E-NARST NEWS

National Association for Research in Science Teaching

Organized to improve science teaching through research

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E-NARST News Editor

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2003-2006 NARST Executive Board member, and Chair, Publications Advisory Committee

As a NARST Board we decided to publish our NARST News electronically and rename it E-NARST News. This is our first issue in the new format. We are continuing the numbering of the volumes from NARST News. We will continue to have the issues downloadable from the NARST Web site, so we will have easy access to the publication. Also the history of our organization will continue to be available.

In this issue, Immediate Past NARST President Charles Anderson highlights changes we are making in the NARST organization in light of the recently voted changes to our Bylaws. He includes a description of each standing committee of NARST and how you as our members can help in the organization.

Our NARST President John Staver has a message about his presidential talk at our upcoming annual meeting. NARST President-Elect Jim Shymansky tells us how the Program Committee has organized the meeting, with details of how to register, if you have not already done so. Larry Yore and his subcommittee of the Membership and Elections Committee provide us with informative details about local arrangements in Dallas.

Finally, we have reports from three other of our eight committees in this issue: Publications Advisory Committee (including a report from the new editors, J. Randy McGinnis and Angelo Collins, on *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*), Equity and Ethics Committee, and NARST Awards Committee. The other three committees will report in the next issue.

Let my layout editor, Lisa Upham lumham@chem.fsu.edu or me gilmer@chem.fsu.edu know if you have any suggestions of what to add or how to improve this publication.

President's Message

John R. Staver

2004-05 NARST President

It has been said that the only constant in life is change, and perhaps the only example of a person who is happy about change is a baby with a wet or soiled diaper. Moreover, all of us face change on an individual and as well as a group level. My purpose in this very brief president's message is to set the stage for my presidential talk at the upcoming NARST annual meeting in Dallas, Texas. As a professional society, NARST faces change, not just to survive, but rather to thrive in the next 10-20 years. The need for change emerges from five sources:

1. Trends in associations;
2. Revenue and publishing;
3. Governance and membership;
4. External forces; and
5. Planning.

I look forward to seeing you in Dallas, and I look forward to expanding on what I have said above at the awards dinner.

A Note from President-elect

Jim Shymansky

2005-06 NARST President-elect

The response to the call for volunteers for the various NARST committees that was posted on the list-serve on January 31st was overwhelming. In almost every case, I received emails of

interest from about about five times as many volunteers as there are committee openings. What a great testament to the spirit and commitment of our members.

I will be working with the board members who chair the various committees in the next few weeks to finalize selections and will be personally contacting all of you who have volunteered prior to the meeting in Dallas. Thanks again for your prompt and enthusiastic response.

Reorganization and the Future of NARST

Charles W. Anderson, January, 2004, Immediate Past NARST President

When the NARST Executive Board met in fall, 2004, we began organizing ourselves to carry out the changes in the Bylaws approved by a membership vote over the summer. We are excited about this work because we hope to make NARST a better organization, providing better services and new opportunities to its members and more fully accomplishing our mission.

Making NARST a better organization must be a collective effort. We are all volunteers, and several hundred of us work together to do the work of the organization. I would like to use this message to explain what we hope to accomplish and how we will rely on the efforts of volunteer members in our efforts. We need your help to:

- Provide improved member services,
- Organize ourselves better to accomplish our mission, and
- Involve more volunteer members in the work of the organization.

Improved Member Services

NARST is a service organization, and we are continuing to work toward improved services for all members. Here are some of the things we are working on now:

- Electronic voting
- Improved review procedures for conference proposals
- Making conference proceedings available on CD-ROM,
- Electronic membership renewal and conference registration, and
- Improved record keeping and databases.

All of these are hard things to do. They require us to develop new working procedures as we learn about and confront organizational, legal, and financial issues. We are mostly amateurs at these things, and we are doing them while we have other full-time jobs. (NARST's only half-time employee is Marilyn Estes, who, among other duties, processes your membership renewal and conference registration, organizes the staff for the conference registration desk, and manages our finances and member records.)

