift of music that we give to others. It is in receiving and giving these gifts that we reach the deepest regions of the human spirit, what we often call the “power of music.”

I am so grateful to have been given the gift of music and to have opportunities to give this gift to others. I have had the pleasure of serving in various roles for NASM for almost 20 years – and I am grateful and honored. I am also deeply appreciative to this association for its progressiveness in offering opportunities for women.

Thank you for attending the 2016 meeting, for all that you do to support the work of NASM, and for your leadership to advance music in our communities and the world. We are here because we believe in this professional work, we believe in the power of education and the important role of music to change lives and impact our world – and we do this work together in the spirit of cooperation and respect.

Best wishes for a successful year and thank you for your ideas about how, together, we support the work of music and NASM.