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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Tim Sharp

The State of ACDA

It is appropriate to take a moment to reflect on the state of our American Choral Directors Association

as I begin my fourth year as ACDA's third Executive Director. It remains an honor to serve the membership of ACDA in this capacity: I enjoy the challenges, and enjoy working to bring value and inspiration to ACDA's membership. The opportunity to foster and promote the very best in choral music is a worthy endeavor.

As context, three major factors shaped and challenged the environment in which we have all worked over the last three years: (1) the Great Recession that began in 2008 and continues to influence our efforts and the major decisions everyone is making today; (2) a technological revolution, particularly in the area of communication; and, (3) the shadow of a general national fear and distrust following 9/11 and a variety of unsettling events that were part of the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, on the positive side, ACDA could not have been better poised for new direction and new energy in 2008 when I began my work.

When I accepted the position of Executive Director, ACDA was preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary as an association. The association had matured into a solid working Constitution and Bylaws; a strong volunteer leadership structure; a Standing Committee structure, primarily structural, and only minimally actualized; a firm and working national structure of state chapters with regional division oversight; a division structure existing constitutionally to offer an alternate-year conference; and a volunteer administrative structure that permeated the organization with somewhat defined job descriptions and a one-way communication system consisting of newsletters and occasional Web sites.

The emphasis for the association during the search and interview process for a new Executive Director was dominated by a desire for an open and transparent executive leadership, a shift away from conference-dominated financial dependency, a shift away from conference-dominated leadership focus and project focus, the need for a renewal of vitality throughout the association at the grassroots level, the need to further professionalize the national office staff and endowment structure, the desire to move the operations of the association into best practices for a twenty-first century association, including the use of technological innovation, and the expectation of maintaining the very best of the benefits that had been created for the membership over the lifetime of the association, which included primarily our annual conferences, publication of the *Choral Journal* and newsletters, and our volunteer infrastructure.

A Culture of Transparency

In order to create a culture of transparency for ACDA, I determined it was important to create a culture that rewarded transparency and accepted responsibility for decisions, starting first in the national office. I implemented a reporting



process for every staff member, which was shared throughout the National Headquarters through published GoogleDocs, and was also reported verbally in weekly staff meetings.

I asked every staff member to participate in the defining of measurable goals within their work area, which then moved into reporting structures that could be shared between areas of responsibility. Job descriptions were written and refined, and I created an evaluation system with staff input that rewarded progress, and identified areas in need of improvement.

In the financial operations of ACDA, I insisted that all bill payments, state and division dues allotments, publication and recording royalties, and all financial matters, be paid on time, if not early. I had area managers search through all expenditures to identify patterns in spending. After these areas were identified, we created budgets to track and target needed allocations. Many problems surfaced related to how conferences were budgeted, how work was funded, how entitlements had entered into the planning process, and a number of inefficiencies that had to be addressed. I confronted the problems, and made the necessary changes. New operational systems were put into place, and new accounting structures were created. When problems related to staffing arose, I implemented progressive discipline to problem areas, and staff changes and operational changes were made where required.

I have now made most of the staff changes that were necessary, but I continue to monitor our staffing to be certain we are providing the services necessary to our membership and in support of our various programs. I remain vigilant in the study and analysis of our membership area,

(Continued as an article on page 28)

The 12 Purposes of ACDA

- To foster and promote choral singing which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
- To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
- To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
- To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
- To foster and promote the understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
- To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
- To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
- To foster and promote International exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers.
- To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
- To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America.
- To disseminate professional news and information about choral music.

—ACDA Constitution and Bylaws

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LOG

WHAT'S ON TIM'S DAYTIMER?

- September 8 - 10 World Choral Games Planning Cincinnati, Ohio
- September 12 Technology Planning Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- September 15 - 16 ACDA Exec. Committee Mtg Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- September 16 - 17 ACDA Nat'l Board Meeting Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- September 21 - 25 Premiere "High Lonesome Mass" Portland, Oregon

WHAT'S ON TIM'S IPAD?

The Accidental Masterpiece: On the Art of Life and Vice Versa

by Michael Kimmelman

Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul
by Stuart Brown

WHAT'S ON TIM'S IPOD?

