

Brief History

National Council for Higher Education with the National Education Association 1987 - 2024



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Preface

Prior to the creation of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), the National Education Association (NEA) higher education program was heavily staff driven. Governance was used more in a consultative role on occasion except for organizing campaigns. However, with the establishment of NCHE, the NEA began to use the NCHE presidents and other key leaders more and more as the public face of NEA's higher education membership and program. The NCHE president and higher education leaders have subsequently been the representatives for NEA in national and international higher education program and for discussion of issues. Thus, NCHE leadership and the NEA higher education program are inseparable in many ways, with staff and NCHE leaders working collaboratively ever since the formation of the organization.

Pre-NCHE

Before NCHE'S inception, two groups represented higher education. The NEA Higher Education Council, with its members elected by geographic regions, served as the governance body for higher education members within NEA. At the same time, the second group – an informal Higher Education Caucus – met during the NEA Representative Assembly (RA) and the higher education conference. This group served as an advocate for higher education issues and concern within NEA since the caucus was not limited to charges established by NEA.

In the early 1980s, however, higher education members and the NEA began to look for a more effective voice for higher education. As a result, the Higher Education Council was replaced by the Standing Committee on Higher Education where 12 members were appointed by the NEA president. It is important to note that both the Standing Committee and its predecessor, the Higher Education Council, served as futures-thinking bodies for NEA, focusing on organizing, advocacy, issue, and directions for higher education.

By the mid 1980s, NEA asked again that higher education look for ways to broaden its voice within the Association beyond the Standing Committee and the informal caucus. NEA suggested the National Council for Urban Education Association (NCUEA) as a model that would serve higher education well. NEA was willing to give a new “council” the exact same status and privileges as NCUEA, including a contract providing some financial and staff support, an office, and official observer status at the NEA Board, Executive Committee, and Budget Committee meetings, among others. In the NEA structure, these councils were technically caucuses, but they were awarded additional status and support. As a result, at the 1987 NEA Higher Education

Conference, members voted to dissolve the Higher Education Caucus in favor of the National Council for Higher Education. (The only parallel benefit afforded to NCUEA but promised and never given to NCHE was a seat on the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education Board.)

During this period, Ken Magill, former president of the United Faculty of Florida, joined NEA's communications staff. Under his stewardship, higher education members agreed to forgo receiving NEA K-12 focused publications in exchange for three higher education publications: the *NEA Advocate* (newsletter approximately 10 times higher a year), the *NEA Almanac of Higher Education*, and *Thought and Action*, a refereed journal with a group of NEA higher education faculty serving as the review panel. The latter was a first for NEA since it was ceding editorial control.

James Davenport, 1987-1989

First President

In February 1987, at the Monteleone Hotel in New Orleans, higher education members voted to dissolve the Higher Education Caucus and approved the Constitution and Bylaws for the NCHE. Jim Davenport, Washtenaw Community College, Michigan, was elected the first president. Carol Gaede, Inter-Faculty Organization, Minnesota, was elected vice president, and Roger Knutsen, Green River Community College, Washington, was elected secretary/treasurer. In February 1989, in Orlando, Florida, Davenport was elected to a second term. Ann Shadwick, California Faculty Association and San Francisco State University, was elected vice president. Knutsen continued as secretary/treasurer.

Early Advocacy for NCHE

During his terms as NCHE President, Davenport set the tone for NCHE's visibility at NEA. At Executive Committee and Budget Committee meetings, he was granted the privilege of asking questions and providing input from the higher education perspective on issues under consideration. He served as an emissary for higher education members and NCHE, making sure that both membership and NEA staff understood the importance of higher education. He attended many state functions and visited higher education locals/chapters, working to build membership in NCHE and to convey the importance of higher education members being a strong voice within NEA and their states. He also led the NEA delegation to the International Conference of University Teaching Organizations (ICUTO) higher education conference in Norway.

Ann Shadwick, 1989-1995

Following Davenport's untimely death in May 1989, Shadwick became president at the close of the RA. Roger Knutsen was appointed vice president and served as both vice president and secretary/treasurer until the Regular Annual Meeting in February 1990 when he was elected vice president. Jean Peters, Oregon, was elected secretary/treasurer.

