NATIONAL MARINE EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-17

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THE FUTURE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) has a long, rich history of convening people to promote professional excellence in marine education. Through successful conferences, field experiences, publications and mentoring, to name a few, NMEA has created a lasting impact on individual professionals and the audiences they reach. Members of NMEA come from a wide variety of backgrounds which adds to the inherent richness of an organization over 1,000 members strong. NMEA is powered by 17 regional chapters which provides key opportunities to cultivate collective action for marine education and, more recently, ocean literacy.

NMEA is now poised to leverage its history and relevancy through this strategic plan over the next three years. Weaving together facets of local, national and international importance, the intent of this plan is to proactively strategize for the future. NMEA has built a solid foundation on which the organization can continue to foster an environment for meaningful impact.

As a mission-driven organization, NMEA has a central focus on which to target and measure both effort and outcome. NMEA also has both an opportunity and a challenge to balance the four core components of being a mission-driven organization:

- PEOPLE – Who are our members, partners, colleagues, friends, sponsors, and more?
- PURPOSE – Why are we here? What would happen if we were not?
- PASSION – What do we love to do? What are we exceptionally good at doing?
- SUSTAINABILITY – How are we being financially, socially and environmentally responsible and growing as a non-profit organization?

As these four core components are in balance, with clear answers to the key questions, NMEA will continue to move forward in this strategic plan.

The process of strategic planning is as important as the plan itself and NMEA is to be commended on their ‘all in’ approach. NMEA leadership, members, and external stakeholders were all willing to participate fully, give input, and provide direction for this great organization.

The five Key Focus Areas identified in this plan represent a significant investment of time and energy over the next three years. As a master ‘Convener of Conversations,’ NMEA is ready to tackle these goals and continue setting the bar for excellence in marine education.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a flexible, living document that will be revisited frequently and built upon over the next three years.
SITUATION ANALYSIS

NMEA has a 37+ year history with 17 regional chapters. Its strengths lie in the continued commitment of its members to attend and participate in events such as conferences, workshops and more recently, online interactions and through social media. NMEA is fueled by the passion of its people to dedicate themselves to running a primarily volunteer-led organization. NMEA also occupies a unique niche of promoting the marine education profession which pulls people from varied backgrounds including both formal and informal education, science, research, technology, arts, literature, and more.

The weaknesses of NMEA are evident in the challenge of maintaining consistent communication and support between the Chapters and National organization. The inherent challenge of finding volunteers to assume leadership responsibility for the organization is becoming greater as NMEA grows in scope and size. The progress made in utilizing online tools and methods to reach out to members and broader audiences is commendable, but must now be efficiently balanced with the operational needs of a new National Office and a growing organization.

NMEA has a unique opportunity to leverage its forward momentum in ocean literacy initiatives and maintain a leadership role. The open, collaborative spirit of NMEA naturally invites people from all around the world to seek out NMEA members as mentors and colleagues in establishing similar ocean literacy initiatives. No other organization solely claims ‘marine education’ as its focus, so NMEA should continue to keep this laser focus.

The threats to NMEA will manifest if the organization becomes distracted from its true mission – of making known the world of water, both fresh and salt. Seemingly similar organizations will always exist and/or establish themselves, but NMEA should stay true to its roots while leveraging its newfound foray into the digital realm.

IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY

The Identity and personality of NMEA is important because it draws attention to the unique experience people can have with the organization. Whether they are a member, potential member, sponsor, partner, funder, etc., a consistent experience with the organization will strengthen its reputation and influence.

NMEA’s identity/personality is...

COLLABORATIVE – dedicated to sharing, working together, and being open with resources with individuals and organizations nationally and internationally to strengthen marine education and ocean literacy.

NURTURING – interested in supporting each other both professionally and personally, creating a ‘family atmosphere’

DEDICATED – can make great things happen to further marine education, even with few resources

FUN – knows that to accomplish big goals, there must also be time for laughter and all out fun
**Key Focus Area: Advance Ocean Literacy**

Implementation Leads: Diana Payne, Craig Strang

NMEA will build on the momentum gained in the past five years and focus on advancing ocean literacy at the local, national, and global levels through these strategies:

- Encourage, influence, and support the inclusion of ocean content in the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- Promote the use of ocean literacy principles in both formal and non-formal education settings such as aquariums, museums, after-school programs and out-of-school learning opportunities
- Actively seek out and support global initiatives to advance ocean literacy

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**Key recommendations:**

- Utilize partnerships with like-minded professional organizations to expand our reach and influence to advance ocean literacy
  
  **Lead:** President’s Chain and Membership Secretary

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**Action 1: Renew discussion with NSTA to complete the Ocean Literacy (OL) position paper.**

**Rationale:** The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) has extensive influence regarding Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and reaches thousands of teachers across multiple disciplines. The OL position paper is already in queue. Because NMEA has not been able to send a representative to the NSTA Congress on Science Education recently, it may have moved down in the queue (position papers usually need a champion on the NSTA Board). Although NMEA has a formal, long-standing relationship with NSTA, NMEA needs to strengthen this relationship. Working directly with NSTA on a project for a product useful to both NMEA and NSTA may help initiate further discussions regarding OL and NGSS, particularly once the OL/NGSS alignment is complete.