Witloof Bay www.witloofbay.be

Brilliant Journey Taipei Male Choir

World Choir Initiatives

The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) at their General Assembly in Puerto Madryn, Argentina (August 6) elected the following members:

Executive Committee

Michael Anderson (USA) – President
Leon Ton Shiu-wai (China) - First Vice President
Philip Brunelle (USA) - Vice President
Saeko Hasegawa (Japan) - Vice President
Stephen Leek (Australia) - Vice President
Theodora Pavlovitch (Bulgaria) - Vice President
Håkan Wickström (Finland) - Treasurer

Board of Directors

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Rudolf de Beer (South Africa)
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Cristian Grases (USA/Venezuela)
Susan Knight (Canada)
Diego Lenger (Argentina)
Aarne Saluveer (Estonia)
Tim Sharp (USA)
Fred Sjöberg (Sweden)
Jean Smeets (Belgium)
Jennifer Tham (Singapore)
Thierry Thiebaut (France)
Annemarie van der Walt (South Africa)

 TimothySharp

 American Choral Directors Association



FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3)

and our methods of managing state and division financial issues, and we continue to work through transitions in the area of technology and automation to implement additional personnel adjustments for further efficiencies.

I immediately began an exploration with our various Standing Committees (Research and Publications, *Choral Journal* Editorial Board, Technology, National Conference Steering, Repertoire and Standards, Membership) to discover what was working, what was no longer working, and what needed to be done to improve our processes. This effort led to a new sense of purpose on behalf of most of our Standing Committees, and new energy is evident in the majority of this structure. There have been areas resistant to change, which has been explained by reasons of history, leadership, and flaws related to the genesis of the concept in forming certain committees. Entitlements and protectionism related to conference turf, and perfunctory reporting, still plagues some areas. Progress has been impaired in certain areas due to old loyalties and entitlements, but new leadership offers the hope of change. I am optimistic that a new culture, and needed

reforms, can be constructed as we move forward, and I plan to help our committees move in this direction.

Today there is strong leadership in each Standing Committee area, and as committees move away from a "conference only" platform, more of their potential of service to ACDA will be realized. We are moving beyond talking and proclamation to actual "doing" for the benefit of our general membership.

I have identified two areas that are in strong need of consideration toward new Standing Committees for ACDA, and one Standing Committee that seems to have no direction or operational function within the current structure. The two committees which need consideration are in the areas of (1) International Initiatives and Concerns; and (2) Choral Composition Concerns. There is an important list of current activity taking place under these topics, but neither area has membership or committee oversight (although there is indeed Executive Committee oversight). This activity needs leadership and a home, justified by the amount of money, personnel time, and activity that takes place under each of these areas.

The Standing Committee that is not functioning, but represents an important area for ACDA, whether or not a committee exists to assist, is the Membership Standing Committee. It is my intent that our current Strategic Planning Process will address this needed structural adjustment and create action potential for this committee, or eliminate it and defer to National, Division, and State leadership as is currently taking place.

A Culture of Sustainability

ACDA is similar to most associations in terms of streams of revenue. The monthly cash flow for the association depends on new membership and membership renewal. The trade term for membership turnover is "churn," and, like most associations, ACDA's "churn" is approximately 1/3 of its membership every year. In practical (and broad, and approximate) terms, this means that ACDA is replacing, or chasing, about 6,000 members per year at our current status, or 500 members per month.

To counter this fluctuating and vulnerable membership income stream, ACDA, like other associations, has become increasingly

The State of ACDA



dependent upon its biennial national conference for additional income to support the structure, benefits, and national operations needed to run the organization. The biennial income from the national conference provides essential operational income, and some degree of financial security beyond membership income, for the operation of the association.

Over the last three years, I have established a sustainable budgeting process that can more readily forecast income, and react conservatively to anticipated costs. This budgeting process is now able to supervise conference expenditures and income through separate accounting, in order to accurately observe routine cash flow and expenditures for non-conference operations.

A third income stream exists for ACDA through advertising in the *Choral Journal* and at the national conference. Advertising helps offset the production and mailing costs of the *Choral Journal*, which has historically been the only communication instrument from the ACDA National Headquarters.

The strategies and initiatives implemented over the last three years have resulted in a growth in ACDA membership, and, as a result, ACDA's monthly cash flow has remained steady and healthy. Through conservative budgeting and careful contracting and spending, both the 2009, and recent 2011 national conferences, were financially successful, and provided the safety net of non-membership income to help with Association operational costs. Advertising income has decreased during the recession. However, through a variety of new initiatives, additional revenue streams have been created, which have helped ACDA move forward in this challenging national financial environment. These new revenue streams include government grants; sales from conference recordings, video, and publications; support from industry sponsors for international initiatives; conference revenue from new conference offerings in addition to the biennial national conference; corporate sponsorships; Web advertising; and sales from ACDA "pride" merchandise (clothing,

folders, certificates, etc.).

