

State of the Association

2010 Education Forum and Annual Meeting
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For a few minutes let's look at what the Power of Commitment can bring about, and has brought about this year. Coach Vince Lombardi said: "Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."

I also say that's what makes this association work: Individuals working together to make IAAP great. Along the way, individuals learn and grow personally as well as professionally and that benefits IAAP as a whole. It benefits our chapters, divisions, districts and the administrative profession. All this starts with you, and with me, as individual members committed to a common goal. That goal is to make this association great.

Power of Commitment has been the theme for the 2009-2010 year. We've held onto a commitment to stay the course, to finish well. That's important to all of us—whether job or family related—and it's especially important in our vision for IAAP. It means that person to person, board to board, member to member, we pass the baton to the next one in line so the vision for IAAP doesn't die at the end of each year—instead, it continues on through a smooth transition maintaining forward momentum. We've made progress this past year in our succession development to ensure that when I hand that baton off into the very capable hands of Mary Ramsay-Drow, CPS/CAP and the 2010-2011 board, they won't miss a beat in continuing the growth and advancement of IAAP.

This Power of Commitment year with IAAP hasn't been just me working in isolation. This year I've worked with the wonderful staff at headquarters, fellow IAAP members and the board. During my time on the board, not just as president but also during the years leading up to it, I've worked with amazing, committed and talented people. We've worked together to ensure a continuance from one board to the next, one president to the next and that will carry on into the future starting with the 2010-2011 year of Passion and Purpose. It's going to be another strong year ahead for IAAP and I'm excited about the foundation this board and the boards before it have laid for the future.

Reflecting back on the past year what I see is an association that is resilient and strong. We've accomplished much in the last twelve months by continuing to use data-driven strategies to fuel decisions. Thank you for taking the time to complete surveys and to inform us of your opinions. Your input is invaluable.

We've been able to attain continuity on the international board and in the association by using the Project Plan as our guide. We created the Project Plan with guidance from the book *7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations do that Others Don't*. The Project Plan identifies the areas of focus and who, how and when the work will be accomplished. Our Project Plan, fueled by concrete data, guided our decision-making this year.

As a part of the Project Plan, two years ago the International Board established an Executive Oversight Committee (EOC) consisting of the international president, president-elect, vice president and executive director to oversee the plan's development and fulfillment. A project manager was put into place to drive the plan's key components to completion.

As a result of the Project Plan, we've completed an intensive process mapping project at our international headquarters with the goal of creating capacity and streamlining our everyday processes. We've made strides toward integrating and working with our international affiliates more effectively. We have new processes in place to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and also to more quickly identify the growing number of companies in competition with IAAP.

Action teams and think tanks are an essential part of the Project Plan. They consist of board members, headquarters staff and IAAP members working together on initiatives such as recommending changes to our certification program, revising and adding to our leadership documents, analyzing our alliances from the past five years to identify key alliances for the future, and continuing to survey our members and collect feedback for the international board to use in future planning.

With the first revision to the Project Plan in 2010, a result of strategic planning at the board's spring meeting, we realized that being remarkable is a process . . . not an event . . . and that we will have to continue being "remarkable" in the years to come. As such, the recently approved "Process Plan" can be located in the web community.

As our association moves forward, listens to our members, and gathers data, there have been, and will continue to be changes. With that in mind, I'd like to take a few minutes to tell you about some big changes coming to our certification program with the fall 2011 exam.

IAAP has the only true certification for administrative professionals. Our certifications show the world that those who have attained our certification, possess and maintain the knowledge and skills needed to be that go-to person in the workplace, who can take virtually any task and ensure that no one else has to worry about it.

Our program has long faced one challenge, however, and that's this: it's been difficult to explain and to publicize. When the CAP was first instituted, it was during the time when the term "Administrative Professional" was becoming the standard for our profession. We changed the name of our association to reflect that, and the assumption was that as the world became used to calling us "Administrative Professionals," the CAP rating would become our "baseline" exam.

