

National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts

Leading Into the Next Half Century

Strategic Plan
2010-2015

Final Draft
March 25, 2010

Guiding Group

Patsy Cox (co-chair)
Eduardo Lazo (co-chair)
Susan Filley
Linda Ganstrom
Steve Hilton
John Natsoulas
Skeffington Thomas
Barbara Webb
Dick Wehrs
Keith Williams

NCECA: Leading Into the Next Half Century, Strategic Plan (2010-2015)

INTRODUCTION

In 2016 The National Council of Educators in the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) will celebrate its 50th anniversary. In preparing for its leadership role in the field of ceramics education and the clay arts the NCECA Board, staff, and membership have developed this strategic plan to serve as a pathway toward its next half-century of guidance and service to the field. The plan is a result of surveys in the field, engagement with its membership, and decision-making by its board and staff leadership. It also represents a commitment to ongoing planning. Plan implementation accommodates both the strategies articulated below (declared strategies) and those strategies that will be required (emergent strategies) over time as conditions change and organizational capabilities are built (internal capacity and external collaborations and networks).

Some critical observations inform the planning deliberations:

- NCECA is at a crossroads, and must focus its efforts and not try being all things to all people.
- NCECA must be responsive to opportunity and guided by mission and vision.
- NCECA must be more proactive and less reactive to changing conditions.
- NCECA must develop a spirit of collaboration, both internally and externally.
- NCECA must focus its resources (reputational capital, human and financial resources, links across the field) toward creating value for its constituencies.

MISSION

The National Council on the Education for Ceramic Arts is a dynamic organization that fosters global education and appreciation of the ceramic arts and offers opportunities and resources for the advancement of the field.

PROGRAMS AND CONSTITUENCY

NCECA promotes and improves the ceramic arts through education, community building, research and creative inspiration. NCECA offers exhibitions, programs, events and publications to support its constituency of:

- artists
- educators
- students
- individual patrons and potential patrons
- museum goers, collectors and
- corporate art patrons
- gallery owners,
- museum curators
- providers of ceramic arts-related products and services

CORE VALUES Foster:

- An environment of Trust
- A commitment to Transparency, across the organization and across the field
- Flexibility in assuring organizational sustainability
- Entrepreneurship in developing resources on behalf of NCECA goals
 - Investigate online exhibitions

KEY GOALS

GOAL #1 An ever increasing awareness of the ceramic arts in society

Benchmark: *Increased exposure for ceramic artists and their work in publications, exhibitions and other highly visible venues*

Strategies

- 1a. Build and maintain an attractive and functional website.
 - Acquire nceca.com URL.
- 1b. Use website and database to promote NCECA's mission, objectives, and programming.
 - Secure more prominent placement of such information on NCECA's website.
 - Develop a set of FAQs that communicate NCECA's purpose, programs, and services.
 - Develop and circulate NCECA annual report.
- 1c. Develop media, retail and other partnership(s) to increase the visibility of ceramic arts (potential examples such as HGTV, Food Network, Museums etc.).
- 1d. Investigate the feasibility of NCECA embracing a global vs. a domestic programming strategy.
 - Engage NCECA members as a significant resource in building such awareness (membership connection to organization e.g., "We are NCECA, I am NCECA").
 - Identify a recognizable, "spokesperson" for ceramic arts and ceramic artists.
 - Research recent initiatives by the International Sculpture Center (ISC) and others
- 1e. Develop a more inspiring, public identity or "brand" for NCECA as a means of building interest in ceramic arts.
 - Develop NCECA site as a portal to the „world of ceramic arts“ by including carefully vetted links to other providers of support for the form and its artists.
 - Implement virtual ceramic image library.
- 1f. Develop a greater presence in academic and other trade journals.

- Commission white papers (authoritative reports or guides) and/or other articles, etc.