In addition to added revenue streams, I have led our operations in a manner that has allowed ACDA to economize in many areas of operation without eliminating benefits or services to the membership, and without eliminating staff or benefits to staff. Other savings have been realized through careful management of staff personnel lines and hiring. Some of these savings have been realized due to new technologies. Some of these savings have been realized through careful contracting of outside services such as reduced publication costs for the *Choral Journal*, reduced travel costs for conference site selection and planning, and reduced costs for legal services.

I have worked to create a culture with the national staff that rewards progress and innovation, and invests in the long-term sustainability of the association. A recent administrative self-assessment conducted with the national staff reveals ACDA staff members

have a strong sense of the direction of the association, and understand their important role in maintaining this direction. Furthermore, this self-assessment of the working environment of the national staff indicates the staff is happy in their work, rewarded, and motivated. This has been a critical step in my work at serving the greater membership, and I feel good that this culture is beginning to move beyond the national office into the inner workings of the Association. However, this culture, along with the desired culture of transparency and sustainability, will take more time to mold before it will fully permeate and sustain ACDA. My long-term goal for ACDA is for this culture to become an assumption, and not only a "refreshing change."

There are signs throughout ACDA that the above strategy is taking root. There is much less angst in the deliberations that are taking place, and with the exception of the tensions that gather around the projects leading to conferences, much of the tension

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

related to competition and personal ego has toned down over the last three years.

ACDA's ability to move forward with endowment growth has been slow. It was clear when I came to ACDA that the current model of operation was not working. I have helped the association in its desire to move away from the former model, and am helping create a new structure of management for ACDA's endowment. It is now time to move this work into higher gear. I am eager to lead this effort, and will comment on this need at the end of this narrative with my future recommendations.

Part of this "next-step thinking" includes ACDA's need to sell the property in Lawton, OK. Not unlike the previous endowment structure, this sale has been complicated by the terms by which the property was acquired. I continue to work to liquidate this possible ACDA asset, and will remain vigilant to see this accomplished. I have constructed the deal and negotiation I believe will lead to the sale of the Lawton property, and this proposal has been offered to the interested buyer.

One of ACDA's assets is the current national office building structure and grounds in Oklahoma City. When I began my work, the building was plagued by foundation and roof leaks, insect problems, and issues related to deferred maintenance of the building. I have eliminated those problems and the building is now in good condition and on a good maintenance schedule. It has been my delight to bring art, sculpture, mobile art, music, technology, ambiance, and a Steinway grand piano, to this good building. I have also enjoyed not only maintaining the building as a comfortable and desirable workplace, but also enhancing the area as a contribution to the staff, membership, and leadership, and being a good citizen to downtown Oklahoma City and the OKC Arts Corridor. The grounds, the offices, the equipment, soundness of the building, and overall aesthetic of the space, is something all ACDA members can use with pride. I have opened the McMahon International Choral Museum to the public, and through a variety of receptions and social events, also offered the ACDA National Headquarters to our civic friends.

and I spoke to individual components of this Statement in every conference, publication, and public and private opportunity I had in my first three years. In short, the vision I outlined was "to establish the opportunity for every child to sing in a choir; to become fully engaged in world choral initiatives; to set the research and publication agenda for the best thinking, past and present, in choral music; and to utilize the full extent of technological communication and other technologies for the benefit of our membership."

At my first ACDA National Leadership Conference in the summer of 2008, I asked members of our national board to give me names of outstanding leaders across the country with which they were familiar; that I might contact for a conversation toward my own mentoring. Over the last three years, I have made the opportunity as I travel to meet with most of the individuals named to me in that early Leadership Conference. I spent a day with these individuals to help me as I continue to refine and shape the vision for ACDA.

Although my vision will continue to guide many initiatives throughout ACDA, it has been my desire for the last 18 months to significantly supplement my original vision for ACDA with a prioritized Strategic Planning Process that gives our national leadership, and our grassroots membership, a voice in shaping ACDA's next steps. Similar to forging ahead with a vision, it has become clear I must lead this strategic planning effort, if it is to be taken seriously and owned by the association. Over the next 18 months, I will work with ACDA President-Elect, Karen Fulmer; to prompt our membership to take the lead, to the degree they can as dedicated volunteers, to undertake a widespread involvement in an ACDA Strategic Planning process.

So, returning to my original vision statement for ACDA, it is appropriate at this moment to take stock of what has been accomplished under my original outline, as well as to reflect on those things that remain on a "to do" list.

Leadership

As Executive Director of a national and volunteer association, there is a balance that must be maintained between centralized and decentralized leadership, local and global initiatives, old and new methods of operation and communication, and management and visionary leadership. It does not necessarily follow that the "mojo" that works for an individual in a confined and controlled local environment will be effective on a national scale. Therefore, I have had to learn my pacing and "flow," on the job and over time. This search for the balance within ACDA has been a personal challenge for me in my first three years of service.

