NATIONAL COLLEGE TESTING ASSOCIATION
2015 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

During 2015, the Governing Council of the National College Testing Association emphasized a number of goals geared to strengthening what the association offers its membership. These goals included providing the membership with additional opportunities for professional development, enhancing the annual conference through the addition of a conference app, strengthening the impact of the virtual conference with the addition of more sessions, and continuing the progress made in various areas of the 2014 Strategic Planning Initiative (NCTA 2020: Focusing on Our Future). Each of these accomplishments and both the new and continuing initiatives on which they depend is described more fully in the sections under the divisions in which they reside. For a more detailed overview of the 2014 Strategic Planning Initiative, please review the NCTA 2014 annual report available on the website under the Resources tab/Annual Reports link. Questions and/or concerns about the content of the annual report should be directed to Francesca Taylor, current NCTA president, by email (ftaylor@westga.edu) or by phone (678-839-6435).

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Division, headed by NCTA's secretary, oversees the administrative portions of the organization, including Awards and Recognition, Volunteer Services, and Technical Services.

In conjunction with the 2015 annual conference, the Awards and Recognition Committee recognized 101 members of various committees with the Service Recognition Awards. The 2015 President's Award was given to webmaster Christopher Szucko for his outstanding work on the NCTA website and mailing lists and for his guidance in keeping the organization's digital footprint firmly placed on the internet. The 2015 Service and Leadership Award was presented to Jim Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison, for his work as co-chair of the Professional Development Division and chair of both the Conference Program and E-Journal committees. David Espinoza, University of Oregon, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his many years of leadership and service to NCTA including a term as NCTA's president and service as the chair of the Webinars Program, manager of the Virtual Conference which broadcasts the conference in real time and provides post-conference archived sessions, and member of the Universal Access in Testing Special Interest Group (SIG) Leadership Committee.

The Volunteer Services Program (VSP) continued to actively recruit volunteers and pair them with the needs of various NCTA committees and programs. Division Heads identify needs for

committee vacancies and other volunteer positions, and the coordinator of the VSP solicits the necessary personnel to fill those requests. VSP paired over a dozen new volunteers with committees and programs in 2015.

The Technology Services Committee provided valuable assistance with technological needs during the annual conference and also advises other committees throughout the year with technological issues.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

With the support of a large group of volunteers and annual host committees, the Annual Conference Division not only presented the 2015 conference but also began initial planning for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 NCTA conferences.

The 2015 Conference, held in St. Pete Beach, Florida, was NCTA's largest conference to date, with 501 in-person attendees and another 120 registrations for the virtual conference that was expanded to two full days: the virtual sessions included the president's address, the keynote address by ACT's Rachel Watkins Schoenig, eight member presentations, and two mini-workshops; while the Thursday sessions were archived, the Friday sessions were streamed live. Two different pricing tiers were established for 2015: one for those who purchased the virtual conference in addition to the in-person conference and one for those who purchased only the virtual conference.

New to the 2015 conference program were breakout sessions which began on Wednesday afternoon, sponsor workshops embedded throughout the program, and an increase in concurrent sessions from 10 to 12. Five presenters received travel awards, and five first-time attendees received travel awards.

The members of FACTA (Florida Association of College Test Administrators) provided a warm welcome to conference attendees, hosted the hospitality table, ran dinner groups, served as moderators, and helped at the registration desk and in various other ways. A new conference app was an immediate hit as it enabled attendees to easily access all conference information on their mobile devices.

The 2016 Conference is scheduled for early August at the Westin in Seattle, Washington. The Seattle Host Committee (representing both the state of Washington and the Canadian province of British Columbia) is preparing to welcome NCTA to the great northwest.

Plans are also underway for the 2017 Conference that will be held in September at the historic Hilton Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati, Ohio. For 2018, the conference planners selected an Arizona resort experience and confirmed the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa at Gainey Ranch as the site for the September conference.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Division consists of communications-related groups including editing, the mailing list, news features, networking, and the website.

The **Editing** Committee edits all printed and digital material for NCTA including conference-related materials, official documentation, and correspondence sent on behalf of the organization.

While the **Mailing List** is active and largely self-governing, on occasion the mailing list moderators step in to identify inappropriate content, remind participants of the decorum of the list, and answer procedural questions regarding how to unsubscribe from the mailing list. Also, moderators read and try to respond to more messages than the usual member. The mailing list moderator role will continue into 2016. A group of volunteers was asked to determine whether or not it was feasible to train a few users to summarize NCTA mailing list information as part of creating a usable WIKI resource. However, with the creation of an archive function which would enable mailing list users to search for particular topics, the WIKI project was disbanded.