**Leads:** NMEA President; NSTA Liaison Committee Chair and vice chair (?), Ocean Literacy Committee Chair and Vice Chair, NMEA President’s Chain (to identify attendee and support NMEA attendance at Congress on Science Education).

**PRIMARY LEADS:** Ocean Literacy Committee Chair (C. Strang), NSTA Liaison Committee Chair (L. Rader), NMEA President

**Action 2: Establish formal partnerships with other informal associations [e.g., North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE), Consortium for Ocean Science Exploration and Engagement (COSEE), Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), The Ocean Project] to promote Ocean Literacy for informal, free-choice and public audiences.**

**Rationale:** Many NMEA leaders/members are also members of associations with which NMEA could develop stronger partnerships to promote Ocean Literacy. “Partnership” will be defined as it relates to each organization and the associated cooperative efforts.
Action 3: Strengthen existing partnerships with international organizations and professional associations [e.g., European Marine Science Educators Association (EMSEA), International Pacific Marine Educator Network (IPMEN), Australia, Canada and others] to promote Global Ocean Literacy.

Action 3.1: Establish new and strengthen existing partnerships, collaborations, and initiatives with organizations that participate in international professional associations.

Rationale: NMEA has strong affiliations with several like-minded international organizations. Discussions to articulate common goals and objectives could result in potential proposal development/funding opportunities as well as collaborations that may not require funding (e.g., publications) but will strengthen our partnerships and promote Ocean Literacy. We should actively invite and recruit international colleagues to attend and present sessions or panels at NMEA 2015 in Newport, Rhode Island.

Leads: NMEA President’s Chain, NMEA 2015 (and other upcoming) conference committee(s), leadership from like-minded international organizations, Ocean Literacy Committee, International Committee, Traditional Knowledge Committee, Grants & Funding Committee, Publications Committee.

PRIMARY LEAD(S): President’s Chain, Ex Comm, appropriate committee chairs.

Action 4: Encourage NMEA members to present at conferences of professional associations (e.g., AAAS, AEA, AERA, AGU, NARST* and others) and publish in high level peer-reviewed journals to promote education research and evaluation in Ocean Literacy.

(*American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Evaluation Association, American Educational Research Association, American Geophysical Union, National Association for Research in Science Teaching)

Rationale: To achieve recognition and promote wider acceptance of OL beyond practitioners, presentations and publications to science and education research audiences are essential. To quote 2014 Honorary Member Award recipient, Dr. Rosanne Fortner, “Publish, publish, publish!”

Leads: Education Research Committee, Ocean Literacy Committee.

PRIMARY LEAD(S): Meg Marrero, Diana Payne

> Develop tools to assist professionals to ensure ocean content is included in NGSS implementation

Lead: Craig Strang (Ocean Literacy Committee Chair)

Action 1: Complete the basic Ocean Literacy (OL)/Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) alignment

Rationale: Since the publication of version 2 of the Ocean Literacy guide in March 2013, a small group of volunteers have worked on the correlation of the OL Essential Principles and Fundamental Concepts with the Disciplinary Core Ideas (DCI) of the NGSS.

Leads: Craig Strang and the OL/NGSS alignment team (includes Kurt Holland,, Catherine Halversen, Diana Payne, Sarah Schoedinger, Lynn Tran, Peter Tuddenham, Emily Weiss, Lynn Whitley, Beth Jewell, Carmelina Livingston, Jim Wharton, Scott Carley)

PRIMARY LEADS: Craig Strang + Lawrence Hall of Science
**Action 2: Elaborate on specific grade level (K-5) and grade band (6-8, 9-12) appropriate correlations.**

**Rationale:** Formal and informal educators will need an implementation product. This is the same tool described above in Action 1. The tool will need to be “published” in an accessible form, hopefully electronic and print. Currently it is in the form of an unwieldy spread sheet. We are currently re-formatting it into a document.

**Leads:** Ocean Literacy committee, Grants & Funding committee.
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Craig Strang and Diana Payne

**Action 3: Promote use of OL/NGSS Alignment doc by state science supervisors, LEAs, professional associations, etc.**
Promoting the use of the document can be done through NMEA social media outlets. NMEA Conferences and webinars can be used to prepare members who are positioned to interact with the stakeholders listed above, but the actual work of engaging the stakeholders is beyond the scope of NMEA unless significant additional funding is obtained. We must rely on the efforts of members to carry this action forward to implementation.

**Action 4: Design and conduct Professional Development/Professional Leadership for professional developers about how to utilize OL/NGSS Alignment Doc**
See Action 3 above. Promoting the use of the document needs to be followed by providing technical assistance (PL workshops and webinars) to members who are positioned to use it.

