

RID PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 2011 Board of Directors Face to Face Meeting

Dear Members:

This report is coming fresh from the **RID** Board of Directors face to face meeting which was held last week, September 21-25, in Alexandria, VA. The board has a deep understanding that the membership is seeking answers, guidance and information related to a great many issues and topics that have arisen over the past few years, as well as ways to find greater participation in their member-driven organization. Many of these issues were discussed during the agenda this past week and this is an update of those conversations. While these are not the official minutes of the most recent board meeting, this article is meant to give you, in as timely a fashion as possible, a window into the discussions and some of the decisions that were made. This is quite lengthy, but bear with me as I try to encapsulate five full days of discussions into this report.

In addition to the many topics in which we want to update you, this report will also include our plea and call for your participation in some upcoming and crucial initiatives – activities that will shape and guide the direction of our organization, so please take the time to read up on some of these upcoming crucial data-gathering initiatives as well.

Before I begin, I want to first state that this is a time of monumental importance for our organization as we are yet again facing another defining moment in our nearly 50 year history. Yes, defining moments can be a little daunting and overwhelming at times. However, the fortitude and motivation of your elected leaders, along with the experience and drive of the national office staff, coupled with the input and participation from the membership, will guide us through these moments as we set in motion today that which will forecast our future. So, yes, the future is bright.

For the board agenda, the issue of utmost importance was defining the immediate priorities for the organization for Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12), which ends June 30, 2012. While not ideal that we are making decisions for direction in a year that we have already started and are currently in, it is something that we had to address based on the current state of the association and the unexpected impact of such things as the fraudulent scoring, termination of the executive director and the investment into the certification system – currently, the NIC, CDI knowledge exam and review of specialty exams. Please let me make it clear that these three previously-mentioned items are in no way interconnected. It is such that in a year in which we faced a difficult economic climate is also the year in which three major issues hit the organization. The culmination of all of these factors has put a financial strain on our resources and thus the board needed to prioritize the focus of our current pool of resources in this fiscal year. More about **RID**'s financials will be shared in upcoming reports as the auditors work to finalize their report for our financials and for the annual report to the members, which will be distributed in January 2012.

So, to get to our priorities, the board answered the question, "Who is our constituency and what do they need **RID** to be and what do they need **RID** to be doing right now?" Take a close look at this question as it will be included in a survey we will be sending out to the membership in the very near future. The responses will guide our work in future fiscal years and prioritize our resources.

From that question and the ensuing dialogue, the board identified the following four categories as

our current strategic priorities for FY12:

- Certifications
- Technology
- Executive Director Search
- Relationships ([Communications](#))

Please let me go into each of these areas in further detail so that you better understand how they fit as priorities within the organization and how addressing them will better serve the overall membership and the field. In identifying these priorities, the board has tasked the national office with ensuring that our budget reflects each of these categories. It is a way for us to guarantee that our strategic priorities, strategic plan and budget are all supporting the strategic direction of the organization.

Certifications. Knowing that value of national certification within the field and as a part of the overall structure of [RID](#), this priority is an investment into the entire certification program as a whole but in particular, for FY12, covers the areas of the NIC enhancements that we have reported on previously (more information can be found at www.rid.org/NICNews) and the CDI exam. But this is also to emphasize the work needed on specialty areas and credentials as well as an overall need to plan for best practices within the certification program from this point forward.

Technology. To better serve the membership, [RID](#) and the national office staff are seeking to add features and enhancements to the existing pool of technological capabilities. A database that provides the necessary tools for member relations is essential in achieving many outlying goals of the organization. Additionally, a revision and/or revamping of the [RID](#) Web site is paramount in providing greater ease of usability, offer materials in ASL and more. Investment in technology is also necessary for the core functions of the operations of the national office, such as a more enhanced survey tool that provides more useful analytical data.

Executive Director Search. Filling this crucial leadership position within [RID](#) must be a current focus of resources. While the board is elected to move the organization directionally, maneuvering the association toward goals and objectives, the executive director is responsible for the implementation and operation of programs and services, among other duties. During the board meeting, the board identified several leaders within the interpreting field and Deaf community to serve on the Executive Director Search Task Force. At the writing of this report, these individuals are being offered their appointment letters. The members of this task force will be shared with the membership once the final commitments have been made. Additionally, the board has selected a firm for the task force to consult with throughout the search, review and hiring process. Please know that there will be more reported on this as their work begins. As stated in the August [RID](#) e-NEWS, we are still anticipating that the position will be filled by June 30, 2012.

Relationships/Communication: As we invest in our certification program and the technology to support and enhance the service to our members, as well as identifying the next executive director of our organization, we also need to invest in building relationships, restoring trust and confidence, creating open lines of communication about decisions and the decision-making process, and developing avenues for greater participation – not just in leadership roles but at the grassroots and ground-up. [RID](#) needs to focus on breaking down barriers in the organization and the field, on addressing fragmentation at the state and national level and communicate at all levels both within the organization as well as beyond the walls of our association and the field. In discussing this priority, the board talked about [RID](#) providing a greater voice for our members, for advocating for [RID](#) and the profession, and for connecting with the membership to enhance our education efforts. We acknowledge that “Relationships/Communication” is a very general priority and could

essentially point to any area impacting our organization, but its significance is so enormous and covers a wide array of issues throughout the organizational structure that we felt its presence must be included both in the short-term in this current fiscal year and then ongoing in years to come. To not include this priority would be to the detriment of RID's future.

