GCEA Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Report submitted to the Graphic Communications Education Association Board of Directors, July 2018

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The Graphic Communications Education Association (GCEA) is a tax-exempt association focused on providing resources for graphic communications educators. Its roots date back to 1912.

> In 1912 the United Typothetae of America established a professional association of printing teachers and administrators with the goal of creating and preserving an educational program for the printing industry. This organization was dissolved in 1934 as a result of the economic depression, but the educational program it established was continued by two men, likely Fred Hartman and Harry Hillman, under the sponsorship of the American Institute of Graphic Arts as the International Graphic Arts Education Association (IGAEA).
>
> The IGAEA officially began 15 November 1935, and for many years faced difficulties in getting adequate industry backing to undertake its educational role. The largest step forward in this work occurred in September 1950 when the Education Council of the Graphic Arts Industry was formed. The Education Council of the Graphic Arts Industry worked very closely with the IGAEA, and vice-versa, as evidenced through the significant financial support provided to IGAEA by the Council, the number of joint committees, and the annual membership meeting of the council being held concurrently with the Annual Conference on Printing Education held by IGAEA.
>
> The IGAEA and Council continued to develop effective systems of graphic arts education and provide well-trained individuals for the printing and graphics industry through 2014. The organization either directly sponsored or was heavily involved in activities such as Printing Education Week, typographical contests, student organizations, and publications. (Willey, n.d.)

In 2014, the International Graphic Communications Education Association (IGAEA) changed its "doing business as" (DBA) name to the Graphic Communications Education Association (GCEA). Everything in the Constitution and Bylaws refers to IGAEA, which remains the legal name of the 503(c)(3) association. Everything outside of our legal documents, refers to the current recognized name of the association, GCEA. The Administrative Handbook, which is a working document, contains GCEA since it is not a legal document.

Why a Strategic Plan?

Like many associations, GCEA is faced with challenges. We are in a place with few members, fewer leaders, and relatively few services provided to members. That is not a good recipe for the future. We have a cost structure that has relatively high fixed costs and relatively low variable costs, which creates ongoing challenges as membership numbers decline. We are a volunteer-run organization. Most importantly, we have a value problem. What is the value GCEA provides members and how do we increase that value with the resources currently available to the association?

We see three fundamental problems needing attention:

1. We continue to borrow from reserves every year to sustain are current expenditures. We need to either raise revenue or cut expenses or both. See Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3.
2. We continue to lose members, either to retirement (which if members continue in the organization, their dues are half price), leaving education, or simply not seeing the value of continuing GCEA membership. See Figure 3.
3. We have difficulty attracting leadership to the organization as evidenced by repeated uncontested elections and frequent "burn out" when leaders exit the board of directors (BOD), exposing a lack of continuity in leadership.
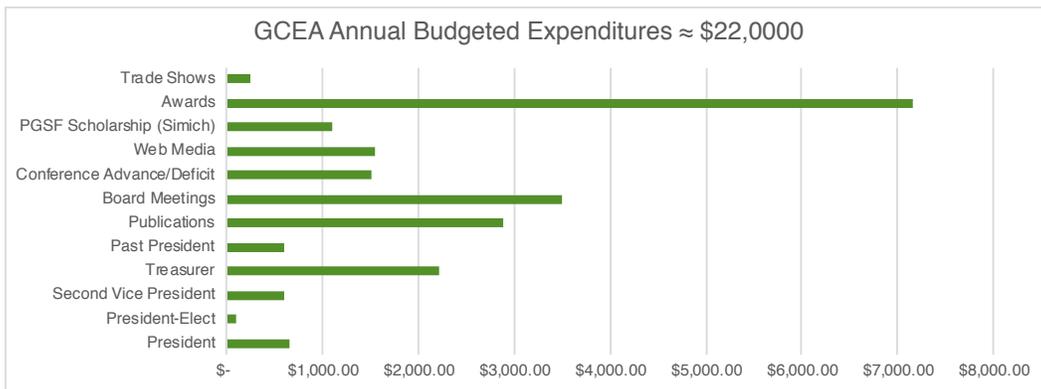
Figure 1 – Budgeted expenses for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Awards are budgeted as PDVH conference incentive award=$4,000; Cox award=$1,200; GC Week poster=$600; Gutenberg=$400; Kagy/Hartman/Sundeen=$550; Project exchange=$400.
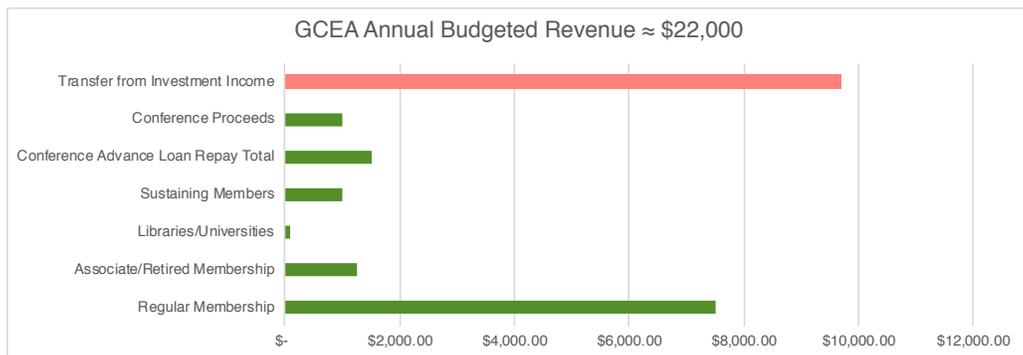
Figure 2 – Budgeted revenue for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Red line on top represents the portion we budget each year to take from our reserves. Sometime in the past, GCEA Board of Directors were able to invest in a SmithBarney money market account which is presently valued around $123,000. It is from this account that we occasionally draw funding.

The purpose of this report is to identify key areas we believe need changing in the offerings and structure of GCEA and to provide a plan of action to curb these challenges and grow the organization over the next five years.
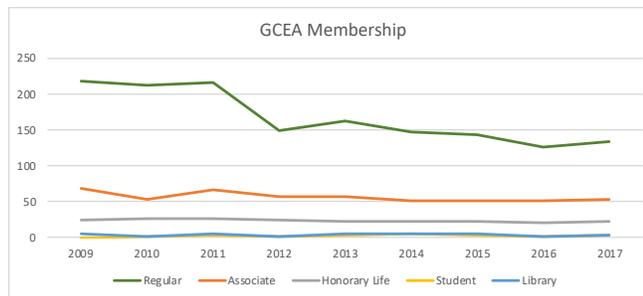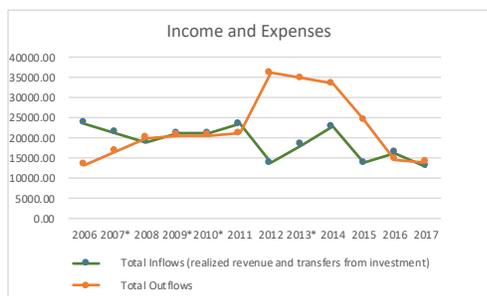
Figure 3 – Actual income and expenses for 2006-2017. Membership for the period 2006-2017. Note that regular membership has steadily declined other than 2012, which was the year GCEA spent a large expenditure on marketing collateral, including the current website.