Shadwick was subsequently re-elected in 1991 and 1993. Knutsen served as vice president and, in 1992, Jim Rice, Quinsigamond Community College, Massachusetts, was elected secretary/treasurer.

Research Center and Contract Analysis Systems Established

The key accomplishment during these years for higher education members was the establishment of the NEA Higher Education Research Center and its advisory group of higher education members and staff. The first priority for the Center was to create the Higher Education Contract Analysis System (HECAS). Higher education members had been asking for contract analysis on a national basis for nearly 20 years. To support and help develop priorities for the new research center, the NCHE President, NEA higher education staff, and higher education leaders and staff from around the country were appointed to a new Higher Education Research Advisory Committee.

Policies, Procedures, Awards Established

During this period, NCHE's policies and procedures were developed and codified. As this occurred and practices were established, e.g., the vice president attended Board and other meetings, NCHE came into being. The James Davenport Memorial Award, given annually at the RAM, was also established.

In 1989, NEA established a Streamlining Committee to review NEA governance structure and member services. One of its recommendations merged the Higher Education Standing Committee into the Advisory Committee on Membership, where K-12, ESP, and higher education members sat in equal numbers, and a first in NEA. The NEA president agreed that each constituency group's president would serve as a co-chair with the NEA vice president and that the NCHE President would serve as the chair of the higher education portion of the committee. Unfortunately, the Streamlining Committee's second recommendation, establishment of a guaranteed "add on" to the NEA Executive Committee for higher education and education support personnel (ESP) if a representative of these groups were not elected to regular seats, failed at the RA.

While the Advisory Committee on Membership (ACM) afforded an opportunity to discuss issues with colleagues across the spectrum of membership (K-12, ESP, higher education, students, and retired), the Committee's primary function was to deal with New Business Items (NBIs) adopted by the NEA Representative Assembly. Due to the time required for working on these NBIs and also developing the theme and framework for the Higher Education Conference, the Higher Education Subcommittee of the ACM was not able to spend significant time anticipating future needs, issues, and goals for higher education members. As a result, NCHE, working in conjunction with NEA staff, began to assume more of the planning and futures-thinking roles that had previously been the purview of higher education governance committees.

In addition, the higher education program was expanded to include an annual Critical Issues Seminar, which each year focused on an issue of urgent concern to higher education members, explored all aspects of the issue, and made recommendations for NEA program and policy. NCHE leaders worked with NEA staff to select the topic and set the agenda for this issues meeting.

NCHE and NEA Pave International Path

Until this point, NEA had no consistent presence within the international higher education community because appointments to international forums had been treated as "perks." Because NEA had no voice or influence, NEA began the practice of using the NCHE President as the key governance appointee along with a regular staff person to participate in these discussions. This

practice has continued to the present and has lead to real involvement of NEA in international higher education work.

As NCHE President, Shadwick represented NEA at local and chapter meetings across the country to help organize membership and represent the higher education governance face of NEA. She led the NEA delegation to several international conferences in Europe and New Zealand. She served on an initial planning committee for Education International to discuss building a higher education program and was then appointed to the EI Further and Higher Education Committee. Following her term as NCHE President, she completed her EI term and served on the higher education conference planning committee when EI reorganized its committee structure.

During Shadwick's presidency, NEA began the practice of sending the NCHE president to serve as a member of the Advisory Board for the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions (NCSCBHEP). In addition to the NCHE president, one staff person and one higher education NEA member, appointed by the NEA president, also sit on this board.

Roger Knutsen, 1995-1999

In 1995, Roger Knutsen, Green River Community College, Washington, became the third NCHE President. Jim Wilson, Broward Community College, Florida, was elected vice president and Jim Rice continued as secretary / treasurer. Knutsen was re-elected in 1997, and Kathy Sproles, Hartnell College, California, was elected vice president. In 1998, Gloria Wagener, Saginaw Valley State University, Michigan, became secretary/treasurer.

Programmatic and Budget Support Increase

Key accomplishments during this period were increases in NEA's programmatic budget support for higher education – not without great effort and lobbying by NCHE. Much of the president's time and energy was also spent working on the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and the 50 percent rule to require that federal money or student loans could only go to institutions where at least 50 percent of their classes/programs were "on the ground." Work also began on broader issues affecting higher education such as intellectual property rights. During this period, the first Future of Higher Education CD was also released.

