

2017 NAP Convention Report President's Oral Report

This member has had the privilege of serving as NAP President for the 2015-2017 term. As you look around, this has not been a glitzy term with lots of new products – instead our focus has been on ways to strengthen NAP and in turn, you, our members. Let me explain.

Right after election I visited the NAP headquarters with some of the other officers. When we had the opportunity to really look into the functioning of NAP and the NAP staff, it became clear that there were some real problems brewing. NAP was like our own homes, when we live with problems over time, we just deal with them and ignore them as long as possible. NAP had found ways to work around the situation but it did not go away. As they grew in their commitment to our membership, the problems also grew. One of my goals coming into office was to build up NAP as an organization but I did not understand how critical this focus would be. This situation needed to take priority over the other plans I had coming into office.

It was time to do something. The focus of this administration changed from programs to update and stabilize NAP. Not a showy process for sure, but necessary to make the organization's internal structure healthy.

To start with, the declining membership base over the years has been on a downward trend and the NAP budget was not keeping up with the level of membership services we needed to provide to our members. The bottom line is that our expenses to maintain membership services was increasing and the income was not. With the declining membership base, the NAP budget was not making its anticipated income and the deficit was growing. Something drastic had to be done. Our Treasurer did a thorough study over the past several years and we could see the trend developing. NAP could be in trouble if we didn't do something. You will hear more about this when you receive the report of the NAP Treasurer – stay tuned.

Based on the study, a new budget to financially stabilize NAP was implemented.

The Board of Directors, made the commitment to set spending options that would reverse the trend in real budget deficits and membership became a primary focus. The board made a commitment to deeply cut their own expenses and reimbursements to stop the growing deficit. But to accomplish the goal, it also meant that all areas would have to be cut to a bare-bones level this term. Except for the Commission on Credentialing, committees only met by teleconference or adobe connect, except when they were present at an event like the National Training Conference. The exceptions were very specific. The Bylaw Committee needed to meet to develop the Bylaw Amendment Booklet, and the board met biannually in person. The president and officers cut back on their non-essential travel, the District Directors made drastic cuts, and even the membership took some cuts.

One of those was the Membership Manual. It costs \$30,000 to print. The board determined they would make the hard decision to provide the Membership Manual free by download and charge the basic cost of printing for those that wanted the hard copy. Yes, change is hard sometimes. But, that savings went a long way towards subsidizing the new Commission on Credentialing

mandate from the 2015 convention – although they also joined us and assumed some of the cost themselves.

This president thanks all board members, committees, and members for their commitment to stabilize the budget. This was only the first step. To make this a long-term budget repair, the board determined that it is absolutely essential to use the bylaw clause allowing automatic dues increases up to the CPI-U (Article III, 3B) which has not been implemented for several terms. There was no choice to keep our organization viable. The dues increase will become effective with the 2018 membership year.

Another area of concern was the NAP current computer system – or systems I should say. This is the nerve center of communication and data consolidation for membership contacts, committee information, communications, dues tracking, and membership and credentialing records to name a few. There are individual programs doing specific tasks but they do not talk to each other. The staff has to manually download from one program to another, and to get specific information may require going through multiple programs. That is not very efficient!

We did an extensive evaluation of the process to determine what could be done with the current system to bring it up to speed. It was determined that there was no quick fix that would solve the problem. An extensive and professional analysis of the multitude of programs that interface with headquarters was necessary to determine what program, or programs, we need to serve NAP. The board approved a long-term professional study which will continue into the next term to obtain professional guidance.

However, in the interim, a lot was going on.

The information received from you, the members, at the NAP Training Conference input session, has been invaluable in finding areas of concern. Some areas could be dealt with during routine NAP functions. A couple areas, however, required some thorough study and were assigned to board committees. One of those was the equity of the Professional Registered Parliamentarian Referral System. Thanks to the Referral Committee, some great assistance from some computer-savvy members, and the staff, a new program is now implemented that addresses many of the concerns.

The Bookstore is a totally different story. The Bookstore Committee did what it could to clarify somethings but was limited in what they could do. This program is dependent on the underlying computer program and cannot be further modified until the updated system has been implemented.

Among all these concerns and limiting actions, small steps have still been taken by the committees. Membership is on the upward trend. The NAP committees have produced materials that will help NAP move forward. Let me tell you about a few.

This term, members have more choice on how they receive educational materials. You now have more options on purchasing downloadable educational materials or purchase of hard copies of the NAP education materials.

The membership manual is provided biannually to keep you up to date with current membership and organizational status, committee changes, membership changes, address and email information to keep the you up-to-date. This is not possible with a hard copy, it quickly is out of date as a reliable data resource. I encourage you to download the manual as soon as the update is available. It will have all the 2017-2019 officers, and committees you need instead of depending on the outdated printed manual – and it is free, we all like free. To keep you current, the address section is updated quarterly – or you can go online to search for contacts.

The *National Parliamentarian* moved the dates of publication so that timely information could be received according to current activities of NAP. The new timeline will provide you with a timely list of the 2017-2019 NAP Officers and committees much sooner than the previous schedule.

The Communications Public Relations Subcommittee developed a long-term Public Relations and Marketing plan that will lead us into the next five years. There are new NAP brochures for member to use to let their clients and organizations know about NAP. In fact, you will find one in your convention materials. Use them often and freely.

The Professional Development Committee has provided several in-person professional Qualifying courses which is the entry point for the Professional Registered Parliamentarian credential. They have also coordinated multiple access to in-person and module training for the professional parliamentarian to maintain their certification. This has taken many, many volunteer and a huge commitment by the chairman. My hats off to her and the committee. The Professional Qualifying Courses (PQC's) and Professional Recertification Courses (PRC's) held just prior to the opening of this convention were at all time highs.

NAP membership is on the upward curve. There are several new units, and NAP is pleased to announce that it has chartered the first Electronic Association. Congratulations to the new **NAP e-association**.

The Membership and Registration Examiners Committee has approved an exciting new modular membership exam program. A member may prepare and take the exam in steps on their own, at their own pace, and any time of day or night. Since the exam questions are built into the initial program, once the modules are completed the member does not have to take another exam but may apply for full membership. We are looking toward encouraging Provisionals, members without access to units, and those which have difficulty traveling, or a time constraint to become members. The module questions are from the one-hundred question exam and based on Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised in Brief.

Above all the activities of the term my biggest desire is to stabilize NAP and grow this great organization with the essence of what my theme RISES encompasses – Respect, Integrity, Service, Education, and Stewardship.

The future of NAP is in your hands. Truly, it takes many committed volunteers but together we can continue to grow NAP into that vision of being the primary source of parliamentary training in the world.

Thanks for listening and your support this past term.