Sometimes we make mistakes as we make these changes, and we appreciate your patience as we work through them. We also appreciate your suggestions, your time, and your expertise if you can help us do them better.

Organizing to Accomplish Our Mission

Our principal goal is to do a better job of accomplishing NARST's mission, as described in our Mission Statement:

> The ultimate goal of NARST is to help all learners achieve science literacy. NARST promotes this goal by: 1) encouraging and supporting the application of diverse research methods and theoretical perspectives from multiple disciplines to the investigation of teaching and learning in science; 2) communicating science education research findings to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers; and 3) cooperating with other educational and scientific societies to influence educational policies.

I believe that the new committee structure will allow us to focus on issues and problems that are central to our mission. Here are our new committees and their charges.

The International Committee

NARST members elected our first International Coordinator, Saouma Boujaoude, in Spring 2004. The expanded charge of the International Committee includes policy, representation, and coordination with international science education organizations. This committee is to:

- recommend policy to the NARST Board concerning matters of international science education research;
- represent the concerns, interests and unique perspectives of international members; and,
- stimulate collaborations and exchange of ideas between NARST and other international

science education organizations. The International Coordinator will serve as NARST's liaison to various international science education organizations.

If you are an international NARST member or a US member who is concerned about these issues, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to the International Coordinator.

The Program Committee

The Program Committee assists the President-elect in planning and conducting the annual meeting. The Program Committee under the old Bylaws used to be a committee separate from the Strand Coordinators Group, but there was overlap between the membership and the functions of the two groups. Therefore, it made sense to join these two groups into one Program Committee, especially since much of the work of the Program Committee concerns the work of the Strand Coordinators, and vice versa. This also allows Strand Coordinators to have a more active, influential, and visible role within NARST as they organize the annual program. Thus the new Program Committee is responsible for all aspects of the annual NARST conference. The members of this committee will:

- select the theme and speakers for the annual meeting;
- organize and manage the process of reviewing proposals for the annual meeting; and
- organize the annual meeting program and proceedings.

If you wish to help shape our program by contributing to this complicated and difficult process, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to the President Elect as Program Chair or to David Zandvliet, the Annual Meeting Coordinator.

Equity and Ethics Committee

This committee is charged with providing leadership and guidance to the organization on issues of equity, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disabling conditions, sexual orientations, language and religion. This charge includes both internal and external responsibilities:

- encourage equity-related research in science education;
- inform NARST members that they know research and its implications for their work as curriculum developers and teacher educators;
- inform policy makers and science teachers;
- insure that all researchers are treated fairly within NARST.

There are currently many children in our schools whose possibilities for the future are diminished because they are taught science in ways that are inappropriate, ineffective, and culturally insensitive. If you wish to promote the interests of these children or of researchers who make these children a primary concern, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to Okhee Lee, chair of the Equity and Ethics Committee.

External Policy and Relations

Enhancing NARST's collaborations and affiliations with other professional organizations and education stakeholders should play an important role in our ability to influence policy. Such partnerships and collaborations do not occur without concerted effort. Consequently, this committee will also focus its efforts on the formation and maintenance of relationships with appropriate organizations and stakeholders. The members of this committee:

- monitor and study policies that affect science education and science education research;
- develop partnerships and collaborations with appropriate professional organizations and groups concerned with the quality of science teaching and learning; and
- produce position papers based on research, based on current and innovative findings and distributed to members, policy-makers, and the public at large.

If you wish to help NARST members understand policy developments and influence policies that affect science education, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas.

Research Committee

This committee is charged specifically with professional development activities that improve the research expertise and understanding of NARST members and other science educators. The committee provides NARST members with professional development related to all aspects of research methodology, research findings, and the dissemination of research findings to constituencies outside the organization. Members of this committee:

- develop, organize and/or implement various professional development activities for NARST members, including special research topic pre-sessions at the Annual Meeting and research reviews and research-oriented documents specifically designed for internal use and member benefit;

- select and coordinate presentations made by NARST members at NSTA meetings;
- conceptualize, develop, and disseminate reviews of research and white papers on appropriate topics.