**Areas of direct overlap with other KFA:**
**KFA: Purposefully Cultivate International Relationships**

> Support key NMEA members to attend international ocean literacy/marine education events
KEY FOCUS AREA: PURPOSEFULLY CULTIVATE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Implementation Leads: Peter Tuddenham, Géraldine Fauville, Fiona Crouch

NMEA will support and respond to the needs of like-minded people and organizations throughout the world through these strategies:

- Participate in international opportunities to promote excellence in marine education
- Maintain an open, collaborative spirit to encourage shared learning and growth
- Provide leadership, guidance, and support as necessary to actively collaborate with people and organizations working towards similar mission-driven goals at the international level

*Since this KFA is primarily focused on assisting and collaborating with other organizations independent from NMEA and its strategic planning, it is difficult to clearly foresee and describe in detail all actions that will need NMEA’s support. It is important to remain open to new or unexpected ways for NMEA to help these projects or organizations to emerge in their own terms.*

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**Key recommendations:**

- Seek and participate in international opportunities to promote excellence in marine education with governments, universities, schools, education and ocean science organizations and professional associations; encourage and seek out methods for NMEA members and chapters to engage in marine education projects in other countries and regions.

**Action 1:** Engage with the European Blue Growth (BG) 13 projects organizations starting in 2015 for three years, Sea Change (17 organizations) and ResponSEAbles (13 organizations).

**Rationale:** NMEA wrote letters of support for the SeaChange proposal, committing to provide a level of engagement with this project. A member of NMEA will be invited to an annual meeting of the Sea Change International Advisory Group to help develop ocean literacy initiatives through the project. There will be a kick off meeting in April 2015. G. Fauville can then expand information within this plan.

**Leads:** Peter Tuddenham, Fiona Crouch, Géraldine Fauville

**PRIMARY LEAD:** Fiona Crouch
Action 2: Continue to engage and impact shape of the Transatlantic effort to promote ocean literacy and ocean research with Canada and Europe. Ensure NMEA representation/participation.

Rationale: The Galway Statement, signed by representatives of the EU, US and Canada, is intended “to increase our knowledge of an Atlantic Ocean that is healthy, resilient, safe, productive, understood and treasured so as to promote the well-being, prosperity, and security of present and future generations.” Through The Galway Statement, all three parties agreed to foster public understanding of the value of the Atlantic Ocean through promoting Ocean Literacy. To continue to advance the recommendations of The Galway Statement, an EU/US high level Marine Working Group has identified ocean literacy as one of six Themes around which collaborations should occur. The Ocean Literacy Co-Leads agreed on a three step process to do this: 1) to share information and identify complementarities, 2) engage in joint priority setting for potential cooperation areas, and 3) align to the planning and programming of research activities. NMEA as one of the early leaders of the ocean literacy campaign should position itself as a key leader in raising the ocean literacy campaign to an international level.

Leads: Paula Keener, Anne Stewart, Fiona Crouch, Peter Tuddenham
PRIMARY LEADS: Peter Tuddenham, Fiona Crouch

Action 3: Assist NMEA members to collaborate with EMSEA in producing an academic book on global ocean literacy.

Rationale: As requested by Springer Publishers in Europe, NMEA members working in academia will edit a book gathering chapters from authors involved in Ocean Literacy from across the globe. The focus will be on exemplary best practices in marine science education. The primary audience for this book will be marine science education practitioners (e.g., formal and informal educators) and researchers (both education and science). NMEA endorsement of this book is at the discretion of the Executive Committee and Board in office when the book is published.

Leads: Meg Marrero, Diana Payne, and Géraldine Fauville
PRIMARY LEAD: Diana Payne

➢ Provide leadership, guidance, and support as necessary to actively collaborate with people and organizations working towards similar mission-driven goals at the international level.

Action 1: Establish an effective method for the different Ocean Literacy leaders from around the world to communicate efficiently.

Rationale: The global ocean literacy community is now involved in several discussions with different geographical regions, time spans and addressing various topics involving different leaders. As the community grows and the demand on it increases, it is important to raise this issue with all partners in order to find an effective way to organize, structure and manage the different topics NMEA is working on and to clearly know who is involved.

Leads: PC and Technology Committee (Justine Glynn, Chris Petrone, Lisa Lawrence, Allie Toomey, Jason Robertshaw)
PRIMARY LEAD: Geraldine Fauville
**Action 2:** Participate in the organization of the EMSEA annual conferences by serving on the conference planning committee.

*Rationale:* With more than 40 years of expertise in ocean science education conferences, NMEA will be part of the organizing committee of the future EMSEA conferences as requested by EMSEA. For EMSEA15, Craig Strang and Peter Tuddenham have been invited to join this committee. EMSEA will remain in charge of requesting NMEA’s help to assist at the organization of their conference. The tasks assigned to the NMEA members integrating the EMSEA committee will be negotiated each year between EMSEA and NMEA members depending on the specific need.

