

## **Ensuring COSCA's Relevance into the Future**

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### **3/23/19 Board Discussion**

#### **Recap<sup>1</sup>**

Prior to the day-long meeting, the facilitator requested responses of meeting participants (see list in Attachment A) by email to the following four questions:

1. Do you have any concerns about the continuing relevance/value of COSCA to all its members? Please explain.
2. What works/doesn't work about the process of identifying/responding to new issues and assigning them to a standing committee or new task force? Could the process be more effective/transparent? Please explain.
3. Does the current path to COSCA leadership positions and other positions of high visibility (e.g., Chairs of Task Forces or Rapid Response Working Groups) need improvement? Please explain what you think is/is not working.
4. Are there methods of communicating with the COSCA membership that are not being used or are not being used to full potential? If yes, please describe.

During the meeting, the Board reviewed the seniority/experience level of current COSCA members and discussed each of the four questions in-depth (see slides in Attachment B). At the end of the meeting, the Board agreed to the following actions:

1. Keep/collect additional information about the membership to better understand trends.
  - Save an electronic version of the "seniority of service" table prepared for each annual meeting. Because the table changes frequently throughout the year as members leave and new members join, the practice has been to update the old table with the new information rather than saving every new version of the table. The Board agreed to keep an annual version of the table for comparisons over time (e.g., the number of new members each year, the level of experience of members).
  - Conduct exit interviews. Ask the designated mentor for each departing COSCA member to conduct an exit interview to determine why the member is resigning (e.g., retiring, leaving for another position, change in chief justice). The President of COSCA will determine who will develop the exit interview questions for review by the Board.
2. Make minor edits to the COSCA mission statement and submit to the Board for review prior to the annual meeting. (See suggested edits in Attachment C.)

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<sup>1</sup> This summary was prepared following the March 23, 2019 meeting of the COSCA Board and guests. Questions or comments should be directed to Pamela Casey at [pcasey@ncsc.org](mailto:pcasey@ncsc.org).

3. Implement a process for identifying key topics for COSCA's focus. The intent is not to limit committees to the key topics but to identify a few topics each year that several committees might be interested in pursuing. Major components of the process are:
  - The President solicits topic ideas from the membership via email within a short time of the Spring Board meeting.
  - The topics are reviewed by the Board and themes/groupings are identified if ideas overlap.
  - The topics/topic groupings are discussed during the "Hot Topics" session of the mid-year meeting with the membership.
  - The Board and Chairs of the committees meet following the "Hot Topics" discussion and determine topic priorities for the year. (Note—one or more committees may opt to work on a topic even though it is not chosen as a priority topic for the year.) The Board and Chairs also discuss whether a separate Task Force or Rapid Response Work Group is needed to bring in outside stakeholders and expertise.
  - The Board assigns each priority to a specific committee which serves as the Coordinator. Any committees working on the topic should inform the Coordinating Committee to ensure work is not duplicated or contradictory across committees and to inform the Coordinating Committee of expertise from other committees that is available if needed.
  - COSCA informs CCJ of its topic priorities and asks for CCJ input on the topics and on other topics CCJ is interested in discussing.
  
4. Provide more opportunities to engage new members and develop future leaders:
  - Ask members why they are interested in serving on specific committees—not just their preferences for committees. The additional information will be helpful to the President in assigning members to committees with which they have interest/expertise they can grow. This can be done annually with committee preference requests.
  - When asking about committee preferences, also ask about their interest in serving in a leadership role. This could be done annually; would require an additional request this year since committee preferences have already been requested.
  - Post opportunities to serve on task forces, rapid response work groups and other special interest committees that come up on an ad hoc basis to the COSCA listserv and allow members to volunteer their services. Provide information on this process in the new member orientation.
  - Include description of the Board nomination and selection process in the new member orientation. To increase transparency, remind the membership of the process when the Nominating Committee presents its report at the Business Meeting.

