2009 VRA STRATEGIC PLAN

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The 2009 VRA Strategic Plan

Charge

Introduction

Organization and Governance of the Association

Goals and Recommendations for the VRA Board

1. Reduce the VRA Board workload

A. Investigate the costs of outsourcing investment management and full bookkeeping duties. (VRA Board, Treasurer – Short Term)

B. Outsource routine bookkeeping chores; establish one support position combining both Membership Services and bookkeeping tasks. (VRA Board, Treasurer, Membership Services Coordinator – Implemented during 2009)

C. Define tasks for President-Elect position to alleviate Presidential duties. (President - Short Term)

D. Use appointees, committees, advisory groups and task forces to alleviate VRA Board workload. (VRA Board – Ongoing)

2. Provide for transition and continuity

A. Begin Officers’ election balloting on September 1. (VRA Board, Secretary, Nominating Committee – In process)

B. Require incoming and outgoing Board members to attend both Board meetings at the annual conference. (VRA Board – Implementation planned for March 2010)

C. Prepare outgoing Board members to continue mentoring and advising in the months after the conference. (VRA Board – Short Term)

D. Treasurer:

1) Begin training of incoming Treasurer as soon as possible after the election. (Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect – Next Election Cycle)

2) Fund travel for the incoming Treasurer and current Treasurer to meet for orientation. (VRA Board – Next Election Cycle)

3) Have the out-going Treasurer assist with preparation of new budget and end of fiscal year duties. (Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect – Next Election Cycle)
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The 2009 VRA Strategic Plan

Charge

Beginning with a review of the 2003 VRA Strategic Plan, the Task Force will provide a status assessment and proceed to make recommendations for initiatives going forward. The task force will focus on the areas of: programs and services, membership, technology, financial structure, organization and governance, and leadership in the field.

Initiatives will be developed according to the following criteria:

- achievable within a 5 year period to commence in January 2010
- include measurable activities and tasks
- provide an estimated chronology of events

Recommendations will take the form of a written report that will be delivered to the Executive Board at their mid-year meeting in 2009. The report will then be presented to the Membership at the annual conference in Atlanta in 2010.

Introduction

This is the second Strategic Plan developed by the Visual Resources Association, and follows upon the successful implementation of the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan. Intended to address both the routine operations of the Association and to forward the organization and the profession in new directions, this plan serves as a call to action for the members of VRA. The recommendations take full account of the past Strategic Plan and the insights of VRA leaders and members. While the recommendations are focused on what are believed to be attainable goals, the Strategic Plan should be viewed as a living document that is responsive to context and cultural change. Although the Task Force’s charge called for the plan to be implemented on a 5-year timeline, the process of writing the new plan required close to two years to complete due to the operating cycle of the Association. Therefore, the goals and recommendations were conceived to be implemented over a period of up to seven years. The current Task Force recommends that a new Task Force be charged in 2014 to allow sufficient time to review progress on this Strategic Plan and develop a new plan as the timeline for implementation draws to a close in 2016.

Charged by the VRA Board in 2007, the Strategic Plan Task Force undertook a rigorous two-year process to research and to draft a new plan. Web 2.0 technologies such as Google Groups, Google Docs, and Skype allowed for a heightened level of interaction during the research and writing process. The Task Force began its work with a comprehensive analysis of the six areas addressed in the 2003-2008 Strategic Plan: Programs and Services, Membership, Technology, Financial Aspects, Organization and Governance, and Leadership in the Field. The Task Force reviewed what had been implemented and
addressed the recommendations not implemented as initial points of discussion. Following these topical
discussions, each member of the Task Force was assigned responsibility for one area to research and
write a preliminary set of goals and recommendations.

The Task Force was committed to incorporating the voice of VRA members throughout the Strategic
Plan. They conducted their research through targeted interviews with former and current VRA leaders,
as well as through an extensive survey available to the entire VRA membership (Appendices #). This
survey received 121 complete responses. Based on the findings and extensive interviews with past and
current VRA leaders, each Task Force member wrote drafts for their topic, which were discussed prior to
and during a day-long meeting at the 2009 Toronto conference.

The Task Force co-chairs took the drafts and integrated them into a single document using a new format
designed to address the challenging issue of overlap between sections. The plan is thus divided into the
following areas: Organization and Governance, Financial Aspects, Community, Communications, and
Conference. The appendices to the report include a list and descriptions of proposed new
appointments, an organizational flow chart, the questions from the survey, and conference-related
supporting documents. The report’s five sections are comprised of goals and recommendations followed
by narrative commentary to explain the process and reasoning behind them. It should be understood
that recommendations are not be considered in isolation, but within the context of this commentary.
The recommendations are tagged as implemented, in process, short-term (1-2 years), mid-term (2-5
years), long-term (5-7 years), and ongoing (necessary for the foreseeable future), and are assigned to
existing and yet-to-be-appointed individuals and groups throughout the Association. While the VRA
Board is not assigned to all of the recommendations, it is understood that the Board will take overall
responsibility for supervising the plan’s implementation, with careful consideration of the Association’s
by-laws. The Board should also engage in regular progress reviews and report this to the VRA
membership.

The success of any strategic plan relies on the investment of its constituency. This plan is predicated on
the dedication of VRA members to the organization’s future achievements. A strong commitment to
volunteerism is key to its successful implementation. With an active and enthusiastic membership base,
the VRA is well positioned to move forward with dynamic steps for both VRA professionals and the
Association. The Task Force invites and welcomes your participation in this important and exciting
process.

**Organization and Governance of the Association**

Organization and governance are the underpinnings of any professional association. The framework of
elected officers, appointees, committees, and regional chapters allows for the assignment of specific
responsibilities to accomplish the work of the organization; those appointed or elected to positions of
leadership enable the achievement of the goals of the organization. A Strategic Plan must evaluate the
activities of each organizational entity and provide goals, recommendations and guidelines to improve their effectiveness.

A key objective of the 2003 Strategic Plan was to hire an Executive Director. For a number of reasons, primarily financial, this did not happen. Instead, the past several Boards identified jobs, tasks and projects where outsourced labor or services could be utilized effectively and efficiently to reduce Board workload. The VRA Board and Financial Advisory Committee should revisit this issue periodically in consultation with the Treasurer.

Ongoing challenges for the VRA are establishing and maintaining effective communication within the organization, and outreach to the larger community. Embracing new technologies, utilizing them, and communicating their effective use to the membership, is a key to success in these areas. The Association also must find ways to develop new leaders. Leadership roles require the time and energy of volunteers; those who take on service to the VRA must be encouraged and rewarded appropriately. Developing formal, written guidelines, policies, and manuals will not only save time for officers, appointees, chairs, committees, and chapters in the future, but will also provide standards that will be of value throughout the organization.

**Goals and Recommendations for the VRA Board**

1. **Reduce the VRA Board workload.**

   A. Investigate the costs of outsourcing investment management and full bookkeeping duties. (VRA Board, Treasurer – Short Term)

   B. Outsource routine bookkeeping chores; establish one support position combining both Membership Services and bookkeeping tasks. (VRA Board, Treasurer, Membership Services Coordinator – Implemented during 2009)

   C. Define tasks for President-Elect position to alleviate Presidential duties. (President - Short Term)

   D. Use appointees, committees, advisory groups and task forces to alleviate VRA Board workload. (VRA Board – Ongoing)

Members of the VRA Board frequently put in 20 or more hours of work each week for the Association. Time commitments increase before and after the midyear Board meeting and the annual conference. The burden on volunteer leaders is evident given the difficulty the Nominating Committee has experienced in recruiting new Board members. The Treasurer and President positions are particularly time consuming.

There is a tendency to see volunteers as free labor. Having a clear understanding of the true cost of volunteer services is a key factor in making informed decisions on the relative expense and savings of outsourced or contracted services including the Membership Services Coordinator (MSC), MemberClicks, the VRA web hosting services, web development and design services, and accountant and bookkeeping fees. The Task Force recommends investigating the costs of outsourcing investment
management and full bookkeeping duties. The Task Force recognizes that these are likely to be (as is an Executive Director) too expensive for the Association to manage at the present time. Knowing the cost gives us a benchmark for the expense of other solutions, including volunteer time.

The Board has already contracted with the new Membership Services Coordinator to take on additional tasks, including handling some of the forms in MemberClicks that were previously the duty of the Secretary. The MSC also handles entering dues and conference payments into QuickBooks (online), and as of July 2009, additional routine bookkeeping tasks, thereby alleviating some of the Treasurer’s work.

The duties of the President-Elect are loosely defined. The President should identify tasks that could reasonably be assigned to the President-Elect on a regular, on-going basis. These should be written into the position description in the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual.

Designating tasks and duties to appointees, committees, advisory groups and task forces will aid in alleviating the VRA Board workload. Specific recommendations will be made in appropriate sections of the following report.

2. Provide for transition and continuity.

A. Begin Officers’ election balloting on September 1. (VRA Board, Secretary, Nominating Committee – In process)

B. Require incoming and outgoing Board members to attend both Board meetings at the annual conference. (VRA Board – Implementation planned for March 2010)

C. Prepare outgoing Board members to continue mentoring and advising in the months after the conference. (VRA Board – Short Term)

D. Treasurer:

1) Begin training of incoming Treasurer as soon as possible after the election. (Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect – Next Election Cycle)

2) Fund travel for the incoming Treasurer and current Treasurer to meet for orientation. (VRA Board – Next Election Cycle)

3) Have the out-going Treasurer assist with preparation of new budget and end of fiscal year duties. (Treasurer and Treasurer-Elect – Next Election Cycle)

4) Evaluate instituting a 3-year term with a Treasurer-Elect on model of the President-Elect. (VRA Board - Long Term)

E. Ensure that the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual is updated by the Past President to include changes in each position and new policies and procedures. (VRA Board - current and immediate past members, Past President - Short Term)
F. Set up a permanent address for the Association with a forwarding service. (VRA Board – Midterm)

Maintaining smooth transitions from one VRA Board to the next has been a challenge. As the VRA becomes a larger and more sophisticated organization dealing with 21st century issues and supporting projects that are international in scope, leadership continuity is essential. VRA Board positions are increasingly complex and diverse. It has become evident that more time is needed to bring newly elected officers up to speed with their duties and responsibilities. Two months on the VRA Board email list and "on the job" training at the conference are simply not enough.

Mentoring by the outgoing officers remains the most feasible method of providing a smooth transition. Now that the Association has made the change from mailed paper ballots to online voting, it is no longer tied to the membership renewal cycle for elections. Moving the election start date to September 1 (ending September 30) would enable incoming Board members to start learning their new duties by mid-October, giving close to 5 months for transition. In addition, new officers would be observing and participating in much of the pre-conference preparation and planning. Incoming, current, and outgoing officers should be required to attend both Board meetings at the annual conference. Outgoing Board members should be prepared to continue mentoring and advising their replacements in the months after the conference, reasonably up until the midyear Board meeting. It is important that these policies be recorded in the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual and be made known to candidates running for election. Board members have expressed the opinion that an updated Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual is essential to ensuring a smoother transition for all positions. It is essential that the Manual be reviewed and updated by each outgoing President.

Moving the election date forward to September 1 may require a Bylaws amendment [see Article III: Nomination and Election of Officers, Section 3. The names of the nominees shall be presented to the President by September 2 of each year. Each nomination must be accompanied by the nominee’s statement of acceptance, goals and biographical data, which the Board may publish or announce after September 2 in an official publication and/or venue of the Association.] The Board is currently reviewing the Bylaws with the goal of making revisions to add flexibility to the election schedule. In the interim, it is recommended that the election date be moved forward as early as is feasible.

The Treasurer has the most complex set of duties to master. It is essential that candidates for the office be prepared to start training immediately after the election. We recommend that the Board fund a weekend trip for the incoming Treasurer to visit the out-going Treasurer soon after the election for orientation to the position. The out-going Treasurer should assist with the preparation of the budget for the new fiscal year and support any end of fiscal year duties. These responsibilities should be formalized, written into the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual and conveyed to the Nominating Committee. We recommend that the VRA Board enlist the current and past Treasurers in a discussion of the advisability of changing the term of Treasurer to three years on the model of the President and President-Elect.
One issue, which would have been resolved with the hiring of an Executive Director, is the establishment of a permanent address for the Association. Under a previous Board, an address was registered with a mail forwarding service in northern Virginia, but this service was discontinued. It is recommended that such a service be reconsidered as a means of establishing an address for business purposes that is not tied to a particular officer and needing to be changed every two years.

3. Compensate VRA Board members adequately and consistently.

A. Create a formal, written policy for reimbursement of VRA Board officers’ expenses for travel and lodging for annual and midyear meetings, as well as other Association business travel that officers may undertake. (VRA Board, Treasurer – Short Term)

B. Continue the practice of offering compensated membership for each Board officer during his or her term of office. (VRA Board, Membership Services Coordinator – Short Term)

A key concern for past and current and future Board members is the issue of compensation for their time and Board related business expenses. The reimbursement policy for travel and lodging expenses for the midyear and annual conference Board meetings has changed with each Board. Board members have been advised of a policy when running for office, only to have it changed during their terms. Although the current economic climate calls for careful stewardship of the Association’s financial resources, Board members, whose attendance is required at these meetings, should not be expected to have to pay out of pocket if their institutions cannot or will not provide support. The Nominating Committee finds it difficult to convince members to run for the Board. The workload is time-consuming and Board members often make personal and financial sacrifices in order to attend to VRA business. It is recommended that a formal, written, and permanent policy be put in place for compensation and reimbursement. This should be recorded in the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual and be made known to the Nominating Committee and candidates for Board office.

The Task Force recommends the following: Board members should seek reimbursement for travel and lodging expenses from their institutions or place of business first. The Association should cover the remainder (or entire amount if no institutional support is available) for airfare (or other transportation) and half of the hotel room expense based on the double occupancy rate. If a room cannot be reasonably shared, the full amount may be reimbursed. A per diem amount for meals not covered by other circumstances should be established. Officers are expected to book travel and lodging early and to secure the least expensive rates available. Board members who travel to Association meetings, conferences, training or other Association business should be fully compensated for travel and lodging expenses. Again, it is assumed that officers will be responsible and fiscally prudent in making travel arrangements. Officers will submit to the Treasurer appropriate receipts and documentation for all expenses.
4. Establish written policies for the Board officer nomination process.