**Leads:** Géraldine Fauville, Fiona Crouch  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Fiona Crouch

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**Action 3:** Contribute to the planning of IPMEN 2016 in Lombok, Indonesia.

*Rationale:* With more than 40 years of expertise in ocean science education conferences, NMEA will help to organize IPMEN 2016 in accordance with the need of IPMEN. The tasks assigned to NMEA for the organization of future IPMEN conference will be discussed each year between IPMEN and NMEA members depending on the specific need.

**Leads:** Mike Spranger, Peter Tuddenham, Sylvia Spalding, Judy Lemus, Craig Strang, Géraldine Fauville, Harry Breidahl  
**PRIMARY LEADS:** Mike Spranger, Peter Tuddenham, Sylvia Spalding, Craig Strang

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- Encourage NMEA members to present at international conferences of professional associations to encourage shared learning and growth (e.g. EMSEA, IPMEN, ASLO, MTS-IEE, EU Maritime Day, and others) and publish to promote excellence in marine education.

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**Action 1:** Work with the NMEA Scholarship Committee to support scholarships for international attendance at the annual NMEA conference and increase advertising/awareness of the availability of these funds.

*Rationale:* For the past 5 years conference attendees from around the world have applied for scholarships under the existing guidelines that were initially designed for members in the USA. A specific international category with specific guidelines would help meet the strategic goals and the specific needs of international attendees. *(5/15/15: This is currently under discussion amongst these leads.)*

**Leads:** Géraldine Fauville, Fiona Crouch, Tami Lunsford (then DJ Kast), Kate Achilles  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Géraldine Fauville

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**Action 2:** Establish a funding mechanism to support the President elect or member NMEA President’s Chain to travel to international marine education conferences.
**Rationale:** In order to achieve the strategy of making meaningful relationships and to keep our position of leaders in the expanded community of ocean literacy, NMEA representation at international meetings is essential.

**Leads:** NMEA President’s Chain, NMEA Executive Committee, Grants and Funding committee, NMEA Scholarship committee  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** NMEA President’s Chain

**Action 3:** Add a calendar of international conferences and events to the NMEA website that offer opportunities for NMEA participation.

**Rationale:** As stated in Action 1, the ocean literacy community is currently expanding at an increasing pace. The calendar of international conferences and events will provide an efficient method to disseminate details to the members.

**Leads:** Peter Tuddenham, Technology Committee Chair (Justine Glynn), Social Media Manager (Lisa Tossey)  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Peter Tuddenham

**Action 4:** Continue holding a welcome half day or full day meeting for International attendees to the NMEA Annual Conference on the day before the annual meeting begins.

**Rationale:** Attendees to the annual conference from outside the USA may be new to the USA, new to NMEA, new to the annual conference and new to the special culture of NMEA annual conferences. Topics addressed include sharing international education examples, building personal connections and international marine education partnerships and developing global ocean literacy.

**Leads:** Members of the International Committee as hosts  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Peter Tuddenham

**Areas of direct overlap with other KFA:**

**KFA:** Advance Ocean Literacy  
Action 3: Strengthen existing partnerships with international organizations professional associations (e.g., EMSEA, IPMEN, Australia, Canada and others) to promote global Ocean Literacy.
KEY FOCUS AREA: ENGAGE YOUTH LEADERS

Implementation Lead: Sean Russell

Youth are actively leading marine conservation initiatives and educating audiences of all ages. NMEA has an opportunity to engage youth (specifically high school aged and above) both to amplify their work and nurture future members of NMEA through these strategies:

- Connect youth with mentors
- Establish peer-to-peer networks to involve youth in NMEA
- Recruit youth representation in NMEA leadership circles

<table>
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<th>Key recommendations:</th>
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<td>Establish a Youth Engagement Ad hoc Committee</td>
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<td>Lead(s): Sean Russell</td>
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**Action 1: Identify and invite potential committee members/contributors, ensuring involvement from college age students.**

Rationale: In order to ensure the effective long term integration of student and emerging professional members in NMEA, a committee representative of both professionals and students should be assembled in order to identify key opportunities for young people to benefit from and support NMEA, and make these opportunities known to young people.

PRIMARY LEAD: Sean Russell with recommendations from strategic planning team/NMEA Board of Directors

**Action 2: Develop tiered approach, associated opportunities, and plan to engage students in NMEA**

Rationale: To ensure students and recent graduates are aware of opportunities available to them through NMEA, the Youth Engagement committee will develop an approach to student engagement in the organization that begins with introductory opportunities for high school students, such as highlighting their conservation and/or research projects on blog and social media posts, moving to larger participatory/leadership roles for college students/recent graduates such as conference participation, networking opportunities, and leadership roles. This will help create a pipeline of students who are aware of NMEA, and exposed to careers in marine science education at an early age, and will help provide students with an on ramp to increasing leadership opportunities within the organization. In addition to engaging a younger demographic in the NMEA organization, this process will also help students gain access to resources to expand existing marine education and conservation programs they may be involved with. Input from students and veteran NMEA members will be beneficial to this process.