- To help build a bullpen of future SCA leaders, explore efforts to engage state AOC staff in specific areas (e.g., HR, financial, technology) to share their expertise across states. NCSC will provide current list of staff listservs in specific areas to begin this process.
5. Enhance communication across the organization by:
- Consider options to extend conference meeting time. This could be raised during the “Hot Topics” discussion at the 2019 mid-year meeting.
  - Create a non-public area of the COSCA website for COSCA member information such as contact information and listserv surveys that are searchable (see NACM website for example). This request should be referred to the NCSC VP for External Affairs.
  - Convene webinars on specific issues. The President can ask whether any members have a best practice or strategy that worked in their state that they would like to share with others. This also would provide an opportunity for members to increase their visibility in the organization for future leadership positions.
  - Create a glossary of acronyms to add to the orientation materials.

**Attachment A**  
**Meeting Participants**

**Board Members:**

Sally Holewa, North Dakota, President

J. Joseph Baxter, Rhode Island, President-elect

Laurie Dudgeon, Kentucky, Vice President

Patricia Gabel, Vermont

Pamela Harris, Maryland

Jeff Shorba, Minnesota

Greg Sattizahn, South Dakota

David Slayton, Texas

Robin Sweet, Nevada (responded to pre-meeting questions but did not participate in meeting)

**Guests:**

Robert N. Baldwin, NCSC

David Byers, Arizona

Paul Delosh, NACM

Kathy Lloyd, Missouri

Mary McQueen, NCSC

Arthur Pepin, New Mexico

Shelley Rockwell, NCSC

Marion Warren, North Carolina (ret.)

**Facilitator:**

Pamela Casey, NCSC

# ENSURING COSCA RELEVANCE

Informal Board Discussion  
March 23, 2019  
Jekyll Island, GA

2

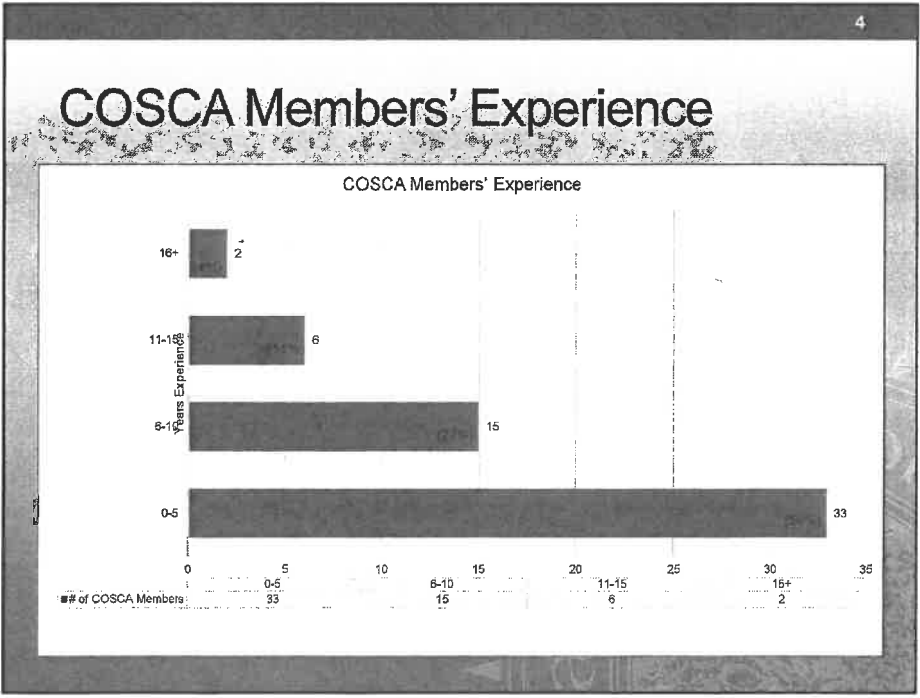
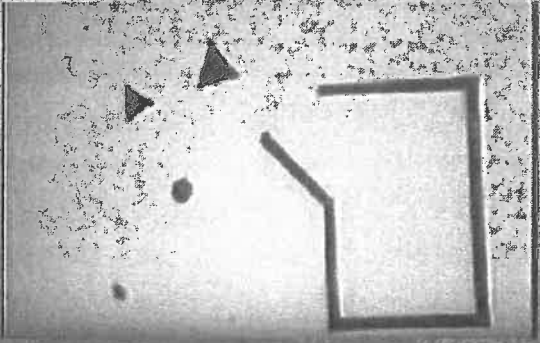
## Roadmap (Tentative)