The premier activity of GCEA is its annual summer conference. The organization's "strength" at any given time is reflected largely by two factors:

✦ The leadership of the organization
✦ The annual conference location and content, including the geographic location relative to a large portion of the membership (Midwest) and the strength of the institution's reputation.

When either of these factors wane, the organization tends to suffer for a period of time, losing membership. It is important to focus attention not only on the offerings of the association but also on leadership development.

Values, Mission and Goals of GCEA

Why should someone join GCEA? Why should someone come to our annual conference?

We believe the core values we espouse are:

✦ Member-to-member values:
  o Sharing knowledge with fellow educators
  o Collaborating with fellow educators
  o Exploring and sharing new Graphic Communications (GC) technologies
✦ Member as instructor values:
  o Teach how to convey information in a better, more effective way.
  o Promote problem solving
  o Explore new instructional strategies
✦ Member to industry values:
  o Effectively recruit and prepare students for employment in GC

We propose a Constitution change to our *Mission Statement*:

The Graphic Communications Education Association (GCEA) is an association of educators We are a collaborative professional organization in partnership with industry, dedicated to sharing theories, principles, techniques and processes and practices relating to graphic communications and imaging technology. We exist to help our members become better educators.

We propose a Constitution change to our *Goals*:

> *IGAEA will:*

Section 1. Provide leadership for professional growth and development, to enhance student learning in graphic communications ~~education and related subjects~~;

Section 2. Foster scholarship, research, and ~~information sharing~~ collaboration through partnership with educators and industry;~~educational and industrial associations, companies, and individuals; and~~

Section 3. ~~Promote a positive image of the~~ Advocate for the graphic communications ~~industry~~ profession and its career opportunities.

It is important that these values, mission and goals are well-articulated and marketed. As importantly, all activities should support the goals of the association.

GCEA Competitive Landscape

There are several things that prevent GCEA from exploding in growth. Competing priorities for money, time and attention are numerous in our modern culture. In year's past, GCEA/IGAEA was a key source for knowledge and networking. Now, online sources are available for software training and general GC knowledge. Clearly YouTube and Lynda, as well as numerous other avenues exist for skill and pedagogical development. In many cases, these avenues are cheaper, better and quicker to access than GCEA.

Further, other associations and groups may be more compelling options for the limited resources of GC instructors. We see several potential "alternate" professional associations (see Table 1). We understand that many schools, colleges and universities do not pay GCEA membership dues or conference attendance and that instructors pay themselves. This clearly limits the membership and involvement in professional associations educators may wish to join. Further, as a member-run association, we are challenged with producing quality programming and member services with the limits of time.

In addition to other associations contributing to the competitive landscape, we see numerous conferences as limiting member attendance at the GCEA summer conferences. Committee members identify the AGIA Educator Conference https://educators.aiga.org/, Adobe Max conference https://max.adobe.com/ or PhotoshopWorld https://photoshopworld.com/ as conferences that are popular for GC educators. It is easy to see why if members attend these conferences, they may not have the incentive or resources to also attend the GCEA summer conference.

When surveying the competitive landscape, it is easy to see that the GC world is changing rapidly. Printing programs are either dissolving or changing quickly, in many schools. It seems logical that we must change just as rapidly. One committee member stated: "I teach laser cutting and engraving, 3D printing, die cutting, vinyl printing & cutting, digital printing, bindery, web, video and game design." That is a far cry from teaching paste-up, stripping, platemaking, offset press and bindery. We need to expand our offerings to meet the requirements of current and future members.

Table 1 – List of "alternate" associations (not exhaustive), which could potential draw members away from GCEA.

Organization	Annual membership dues	Paid staff	Notes
Graphic Communications Education Association	*$50*	*No*	*Volunteer run*
National Art Education Association	$100	Yes	
Society for Photographic Education	$125	Yes	
Journalism Education Association	$60	No	Appears to be volunteer run
International Digital Media and Arts Association	$125	No	Appears to be volunteer run and post-secondary only
AIGA, The Professional Association for Design – Designer Educator Community	$150	Yes	Run AIGA Educator Conferences
ATMAE – Graphics division	$100	Yes	
International Circle of Education Institutes for Graphic Arts Technology and Management - IC	Free institutional membership	No	Conference (paid) & journal
Technical Association of the Graphic Arts - TAGA	$125	No	Individual research
IARIGAI - International Association of Research Organizations for the Printing, Information and Communication Industries	€850 institutional membership only	No	Institutional research

The traditional print landscape is changing too. While hiring remains strong, replacing an aging industry, the reality is that employment demand in commercial printing is weaker than it once was. Growth fields include packaging, outdoor advertising, wide-format, vehicle and window decorations, etc., and also interactive, screen-based media including web, mobile, social media, digital advertising, etc. We can provide more value by helping our members develop new skills that help them position for the future workforce demand.

Finally, surveying the competitive landscape needs to include changes in students' interests. Students are not interested in manufacturing positions unless they see a connection to their world. The notion of learning a trade for the purpose of getting a job is no longer motivating. Students like creating graphics, whether printed or on screen. They like the idea of impacting and influencing their immediate surroundings. GCEA can play a pivotal role in helping educators position their programs to include high-impact, high-interest curricula.

GCEA Board Structure

We believe the general structure of the GCEA leadership is appropriate. However, we recommend some strategic changes. Currently, the leadership structure is comprised of a Board of Directors (BOD), Executive Assembly and an Advisory Council (see Table 2). The Board of Directors provides the bulk of the leadership while the Advisory Council helps with long-term continuity and the Regional VPs work to ensure regional members are served. More information about the Advisory Council can be found in Article VI of the IGAEA bylaws.

Table 2 – List of current GCEA leadership positions

Board of Directors	Executive Assembly	Advisory Council
President	All members of the Board of Directors	Past-president 1
President-elect	Region 1 Vice President	Past-president 2
Immediate past-president	Region 2 Vice President	Past-president 3
1st Vice President	Region 3 Vice President	Past-president 4
2nd Vice President	Region 4 Vice President	Past-president 5
Secretary	Region 5 Vice President	Sustaining member 1
Treasurer	Region 6 Vice President – typically filled by Immediate past-president	Sustaining member 2

We recommend a change in name and duties for four of the Board of Directors (see Table 3). The traditional structure served its time well, but as times are changing we think modernizing the names will be clearer to members and likely be more attractive for leadership and professional development. This will require a Constitution change.