A. Make nominating qualified candidates a priority over finding two candidates for each office. (VRA Board, Nominating Committee – Short Term)

B. Develop criteria for each office and communicate them to the membership. (VRA Board, Nominating Committee – Short Term)

C. Re-evaluate self-nomination. (VRA Board, Nominating Committee – Short Term)

In recent years the Nominating Committee has found it increasingly difficult to find two candidates for VRA Board offices. The Task Force sought to determine members' views on adopting a model of voting by acclamation for a chosen slate of candidates (one candidate per office). The survey responses were: 29 for (25.2%); 34 against (29.6%); 52 neutral (45.2%); 6 respondents who took the survey skipped this question. There were 43 comments which expressed a range of opinions. Both these comments and those taken from our interviews indicated that there are advocates on each side, although those against changing the current process tended to be more strongly vocal in their expression. Survey comments reflected misunderstandings about the nominating process and the need for transition and training of Board officers as well as some naïveté about the availability of qualified candidates willing to run for office.

While there is a preference for maintaining a competitive slate, the Task Force recommends that the priority should be nominating qualified candidates for office. This policy should be established and communicated by the Board to the Nominating Committee and the Membership: if only one qualified candidate is identified, then that candidate should run unopposed. It does not serve the Association’s best interests to nominate people solely for the purpose of having two candidates on the ballot. The VRA Bylaws allow for such an event.

Although the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual has charges and position descriptions for each office, these do not serve as criteria for nomination. The Task Force recommends that the VRA Board, in conjunction with the Nominating Committee, develop criteria for each office, including qualifications needed to meet the responsibilities of the position. These should be communicated to the VRA membership when the call for nominations occurs.

Finally, comments on the survey and in our interviews called into question the issue of self-nomination, which is currently allowed under the VRA Bylaws. At the very least, there should be an established procedure for vetting self-nominated candidates.

5. Utilize new technologies to facilitate more frequent and more efficient Board meetings.

A. Appoint a Communications Technology Advisor, with a clearly defined job description, to assist the Board, as well as other VRA groups, in utilizing conferencing technologies for improved communication. (VRA Board – Short Term)
The VRA Board meets twice a year and other than occasional phone conferences, relies on email to communicate. Many members’ institutions support teleconferencing and video-conferencing; often these are freely available to staff throughout the community. In addition, there are free online services such as Skype, which is easy to set up and use. These applications could be used to increase the efficiency of Board communications between face-to-face meetings. It is recommended that the Board appoint a Communications Technology Advisor to be charged with assisting the Board, advisory groups, committees, task forces and chapters in promoting and implementing remote communications technologies to facilitate meetings. As numerous video-conferencing technologies are available, the Communications Technology Advisor would be expected to be familiar with the general concept of these applications and to encourage VRA members in identifying appropriate services and support for these at their home institutions. Guides (including YouTube instructional videos) to the most commonly used applications can be found online; the Communications Technology Advisor should investigate these options and make them available to the membership through VRAweb.org. Instructional guides specific to the VRA community should be developed as needed.

**6. Recommendations for the Public Relations and Communications Officer (PR&C Officer).**

A. Consign increased emphasis to public relations and outreach in the position description of the Public Relations and Communications Officer. (VRA Board – Short Term)

B. Provide assistance to the Public Relations and Communications Officer by establishing a Publishing Advisory Group and a Public Relations Advisory Group, and a Web Community Coordinator. (VRA Board – Short Term)

C. Assist the membership in using MemberClicks. (PR&C Officer, Membership Services Coordinator – Short Term)

D. Re-evaluate MemberClicks in terms of cost and features. (PR&C Officer, Treasurer, Membership Services Coordinator – Long Term)

The Public Relations and Communications Officer (PR&C Officer) Board position was created in 2003. The first PR&C Officer, Christine Hilker, focused on selecting and establishing MemberClicks as the VRA online membership management system. The second PR&C Officer, Lise Hawkos, was responsible for the development of a new VRA logo, style guide, and business package (letterhead, envelopes), and the complete redesign of the VRA website; these tasks will not be repeated in the near term. The description of duties is broad: The Public Relations and Communications Officer shall be responsible for overseeing Association publications, facilitating communication within the organization, and developing and maintaining the Association’s public relations program.

As will be discussed in more detail in the Community and Communications sections, the VRA needs to do a better of job with outreach and promotion. This should be a priority for the PR&C Officer. What is needed are frequent press releases, better conference publicity, as well as regular contact with VRA committees, advisory groups, task forces, appointees, and chapters to keep the membership updated on
their activities. A Public Relations Advisory Group should be formed to work with the PR&C Officer to create a public relations campaign and strategies for ongoing outreach. The publications program is an essential part of this effort. A Publishing Advisory Group, made up of members with appropriate background and expertise, should be appointed to assist the PR&C Officer in evaluating and managing publications. The Board-appointed editors of the VRA Bulletin, Images, and VRAweb.org may be included in the Publishing Advisory Group, but should not be the only members. In order to avoid redundancy and confusion, the Task Force recommends that the Publications Program Group (PPG), composed of all of the editorial staff members of the VRA publications, be dissolved. The PR&C Officer should continue to have regular communications with these editors and meet at the annual conference with those editors in attendance.

It is anticipated that the PR&C Officer, editors, those working with VRAweb.org, and the proposed advisory groups will utilize new technologies with increasing frequency. It is difficult to keep up to date with technology changes and even more difficult to use new technologies effectively within an organizational context. The Task Force recommends that the Board create a new appointment, a Web Community Coordinator, who will be charged to work with the PR&C Officer and the VRA Web Editor to investigate, implement, and integrate Web 2.0 technologies with the VRA website. These would include blogs, Facebook, wikis, YouTube, Flickr, and other applications to facilitate communication with the VRA membership and outreach to the community. The VRA is already utilizing some of these Web 2.0 technologies, such as a VRA Flickr page, a VRA Facebook group as well as a few VRA chapter Facebook groups, but there needs to be better integration of these Web 2.0 technologies with VRAweb.org.

The Task Force believes that the above efforts will have a positive effect on outreach. The Web Community Coordinator would be responsible for promoting the use of these technologies within the Association.

MemberClicks was implemented four years ago, yet many VRA members have no idea what it is or how to use it. The PR&C Officer, in conjunction with the MSC, should develop user guides to assist members. The Task Force recommends providing training sessions at the annual conference and promoting instruction at chapter meetings.

In the longer term, MemberClicks should be re-evaluated to determine if it is still the best solution at the best cost for the Association's needs.

Goals and Recommendations for Appointees

1. Make effective use of appointees to accomplish key tasks.

A. Increase the number of Appointees to provide support for Board initiatives. (VRA Board – Ongoing)

B. Provide adequate funding to support appointed positions by establishing a standard compensation package applicable to all VRA members designated to represent the Association at specific regional and national meetings or events. (VRA Board – Short Term)
Although Board appointments are generally made for a two-year term, Appointees in practice often serve multiple terms. This provides the advantage of appointments having continuity across Board Officers' terms. Appointments are an appropriate way to provide support for special projects and initiatives that do not require a group of people. Specific recommendations about appointments will be made throughout the report; we are recommending four new appointed positions: Communications Technology Advisor, Web Community Coordinator, Web Conference Content Manager, and VRA Grants Administrator. See Appendices I and II for an organizational chart and new position descriptions. In addition, we are recommending the appointment of liaisons to other professional organizations (see under Community).

It is important that appropriate funding be provided to Appointees to attend key meetings or other events if these are a requirement of the appointment, e.g., the VRA PLUS Board Representative. In other cases, such as appointed liaisons to other professional organizations, conference attendance is seen as desirable, but not required, and not to be funded by the Board.

Goals and Recommendations for Committees, Task Forces, and Advisory Groups

1. Provide support and guidance for committees, task forces, and advisory groups.

A. Appoint a task force to create formal policies on forming and managing committees, task forces, and advisory groups and to write a Leadership Guide for Chairs. (VRA Board, Task Force for Policies and Guidelines – Short Term)

B. Encourage standing committees to create manuals to facilitate leadership transition, continuity, and delineation of responsibilities. (VRA Board, Committee Chairs – Short Term)

A survey question probing how members feel about joining committees revealed that 44% of respondents had found it easy to join, 16% did not find it easy, and 39% had not tried to join a committee. The top reasons why individuals have not joined committees were: a perceived lack of experience, an uncertainty about the process for joining committees and the responsibilities for committee work, and a perception of exclusiveness among committees and the Board.

In talking to chairs and other VRA leaders, we heard from many that both written policies for committees, task forces and advisory groups, and a leadership guide for chairs would be very useful. These would serve different purposes.

Policies, which provide standardization and regulation, would resolve some of the confusion and uncertainty members expressed by formalizing the process for creating committees, task forces and advisory groups. Starting with definitions (e.g., how a task force differs from a committee), it should be made clear how these groups should be convened, what the criteria for membership should be in each case, and how chairs are appointed. For example, in practice, once a VRA committee is formed and ongoing, new chairs are often self-selected from the committee ranks. This process should be formalized to include official appointment by the Board.
It is clear that formal guidelines for chairs would be welcomed. Along with advice on how to run meetings, create agendas, delegate responsibilities, and locate additional resources, suggestions for handling issues and challenges should also be included. For example, some committees have become too large, with many inactive members. Generally, large committees should be organized into working groups to be effective; chairs may lack the experience to manage these. Removing non-productive members from a committee is also a challenge, but failing to do so often means that new members are discouraged from joining. Providing practical solutions for common problems will make the Leadership Guide for Chairs an extremely valuable document.

The Task Force recommends that the Board appoint a Task Force for Policies and Guidelines, composed of experienced VRA leaders to craft these policies and guidelines and to write the Leadership Guide for Chairs.

Several years ago the VRA Board began to encourage the standing committees to write manuals or guides for internal committee use. These serve to provide information on the regular activities, duties and responsibilities of the committee, time lines, examples of reports and other documents, and history of events and leadership. To date, manuals have been produced and posted on VRAweb.org by the Development Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Nominating Committee. The VRA Board should continue to encourage and follow up with standing committees to create this documentation, which is useful both to committee members and to new members who are looking to find places within the VRA to develop their interests.

2. Improve communication.

A. Educate committees, task forces, and advisory groups in using new technologies for meetings and communication. (Communications Technology Advisor – Short Term)

The new Communications Technology Advisor can assist committees, task forces, and advisory groups by providing advice and guidance in using remote conferencing applications (including Skype) to facilitate group communication.

Goals and Recommendations for Chapters

1. Provide support and guidance for chapter leadership.

A. Move forward with bundled memberships and chapter bursary initiatives. (VRA Board – Implemented)

B. Revise, update, and rename the VRA Leadership Guide. (Membership Committee, new Communications Technology Advisor – Short Term)

The VRA now boasts thirteen regional chapters of varying membership size, geographic range and membership activity. Several chapters have recently had problems with sustaining membership, leadership transition and holding regular meetings. The bundled membership renewal and the chapter bursary program currently being initiated promise to help address some of these issues. Adoption of
these initiatives will also mean that chapters will be reviewing and standardizing their bylaws, which the Task Force sees as an additional advantage. The Board should continue scheduling a meeting for chapter chairs at the annual conference. This affords the chairs an opportunity to share and discuss issues, challenges, and problems, as well as to interact with the VRA Board.

The VRA Leadership Guide (not to be confused with the Leadership Guide for Chairs – see above), developed by the Membership Committee some years ago, was a valuable handbook for establishing chapters. Specific additions the Task Force recommends are: information about bundled memberships and the chapter bursary service; a revised Chapter Bylaws template which reflects the new VRA standards; information on using MemberClicks; guidance from the Communications Technology Advisor on new technologies Chapters can use for teleconference meetings. The handbooks should be made available in PDF format and linked from the Chapters page of VRAweb.org. The Task Force suggests that the VRA Chapter Guide would be an appropriate new title.

2. Position the chapters as loci for membership recruitment and outreach efforts.

A. Encourage chapters to create membership outreach groups. (Membership Committee – Short to Midterm)

Chapters serve as a natural place for the Association to promote its activities and recruit new members. Chapters should be encouraged to identify members to work on outreach. Inviting non-member colleagues to meetings, identifying members of other like-minded organizations and contacting them, and visiting college fairs to promote visual resources as a career are a few ways in which the VRA can cultivate membership on a local level. This is further addressed in the Community section of this report.

3. Support chapter efforts to provide professional development and technology training for members.

A. Offer regional workshops with continuing education opportunities of value and convenience to members at reasonable cost, using a sliding scale of fees for members, non-members and students. (Regional Chapters, Education Committee – Short Term)

B. Develop a formalized way for VRA chapters to ask for funding for professional development and training programs. (VRA Board, Education Committee, Chapter Chairs – Short Term)

C. Establish an Association YouTube channel to post recorded video and audio materials from chapter meetings. (Web Community Coordinator, Chapter Chairs, Education Committee – Short Term)

D. Consider creating a fund for professional development and training at the chapter level. (VRA Board – Midterm)

In the current economic climate, it is likely that fewer members will have institutional support to attend the VRA annual conference, and those who have attended without support in the past may find it more
financially difficult to do so now. Regional chapters offer a means of filling the gap by providing professional development and technology training to members at less cost. The Task Force sees this as a joint effort with the regional chapters working with the Education Committee and the VRA Board, as well as the new Web Community Coordinator and Communications Technology Advisor, to create an enhanced educational program for members. These offerings will provide a means of recruiting new members as well.

Over 80% of the survey respondents reported an interest in attending reasonably priced workshops, while over 70% indicated a willingness to pay more for a workshop offered by an expert in the field (including non-members). These results strongly suggest that members support the idea of bringing new ideas from outside of the organization inside. It is up to the VRA Board, working with the Education Committee, to find ways of providing financial support for chapter professional development and technology training programs. The Education Committee can serve as a coordinator and clearing house for successful programs as chapters develop and test various offerings. Those that work well can be shared via the Education Committee - either as an idea to be developed locally or a whole package that includes specific speakers or trainers. The VRA Board, working with the Education Committee, should formalize a means by which chapters may request funding for professional development and technology training programs.

The establishment of an Association YouTube channel would allow chapters to post video clips from meetings and events. This also could be used for promotional and recruitment efforts by the chapters. The Task Force sees the YouTube channel as a place where content that is being freely provided would be posted. It probably would not include workshops or other educational materials for which members are paying a fee to attend in person.