Barry Stearns, 1999-2003

In 1999, Barry Stearns, Lansing Community College, Michigan, became the fourth NCHE President. Kathy Sproles continued as vice president and Gloria Wagener continued as secretary/treasurer. All three served through 2003.

Emerging Leaders Academy Established; Distance Ed Debated

The key accomplishment during this period was the creation of the NEA Higher Education Emerging Leaders Academy to identify potential leaders and give them leadership training as well as an understanding of NEA and its programs for higher education. Ideally, the goal was to prepare members for leadership roles in their chapters, locals, and states.

During these years, as distance education became more and more an issue for higher education members, NCHE led policy debates within NEA related to distance education and professional development. At this time, NEA began looking at an internal academy which might utilize distance education to support professional development needs of all NEA members.

Adjunct Faculty Dues Structure; Globalization

In addition, NCHE spearheaded the effort to develop a partial dues structure for adjunct faculty and received support from NEA and NEA's Education Support Professionals members. That dues structure exists today.

As president of NCHE, Stearns led delegations to several meetings in Europe, as well as to EI's International Higher Education Conference in West Africa. As the issue of globalization became an increasing focus for EI, an international task force of 13 leaders from around the world, including Stearns, was appointed to examine globalization's impact higher education.

NEA also sent Stearns, as NCHE president, to several campuses where problems existed. For example, when the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) was on strike, he was there to give support and to interact with its members.

Kathy Sproles, 2003-2007

In 2003 Kathy Sproles, Hartnell College, California, became the fifth NCHE President. Stan Jackson, Westfield State University (formerly Westfield State College), Massachusetts, was vice president from 2003-2005, and Jim Rice, Quinsigamond Community College, Massachusetts, was vice president from 2005-2007. Gloria Wagener, Michigan, completed her term in 2006, and she was succeeded by Christine Domhoff, Youngstown State University, Ohio. During Sproles' tenure as president, the NCHE Constitution was amended to include a membership chair on the NCHE Executive Committee.

Workgroup for Online Learning

Key accomplishments of Sproles' presidency included coordinating and chairing the Workgroup for Online Learning, an NEA-wide task force that made recommendations for creation of the NEA Academy, the vehicle used to provide distance education and professional development to NEA members. The Workgroup's discussions also led to the creation of the Content and Quality Review Board, the body that provides quality assurance standards for any courses/programs offered through the Academy.

Contingent Academic Worker Action Plan

At the 2004 NEA Representative Assembly, NCHE and higher education members advocated for rights of contingent academic workers through NBI 2004-60. This NBI was referred to the Higher Education Subcommittee of NEA Advisory Committee on Membership. Chaired by NCHE President Sproles, this Subcommittee authored NEA's Contingent Academic Worker Action Plan. The plan was accepted by NEA's Executive Committee, and it allocated \$100,000 to implement the recommendations to improve the working conditions for contingent faculty and staff. Funding for this program continued through two biannual budgets.

International issues continued to be a focus of NCHE during Sproles' term. In addition to attending several EI meetings and chairing the delegation to the 2005 EI Conference on Higher Education and Research in Melbourne, Australia, the NCHE president represented NEA at the 9th UNESCO/NGO Collective Consultation on Higher Education in Paris.

EI North American Sector; Globalization Cadre

Since the beginning of NCHE's active involvement in Education International, there had been interest in having periodic meetings of EI's North American Sector, which includes Canada, the

United States, and the Caribbean. It was also thought that perhaps Mexico should be included due to similar interests. Sproles, together with the help of NEA higher education staff and David Robinson from the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), activated this group to discuss North American positions and to propose new business items prior to the meetings of the EI World Congress and EI Higher Education Conferences. NEA hosted the first Sector meeting, and this group continues to meet at least yearly.

Also, realizing that a number of NEA's members and staff were interested in and affected by international transactions but lacked background information about many of the complex issues, in 2005 Sproles coordinated an Association-wide seminar on Globalization, the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), and Education. This seminar culminated in the establishment of an NEA Higher Education Globalization Cadre that further expanded international expertise among the membership.