Table 3 – Proposed name change for four BOD positions.

Former name	Proposed new name	Rationale
1st Vice President	Director of Publications	There has long been a confusion of what the 1st and 2nd VPs do. This name change will minimize that confusion.
2nd Vice President	Director of Member Services	There has long been a confusion of what the 1st and 2nd VPs do. This name change will minimize that confusion.
Secretary	Director of Communications	This is the most critical name change of all. The duties of the secretary have changed radically in the past 4-5 years. The primary duty 10 years ago was for the secretary to take minutes at meetings. Now the secretary is responsible for many more things. As an association, we see these duties increasing and the title should reflect its significance.
Treasurer	Director of Finance	For consistency, we recommend this change. However, this is likely the least critical of the group.

The duties of these positions will not change dramatically, with the exception of the Secretary position. The new Director of Communications, along with a committee of members, will be responsible for ensuring all our social and web media are achieving our goals. This is a very significant change, as we must improve our communications to enhance members services. (Note that the current Secretary is doing an excellent job. This is not an indication of poor performance, but rather an expansion of duties). The BOD can determine if other responsibility changes are necessary.

One reason we believe these changes are needed, besides the improvement in clarity of responsibility, is that we think the titles are more prestigious and will attract additional interest by members in serving on the Board of Directors. Acquiring a position as Director of

Communications or Director of Member Services in a professional association looks favorable for professional development purposes.

Regional Vice Presidents (VP) continue to be "hit and miss" in GCEA. In the case where a region runs a regional conference or is associated with another group (like GATAI-Graphic Arts Teachers Association of Illinois), the regional VP tends to play a significant role. In other regions, the regional VPs role is minimal. We recommend the board continue to develop a Regional VP tool kit to help Regional VPs, as they have interest and time to commit. We would like to see Regional VPs be more effective but are unclear of the best way to increase their effectiveness in the association, with the diversity of regions and the extensive geographies they cover.

GCEA 5-year Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & Metrics

In this report, we suggest several strategic activities for the next five years. Ultimately, we do not measure activities, but we can measure key performance indicators (KPIs). The balance of this report focuses on how to increase member value through improved member offerings and strategies to increase revenue and decrease expenses. It is critical to keep these metrics visible and to report annually how the strategy is influencing these KPIs. It is easy to forget about a strategy as new members come on and old members go off of the board. For the next five years, we ask the board to keep KPIs and metrics visible and adjust the strategy accordingly to positively influence the KPIs. Without measurement, we cannot determine if our initiatives are working.

We believe the KPIs that will speak to the health of the organization include both growth in members and revenue, as well as better financial management, including cost reduction and minimizing dipping into reserves. Also, we would like to see a member satisfaction survey developed and administered annually. We offer suggested metrics to determine success in Table 4.

Table 4 – Strategic Goals for GCEA 2018–2023.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI)	3-year Metric	5-year Metric
Increase regular membership numbers	+10%	+50%
Reduce membership turn-over (number of members who do NOT renew membership)	-10%	-10%
Summer conference attendance	>80 GCEA member attendees	>100 GCEA member attendees
Annual revenue	+20%	+30%
Annual expenses	-10%	+10%
Sustaining member numbers	+30%	+50%
Sustaining member revenue	+50%	+200%
Transfer $ from investment account	<$1000 per year	≈$0.00 per year
Member satisfaction survey	TBD	TBD

GCEA Membership Offerings

To achieve growth in membership and revenue, we need to do a better job at providing members with valuable offerings. This will ensure retention of existing members and growth of new members. Obviously, we cannot increase expenditures until we get our finances in a better position. Two questions come to mind:

✢ Are we offering our current members the best value for their money?
✢ Are we providing the right offerings to attract new members, perhaps those teaching related GC content, but not traditional print topics?

Not all members think our offerings are valuable. This is particularly true when members do not participate in activities, including the annual conference (see Figure 4). We took time to look at all of our current offerings to brainstorm about the value of these services and to explore increasing our services.

Project Exchange

GCEA has recently put emphasis on project exchange with our quarterly recognitions. We applaud that and suggest continuing this emphasis. It would be terrific if we could further develop the Project Exchange resources.

At this time, we recommend continuing with the quarterly competitions. We do not recommend devoting prize money for winners of these resources due to the need for reducing expenses. In the future, it would be terrific to include prizes. In lieu of monetary awards, we think liberal recognition is in order. Most educators need recognitions to brag about on their Curriculum Vitae. We recommend using named prizes without monetary incentives to recognize winners of quarterly project exchange competition. It was also suggested that a 1-minute video be produced for quarterly (or annual) projects to highlight the achievement and also drive members to our website. Members think it would be good for author name and contact details be included with the Project Exchange submission.

One suggestion was to consider leveraging other national competitions. For example, Adobe Education Exchange offers a similar site to share projects https://edex.adobe.com/. One suggestion was to partner with them in some way. Suggestions might be to filter projects on their site to what might be relevant to our members and then highlight a project each month. It may be possible for Adobe to highlight one of our projects too. Perhaps our best project (that uses Adobe software) automatically gets entered on their site. We are looking for ways to collaborate with other project exchange sites. The Flexographic Technical Association (FTA), Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute (TLMI) and many Printing Industry Association affiliates (PIA) also have student awards. Perhaps we can recognize members who have one these awards. Alternatively, we could run complimentary competitions where the GCEA winner is automatically entered into one of these other competitions.

Annual GCEA Summer Conference

Our summer conference is a GCEA highlight. One of the things the committee suggested is to continue to focus on finding quality sites, with quality schools and keeping costs as low as

possible. It was thought that we might consider a conference that is co-hosted and would include a high-school site *and* a college/university site, alternating days.

GCEA Value, needs met perception and number of GCEA Activities participated in...by length of time in the association.

Length of time as member

GCEA Value (scale of 1-5)

Needs met by GCEA (Scale of 1-5)

1 year — 2.000

1 - 2 years — 3.500 / 2.000

3 or more years — 3.333

Mean GCEA partic. level (up to 8 Act)

Comments about GCEA

Comments
GCEA: An organization that completely focuses on printing press technology without visual, social and creative design input
I still plan to renew my membership. Just waiting for final word from my principal before paying for it myself.
I value the friendship of members, but find it hard to justify paying dues to be a member - when I find it difficult/impossible to attend annual or regional conferences.
I wish you offered more in Wisconsin. Otherwise, I enjoyed my experience and have recommended it to others (two just this week in fact)
Local instructor at the Metamora and Pekin High School seem to be a little hard to win over to the value of the GCEA. Has anyone called them in person and invited them to attend the conferencess? I can seem to get them engaged.
The logo/website redesign is encouraging; the old logo was shockingly outdated for a graphics organization. I'll look into it again.