Finally, it is recommended that a fund be created for professional development and training at the chapter level. Specifically, the Task Force suggests that the Education Committee stipends currently used to fund a single chapter member to attend a workshop at VRA’s national conference be reallocated to a chapter education funding program.

4. Improve communication.

A. Educate Chapters in using new technologies for meetings, training and communication. (Communications Technology Advisor – Short Term)

New technologies for teleconferencing and video-conferencing could make it feasible for Chapters with large geographic areas to reach members remotely and provide opportunities for increasing membership and member interest. Often these technologies are freely available at members’ institutions. We recommend that the VRA Board actively promote remote conferencing technologies for chapter meetings for those who cannot attend in person. The new Communications Technology Advisor can provide advice and guidance to chapters in using remote conferencing technologies.
Goals and Recommendations for Developing VRA Future Leaders

1. Develop and promote leadership within the Association.

A. Utilize current and past VRA leaders to promote the value of leadership. (VRA Board, Leadership Task Force – Ongoing)

B. Establish a Leadership Fund for training programs at the annual conference and chapter meetings. (VRA Board, Development Committee – Midterm)

C. Develop leadership workshops to be offered at the annual conference and chapter meetings. (VRA Board, Leadership Task Force, Education Committee – Ongoing)

Leadership is a required element for the success of an organization. It must be established and developed from within and must also extend beyond the confines of the organization in order to promote effective relationships with other groups, thus laying the path for an organization's relevance and longevity. Developing leaders within an organization begins with the early identification and recruitment of potential leaders and matching their interests with educational opportunities and committee assignments. The continuum of leadership is nurtured and sustained through mentoring relationships, internships, and by a transparent process for individuals to grow their involvement within the organization.

The Association is fortunate to have a number of past VRA leaders who are still actively involved in the Association. Drawing on the experience of these individuals is essential to grooming the next generation of VRA leadership. To embark on a campaign for developing leaders, we recommend the appointment of a Leadership Task Force and the establishment of a Leadership Fund in support of leadership training. The Leadership Fund should be designated as a restricted fund for the purpose of bringing expert speakers and trainers to the conference and regional chapter meetings for workshops and sessions.

The Leadership Task Force will look at promoting leadership and should take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies. Some ideas that were suggested during the course of our work included spotlight features on past and current leaders, the use of YouTube videos following the theme of "what I gained from being President, VP, Chapter Chair, etc.," “Did You Know?” features, and oral histories of retired members.

A recommendation that was not realized from the 2003 Strategic Plan was the development of a Founders’ Lecture at the annual conference as a way of promoting VRA leadership. Survey and interview data did not find great enthusiasm for this concept.

Goals and Recommendations for the VRA Foundation

1. Focus on Education and Communication.

A. Educate the VRA membership about the Foundation and provide more frequent updates on Foundation activities. (VRA Board and VRA Foundation Board – Short Term)
B. Communicate and work with the VRA Development Committee. (VRA Board, VRA Foundation Board, VRA Development Committee – Ongoing)

The establishment of the VRA Foundation was a significant event for the VRA. Oversight of the Summer Educational Institute and the Cataloguing Cultural Objects project has been transferred to the new body. A Memo of Understanding between the two Boards has been finalized to further define the relationship of the two organizations. While the Task Force does not feel it is within its charge to make recommendations for the Foundation, we see that education of the VRA membership on the mission and goals of the VRA Foundation is needed, as confusion exists about the role of the Foundation and its relationship to VRA. This should be the responsibility of both Boards. Regular communication to the VRA Membership on Foundation activities, delivered in a variety of formats, is suggested.

The purpose of the Foundation is to raise funds to advance programs of interest to the Association, its membership, and the wider visual resources community; it must be kept in mind that the VRA Foundation must make its offerings available to the public. It is critical that Foundation development efforts are not at the expense of the Association's need for donations from its members. While the contributions to the VRA Foundation are tax deductible to the extent provided by law, donations to the VRA are not, potentially putting the Association at a disadvantage in fundraising activities. Loyal members provide the main source of funding to the VRA, through memberships, conference fees and donations to VRA activities such as the Travel Awards program. Offering businesses that might wish to take advantage of the tax-deductible nature of contributions to the VRA Foundation, or to associate their names with future Foundation initiatives, will have to be balanced carefully against the relatively small number of business supporters of the VRA. Ideally, the Foundation will be seeking grant funding from agencies and foundations as a means of providing its financial base. The Foundation must communicate with the VRA Board and the VRA Development Committee to find a balance between utilizing VRA’s membership (including vendors) for support and establishing new, external sources for funding.

**Financial Aspects**

Professional organizations, particularly those such as the Visual Resources Association that draw their support primarily from people in the arts and humanities, are being significantly challenged by the current economic climate and future outlook. On the other hand, this difficult time may be used advantageously to re-evaluate the means by which the Association funds its mission and goals, both in the short and long term, and to ensure that current resources are used to their full potential. As with the past Strategic Plan, the focus here is on providing for the ongoing financial health of the Association by recommending ways of stabilizing primary income sources, reducing expenses, redirecting financial resources, and identifying additional sources of income.

Some overarching concerns continue with the Association’s limited membership base that is not well-remunerated as a whole. Many members have little or no institutional support; chapters have few
financial resources and modest revenue streams. Operating costs continue to rise, as have many of the costs associated with the annual conference. The following goals and recommendations reflect the importance and difficulty of responsible financial planning for the Association in these uncertain economic times.

**Goals and Recommendations**

1. **Stabilize primary income sources.**
   
   A. Expand the membership base as a dependable source of operating income by broadening its scope to include other members of the imaging community. (Membership Committee – Short Term)
   
   B. Increase membership dues modestly, based on need as exhibited by operating budget (as opposed to regularly scheduled dues increases). (VRA Board, Treasurer – Short Term)

   1) Provide analysis charting annual rate of increase in Association’s operating costs compared to dues increase.

   C. Redefine dues levels to four membership levels: Student, Professional, Senior, and Institutional. (VRA Board, Treasurer – Midterm)

As membership dues provide the Association’s primary source of income, it must work to retain current members while recruiting new ones. Expanding outreach efforts to include others in the imaging community, outside of the traditional base, is a subject of the **Community** section of this report.

Raising dues is always an issue of concern. The Task Force recommends that in the near future dues increases be modest and based on an analysis of the annual rate of increase in the Association’s operating costs. It is important that increases be communicated in an open manner and that the analysis be done formally and posted to the VRA website, along with comparisons to the dues of peer organizations.

As the Association moves forward, it would be useful to determine what percentage of members currently receives institutional support for membership dues, outside of the category of Institutional Membership. Further, the Task Force recommends that the current income-based model be flattened to three categories, Student, Professional, and Senior (retired members), along with the Institutional Membership. Those members at the beginning and end of their professional careers would be given a discount, as these two categories currently provide. The recent tightening of the criteria for the Student category has reduced the numbers of those claiming this status. The salary-based structure has inherent problems, privacy concerns being among them. The Task Force recommends that an analysis be undertaken to determine an averaged dues amount that would apply to all members (outside of the Student and Senior categories) and that would provide the same amount of income as under the current tiered system, adjusted for operating cost increase. A number of VRA members use the Institutional
Membership category; we recommend that it be retained. All members should be encouraged to make a donation beyond the standard membership fee.

The recent implementation of the Chapter Bursary and bundled memberships programs will go a long way towards stabilizing the financial operations of the chapters.

2. Reduce conference expenses.

A. Compare and analyze costs of similar professional conferences (Vice President, Treasurer, Financial Advisory Committee – Short Term)

B. Undertake cost/benefit analysis of conference expenses to member satisfaction and participation (Vice President, Treasurer – Short Term)

C. Reduce national conference costs by evaluating and considering cost of accommodations and food and beverage contracts, length of the conference, location of conference in less expensive city, joint conferences in conjunction with other professional associations, tour costs, time of year for the conference, and provision of campus accommodations when available or appropriate. (Vice Presidents, Treasurer – Ongoing)

Conference issues, including related financial considerations, are dealt with in more detail in the Conference section of this report. Although the Association has converted to a for-profit conference model recommended by the previous Strategic Plan, in practice the results have been mixed. Several conferences were very profitable (Portland, Baltimore) while others were much less so (Miami, San Diego). The current Board continues to examine conference expenses, especially in light of today’s rising costs and members’ disappearing travel budgets. While the overall expenses incurred for conferences and the range of costs are known factors, and it can be determined what other organizations charge for conference fees (VRA is considerably lower than similar organizations), there is no benchmark against which to compare other, similar organizations’ conference costs. The Task Force recommends that a comparative analysis be undertaken, with the assistance of the Financial Advisory Committee, to provide a basis for considering cost containment, expenses, and conference fees.

Post-conference surveys provide a sense of member satisfaction and participation in events and offerings. A cost/benefit analysis of conference expenses should be undertaken to determine the direction of planning for future conferences. In particular, the Task Force suggests looking carefully at the Travel Awards Program. In addition to having the lowest base registration fees for its conferences, VRA offers a greater number of travel awards than any of the other peer organizations. Yet the Strategic Plan Task Force survey results revealed that only about 28% of VRA members viewed the travel awards program as a valuable membership benefit. This may be because only a small percentage of VRA members have benefited directly from it. While the Task Force is convinced that this program should be retained as a benefit if funds are available, we recommend that the Board analyze the long-term benefits of the Travel Awards program, both for members and to the organization, particularly in light of its costs.
In practice, each new Board reevaluates the conference model. As a reminder, negotiating cost of accommodations and food and beverage contracts, tweaking the length of the conference, and planning tours should be done with a view to keeping costs as low as possible. Choosing less expensive cities as venues must become a standard procedure. A joint conference model can be developed, as the upcoming conference with ARLIS/NA (2011 in Minneapolis) will provide a basis for a cost analysis of this approach. It has also been suggested that the time of year for the conference be reconsidered. As such a change could have major implications for the annual calendar of operations there is less flexibility with that parameter. The VRA has no control over the availability and suitability of academic institution facilities in a given city, therefore the Task Force can only recommend that these be looked at as options if available and appropriate.

3. Reduce publications costs.

A. Reduce the cost of publications by elimination of print copy, providing a print-on-demand copy model, having an electronic copy available (for fee) on the public website. (Publishing Advisory Group – Midterm)

Detailed consideration of the VRA publications program, with specific recommendations and discussion, may be found in the Communications section of this report. As a financial matter it is recommended that print copies of publications, the VRA Bulletin and the Special Bulletin series produced to date, be eliminated as a cost-reduction action, with a move to a print-on-demand model. The majority of VRA members favor this approach. The Strategic Plan Task Force survey revealed that over 70% of responding members agree that the print edition of the VRA Bulletin should be eliminated entirely.

4. Redirect resources.

A. Realign the Development Committee charge in order to focus on non-conference fundraising. (Development Committee – Short Term)

B. Strengthen and increase the VRA donor base to help fund special projects. (Development Committee – Ongoing)

C. Increase collaboration between the Financial Advisory Committee and the Development Committee. (Financial Advisory Committee, Development Committee – Long Term)

D. Increase collaboration between the Development Committee and the Public Relations and Communications Officer in identifying donors and potential sources of revenue. (Development Committee, PR&C Officer – Long Term)

In the past much of the work of the Development Committee has been focused on the annual conference. In Task Force discussions with VRA leaders, including current and past members of the Development Committee and the Board, it became clear that a cost-benefit analysis of this activity indicates that fundraising efforts should be refocused. The VRA is dependent on members’ generosity at a time when financial resources are stretched. Too few members make donations above their basic
membership fee. The Task Force believes that the main thrust for the Development Committee should be to stimulate giving from within the organization, with raising funds from outside sources as a secondary goal.

The phrase “bake sale mentality” has been used to describe VRA fundraising, suggesting that the organization thinks too small in its development efforts. A refocused Development Committee could turn this way of thinking into a positive. We suggest using the model introduced by the Obama campaign in the 2008 presidential election: lots of small donations add up quickly and give more people a chance to connect with the effort. Develop ideas to market giving at the low end, such as a campaign asking members to “Skip a latte and donate the $10 to the VRA.” Recognize and value all donations regardless of size. In other words, capitalize on the “bake sale mentality.”

There is a core group of vendors who are integrally involved in the VRA. Nurturing these relationships is also a critical part of internal development. Care must be taken not to ask persistently and repeatedly for donations from this group, especially in light of the work of the VRA Foundation. As articulated in the Organization and Governance section of this report, these concerns point to a need for the Development Committee to communicate with the VRA Foundation. We suggest asking a VRA member who is also a vendor to either serve on the Development Committee or proffer advice on cultivating vendor relationships.

As an organization, the VRA does not have a networking model for external development. It must determine how to build such a network and how to direct these development efforts. Although development training was not fully embraced by previous committees and Boards, the Task Force recommends that the training issue be addressed again. The Board may need to consider hiring a consultant for fund raising just as they have hired other professionals as needed in the past (for example, a lawyer for work on forming the VRA Foundation and accounting firms for audits and consultations).

5. Identify additional sources of income.

A. Provide on-line workshops and other continuing education opportunities of relevance at reasonable cost, including those conducted by non-member experts. (VRA Board, Education Committee, Education Task Force, VRA Foundation – Long Term)

B. Partner with other organizations and higher education programs in offering on-line instructional opportunities, whereby VRA can share income from tuition or fees. (VRA Board, Education Committee, Education Task Force – Long Term)
C. Make better use of the Association website as revenue source through paid advertising, sale of publications, and services. (PR&C Officer, Publishing Advisory Group, Development Committee, Web Editor – Ongoing)

D. Establish a VRA Grants Administrator position to act as a liaison to vet and propose projects for funding from the VRA Foundation, once the VRA Foundation has sufficient financial resources to provide grants from funding agencies and foundations. (VRA Board, Development Committee, VRA Foundation – Long Term)

E. Collaborate with the VRA Foundation in fund-raising to advance programs of interest to the Association and its membership. (VRA Board, Development Committee, VRA Foundation – Long Term)

Identifying new sources of income will be crucial to the Association’s financial health over the next five years. One way of doing this is to provide relevant continuing education opportunities for the membership and for non-members in the form of online tutorials and workshops. These might be created by member experts or by educators outside of the VRA. We also recommend considering partnerships with other organizations, library and information science schools, and instructional technology programs in offering on-line educational opportunities, whereby the VRA can share income from tuition or fees. The Task Force recommends that an Education Task Force be appointed to take on the responsibility of directing the development of online workshops, webinars and other educational programming as a potential profit-generating program for VRA. Potential topics, instructors, and collaborations with existing institutions and programs should be explored and initiated where feasible. This Task Force should include representation from and work in coordination with the Education Committee.

