Empowering All Professionals

Becoming the standard of excellence around the globe

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As your International President, I am proud to be part of an Association that empowers professionals by elevating ethics, learning and a standard of excellence within the global infrastructure real estate community.

Adopting our new purpose and mission statement—improving people's quality of life through infrastructure development—was one of our most important accomplishments this past year, but that was just the beginning. As professionals, we need to continually remind ourselves of the impact we have on the world and the vital role that each and every one of us play in building a better world. I encourage you to reflect on this and find ways to help embody this message as we all carry it forward to our Chapters, our employers and the public.

An Association Roadmap

As we prepare for our future, determining where we can maximize the impact on people's quality of life is essential. Consider a future where we are regularly sought out by governments, agencies and organizations to offer our expertise, education and experience. The future is closer than you might imagine.

To help us as we shape our future, the International Executive Committee and Governing Council spent a significant amount of time this year establishing key priorities and initiatives for the Association. These priorities will serve as a roadmap, and although things will surely change, this roadmap will keep us focused on our primary goals.

Through our previous work in reviewing IRWA's International Bylaws, we recognize the need to step back and take a holistic look at our structure and governance. To help guide us through this process, we are pursuing external experts who can help take us to the next level in our Association's governance. Of course, we fully acknowledge the importance of involving and engaging a diverse representation of our membership, and I'm confident that you will be open to new ideas as we envision an exciting new future.

The reality is, our members are now playing lead roles in major infrastructure projects—in the early stages of project planning. More and more, the SR/WA designation is becoming a requirement for anyone working in infrastructure real estate, and the public views us as a trusted partner that will help them navigate complex property issues.

An Underlying Foundation

Education remains the cornerstone of the IRWA, and the continued implementation of our Five Phase Education plan plays a critical role. Just this past year, we completed two additional CLIMB Instructor Development sessions. As an instructor, my participation in CLIMB was an eye-opening learning experience. Bringing all of us together has really strengthened our community of instructors, as it's given us a venue where we can all learn from each other.

I am pleased to report that new course development has really ramped up. We have launched Course 218, Right of Way Acquisition for Electric Transmission Projects, and recently finished the pilot for the new Elevating Ethics course, as well as a pilot for the Canadian Oil and Gas Course. We also filmed country-specific modules for Course 100 and launched two new online Relocation courses through

At the 2016 Annual International Education Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, Mary Anne met with members and industry representatives from around the globe. "I've learned so much from all of you, and the friendships I've developed will last a lifetime," she said.

our partnership with O.R. Colan, LLC/ORC Training. In conjunction with IKT, Germany's Institute for Underground Infrastructure, we introduced a new six-module panorama on the fundamentals of underground infrastructure. In light of all these accomplishments, I salute the members of our Partnership for Infrastructure Professional Education for their selfless dedication and commitment to bringing all of these projects to fruition.

Looking forward, we are committed to providing support for our young professionals and opening up opportunities for them to participate in leadership meetings, Region Forums and conference planning. We now have more YP's serving in leadership roles than ever before. As a leadership team, we've spent time this year visiting with our Chapter leaders, and through these meetings, we've had even more opportunity to reach out to our volunteer leaders. In response to growing demand, we plan to develop and support an Emerging Leaders Program aimed at our mid-career members aged 36-55.

Through our partnership with the Right of Way International Education Foundation, we recently solidified a new scholarship program that will directly benefit our members and their employers. Details will be announced in June, and I can't wait to see the impact it will have on our scholarship recipients!

Expanding our Reach

On the international front, IRWA continues to attract new members from across the globe. Our Chapters in Australia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Nigeria are working continuously to engage government and agency leaders in these countries, reinforcing the importance of our mission and forming new alliances.

Recently, IRWA was accepted as an Observer to UPAV, the Union of Pan American Associations of Valuation. We continue to explore new educational offerings in partnership with IKT, and our relationship with members of the Compulsory Purchase Association in London has provided the opportunity to share our collective relocation expertise and best practices. As we expand our reach and global presence, we will continue to embrace the diversity, talent and opportunities that will be presented.

As our fiscal year wraps up, I can't help but reflect on my own personal journey as an IRWA leader. I've learned so much from all of you, and I am grateful for the time I was able to spend this past year with our members, volunteers and leaders. Throughout my term on the International Executive Committee, I've had the opportunity to work with an extraordinary group of past, present and future leaders. I developed friendships that will last a lifetime, and I know without a doubt that the Association is in good hands. A special thank you to our IRWA staff who work tirelessly day in and day out to consistently achieve excellence.

Although my time as your International President is coming to a close, I am confident that through my voice, I will continue to serve the Association for many years to come. ✪