In practice, though, that hasn't happened, and what we're left with is a system with two ratings that are separate in name. But as many of you who have taken the exams know, they are definitely not separate in the way they are tested.

Have you ever tried to explain the system of CPS, CAP and CPS/CAP to someone outside of IAAP? It's difficult to get across that CPS and CAP are separate ratings—but, you can get the CAP by taking the CPS, **plus** one part—unless you take the CPS exam first. Then, you can sit for the fourth part and get your CAP—**however**, if you do that, you're not a CAP—you're a CPS/CAP—even though you took the same exams as someone who's a CAP, just at different times. Actually, it's amazing that we can explain the process to someone inside of IAAP!

And if it's that complicated to explain to someone who has a working knowledge of the process, imagine how difficult it is to publicize it to the business community as a whole!

Before I go into specifics, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of you who are currently certified. It is you who have built this program, supported it through the years, and it's that support that allows us to change this program while still keeping its integrity intact.

The fall 2011 exams will bring some changes to our program. In late 2009, we began investigating the possibility of adding a third rating... one that would build on the CAP and offer some areas of specialty. However, in looking at the process, what we realized is that in doing so, what we'd be doing is adding another layer of complexity to an already complex program. And, that IAAP would be better served by taking this opportunity to make the process simpler and also more easily expandable.

Beginning with the fall 2011 exam, IAAP will move from a two rating system to a one rating system—with areas of specialty. Our base exam, while still testing material similar to the current three part exam, will now be a one part exam, and passage will result in earning a CAP rating.

The shorter exam, which we now call the "fourth part," will remain, with its focus on organizational management. Passage of this exam will result in the "OM" designator to the CAP rating: CAP-OM.

This system, with **one rating** and areas of specialization, will allow us to offer many more certification designations in the future. Imagine being certified in an array of technology systems and software and earning a CAP-IT! Or being certified in medical administration and earning, for example, a CAP-MA! This system will allow IAAP to devote its resources where they're needed most: developing new programs in a system designed to expand, instead of attempting to figure out how to fit new certifications into a closed system.

What does this mean for those of you who are already certified? Those of you who currently hold a CPS will have your rating switched to a CAP. Those of you who hold CAP ratings will hold the new CAP-OM rating, as will CPS/CAP holders.

There will also be changes coming to the recertification process, and I think you'll like these changes. This change will begin immediately, although our Certification Department will allow recertification under either the new or old system for the next nine months.

The first change is the number of points required for recertification. Beginning immediately, it takes just 60 points to recertify your rating, rather than 90. The new categories will be as follows: Continuing Education, which allows a maximum

of 60 points—with a minimum of 30 in this area); Other professional or technology Certifications will be worth 5 points each, with a maximum of 20; and the last category is Leadership, which retains the same criteria and is worth a maximum of 20 points. With this new system, there will be no elective or work project points.

Why the change? Well, this change is the result of the work of two action teams as a part of IAAP's Process Plan. They found that most of the issues with applicants having points denied came in the elective and work project categories.

To make our process more accessible, the decision by these teams was to bring the number of points required for recertification more in line with other professional certifications (moving from 90 to 60) and eliminate the areas that are the most loosely defined and that invite confusion. We're confident that you'll find these changes a welcome and needed one... and more importantly, that they will make the recertification process a more streamlined one.

I know that there are lots and lots of questions, and I'm sorry that I can't take the time to answer them this morning. To address your questions, our certification department will be holding office hours during the entire EFAM, beginning today at 1:00 p.m. In addition, an information sheet explaining all the changes will be available at the back of the room as you leave this morning. Please be sure to take just one. This information will be available online as well for you to download.