VRAweb.org, the Association’s website, offers a potential for income. The Task Force recommends making better use of the website as revenue source through paid advertising, sale of publications, and the advertising and sale of services offered by members and non-members by establishing an on-line Vendors or Business Directory.

Once the VRA Foundation has sufficient financial resources to provide grants from its own funds or to seek grants from funding agencies and foundations, the Task Force recommends appointing a VRA Grants Administrator to vet project proposals from within the VRA for funding from the VRA Foundation. The Grants Administrator should coordinate with the Development Committee where appropriate. In addition, the Task Force encourages collaboration with the VRA Foundation in fund-raising to advance programs of particular interest to the Association and its membership.


A. Adopt management and financial practices that conform to best business standards for non-profits. (VRA Board, Treasurer, Financial Advisory Committee – Long Term)
B. Develop a written finance manual to be used in tracking and documenting changes in financial policies. (Treasurer – Ongoing)

C. Establish a regular reporting schedule between the Treasurer and the Financial Advisory Committee. (VRA Board, Treasurer, Financial Advisory Committee – Short Term)

D. Consider establishing a ceiling figure for ready cash reserves, or alternatively, establishing a bottom line amount for drawing down finances, to be included in a written policy statement for the organization. (VRA Board, Treasurer, Financial Advisory Committee – Long Term)

It must be ensured that the VRA operates in accordance with recommended best practices. During Ann Woodward’s term as Treasurer of the VRA, T.R. Klein & Company, C.P.A., which specializes in providing accounting services for non-profit organizations, made a number of recommendations for best practices in managing VRA finances. The Treasurer should continue to implement these practices. A financial manual has been started (currently it is part of the Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual) and should continue to be developed. In addition, the Task Force recommends that the Board establish a regular reporting schedule between the Financial Advisory Committee and the Treasurer.

In providing for the ongoing financial health of the VRA, it is recommended that the Board, Treasurer, and Financial Advisory Committee consider how to handle surplus funds beyond what is needed to have in hand for ready cash reserves. Surplus funds could be used to: (1) create an endowment to stabilize long-term income; (2) enhance services to the membership; (3) provide additional support for key positions and activities; and (4) offer additional travel awards to encourage broader conference participation.

Community

Cultivating a sense of community is critical to the success of any organization. To flourish, an organization needs to have both a committed membership and relevance in the outside world where the initiatives it generates are forwarded and adopted. The Strategic Plan includes recommendations designed to invest members in the organization, as well as provide guidance on how the organization can expand its reach as a leader in the field and an advocate for the profession.

Member involvement in the organization is particularly important for the VRA, which relies on volunteers to accomplish much of the organization’s work, including day-to-day operations and the development of ideas and programs. Every effort should be made to invest members in the organization. Since the Association also depends heavily on membership dues to support the organization, membership satisfaction should be a high priority. From the data gathered in Task Force interviews and the survey, it is clear that members strongly believe in the mission of the VRA and value the professional relationships and sense of community the organization provides. Cultivating intangible
benefits such as sense of belonging, as well as enhancing tangible, members-only benefits like the VRA Listserv (VRA-L), are important objectives.

The Task Force also determined that the Association should do a better job of looking outward, utilizing careful coordination of effort in regard to its activities, projects, and publications alongside a well-realized public relations strategy to expand its audience, recruit new members, develop the profession, and enhance leadership on image-related issues. A high priority should be to create an environment of advocacy for the Association and its professionals. This is particularly important during a time when many visual resources professionals see their facilities and positions under siege. The VRA should also look to expand its leadership in the area of image management. The VRA has placed an admirable focus on VRA Core 4.0 and Cataloguing Cultural Objects (CCO), proving an ability to develop and forward initiatives on a large scale. The organization has the opportunity to display its versatility by engaging in a broader range of issues. The Association should be in a position to quickly identify relevant topics for its known and potential audiences, and have mechanisms in place to offer and show expertise on these topics. Drawing on the skills and talents of an increasingly diverse membership, the VRA has the potential to reinforce its leadership in areas such as image standards, image sharing, copyright, social tagging, and expanded applications of VRA Core 4.0 and CCO.

Goals and Recommendations for Membership

1. Involve and invest members in the organization.

A. Create a New Member’s Packet to be posted on the website. (Membership Committee – Short Term)

B. Institutionalize the year-long mentorship program, with clear guidelines and expectations for mentors and their mentees. Ensure that this program is also available to members who cannot attend the annual conference. (Membership Committee – In process)

C. Create an “idea commons,” or “project incubator” where special interest groups can grow up around an idea.

1) Establish these project incubators within committees on the following topics: Data Standards, Education and Outreach, Image Standards, and Copyright. (VRA Board, Data Standards Committee, Education Committee, Intellectual Property Rights Committee – Short Term)

2) Create a mechanism within the Board for monitoring these projects and identifying when an idea requires a next step, such as establishing a special interest group. (VRA Board – Short Term)

3) Ensure regular communication between the VRA Board and the VRA Foundation regarding developing projects. (VRA Board – Short Term)
D. Foster a climate of openness and inclusion:

1) Continue regular communication from the VRA-Board to the membership. (VRA Board – Short Term)

2) Provide multiple access points to Board communications by harnessing new technologies to communicate and inform. (VRA Board, Communications Technology Advisor – Short Term)

3) Provide informal opportunities for VRA Members to communicate with Officers, Chapters, and Committee Chairs. (VRA Board, Chapter Chairs, Committee Chairs, Membership Committee – Short Term)

4) Create a regular schedule for mini-surveys of the membership in the Board calendar. (VRA Board – Implemented)

From interviews and the online survey, it is clear that one of the most valued aspects of membership in the VRA is the sense of collegiality and community that participation in the organization provides. It was also apparent that many members, both new and long-term, feel excluded from discussions, projects, and the groups of friends that inevitably form over time. This sense of disenfranchisement is problematic from the perspectives of membership retention and participation, and ultimately inhibits the Association’s growth financially and intellectually. How to create a sense of belonging and a flow of ideas throughout the organization was an important topic of the Strategic Plan Task Force’s discussions.

The Association should be adept at ushering new members into the organization from the outset, through a welcome packet posted on VRAweb.org that provides tips on how to get involved in the organization, activities such as the new members’ breakfast, and offering mentorship that extends beyond or is independent of the annual conference.

The VRA should also provide forums for the cultivation and development of new voices, and for new projects as well as established ones like VRA Core 4.0 and CCO. A project “incubator” or “idea commons” could fill this need, allowing ideas to move forward more smoothly and democratically. This commons might take the form of a wiki, which would allow members to suggest, create, and comment on content, and could be modeled on the W3C consortium, fostering an entrepreneurial element within VRA where ideas that gain critical mass are expanded upon and developed. These “incubators” could begin at the committee level, much like the proposed XMP project that has established a working group under the Data Standards Committee, but further exploration of the concept could mean it takes a different form. It is important that a mechanism be created for monitoring these projects and identifying when an idea has reached a critical mass and requires a next step, such as establishing a special interest group or task force. The Board should ensure that there is regular communication with the VRA Foundation Board regarding developing projects of potential interest to the broader community, especially where outside funding or grant opportunities might be available.

In spite of notable efforts to increase communication between the Board and membership in the past
several years, members also voiced concerns about a lack of Board transparency and an environment of secrecy as a reason for feeling excluded from the organization or for their lack of participation. On the other side, present and former Board members expressed frustration that business-related messages sent out on VRA-L, as well as through Images and the VRA Bulletin, are often ignored by the membership, and that recruiting members to participate actively in the work of the organization is a daunting task. In truth, active members and VRA leadership welcome input and want more members to volunteer, and many VRA members are interested and want to participate in Association activities. Given the necessity of retaining and involving members, how can the VRA Board best foster a climate of openness and inclusion?

Task Force members discussed a number of interesting and innovative ideas for breaking down barriers, informing the membership about leadership activities and duties, and for improving communication throughout the organization. These included having sessions at the conference where Association leadership (Board Members, Appointees, Committee and Chapter Chairs) can talk informally with members about their activities. These could be short, casual presentations, poster sessions, or mixers. The latter concept, a variation on “speed dating,” has been used successfully at the University of Virginia to increase dialogue between faculty and students, by pairing them up briefly to gather data, ask questions, and share ideas. The VRA could utilize mixers as an informal way for members to approach the organizational leadership and learn about their work. In turn, it would also serve as a way for the Board to get a better sense of membership concerns and ideas.

In addition, members want to be heard. Along with regular transmissions from VRA leaders to members through VRA-L, Board communications should increasingly harness the Web 2.0 model of a two-sided dialogue, both as a general approach and attitude and through the use of Web 2.0 communication and social networking tools such as blogs and Facebook. This need not mean more work for those creating messages or reports. The same post can be published to a number of different outlets, allowing members to receive information in the format of their choice. Feedback from the membership also indicates that more frequent, shorter messages posted to a variety of outlets, containing news and updates on the conference, projects and activities, as well as news from related organizations, will more likely be viewed and shared. Interest and enthusiasm in the VRA will build as a result. Currently the Board is using periodic mini-surveys as a means of getting membership feedback on topics of interest. The Task Force recommends that this practice be continued.

2. Provide benefits to enhance the value of VRA membership.

A. Retain VRA-L as a members-only benefit.

1) Post a regular etiquette message on VRA-L to encourage respectful communication between parties. (Membership Services Coordinator – Short Term)

2) Investigate new email list software that might provide enhanced searching and functionality. (PR&C Officer, Membership Services Coordinator – Midterm)
3) Investigate FeedMyInBox or other, related RSS technology to deliver blog and other content to the VRA-Listserv. (PR&C Officer, Web Community Coordinator – Midterm)

B. Eliminate the PDF format of the VRA Sourcebook and Directory and develop an online guide for using MemberClicks. (PR&C Officer, Membership Services Coordinator – Short Term)

C. Investigate providing access, for free or for a nominal fee, to products produced or offered by VRA members that will help other members to accomplish their work. (VRA Board – Midterm)

D. Sustain the travel awards program alongside of an assessment of the long-term benefits to VRA members and to the organization (VRA Board – Short Term)

While the significant and most valued benefits of collegiality and sense of belonging that VRA offers are not easily quantifiable, it remains true that many VRA members want tangible benefits for their money. While results of the Strategic Plan Survey certainly do not reflect the opinion of the entire membership, they provided insight as to which benefits members most value. The statistical breakdown to the question what VRA benefits are most important to members was the following:

- VRA Listserv: 98.3%
- Discounted registration fees for the VRA annual conference: 62.6%
- VRA Bulletin: 50.4%
- VRA Sourcebook and Directory: 46.1%
- VRA Travel Awards Program: 27.8%
- Discounted registration fees for SEI: 17.4%
- VRA Mentor Program for New Members: 13.9%

The VRA Listserv remains the most valued benefit in the organization, and as such, is perhaps the most potent marketing tool for recruiting new members. While much debate ensued in Task Force discussions about making the Listserv public as a way to draw people to the organization, the fact remains that when VRA-L was public membership numbers dropped substantially, a financial blow that the Association cannot afford to repeat at this time. Instead, the VRA should retain the Listserv as a members-only benefit, and make a concerted effort to add value to the resource. One way to accomplish this is through topically-based digests such as a “Best of VRA-L” feature, some of which could be put forward for public viewing. Another idea would be to consider email list software that allows for enhanced searching capabilities. Any consideration of a move from the current system, which has been hosted long-term and for free by University of Arkansas, should be weighed seriously against potential associated costs of software and hosting transitions. VRA-L could be made more dynamic through the use of RSS technology such as FeedMyInBox, which would allow for forwarding of content from
VRAweb.org directly to VRA-L. Security concerns should be investigated before implementing this technology.

The VRA Sourcebook and Directory is also perceived as an important benefit, although many lament the loss of the printed version with the move to the use of MemberClicks, a tool in which the organization has invested but one that members are not fully utilizing. A PDF version of the VRA Sourcebook and Directory has been used as a substitute. However, past and current Public Relations and Communications Officers have commented that creating this PDF is a time-consuming process that takes away from other, potentially more valuable functions. Since directory information is available through MemberClicks, and material such as the VRA Bylaws can be found on VRAweb.org, creating a PDF of the VRA Sourcebook and Directory is a redundant process. It is important to make members feel that the transition from the VRA Sourcebook and Directory to VRAweb.org and MemberClicks provides them with a product equal to the printed or PDF version. Better promotion of MemberClicks by the Board and the Membership Services Coordinator, the creation of an online guide, and in-person training in its use are recommended.

The Association must investigate new ways to add value to VRA membership. One idea is to harness the individual efforts of VRA members to create products that streamline workflows and help members accomplish their work. These might include technical advice, concise how-to articles, or practical tools such as forms, templates, or XSL style sheets. A members-only space for sharing practical tools such as transformation style sheets and data templates should be considered, along with a potential fee-based system for access to these materials by non-members. And, offering some of these products for free to the general public may be a way to draw new members to the organization.

While the annual conference is addressed in greater detail in the Conference section of this report, keeping conference fees reasonable for members is a valued benefit of VRA membership. In addition, the Strategic Plan Task Force discussed whether or not access to conference proceedings should be a membership benefit. It is clear these materials need to be made available in a more standardized form, and that the issue of whether or not they should be viewed as a members-only benefit or as a promotional tool needs to be resolved.

The VRA Bulletin is addressed in detail in the Communications section of this report, but is highly valued by members as a record of the research, recommendations, and accomplishments of the VRA. Every effort should be made to keep this program on track and vibrant.