To guide my leadership course of action, and as a result of my understanding of my original search committee and ACDA Executive Committee mandate, I formed a statement of vision as I began my work in 2008. This Statement of Vision was widely published throughout ACDA and ChoralNet,

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The State of ACDA



I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that utilizes the full extent of technological communication and other technologies for the benefit of our membership.

Innovations in the area of technology are probably the most visible and tangible changes ACDA's membership at large has witnessed as a result of my work over the last three years. These benefits include my creation of a member-oriented Web site that is rich with content and resources (too numerous to mention by name); online membership renewal; online voting through VoteNet (which has increased our percentage of voter participation, and I would also

argue that it is changing the face of ACDA's leadership); online honor choir applications and conference performance auditions through OpusEvent; online conference registration; online choral auditions through OpusEvent; online choral reviews and other interactive media (aided by expanding partnerships and collaborations); online choral reading sessions and literature reviews; online recordings, videos, books, and additional research resources; online indexing for the *Choral Journal* and other "Finding Aids" for ACDA Archives; online choral "radio" (through a collaboration with Naxos and Musica Russica); acquisition of ChoralNet, ACDA's professional and social networking

resource; development of professional "communities" within ChoralNet for chapter and sub-group and interest area communication; ACDA server expansion; invigoration of technology leadership and resulting work of ACDA's Technology Committee; robust safety measures for ACDA data and online activity; ACDA-authored articles and communication related to technological resources; conversion of the national office to a technology center with media-rich offices, board room, and meeting rooms; technological modeling of best practices to divisions and states; technological upgrading of the national office database

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

and accounting systems; ongoing upgrades to current operational systems; and more and more daily.

Going forward, technology remains one of the most pressing ongoing concerns for my efforts with ACDA operations, communication, and membership development. It will remain a personnel-intense area, and an expensive operational area to maintain. We find ourselves as an association in a technological divide, having to maintain some outdated means of operation and communication, while developing the required new means of operation as quickly as possible. The fastest and largest area of growth for ACDA is with student members, so this conversion process is not optional, it must continue, and will eventually move to a new paradigm.

The ongoing upgrade of the ACDA Web site to Drupal 7.0, along with the upgrade of our database and accounting system soft-

ware (MySQL and SQL), is taking place at the moment of this writing. Along with these upgrades, we are working at the integration and migration of our database and financial programs into our Web site, and the migration of ChoralNet into the ACDA Web site. The addition of a director of education and communication to our national staff will now push us into new benefit delivery systems and technology, which is an invited and self-inflicted challenge. The reality of web advertising will shift our advertising revenue budgeting and operational paradigm, and we have hired a new staff member with a degree in business and marketing to help move us into this new advertising territory. And, as we continue to professionalize our staff, we have recently hired a new technology director for our staff. More emphasis has been placed upon programming in this recent hiring, which will characterize much of the effort in this area in the coming years as I work to create unique systems to serve our membership.

I will continue to use the resource of

our national conference to experiment with new technologies as we learn and develop our abilities to prepare for what our membership needs, and to innovate where our profession needs to innovate. Our ACDA Technology Committee has become a model for excellent leadership and involvement in our overall Standing Committee constitutional structure.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that becomes fully engaged in world choral initiatives.

ACDA's relationship to the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) had fallen into a state of disrepair by 2007, which we have now reversed. The timing of this reconciliation has proved to be critical for IFCM. Within my first year as ACDA executive director, the executive secretary of IFCM resigned, and soon afterward, the president of IFCM moved out of his position.

As a founding member of IFCM, ACDA continues to play an important role for IFCM. However, ACDA is now able to achieve many of the goals of IFCM on its own: the reintroduction of the ACDA International Conductors Exchange Program (ICEP) to our membership and other countries; ongoing invitations to international choirs to perform at ACDA conferences, both division and national; partnership with INTERKULTUR for the American International Choir Games (2010 and 2011), and the World Choir Games in 2012; partnership with KIconcerts for an ACDA American Youth Choir; inclusion of international announcements in *Choral Journal* and collaborative publications in the *International Choral Bulletin*; ACDA leadership participation in World Choral Music Symposia; and through participation on IFCM administrative committees. As a founding member of IFCM, ACDA will continue to participate in IFCM, and support and assist the organization as needed. I continue to serve on the IFCM Board as ACDA's representative, recently attending the 2011 World Choral Music Symposium in Porto Madryn, Argentina, August 3-10, 2011, and I will represent ACDA at IFCM's sponsored World Choral Summit in China July 15-20, 2012.