The changes to IAAP's certification program are one of several we've made this year in response to data and to move the association forward. Sometimes, change is difficult because we are comfortable with the familiar. However, change brings growth. Change allows us to explore new and better things but doesn't preclude us from keeping the programs that are still effective. An unknown author once said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

In addition to changes, we've also experienced challenges this year. As discussed during last year's EFAM in Minneapolis, IAAP expected a difficult 2009-2010 financial year. The following factors contributed to the challenge of managing IAAP's finances:

- Attendance at EFAM was down more than 30 percent last year.
- IAAP experienced more than a 40 percent drop in attendance at both the Certification Conference and the Spring Conference (formally, the Professional Education Conference).
- A lag in dues renewals which started last summer has continued.
- With the effects of the recession, it is difficult to determine if member drops are due to the poor economic times or related to the dues increase. We think it is a little of both. Currently, efforts are in place for both retention of existing members and recruitment of new members.

At the post-EFAM Board Meeting in Minneapolis, I appointed a Financial Oversight Committee to closely monitor IAAP's finances. The committee consists of the international president, president-elect, treasurer, executive director and controller. They meet by conference call on a monthly basis to review the latest financials of the association. The results of the meetings are communicated back to the full board of directors with quarterly updates provided to the members.

IAAP headquarters began cutting expenses even before the end of last fiscal year and continues to monitor all expenses closely. Some examples of cost cutting measures that have been undertaken are:

- Headquarters staff salaries were frozen for the year.
- An alternative insurance plan was selected to avoid a 17 percent increase, saving IAAP \$40,000
- Fewer staff in attendance at the 2009 EFAM and other events. The staff level has remained the same for this year's EFAM.
- Two full-time positions resulting from departures have not been filled with permanent staff.

- The travel and lodging budget for the entire association was reduced by more than 40% over what was originally budgeted. One way that we accomplished this was by reducing the number of IAAP staff managers attending the fall and spring board meetings.

IAAP continues to look at ways to bolster our revenues as well. This is a more difficult challenge to accomplish during the midst of a recession. We have some programs that will be announced which will provide the association with needed revenues but, just as importantly, are in alignment with our mission as an organization.

Additional steps were taken this year to bolster our need to survive the economic downturn and maintain our operations. Also mentioned at the 2009 EFAM was the need to have a cash infusion into IAAP to withstand the decrease in cash reserves until our dues increase took full effect and the economy began to recover.

The board began discussions immediately after returning home from Minneapolis. In the fall, two loans were initiated in order to provide the necessary cash to tide the association over during the anticipated lean months (in terms of cash flow) during December and January:

IAAP took one loan through refinancing of the headquarters building. The principle amount owed on the building at the time of the refinancing was approximately \$115,000. Due to the downturn in the commercial real estate market, IAAP was limited in the total amount of the refinanced loan that could be obtained. Knowing the available amount may not be enough, the International Board asked the Retirement Trust Foundation Board of Trustees to extend a hand and also provide a loan to IAAP. This loan not only benefits IAAP but also the RTF since they are guaranteed a 6.5 percent return on a loan during a very unstable time in the financial markets. Both loans netted IAAP a combined total of more than \$500,000 of additional cash to weather the shortfall of financial resources.

These loans will provide the necessary cushion to enable IAAP to continue its operations until the economic recovery has taken place and our dues increase has fully been realized. All of what I have just said was predicted during last year's Annual Meeting dues discussion in Minneapolis. In addition, similar predictions and information were outlined in the "IAAP's Financial Future" document referenced in several of my President's messages this year.

The end result of the final unaudited numbers from the 2009-2010 budget shows a loss of about \$420,000. Again, this loss was predicted as a result of the circumstances I just provided and also was cited in the Financial Future document. The year-end loss figure I just provided to you is an estimate at this time. The audited statements will be available and printed in our annual report, which is scheduled to be published in late October. The International Board, in a decision made earlier this year, decided to move the publishing of the IAAP Annual Report to October so that it could include the audited financial statements which are not available until this time frame.

We realize this year has been a challenge. We also realize it has been a sacrifice for IAAP members to support a dues increase. The International Board knew we needed a dues increase before the economy fell off a cliff in the spring of 2009 and we need it even more to withstand the economic recession. We greatly appreciate your support of the dues increase.