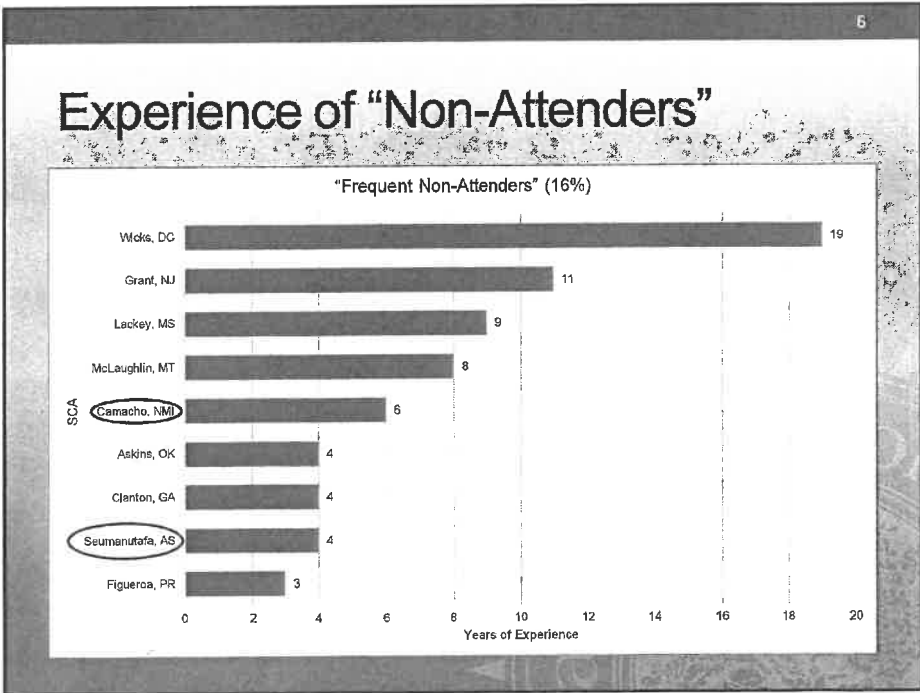
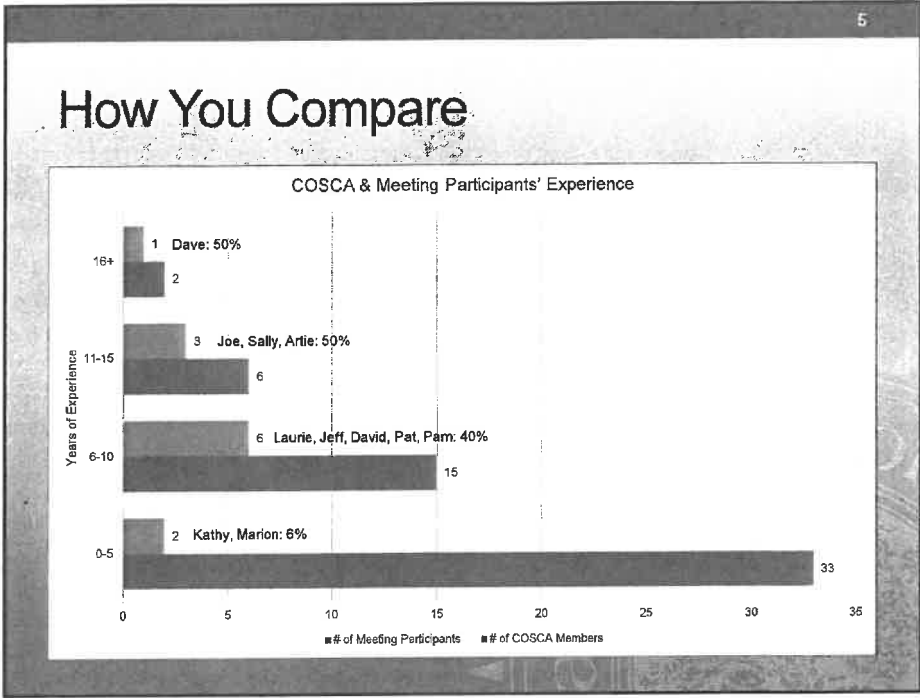
- Overview: Member experience & possible scenarios for future
- Continuing relevance of mission statement
- Concerns about prioritizing topics
- Developing the next generation of COSCA leaders
- Enhancing communications with members
- Planning for next steps

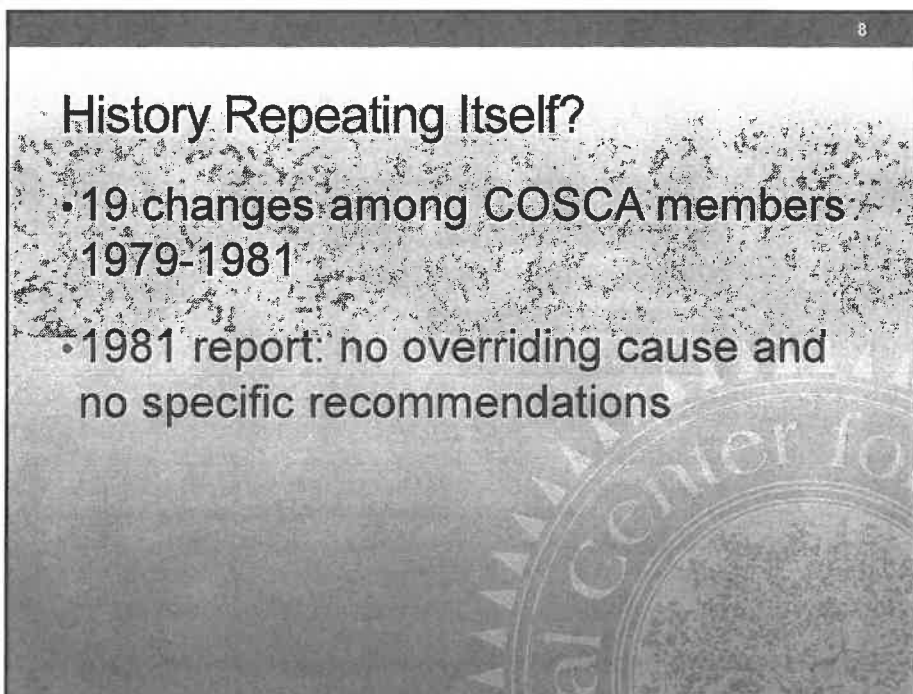
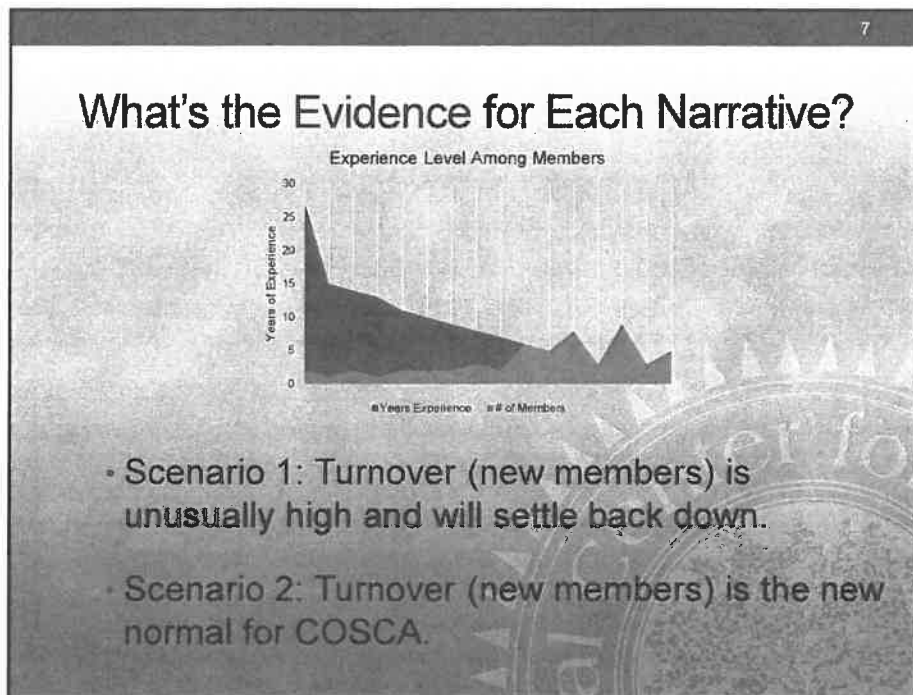
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## Heider & Simmel Animation

