



NATIONAL COLLEGE TESTING ASSOCIATION 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

NCTA leadership for the 2014 year included two presidents: 2012-2014 president Steve Saladin with the University of Idaho completed his term at the conclusion of the NCTA 2014 Denver conference and passed the gavel to 2014-2016 president Francesca Taylor with the University of West Georgia. Dr. Saladin, instrumental in the creation of a strategic planning initiative to carry NCTA's vision to 2020, presided over NCTA's first ever strategic planning meeting held in late January and has summarized the process in the "Strategic Planning" section below; it represents the high point of NCTA's year since its focus was to provide a vision for the association which would carry us into the next six years. Numerous other initiatives, both new and continuing, are also included in this document under the division in which they reside. Questions and/or concerns about the content of this annual report should be directed to Francesca Taylor, current NCTA president, by email (ftaylor@westga.edu) or by phone (678-839-6435).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

NCTA 2020: Focusing on Our Future

As our organization continues to grow in both size and scope, the leadership recognized a need to approach decisions in a more strategic manner. As a result, the first ever NCTA strategic planning meeting was held in early 2014 after several months of preliminary work. With the aid of leadership consultant Ray Wells of Wellbeing Systems, the Governing Council, eight non-board collegiate members, and two corporate members held an intensive three-day summit entitled "NCTA 2020: Focusing on our Future." Using an Appreciative Inquiry approach, this group developed a shared vision for the future of NCTA. The process began by identifying the core strengths of the organization and the trends that are impacting the future of the field of testing. Working in small groups, the participants used this information to develop and design a number of dreams for what the organization might be in 2020. After they shared these dreams, four major areas of focus were identified that would facilitate making NCTA the "go to" organization in the field of testing. This is the NCTA 2020 Vision. Working groups self-identified and developed specific target goals within each area.

During the 2014 NCTA Annual Conference, President Steve Saladin shared this process with the membership and asked for member input. The culmination of this exciting and invigorating work was the launching of a number of initiatives designed to strategically shape NCTA into a larger, stronger, and more active professional organization. In support of the NCTA 2020 Vision, the Governing Council committed to the following strategic plan:

1. Reorganize the administrative functions of the organization in order to provide a continuity of service and facilitate forward movement for NCTA
 - a. realign the duties of the Governing Council away from day-to-day operations to focus on policy and program development
 - b. conduct a comparative analysis of administrative structure and staffing in similar professional organizations with the goal of hiring appropriate levels of administrative support staff to manage the day-to-day operations of the association
 - c. ensure adequate revenue streams to support operations, services, and future growth
 - d. develop a plan for the establishment of a permanent headquarters
 - e. create an advisory board comprised of leaders from within the testing industry
2. Increase and expand membership and services
 - a. cautiously explore the value and impact of expanding membership into the K-12 and international markets
 - b. explore the restructuring of membership categories to better reflect the role of each within NCTA
 - c. gather additional information on our members to facilitate planning and direct programs and services that meet the needs of the membership
3. Increase the credibility of NCTA in order to position the organization to play a role in policy decisions
 - a. align the NCTA Standards and Guidelines for inclusion in the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)
 - b. expand the current Test Center Certification program and explore the development of programs for the certification of individual testing professionals
 - c. prepare and publish whitepapers, pamphlets, and/or handbooks on a variety of testing industry practices such as test center management, best practices in testing procedures, etc.
 - d. prepare and publish policy/position papers as appropriate
 - e. develop a highly recognized brand and launch it through strategic marketing
4. Develop, enhance, and support partnerships with other professional organizations and corporate members of NCTA
 - a. identify other professional organizations for which partnerships represent added value for both sides and establish liaisons

- b. partner with other professional organizations to develop, augment, and/or disseminate relevant policies, procedures, and practices
- c. establish and maintain active lines of communication between corporate membership and the Governing Council
- d. increase presence at conferences with representatives, booths, flyers, etc.

As with any strategic plan, it is important that the leadership continue to revisit it on a regular basis to ensure that we are moving forward and to make any adjustments in light of changing circumstances. While it is the intent of the Governing Council to regularly work on and discuss initiatives associated with this plan, it will specifically devote a portion of each spring Council meeting to this purpose. In addition, the progress and work in this area will be reported to the membership as part of the President's address at the annual conference and as part of each annual report.

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Division, managed by the NCTA Secretary, encompasses the administrative areas of the organization, including Awards and Recognition, Volunteer Services, and Technology Services.

