

A NEW ERA OF COLLABORATION

An in-depth look into our strides forward

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Our member leaders are making incredible strides within the Association, driving us toward important and meaningful change. I am motivated and inspired by our member leaders, and I want to take a moment to recognize and share some of the noteworthy work taking place.

International Governing Council

In September, the International Governing Council (IGC)—which is comprised of our 10 Region Chairs and the International Executive Committee (IEC) members—along with our Region Vice Chairs and senior staff met in Long Beach, California for two full days of productive and intensive meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to bring our Region leadership together with the IEC to discuss and plan for the year ahead. This was also an opportunity to prepare our

leadership team for how best to continue to support our membership.

In addition, this meeting served as a level-setting event—a chance for our member leaders to come together face-to-face to share our plans, answer questions, hold each other accountable and prepare for our next steps. And although we did not see eye-to-eye on every issue ahead of us, a new era of trust and collaboration was established. This was a critical first re-building step and I am grateful and appreciative of our member leaders who took time away from their families, friends and work

to be present with us. The time and energy they are investing now will pay dividends in our future.

At the IGC Meeting, several important agenda items were addressed, including the CEO search, the Governance Task Force (GTF), International Committee and Communities of Practice (CoP) Strategic Plans, as well as a meeting with the Right of Way International Education Foundation (RWIEF) and the Canadian Right of Way Education Foundation (CRWEF). Region Chairs were briefed on each of these items and prepared to share updates around each at their Region Fall Forums.

CEO Search

The IEC has embarked on the search for IRWA's new CEO. We have partnered with Sterling Search, a search firm that specializes in non-profit executive searches. The position description has been posted on targeted websites, including the IRWA website, and shared via social media. Sterling Search is also proactively identifying suitable candidates through their networks. The IEC remains optimistic that the Association's new CEO may be on board by IRWA's Annual International Education Conference in June of 2020.

International Committee and Community of Practice Strategic Plans

This year, our Association's International Committees and CoPs were tasked with developing strategic plans outlining their annual goals and initiatives. The initial plans were presented to the IGC in July. During the September IGC meeting, the Committee and CoP leaders called in to provide an update on their progress to date. It is exciting to see our Committees and CoPs executing on their initiatives. The IGC appreciates this communication as it allows them to continue to be better advocates for the important work our Committees and CoPs are accomplishing.

Governance Task Force

The GTF was established by a motion made by the IGC in September of 2018 to "pause the Association's Governance Project and postpone the Board of Directors vote in Portland 2019 in order to create a Governance Task Force to review the process." After a year of dedicated review, the GTF presented their final report to the IGC in September of 2019.

GTF Chair Sharon Slauenwhite, SR/WA, provided a detailed overview of the task force members, the review process, a cost-benefit analysis and breakdown of costs, the deliverables and benefits, as well as the project's weaknesses. In addition, the GTF's report included 11 recommendations, the first being that the "Governance Task Force recommends that the International Governing Council cancel the final phase of the Governance Project and instead take steps to implement changes that will satisfy the goals of the project but will not dramatically alter the existing structure of the organization at this time." After thorough discussion, the IGC unanimously voted to accept the first recommendation to cancel the final phase of the Governance Project.

The IGC will be discussing the value and approach to implementing the remaining 10 GTF recommendations at our February IGC meeting. A sincere thank you goes out to the GTF members for your hard work and perseverance. Our Association is headed in a stronger, more aligned direction thanks to you.

Education Foundations

This year, the RWIEF annual trustee meeting was held at the same time as the IGC meeting, which spurred a thought to try something new. The RWIEF and the CRWEF President and Trustees were invited to video conference in to a portion of the IGC meeting. As President, I was honored to provide a recap of the funding requests currently in progress and, more importantly, to share with the Foundations our sincere thanks for their continued partnership. The Foundations provide a critical role in the success of our Association through funding right of way education initiatives. We are grateful for the Foundations' support and look forward to our continued partnership.

In Summary

IRWA is headed in a stronger, more aligned direction thanks to the hard work of our member leaders. I am honored and humbled to be a part of the leadership of this Association and multitudes of thanks and appreciation go out to each of you. We have much to be excited about with the future of our Association. ✪