Reasons for non-renewal

Length of ti..	Reasons
1 year	No time to take advantage of this membership
1 - 2 years	The value of membership is unclear; I was not able to access the members-only area of the website and no one at the org worked with..
	Administration will not approve funding
3 or more years	The value of membership is unclear; No time to take advantage of this membership
	The value of membership is unclear; No longer bears any resemblance to what I taught for 38 years.
	Retiring after 38 years of teaching!
	Retired from teaching gc, and can't make it to annual or regional conferences
	Not enough services to help me advance professionally; The value of membership is unclear; Visual communication design is only an aftert..
	Forgot to renew

Figure 4 – Data from non-renewal survey 2018. n=9. Higher values are better for all scales (i.e. 1–5)..

Co-locating with other conferences was also discussed. Would it be possible to co-locate a GCEA conference with a conference like SGIA or PhotoshopWorld or one of the Tech-ed conferences? We already co-locate with PrintEd. We have also co-located with the International Circle (IC) https://www.hdm-stuttgart.de/international_circle conference at Cal Poly. We think co-location offers some advantages, particularly when a host institution is interested in doing so. However, the timing of other conferences often makes it prohibitive to do so.

We find value in surveying members. Perhaps the board might embark on a comprehensive fact-finding mission from both active members and those who do not regularly go to our conference.

Committee members find the conference to generally be inspiring and professionally rewarding.

Financing a conference host is tricky. The objective is to keep the cost affordable. Most University Conference Services help the host to build a budget for the conference. But like any budgeting process, projecting the right number of attendees is critical. Currently, the association's financial liability for a conference is limited to a $1,500 startup loan. Further, the conference agreement for most conferences provides 70% of conference proceeds be returned to GCEA. These proceeds are intended to be used for the Paul D Von Holtz Conference Incentive Awards.

We acknowledge that some Universities do their own fundraising for their conference. We realize that in many cases, there simply will not be conference proceeds because the conference runs in a deficit or the host-institution raises their support to cover costs. When budgeting, we should not anticipate surplus proceeds. It seems that many boards assume there are conference proceeds and budget that into the revenue picture.

Visual Communications Journal

We think it is professional and a wonderful asset to our members. Having a peer-reviewed journal in our field is extremely helpful. However, we recommend some changes to the Visual Communications Journal. We think it should become an online journal with only one annual printed compilation. We recommend that the journal itself continue to be published twice per year but it be in an online format for both issues, with a compilation edition sent to members annually. We believe this would be beneficial for two reasons. First, it would save us some production and mailing money. Second, when it is published, it would be a little larger, to carry some weight. While this may seem trivial, we believe it would actually increase in its perception as a rigorous academic journal. The Journal of Technology Studies was offered as a model: https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/

Conference Incentive Awards

The Paul D. Von Holtz Conference Incentive Award is designed to offer an incentive for members (or perspective members) to attend their first GCEA annual conference. Many current members are former recipients of this program to attend their first conference. According to our Administrative Handbook, it was established with proceeds from the 1976 conference. The Administrative Handbook has specific guidelines on how much money may be allocated each year for incentives.

We recommend the BOD revisit the funding process of this program. We have seen that we continue to borrow money from our investment accounts to pay for this program. Since conference proceeds come and go, we recommend a new approach be established so that no more than 50% of the balance in Category 320 - Conference Proceeds may be allocated to incentive grants for a given year (see Table 5). One member suggested only offering ½ off conference fees for incentives. It was also discuss considering a second-year incentive to encourage recipients to attend a conference two-years in a row. Another idea was to offer an incentive for a mentor to recruit conference attendees.

Table 5 – Sample of recommended process for allocating amount of money to be used for conference incentives.

Balance in 320 - Conference Proceeds	No more than _____to be allocated for conference incentive awards in that fiscal year.
$5000	$2500
$2500	$1250

The committee also would like to see some follow-up take place with incentive recipients. At a minimum, the recipient should be asked to complete a follow-up survey. Ideally, personal follow-up should take place by either the Director of Member Services, the President or by appointed board members. Another idea is to require a follow-up project be completed to receive all funding. It doesn't have to be a big project but maybe something that would promote involvement in the association. Perhaps each recipient should be required to submit a reflection article for The Communicator.

Regional Conferences

Regional conferences are a great way to connect members in a region. We have no specific recommendations for Regional Conferences.

Gutenberg Awards

Feedback from the committee is that we need more and better Gutenberg Awards entries. One member suggested to make a downloadable flyer/poster PDF for instructors to print out and post in their labs. Further, we suggest we offer 5 "best of shows" (Jr. High, High School, Voc School, CC, Univ). However, we do not recommend offering monetary prizes.

We also suggest revisiting the different categories. By looking at the previous three years of entries, we can see if categories need adjusting. In general, it was suggested that additional categories be established in the non-print areas and some categories may be able to be combined in the print-focused categories. Also, since some instructors enter student work, it was suggested that an instructor might be able to upload a spreadsheet, instead of requiring individual entries. We acknowledge this may not be feasible.

GC Week Poster

This committee recommends we move away from a printing theme for the GC Week Poster design year after year. We acknowledge that Printing Week was started to celebrate printing, in

connection with Ben Franklin's birthdate. If we as an organization are broadening our scope, we need to do the same in our programming. We recommend going to even and odd years focusing on substrate-themed designs and screen-themed designs or merely opening the competition to include any form of mass communication.

Scout Merit Badge

We have no specific recommendations for the Scout Merit Badges.

Associate Members

We have no specific recommendations for Associate Members.

GCEA Webinars

GCEA webinars were initiated this year, with four webinars offered. Webinar attendance was very poor. However, archiving the webinars helps to build our library of resources for members. Webinars are also relatively easy to do (assuming the person providing the webinar has content already developed). Very little preparation is needed, should the BOD want to put additional emphasis on this as a value-added service.