The Task Force was surprised by the low percentage of members who considered the VRA Travel Awards program to be an important benefit. This may be due to the fact that only a small percentage of members have benefited directly from the program and others do not perceive the long-term value it may have for those who receive these awards. While the Strategic Plan Task Force is convinced that this program should be retained if funds are available, we recommend that the Board review the long term benefits of the Travel Awards program, both for members and to the organization, particularly in light of its costs.
Goals and Recommendations for Advocacy and Outreach

1. Promote and advocate for the visual resources profession.

A. Create professional advocacy materials.

1) Update or rewrite the publication *Guidelines for the Visual Resources Profession*. (VRA Board – Short Term)

2) Ensure that the VRA *White Paper* is widely distributed and regularly revisited to retain its currency as an advocacy document. (VRA Board – Short Term)

B. Forward visual resources as a potential career path.

1) Schedule appearances at college job fairs, particularly relevant at institutions with MLS/MLIS programs. (PR&C Officer – Short Term)

2) Create a VRA career-specific poster to be hung in museum studies, library science and art history departments as a visual reminder that this career path exists (VRA Board, PR&C Officer – Short Term)

3) Promote student membership (Membership Committee – Short Term)

As this Strategic Plan was being drafted, the closures of several visual resources facilities were announced. In the digital age when some faculty, students, and administrators believe that image access is as simple as a Google or ARTstor search, the role of the Visual Resources Association as advocates for the profession and professionals needs to be strong, forward-thinking and responsive. The organization should provide documents that aid visual resources professionals in advocating for their profession and facilities to administrators. There must also be a mechanism in place to ensure that these documents remain up-to-date. Updating the *Guidelines for the Visual Resources Profession*, last published with ARLIS in 2000, should be immediately addressed and thereafter placed on a publications calendar for periodic review. Consideration should be given to the form this publication should take; a wiki might be a better long-term solution than a static printed document. The VRA *White Paper* should be made widely available and be regularly reviewed by the Board for currency.

In addition, the VRA should work to ensure that the profession remains a viable and desired career path by making its presence known to students in fields such as library and information science, art history, museum studies, and instructional technology. A general poster supporting the VRA was distributed to certain institutions in 2005; a VRA-sponsored poster advocating for the image management profession, perhaps advertising mentorship opportunities, should be revisited. Targeting college job fairs with information about image-management careers and staffing those fairs with local VRA members presents a unique one-on-one opportunity to cultivate future professionals. This could easily be accomplished at academic institutions with active VRA members, and could be promoted as an outreach opportunity through the chapters, as mentioned in the *Organization and Governance* section of this report. Student
membership in the VRA should be actively promoted, perhaps through the establishment of a VRA student group similar to ARLISnap, ARLIS's group for student and newly minted professionals.


A. Establish a Public Relations Advisory Group to work with the PR&C Officer on publicity issues. (VRA Board – Short Term)

1) Identify related organizations and groups to target for a public relations and recruitment campaign. (PR&C Officer, Public Relations Advisory Group – Short Term)

2) Establish a VRA public relations campaign with this targeted audience in mind, tailoring PR material to the needs of particular groups by identifying common interests. (PR&C Officer, Public Relations Advisory Group – Short Term)

B. Appoint liaisons for relevant organizations from within the VRA membership, making use of those who have memberships in other organizations. Formalize the duties of a liaison, and create appropriate procedures for reporting to the VRA Board. (VRA Board – Midterm)

C. Utilize the VRA publications program as an avenue for outreach and leadership.

1) Identify additional avenues and formats for VRA publications by making use of new technologies and social networking tools. (PR&C Officer, Publishing Advisory Group, Communications Technology Advisor – Midterm)

2) Undertake publicity efforts in the areas of publications, activities and projects where there is broad appeal and applicability to both the traditional VRA membership and new targeted areas. (PR&C Officer, Public Relations Advisory Group, Publishing Advisory Group – Midterm)

D. Harness Web 2.0 technologies as a way promote the VRA (Public Relations Advisory Group, PR&C Officer, Web Community Coordinator – Midterm)

1) Publish summaries or posts of pertinent VRA information on the Listservs, social networking pages, and blogs of targeted groups.

2) Utilize meta-tagging and other means to make certain that the VRA and its championed issues are returned in Google searches.

3) Utilize a VRA YouTube channel to showcase VRA activities.

Establishing a Public Relations Advisory Group charged with developing a public relations campaign was a high priority for the Strategic Plan Task Force. With MemberClicks in place and the VRA website developed, it is an ideal time to switch the attentions of the PR&C Officer to outreach for the organization, working with the proposed Public Relations Advisory Group dedicated to address this
important organizational need. The suggested evolution of the PR&C Officer’s role is addressed more thoroughly in the Organization and Governance section of this report.

Throughout Task Force discussions, the concept of the audience for VRA issues was raised and debated. Historically, the focus has been largely academic, and oriented primarily toward art and architecture. With an established technical expertise in archiving academic digital materials as rich and permanent resources, and providing access to these images with a sensitivity to rights issues, the VRA should expand its audience to include other disciplines (not exclusively academic in orientation) needing advice in asset management, metadata and crosswalks, digital imaging standards, and best practices for providing image access. In addition, other organizations will benefit from the Association’s work on digital image creation (technical standards, workflow, file management, and archiving), metadata (database schemas, data standards, data sharing), delivery (interface design, data retrieval) and use and access (fair use, tracking copyright status, controlling use). As the VRA pursues the recommendations to expand the scope of its leadership on image management issues, it should also have mechanisms in place to forward and publicize these issues to an expanded audience.

The Association should emphasize developing interactions with related organizations through a formal liaison program. To minimize costs to the organization, the liaison program should utilize VRA members who are already participants in and attending the conferences of these related organizations, providing them with guidelines on how to act as advocates for the organization, and creating procedures for reporting to the VRA Board. While attendance at the conferences of the related organizations is desirable, the Task Force is not recommending that the VRA Board provide funding for this activity. It was suggested that communications through these liaisons could serve to promote and advertise specific aspects of the VRA and its conferences tailored to the interests of the related organizations. In turn, the liaisons would serve as a conduit of information back to the VRA.

The printed publications program is addressed more thoroughly in the Communications section of this report; we recommend here that it should be utilized as another important mechanism to promote the VRA, with potential topics including digital asset management, digitization guidelines and standards, digital preservation, metadata crosswalks, and intellectual property rights issues. In addition, the VRA needs to explore how best to harness Web 2.0 technologies. The Public Relations Advisory Group and the PR&C Officer, in consultation with the Web Community Coordinator, should explore mentions of the VRA in blogs, the use of metatags to place VRA at the top of Google Search results, and the use of a VRA YouTube channel (the second most popular search site beyond Google) to showcase the organization’s ideas and message.

3. Recruit new members.

A. Engage in grassroots recruitment practices.
1) Give the chapters more responsibility in the recruitment process including identifying and contacting potential members. (VRA Board, Public Relations Advisory Group, PR&C Officer, Membership Committee – Midterm)

2) Publicize chapter workshops and other educational programs to a broad audience to draw potential members to VRA and increase attendance at chapter meetings. (VRA Board, Education Committee – Short Term)

B. Investigate establishing affiliate relationships or memberships with other like-minded professional organizations. (VRA Board – Midterm)

Recruiting new members is essential to the organization's financial growth. While such recruitment should be an intrinsic component and expected result of the Association’s publicity campaign, VRA chapters also provide a fertile and relatively untapped avenue for membership recruitment. Membership recruitment strategy should include putting a structure in place to ensure that chapters assist in identifying potential local candidates for membership, including those outside of the Association’s traditional target areas of academic institutions and art museums. In addition, the Strategic Plan survey and interviews suggest that implementing a program to provide quality workshops at the chapter level and marketing these beyond the chapter membership should be an essential component of membership recruitment efforts. Additional recommendations for these programs may be found in the Organization and Governance section, under Chapters.

The VRA should investigate the possibility of establishing affiliations with related organizations. These affiliations could take the form of affiliate memberships on the model of the relationship with ARLIS/NA, or could include other shared benefits or collaboration on specific common issues. The Joint Task Force Report on Collaboration includes a list of potential affiliate organizations identified during their research process. The VRA Board should utilize this list as it investigates potential affiliations and inter-organizational relationships.

Recommendations for Leadership in the Field

1. Expand the scope and reach of VRA leadership on image management-related issues.

A. Expand VRA participation in photo sharing sites (such as Flickr) to improve the dissemination of images, and actively promote VRA leadership in the area of folksonomy and image tagging. (Data Standards – Short to Midterm)

B. Develop and publicize updated image creation standards for use and preservation. (Data Standards – Short to Midterm)

C. Continue to promote VRA Core and CCO, but revitalize and expand the reach of VRA’s influence and work in the development of data and cataloguing standards. (Data Standards, VRA Foundation – Midterm)
D. Actively promote and establish VRA participation on national and international task forces and committees involved with issue relevant to the organization. (VRA Board – Short Term)

For the VRA to grow and remain dynamic as an organization, it must not only develop its public relations presence, but also the breadth of its leadership on image-management issues. In light of the recent formation of the VRA Foundation, these efforts also represent the potential for fundable projects. VRA Core 4.0 and CCO are successful models of how the Association can develop and lead on key aspects of image management.

The Strategic Plan Task Force identified several additional areas where the VRA may take the lead or make significant contributions to expand its reach into the broader cultural community. Efforts in the realm of intellectual property rights (such as the Digital Image Rights Computator) should continue to be pursued. The VRA Flickr Group could be developed into a serious initiative to provide leadership in the area of public domain image-sharing and the use of social tagging and folksonomies. As experts in the area of image creation, VRA could endorse and publicize standards for image use and preservation to the broader cultural community. Promoting cutting edge research and development in the area of embedding metadata and metadata retrieval (already underway with a newly established Data Standards working group) represents an important new direction for leadership opportunities. While VRA Core 4.0 and CCO should continue to be promoted, the possibility exists to expand upon them to include crosswalks to other standards.

The bulk of the Task Force’s suggestions for the Association’s future leadership initiatives fall in the area of standards and metadata, and are thus a good fit for the Data Standards Committee, at least in the short term. While these suggestions should be given serious consideration by the Board and Data Standards Committee, they are by no means a mandate. Future initiatives should be based on what projects are deemed attainable and of the greatest interest to the Board, the Data Standards Committee, and to other VRA members and committees willing to work on these topics.

As the VRA develops its leadership in new areas, it must vigorously market its expertise. The organization should actively pursue representation on national and international task forces devoted to a broad spectrum of image-related issues, including copyright, cataloguing and metadata, technology standards and image databanks. The organization should compensate necessary travel costs for those who are delegated to represent the VRA.

Communications

A well-realized communications program acts as the public face for an organization, and is essential for promoting its ideas and goals. Traditional communication mediums such as print publications increasingly co-exist alongside or are being replaced by digital versions, as websites and social networking sites become an organization’s first point of contact. A Strategic Plan must not only consider
each of these communication modes separately, but also how they interoperate to form a complete and vital program.

The VRA currently offers a variety of publications, print and digital, including the VRA Bulletin, the Special Bulletin series, Images, and VRAweb.org. The Strategic Plan Task Force addressed each of these publications separately, while also determining how or if they fit within an overall communications program. The Task Force suggests making changes in existing publications and pursuing new modes of communication in light of economic realities, efficient use of organizational resources, and technological advances. Overall, it is apparent that the VRA publications program plays a significant role among the resources provided by the Association, and is intertwined with the other areas of the organization addressed in this Strategic Plan, particularly that of the community (Community section of this report).

In light of its importance, the Task Force determined the need for more advice and oversight to guide the planning of future communication efforts in the form of a Publishing Advisory Group. The recommendations of the Strategic Plan Task Force should function as a starting point for this group, with an eye to future developments that could impact these recommendations and the publication program’s direction.

**Recommendations for the Publications Program**

1. **Create and sustain a comprehensive, flexible, and forward-thinking VRA publications program.**

   A. Establish an advisory group to counsel and provide oversight for the VRA publications program. (VRA Board – Short Term)

   B. Utilize recent developments in the realm of digitization and XML markup to enhance access to and properly archive publications. (Publishing Advisory Group, Publications Program Group, Communications Technology Advisor – Long Term)

Through interviews and the survey conducted by the Task Force, it became clear that the VRA publications program is in a state of transition, and is in need of additional advice and oversight. While the VRA Bulletin and Special Bulletin series will be addressed separately in this section of the report, our recommendations include substantial suggestions regarding the reconfiguration of both. In addition, the advent of Web 2.0 has produced new media through which the VRA can publish and communicate. Blogs, wikis, and a more interactive VRA website are all plausible avenues for introducing new and/or revitalizing existing VRA publications and communications. The role of planning, strategizing, and revamping the publications program is too large for an individual such as the PR&C Officer, and not an appropriate role for an editorial body such as the current Publications Programming Group. Recommendations for dissolving the Publications Programming Group as a formal body are made in the Organization and Governance section of this report. Establishing an advisory group solely devoted to considering and expanding upon all of the recommendations that follow in this section of the report should be an immediate goal of the VRA Board.
The Publishing Advisory Group would be charged with providing guidance for the future course of the publications program. The membership should consist of the PR&C and the Board-appointed members of the VRA publications editorial staff, as well as several at-large, Board-appointed members not immersed in the VRA publications process. An appointment process that takes into account the background that these at-large members may have had in publications will ensure a qualified group. The new Web Community Coordinator should serve as a consultant as needed.

The role of the Publishing Advisory Group will include managing and vetting the recommendations made in this Strategic Plan regarding the VRA Bulletin, the Special Bulletin series, Images, and VRAweb.org, and addressing the emerging interest in the use of Web 2.0 media such as blogs and wikis for VRA publications. The Publishing Advisory Group should also consider different and enhanced modes of electronic access to publications, including versioning of PDF’s to allow for different printing options and ultimately, moving away from PDF documents to searchable, XML-based content. Additional roles could include identifying and recruiting new editors as positions are vacated and providing insight on future directions for the publications program.

Recommendations for the VRA Bulletin

1. Transition the VRA Bulletin to a twice-yearly, electronic publication.

A. Establish a schedule to eliminate the VRA Bulletin publication backlog. (Publishing Advisory Group, VRA Bulletin Editor – Short Term)

B. Going forward, shift the conference proceedings from the published VRA Bulletin to web-accessible formats. (Publishing Advisory Group, VRA Web Editor, Conference Content Manager – Short Term)

C. Transition the publication of the VRA Bulletin from print to digital format. (Publications Advisory Group, VRA Bulletin Editor – Midterm)

D. As the digital transition of the VRA Bulletin proceeds, produce an index of past VRA Bulletins and put a mechanism in place to provide indexes of future issues to enhance accessibility to the electronic documents. (Publishing Advisory Group, VRA Bulletin Editor – Midterm)

While the Strategic Plan Task Force is aware that steps are being taken to address this issue, getting the print version of the VRA Bulletin back on schedule should be an immediate priority of the organization and is necessary before the print version and the three-times-yearly publication schedule can be phased out.