If you wish to help NARST members and other science educators improve their research expertise and involvement, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to Gail Richmond, outgoing Chair and Pamela Fraser-Abder, incoming Chair of the Research Committee.

Publications Advisory Committee

NARST publications are the organization's primary outlet to constituencies outside the organization. In addition to developing policy for the existing publications of the organization, the committee will facilitate the development of joint publishing projects with other professional organizations (e.g., NSTA, ASTE) as well as other publications. Members of this committee:

- recommend policy concerning the Association's print and electronic publications;
- develop and disseminate additional publications specifically designed for use by media, policy makers, education officials, teachers, and other professional organizations;
- monitor the development of publications initiated by the External Policy and Relations, and Research Committees
- monitor and oversee updates, and additions/deletions to the website.

In a time when electronic technology is rapidly changing the nature and availability of all kinds of publications, we need to be thoughtful about our publications outlets and strategies. If you wish to help improve NARST's publications and communication strategies, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to Penny J. Gilmer, Chair of the Publications Advisory Committee.

Membership and Elections Committee

This committee combines the work of two prior committees. We anticipate that the new committee will link recruitment, retention, and increased activity from a larger segment of the membership. Members of this committee:

- seek new members from a variety of backgrounds;
- provide mentoring and support for new members;
- retain active members by soliciting interest in committee membership and elected offices; and
- develop a slate for annual elections.

If you wish to help improve NARST's recruiting and support for new members, as well as recruit and select members for appointed and elected offices, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to Larry Yore, Chair of the Membership and Elections Committee.

Awards Committee

NARST used to have five standing awards committees, each chaired by an Executive Board member that managed the nominations and selection of the Outstanding Doctoral Research Award, NARST Outstanding Paper Award, JRST Award, Early Career Research Award, and Distinguished Contribution Through Research Award. These committees, called Select Committees, have been consolidated within one Awards committee. As members of the Awards Committee, Award Select Committee Chairs, appointed by the President-elect manage the nominations and judging of the awards, and report to the Awards Committee chair. Chairs and members of the Award Select Committee:

- accept nominations and select winners for each of the NARST awards;
- discuss issues related to equity and efficiency in the selection process, and the appropriateness of the award considering the NARST mission; and
- recommend changes in awards or procedures to the Board of Directors.

The processes of selecting awards winners benefits NARST members as well as the award winners; through these processes we learn about the best that NARST has to offer and refine our standards for good research. If you wish to participate in and help improve these processes, we encourage you to attend the meeting of this committee at the conference in Dallas and make your interests known to the president elect and to Zoubeida Dagher, outgoing Chair or to ingoing chair, Fouad Abd-El-Khalick of the Awards Committee.

How Volunteer Members Can Help

I am excited about the potential that this new committee structure has to make NARST a better organization. I hope that it will offer many new opportunities for members to improve their own expertise and accomplishments, as well as contribute to our shared goals articulated in NARST's mission.

This depends, though, on members'

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thorough and fair. This year, after many deliberations, the Distinguished Contributions Awards Selection Committee implemented a change in procedures that was then approved by the Awards Committee. I ask you to maintain a close line of communication with the Awards Selection Committee members and chairs regarding ideas for improving nomination or review procedures.

Finally, I wish to end this statement on a personal note. In my capacity as a Board member, I have chaired the Outstanding Awards Committee for two years, and the NARST Awards Committee in this transitional year. During this time, I have had the pleasure of working closely with many dedicated and thoughtful committee members who have given much of their time and energy to the tasks at hand.

As I draw close to the end of my term, I wish to thank every single award selection committee member for his/her dedication and hard work. I also want to thank all the chairs and co-chairs of those committees, who have provided strong leadership and continuity during this transition period. Without this incredible teamwork none of the Awards would have been possible.

In the next issue of E-NARST NEWS, the following standing committees (International Committee, External Policy and Relations Committee, the Research Committee, and the Membership and Elections Committee) and the ad hoc Committee on the History of Science Education will have reports of their committee work. Committees that submitted reports here may have updates. We will try to have one report per committee per year.

If you would like a paper copy of this Newsletter, please inform:

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