Other Member Services

Among the areas we think new offerings can be developed to increase membership value, includes a series of resources to immediately help classroom instructors modernize their offerings, particularly with high-interest projects. The first things we recommend is to develop a Top 5 handout of new technologies/projects. The premise is that a teacher could take this resource and over the course of a year or two, completely reinvent their class with "cool stuff". Ideally the projects would be under $500 each (or some minimal amount). It could include things like:

- Sublimation
- Hydrographics
- RFID/NFC - printed electronics/Arduino/integrating tech with graphics
- Mobile prototyping
- Programming fundamentals using Python
- 3D printing
- AR - Augmented Reality
- Vinyl wraps/Clings
- Lenticular
- T-shirt printing with decorative heat transfer
- Key chains and other swag give away
- Heat/foil transfer vinyl
- Mobile UX/UI

This list is not exhaustive and the BOD would want to put together an Ad Hoc group to develop the first Top 5 list, but the premise is to give resources to instructors on new, innovative ways to transform their classroom. Ideally, a new Top 5 list would come out each year. We suggest over

time developing a mix of Top 5 lists so that instructors can download different lists based on interest or class topic. It was thought that a topic-focused working session could be conducted at a conference to help jumpstart one or more Top-5 lists.

One member also suggested that GCEA provide resources for sample curricula and sample quizzes/tests.

When deciding which member services to emphasize, we broke our offerings into quadrants of a matrix. When looking at Figure 5, most fall into low resource/low impact or high resource/high impact. We are concerned that we need better follow-up for conference incentives and also better financial management around conference incentives. We also believe that Project Exchange can be moved over to the high impact category by increasing the resources there. Webinars could also be move to higher impact if the BOD wanted to pursue that direction.

High resource/low impact	High resources/high impact
• *Conference Incentive Awards when recipient does not engage.*	• Annual Conference • Regional Conferences • VC Journals • Gutenberg Awards • Service Awards ($) • *Conference Incentive Awards when recipient engages.*
Low resource/low impact	Low resource/high impact
• Scout Merit Badge • **Project Exchange ⇒** • Associate Members • *Webinars ⇒*	• GC Week Poster

Figure 5 – Matrix of association resource consumption (money, people's time, etc.) relative to impact to members. Note that we recommend working to move Project Exchange over to high impact through diligence. Also, we remain concerned with the high financial impact conference incentive awards have and would like to explore options to achieve lasting benefit for the investment.

One member suggested developing a document focused on the Graphic Communication Education 2030, modeled after AIGA Designer 2025: Why Design Education Should Pay Attention to Trends. See Appendix A.

We also recommend collaborations with like-minded groups and organizations. Below we discuss cross-marketing with various organizations as a means to reach potential members. Beyond cross-marketing, we see design research or technology-research opportunities with other groups, including but not limited to the International Association for Packaging Research Institutes (IAPRI) and PlusPublic (or +Public). PlusPublic is an organization focused on community communication and design. RJ Thompson of Youngstown State University developed this corporation (essentially non-profit) to assist municipal governments (cities) around the country to improve their community development and branding efforts, through academic partnerships. PlusPublic is interested in collaborating with GCEA and its members to work together to help link academic and public interests, through design research. We see these types of initiatives as positive for member scholarship as well as reaching new constituencies.

NextGen GCEA

We need to be realistic. We will not grow as an association if we continue to serve printing instructors only. Name changes alone do not make us a new organization. We need to commit our association resources to offering meaningful interaction design education resources if we really wish to grow. We need to fully transition to NextGen GCEA. We changed our name but we need to be serious about attracting members from other graphics disciplines. We have a unique opportunity because there is not currently an association who is providing resources for the UX/UI interaction design community, as well as web and mobile development.

We have two audiences for UX/UI interaction design: 1) graphics instructors needing new skill development; 2) UX/UI instructor who need advanced programming topics. We need to offer advanced offerings in these topics, not just introductory programming. We need to work diligently to build our resources with more advanced topics.

In many ways, the BOD is limited in its ability to direct programming as we rely so heavily on host institutions for developing conferences programming. We recommend the BOD do the following things:

✦ Encourage all conference hosts to have multiple strong tracks in interaction design and UX/UI.
✦ Identify one or more future conferences where these topics will be the primary focus of the entire conference, with the intention of jump starting NextGen GCEA. This should be in conjunction with a comprehensive advertising approach so we can leverage this conference with a new member campaign.
✦ Identify and encourage connections between GCEA and NextGen GCEA (print-only vs print & screen). What does print education offer interaction design education? What does interaction design education offer print education? These connections will allow us to do more than developing two distinct member profiles under one association name.

We can see a number of topics being relevant to both of these member sets. Assuming we have two personas – substrate-based members and screen-based members – we believe there are numerous things that are common among them, including:

✦ Data-centric
✦ Adobe Creative Cloud users
✦ Color theory and color management
✦ Integrated marketing communications (cross-channel)
✦ User experience design
✦ Resource estimating
✦ Scripting and programming
✦ Design principles
✦ Workflow
✦ Project management
✦ Etc.

We see ample opportunities were content can be made relevant to both persona. Of course, we can also see ample opportunities for the development of highly-specialized content for just one group. Currently we have substantial (though perhaps dated) content for print on our web site. We recommend the BOD put emphasis on developing content for screen-based graphics to build the attraction for new members.

We believe SGIA is also an ally for GCEA. Not only because they are strong supporters (including providing a member of this committee), but also because they represent strong and high-interest technologies that our members benefit from integrating in their classrooms.

Growing Membership

Do we want to grow our membership? That is a realistic question that board members should seriously consider. Small organizations are fine. We could choose not to grow and rather strengthen our focus on print graphics. If choose that direction, we need to cut our expenses, as we have repeatedly pulled from our reserves, which is unsustainable.

Perhaps we do want to grow our membership. The reasons we might want to is so that we can have more resources to offer more services and be a larger, more impactful organization. So how do we grow?

We need three things to sustain growth, in this order:

- Strong leadership & strategy
- Strong value propositions
- Strong marketing

We recommend the BOD put together an Ad Hoc group to focus on building educational resources in the area of Interaction Design/UX/UI/Mobile/Digital Marketing. We believe strengthening our project exchange resources, webinars, as well as conference programming, will allow us to focus on marketing our organization to a unique population. We believe we can promote NextGen GCEA outside of traditional graphic arts programs to attract a larger member-base. We can draw potential members by strengthening technical content on our site, including basics of user experience design, prototyping and software programming.

As we strengthen our technical content, we become more effective at recruiting new members. We then focus on marketing these new resources.

Member Communications

Communication is critical to keep our members informed and position GCEA in "front of mind". We want members to remain engaged with us, beyond our annual conference. We currently use the following channels of communications:

- Our mailed *Communicator* newsletter
- The Monthly Memo email
- Our website
- Other occasional informational emails
- Social media channels include: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn (others?)

- ✦ Occasional other postal mailings including conference marketing, invoicing and election mailings.

