



The Legacy of Leadership

Cultivating the seeds planted before us



LISA R. HARRISON, SR/WA, R/W-URAC, R/W-RAC, R/W-NAC

How quickly time flies! As I reflect about my time on the International Executive Committee (IEC), I realize how many important things have taken place during those five short years. As one of nearly 11,000 members, I always wondered how things actually got done with volunteer leaders and such a small staff. I finally figured it out and would like to let you in on the lessons I learned along the way.

As I progressed from year to year on the IEC, I have been amazed at how many new layers unfolded based on the responsibilities of each office and my assigned tasks. My newfound clarity regarding the big picture, however, is based on how much the leadership before me contributed to both my evolution as a person and the increasing success of the organization. I have been fortunate enough to see is how the seeds planted by those before me have grown into programs and products that have increased member value and professional development, all resulting in a growing recognition by decision-makers and the users of our services. In other words, we are making a difference in the profession in a way that continues to expand every year.

This was demonstrated during my first year on the IEC when Sandy Grigg, SR/WA was President. Sandy talked a lot about how important it is that all our many subgroups—chapters, industries, disciplines and regions—talk to each other and not just to themselves. “Horizontal integration” would be a game changer for our Association, he would say. At

the time, I was in the weeds and did not fully understand his point. However, that seed has grown into a completely new communication model for our Association. We now have Communities of Practice for each of our disciplines, working with Industry Committees and the International Governing Council (IGC) to provide information and access to each and every member.

“...we are making a difference in the profession in a way that continues to expand every year.”

Ken Davis, SR/WA was the next International President. Ken created several task forces that were charged with evaluating specific issues and making recommendations to the IGC and the International Professional Development Committee (IPDC). The recommendations resulted in significant improvements to our education and credentialing programs. The Instructor Task Force created a plan for new instructors and added new requirements for existing instructors to ensure they remain current and engaged and act as mentors to other class

participants. The Experience Task Force, in conjunction with the IPDC, developed a matrix to help Chapter Professional Development Chairs evaluate experience for the designation and certification applications, resulting in more consistency and efficiency. And the Specialty Task Force, with representatives from each industry and discipline, evaluated whether IRWA was offering the right credentials to our members - those that are meaningful to the users of our services. The new industry pathways to earning the SR/WA are one result of this effort. The seeds planted by Ken’s leadership will result in a credentialing program that is taught by the highest quality instructors and speaks directly to the users of our services regarding the experience and education required to obtain them. Our credentials will be easier to understand and easier to market as a true differentiator.

The “International” part of our name had been primarily North American related prior to the leadership of Randy Williams, SR/WA. As an appraiser, Randy began conversations with appraisers around the world to find mutual benefits, and he used our educational offerings as a global bond. As a result, we now have hundreds of members outside North America in countries like Germany, Mexico, Thailand, South Africa, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, among others. With chapters in South Africa and Nigeria, we are on the verge of creating a region in Africa, our first outside North America. Our connection to a global market of infrastructure real estate professionals provides work,