The **Networking** Committee largely focused on building a social networking presence this year. The NCTA LinkedIn account maintained a strong following with 283 members. Members in this group, made up of both governing council and organization members, started many unique discussions and posted the latest issues and trends in testing.
In the past year, the Facebook membership for the organization grew to 207 members. The Facebook group works similarly to the LinkedIn account, providing a platform for members to post comments. NCTA's Twitter account, on the other hand, is designed simply to distribute information to followers. NCTA has 204 followers and also follows a combination of 184 individuals, test centers, and vendors.

The updated layout for the website will be implemented early next year. The webmaster has plans to refresh several areas of the site to increase ease of navigation.

While the social media accounts are useful for networking in general, they proved particularly useful during the 2015 conference. Facebook's photo album features were used to share pictures from the conference events and city. Twitter was used predominately for commenting on and starting dialogues about session content, including robust usage from virtual conference attendees. The Networking Committee will continue to draw the NCTA membership to the social media pages by sending out e-blasts and distributing flyers at the conference(s).

New to the 2015 conference was the addition of a mobile conference application (app) which provided conference attendees with an enhanced experience. The app contributed to the organization's assessment of conference attendance and satisfaction with built-in features for tracking data. The app offered many features, and each year the NCTA app team will expand on these offerings. Over 85% of the attendees used the mobile app to complete their survey sessions. Over 90% of the in-person/virtual attendees utilized the mobile app. The conference app team intends to continue the partnership with Gather Digital for 2016, 2017, and 2018.

FINANCE
The annual conference continues to be a success with the 2015 Florida conference bringing in revenue of $212,268 based on conference registrations, sponsorship, and other contributions;

conference expenses totaled $131,832. Membership continues to be a solid source of revenue with $127,703 received. Board expenses to conduct the business of the association this year amounted to $43,209, and expenses for various initiatives by NCTA committees included $21,974 for grants, $736 for webinars, $3,829 for test center certifications, $13,171 for conference travel assistance grants for first time attendees and presenters, and $140 for awards/service recognition. For a more complete review of the profit/loss statement for 2015, please refer to the 2015 NCTA Financial Reports located under the Resources tab/Annual Reports link on the NCTA website.

GRANTS

As part of the Finance Division, the annual grants program offers opportunities for professional development and strives to promote the development of resources for NCTA members, to encourage professional support activities, and to support the formation of state testing organizations among the members of NCTA. In 2015-2016, the grants program funded a total of ten applications with a total of $21,974 distributed to applicants. This was in line with the 2014-2015 grant cycle when eight applications were funded for a total distribution of $23,536. The 2015-2016 grant funds were used to support several projects including regional professional development conferences, staff training, and the creation of state organizations. The Grants Committee follows a very specific set of guidelines regarding how the funds can be used. These guidelines can be found on the NCTA website under the Resources tab/Grants Program link.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

NCTA membership was stable with 2200 members at the end of 2015. Of those, 1960 were affiliated with post-secondary institutions, 15 were identified as non-collegiate, and 225 were corporate members. The Canadian membership continued to grow. NCTA members are found in 48 of the 50 United States; New Hampshire and Rhode Island are not represented.

At the end of 2014, the Governing Council approved the hiring of Jody Rosen Atkins with The Association Source, LLC as a part-time administrative assistant to help with maintaining and reconciling the finances of the association as well as addressing membership requests/concerns. This position provided the membership ready access to a person, a phone number, and an email address to be used for the prompt resolution of problems and questions. Up to this point, the membership position had been strictly volunteer and held by an NCTA governing council member who added this responsibility to the full-time testing obligations already held.

OUTREACH

As part of NCTA's outreach efforts, the **Marketing Committee** continued to promote the collective services and benefits of NCTA. The committee designed and published a promotional brochure highlighting the different components of NCTA; this brochure was distributed during the Resources Fair at the annual conference. For 2016, the committee will focus on developing a strategic marketing plan that aligns with the mission and objectives of NCTA. The goal of the plan is to continue building NCTA credibility and strengthening the brand identity through conscientious, organized activities.

Another integral part of the association's outreach strategy, the **State and Regional Organizations** (SRO) **Committee** focused on promoting the SRO website in 2015, which is available via the Resources tab on NCTA's main webpage. It includes the following content: Learn

More about the SRO, SRO Meeting Dates and Conferences, SRO Information Pages, Helpful Resources, and more. For 2016, the Committee will continue to concentrate on developing an NCTA State and Regional Organizations Affiliation Program and identifying an SRO liaison in every state.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCTA offers professional development opportunities that engage members through diverse methods. These include the NCTA E-Journal, the Test Center Certification Program (TCC), Special Interest Groups (SIGs), and Webinars.