Communication Strategy and Messaging

Our communication approach is focused on reminding members of our value proposition and strategically connecting with them to increase member affinity with GCEA. Our new Director of Communication will develop a comprehensive messaging strategy for marketing and general communication. The Communication Director will work closely with our Member Services Director to ensure coordinated content planning and deployment.

We recommend the development of three contact lists:

- ✦ Current members
- ✦ Lapsed members
- ✦ Prospective members

We believe the development of these lists is very important. If a reliable list is available for purchase, it may be a wise investment. However, these specific lists may not be available for purchase and must be developed internally through acquiring data from state education offices and the like. We think this is a significant effort for us to adequately market GCEA and recommend attention be given to list development.

We also need a digital repository for board members to access and edit current working documents. This is important for BOD continuity. Further we need a password strategy so that in the event of an untimely accident, we have access to GCEA digital assets. We recommend the BOD develop a password and digital asset strategy for storing and updating working documents.

Why should someone join GCEA?

The reasons need to be articulated and communicated effectively. Developing appropriate messaging is important to communicate our value proposition to members. When asked this question to this committee, responses included:

- ✦ Curriculum development, project ideas and curricular examples
- ✦ Ideation - inspiration
- ✦ Hands-on - actually do it in a lab at a school
- ✦ Networking – important early in career
- ✦ Finding a collaborator - research partners
- ✦ Friendship – important but maybe less than in year's past due to lifestyles
- ✦ Professional development credit (job requirement)
    - o i.e. Pennsylvania Act 48 credits
- ✦ Recruitment (staffing, student recruitment)
- ✦ The annual conference

We recommend that various ways of communicating these benefits are needed. This might include YouTube testimonials of how the conference impacted a member (conference incentive award recipients, for example).

We also should seek opportunities to collaborate with other associations, cross-marketing each other. We may want to consider swapping advertisement in our Monthly Memo with like-minded groups, such as TAGA or tech-ed groups.

We have not been particularly strong at issuing press releases in recent years. We recommend that we reinstitute this practice. It would be helpful for a GCEA PR template to be developed and available to the President-Elect. If a simple template is available, along with a list of current publications, it would improve the process and make it easier to deploy press releases.

Web, Monthly Memo & Social Media

Our current website was developed in 2012(?). While it could use refreshing, we do not recommend a new website, due to the quantity of information and resources committed to the existing site. We recommend increasing the resources available to members on our site and then building social media content to drive traffic to the site. One committee member suggested placing a Twitter-feed on our site.

We see our Monthly Memo email as an important way to communicate with our members. This 12Xs per year newsletter is effective at conveying happenings to our members. We recommend developing a workflow for managing content.

Social Media needs more attention in GCEA. Our Communications Director may develop a team focused on content planning and deployment across channels. We recommend weekly, multiple messages going out on different channels. We envision a team with different individuals managing different channels.

One suggestion was to use themed days for social media. SGIA has "Tech Tip Tuesday." We can do "Teaching Tip Tuesday" or equivalent. Further, we can share posts from other associations. Ideally, we would generate original content three to four times per week and then share like-minded content from friends. BOD officers may need to help generate content. One potential pattern might look like:

✦ Mondays - Share - PIA
✦ Tuesdays - Share - SGIA
✦ Wednesday - Share - FTA
✦ Thursday - Share - etc.

Alternatively, we might develop themed weeks or months, like:

✦ January is Project Exchange Month
✦ February is CTE Month
✦ March is Packaging Month - share related to packaging (concept)
✦ Etc.

Beginning at the Ryerson conference, we incorporated the Whova GCEA Conference App into the conference experience. This was a terrific way to engage conference attendees and to build a sense of community. We encourage the use of conference apps as means to help connect attendees in various ways. Alternatively, if the BOD or Communication Director thinks using a traditional social media channel instead, that is fine.

While we do not see resources available for purchasing a content planning and workflow tool, we think it may be possible to acquire a donation of a tool like DivvyHQ or equivalent https://divvyhq.com/ for content planning and deployment. We recommend the use of a tool to strengthen planning and deploying our campaigns.

Leadership Development

Leadership development is critical for the future of GCEA. We need individuals who are willing and proficient in providing leadership to the organization. As a volunteer organization, we rely on members to provide direction. We believe student involvement in GCEA is positive, as these are our future educators and association leaders. However, we caution the BOD in sponsoring students monetarily, as we focus on balancing our budget. We do however, support "investing" in younger GCEA members.

We brainstormed the following reasons someone might choose to serve in leadership with GCEA:

- Be a part of the decision-making process
- Professional development acknowledgment
- "Give back"
- Leadership development
- Builds ego
- Logical progression from member to presenter to leader
  - Committee assignments
  - Committee chairperson
  - Regional VP
  - Director
  - President
- Satisfaction about being involved
- Mentorship from "older" members

We discussed how to incentivize leadership. One member suggested conference discounts for officers. While that sounds attractive, it really isn't feasible in our current financial position. Further, we want to be cautious to incentivize people in serving for the right reasons.

Another idea was to work out a "badge" system where members can earn digital badges for various types of service, which show on their member profile on our website. These could include badges for being on a committee, presenting at a conference, submitting to project exchange, etc. This is intriguing and we recommend exploring this approach further. At a minimum, we can offer a place for people to list their service credit.

We would be negligent to not mention what a tremendous tool the Administrative Handbook is. If someone wants to lead, the tools are there. We encourage the BOD to continue to update, refer to and use the GCEA Administrative Handbook.

GCEA Awards

Awards are an important part of GCEA. Our association is full of members and officers who deserve recognition for their contributions to the profession and the association. And our

committee thought of additional ways to recognize and encourage the involvement of members and industry. We can envision awards promoting leadership development, with tiered levels of distinction: Emerging leader (under 40), Distinguish GC Educator, etc.

The committee suggested that we might set-up a tiered service award structure. This could include an emerging leader (early career) lapel pin for recognizing younger members for service. The top level would be identified as Distinguished Graphic Communication Educator, reserved for only the top 10% of the organization. An example model is available at ITEEA https://www.iteea.org/Awards/dte.aspx These awards could simply involve a small lapel pin or equivalent.

Further, we see other potential awards, related to industry support recognition. One example would give recognition for an industry supplier, nominated by members for support for a school or university. This award would not need a monetary investment, other than a plaque. The advantage of this award is that it gets school supporters recognition, as well as exposes these suppliers to GCEA.

Overall, we find the award structure of GCEA to be somewhat confusing, particularly the distinction between the Hartman/Dennis, Box Cox, and Kagy/Prust awards, as well as the PIA Award of Excellence. Table 6 summarizes current GCEA services awards. We recommend providing a clearer distinction between Hartman/Dennis, Bob Cox, and Kagy/Prust.