Task Force Examines Dues

During Sproles tenure as president, a new business item was presented at an NCHE regular Annual Meeting (RAM) that directed the NCHE to establish a task force to review what higher education members, chapters, and locals were getting for their dues from NEA. That task force consisted of President Kathy Sproles, Vice President Jim Rice, and NCHE members Tom Auxter, Florida, Catherine Boudreau, Massachusetts, and Gazi Rahman, Illinois. The task force met in Denver, and after its productive meeting, Sproles met with NEA leadership, and NEA responded to a number of concerns. This taskforce was never disbanded but held in abeyance pending a resurrection of the concerns that triggered its creation.

Jim Rice, 2007-2013

In 2007 Jim Rice, Quinsigamond Community College, Massachusetts, became the sixth NCHE President. Jane Munley, Luzerne Community College, Pennsylvania, was elected vice president. Christine Domhoff, Ohio, continued as secretary/treasurer. Munley resigned later in 2007, and Catherine Boudreau, Massasoit Community College, Massachusetts, was appointed vice president. She was elected to the position in 2009. In 2012, Cynthia Schneider, Michigan State University, was elected secretary/treasurer.

NEA Reorganizes

In addition to all the normal issues of advocacy, legislation, and member visibility, this presidency faced many challenges as NEA went through several reorganizations. In the spring of 2011, NCHE successfully lobbied for, and the NEA established, an Office of Higher Education (again), only to see it dissolved one year later. In the latest reorganization, NEA's higher education program was dispersed throughout the NEA structure. NCHE's priority during these years was fighting to retain identity, programs visibility, and identifiable staffing for NEA's higher education members.

NEA Academy Offers Graduate Degree through For-Profit

Another major issue was the creation of an NEA-sponsored online Master's in Education Program provided by the NEA Academy at a discount for NEA members. NCHE expressed concern that providers selected were private for-profit organizations with a less than strong interest in getting NEA higher education institutions on board. There was agreement that there

would be an attempt to consider a variety of providers. Three providers were chosen: a public higher education institution, a non-profit organization, and a private for-profit.

After the Academy got started, concerns were raised by K-12 and higher education members over the NEA Academy's partnership with Walden University, a private for-profit institution and whether this choice conflicted with the Association's policies and positions. In response to the initial concerns, a moratorium on new partnerships with for-profit higher education institutions was instituted until a task force could review the issues raised and recommend next steps. In February 2012, the Task Force on For-Profit Colleges and Universities issued a report and recommendations. It was approved by the NEA Board of Directors at its February 2012 meeting. NCHE President Jim Rice was a member of the Task Force.

National Membership Strategy

In June 2009, the National Membership Strategy Task Force (NMS) was convened by the authority of NEA and the National Council of State Education Associations (NCSEA). In September, NMS submitted its report to the NEA Executive Committee. The report reviewed the five-year accomplishments of the NMS and made recommendations for the further development and refinement of that strategy initiative in support of NEA's Strategic Mission and Vision.

As part of its discussion, NMS reviewed the opportunities for membership growth in higher education and determined that there needed to be a specific national membership strategy focused on the growth opportunities in higher education. "The Task Force recognizes the untapped potential in the higher education market as well as the challenges in organizing this market, such as the need for issue identification, message development, service model creation and additional training of staff." Consequently, NMS recommended to the NEA Executive Committee that a separate task force be convened to "create a national strategy to grow the Higher Education membership." The Executive Committee approved this recommendation, and in 2011, the NEA Executive Committee approved the recommendations of the Task Force on Higher Education Membership. NCHE Vice President and NEA Board member Cathy Boudreau served on both Task Forces.

At the close of Rice's presidency, higher education within NEA remained difficult to identify. With the higher education program dispersed throughout the NEA, it is difficult to contact a particular person with a general, overall view and knowledge of higher education within NEA. Communication for NCHE is limited because higher education is no longer included in the higher education staff's communications.

Theresa Montano, 2013-2015

Theresa Montano was NCHE president from 2013-2015. She is a professor of Chicana/Chicano Studies with an emphasis in education at California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

Degrees Not Debt

A key focus of Montano's presidency was a focus on student debt. During her tenure, NCHE was instrumental in the development of the Degrees not Debt campaign in NEA. For the first time in recent history, NEA centered a higher education issue in the NEA political and educational platform. NCHE worked to sponsor an NBI #33 at the NEA RA 2014, calling for a

week of action. The campaign was to address the problem that college is increasingly unattainable for too many families, and existing student debt is quickly becoming a barrier to the “American Dream.”