At the end of 2014, the first two manuscripts were submitted for consideration for publication in the *Journal of the National College Testing Association (JNCTA)*. Both manuscripts underwent multiple rounds of blind review, with each manuscript having been reviewed by at least two NCTA members. One of these manuscripts, "Evaluating a retest policy at a North American university" by Cindy L. James at Thompson Rivers University, was published in Volume 1(1). The other manuscript, "Retaking the SAT may boost scores but this doesn't hurt validity" by Michael J. Roszkowski (La Salle University) and Scott Spreat (Woods Services), was also accepted and in the final stages of copyediting at the end of 2015. This article is expected to appear in Volume 2(1) of *JNCTA* and be posted to the website in early 2016.

Two manuscripts were submitted to *JNCTA* in 2015. At the end of the year, one was out for review. The other was rejected without encouragement to resubmit. The journal continues to solicit manuscripts that focus on the trends, practices, research, programs, policies, and activities related to examination development and administration. Prospective authors will find the call for journal submissions on the NCTA website under the Resources tab/eJournal link.

The **Test Center Certification Committee** was very active during 2015 conducting three open enrollment periods that allowed schools to begin the certification process. Sixty schools applied during the open enrollments, twenty in each cycle. During the year, 36 test centers were granted NCTA Test Center Certification bringing the total number of certified centers since the project began in 2010 to 118; at the end of 2015, 76 schools were in various stages of the certification process. During 2015, the first Test Center Recertification process occurred as two schools certified in 2010, the first year of the program, went through the required recertification process which occurs five years after the original certification. There will be more recertifications in 2016 as the schools that were awarded Test Center Certification in 2011 will need to do their five year renewal. The Committee continued to meet every two or three weeks by conference call. During the year, parts of the Test Center Certification process were put on the NCTA website, and the addition of other parts of the process also to be done on the website is under consideration for 2016.

The next Pre-Application period for test center certification, Cycle 13, is targeted to be announced mid-January on the NCTA website. As the number of schools seeking certification grows, additional volunteers will be solicited for the TCC committee. A pilot program will take place in 2016 for NCTA non-collegiate centers indicating an interest in becoming certified.

In response to requests for a more focused discussion opportunity of certain topics, the Professional Development Division launched the first **Special Interest Group** (SIG). Designated

as "Universal Access in Testing," its focus is to provide targeted professional development and resources related to ideas of non-standard or accommodated testing for students with disabilities with a focus on creating accessible testing experiences for these students. A separate electronic mailing list to which NCTA members can subscribe is available.

There were no **Webinars** offered in 2015 as the committee opted instead to focus on making the virtual conference a top priority; both those who attended the in-person conference and those who were unable to do so received information regarding the live and archived conference sessions which would serve as professional development/in-service opportunities for testing center personnel. Based on mailing list concerns regarding placement testing, at least two webinars on this topic will be offered in early 2016.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

During 2015, the Governing Council made a concerted effort to continue implementing the vision of NCTA that was formulated in the strategic planning meeting held in early 2014. Perhaps the two most important goals were to (1) to increase the credibility of NCTA in order to position the organization to play a role in policy decisions and (2) to develop, enhance, and support partnerships with other professional organizations and corporate members of NCTA.

To increase professional credibility, the Governing Council approved NCTA's plan to apply for membership to the **Council for the Advancement of Standards** (CAS). Once NCTA was approved for membership in CAS (there are currently 42 member associations), the GC appointed an NCTA member to serve on the CAS board, participate fully in training sessions, and work on aligning the NCTA Standards and Guidelines for Testing with the CAS standards and guidelines; a request for standards development for NCTA has been submitted to the CAS board for review and assignment and could be acted upon as early as April of 2016.

An additional emphasis was placed on **partnering with sister organizations** for the purpose of strengthening NCTA's reputation as a prime source of testing-related expertise. With that in mind, two NCTA members attended and presented a session on NCTA at The College Board's 2015 ACCUPLACER/CLEP conference.

Of special note in 2015 was NCTA's collaboration with the Security Committee of the Association of Test Publishers (ATP) to develop a document entitled *Proctoring Best Practices* that aims to establish best practices and guidelines for test proctoring across a wide variety of programs (e.g., admissions, certification, licensure, and credentialing) and settings (e.g., professional, educational, and employment). The publication takes a very broad view of proctoring and focuses most intently on administrative practices that promote test security, maintain standardization, facilitate accessibility, and ensure fair and respectful treatment of examinees.