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The State of ACDA



I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that establishes the opportunity for every child in the United States to sing in a choir.

The importance of this vision will not decrease in the years ahead as ACDA continues to be an advocate for music education and music participation at an early age. On behalf of ACDA, I have encouraged and participated in various proactive initiatives with Washington, D.C.-based music education and choral associations toward the achievement of this vision, and will continue to do so. I continue to collaborate with the National Association for Music Education toward position statements, advocacy statements, and letters of support for music education. I have gathered models of action for broad-based choral music offering opportunities over the last three years from around the U. S. and the world, and continue to search for scalable ways I can help ACDA encourage the start and continuation of choirs for young singers. To date, I have identified many of the problems that can be anticipated for such a scalable effort, and am still seeking a national meaningful, and scalable, approach to achieving this vision.

It appears that ACDA will have its first big opportunity to influence and become a resource to directors looking to begin a children's choir through professional and social networking opportunities, and through the distribution of helpful resources through the ACDA Web site and through ChoralNet. My best efforts to date have been assisted by the Children's and Community Youth R&S leadership. Through a children's director retreat held in January, 2010, and through another such event planned for January 2012, a dialogue and network has begun and will continue toward this vision. A similar event for middle school and junior high directors has been planned and scheduled for March, 2012. These initiatives are emerging through the excellent leadership of our R&S areas.

I have highlighted the Encore program, created for the children of Dothan, Alabama, in my writing and through the *Choral Journal*. I have encouraged the writing of articles for the *Choral Journal* specifically directed to creating choral opportunities for children. I have identified and studied other choral

and music education programs for children around the United States, and the findings for a scalable effort on behalf of children's choirs are still in development. I am prepared to make a symbolic gesture toward this vision and the establishment of more children's choirs as I continue to work with our interested and motivated R&S leadership in these areas. I am currently pursuing a grant on behalf of ACDA that could assist in a visible gesture related to children's choir invigoration. I also continue to work with other like-minded associations in an effort to collaborate, if not innovate, in this critical vision area. I have met with the Board of Chorister's Guild on this topic, and worked intentionally to include their organization in

ACDA's thinking and planning.

I envision a twenty-first century ACDA that sets the research and publication agenda for the best thinking, past and present, in choral music.

I have prepared much groundwork for an enhanced approach to research and publication for ACDA. Over the last three years, we have located, moved, secured, identified, catalogued, and created "Finding Aids" for our entire archival holdings. Although there is a lifetime of work to be done, as a result of my work in this area, we now know what we have in our Archives, where the material is



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

located, and how to find it. This summer, we have had several scholars visiting the ACDA National Archives as they pursue research projects related to our holdings. This is exciting, and promises to expand as we are able to make more of our holdings discoverable, if not viewable, online.

ACDA's signature publication the *Choral Journal* has never looked better, and several innovations in design and publication have led to an ongoing viable publication for ACDA. The editorial board is engaged, and I have challenged them to continue to work on editing integrity, innovation in design,

and relevance. I have worked to help shape the editorial board where invigoration was needed.

In an effort to supply pragmatic information to our membership, I helped create *ChorTeach*, an online magazine for members, composed of the most practical and helpful articles found in state and division newsletters. In addition, I orchestrated the addition of our ACDA national newsletter coordinator to the editorial board of the *Choral Journal* in an effort to provide continuity and connection for this role, and synergy for publication conduits.

I reduced the page size of *Choral Journal* early in my work, which resulted in savings of over \$50,000 per publication year. Due to a lack of advertising in the summer months, I returned the publication to an eleven-month schedule of publication (combining the June and July issues), realizing additional revenue savings, with no discernable pushback from our readership. I have moved us to putting longer documents and extended official items on the Web site, with accompanying notification in the *Choral Journal*, in order to affect costs and to avoid fatiguing our readership.

The invigoration of ACDA's Research and Publications Committee and leadership in this area is an encouraging result of the above vision statement. The National Symposium on American Choral Music taking place June 29–30, 2012, is a wonderful example of this vitality. This collaborative offering is the culmination of years of work and development by ACDA's Research and Publications Committee and the Music Division of the Library of Congress. Through presentations, panels, and performances, attendees at the Symposium will explore and hear live performances of the choral works featured on the Library of Congress American Choral Music Web site, and all of our country's professional military choirs will be featured in performance (also a result of an intentional effort toward collaboration and assistance to the United States professional military choirs).

