

On A Mission – Part I

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Congratulations to now Past-President Mike Golemo for orchestrating the 89th Annual Conference that was full of rich and memorable performances. Kudos to every ensemble that performed; each group of musicians should feel proud of its inspiring work.

President Russ Kramer is poised and on the road to creating a landmark conference in 2017. It's a big one – number 90! The good news is there's no pressure to pull off a "surprise" conference; we already have it on our calendars for May 11 – 13, 2017.

Before embarking on the "meat" of this article, please accept a genuine thank-you for the opportunity to serve the IBA. Out of respect for the many outstanding music educators and visionaries in our state who have, and will, serve IBA admirably, I humbly commit to work hard to honor the organization and its members.

On A Mission

With the support of President Kramer and the IBA Board of Directors, and as we approach the landmark conference number 90, we will be using the *President-Elect's Thoughts* column and other venues to explore what the IBA does, what it wants to do, and who it wants to be for the next 10, 20, or even 90 years. We will engage the entire membership in this process through the use of conversation, feedback, questioning, and brainstorming, in person and via technology.

The goal is to hone, refine, craft and/or affirm IBA's official mission statement and allow an exceptional, re-energized mission statement to serve as a guidepost for decision-makers in the coming years and place ownership over the direction of IBA in the hands of its membership.

Many of IBA's members are teachers of the best discipline there is. Through our experience, we know that students benefit from band in part because as members of ensembles they have a concrete purpose – and even more importantly – a common purpose. Similarly, an organization such as the IBA can benefit from occasionally reflecting on its purpose. Three such benefits might be:

- to direct the energy of the organization on what it determines is of greatest value
- to tell others who we are, what we do, and why we do it
- to unite our members, and draw in new members, through a tangible common purpose

In the coming days, the membership will be offered the opportunity to reflect on the IBA, its activities and its mission. Together, we'll contemplate questions such as:

- What have been important landmark moments in IBA's history that have left lasting impact on the organization and the state of bands in Iowa?

- What does the IBA do well?
- What are the IBA's most important roles, purposes, and activities?
- What new or evolving realities are waiting for us tomorrow, in a year, or 10 years down the road – and how can we shape them?
- How can the IBA best serve the needs of its members, and in turn Iowa's great bands?

What then?

In *On A Mission – Part II* we will organize the answers to those questions and share the resulting knowledgebase with the membership. We will explore the characteristics of great mission statements. We will re-engage the members in a period of brainstorming to seek as many *potential* mission statements that represent the important work of the IBA. In true brainstorming fashion, all ideas will be welcomed and encouraged, from the serious, to the whimsical, crazy, and even humorous ones. Any seed of an idea might grow into the perfect statement that elegantly sums up the work and purpose of the IBA. We will sort, sift, and narrow these statements to find the cream of the crop – and every member will be invited on the journey every step of the way.

By the time we meet again in *On A Mission – Part III* we anticipate having the best of the best mission statements for the membership to review. With good fortune the membership will select the statement to publicly define the work and purpose of the IBA for the next generation.

Finally, in *On A Mission – Part IV*, our new guidepost will be revealed and celebrated.

Let's enjoy the journey. Safe travels.