We recommend the Bob Cox award be awarded less frequently or have a reduced monetary prize. This is a way to reduce costs as we build membership. See the last column in Table 6 for a summary of suggested changes.

As discussed in the section titled Conference Incentive Awards, we see the value of these awards in promoting attendance for new members. However, we have some concerns on the expense these awards, particularly when minimal follow-up is involved. The original intent was to fund these awards from the previous conference proceeds. Frequently, funding comes from the general budget. Refer back to the Conference Incentive Awards section above to see the committee's recommendations.

Table 6 – Summary of current and proposed service awards.

Award Name	Criteria/Purpose	Who is eligible?	Frequency?	Monetary /gift	Possible Change
Hartman/ Dennis Award	GCEA member who has devoted many **years of service** to the Association and, in addition, is nationally recognized through contributions and accomplishments in graphic arts teaching, research and/or service.	Regular GCEA Member (not a current BOD)	Annual award	Plaque	Make a clear distinction between this award and the Bob Cox award.
Kagy/Prust	**Life Achievement** Award is granted by the Graphic Communications Education Association for significant contributions to graphic arts	Educator of Highest Distinction (highly prestigious)	Need not be presented annually since it is	Plaque	Lifetime achievement (top 5%). This should only be presented when a highly deserving

	education and the graphic arts industry.	(not a current BOD)	very prestigious.		recipient is identified.
Sundeen/Simich	Recognize sustaining members who had made highly **significant contributions** to graphic arts education over an extended period of time. The award was not established as an annual award, but rather as an honor that would only be presented to truly outstanding candidates.	Sustaining GCEA Member (not a current BOD)	Need not be presented annually.	Plaque	No change
GCEA Support Award	Presented to a spouse, individual, or significant other of a GCEA member in recognition of the love, support, and encouragement that the recipient has shown over the years to their GCEA member.	Spouse or significant other of GCEA member	(note there is nothing about this award in the Administrative Manual).	Plaque	No change
Bob Cox	Granted by the Graphic Communications Education Association for significant service to the association.	GCEA member (not a current BOD)	Need not be presented annually.	$$ to cover conference costs.	Change this award to reduce financial burden to the association. Perhaps a $100 visa gift card and letter to school administrator? Make a clear distinction between this award and the Hartman/Dennis
PIA Award of Excellence	Recognize those preserving the future of our industry. Education An engraved plaque is presented to the recipient(s) to commemorate their accomplishments.	One GCEA educator and one GCEA industry representative is nominated.	GCEA sends nominations to PIA, who selects the recipient	PIA provides Plaque	
Elmer G. Voigt	This award was replaced by the PIA Award of Excellence	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Proposed National or Local Industry Support Award	*Awarded to industry supplier supporting more than one school.*	*Member nominated*	*Need not be awarded annually.*	*Plaque*	

Financing GCEA

Paying for GCEA initiatives, particularly when the association wants to increase member services, is a challenge. Currently, we have not been effective at managing our long-term financial picture. Membership revenue is decreasing and our expenses are increasing. If you look back at Figure 3, you see that prior to the last two years, our expenses surpassed our revenue for the previous four years. We need to be more strategic in the years ahead to ensure we are not draining our surplus, as we strategize to grow the revenue-side of the association.

Revenue

In 2017, we had 134 regular members, generating $6700 in regular member revenue. That accounts for approximately 30% of our annual budget. In 2006, we had more than 230 regular members and regular member revenues just under $12,000 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Membership revenues, 2006–2017

Clearly, we need more members and/or more revenue per member if we plan to sustain our current level of expenditures (some of which are fixed costs). We suggest the BOD focus on both sides of the equation, raising membership revenue while increasing our value and marketing for new membership.

We recommend an increase in membership dues over the next five years (see Table 7) to increase the level of our regular membership revenue to equal approximately 50% or more of our expenditures, assuming current spending levels (we will focus on cost reduction in the next section). We recommend an equivalent increase in associate membership dues as well.

Table 7 – Recommended path for increasing membership dues.

Year	GCEA Regular Member Dues	Increase in annual revenue at 134 members, based on 2017-18 dues of $50.
Current	$50	$0
2018-19	$75	$3350
2019-20	$75	$3350
2020-21	$75	$3350
2021-22	$95	$6030
2022-23	$95	$6030

We also need to work more at the category we call Sustaining Members, supported by industry partners. In year's past, this has helped our association tremendously by providing extra revenue. It is a little difficult for educators to ask industry partners to support GCEA, mostly because we are already asking them to support our schools and universities financially. Further, our leadership structure rotates this task every year, which reduces its effectiveness.

At various times, individuals take on Sustaining Member development for an extended period of time. This allowed a GCEA member to develop relationships that could span from year to year. Currently, it is the responsibility of the Immediate Past-President to serve as the contact for Sustaining Member recruitment, moving the role every year. We all know that some people are gifted at getting donations and some are not, or simply do not like it. This role is better filled by someone who enjoys the challenge and thrill of "winning" sustaining members. We need an industry development advocate.

Figure 7 shows that our Sustaining Member revenue has fallen off substantially in recent years. To some degree, this may be related to the economic crisis. Conversely, it may also be related to a decline in industry supplier numbers.

We recommend the BOD take a serious look at Sustaining Member development and devise a long-term plan for reinvigorating industry support.
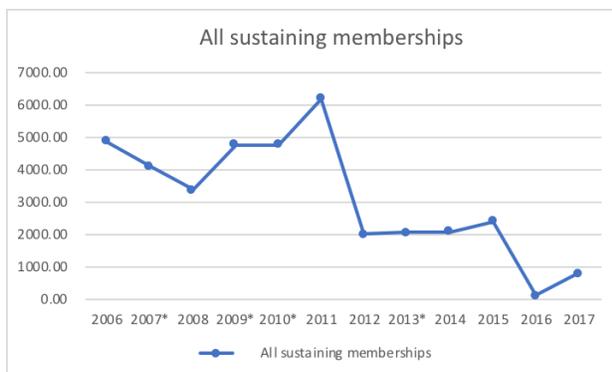

Figure 7 - GCEA Sustaining Member revenue 2006–2017. Note that more than $6000 in revenue was generated in 2011 from industry supporters.

GCEA currently offers a Super-saver membership rate, which allows members to pay for 5 years in advance, for the price of 4 years. Some members and universities prefer to pay this way, as much for convenience as for the price savings. We see it as a value to some members and wish to continue it as long as we put structures in place to assure financial solvency.