Most of my successful grant activity over the last three years has been in the area of our archival holdings, their preservation, and initial indexing. This work requires ongoing

maintenance and supervision, and the work is never really completed. However, due to a sizeable grant secured last year that allowed us to hire two full time interns, we now have a clean baseline from which to operate.

The greatest need going forward related to ACDA's archival holdings is for detailed identification of our holdings, indexing, and the digitization and distribution of appropriate material for research at a distance. Our new Director of Education and Communication is fully aware of the potential of my vision statement related to ACDA's Archives, and is prepared to help move us toward these goals. I have outlined a process with this new staff member to develop and communicate a research agenda for our archival holdings. I have initiated the process to attain additional grants to assist ACDA in this ongoing process.

Strategic Imperatives

As I worked with ACDA's leadership on the national, divisional, and state level, it became clear to me that our original ACDA mission for a finer performance of a finer quality of choral music in the United States could only be accomplished with the help of two strategic imperatives. [Note: This statement, "a finer performance of a finer quality of choral music in the United States" is my construction of a mission statement for ACDA. Although ACDA has a "Statement of Purposes," we do not have a "mission statement." Therefore, I have created a working "mission statement" until we as an association create or adopt one through strategic planning.]

The first strategic imperative I outlined was the need for ACDA to recognize and embrace our interconnectedness with other choral music education and performance organizations. As I worked with our volunteer network, it was clear that we could not accomplish the outlined vision alone. I was guided by a statement from former U. S. President Bill Clinton, who stated:

My simple premise is that the mission of the twenty-first century is to build up the positive and reduce

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the negative forces of interdependence. I'll ask myself on any profound issue: will this increase positive interdependence or reduce negative interdependence?

In order to achieve our objectives for choral music education and performance, we must build up the positive music forces of interdependence throughout the country.

To this end, I developed reciprocal agreements that were written and/or discussed with the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the American Guild of Organists, the Church Music Publishers Association, RILM, the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada, various National Association for Music Education chapters and national National Association for Music Education leadership, the Society for Barbershop Singing, Sweet Adelines, our professional U. S. Military Choruses, the Library of Congress, IFCM, INTERKULTUR, Music Teachers National Association, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, the Conductor's Guild, the Church Music Institute, Choristers Guild, and Chorus America. I have attended and made presentations to several of these organizations, their Boards or General Assembly, and I maintain good contact with these groups, along with a growing list of additional collaborations.

To assist ACDA in offering expanded benefits to our membership, I developed reciprocal agreements with a variety of industry sponsors for the support of our conferences. I have held "summits" with various aspects of our choral industry membership, initiated by my office, including the Retail Print Music Dealers Association (RPMDA), choral music publishers, Church Music Publishers Association (CMPA), the choral travel industry, choral composers, and various individual business segments such as choral apparel companies and concert production companies. These have been productive meetings, and in most situations, these segments of the choral music industry would like to continue this practice of a "summit" meeting with the ACDA National

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Office, and I plan to continue our collaboration when objectives overlap and advance ACDA's mission.

The second strategic imperative I outlined for ACDA was to recognize and embrace the need for generativity, or mentoring, in our ongoing work as choral directors. I have advocated a mindset of mentoring throughout our leadership structure and membership, considering those looking to us for choral expertise, considering how we work with each other, and certainly in consideration of those choral directors that follow us. I have encouraged our states and divisions with specific incentives and initia-

tives in this area, particularly for students and student ACDA chapters. These incentive programs have proven to be very welcomed and effective, and continue to be offered.

In the last year, I have noticed states either instigating a mentoring program within their activity, or in some cases, reinvigorating programs or ideas that have mentoring at the core. I will continue my own emphasis on this imperative in the immediate future, recognizing the ongoing need for education and continuity for ACDA's original purposes. I continue to contribute a ChoralBlog on ChoralNet every Tuesday, and have done so for over a year. Most of these posts are in the area of mentoring, leadership, and administration. I supplement these efforts with

regular Facebook and Twitter posts.

The Work Ahead

As I look forward to advancing ACDA's choral mission of excellence in education and performance, and as I look ahead to accomplishing the outlined vision for ACDA, I have concluded that we must do so by focusing on the following five priorities: (1) strategic planning; (2) education and communication (including mentoring); (3) technological advancements; (4) innovative conferences (including collaborations); and, (5) choral research.

The first and ongoing step in this list of priorities is the development of a new strategic plan for ACDA. The scope of the last ACDA strategic plan expired in 2010. This work has now begun, and I will continue in earnest to advance this priority through the 2013 National Conference in Dallas, Texas. Priorities and a timeline have been established, and President-Elect Karen Fulmer and I are leading the first efforts in organizational assessment this summer.