The drafting committee, which included equal representation from NCTA and ATP, met regularly through the latter part of 2014 and the first half of 2015 to decide on the organizational framework for the document and to develop the content, after which it underwent a legal review by ATP Counsel and a content review by the ATP Executive Director and the NCTA Governing

Council. The drafting committee made a number of revisions to the document in response to the feedback, after which both the ATP and NCTA leadership gave their endorsements. NCTA and ATP announced the document's publication in a joint press release on September 1, 2015. The document is posted on the members-only sections of the NCTA and ATP websites; bound copies of the publication are available for $24.95. Information on purchasing hardcopies is available at the ATP and NCTA websites (visible by the general public).

To help publicize the document and encourage increased attention on proctoring practices, the committee gave presentations at one international and several national conferences. Hour-long sessions promoting *Proctoring Best Practices* were given at the NCTA conference (September 2015), European Association of Test Publishers (September 2015), Institute for Credentialing Excellence (October 2015), and the Conference on Test Security (November 2015). The committee will also have a featured session at the Association of Test Publishers conference (March 2016) to discuss the publication with the ATP membership.

GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council currently consists of fifteen persons whose primary goal is to continue providing the opportunities that will enable NCTA to move forward in its quest to serve as a leader in the area of test administration/proctoring whether online or in person, computer or paper/pencil, national or institutional—always keeping uppermost the need for security and integrity.

The Governing Council meets three times a year, and this year those meetings were held in March at the 2015 St. Pete Beach conference site, at the end of the September 2015 conference, and in November at the site of the 2018 conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. Abbreviated minutes of these meetings can be found under the Resources tab/Governing Council Minutes link on the website.

Four Governing Council members completed their terms at the end of the 2015 conference: Susan Morgan with Appalachian State University (NC), Past President Steve Saladin with University of Idaho, Cindy Sproehnle with Good Samaritan College (OH), and Mary Vaughn with Mississippi State University. Three new persons joined the board: Cindy James with Thompson Rivers University (British Columbia, Canada), Yvette Leverett with University of Georgia, and Tabatha Phillips with Western Kentucky University.

The Governing Council continues to make every effort to be good stewards of NCTA's financial situation: while there are expenses associated with the GC meetings, we are reducing the number of persons who will serve on the council in order to contain costs; conference sites are chosen with the intent of providing attendees with an affordable professional development experience, and conference costs are monitored closely; we continue to fine-tune the virtual conference option to enable those whose schedules and departmental budgets preclude their in-person conference attendance with a reasonably priced way of participating in sessions; the multi-year purchase of the conference app provides NCTA's membership with a connection to colleagues at a reduced rate; any costs associated with webinars that at some point may be passed on to the membership will be kept to a minimum.

To increase efficiency, the reorganization of NCTA's structure and the realigning of various divisions and the areas they oversee is a current project designed to streamline the work flow of the Governing Council. Finally, the addition of a paid staff member to assist with multiple tasks related to finances, the annual conference, and membership has enabled the GC to focus on tasks more directly related to the larger goals of the association rather than the day-to-day business.

CONCLUSION

Since its founding in 2000 and now midway through its second decade as an association, the National College Testing Association continues to meet the objectives for which it was created: to enhance professional testing practices, to offer opportunities for professional development, to encourage professional support activities, and to advance collaborative efforts among testing professionals, testing companies, and other policy-making agencies.

APPENDIX A
Governing Council Members
as of December 31, 2015

OFFICERS

Francesca B. Taylor, University of West Georgia
2014-2016 NCTA President
Jarret Dyer, College of DuPage (IL)
Treasurer
C. Criss Gilbert, University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse
Secretary
Duane Goupell, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh
2016-2018 President-Elect

Kay Alford, Coastal Carolina University (SC)
Sally Frazee, Temple University (PA)
Amystique Harris Church, Delaware State University
Cindy James, Thompson Rivers University (British Columbia, Canada)
Yvette Leverett, University of Georgia
Heidi Pettyjohn, University of Cincinnati (OH)
Tabatha Phillips, Western Kentucky University
Tammy Roach, University of Louisville (KY)
Theresa Scott, Palm Beach State College (FL)
Kristen Vickery, Anne Arundel Community College (MD)
Jim Wollack, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The following Governing Council members served until the expiration of their terms at the conclusion of the 2015 conference (September 2015):

Susan Morgan, Appalachian State University (NC)
Steve Saladin, Past President, University of Idaho
Cindy Sproehnle, Good Samaritan College (OH)
Mary Vaughn, Mississippi State University