

Building CAPACITY



BY DEIDRE ALVES, M.ED.

I have a favorite jogging trail here in California that leads directly to the beach. For me, this destination proves to be a beautiful reward. Some call it an “enchanted path” for its magical and curious nature, which makes the journey as special as the destination.

As we delve deeper into optimizing the IRWA Learning Experience, we are on the journey-building path. Our goal is to create a customized experience for right of way professionals, users of right of way services and the general public at large that deploys relevant and valuable learning resources, connections and opportunities to support the work of building a better world. Right of way professionals are at the center of it all, with more learning options and ways to extend marketability and expertise in any specialized niche.

THE IRWA **5 YEAR CURRICULUM DESIGN PLAN** *A Certificate Driven Approach*

In February, the International Governing Council approved the IRWA Five-Year Curriculum Design Plan that blueprints and aligns innovative curriculum development through the year 2018. Based on what the right of way market has told us about its current and future needs, this plan marks a major curricular shift in focus toward market relevance and project-based right of way certifications. The industry has spoken and IRWA has risen to the challenge.

The Five-Year Plan is driven by the development of certificates in Pipeline, Transportation and Utilities. The Pipeline Certification is first on the list, and its production is slated to begin in year one of the plan. The certificate curriculum is currently being mapped to clear pathways that prescribe and align appropriate coursework and proficiency levels. These pathways will include enhanced versions of our current IRWA courses, as well as new courses that speak directly to industry needs. These newly-defined certificate pathways are designed to provide transition points of competency and robust right of way coursework that members and users of right of way services, employers and chapter leadership can utilize for career development and hiring practices.

This is an organization-wide transformation in practice that will strengthen IRWA as the central authority for the right of way profession. It also positions us as an essential partner to various public and private entities as we align current and future needs with relevant curriculum and learning resources, and meet the rising demand for domestic and international infrastructure development.

THE IRWA **COURSE PRODUCTION PROCESS** *Streamlined Operations with a Team Approach*

Over the next five years, IRWA is poised to design and release a bevy of new courses. To accomplish some fairly aggressive goals, we are streamlining our internal operations while increasing quality and consistency.

We will be implementing a new course production process that is built on an innovative three-member team approach. Each team will be comprised of two right of way subject matter experts and a contracted instructional designer. Subject matter experts—our IRWA members—will be invited to indicate their availability for developing courses during two cycles of development each year. In recognition for their commitment, time and service, they will receive an honorarium. An important addition to the course development team is the instructional designer. Hired for their learning and assessment expertise, they will be responsible for meeting project targets and creating an impactful, relevant, and memorable learning experience using content provided by right of way subject matter experts.

We will pilot this new three-member development process in year one with IRWA Course 604, Environmental Due Diligence and Liability. This particular course can be applied across multiple certifications, making it the ideal course for a pilot project. Our ability to re-purpose this course across all certificates will save both time and money, while maintaining high quality and increasing its industry relevance. Please stay tuned for your next opportunity to participate in the IRWA course development cycles.

Collectively, we are building capacity with strength, purpose, focus and resolve. This journey is leading us to achieve that ultimate destination and reward - a shared vision of building a better world together.

As IRWA's Vice President of Professional Development, She has expertise in education, training, human performance and collaborative social environments. Deidre holds a Master's Degree in Education, Multicultural Curriculum and Instruction from George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia and a Bachelor's Degree in International Service from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