Toward my priority of education and communication, I have redesigned the former position of ACDA archivist to embrace the overseeing of the ACDA Archives, and to make available to our entire membership through digital distribution and viewing, the educational and instructional holdings of ACDA. The description of this position now includes "communication" in order to reflect the outbound nature of this staff position, and to address a critical problem within the communication structure of ACDA.

Technological advancements are a given for any thriving twenty-first century organization. For ACDA, this specifically means I am moving us toward our immediate Web site upgrade to Drupal 7.0, an ongoing integration of ChoralNet and its vast networking and informational assets into the ACDA Web site, the upgrading of the database and accounting system used for all state, division, and national record keeping, the move to C-Event for conference registration, and added layers of security protection as more and more of our financial, voting, and communication transfers to digital transactions.



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The State of ACDA



The priority of conference innovation and creative thinking that is needed for our future workshops, seminars, master classes, and conferences to be relevant, has begun. In the next year we can look forward to the leadership of our Repertoire & Standards committee bringing us events specifically designed for middle school and junior high choral leaders, boyschoir and male choir leaders, children's and community youth choir leaders, music in worship leaders, conferences designed to explore the historic canon of choral literature, and our Library of Congress co-supported 2012 National Symposium on American Choral Music—all firsts for ACDA. I am working with our International interests toward a United States/Cuba Symposium on choral literature and performance, and collaboration toward an educational offering during the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati. Furthermore, "innovation" toward relevancy has been my constant mantra as I coach our ACDA state and division chapters toward their upcoming events. Most of them only need the encouragement to do what they know and want to do for their area of service.

As ACDA looks to the future, I continue to advance the priority of research and publication in our field. The expanded role of the Archives and education staff position, and the National Symposium on American Choral Music are immediate and visible examples of this priority and my leadership in its advancement. I have encouraged ACDA's Research and Publications Committee and their strong leadership to outline and advance an aggressive schedule of digital publishing for the coming year, and ACDA's ChoralPedia, an online wiki for everything choral, will move into higher visibility as a result of this prioritization. I have encouraged many thesis advisors and masters and doctoral students to use the ACDA Archives as a source for project, thesis, and dissertation material and research articles. This effort is seeing more and more inquiries as a result of this ongoing seeding process.

the following are the primary roles and responsibilities of an Executive Director:

Understand the organization inside and out; provide policy guidance and leadership for the board; establish and maintain effective communication systems; educate board regarding board and staff roles and responsibilities; maintain fiscal control; encourage and support involvement of volunteers; and strategically manage all aspects of the association.

The information I have written about to this point in this self-assessment is important for ACDA and in line with, if not beyond the scope, of the above duties. However, in terms of ACDA, the "501(c)3 corporation," another important assessment is contained within ACDA's membership, financial, and conference attendance numbers.

quarter of 2008, just before I began my work, to the same months this year; three years later. It is significant to note that beginning in 2003, ACDA's membership began a decline that had continued through 2008. It is also significant to note that beginning in the summer of 2008, ACDA's membership numbers were calculated for the first time precisely to the month; prior to the summer of 2008, membership numbers reflected the month, and the previous two months of members who had actually not renewed their membership, a number that could reflect a false count of approximately 500 members per month. In other words, for the 2008 numbers below, you could expect to subtract up to 1,000 members from that number for the real monthly count in 2008.

National Financial Numbers

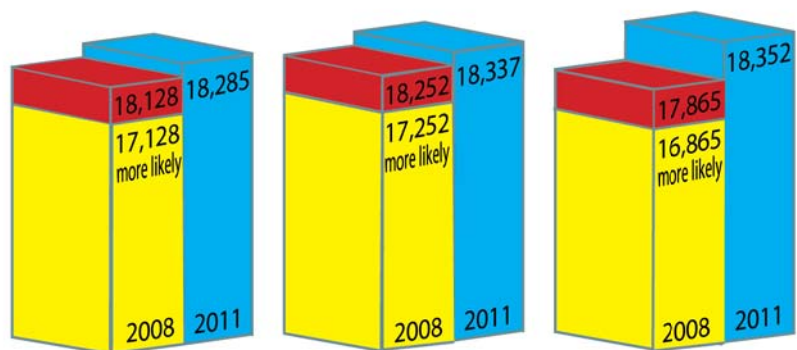
On July 1, 2008, ACDA had \$465,552 in the bank for operations. On July 1, 2011, ACDA had \$751,088 in the bank. These figures and balances do not include the money in the bank for state and division accounts.

