

■ ■ Message from the Chair ■ ■



Suffering from Inertia

Alice Y. Scales, Ed.D.
North Carolina State University

The last Mid-year Conference, hosted by Dennis Lieu in Berkley, California, was a huge success, in spite of budget constraints that caused some people to withdraw their papers. I would like to thank all the people who were instrumental in putting the conference together. We had a multicultural, multinational, and multidivisional experience as well as a new approach to sharing our work in the form of the “Media Showcase Session.” Because we had so many papers, Dennis Lieu, Bob Chin, and Ted Branoff initiated the Media Showcase Session so that more people could present their work. This session was highly successful, and the papers presented through this media were those that best lent themselves to this form of sharing information. It is my hope that we continue to use a Media Showcase Session for certain types of papers. The “overhead and talk” we used for years at our conferences should not automatically be morphed into “PowerPoint and talk.” As we diversify into new modes of graphics and rethink what and how we teach, we need to be able to share our experiences using the most appropriate method for the topic. It is easier to stimulate people to try new teaching techniques and technology if we provide them a better way to experience them.

A second observation I would like to make concerning the conference is the collaboration between the First-Year Division and the Engineering Design Graphics Division members.

Ten individuals from the First-Year Division who presented papers at the Annual Conference were asked present their papers at the EDGD Mid-year. This was the first time we tried this, and everyone I talked to about this collaboration was enthusiastic about the experience. Again, I hope this kind of interaction becomes more common at our conferences. It provides a way to examine approaches to shared problems from different perspectives.

My final observation is that the members of the division are struggling with what we are versus what we have been. The diversity in our focus is visible in the types of papers that we present at conferences, the discussions we have between sessions, and at the executive and business meetings. It is hard to give up the comfortable ideas of what we teach and who we are; however, we cannot continue to maintain the status quo and remain a viable organization that serves the needs of our institutions, our faculty, our students, and the employers of our students. Although we do not want to change simply for change sake or abandon things that are still appropriate to our mission, there must be room for changes that keep us relevant and reflect the needs of all of our stakeholders. The world she is changing, and we have to change with it.

-- Alice Y. Scales