The NEA Student Program and the National Council for Higher Education were primary drivers. Local affiliates and student groups mobilized and held a variety of different actions. Hispanic Serving Institutions (CA and TX) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (AL, FL) were the focus of many of the affiliates.

The NEA’s Degrees Not Debt Week of Action was a success. Thousands of members participated in on-the-ground events and digital engagement. The campaign made a splash in the media and helped tens of thousands of people learn more about their options on reducing debt and/or monthly payments

Other highlights from the Week of Action included 36 NEA events in 16 states, 16,340 pledge cards were signed and collected, NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia appeared on 14 national and local radio shows and Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) held a tele-townhall with NEA President Eskelsen-Garcia on Public Service Loan Forgiveness, attended by over 8,000 NEA members.

Campaign for the Future of Higher Education; New Faculty Majority

Another initiative during Montano’s tenure involved building key alliances. NCHE became a leader in the national Campaign for the Future of Higher Education. CFHE is a coalition of many higher education unions. As an active member of CFHE, NCHE participated in the Seventh National Gathering of the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education’s “Building Alliances for Access, Equity and Quality in Higher Education.” This meeting was the first time, CFHE sought to include organizations outside the ranks of faculty and staff, is an important step toward our goal of developing the broad alliances needed to ensure meaningful access to quality higher education for all sectors of our society.

A stronger bond was also created with the New Faculty Majority. NFM was invited to participate in the larger coalition to secure unemployment insurance for contingent faculty, loan forgiveness for contingent faculty and other important issues.

MOOCs

NCHE highlighted and challenged NEA’s participation in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), calling attention to the perils of on-line universities like WGU (Western Governors University). The proliferation of on-line courses were attracting media attention, groups like Udacity and Coursera were taking over university teaching in the United States and abroad. An

entire issue of Thought and Action was devoted to exposing the efforts to privatize the university by relying on out-sourcing faculty work to on-line profiteers.

Ed-TPAs

On another front, NCHE lead the fight in the NEA against the Pearson company's "Teacher Performance Assessment" (Ed-TPA). In spite of fierce resistance from NEA leaders and staff, NCHE successfully passed NBI 5 at the NEA RA 2014 that called on NEA to form a representative task force of NEA members to explore the use of teacher performance assessments for pre-service teacher candidates.

The task force lead by NEA Executive Committee member, Joyce Powell, was comprised of NEA members from throughout the nation. The committee included the NCHE president, two NEA student members, staff of the Teacher Quality department, four members of higher education and several classroom teachers. The taskforce developed and forwarded policy recommendations for developing valid teacher performance assessment for those entering the profession. The NEA Board of Directors passed the policy at the May Board meeting in 2014. The policy adopted by the NEA RA in 2015 remains intact today.

Unemployment Insurance and Loan Forgiveness for Adjuncts

Unemployment insurance for adjunct faculty was also a key issue for NCHE during this time. After several iterations, a coalition of faculty unions and organizations authored a joint letter to the Department of Labor, requesting that the Department put the onus on the employer to clarify employment status to establish that an offer is not contingent. The letter was sent; a meeting was held; and NCHE/NEA continues to work on this issue.

On a related front, NCHE pressed for a webinar on Public Service Loan Forgiveness for parttime faculty. The discussion centered on Education Act and Public Service Loan Forgiveness and their impact on full-time and part-time faculty. Senators Durbin and Franken introduced legislation to expand eligibility for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program to adjunct/parttime faculty. NEA and NCHE were supporters, along with SEIU, AFT, USSA, and the aerospace workers' union. NCHE continued to lobby for loan forgiveness for contingent faculty to the present.

Remedial and Developmental Education; Gainful Employment

NCHE successfully lobbied for the passage of NBI 2014-02 regarding remedial and developmental education. The rationale was that remedial and developmental education at the college level and the funding for such programs/courses are being threatened. NCHE argued that NEA should elevate awareness of this movement and the need for state funding of such programs/courses.

Also during this time, NCHE/NEA lobbied for new regulations to ensure that for-profit colleges and non-degree programs improve their outcomes for students, or risk losing access to federal student aid. These "gainful employment" regulations were passed and will hold career training

programs accountable for putting students on the path to success, and protect consumers by preventing and investigating fraud, waste and abuse.

