

AN ASSOCIATION IS REBORN

Throughout the history of our association, periodic debates have arisen with regard to our name. We began as “vocational” education. Then, as our society became more highly technical, our training programs also evolved. Vocational education more frequently was referred to as vocational-technical education. Still there was the occasional argument for changing the name. Should it be occupational education? Should it be career education?

In 1970, when “career education” was proposed by President Nixon as a new term, there were concerns that it might be looked upon as a reform for vocational education. Nixon said that, “Too often vocational education is foolishly stigmatized as being less desirable than academic preparation, and too often the academic curriculum offers very little preparation for viable careers.”

The term vocational may have unfairly developed a certain stigma, but what it actually accomplished could be clearly seen by those who worked in the field. Some feared that the proposal to establish a new program of “career education” was really an attempt to divide the forces of vocational education and confuse our purpose. In 1989, the House of Representatives wanted to change the name to applied technology education, but AVA again worked to keep vocational education.

As the 1990s drew to a close, and with the new millennium on the horizon, it became more apparent to an increasing number of members of the American Vocational Association that it was time for a change. Our courses have become more academic, more challenging and more technical, and we needed a name that accurately reflected those changes. At the December 1998 convention, the



Bret Lovejoy was the executive director at the time of the official name change to the Association for Career and Technical Education.



“I believe career and technical education is the future of this society. After the events of September 11, it takes on even greater importance.”

**—Janet B. Bray,
executive director of ACTE**

members voted to change the organization’s name to the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE).

Following the adoption of the new name by the national association, state associations began making the change from vocational to career and technical. Today, career and technical education is strong both in name and in practice. Our programs teach some of our most challenged students, but they also teach some of our most gifted students. Career and technical courses are training both young students and adults for careers in the real-world workplace.

There is still work to be done in improving our image, and ACTE is developing plans for a major public awareness campaign to do just that. Our new executive director, Jan Bray, and the members of the ACTE Business-Education Partnership are committed to that cause. At our 75th Anniversary Convention in New Orleans in December, Bray also announced the expansion of our government relations department that will give us a stronger presence on Capitol Hill as the reauthorization of Perkins draws closer.

We must all work together to increase our membership, because that is our true power. ACTE has served its members well for 75 years and will continue to champion the cause of career and technical education by keeping our numbers strong. The association has a proud history, as is clear from the story told on these pages, and we will continue to make history throughout this millennium by changing when change is called for and by standing firm when appropriate. One thing that will not change is our belief in the importance of the work done by our members. That belief gives strength to the voice of ACTE—the voice that has spoken out for the students and educators of career and technical education for 75 years. The Association for Career and Technical Education looks forward to the privilege and the honor of representing its membership for the next 75 years ... and then for many more.