Leads: Youth Engagement Committee members (plan development/implementation), Lisa Tossey (opportunities to feature student projects through guest blogs/social media)

PRIMARY LEAD: Sean Russell
Action 3: Create a section of the NMEA website highlighting opportunities for students and emerging professionals to become involved in NMEA at various levels

Rationale: With the creation of the student and emerging professional NMEA membership categories, a section of the NMEA website targeting young people and highlighting benefits of membership will aid in engaging students in the organization and making them aware of the opportunities it offers them prior to graduation.

Leads: Youth Engagement Committee (content development), Lisa Tossey, Tech Committee Chair

PRIMARY LEAD: Sean Russell

➢ Connect with existing youth engagement programs and collaborate on shared reach and influence opportunities

Lead(s): Sean Russell

Action 1: Create and share a best practices guide for engaging students in NMEA chapter conferences.

Rationale: In order to engage students in professional marine education networks and connect them to NMEA at a local level, a best practices guide for involving students in NMEA chapter conferences will be beneficial to share with chapter officers/board representatives. This guide will build on and highlight the lessons learned and successes of the New York State Marine Educators Association Conference’s work to actively engage students in their annual conference.

PRIMARY LEADS: Sarah Richards/Meg Marrero (NYSMEA)

Action 2: Continue student involvement in NMEA conference through Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the NMEA 2015 Conference.

Rationale: The incorporation of a day long Youth Ocean Conservation Summit into the 2014 NMEA Conference in Annapolis, MD provided an ideal avenue to engage high school students in one day of the NMEA Conference and connect them to the resources offered by NMEA through interaction with members, exhibits, and speakers. Continuing to build on this student involvement by incorporating a student driven Youth Ocean Conservation Summit at the NMEA 2015 conference Newport, RI will allow NMEA to support the development of young ocean conservationists, and connect these students to the organization.

Leads: NMEA 2015 Conference Committee and student summit planning team (from Conference Committee)

PRIMARY LEAD: Sean Russell

Action 3: Develop list of youth leadership programs engaging students in marine conservation/education programs to explore collaborating/cross-sharing opportunities.

Rationale: Youth leadership programs across the country engage students in marine education and conservation programs and look to connect these students to additional resources/opportunities, while promoting their organizations. Collaboration with these organizations and sharing of opportunities for students to become involved...
in NMEA will help develop the pipeline of young people who are aware of the opportunities offered to them by NMEA. Professionals from these organizations may also become involved in NMEA through this process.

Leads: Allie Toomey (EarthEcho International), Sean Russell, Youth Engagement Committee with recommendations from NMEA Board to ensure broad perspective

PRIMARY LEAD: TBD
KEY FOCUS AREA: ACTIVELY INVOLVE DIVERSE AND UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

Implementation Lead: Tami Lunsford
Additional supports/leads: Jenny de la Hoz, Taalibah Hassan, Dieuwertje Kast, Bob Jakus, Darrell Walker

NMEA will continue its focus on broadening participation and diversifying both its leadership and membership through these strategies:

♦ Strategically partner with up to three (3) organizations that represent diverse and underrepresented communities and jointly establish achievable outcomes

♦ Support participation of diverse professionals in NMEA activities both online and in-person

♦ Foster an organizational culture that attracts diverse professionals to NMEA

Key recommendations:

➤ Identify specific organizations who effectively reach diverse and underrepresented communities with whom NMEA should engage.
  Lead: Tami Lunsford

Action 1: Create a list of 5-10 organizations on which NMEA wants to focus and reach out to in order to increase participation.

Rationale: We cannot increase involvement from all underrepresented groups with limited resources. This will allow us to leverage their knowledge of the audiences and expertise in language and culture and reach a wider audience than we can reach alone.

Lead: Tami Lunsford

➤ Articulate how organizational partners will increase the involvement of diverse professionals in NMEA.
  Lead: Bob Jakus

Action 1: Foster relationships with the identified groups through social media.

Rationale: This will allow us to leverage their knowledge of the audience and expertise in language and culture and reach a wider audience than we can reach alone.

Lead: Expanding Audiences committee with Social Media committee and Lisa Tossey
Recruit and mentor individual diverse professionals to participate in NMEA leadership opportunities  
**Lead: DJ Kast**

**Action 1:** Create a task force to bring to light the language and/or practices that entrench only certain types of individuals as people who do marine education. Ask that task force to make specific recommendations on modifications to those practices to be more inviting and inclusive.

**Rationale:** If we continue to look the same, it must mean that we are doing the same thing to attract the same people.

**Lead:** DJ Kast

**Action 2:** Create a mentorship program to foster the continued involvement of professionals from groups underrepresented in NMEA. This should begin with the buddy program at the conference and go beyond the conference week.

**Rationale:** We bring in some diverse professionals through the Expanding Audiences scholarship, and some stay with NMEA but others do not. The onus of continued participation must not be on the diverse professional only, but on the entire organization.