Ethnic Studies; College Rankings

NCHE also successfully gained passage of an Ethnic Studies NBI, which called for the NEA president to write a letter on behalf of Ethnic Studies faculty and students. The battle for ethnic students continues to the present.

NCHE continued to lobby against a proposal by the Obama administration to rank colleges according to student test scores and to use that ranking to decide federal funding for universities and college. In a letter to Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, NEA President Eskelson-Garcia declared that NEA could not support the rating system proposed by the president nor would NEA support the framework for establishing such a system.

DeWayne Sheaffer, 2015 - 2024

In 2015, DeWayne Sheaffer became NCHE President following the resignation of Theresa Montanyo. She left the NCHE presidency to become Vice-President of the California Teachers Association. A counselor at Long Beach City College, DeWayne had also served as the president of his local (Long Beach City College Faculty Association).

Increased Visibility/Recognition

Since its inception, NCHE has strived to raise the visibility and recognition of higher education members within NEA. This work continued during President Sheaffer's tenure.

- Launch of Higher Education Month – The designation of October as Higher Education month started as a New Business Item (NBI) at the Representative Assembly (RA). It now is a prominent feature of the overall organization's commitment to recognizing the contributions and efforts of higher education members from across the organization.
- Creation of the National Higher Educator of the Year Award – The creation and implementation of this award was the result of continued lobbying and leadership by DeWayne. Efforts to create the award through NBIs were not successful, so NCHE pushed to launch the award on its own. The first recipient was Loretta Ragsdell (contingent faculty member) from Illinois. However, before the presentation was made, the NEA Foundation offered to back the award and provide a cash prize in the amount of \$10,000 annually to the award. Today, the award is issued annually by the NEA with NCHE and NEA Higher Education members serving on the award committee.
- NEA Board Representation - During DeWayne's tenure the NEA had a call for four at-large NEA board seats were up for election. Three individuals from NCHE sought seats,

DeWayne, Phillip Abraham, and Loretta Ragsdell. Elizabeth Davenport and Barbara Cade also sought election. All of the NCHE members and Elizabeth Davenport were elected. These elections were important as it is critical to have as many higher education members on the NEA Board to raise the perspective of college and university members.

- Councils and Caucuses now are provided with an annual opportunity to address the NEA Board of Directors.
- NEA Higher Education Board of Directors meet collectively with the NCHE President and NEA staff one evening during every Superweek. This meeting provides time and space for the exchange of ideas and direct communication with NEA departments regarding issues and concerns facing higher education members.
- The National Center for the study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Profession (NY – Hunter College) - NCHE is represented on this board by the NCHE President. The board consist of labor unions across the nation(AFT, AAUP, UAW, NEA, etc...) and administrators from various colleges and universities. The Center brings the labor and administrators to discuss collective bargain issues within higher education. The hosting of an annual conference and hosting research articles and databases are some of the critical work accomplished by this collaboration.
- State Affiliate Visitation – DeWayne traveled to New York and Michigan to visit with higher education members in those states. The trips raised the visibility of NCHE and helped to connect NEA higher education members to the NEA and not just their state and local affiliates.
- Language matters – NCHE helped NEA move from using the word “children” to “students” and from using the word “Teachers” to “Educators.” We find these words to be inclusive of all member categories.

NCHE Governance

To meet the challenges of growing its ranks and implementing better communication with members, NCHE implemented some structural changes.

- Electronic Memberships – After a multi-year effort, NEA and NCHE were able to implement a electronic membership system to allow for individuals to join NCHE directly through a CVENT link and NCHE moved away from accepting checks or cash payments for individuals joining the group.
- Officer Terms – It was decided to change the length of NCHE officer terms from one wherein individuals would serve 2-year terms, with a 3 term limit, to an arrangement

where there are now 3 year terms, but a 2 term limit. This change works better for the organization to do its work.

- NCHE has worked collaboratively with the ESP Council. We have several higher ed ESP's and created a pathway to connect and develop opportunities to create an inclusive environment. As a result of collaboration with NCESP, each conference planning committee now has a member from each council to contribute to the preparation of sessions for all members.