The highlight of the Administrative Division this year has been the Volunteer Services Program (VSP). It moved into high gear with the appointment of a coordinator. Based on requests from division heads who identify organizational needs, this program actively recruits volunteers and matches members to serve in positions on committees, ad hoc work groups, and new initiatives. This has been particularly helpful with the creation of the new Technology Services Committee, which will help with technological needs during the annual conference and also assist and advise other committees throughout the year with their technological concerns. VSP matched up more than 50 new volunteers with nine different committees this year.

The Awards and Recognition committee continued to assist the division heads in recognizing 109 members of various committees with the Service Recognition Awards at the annual conference in Denver. Professional Development Committee Co-Chairs Heidi Pettyjohn and Jim Wollack received the 2014 President's Award for making a significant contribution to the organization. The Service and Leadership Award in 2014 was given to Duane Goupell for his many years of service to NCTA, most recently as a member of the governing council and as chair of the Test Center Certification Committee.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference Division, under the leadership of two conference coordinators and with the support of a core group of volunteers and annual host committees, worked on four conferences in 2014.

The 2014 conference, held in Denver, was NCTA's first hybrid conference. There were 417 participants registered for the Denver conference and another 114 registrations for the one day virtual conference. The virtual audience was able to participate fully in a live stream of the

President's Welcome and State of the Association Session, followed by four conference sessions. The virtual audience numbered 259, bringing the grand total of 2014 conference participants to 676. Also for the Denver conference, conference financial assistance of up to \$1500 was offered to 6 first time conference attendees and 4 lead presenters for a conference session. A Resources Fair gave attendees the opportunity to chat informally with NCTA committee and group representatives and to hear more about the work and opportunities for engagement throughout the organization.

The 2015 Conference is scheduled at the TradeWinds Resort on St Pete Beach in Florida. The Florida State Association (FACTA) members who were in Denver provided wonderful information about their state and a lively "hype" for the first NCTA conference in Florida. A conference app will be introduced for the 2015 conference as well as some scheduling enhancements.

The conference planners continue to select cities that offer the membership diversity in terms of both location and conference experience. The 2016 conference will be an August event held in Seattle, and plans are underway. The city of Cincinnati impressed visitors on the summer site visit, and a contract was signed with the historic Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza for the September 2017 conference.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Division consists of communications-related groups including editing, the mailing list, news features, social networking, and the website.

The Editing Committee edits all printed and digital material for NCTA including conference-related materials, official documentation, website posts, and correspondence sent on behalf of the organization.

While the mailing list is active and largely self-governing, on occasion the mailing list moderator steps in to identify inappropriate content, remind participants of the decorum of the list, and answer procedural questions regarding how to participate or not on the mailing list. The mailing list moderator role will continue in 2015.

The Networking Committee has largely focused on building a social networking presence this year. The NCTA LinkedIn account has maintained a strong following with 236 members. Members in this group, made up of both governing council and organization members, have started 16 unique discussions. Twitter and Facebook are new additions to the Networking Committee. In the past year, the Facebook membership for the organization has grown to 91 members. The Facebook group works similarly to the LinkedIn account, providing a platform for any members to post. NCTA's Twitter account, on the other hand, is designed simply to distribute information to followers. NCTA has tweeted 550 times and amassed 143 followers. Follower accounts are made up of a variety of testing professionals, test centers, and vendors.

While the social media accounts are useful for networking in general, they proved particularly useful during the 2014 conference in Denver, Colorado. Facebook, for its photo album features,

was used to share pictures from the conference events and city. Twitter was used predominately for commenting on and starting dialogues about session content, including robust usage from virtual conference attendees.

In addition to these tools, the 2015 NCTA conference in St. Pete Beach, Florida, will include the inaugural use of a mobile conference application. After significant research into the options, Gather Digital has been selected as the application provider. The addition of a mobile conference application will help NCTA stay current with national organization conference trends and provide an enhanced experience for conference attendees. The application will also contribute to the organization's assessment of conference attendance and satisfaction, with built-in features for tracking data.

FINANCE

The annual conference continues to be a success with the 2014 Denver conference bringing in revenue of \$156,406.25 based on conference registrations, sponsorship, and other contributions; conference expenses totaled \$159,548.44 including \$15,590.87 for the virtual conference. Membership continues to be a solid source of revenue with \$114,323.75 received. Board expenses to conduct the business of the association this year amounted to \$55,992.31, and expenses for various initiatives by NCTA committees included \$22,950.67 for grants, \$2,194.47 for webinars, \$2,724.98 for test center certifications, \$11,583.82 for ten conference travel assistance grants for first time attendees and presenters, and \$5,103.75 for awards/service recognition. For a more complete review of the profit/loss statement for 2014, please refer to the 2014 NCTA Financial Report located under the Resources Tab/Annual Reports link on the NCTA website.