Other items discussed throughout the board meeting agenda include the following:

Volunteer Group (i.e., Council/Committee/Task Force) Appointments. In an effort to remain true to the current fiscal year's priorities, the board focused on the volunteer group structure and identified which volunteer groups are essential in meeting the FY12 priorities. We also discussed that some of the volunteer groups may be appointed with limited board-assigned tasks initially. The appointments of volunteer leaders maintain the important membership connection to the board and staff and serve as resources for the work related to the strategic priorities and the initiatives identified through the membership motions during the 2011 Business Meeting. Additionally, the board recognized that the work of the task forces, such as the legislative task force, is truly driven by the national office staff's need for the experience and expertise in the field – subject matter experts to inform the work of the association. Therefore, the board determined it appropriate for the national office to identify the volunteer leaders to serve on the task forces for the term 2011-2013, taking into consideration feedback received by the board. The appointments for the volunteer groups (councils, committees and task forces) will be announced in the very near future.

Board Travel Expectation. Just like most individuals, organizations and companies that are finding ways to cut costs in these economic times, so too is RID. This discussion was raised as we try to solely dedicate our resources to the top priorities while still balancing the need to have the in person interactions with our members at state and regional conferences as well as with our stakeholders at their sponsored events. An adjustment has been made in the budget which reduces the opportunities for board travel. However, please be assured that we are seeking other means for that member-to-member connection to occur without requiring the expense of attendance at sponsored event during this time of economic challenge.

Business Meeting Motions. The board has asked the national office staff to provide a status report on all of the motions that carried from the 2011 RID Business Meeting, especially those that are time-limited. In keeping with the focus on the strategic priorities for the current fiscal year, we would like to ensure that resources related to the implementation or research of these motions are in line with the current priorities. There will be more to report back on the implementation plans and schedules for each of the motions from the 2011 RID National Conference. Additionally, the minutes from the [2011 Business Meeting](#) are now available on the RID Web site at www.rid.org, keyword search "minutes."

Calls for Action. As I shared during the closing session of national conference in Atlanta, GA, for RID to remain relevant, we must re-assess the strength of the foundation and structures established since 1964. For us to be successful, each member must take action by participating in the following tasks:

First, as you know, the [Pre-Job Task Analysis \(Pre-JTA\) survey](#) was distributed earlier this week. Your participation in this survey is essential for an important step in the NAD-RID NIC enhancement process. This survey is being distributed to practitioners and deaf, hard of hearing and hearing consumers to help determine the need for specialty certifications within the field of sign language interpreting. Specialty certification plays an important role in meeting the demands and realities of the marketplace. We are trying to determine those specialized areas that are most critical to serving the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing consumers. Your participation in this process is vital. Please take the 15 minutes estimated to complete the survey to share your input. To access the

survey, please go to, https://lucas141.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_a2SW8c0WQxHSzis.

Additionally, as stated above, in the very near future RID will be sending out a survey with the question, "Who is our constituency and what do they need RID to be and what do they need RID to be doing right now?" It will be an open-ended question for you to share as much as you like or if you can fit it all in a few words, then that is welcome too. The point is that we want you to share with us what you value from your professional organization. I hope the preview to this question helps you to take time to formulate your response when the survey goes live. We anticipate this going out in mid-October so as to provide the necessary time and attention to the Pre-JTA. Look for an e-mail blast announcement as well as posts on the RID Facebook page (with more than 12,400 fans!!) and the RID Web site at www.rid.org.

Furthermore, and this may be the most important of all messages throughout my report, we, being the RID Board of Directors and the national office staff, also ask that you understand the current economic effects on operations of RID as well as the reallocation of resources to address some of the issues that have arisen over the last year. The exercises we underwent during this board of directors meeting really helped us to focus our resources on key strategic priorities. We recognize that these priorities may halt or slow down some impactful projects – projects that are important to the field. However, these discussions demonstrated that while everything is important and relevant to the organization and the field, and we know they are, we really need to have focused energies and resources on those that have the most impact on our organization's overall health and future – both in a fiscal and philosophical sense.

Finally, the board would like to send a great big thank you to Potomac Chapter RID for observing the board meeting Friday afternoon and providing us some nourishment that lasted throughout the days of our meeting. Connecting with our affiliate chapter leadership and membership during the face to face meetings is that member-to-member connection that further builds the foundation of understanding within our organization through dialogue.

It is time for RID collectively and RID as individuals to roll up our sleeves and effect change in ourselves, in our daily lives, in our profession and in our organization. Plain and simple, and as I have said it before, I say it again with emphasis, RID needs to be our members and our members need to be RID. Providing you this extensive wrap-up report following the exhaustive days of our five-day board meeting is a way for us to demonstrate to you that the door is open for your participation and we hope that you will come on in.

Until the next update (which just may be tomorrow),

Brenda

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