In our effort to look at how the VRA Bulletin program fits into the goals of the organization as a whole, the Task Force consulted financial records and budgets as well as one-on-one interviews and the survey to craft its recommendations. While the VRA Bulletin is highly valued as both a scholarly resource and as a membership benefit, it is published at a considerable expense to the organization. As addressed in the Financial Aspects section of this report, cutting and streamlining expenses when prudent is a necessary
component for the financial health of the organization. One way to do this is to eliminate the print and mailing costs of the VRA Bulletin. The survey results show that over 70% of responding members agree that the print edition of the VRA Bulletin should be eliminated entirely.

This opinion was not expressed without reservation. Questions remain about how digital publications will be distributed and used. What mechanisms will be in place to make certain that digital versions of the VRA Bulletin are properly indexed and archived? Others voiced objection to a digital VRA Bulletin on the basis of format alone; they enjoy a document they can hold in their hands, read easily, and that feels important and permanent. Therefore, any plan to move to a digital format should investigate how other disciplines, most notably the sciences, have managed the transition to solely electronic formats within an academic and library context, and how to optimize the digital version so that is considered versatile and valuable.

Publishing conference content online makes sense both in terms of timeliness and practicality, as widely used presentation formats such as PowerPoint are ill-suited to traditional print publication. The VRA Bulletin could then sensibly transition to a twice-yearly publication schedule, which is more sustainable financially and from a human resources perspective. As the Publishing Advisory Group addresses these issues, clear notice should be given to VRA Bulletin subscribers and VRA members before the start of the membership cycle.

2. Ensure that the VRA Bulletin is a vital, scholarly resource on image-related issues.


B. Make the process of submitting to the VRA Bulletin more transparent and solicit new contributors through regular open calls for articles. (VRA Bulletin Editor – In Process)

C. Establish a “guest editor” program to collaborate with and assist the VRA Bulletin Editor. (Publishing Advisory Group, VRA Bulletin Editor – Midterm)

From the Strategic Plan Task Force’s interviews and the survey of VRA members, it is clear that the VRA Bulletin is revered as the scholarly forum of the organization, and is often used by members as tangible proof of their intellectual accomplishments. Every effort should be made to enhance the scholarly status of the VRA Bulletin so that it remains a distinctive element of the VRA publications program. The Publishing Advisory Group should determine what comprises a scholarly publication for visual resources related fields. Are the criteria simply being indexed by a service such as EBSCO, or does it involve peer-review or other vetting processes? What are scholarly topics in the image management field, and what topics may be more suited to regular, online publications such as Images or a VRA blog?

Another issue raised in the inquiry process was that of keeping the VRA Bulletin vital in terms of content and contributors. As with many aspects of the VRA, the process of soliciting and/or selecting articles was perceived by some members as exclusive or exclusionary. Simple steps such as open calls for article
submission can be taken that will alleviate that perception and increase the range of contributors and content available to the VRA Bulletin. The “New Challenges, New Directions” theme issue, to be published in the summer of 2010, included an open-call on VRA-L. Another way to keep the content of the VRA Bulletin vital is to invite the participation of guest editors to assist in developing and publishing topic-specific issues. This would provide the side benefit of offering publication experience to more VRA members, grooming potential future editors, and easing some of the workload for the current VRA Bulletin Editor.

Recommendations for the Special Bulletin Program

1. Eliminate the Special Bulletin program.

A. Eliminate the Special Bulletin Editor position. (VRA Board – Short Term)

B. Convert all existing Special Bulletins to PDF format and make them available for purchase through MemberClicks. (PR&C Officer – Short Term)

C. Eliminate the printed stock of Special Bulletins. Send two copies of each to the VRA Archives. (PR&C Officer – Short Term)

D. Determine the need and identify new formats for special topics publications, as a replacement for the Special Bulletin Program. (Publishing Advisory Group – Short Term)

The recent retirement of the longtime Special Bulletin editor presented an opportunity for the Strategic Plan Task Force to re-evaluate the program. The issues are substantial. Production costs are high in relation to the number of volumes sold, finding individuals willing to take on the task of writing a Special Bulletin has been difficult, and the production process has often been slow. The Special Bulletin Cataloguing Native American Art is the first new publication in several years; there are none currently in production, and there have been no recent formal proposals. Technology-related topics which require frequent editing and updating were never well-served by the static print medium. More than half of the respondents to the Strategic Plan survey had never purchased a Special Bulletin, and sales statistics on the Special Bulletin series as a whole show relatively low purchase numbers. In light of all of these issues, it seems appropriate to dissolve the Special Bulletin program.

There is still a need for the authoritative educational content the Special Bulletin series provided, particularly in the area of cataloguing in specific subject areas compliant with CCO and VRA Core 4.0, and on technology topics. Survey results suggested that members increasingly value collaborative processes. Harnessing Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis may provide an easily updated, collaborative, and dynamic replacement to the Special Bulletin series. This issue should be a priority for the Publishing Advisory Group, and should be considered in tandem with other potential web-based publication initiatives.
Recommendations for the VRA Web Presence

1. *Enhance and increase the interactivity of the VRAweb.org.*

A. Add new regularly updated written features and news items to the website. (PR&C Officer, Publishing Advisory Group – Midterm)

B. Deliver conference proceedings through VRAweb.org. Establish a new Conference Content Manager position to ensure this material is gathered, and create a clear process for publishing the proceedings. (VRA Board, Web Editor, Conference Content Manager – Short Term)

C. Investigate Web 2.0 technologies and portal technologies to add potential interactivity and customizability to the website. (PR&C Officer, Web Editor, Web Community Coordinator – Midterm)

D. Utilize metatagging with targeted keywords and phrases across VRAweb.org to enhance search and discovery. (PR&C Officer, Web Editor, Public Relations Advisory Group, VRA Committee Chairs – Short Term)

The VRA website (VRAweb.org) is a critical tool for the Association. It is where members receive information about initiatives, conferences, committees, and chapters, as well as the point of entry for MemberClicks. VRAweb.org also is important for public relations, as it is often the first exposure someone interested in image-management issues has to the VRA. While VRAweb.org is considered a publication and should be included in the oversight of the Publishing Advisory Group, the PR&C should ensure regular communication with the Public Relations Advisory Group about plans and suggestions for VRAweb.org.

VRAweb.org was redesigned in 2006, representing a considerable planning effort and some financial investment for the Association. Though it is relatively static by a Web 2.0 standard of interactivity, the expense and newness of the redesign are solid reasons not to order a wholesale revamping. Instead, the Association should look for inexpensive ways to incorporate dynamic, Web 2.0-style features and enhanced content into the current site.

One way to achieve this is through additional features that would augment what is already published in *Images* on a bi-monthly basis. The content could include spotlighting VRA members, their achievements, and their collections; “VRA in the Wild;” or instances where VRA work and its members have been cited by others; “Best of VRA-L;” and additional compilations on special topics similar to the *Intellectual Property Rights Newsletter*. Whether these news features should take the form of a blog or wiki, be published in *Images*, or simply added to new pages in the website itself should be determined by the Publishing Advisory Group. All new features should be easily accessible through VRAweb.org.

With the recommendation that conference proceedings be published on VRAweb.org instead of the *VRA Bulletin* comes the question of the process for collecting this content, and of who will manage the publication of it. The role of the VRA Vice-President for Conference Program in this process should be
decided. The new Web Community Coordinator might well be given some responsibility in determining the form conference proceedings will take. While an overall analysis of the conference proceedings issue is in the Conference section of this report, the Task Force recommends that a new position of Conference Content Manager be established to ensure that all appropriate conference proceedings are gathered and published electronically. This individual will collaborate with the VRA Web Editor, who will remain in charge of VRA’s overall web presence.

Another path to a more dynamic, content-driven VRAweb.org could come from the use of portal technologies such as Netvibes, which would allow users to create personalized start pages (similar to the function of iGoogle) that are simple, clean, and intuitive, allowing them to integrate VRAweb.org content with other content they deem useful. While exploring the use of portal technology to enhance VRAweb.org might be a long-term goal for the new Web Community Coordinator, and is currently recommended in the Conference section as a pilot for the conference website, a short term solution would be to train interested VRA members in its use, either at the conference or through an online guide.

All communication has a two-way component. To make sure the Association is heard, it is also imperative that it can be found. While the specifics of this as a public relations strategy are addressed in the Community section of this report, those charged with publishing VRAweb.org should utilize metatagging and other strategies to make certain VRAweb.org is easily located through Google searches on image management issues. Keywords such as "digital image standards," "image management" and "image cataloguing" should be embedded as metatags in appropriate pages on VRAweb.org. Although the task of selecting terms is best left to those with a public relations mindset (PR&C Officer and Public Relations Advisory Group), committees should be consulted to ensure that their issues are represented through metatags on VRAweb.org.

2. Investigate and implement the use of Web 2.0 technologies for new publications.

A. Establish a VRA blog. (Publishing Advisory Group, PR&C Officer, Communications Technology Advisor – Short Term)

B. Utilize wikis for special topics publications and compilation newsletters. (Publishing Advisory Group, PR&C Officer – Midterm)

During the strategic planning process, there was much discussion about alternatives to established VRA publications such as Images and regarding the overall use of Web 2.0 technologies to enhance and expand the VRA’s web presence. From interviews and the survey, the Task Force learned that members value timely communication of news and the opportunity to interact in a web environment. It is also the case that more traditional, static, web-based publications like Images and existing communication venues like VRA-L provide value in their current form.

Any steps VRA takes to incorporate Web 2.0 publication strategies into its program should operate alongside of existing publications and communication modes for the time being. A VRA blog, for
example, should have different content than Images. Should it be topical, with a group of “editors/contributors” addressing these topics and ensuring that new material is posted frequently? Should it be the venue for distributing up-to-the-moment news items like “VRA in the Wild?” Could features currently a part of Images such as the Intellectual Property Rights Newsletter be moved into special topics wikis for easy editing and updating? All of these questions should be considered by the Publishing Advisory Group as it assesses and develops the VRA’s publications program.

3. Improve the VRA’s use of Facebook and other social networking sites.

A. Assign an individual to regularly solicit for and post relevant, informative, or eye-catching content. (PR&C Officer, Membership Committee – Short Term)

B. Publicize the VRA’s Facebook presence (PR&C Officer, Public Relations Advisory Group, Membership Committee – Short Term)

For many, social networking sites like Facebook become the primary point of entry for their interests and operate as their most important communication medium. Because social networking is “viral” in nature, the assumption exists that “if we build it, they will come.” However, a Facebook Fan Page needs regular content to keep it vibrant, to encourage its “fans” to make contributions, and to entice new fans who may see VRA postings on the pages of their acquaintances. To make the best of use of the VRA Facebook Fan page, an individual from the Membership Committee should be assigned the task of “social networking contributor,” making frequent posts of relevant information about conferences and meetings, interesting image management-related news items, and other Association Business. This individual can ensure that the content they post is soundly written and reflects well upon the Association. This individual should solicit and encourage the posting of photographs and video of VRA events, and news from members. The VRA Facebook presence should be publicized at conferences, sent to the Listservs of related organizations, and added to any printed material like posters or brochures.

The Annual Conference

The VRA annual conference has become a cornerstone of the Association’s success. Members come together each year to reunite with friends and colleagues, to greet newcomers, and to continue their professional educations. Yet even in the best years only about a third of the VRA membership is able to attend the conference. In the 2003 Strategic Plan it was recommended that the Association adopt a profit-making model for conferences, which has been done with varying success. In the current economic climate fewer members will receive institutional support to attend the conference. The challenge is to make the conference accessible to as many members as possible, whether they attend in person or virtually, and to assure that the conference remains dynamic and financially viable.

One of the great advances made in planning the VRA conference has been the use of a professional conference-planning assistant. Tom Costello (now with Groups International, formerly with Helms-
Briscoe) has assisted the Board with procuring hotel contracts (a free service) and has worked under contract for a reasonable fee on site at VRA conferences in Kansas City, San Diego and Toronto. His involvement has lifted a burden from the Vice President for Conference Arrangements and the VRA Board. The minimal cost involved makes it advisable that the VRA continues to utilize these services.

Conference plans for 2010 (Atlanta) and 2011 (Minneapolis with ARLIS/NA) are well underway. These recommendations are made with the 2012 conference (location yet to be announced as this document is written), in mind. For that reason, many of the recommendations are designated "Midterm".

Recommendations on financial considerations of the annual conference will be found in the Financial Aspects section of this report.

Goals and Recommendations for the Annual Conference

1. **Adopt a shorter, more economic conference model.**

A. Shorten conference to a four day, three night model (see proposed schedule [Appendix III](#)) (VRA Board, Vice Presidents, Conference Planning Assistant – Implemented for Atlanta conference)

B. Meet in less expensive cities (see list of "Tier B Cities" [Appendix IV](#)) (VRA Board, Vice Presidents, Conference Planning Assistant – Midterm)

C. Consider multi-year contracts with a hotel group to reduce costs. (Vice Presidents, Conference Planning Assistant – Midterm)

D. Establish an alternate mechanism for dealing with the Local Arrangements Committee tasks when there is little or no local support available in the conference city. (Vice Presidents – Midterm)

E. Involve the Treasurer more actively in conference contract planning (Vice Presidents, Treasurer – Midterm)

A shorter conference will be more economically viable for both the Association and the membership. The proposed model would mean that those who wish to attend workshops would spend an additional night on site; the majority of conference attendees would spend three nights and four days at the conference. It would also allow the Association to reduce certain costs such as audio-visual equipment and services, which are typically charged by the day and account for a substantial amount of the Association's conference expenditures.

Conference Planning Assistant Tom Costello has introduced the VRA to the concept of tiered cities. Tier A includes more expensive venues, and some recent VRA conferences have been in these locations. Generally it means much higher hotel and associated costs. The VRA needs to focus on locating VRA conferences in Tier B cities with "good lift"; that is cities that have reasonable airline services. A list of these cities is included in [Appendix IV](#). In addition, Tom Costello has recommended that the Association investigate contracting with a hotel group (usually a corporation with several chains at various price
levels) for two or three conferences in different cities. Working with a hotel group in this way is likely to reduce room rates and associated costs.