GRANTS

As part of the Finance Division, the annual grants program offers opportunities for professional development and strives to promote the development of resources for NCTA members, to encourage professional support activities, and to support the formation of state testing organizations among the members of NCTA. In 2014-2015, the grants program funded a total of eight applications with a total of \$23,536 distributed to applicants. This was up significantly from the 2013-2014 grant cycle when seven applications were funded for a total distribution of \$16,000. The 2014-2015 grant funds were used to support several projects including regional professional development conferences, staff training, and the creation of state organizations.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

The strength of any association lies within not only its leadership but also its membership. NCTA is fortunate that through 2014 it continued to maintain a strong membership with members spanning the United States, Canada, and several overseas countries. While most of NCTA's 2000+ members represent post-secondary institutions, there is also a strong contingent of members affiliated with testing companies and companies which provide test support. Membership categories were redefined in 2014 to further assist members make the most of their NCTA membership. At this time, there is not a dues increase anticipated for 2015. Membership

benefits include opportunities to be listed on the Consortium of College Testing Centers (CCTC), to network with other members, and to participate in the NCTA mailing list, a great forum for sharing best practices and seeking advice or information about testing-related topics.

OUTREACH

The Outreach Division consists of three subgroups: marketing, recruitment, and state and regional organizations. The Marketing Committee had a very successful year with increased sales of NCTA merchandise during the annual conference. During the Resources Fair at the annual conference, the committee distributed the CCTC promotional flyer and informational survey. Several new members and a new chairperson were selected in 2014. For 2015, the committee will focus on creating an NCTA brochure, offer a variety of marketing products for the membership, work closely with the State and Regional organizations to assist them with their marketing needs, continue to work with task forces launched to build NCTA credibility through rebranding, updating the website, and developing an enhanced social media presence.

The Recruitment Committee worked diligently to identify potential new members, starting with states that had a low number of NCTA members. The committee completed its work on the first tier of states in 2013 and focused on the second tier for 2014. Unfortunately, the results have not been as positive as hoped. One initiative planned is to identify non-NCTA schools, particularly two-year schools, in an effort to make them aware of NCTA's presence and the benefits it can provide to them.

The State and Regional Organizations (SRO) Committee implemented the SRO website in 2014, which is available via the 'Resources' tab on NCTA's main webpage. It includes the following content: Learn more about the SRO, SRO Meeting Dates and Conferences, SRO information pages, Helpful Resources, and more. For 2015, the Committee will concentrate on the following: identifying additional resources to support State and Regional Organizations, developing an NCTA State and Regional Organizations Affiliation Program, and identifying an SRO in every state.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCTA offers professional development opportunities that engage members through diverse methods. Its professional development programs are the NCTA E-Journal, the Test Center Certification Program, Special Interest Groups, and Webinars.

NCTA E-Journal: The *Journal of the National College Testing Association (JNCTA)* continued to solicit manuscripts that focus on the trends, practices, research, programs, policies, and activities related to examination development and administration. *JNCTA* hosted a table at the NCTA Resources Fair at the 2014 annual conference and had conversations with a number of members about the submission and review processes. As of the end of the year, *JNCTA* had received two manuscripts for consideration for its first issue. In preparing reviews, reviewers were asked to pay particular attention to the significance of the content to *JNCTA* readers, the manuscript's analytic rigor, the extent to which the paper satisfies its stated goals, and writing style. *JNCTA* hopes to be able to publish its first issue in 2015.

Test Center Certification: The Test Center Certification Committee was very active during 2014 conducting three open enrollment periods that allowed schools to begin the certification process; fifty three schools applied. During the year, thirty test centers were granted NCTA Test Center Certification bringing the total number of certified centers since the project began in 2010 to eighty two. Currently there are sixty three schools in various stages of the certification process. The Committee met every two to three weeks via conference calls, and the plan is to continue that schedule. During 2014, the committee continued work to put the entire certification process on the NCTA website. The committee also began working on test center recertification and will have that process available online as well. During the year, twenty nine NCTA volunteers worked on different aspects of the certification process. The committee intends to add six to ten new members in 2015. The next year will also see the original three schools certified in 2010 apply for recertification, a process required every five years.