**Lead:** Darrell Walker (with the Youth Engagement Committee)

**Action 3:** Create clear pathways into NMEA leadership for new professionals to take up roles that are not based on length of time with NMEA or knowledge of people within the organization, but based on the knowledge and experiences that the person can bring to bear at NMEA.

**Rationale:** It is unclear to anyone outside the NMEA leadership how new leaders “get in”. This has to change if we are to recruit new leaders.

**Lead:** Dave Bader

**Action 4:** Provide diversity training for existing NMEA leadership and future NMEA leaders.

**Rationale:** Without awareness of the existing leaders about the importance of and barriers to participation of individuals from groups underrepresented currently in NMEA, the other action items will not be successful. We have had VERY little participation in past leadership in nominating people for the Expanding Audiences scholarship, for example.

**Lead:** Expanding Audiences and Governance committees
**PRIMARY LEAD:** TBD
**Action 5:** Incorporate into the future conference planning support materials the importance of including culturally based events in every conference.

**Rationale:** Conference planners may or may not have knowledge or comfort with this, so they will need support from NMEA and the TK and EA committees.

**Lead:** David Christopher and Chris Verlinde
KEY FOCUS AREA: DRIVE ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Implementation Leads: Adam Frederick, Jim Wharton

NMEA will maintain and grow organizational integrity and sustainability through these strategies:

♦ Provide leadership, infrastructure and support for Chapters to grow
♦ Increase membership numbers in all categories and establish renewal target to achieve annually
♦ Create a consistent national conference experience for participants
♦ Establish specific goals for funding and development to contribute to financial resilience of NMEA
♦ Develop a succession plan for organizational involvement and leadership

Key recommendations:

➢ Create a Chapter Support Plan to target growth and improvement opportunities
   Lead: Lauren Rader

Action 1: Identify working group for Plan development, to include the current President-elect and at least one member with experience as a Chapter Rep and at least one member currently serving as a chapter officer.

Rationale: The working group model encourages wider Board and membership engagement and prevents the Plan from being kept by a small number of over-committed insiders.

Leads: Bob Rocha (Tami Lunsford)

Action 2: Conduct focus group(s) via GoToMeeting (GTM) or Blue Jeans with key informants to ground truth assumptions about Chapter needs (including relevance of issues developed in past needs assessments).

Rationale: A focus group approach will provide some richer descriptions of the needs established in past Chapter surveys (i.e., not starting from a blank page, but rather starting from what we think we know). Just as a reminder we need to pull these files/surveys and look over data already collected to summarize in one historical document.

Leads: Working group (TBD). May also be prudent to consult with evaluators within the membership (Diana Payne, Beth Day-Miller, Meg Marrero) on the design/conduct of focus group.

PRIMARY LEAD: Bob Rocha
**Action 3:** Create conceptual framework for plan to be discussed at Annual Meeting with Chapter Rep Committee and in working conference session for the membership.

**Rationale:** The working group can provide a very loose, conceptual framework for a Chapter Support Plan to be discussed at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting is our largest gathering of the membership and provides a great opportunity to discuss these questions and ideas with members-at-large. While the Chapter Rep Committee meeting is one obvious forum, a “working session” in the program could also be very productive for engaging non-Board members.

**Leads:** Working group (TBD).  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Bob Rocha

- Identify pathways into NMEA leadership roles and proactively recruit and nurture future leaders.  
  **Lead:** Dave Bader

**Action 1:** Identify working group, to include members whose experience and interests reflect expanding audiences, professional development/mentorship, youth engagement, international and traditional knowledge perspectives. *(intertwined with Youth Engagement and Diverse Audiences KFAs)*

**Rationale:** The working group model encourages wider Board and membership engagement and prevents the Plan from being kept by a small number of over-committed insiders.

**Leads:** Working group (TBD)  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Dave Bader

**Action 2:** Identify key informants both internal and external to NMEA, collect formative information. *(intertwined with Youth Engagement and Diverse Audiences KFAs)*

**Rationale:** The working group will have a rich experience-base and network from which can be mined ideas for fostering future leaders of NMEA. Internal sources may include organizational leaders like Education Directors and CEOs or Past Presidents. External sources might include leaders from similar organizations (e.g., Judy Braus at NAAEE) or thought leaders from other disciplines (e.g., business or management).

**Leads:** Working group (TBD). One approach could involve the group developing a set of questions and interview targets.  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Dave Bader

**Action 3:** Create opportunity for discussion and feedback from NMEA and Chapter members at Annual Meeting on strategic directions.

**Rationale:** The Annual Meeting is our largest gathering of the membership and provides a great opportunity to discuss these questions and ideas with members-at-large. A session on developing and mentoring leadership would provide value to members and provide an opportunity for rich discussion about the working group’s ideas for developing future leaders within NMEA.
Provide opportunities for leadership development of NMEA Board of Directors
Lead: Jim Wharton

Action1: Discuss at Midyear the possibility of creating an ad hoc Board Governance Committee to complement and expand the work of the Nominating Committee.