It is clear that ACDA's financial assets

Membership Numbers

The following (Graph 1) is a comparison of ACDA's membership numbers the first

Graph 1
Comparison of Membership Numbers



Bottom Line

According to Smith, Bucklin, & Associates,



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

have grown significantly over the last three years. In addition, ACDA is now securing CPA-conducted financial audits, and publishing this information for membership review.

required 12,368 rooms, as compared to 10,885 rooms in Miami in 2007, and 6,266 rooms in Oklahoma City in 2009. It is clear that ACDA's national conference attendance has remained strong over the last three years.

Jose Tellez,
Information Systems
Manager



Tim Sharp;
Executive Director



Endowment Numbers

On July 1, 2008, ACDA had \$921,835 in endowment funds. On May 1, 2011, ACDA had \$968,000 in endowment funds. These endowment figures and balances include the money in the bank for state and division endowment funds. I have been able to create a \$43,000 endowment fund with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, which will now fund, in perpetuity, the various prizes awarded by ACDA to students in the area of composition, research, and conducting. Furthermore, this OKC Community Foundation Endowment allows ACDA to apply for additional grants and matching funds for projects and initiatives that would not be available to us outside of participation in this Community Foundation. Thanks to the generosity of Sandra McCabe, during the last three years, ACDA received the largest financial gift in the association's history.

It is clear that ACDA's endowment has grown over the last three years, and the use of the funds for their intended purpose has become more visible. I look forward to moving to a more aggressive and helpful leadership position in this area as we move forward.

2011 National Conference

The recent 2011 National ACDA Conference in Chicago was the third highest attended Conference in ACDA's history, with 5,030 in attendance. This conference followed New York (2003) with an attendance of 5,386, and Chicago (1999) with an attendance of 5,704.

Another way of calculating attendance at ACDA National Conferences is through the room pickup from hotels. At the recent Chicago National Conference, ACDA attendees

2011 National Staff

11 full time staff members;
3 part time staff members

Craig Gregory
Assistant Director and
Chapter Liaison



Olga Funderburk
Receptionist



Marvin Meyer
National Accountant
and Controller



Mark Smith,
Division Accountant



Carroll Gonzo,
Choral Journal Editor



Ron Granger,
Choral Journal
Managing Editor



Leane DeFrancis,
Membership
Coordinator



Scott Dorsey,
Director of Education
and Communication



Katie Lewis,
National Sales Manager



ACDA's staff has grown over the last three years.

Going Forward

There is one important area I feel strongly must be worked into the ongoing job description of ACDA's Executive Director as the Association moves forward. This is in the area of financial development and Endowment growth. The history of this area has been lackluster for ACDA, and it is time for this to change.

It is time to prioritize this work, and place it under the supervision of the Executive Director. I believe we should reshape these efforts toward building the ACDA general Endowment in order to secure the long-term future of ACDA operations and special projects created to advance ACDA's mission and objectives. We need this effort at this time, and I believe we should use the office of the Executive Director in this area in an intentional and professional way.

Such a job description would include the setting of annual fundraising goals, the implementation of these goals, the construction of a development plan (with committee input) that includes secured, renewable, and speculative contributed income, grant writing and research, individual donor research and contact, corporate, foundation, and government grant research, special events, leadership in committee development and involvement, non-committee volunteer support of fundraising, training in these areas, development of materials, gift recording systems, development of mechanism for systematic renewal of donors, and planning for the expansion of ACDA's donor base.

In order to add this important duty to the work of the Executive Director, this

The State of ACDA



structure needs to be added to the Executive Director's job description, and must be accommodated within the ACDA constitution and administrative structure.

In Conclusion

I am pleased with the progress made over the last three years, and I believe evidence demonstrates that ACDA is energized and moving in a strong and right direction. We have a solid structure that can adapt to changes as long as we continue to balance our foundational purposes with the ability to remain relevant in the twenty-first century.

I remain excited about the work ahead, and I appreciate the confidence placed in my leadership for the advancement of such an important and worthy organization as the American Choral Directors Association.

I would like to heartily thank our National Staff in Oklahoma City for their hard work in helping accomplish various aspects of the vision, mission, and initiatives referenced throughout this article. In addition to all of this work, they have also managed the routine work that has been a part of ACDA operations for many years. They do so with professionalism, dedication, and joy in their work.

I would also like to heartily thank all of

the members of ACDA for their work and dedication to the choral art, as well as for being a part of such a vibrant association. We are all members of ACDA because we want to align our work and our dedication to excellence and best practices in choral music education, rehearsal, and performance. ACDA remains as dedicated and single-focused as ever in this mission.



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