Special Interest Groups: Special Interest Groups, or SIGS, are new to NCTA but very common to large professional organizations. Special Interest Groups (sometimes called "Knowledge Communities" or "Affinity Groups" in other organizations) are a great opportunity for professional organizations to provide for targeted development and greater depth of experience to its members by focusing on specific populations, topics, or experiences. As the membership of NCTA grows, members are becoming more diverse, and SIGS are a great opportunity to help members connect in meaningful ways. SIGS benefit the organization by

- allowing members to come together through common interests in ways that support the NCTA mission, vision, and goals
- providing members with access to information and resources on a specific subject matter
- creating leadership opportunities for more members by providing information and referral, organizing professional development opportunities, and networking around a particular topic.
- creating partnerships with other organizations

At the 2014 national conference in Denver, Colorado, the professional development division chairs presented two informational sessions about SIGS and received valuable and encouraging feedback from our members. NCTA plans to thoughtfully and strategically grow the number of SIGS available. All SIGS will include the following:

- a portion of the website dedicated to the SIG, including a Resources Page
- a separate electronic mailing list, which could be used for discussion questions or to disseminate information to the group
- opportunities for networking opportunities or round tables at NCTA national conferences
- support from the NCTA Governing Council to create meaningful partnerships with other organizations who share similar interests and needs

The first Special Interest Group is the Universal Access in Testing SIG, which will be launched in the early part of 2015. The UAT SIG will provide targeted professional development and resources related to ideas of non-standard or accommodated testing for students with disabilities, with a focus on creating accessible testing experiences for these students. The UAT SIG has a

sub-committee on best practices and a resources sub-committee that provides updated information to its members through a resources page and electronic mailing list.

Webinars: During the first half of 2014, the NCTA Webinar Committee provided its first “Webinar Series” around the topic of enhancing the usage of survey data. The Webinar Committee took a two-part approach to this topic providing the first webinar in more of an educational role and in the second providing real-life experiences of testing centers and the usage of survey data. The webinars are summarized below and are still available for viewing on the NCTA website; they can be found in the “webinar” link under the “resources” tab.

Part 1: Survey Construction and Practical Advice: The first of a two part presentation, this webinar introduces NCTA members to basic concepts of client feedback/customer satisfaction survey design and item construction. The webinar provides practical advice on how to identify what in your operation can and needs to be assessed, helps you to understand the types of survey items that are available to meet your needs, offers suggestions on method of delivery, data collection and survey frequency.

Part 2: Using Student/Customer Feedback to Tell Your Story: The second of two parts, this webinar complements the skills introduced in the first webinar by focusing on how to use student/client/customer feedback to improve your operations and tell your story. This webinar discusses how to use surveys to collect data on the student experience and use the information to inform and reinforce collaborative relationships, to show how a testing center positively impacts the student experience and supports student success, and to demonstrate how the testing center is aligned with institutional, divisional and departmental missions.

Partnerships: NCTA developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) to collaborate on the development of a document relating to best practices for test proctoring across all genres of testing. The drafting committee consists of equal representation across the two organizations and will be co-branded. As of the end of 2014, the committee had divided into subgroups corresponding to the different sections of the document and had completed detailed outlines. The writing of each section and the integration of these sections into a coherent, cohesive, and comprehensive document is scheduled for Spring 2015. The final document is expected to be ready in time for the 2015 NCTA conference.

CONCLUSION

It is always gratifying to close an annual report with a statement that acknowledges the stability of an association, and this annual report ends no differently. The Governing Council continues to work diligently to provide NCTA’s members with resources that enhance their professional standing, opportunities that enable continued growth, and collaborations with other associations that help to unite all of us who work with testing programs in any of the varied forms that may take. For a list of the current governing council members, see Appendix A.

APPENDIX A
Current Governing Council Members
as of December 31, 2014

OFFICERS

Francesca B. Taylor, University of West Georgia
2014-2016 NCTA President

Steve Saladin, University of Idaho
Past President

Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage (IL)
Treasurer

C. Criss Gilbert, University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse
Secretary

Cindy Sproehnle, Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science (OH)
Membership Chair

Kay Alford, Coastal Carolina University (SC)

Sally Frazee, Temple University (PA)

Duane Goupell, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh

Amystique Harris Church, Delaware State University

Susan Morgan (retired), Appalachian State University (NC)

Heidi Pettyjohn, University of Cincinnati (OH)

Tammy Roach, University of Louisville (KY)

Theresa Scott, Palm Beach State College

Mary Vaughn, Mississippi State University

Kristen Vickery, Anne Arundel Community College (MD)

Jim Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison