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Platform Statement

1. What leadership qualities do you possess and what motivates you to take on the responsibilities of the president-elect of the Alliance?

I have consistently served the profession through a variety of leadership roles at the state, district and national levels, and have held a variety of leadership positions at the institutions where I have been employed. While serving in these positions, I have developed more patience, a greater appreciation for opinions other than my own, a sense of duty to understand the immediate and long-term implications of my actions, and a commitment to servant leadership. My motivation is based on my belief that my experience and my knowledge of the structure and function of the Alliance and its component associations have prepared me for a position in which I can use this knowledge and experience to assist the members in making important decisions related to the future of our professional organization.

2. What do you consider the three primary challenges facing the Alliance and the professions it represents, and what recommendations do you have for addressing these challenges?

In my opinion, the most immediate and important challenge to the person who becomes the next President-Elect of the Alliance is communicating the work of the Organizational Planning Committee (OPC) to the membership and guiding decision-makers through an open and objective process to enhance the effectiveness of our professional organization. As you will see in my response to the Applied Strategic Plan in the section that follows, I believe that declining membership, the need for non-dues revenue, responsive programming, collaboration and advocacy are all critical needs that must be addressed. However, the charge to the OPC to move from the current structure “to a unified organization with a focus on comprehensive physical education and physical activity” represents both an attempt to enhance the efficiency with which we operate and an effort to be inclusive in continuing to address the diverse needs of our members.

I have gone through this before. I represented the American Association for Leisure and Recreation (AALR) on the Board of Governors when demands for increased revenue and a decline in association membership forced us to seek ways to maintain the programs, products and services our members valued, but to do so in a more efficient way. Our biggest obstacle to our future was our past. We took great pride in what we had accomplished under the structure of AALR and the collective history we had worked so hard to create. Important publications, ‘brand recognition’ and sincere affection for the association and for the family of professional colleagues we came to honor and respect, all made this a very difficult process. What made the transition to AAPAR (the result of the merger of AALR and AAALF) a success was the realization that we are all far more similar than we are different.

Secondly, while I view the effort of looking at ourselves and being sure we are ‘doing things right’ to be extremely important, I also believe it is equally important, if not even more important, to look outwardly to be sure we are ‘doing the right things.’ The authors contributing to one of the textbooks I use (Bates, 2008) suggests that a good manager looks internally to be sure that what goes on ‘inside’ the organization reflects the best practices of the profession; that the right people are in the right places, that the facility provides a safe and effective experience, and that revenues exceeds expenses. However, the function of leadership is to look outwardly and ensure that both our internal concerns (those of immediate interest to the members) and external concerns (those that impact society in general) are being addressed. I stress to my students that it is important to wear both ‘hats’ – to be aware of why what we do is so important (doing the right things) and to also never lose sight of providing the very best experience possible (doing things right). I believe both roles are extremely important to the future of our organization.

Lastly, the professional prestige associated with what so many of us do – teaching – is lacking. On one hand, I’d like to say its society’s problem for not recognizing how important we are to the future of our students, our communities, our country, or our world. However, I am often reminded of one of my favorite Michael Jackson songs – The Man in the Mirror. Sometimes it becomes necessary to quit blaming others, and begin taking a look in the mirror and asking ourselves to change our ways. Its kind of like demanding respect versus commanding respect. It would be great if all we had to do was to tell people (command) how important we are and enhanced prestige would automatically result. Most of us, however, have learned that respect is earned. Earning respect is often a result of my musing in my second challenge stated above – doing the right things and doing them right! Our challenge as an organization is to research and share the best practices of our profession – to provide our members with the benefits they seek. Being a professional is an ongoing process - of being a life-long learner. Let’s make our organization THE source for life-long learning.

3. How would you implement the Alliance Strategic Goals during your tenure as president of the Alliance?

I would concentrate on goal 5: “Ensure that the structure of the Alliance enables it to fulfill its mission.” I concur with the Strategic Planning committee’s assertion in its drafting of the impact statement for this goal, that by adopting the ‘right’ structure “The Alliance will be more responsive to the contemporary environment in meeting member concerns and societal needs through the provision of effective infrastructure to implement and support needed programs, products and services.” To me, accomplishment of this goal will result in significant progress in the other five goals - an effective and efficient structure will facilitate advocacy, enhance collaboration, enhance our ability to attract members and non-dues revenue, and provide programs that are responsive to the needs of our members and that move the Alliance toward accomplishment of its vision, mission and goals.