Over the past five years the VRA has met twice in cities where there was little or no local support. There are cities on the "Tier B" list that are not located within a regional chapter. This creates a challenge for the traditional model of reliance on a local arrangements committee or a regional chapter. Establishing a standard fallback solution, such as a task force or short-term committee, is recommended. This group might include volunteers who have previously lived in or have contacts in the conference city or have local arrangements experience from a prior conference and would fulfill the duties normally undertaken by a local arrangement committee. These include: developing a conference logo, arranging local tours, researching transportation, recruiting local speakers, advertising and promoting the conference, and developing content on local attractions for the conference website and attendees’ packets.

Finally, it is important that the Treasurer take an active role in conference contract negotiations and the development of the conference budget to be sure that the arrangements are financially tenable.

2. Improve and increase publicity for the conference.

A. Increase conference attendance through both broad and targeted outreach and publicity. (PR&C Officer – Short Term)

1) Tailor PR material to the interests of particular groups.

2) Make personal contact with other organizations.

B. Utilize social networking sites for advertising and promoting the conference. (PR&C Officer – Short Term)

C. Use a portal technology such as Netvibes linked to VRAweb.org to improve the functionality and increase the impact of annual conference website. (VRA Board: PR&C Officer, Vice Presidents – Short Term)

Currently conference publicity is limited to notices on VRA-L and the email lists of a few like-minded organizations. There is also a conference website, developed and maintained by contracted web designers. A concerted effort to promote the conference should occur within a larger public relations campaign for the VRA; this topic is dealt with in more detail in the Communications section of this report. The annual conference, as the showcase for VRA achievements, should be viewed as a means to attract new members and publicized widely in ways that will provoke interest for a wide range of image management professionals. Outreach to communities interested in image management topics, including professional photographers, scientists, and artists, should be explored, with a tailored approach to each group based on identified common interests such as copyright and fair use, image data standards, and database issues. The liaison program recommended in the Communications section
of the report will also allow the VRA to create interest, through personal contact with key individuals in related organizations. In addition, the Task Force recommends using social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn to promote the conference.

An Ajax-based portal like Netvibes could easily be linked to VRAweb.org and would simplify the development of annual conference local information pages. Instead of building an html-based, time intensive, static site every year, Netvibes could be used for the easy development and dissemination of local information. This was piloted for the Toronto conference. The development and maintenance of the annual conference page could grow organically with multiple members adding to the portal, with information disseminated in a more timely fashion.

3. Expand the audience for the conference.

A. Develop a model for financial recovery of the costs of providing teleconferenced and synchronous streamed conference content. (VRA Board, Financial Advisory Committee, Task Force on Teleconferencing and Video-streaming – Midterm)

B. Initiate a pilot program to provide some conference content via teleconferencing or video streaming. (Vice Presidents, Communications Technology Advisor – Midterm)

C. Develop a release form for presenters for recorded sessions as this becomes a regular part of publishing conference events and content. (VRA Board – Midterm)

With the 2009 conference in Toronto, the VRA made its first foray into providing online video of conference content. The conference plenary session, Fair Use/Fair Dealing: Which Should Give You More Comfort? was video-taped and made freely available on VRAweb.org after the conference. The VRA was fortunate in Toronto to have the conference hotel located close to the Ontario College of Art and Design, where a VRA member is employed. The member was able to have OCAD host this event and to make the appropriate audio-visual and videotaping arrangements.

Making conference content available to a wider audience synchronously (simultaneous to the actual presentation) and asynchronously (after the conference) is desirable for membership recruitment, as a member benefit, and potentially as an additional source of income. It also raises numerous issues and questions.

The issues of creating recordings (audio and/or video) of conference sessions, whether for synchronous or asynchronous delivery, are challenging. The situation in Toronto was ideal, but not one the Association can count on from year to year. Resources available at the local level will vary considerably. Renting equipment can be expensive. Hotel audio-visual contracts, which we must utilize, typically prohibit bringing in outside equipment to use on site. Purchasing equipment and getting it to a different conference site each year poses other complications.
Related to this, the Association must decide what content to make freely available and what to charge a fee to view. As a general guideline the Task Force suggests that if members are paying a fee to attend an annual conference or regional meeting, videos of entire educational sessions and workshops should not be provided free of charge to anyone either synchronously or asynchronously. Providing free of charge samples of content for recruitment purposes should be considered. Similar issues are posed in the publishing of conference proceedings (addressed below). The Strategic Plan Task Force recommends that the Board start by appointing a Task Force on Teleconferencing and Video-streaming which will work with the Financial Advisory Committee to develop a model for financial recovery of the costs associated with the synchronous teleconferencing and video-streaming of conference sessions, events and workshops, as well as asynchronous delivery of these materials. This would include addressing financial questions. Once these issues are resolved, a pilot program should be initiated to assess the feasibility of the proposed model. Other organizations are already using simultaneous teleconferencing at their conferences and creating video and audio recordings for asynchronous delivery, providing various models from which the VRA could draw. Finally, the legal issues of capturing and sharing presenters' work must be addressed and appropriate waiver forms created.

4. Publish conference proceedings in a timely, accessible manner.

A. Develop policies for making PowerPoint presentations and other conference content available to VRA members as soon as possible after the conference. (PR&C Officer, Vice Presidents – Short Term)

B. Develop a release form for conference presenters that clearly describes how proceedings will be used and where they will be posted. (VRA Board – Short Term)

By definition, conference proceedings are the collection of papers presented at an academic conference. They are often distributed as books or in journal format and contain a written record of the works presented to fellow scholars. In the past presentations made at VRA conferences have been collected and published in the VRA Bulletin. The advent of digital presentation technologies has meant that printed publication is often not a suitable media for distribution of session content. It is no longer the case that presenters prepare a paper in advance of the conference, and not all sessions are amenable to the type of scholarly publication that VRA members have thought of as standard in the past. In the Communications section of this report, the Task Force strongly recommends that starting with the 2010 conference in Atlanta, the VRA discontinue publishing conference presentations in the VRA Bulletin and instead make them available online. Some presentations will likely lend themselves to development as scholarly articles and the VRA Bulletin Editor should continue to identify these conference topics and authors for publication. The Publications Advisory Group could assist in developing a process to determine which presentations might be suitable for VRA Bulletin publication. The PR&C and Conference Vice Presidents should investigate improved distribution models for the online content. EDUCAUSE has been suggested as a model for how to post and distribute conference materials online.

Other issues are raised in consideration of online distribution of conference proceedings. The Task Force
recommends that the material content (PowerPoint presentations, etc.) be provided freely to members. This is separate from the video or audio-recorded content addressed in the previous section. The question remains whether this material should be made publically available. It is the case that some presenters ask that their presentations not be shared outside of the VRA membership. In other cases, should a taste or sample of content be provided publically to encourage people to join VRA? These issues relate to the public relations efforts mentioned above as well as in the Community section of this report. Publically posting presentations from the previous conference could be a great way to advertise the upcoming conference.

As mentioned, not all presenters wish to have their materials published. It is important that the Association develop a release form for conference presenters that clearly describes how proceedings will be used, whether or not they will be available to people outside of the VRA membership, and where they will be posted.

5. Rework the model for how workshops are conducted.

A. Change the current system of honoraria to allow for outside experts to conduct workshops at a higher fee. (VRA Board – Midterm)

B. Identify and further develop workshops that could serve as the basis for a regional chapter education program. (VRA Board, Education Committee – Long Term)

C. Use the workshops as a basis for a more extensive training and continuing education program by recording and making them available online. (Education Task Force, Education Committee – Long Term)

For some years the honoraria for conference workshops has been a fixed amount per workshop, currently $250. If there are several presenters the amount is split among them. This policy was put into place in order to acknowledge and utilize the expertise of the VRA membership and to compensate them in a fair manner for developing and teaching conference workshops. Unfortunately, it has meant that the Association very rarely brings in outside experts for conference training, specifically those who may ask for reimbursement of travel expenses or charge a fee higher than $250 to run a workshop or to provide training. The Task Force recommends that the Board re-evaluate this policy and attempt to find a balance between fair compensation of members and the ability to bring in outside experts at reasonable - though perhaps higher - fees.

There has been a call from the membership to provide more training and continuing education opportunities in web accessible formats and through regional chapter meetings. Data from our survey and interviews indicate that members are willing to pay "a reasonable amount" for such training. Conference workshops provide a starting point for developing a more comprehensive educational program for members and non-members alike. Video-taping workshops and distributing these on a pay per view model should be investigated by the Education Committee. As mentioned in the Chapters section of Organization and Governance, and the Community section of this reports, effective workshop
offerings can be duplicated or re-purposed at the regional chapter level by identifying local resources to provide similar training or presentations. Again, determining how to pro-rate this for VRA members while charging higher non-member fees will be an important part of the equation.

6. **Provide continuity for conference planning.**

A. Ensure that the Conference Planning Guide is updated annually. (Vice Presidents – Short Term)

Institutional memory and continuity from Board to Board is discussed in the [Organization and Governance](#) section of this report. In 2008, the [Officers’ Policies and Procedures Manual](#) was updated and a section on conference planning was removed and used to create a separate [VRA Conference Planning Guide](#). In order to be effective, this document should be reviewed annually and updated to reflect changes in the procedures, practices and policies for planning and executing the annual conference.
Acknowledgements

The Strategic Plan Task Force would like to give special thanks to the following people who assisted us during the research gathering process for this report.

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Liz Edgar Hernandez
Wendy Holden
Amy Jackson
Trudy Jacoby
Jeanne Keefe
Allan Kohl
Steven Kowalick
Elisa Lanzi
Trudy Levy
Rebecca Moss
Vickie O’Riordan
Mark Pompelia
Heidi Raatz
Heather Seneff
Brian Shelburne
Victoria Sigurdson
Christine Sundt
John Taormina
Ann Thomas
Susan Jane Williams
Margaret Webster
Ann Whiteside
Lynda White
Ann Woodward
Loy Zimmerman
Appendix II: New Advisory Groups, Appointments, Committees, Task Forces

1. **Communications Technology Advisor**: Charged with assisting the Board, Advisory Groups, Committees, Task Forces and Chapters in promoting and implementing remote communications technologies (e.g., Skype, teleconferencing, video-conferencing) to facilitate meetings. With the broad number of video-conferencing technologies available, the Communications Technology Advisor is expected to be familiar with the general functionality of these applications and to encourage VRA members to identify appropriate services and support for the technologies on hand at their home institutions. Guides to the most common options are available online (including instructional videos on YouTube); the Communications Technology Advisor should research and make available to the membership references to these resources, and write additional guides when appropriate.

2. **Web Community Coordinator**: Charged to work with the PR&C Officer and the VRA Web Editor to investigate, implement, and integrate Web 2.0 technologies with the VRA website. These would include blogs, Facebook, wikis, YouTube, Flickr, and other applications designed to facilitate communication with the VRA membership and outreach to the community. The Web Community Coordinator would be responsible for promoting the use of these technologies within the Association.

3. **Conference Content Manager**: Charged with ensuring that conference proceedings are gathered and published electronically. This individual will collaborate with the VRA Web Editor, who will remain in charge of the Association’s overall web presence.

4. **VRA Grants Administrator**: Once the VRA Foundation has sufficient financial resources to provide grants from its own funds or to seek grants from funding agencies and foundations, establish a VRA Grants Administrator position to act as a liaison between the VRA and the VRA Foundation to vet and propose projects for funding from the VRA Foundation. The Grants Administrator should coordinate with the Development Committee where appropriate.

5. **Public Relations Advisory Group**: Will work with the PR&C Officer to create a public relations campaign and strategies for ongoing outreach. In consultation with the Web Community Coordinator, should explore mentions of VRA in blogs, the use of metatags to return VRA at the top of Google Search results, and the use of YouTube to showcase the organizations ideas and message.

6. **Publishing Advisory Group**: An advisory group made up of members with appropriate background and expertise, charged with assisting the PR&C Officer in evaluating and managing publications and providing guidance for the future course of the publications program. This group should consist of the PR&C Officer and the Board-appointed members of the VRA publications editorial staff, as well as several at-large, Board-appointed members currently not immersed in the VRA publications process.

7. **Education Task Force**: Charged with directing the development of online workshops, webinars and other potential educational programming as a potential profit-generating program for VRA. Potential
topics, instructors, and collaborations with existing institutions and programs should be explored and initiated where feasible. This Task Force should include representation from the VRA Education Committee.

8. **Task Force for Policies and Guidelines**: The task force will be charged with writing a *Leadership Guide for Chairs*, crafting policies to provide standardization and regulation and formalizing the process for creating committees, task forces and advisory groups. Starting with definitions (e.g., how a task force differs from a committee), it should be made clear how these groups should be convened, what the criteria for membership should be in each case and how chairs are appointed. Along with advice on how to run meetings, creating agendas, delegating responsibilities, and suggested resources, suggestions on handling issues and challenges should also be included.

9. **Leadership Task Force**: Drawing on the experience of VRA current and past leaders is essential to grooming the next generation of VRA leadership. To embark on a campaign for developing leaders, we recommend the appointment of a Leadership Task Force and the establishment of a Leadership Fund in support of leadership training. The Leadership Fund should be designated as a restricted fund for the purpose of bringing expert speakers and trainers to the conference and regional chapter meetings for workshops and sessions. The Leadership Task Force will look at promoting leadership and should take advantage of Web 2.0 technologies to achieve that end. Some ideas that were suggested during the course of the Task Force’s work included spotlight features on past and current leaders, the use of YouTube videos following the theme of "What I gained from being President, VP, Chapter Chair, etc.," “Did you know?” features, and oral histories of retired members.