We will continue to make necessary adjustments and will make the tough decisions should they be warranted. President-Elect Ramsay-Drow has already committed to continuing the Financial Oversight Committee through her term and we will continue to be vigilant in our oversight and use of the member's financial resources. We will also begin the process of building our financial reserves to help withstand any future economic downturns.

IAAP HAS adapted to the changing economic environment. This has truly been a team effort by the international board of directors, headquarters staff and you, the members, which has enabled us to get to this point.

We will prevail and be a stronger organization as a result since we have all learned a great deal from this experience that will help us in the future.

In spite of some challenging times financially at IAAP, we've taken the data that you've provided through our surveys and looked at what's working, what's not and what holes needed to be filled this year. While we've done away with some programs that weren't meeting the needs of the majority of our members, we also added benefits for our members.

The membership department has added webinars for members. We now offer webinars for new members and chapter and division leaders. For new members, this gets them involved immediately in IAAP, showing them the benefits of membership

and how to take full advantage of what we have to offer. The education department started a weekly podcast series, interviewing authors and speakers on topics of interest to administrative professionals. We also now have *OfficePro* online and we're adding back issues of the magazine as time permits. Our web community continues to grow and thrive, offering members not only a vast network of IAAP members, but a "network of networks" for chapters and divisions. We've produced our first webinar on how to use the web community, and started providing webinars for chapter and division treasurers with, I hope, many more to come.

The IAAP Headquarters staff has worked hard this year—doing more with less staff and less resources. I greatly appreciate their Power of Commitment to IAAP, and to you, the members. They not only team with the board to achieve goals and objectives, but at the same time support you, the member, the chapters and divisions of IAAP. Please join me in thanking this dedicated group of people.

Before I close, there are several other people I want to personally thank for their hard work and dedication to IAAP while I've served as president. First, my thanks go out to the leaders in IAAP; all the leaders at all levels. Thank you for your time and commitment to the association and to your fellow members. To the division presidents who began this journey with me a year ago, it's been an honor and a pleasure working with you. I've appreciated your enthusiasm during this year in gaining new members and working with your chapters. I've also appreciate your professionalism in dealing with each challenge you encountered. YOU have raised the bar for all who follow. Thank you, too, for your support of the international board.

I also want to thank the members who served on the Committee on Nominations and the Bylaws and Standing Rules Committees. I know these volunteer positions take time. Thank you for your time and efforts on behalf of IAAP.

I want to also thank the headquarters managers and staff, and especially Executive Director Don Bretthauer, for your guidance, trust, teamwork and passion for the association. Your depth of knowledge about IAAP, availability to IAAP leaders for assistance in resolving issues, and work with the board this year has played a part in positioning IAAP to be more adaptable and flexible in meeting the needs of members and being proactive in addressing external influences. To Senior Managers Joy Johnston, Sue Tuff and Aaron Ensminger . . . thank you for your exceptional service and support during the year. Each one of the staff at headquarters brought expertise that made my job as president flow much smoother than I could ever have expected.

To the members of the Grand Rapids Chapter and the Michigan Division . . . without your support, friendship and mentoring, I would not be standing here today. Thank you!

And to the comedy act of Shamali, Shamali and Obradavich . . . words cannot express the thanks and love I have for you. Your support of my involvement in IAAP over the years has provided the capacity for me to be international president this year. I appreciate very much that you've been with me for this weekend. I look forward to returning home Friday as a past international president whose time will be totally devoted to you. Does this mean that you're returning the honey do list for me to do now?

In closing, I want to say that IAAP has been a part of my life since I first became a member back in 1987. This journey has changed my life and I trust that your IAAP journey is changing yours. I'd like to end with the beginning of this IAAP year which started back in Kansas City in April of 2009 with the Incoming Division Presidents Conference and the Power of Commitment year.

Thank you.