Rationale: A Board Governance committee would contribute to generating an annual slate of nominees and ensure that each board member is equipped with the proper tools and motivation to carry out his or her duties. The function of the Nominating Committee would remain the same, but the existence of a consistent Governance Committee would reduce the annual scramble to reconcile past lists of nominees and could actively assess the composition of the board to identify missing qualities and characteristics. The Chair of the Governance Committee would be appointed to the Nominating Committee each year by the Past President. The Governance committee would also serve to orient new board members and provide continuing education and development opportunities for all board members.

Lead: Jim Wharton

Action 2-4: Committee members recruited, charter established, annual work plan developed.

Rationale: These are the expected initial steps for a newly established committee.

Lead: Jim Wharton

- Develop plan to increase use of and effectively leverage capabilities of YourMembership.com (YM)
  Lead(s): Membership Secretary (Adam Frederick), Membership Coordinator (Jeannette Connors), Technology Committee Chair (Justine Glynn)

Membership:
Action 1: Membership Chair, Membership Secretary, and Membership Coordinator work with Membership Committee to establish renewal targets, discuss with Board at Midyear.

Rationale: The first step towards a more proactive approach to membership development and support.

Leads: Lynn Whitley, Membership Committee, Membership Secretary, Membership Coordinator
PRIMARY LEAD: Lynn Whitley
Action 2: Create set of membership ‘effective practices’ targeted at retention and engagement, discuss at Annual.

Rationale: There are many organizations within our membership and networks that effectively engage and maintain large membership communities. There are likely many well-established effective practices that could help NMEA improve its professional practice in this area.

Leads: Lynn Whitley, Jeanette Connors, Membership Committee. Similar to the leadership development approach, the committee may choose to develop a set of questions and interview targets to gather this information. Some may be readily available through the Internet or other traditional sources.
PRIMARY LEAD: Lynn Whitley or designee.

Deadlines: Formative information gathered during first and second quarters of 2015. Draft of effective practices due to the Board at for the Annual Meeting on June 28.

Website:
Action 1: Create a phase document for growing the functionality of the YourMembership website, identifying specific work that can be done by a paid hourly contract.

Rationale: The service provided by YourMembership.com includes a rich array of features and capabilities that we have only just begun to explore.

Leads: Justine Glynn, Technology Committee, Lisa Tossey
PRIMARY LEAD: Technology Committee Chair, Justine Glynn

Action 2: Assess need and potentially hire website assistance on an hourly basis.

Rationale: There may be straightforward membership and communication-related YM tasks that can be accomplished by part-time staff or contract, tasks that fall outside of the expectations of our Technology Committee or Social Media Community Manager.

Leads: Lynn Whitley, Adam Frederick, Justine Glynn, Jeanette Connors
PRIMARY LEAD: Adam Frederick

Create a consistent national conference experience for participants
Lead(s): David Christopher and Chris Verlinde

Action 1: Identify working group, to include recent conference committee chairs.

Rationale: The working group model encourages wider Board and membership engagement and prevents the Plan from being kept by a small number of over-committed insiders.

Leads: Working group (TBD)
PRIMARY LEAD: David Christopher and Chris Verlinde
**Action 2:** Identify with Ex Comm what elements of the conference should be consistent from year to year, and what sort of consultation the conference committee should have with the board in initial conference preparation (ex. Session themes that reflect current trends within the organization).

Rationale: The conference experience should clearly reflect the national organization’s priorities, in addition to the hosting Chapter.

Leads: Working group (TBD). Strategy might include a short survey of the Ex Comm followed by a virtual discussion (via GTM). Should include Conference Committee and Conservation Committee members.

PRIMARY LEADS: David Christopher and Chris Verlinde

**Action 3:** Meet at conference to discuss how conference cookbook could be evolved to reflect a set of standards for conference experience.

Rationale: Meeting during the Annual Conference captures the excitement of the event and strikes while ideas are fresh. Consider completely redoing cookbook to meet current needs. Set standards, document history from each conference, spreadsheets of planning – sponsors, budget planning, etc. Should also include items that can be purchased in bulk by the National Office and used by each conference for consistency (e.g., items to help with setup for registration, auction, etc.)

Leads: Working group (TBD).

PRIMARY LEAD: Current Conference Committee Chair (C. Verlinde)

- Establish specific goals for funding and development to contribute to financial resilience of NMEA
  Lead(s): Beth Day-Miller

**Action 1:** Meet with current/past Treasurer and President’s Chain to understand the current financial requirements of the organization.

Rationale: Understanding the case for fundraising begins with understanding the financial requirements of the organization to ensure our basic needs are met before we seek funding to grow or expand our activities.

Leads: Grants and Development Committee (President’s Chain, Ex Comm, Treasurer)

PRIMARY LEAD: Beth Day-Miller

**Action 2:** Identify and interview key informants at other member organizations to understand the role grants and fundraising play in their annual support.

Rationale: There are many successful member organizations within our personal and professional networks that may have more experience in this area from which we can benefit.