1g. Explore the opportunities for ceramic artists within public policy initiatives. (examples include Creative Campuses, Imagining America, and Promise Neighborhoods)

GOAL#2- Ever increasing value for NCECA members through essential, high quality and unique programs and services

Benchmark: *Increased member satisfaction as measured through longitudinal surveys*

Strategies

- 2a. Continue to deliver constituent-centered programs of high quality including annual conference, exhibitions, publications, and scholarships.
- 2b. Identify affiliations that can be exploited for the benefit of NCECA members. (examples include College Art Association, American Crafts Council, National Art Education Association, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, International Academy of Ceramics)
- 2c. Implement regional programming. (potential examples such as exhibitions, symposia, mini-conferences)
- 2d. Improve the existing conference through rigorous assessment and redesign.
 - Initiate community outreach in conference cities.
 - Document approach, activities, assessment, and distribute lessons-learned following each conference.
 - Examine the existing on-site liaison model and consider a more staff-driven alternative.
 - Utilize recent membership survey results to guide such improvements.
 - Link member artists to existing professional development opportunities and programs.
- 2f. Improve the member benefits program and refine member categories as appropriate.
- 2g. Actively engage a new generation of potential members by:
 - Establish a mentorship program to enlist younger members.
 - Facilitate younger constituent engagement in generating new ideas for programs and services.
 - Investigate clay activities of interest to the younger generation. (potential examples such as “x-games”, virtual experiences)
 - Embrace social media as a means of reaching and engaging younger constituents.
- 2h. Identify affiliations that can add value for the benefit of NCECA members.

(potential examples such as College Art Association, American Crafts Council, National Art Education Association, National Association of Schools of Art and Design, International Academy of Ceramics).

- 2i. Implement regional programming. (potential examples such as exhibitions, symposia, mini-conferences).
- 2j. Increase support for national and international residencies for emerging artist and other NCECA members.
- 2k. Provide a comprehensive set of links to existing online databases, and develop any essential databases where they are not available through other sources.
- 2l. Improve web-based communications and interactivity with members as a means of creating value with members not simply for members.
- 2m. Improve the existing conference through rigorous assessment and redesign.
 - Initiate community outreach in conference cities.

GOAL#3- Robust structures and systems that respond to opportunities and adapt to changing conditions

Benchmark: A progressively more effective enterprise, as measured by fiscal health and organizational effectiveness

Strategies

Systems and Communications

- 3a. Improve communications among staff, board, and Executive Director.
- 3b. Improve and upgrade infrastructure consistent with current scale of enterprise (e.g. inclusive of financial management and reporting, internal communications, decision making).
 - Conduct assessment and identify essential upgrades
- 3c. Secure appropriate office location and more sufficient office space.
 - Consider options where shared resources would create economies-of-scale without compromising the mission nor identity of NCECA.
- 3d. Incorporate strategic plan progress assessment into staff/board meetings and revise plan annually based on progress to date.
- 3e. Develop and distribute an annual “State of NCECA” report to the membership communicating organizational, programmatic, and financial information in a clear and concise manner.
 - Include recent success and current challenges.

3f. Facilitate NCECA website based interactive dialogue with the membership.

Board

- 3g. Continue refining the Board structure and its responsibilities with an increased focus on governance and policy level activities.
- Implement annual individual Board member self assessment and overall Board evaluation.
 - Adapt Board structure, composition, and processes based on assessment findings and evaluation results.
 - Assure the composition of the board continually reflects NCECA's geographic reach and constituent diversity.
- 3h. Diversify the board to include other expertise/perspectives (accounting, business, alliance-building, etc.).
- Develop a "needs-based matrix" to inform Board development and composition.

Staffing

- 3i. Improve teamwork
- 3j. Structure staff resources in a manner consistent with strategic plan.
- Realign duties to achieve economies of scale and increased effectiveness.
 - Update position descriptions and implement staff reviews.
- 3k. Conduct national search for Executive Director.

Finance

- 3l. Develop three year financial forecasts for NCECA operating budget.
- 3m. Assure timely development and distribution of monthly financial reports, profit/loss statement, cash flow forecast, year-to-date actuals compared with approved budget.

Income Generation

- 3n. Identify and engage specific NCECA members as participants in resource generation activities.
- 3o. Optimize earned revenue through a goal-driven member retention and recruitment effort.
- Develop annual renewal rate goal and new member acquisition goal.

3p. Develop 50th anniversary fund development campaign.

- Initiate planned giving component.
- Draft case for support.
- Design campaign strategy.
- Identify required resources to address an overall approach. (potential examples such as fundraising counsel, board, staff, and member)