What is this?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTNmLt7QX8E>





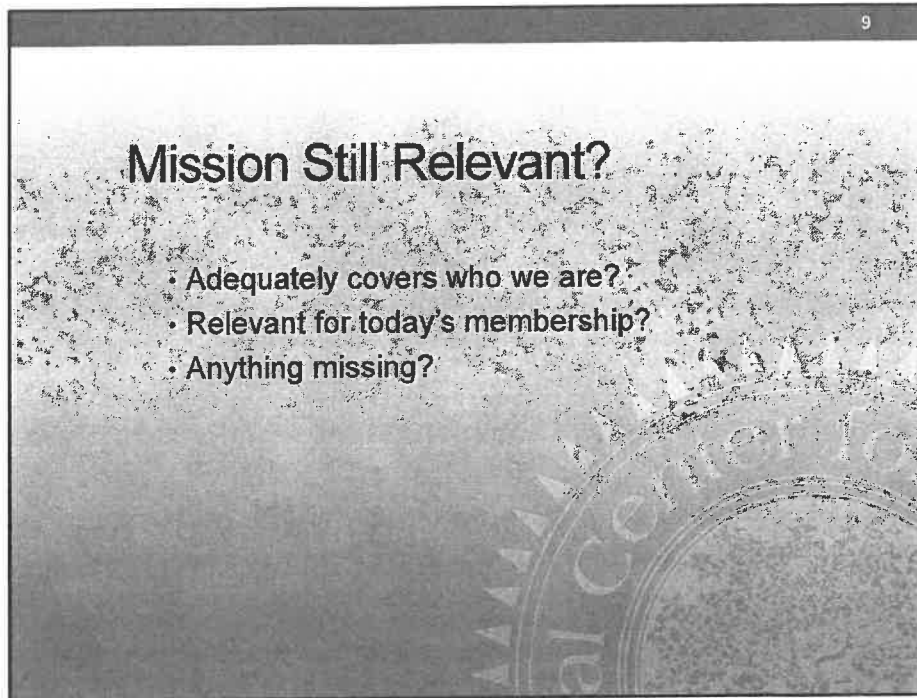




9

## Mission Still Relevant?

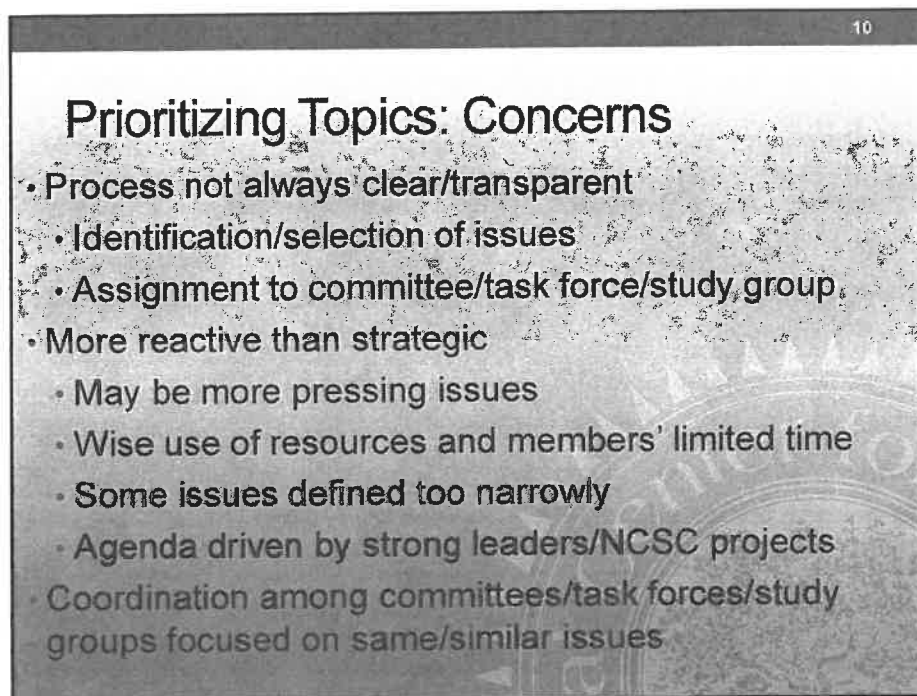
- Adequately covers who we are?
- Relevant for today's membership?
- Anything missing?



10

## Prioritizing Topics: Concerns

- Process not always clear/transparent
- Identification/selection of issues
- Assignment to committee/task force/study group
- More reactive than strategic
  - May be more pressing issues
  - Wise use of resources and members' limited time