Leads: Grants and Development Committee.

PRIMARY LEAD: Beth Day-Miller
**Action 3:** Report and discuss formative information and any recommendations at Ex Comm 2016.

**Rationale:** Because this kind of development activity is new to the organization, a discussion with the Ex Comm on how to proceed is appropriate. Face-to-face conversations are always better for important or sensitive discussions.

**Leads:** Beth Day-Miller  
**PRIMARY LEAD:** Beth Day-Miller
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND PARTICIPATION

This most recent strategic planning process began in 2012 with a survey of the members attending the 2012 annual conference in Alaska and a survey to all Chapters, and to the Past President’s Circle. The Keely Group was employed for ~ 1 year to work with a Strategic Planning Committee, carrying the information from above into a 5 year strategic plan. During this process, NMEA found itself in need of a new location for the National Office. This circumstance led to an intentional pause in the strategic planning process.

Simultaneously, NMEA hired The Pulse Team to undergo a full Communications and Marketing Plan over a two year period. This process identified a need for attention to organizational infrastructure and the NMEA website.

Following the development and implementation of the Communications and Marketing Plan, NMEA reengaged in the Strategic Planning process, again hiring The Pulse Team for this work. This process took into account membership surveys done in 2012 and the work of the Keely Group. Additionally, a Wiki was established for continued membership input. This was followed up by a Strategic Planning Visioning Retreat post- (NMEA conference, 2014 in Annapolis, MD, and then a Final Strategic Planning meeting at the new NMEA Headquarters in College Park, MD in July 2014.

SP Visioning Retreat
(NMEA conference 7/26/14)
Facilitator: Julie Henry, The Pulse Team

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Final SP Meeting
(NMEA Headquarters 9/22/14)
Facilitator: Julie Henry, The Pulse Team

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MEASURES OF SUCCESS

This plan will be deemed successful when recommendations are taken into account, lived with, ‘tried on’, and amended for the specific nature of NMEA over the next three years.

Lessons learned in balance with the strategic nature of this plan will provide a foundation on which to build successive plans designed to achieve the desired outcomes for NMEA.
APPENDIX 1 – MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES
As detailed in the NMEA Strategic Plan 2008-13

MISSION – Our core purpose
To make known the world of water, both fresh and salt.

VISION – Our dream for the future of marine and aquatic education
• Every woman, man and child understands and values the ocean and all watersheds.
• Marine and aquatic education is a fundamental part of every student’s education – it is part of the curriculum, and is integrated into state and national standards, tests, and texts.
• Marine and aquatic-related federal and state agencies work closely with federal, state and local departments of education and informal education organizations to ensure marine and aquatic education become part of the curriculum.
• National recognition of the importance of marine and aquatic literacy leads to increased funding and resources.
• Marine and aquatic education and knowledge drive responsible behavior change, as people apply their understanding to better our environment.
• All people recognize their personal connection to all water resources, including the ocean, and make responsible resource decisions concerning the fragility and interconnectedness of all species.
• Consistent, appropriate messages about the ocean and all watersheds are seen everywhere.
• The benefits and resources of the ocean and all watersheds are available to all for sustainable uses.

CORE VALUES – What we stand for

Excellence
• We utilize and provide access to the best available science and educational practices and resources in everything we do.
• We demonstrate integrity and lead by example, practicing what we teach at our conferences, in our work, and in our everyday lives.
• We continually work to strengthen NMEA as a healthy, fiscally responsible organization.

Camaraderie
• We cherish the camaraderie among our members, building strong, lasting professional and personal relationships among colleagues who share common goals.
• The relationships among members nurture and support us as individuals, allow us to leverage each other as resources, and lead to important collaborations and partnerships.
• We enjoy working together and we take NMEA’s mission seriously – we know that in order to successfully fulfill our mission and vision, we must do it together.
• Our leadership within NMEA provides links among all members and to other professional organizations, enabling the sharing of ideas, resources, and progress, lending fulfillment to our vision.

Action
• We educate and inspire people to understand and value their relationship with the ocean and all watersheds, so that they can make informed choices about their behavior.
• We value the role of educators and support them with tools, conferences, publications, and resources so that they, in turn, can promote understanding and action in their students.
• We empower the public to take an active role in protecting the global ocean and water resources.

Inclusiveness
• We believe that bringing together a wide variety of communities with diverse perspectives strengthens marine and aquatic education.
• We encourage interdisciplinary approaches to our activities and strive to incorporate many disciplines into resources we provide.
• We welcome and include many types of educators, and we honor and utilize the contributions of all our members.
• We are passionate about reaching and inspiring broad audiences, and will stay open to new ideas, perspectives, and input.

Leadership
• We inspire and encourage our members to serve as tenacious, passionate leaders, both within and outside the organization.
• We support our members as they serve in leadership position in universities, government agencies, and in formal and informal education institutions and businesses.
• We drive the conversation regarding marine and aquatic education, influencing policy, practice, and funding.