

President's Direction 2010-2011

By Ken Talley
KACTE President

It is healthy for an organization to occasionally ask of its members the questions: "Who are we? What are we about? What should we be doing?" KACTE is now asking itself these questions. You may be aware that we are considering changes to our Bylaws; we are addressing some fundamental questions about what is the appropriate formula for representation on this Board of Directors. This will involve asking ourselves these questions, as our Bylaws should reflect who we are, what we are about, and what we should be doing.

This is the time I'm supposed to answer these questions about myself, so I'll start there. Who am I? When people ask me this I tell them I am a retired Army officer, where I was trained to lead, led several organizations there, and taught leadership for the Army for six years. I tell them I'm an educational administrator, having been trained and certified to lead schools, and that is the area of study for my third degree. I like to describe myself as a "once and future farmer." I tell them I am a farmer at heart, having been raised on a farm, where I learned the value of working together as a family, before going to college at Western. I tell them I am a journalist; that was the area of study for my second degree, where I learned about communication and public relations; and I taught those subjects for three years at the college level and seven years in high school. So what am I about? I'm about working together, communicating, and leading. What should I be doing? I volunteered to serve on this Board and now to serve again as president. I view a leader as a servant.

What does all that mean to you? It tells you the lenses through which I see the world, how I see organizations, and how I see myself. I know the value of and have taught leadership, which is what I think of when I think of KACTE. Notice I did not say that I'm a good leader. But I have studied leadership; I know a good leader when I see one; and I try to be one. I and you have observed leadership in action in our immediate and recent past presidents. I applaud their leadership. *I know these things about leaders, and what I think KACTE is and should remain: Leaders build a community of individuals by clarifying and communicating a common purpose. Leaders help individuals in this community collaborate to achieve common goals. Leaders try to keep the organization focused on its purpose primarily through communication. This is what I think KACTE is in the CTE world.*

KACTE, this association, is a **community** of professional organizations, working together with a common purpose, to promote Career & Technical Education and support CTE educators. To achieve this, KACTE has created and must maintain a structure and procedures to enable these organizations to work together, to **collaborate**. This does not happen naturally. It requires us working together. Lastly, to create community and encourage collaboration, KACTE must **communicate** both internally to its member organizations and externally to those who influence CTE. So these three concepts will guide me as I try to be a good leader for this organization: ***Community, Collaboration, and Communication.***

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- As a **community** of professional organizations, our Bylaws should communicate our purpose, and should communicate our structure and procedures so we can collaborate. So our Bylaws are important to KACTE's future. That is one of my goals for the coming year: to take a hard look at our Bylaws. This will require a hard look at ourselves, our purpose, and our structure as a community. This is scary to some, as it could entail change. It may be a challenge for all of us. But taking a look at something does not necessarily mean major change, but it does mean we will emerge from this process a better, stronger association. It will make our association a better community that can then work better together.
- My second goal reflects the concept of **collaboration**. We do this already, but I believe we can improve; we can work together better. Our member professional organizations have their individual purposes, and we must appreciate and respect these, while at the same time recognizing our common purpose. I think we can better communicate both our individuality and our common purpose within KACTE and within each of our member organizations. We are not competing at this level. Here we are a community, a collaboration of workers, working together toward a common purpose. We can achieve more together, by pooling our efforts and resources, than we can individually.
- My third goal is to improve **communication** both within our association, as mentioned above, and externally to those who influence CTE. Again, we do a pretty good job of communicating already, but this is an area where technology is constantly increasing our capabilities. The better we communicate within our association, the better we appreciate each of our individual member professional organizations, the better we recognize our shared purpose as an association, and the more we identify ourselves as part of the KACTE community. The better we communicate as an association with outside influencers, the better we achieve our purpose of promoting CTE within our state and at the federal level.

These three concepts reflect where I am coming from, reflect how I view our organization, and provide some idea of what I think we need to be working on. This is where I see us in another year: **communicating** within the association better to promote community, **collaborating** together better to achieve our shared purpose, and communicating externally with the strength of this **community** to promote CTE. I guess you could call this my vision.

We are already collaborating and communicating as a community. In fact, I believe we do these quite well, due to what I consider inspired leadership and dedicated directors. These are areas, though, that I think need emphasis at this time to help us in this period of self-examination, to take advantage of emerging technologies in communication, and to maintain a strong association.

I recommend we continue most of the current initiatives, as they are oriented toward our shared purpose of promoting CTE and supporting CTE educators. You will not see major changes in our Program of Work, for example. I recommend we review our goals and our plans in terms of **community, collaboration and communication**. As we address these goals this year, I ask that you keep these concepts in mind. Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to share this.