

**Assembly 2007  
Peer Session Report**

**Chairs and Council Members**

**December 6-8, 2007  
Baltimore, MD**

John Rohman, chair of the Maine Arts Commission, emceed the chair and council member peer group session during *Assembly 2007* in Baltimore, MD. Lu Ellsworth, chair of the Virginia Commission on the Arts; Everett McCorvey, vice-chair of the Kentucky Arts Council; and Laura Smith, chief advancement officer for NASAA, helped facilitate the presentations and discussions throughout the two-day session.

**Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Overview of the Federal -State Partnership**

Tom Birch, NASAA's Legislative Counsel

Overview of the state-federal partnership and introduction of Eileen Mason

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**Special Guest: Eileen Mason, Senior Deputy Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts**

Successful advocacy strategies and how the states and the NEA can work together

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**Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Making the Most of *Assembly 2007*—What Have We Learned?**

Chairs and council members compared notes on what they learned at *Assembly 2007*:

- Invite statewide Poetry Out Loud winner to council meetings
- Tour Poetry Out Loud winner around state
- Market arts education as a lifelong solution to entrenched societal problems. We can't afford NOT to fund the arts.
- State arts agencies need to collaborate more with other arts educators in order to broaden and deepen networks for impact.
- Reach beyond our arts audiences to those who don't know what we do—expand our public value.

- Think differently about our international work—the arts help us understand our place in the global culture/community.
- Famous people and celebrities can help our advocacy.
- Community foundations can be good partners in promoting and advancing the work we do through our agencies—get to know them.
- It's important to balance and integrate NEA initiatives into state programs and with local constituents.

### **Council Engagement: Strategies for Success**

*Moderated by Everett McCorvey, Vice-Chair, Kentucky Arts Council*

### **Case Studies: New Jersey and Wyoming**

*Carol Ann Herbert, Chair, New Jersey State Council on the Arts*

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*Bruce Richardson, Chair, Wyoming Arts Council*

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### **Strategies to Strengthen Board Engagement:**

- Do an arts activity at council meetings.
- Make council meetings community events.
- Create time for board bonding, i.e., have a dinner or some other social time around meetings where council members can get to know each other
- Provide orientation to new council members.
- Provide ongoing board member education.
- Establish a culture of expectation. Make it clear that council members are expected to do more than just attend meetings. They need to also account for activities and contacts they undertake between meetings. Embedding expectations into council culture can provide stability to balance the “churn” effect.
- Educate grantees about your council – too many grantees do not understand the work of their state arts agency.
- Learn where your council's money comes from, not just where it goes.