Issues throughout NCHE History

From the very beginning, NCHE, and especially its presidents, have been engaged in representing NEA and higher education members in Congress during debates on issues such as the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. In addition, the NCHE presidents have either served on or represented NEA at special commissions related to higher education, such as the Spellings Commission. They have also monitored and attended, as necessary, various accrediting bodies and served on the advisory board for the National Center for Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions.

NCHE presidents have focused on maintaining and building the NEA higher education program, including staffing, publications, state relationships, K-12 relationships, and the branding of higher education within NEA. In addition, work has included attending meetings and maintaining relationships with the AFT and AAUP as well as making presentations at various meetings and working directly with NEA higher education locals.

Some topics that have continued to consume NCHE include the status and working conditions of contingent faculty, distance education, artificial intelligence, and the globalization of higher education. Additionally, there is the overarching concern regarding the lack of a clear, definable higher education program and the lack of a readily identifiable center and staff for higher education within NEA. This also included ongoing concerns about the lack of updating of the NEA Higher Education and NCHE web pages.

International Involvement

As stated previously, since the creation of NCHE, its president has served as NEA's primary appointee to international higher education conference. Prior to the creation of EI in 1993, NEA participated in the International Conference of University Teachers Organizations (ICUTO). After the founding of EI and the requirement that all of NEA's international activities be conducted through EI, NEA leaders worked within both groups to convince all ICUTO members of the importance of EI. Within a few years, all but one joined EI, and ICUTO dissolved into the EI's international higher education conferences.

Due to the appointment of NCHE president Shadwick to early EI committees, NCHE was integrally involved in the initial development of EI's higher education program and policies. From its inception, EI has dealt with key international issue such as the impact of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), intellectual property and copyright treaties, globalization of higher education, across border and distance education, and academic freedom, among others. There also has been a real awareness of and an effort to understand the disparity and differences that exist within higher education in the developing world as compared to the developed world.

A complete record of reports from various meetings and international conferences was compiled and files placed in the NCHE office and NEA's Office of International Relations. Documents include ICUTO (1982-1998), Education International and Other (1991-2007), International Documents Related to Higher Education (from UNESCO recommendation 1997 to the 2006 report on the application of the recommendation), and GATS (2004-2006).

Workload of the NCHE President

It is also worth noting that because NCHE presidents have minimal release/ reassigned time and the job is essentially a full-time job, the work demands and the need to stay on top of higher education issues both nationally and internationally and within NEA make this an extremely demanding assignment. In addition to all of the committee assignments, meetings, and consultations involved, the NCHE president has to maintain and update NCHE files in the office, which include records of international conferences, RAM and RA packets, fiscal records, and correspondence as well as other documents. In addition, the president needs to oversee and ensure that the NCHE database is maintained accurately and kept up-to-date. This holds true for the NCHE financial information; these documents need to be reconciled between the secretary/treasurer and the NEA Finance and Accounting Office. For a number of years, database maintenance has been a problematic area and particular attention to this area is essential to the health of NCHE. Another critical area is communications – publication of the NCHE News, the e-newsletter, and the NEA Board Reports need to be timely.

Conclusion

The primary focus in putting together this brief history was to help higher education members, NCHE leaders, and NEA understand the long struggle by NCHE to help build NEA's higher education program. This awareness is all the more important given recent changes within NEA and a growing perception among higher education locals and members that higher education has less and less of a place within the NEA. We need a strong NCHE supported by our members and locals to press constantly the case within NEA to ensure the NEA gains the prominence it should have as the primary national voice and advocate for higher education.

This document is a living document, and we anticipate that it will be updated on a regular basis. We also hope to have the documents referenced* in this history on the NCHE Web at some point, with a hard copy in the NCHE files.

Written and produced by the following individuals:

NCHE President Virginia Ann Shadwick 1989-1995
NCHE President Roger Knudsen 1995-1999
NCHE President Barry Stearns 1999-2006
NCHE President Kathy Sproles 2003-2007
NCHE President James Rice 2007-2013 and
NCHE Vice President Catherine Boudreau 2007-2013
NCHE President DeWayne Sheaffer 2015 – 2024
NCHE President Alec Thomson 2024 - Present

*Referenced reports / documents:

1. NEA's Contingent Academic Worker Action Plan
2. Task Force on For-Profit Colleges and Universities
3. National Membership Strategy Task Force
4. Task Force on Higher Education Membership

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