We have concerns with the way this process is currently handled, treating all of it as current year revenue with no accounting for future years liability. The preferred way is for our accounting to be adjusted so that we ensure that Super-saver revenue is not spent until the year member services are realized.

We strongly recommend that a separate accounting category be setup to track revenue for future years and not budget the revenue as spendable until the year the expenses for that member are realized. Further, we recommend that the pricing model be changed so that members only save 10%, not 20% when paying using Super-saver. See Table 8.

Expenses

Reducing expenses is important until we see stability and growth in our membership revenue. We are very fortunate those before us were wise enough to established our money market account. We owe it to future generations to leave the association in good financial shape.

Table 8 – Super-saver with new accounting category earmarking funds for future years and saving only 10% by using Super-saver

Year	Regular monthly dues	Spendable revenue in year	Super-saver dues using the 10% discount for all years after current	Spendable revenue in year 1	Revenue earmarked for future years and not spendable in year 1.
Current	$50	$50	$200.00 (20% savings)	$40.00	$160.00
2018-19	$75	$75	$337.50 (10% savings)	$67.50	$270.00
2019-20	$75	$75	$337.50 (10% savings)	$67.50	$270.00
2020-21	$75	$75	$337.50 (10% savings)	$67.50	$270.00
2021-22	$95	$95	$427.50 (10% savings)	$85.50	$342.00
2022-23	$95	$95	$427.50 (10% savings)	$85.50	$342.00

Referring back to Figure 3, we can see that during the period 2012 through 2014, we spent considerably more than we took in. During this timeframe, the BOD purchased rebranding services, developing logo materials and our current customized WordPress website. This purchase required us to transfer funds from our money market to afford these purchases. Since then, we developed a bad habit of continuing to periodically transfer money from our reserves to maintain the same level of spending.

Figure 1 shows our budgeted expenses for 2017-18. You can see the top four expense categories are Awards, Board meetings, Publications and Treasurer, which includes the costs associated with our liability insurance, our annual financial review and our fees for CT Systems, which represents our 503(c)(3) in Delaware.

We have a generous BOD. In 2017, we provided $1100 to fund the Simich Scholarship to a worthy University student. We gave $1800 to Cox service award recipients and another $957.20 to Kagy, Hartman and Sundeen recipients. We further gave $600 to winners of the GC Week Poster contest.

We have budgeted $4000 for conference incentive awards over the past few years. It is a little unclear how much was actually spent from the financial statements on the website. Financial statements need to be revisited to determine actual costs.

As noted in the section titled GCEA Awards, we need to limit the monetary awards to these deserving individuals as we tighten our budget. It is important for the BOD to have a balanced budget, without transferring money from our money market account. We recommend the board consider other options, including rotating these awards to an odd/evening cycle, if needed.

Financial Audit

The BOD made a conscience decision to limit paying for yearly audits and instead switch to a full financial audit only when the Treasurer position changes, typically once every four years. Instead GCEA pays for a financial review each year, due to the costs associated with a full audit (more than $3,000). We support this decision but recommend the BOD is diligent to ensure all financial documents are updated on the website annually for full transparency.

Summary of Plan by Year

The details in this strategic plan require some structure on when to implement them. The BOD has discretion to implement portions or the entire plan in the timing they see appropriate. Table 9 offers a suggested timetable to implementation, based on year. You will notice that the plan is front loaded, with the majority of items being initiated in the first three years. This is intentional to gain momentum.

Table 9 – Summary of steps to complete the strategic plan by year.

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Appoint Ad Hoc group to identify programming and develop interaction design content, focused on NextGen GCEA	Review yearly metrics identified in Table 4 and adjust strategy as needed.	Review yearly metrics identified in Table 4 and adjust strategy as needed.	Review yearly metrics identified in Table 4 and adjust strategy as needed.	Review yearly metrics identified in Table 4 and adjust strategy as needed.
Change BOD titles in Constitution	Continue promoting Project Exchange growth.	Explore conference co-location appropriateness with other professional conferences.	Conduct a survey of members about their interests and needs.	Balance budget without transferring money from reserves.
Propose Mission Statement and Goal changes in Constitution	Explore other project competitions, to determine their appropriateness with Project Exchange collaboration.	Revisit messaging used for promoting GCEA. Develop strong messaging to communicate our values and benefits.	Balance budget without transferring money from reserves.	Continue previous years strategies as needed.
Adopt the 5-year goals, with 3-year and 5-year KPI metrics identified in Table 4	Conduct a survey of members about their interests and needs.	Explore cross-advertising strategies with groups like TAGA.	Initiate an increase in member dues to $95.	
Adopt changes in funding for Paul D. Von Holtz Conference Incentive award, per Table 5.	Transform VCJ to online journal with annual compiled print volume.	Social media team develops content themes around days of week or months of year.	Continue previous years strategies as needed.	

Initiate a follow-up process for incentive award recipients.	Initiate changes in GC Week Poster to alternate print theme with screen-based themes.	Leadership development process is identified with training available.		
Director of Communications appoints media channel team members and develops content planning workflow.	Investigate content planning and deployment tools, like DivvyHQ.	Explore service awards to determine if changes in focus might promote more service.		
Develop a PR template for use in quickly releasing press releases.	Identify sources for Prospective members list, to join current members list and lapsed members list. Develop lists if not available for purchase	Balance budget without transferring money from reserves.		
Revisit service awards, with an eye to reducing the financial impact on GCEA until we are on better financial grounds.	Director of Communication develops password and repository strategy so ensure better availability and continuity as board members change.	Utilize three lists to develop communications strategies for lapsed members and potential members.		
Establish accounting procedures to ensure Super-saver purchases get earmarked for future years per Table 8	Explore badges for web profile related to recognizing achievements to determine if this is an appropriate strategy.	Continue previous years strategies as needed.		
Change the Super-saver rate to save 10%, rather than 20%.	Balance budget without transferring money from reserves.			
Address the best way to handle Sustaining Member development and services per Table 8.	Develop first Top 5 Handout.			
Initiate an increase in member dues to $75.	Continue previous year strategies as needed.			

Balance budget without transferring money from reserves.				
Explore research/development collaboration with organizations like +Public				

In conclusion, we submit this plan as a strategy to keep GCEA a vibrant and exciting professional association for years to come. We believe in GCEA. It has a great history, and an even brighter future. We put forth this proposal for your consideration.

Source Cited: Willey, E. (n.d.). Records of the International Graphic Arts Education Association (IGAEA), 1922–2014 | Dr. JoAnn Rayfield Archives at Illinois State University. Retrieved May 25, 2018, from https://archivefindingaids.library.illinoisstate.edu/?p=collections/findingaid&id=102&q=&rootcontentid=22158