10. **Task Force on Conference Teleconferencing and Video-streaming**: Will work with the Financial Advisory Committee to develop a model for financial recovery of the costs associated with teleconferencing and video-streaming of conference sessions, events and workshops. This would include the question of whether or not to charge for viewing some or all of the content by members and/or non-members. Once these issues are addressed, a pilot program should be initiated to assess the feasibility of the proposed model. Other organizations are already providing teleconferencing and creating video and audio recordings at their conferences, creating various models from which VRA could draw. Finally, the legal issues of capturing and sharing presenters' work must be addressed and appropriate sign-off forms created.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
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<td>Committee Meetings</td>
<td>3-4 &quot;Birds of a Feather&quot; Lunches</td>
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<td>Ask the Expert</td>
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<td>Session 9</td>
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<td>Membership Dinner and Keynote</td>
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Appendix IV: Tier B Cities List

From Tom Costello, July 2006

Anaheim
Atlanta
Baltimore
Charlotte
Chattanooga
Cincinnati
Cleveland
Dallas
Denver
Houston
Indianapolis
Jacksonville
Las Vegas
Memphis
Minneapolis
Nashville
Philadelphia
Phoenix/Scottsdale
Portland
Salt Lake City
San Antonio
Savannah
Seattle
St. Louis
Appendix V: Questions from the Strategic Plan Survey

Programs and Services:

1. Currently the VRA Bulletin is being made available in PDF format through MemberClicks as an optional method of delivery in addition to the print copy. Given the high cost of printing and mailing the VRA Bulletin, how would you feel about eliminating print copies completely?
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

2. Have you purchased Special Bulletins in the past? If so, which Special Bulletins have you found most useful?
   - Have not purchased any Special Bulletins

3. Would you be interested in a Special Bulletin series on cataloguing specific subject areas compliant with CCO and VRA Core?
   - Yes
   - No

4. What subject areas would be a priority for you?

5. The VRA is always interested in marketing our publications and information to a wider audience. Do you have any suggestions for how this could be accomplished?

6. What are the impediments to attending the VRA annual conference? Check all that apply. Please use the comment field to provide additional information.
   - Travel cost
   - Cost of accommodations
   - Conference fees
   - No institutional support
7. Would you like to see the Conference (check all that apply): 
   - Be shorter?
   - Held jointly with other organizations?
   - Held at another time of year (specify)?
   - Held in a less expensive city?
   - Held on a college/university campus with dormitory-style accommodations to cut costs?

8. Have you attended a workshop at a VRA conference in the past five years?
   - Yes
   - No

9. How would you feel about clustering conference workshops on the day before or day after the regular conference programming begins or ends?
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

10. Would you be interested in online workshops if these could be offered at a reasonable cost?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Would you be willing to pay more for a workshop offered by a non-member expert?
    - Yes
    - No

12. In 2008, the conference included a poster session. Would you attend conference poster sessions at future conferences?
    - Yes
    - No
13. Would you be interested in submitting a proposal for a poster session at a future conference?
   - Yes
   - No
   [Comment Field]

14. Do you think we should have more organized opportunities to engage colleagues one-on-one (or in small group settings) at the conference (such as Birds-of-a-Feather lunches or Ask the Expert sessions)?
   If yes, please make suggestions about topics and formats.
   - Yes
   - No
   [Comment Field]

15. What are the impediments to attending regional Chapter meetings? Check all that apply. Please use the comment field to provide additional information.
   - Travel cost
   - Cost of accommodations
   - No institutional support
   - Not interested
   - No regional Chapter
   - Other (specify)
   - No strong impediments
   [Comment Field]

16. Would you be more willing to attend and/or could you justify attending a regional Chapter meeting if VRA began offering workshops at the regional level?
   - Yes
   - No
   [Comment Field]

17. Would you be willing to pay an additional, reasonable fee to attend a regional meeting with a higher level of programming?
   - Yes
   - No
   [Comment Field]

18. Would you be comfortable if a workshop at a regional meeting were opened up to a larger audience, beyond chapter membership?
   - Yes
   - No
   [Comment Field]
Membership

1. How do you feel about the cost of membership in VRA, relative to that of other professional organizations? Specifically, is VRA membership a good value in light of all the other resources we have at our fingertips? Please comment.
   [Comment Field]

2. To what other professional organizations do you belong?
   - ARLIS/NA
   - MCN
   - CAA
   - Educause
   - SAA
   - AAM
   - Other [List]

3. Which VRA Member benefits are most important to you (Select all that apply)?
   - VRA Bulletin
   - VRA Listserv
   - Discounted registration fees for VRA Annual Conference
   - VRA Sourcebook and Directory
   - Discounted registration fees for SEI
   - VRA Mentor Program for new members
   - VRA Travel Awards Program
   - Other (specify)

4. Given that membership dues are one of the Association's principal sources of operating funds, how frequently should dues levels be raised to help cover increases in operating expenses?
   - A modest increase (such as 5%) each year.
   - A regular increase of approximately 10%-15% every third year
   - Other suggestions (specify)
   [Comment Field]

6. Currently, the membership base of VRA is centered largely around image management professionals from university and museum settings, with a heavy emphasis on fine arts and architecture image management. Do you think that VRA should expand its member recruitment efforts to include image professionals from other fields?
   - Yes
   - No
   If not, why do you advise we not expand the breadth of our membership base?
   [Comment Field]
If so, do you have any recommendations on where we might focus recruitment efforts?  
[Comment Field]

Technology

1. In the previous Strategic Plan it was recommended that on the VRA web site we create a Speakers Bureau listing, a Consultants’ Roster, and a Vendors’ Corner which would solicit paid advertising.
   
   a. Speakers Bureau listing
   
   o Strongly in favor of
   o Somewhat in favor of
   o Somewhat opposed
   o Strongly opposed
   [Comment field]

   b. Consultants’ Roster
   
   o Strongly in favor of
   o Somewhat in favor of
   o Somewhat opposed
   o Strongly opposed
   [Comment field]

   c. Solicit paid advertising for VRA web site (Vendor’s Corner)
   
   o Strongly in favor of
   o Somewhat in favor of
   o Somewhat opposed
   o Strongly opposed
   [Comment field]

2. What kinds of technology training would be most useful to you?  
[Comment field]

3. What technology training formats would you like to see? Check all that apply.
   
   o Online
   o Conference workshops
   o Chapter workshops
   o Other (specify)
   [Comment Field]

4. Would you be interested in a short, free training session on using MemberClicks (MyVRA) at the conference or a Chapter meeting?
   
   o Yes
Organization and Governance

1. Over the past several years the Nominating Committee has found it increasingly difficult to recruit people to run for the VRA Board offices. Would you consider running for office?
   - Yes
   - No

If “No,” please indicate the reasons you would not run. Check all that apply.
   - Not interested
   - Too time consuming
   - Terms are too long
   - Not enough experience
   - No institutional support
   - Other (specify)

Leadership in the Field

1. VRA is always interested in identifying and developing new, potential leaders within the organization. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve our efforts?

2. If VRA were to offer a “future leaders” workshop or session at the national conference, would you be interested in attending?
   - Yes
   - No
3. Committee membership is one way for potential leaders to familiarize themselves with VRA, its issues, and its members. Have you found it easy to join committees on topics that interest you?

   - Yes
   - No
   - Have not tried

If no, or have not tried, why not? [Comment Field]

4. Would you recommend that VRA regularize the requirements for committee participation, including a standard number of years allowed for committee membership or chairmanship, and/or institute more formal guidelines surrounding how to handle the issue of non- or low-participating members?

   - Yes
   - No

[Comment Field]

5. Currently, VRA has identified cultural heritage metadata and cataloguing standards such as VRA Core 4.0 and CCO as a way to forward our leadership on a national and international level. Are there other areas where you see VRA having a broader national or international impact?

[Comment Field]

Additional Comments

If you have other comments, ideas or suggestions for the SPTF, please feel free to write them here.
### 1. Currently the VRA Bulletin is being made available in PDF format through MemberClicks as an optional method of delivery in addition to the print copy. Given the high cost of printing and mailing the VRA Bulletin, how would you feel about eliminating print copies entirely?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
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Comments: 31 answered question | 120 skipped question

### 2. Have you purchased Special Bulletins in the past? If so, which Special Bulletins have you found most useful?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have not purchased any Special Bulletins</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
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If yes, please comment: 52 answered question | 67 skipped question

### 3. Would you be interested in a Special Bulletin series on cataloguing specific subject areas compliant with CCO and VRA Core?

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>22</td>
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answered question | 119 skipped question
4. What subject areas would be a priority for you?

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<td>86</td>
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<td>skipped question</td>
<td>35</td>
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5. Would you be willing to work with a group on developing a subject specific guide?

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6. The VRA is always interested in marketing our publications and information to a wider audience. Do you have any suggestions for how this could be accomplished?

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<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
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7. What are the impediments to attending the VRA annual conference? Check all that apply. Please use the comment field to provide additional information.

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<td>Conference fees</td>
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<td>No institutional support</td>
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<td>Time of year of conference</td>
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<td>Not interested</td>
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<td>No strong impediments</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 54
answered question: 119
skipped question: 2

8. Would you like to see the Conference (check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change proposed</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be shorter?</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held jointly with other organizations?</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held at another time of year (specify)?</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held in a less expensive city?</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held on a college/university campus with dormitory-style accommodations to cut costs?</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 62
answered question: 99
skipped question: 22
9. Have you attended a workshop at the VRA Conference in the past five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 120
skipped question 1

10. How would you feel about clustering conference workshops on the day before or day after the regular conference programming begins or ends?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments 40
answered question 114
skipped question 7

11. Would you be interested in online workshops if these could be offered at a reasonable cost?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments 32
answered question 116
skipped question 5
12. Would you be willing to pay more for a workshop offered by a non-member expert?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>73.5%</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 46 answered question, 113 skipped question

13. In 2008, the conference included a poster session. Would you attend conference poster sessions at future conferences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 35 answered question, 101 skipped question

14. Would you be interested in submitting a proposal for a poster session at a future conference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 20 answered question, 102 skipped question
15. Do you think we should have more organized opportunities to engage colleagues one-on-one (or in small group settings) at the conference (such as Birds-of-a-Feather lunches or Ask the Expert sessions)? If yes, please make suggestions about topics and formats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 68

- answered question: 105
- skipped question: 16

16. What are the impediments to attending regional chapter meetings? Check all that apply. Please use the comment field to provide additional information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impediment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel cost</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of accommodations</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No institutional support</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No regional chapter</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No strong impediments</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 49

- answered question: 114
- skipped question: 7
17. Would you be more willing to attend and/or could you justify attending a regional Chapter meeting if VRA began offering workshops at the regional level?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 39 answered question, 114 skipped question

18. Would you be willing to pay an additional, reasonable fee to attend a regional meeting with a higher level of programming?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 19 answered question, 115 skipped question

19. Would you be comfortable if a workshop at a regional meeting were opened up to a larger audience, beyond chapter membership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 29 answered question, 115 skipped question
20. How do you feel about the cost of membership in VRA, relative to that of other professional organizations? Specifically, is VRA membership a good value in light of all the other resources we have at our fingertips? Please comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 109

skipped question 12

21. To what other professional organizations do you belong?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARLIS/NA</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCN</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educause</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAM</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other [List]</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) 40

answered question 70

skipped question 51
### 22. Which VRA Member benefits are most important to you (Select all that apply)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VRA Bulletin</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRA Listserv</td>
<td>98.3%</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted registration fees for VRA Annual Conference</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRA Sourcebook and Directory</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discounted registration fees for SEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRA Mentor Program for new members</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRA Travel Awards Program</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question*: 115  
*skipped question*: 6

### 23. Given that membership dues are one of the Association’s principal sources of operating funds, how frequently should dues levels be raised to help cover increases in operating expenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency Type</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A modest increase (such as 5%) each year</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A regular increase of approximately 10%-15% every third year</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other suggestions (specify)</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*answered question*: 105  
*skipped question*: 16
24. Currently, the membership base of VRA is centered largely around image management professionals from university and museum settings, with a heavy emphasis on fine arts and architecture image management. Do you think that VRA should expand its member recruitment efforts to include image professionals from other fields?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 115
skipped question 6

25. If not, why do you advise we not expand the breadth of our membership base?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 17
skipped question 104

26. If so, do you have any recommendations on where we might focus recruitment efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 69
skipped question 52
### 27. In the previous Strategic Plan it was recommended that on the VRA web site we create a Speakers Bureau listing. Are you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly in favor of</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat in favor of</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat opposed</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly opposed</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 34

*answered question* 93

*skipped question* 28

### 28. In the previous Strategic Plan it was recommended that on the VRA web site we create a Consultants’ Roster. Are you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly in favor of</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat in favor of</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat opposed</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly opposed</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 23

*answered question* 110

*skipped question* 11
29. In the previous Strategic Plan it was recommended that on the VRA web site we create a Vendors’ Corner which would solicit paid advertising. Are you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly in favor of</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat in favor of</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat opposed</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly opposed</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments 36

**answered question** 110

**skipped question** 11

30. What kinds of technology training would be most useful to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question** 88

**skipped question** 33

31. What technology training formats would you like to see? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference workshops</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter workshops</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other (please specify) 11

**answered question** 113

**skipped question** 8
### 32. Would you be interested in a short, free training session on using MemberClicks (MyVRA) at the conference or a Chapter meeting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: 30

- **answered question**: 111
- **skipped question**: 10

### 33. Over the past several years the Nominating Committee has found it increasingly difficult to recruit people to run for the VRA Board offices. Would you consider running for office?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **answered question**: 116
- **skipped question**: 5
34. If "No," please indicate the reasons why you would not run. Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too time consuming</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms are too long</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough experience</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No institutional support</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answered question: 88
Skipped question: 33

35. Given the difficulty in recruiting potential officers, how would you feel about moving to a system where the Nominating Committee offered only one candidate for each position, making the election process one of accepting or not accepting a chosen slate of candidates?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In favor of</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in favor of</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Answered question: 115
Skipped question: 6
36. VRA is always interested in identifying and developing new, potential leaders within the organization. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve our efforts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Answered Question</th>
<th>Skipped Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37. If VRA were to offer a “future leaders” workshop or session at the national conference, would you be interested in attending?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Answered Question</th>
<th>Skipped Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38. Committee membership is one way for potential leaders to familiarize themselves with VRA, its issues, and its members. Have you found it easy to join committees on topics that interest you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
<th>Answered Question</th>
<th>Skipped Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
39. If you have not tried, why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48 answered question

73 skipped question

40. Would you recommend that VRA regularize the requirements for committee participation, including a standard number of years allowed for committee membership or chairmanship, and/or institute more formal guidelines surrounding how to handle the issue of non- or low-participating members?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57 answered question

44 skipped question

41. Currently, VRA has identified cultural heritage metadata and cataloguing standards such as VRA Core 4.0 and CCO as a way to forward our leadership on a national and international level. Are there other areas where you see VRA having a broader national or international impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52 answered question

69 skipped question
42. If you have other comments, ideas or suggestions for the VRA Strategic Plan Task Force, please feel free to write them here, or send an email to Macie Hall macie.hall@jhu.edu or Betha Whitlow bwhitlow@bwhitlow@artsci.wustl.edu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>