



October 2015

It is an honor to be your president at this time. As I gathered my thoughts on giving this update, I was struck by how solid and dependable an association NASPO has been for such a long time. We have a robust history and numerous past leaders who have seen us through good times and occasionally not so good times. Their dedication and passion for the profession have brought us to where we are today.

There's a cautionary quote from Benjamin Franklin stating a seemingly obvious, but oftentimes overlooked, reality: "When you're finished changing, you're finished." When we consider this statement in light of NASPO it confirms that while our status quo has always been strong, status quo is not enough.

Last year, leaders poised NASPO for increased success. And this year, we have picked up the momentum on key initiatives that are propelling NASPO into new territories which can be challenging, but is also energizing.

The Board of Directors tackled strategic planning last year, which is an exercise I assure you, none of us took lightly. Strategic goals aren't just flowery words to put on our website; they are the foundation of why we exist as a professional association. NASPO is here to provide Leadership, Excellence, Engagement, Professional Development, and Awareness and serves each of you, its members.

As a natural extension of the strategic planning process, the role of Board Champions was created. Each Board member serves as a champion of one of our strategic areas. They work very closely with staff to ensure we stay focused on the long term goal while addressing the day-to-day issues and streamlining decision making along the way.

I'd like to share some specific examples of our champions at work: Jim Butler (Governance and Oversight Champion) led the Governance Task Force in modernizing our bylaws.

This was a mature step for NASPO to undertake. Again, it's easy to be satisfied with status quo but we are cognizant of the dangers of complacency. Our desire is to enhance and protect NASPO's reputation as the state government procurement experts. The governance work Jim led this year ensures our internal house is in order and our foundational structure is aligned with our mission.

I also want to highlight the work of Bill Burns as our Stakeholder Relations Champion. NASPO's success is enhanced when shared and coordinated with our key stakeholders and allied organizations. NASPO has sought, developed, and nurtured mutually beneficial relationships with several key partners this year, including the National Governors Association, the National Association of State Chief Administrators, and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers.

With Bill's guidance, and the work of some of you who served in liaison roles, we have achieved much progress. Aligning with these like-minded associations gives NASPO a seat at the table, where discussions and decisions on crucial state governmental issues are taking place. As the leader in state government procurement, it is imperative that NASPO be a driver of these critical conversations.

Paul Mash serves as our Member Engagement Champion. He is spearheading the process of auditing NASPO's products, services, and tools which will bring to light which resources are highly used and effective and perhaps show us resources we should consider revising or sun-setting altogether in favor of spending our time, staff and volunteer energy, and money on those things which best serve our mission.

While Paul and staff have been working fervently behind the scenes, the first tangible action from this project is the recent Member Satisfaction Survey. NASPO is committed to serving all members and we recognize that different procurement staff have different educational and professional needs. This is why feedback from all is encouraged and necessary.

A focus for the Member Engagement initiative is to increase participation and output from all regions, all states, all staff levels on the NASPO Network. NASPO was at the forefront of the move from listservs to online member communities five years ago when we launched the Network. Over time, it's grown and developed to be more than just a discussion forum. It's where our members-only resources live, it's where our committees interact and share documents and files, and it's where you can read a bio on the new NASPO member you met at a conference. In short, the NASPO Network is the hub of our member activity, complementing the publically visible naspo.org website.

The empowerment of NASPO's committees and committee leaders has been another key area of focus this year. All NASPO committees now function under an Annual Charter that defines the purpose, composition, and budget authority. The charters are re-evaluated each year to help ensure we are not just accepting that what was needed last year will be what is needed next year. Committees also worked under Action Plans that were vetted against the strategic plan to ensure committee activities were working in support of, rather than detracting from, the strategic plan.

We want to remain at the forefront of best practices for associations -- not settling for status quo with our NASPO staff either. We have empowered the staff, at the same time challenged our Executive Director to hire and retain only the best of the best. Our staff has grown in a planned manner, focusing on gaining in-house skill sets that complement our objectives.

The NASPO staff members engage every day with other association professionals in the same kind of peer-to-peer communication we experience on the NASPO Network. They are continually learning about new membership tools, experiencing new conference programming formats, discovering cutting-edge member engagement tactics, expanding their procurement knowledge, and experimenting with enhanced reporting programs. These are all benefits NASPO can capitalize on, thanks to the best practice and idea sharing of our staff. Our partnership with AMR, our management company, is central to this effort and stronger than ever.

Advances in technology have forever changed the ways we communicate and do business and the same is true for our association. We continue to embrace new ways to streamline

workflow and create efficiencies capitalizing on our volunteer efforts. As such, we are instituting a new mobile app in the near future for the Board of Directors. Based on results of this initial beta test, a roll-out to NASPO committees will be the next phase.

I would be remiss if I didn't shine a spotlight on Procurement University, the largest program NASPO has rolled out in many years. You helped us identify that NASPO was not doing all it should to promote the professional development of state procurement professionals. Nor were we taking an active role to promote certification through the UPPCC. With the beta courses rolling out this year, we look to see that all change.

I have three more months remaining in my term as your President and I will continue to shape the association for continued success.

Thank you for an exceptional year,

Deb Damore
NASPO President