  - Some issues defined too narrowly
  - Agenda driven by strong leaders/NCSC projects
- Coordination among committees/task forces/study groups focused on same/similar issues

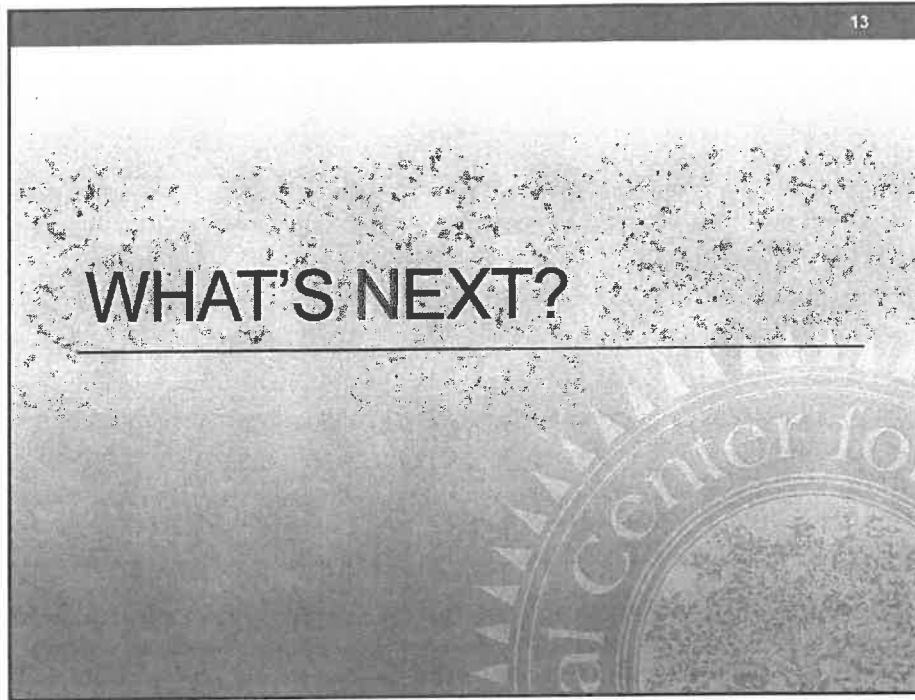


## Developing Next Generation of Leaders

- Improve transparency of process for selecting Board, Committee Chairs, Task Force/Rapid Response Chairs
- Use Vice-Chair Committee position to build new leaders
- Consider term limits for Committee Chairs
- Encourage more participation by grouping states based on size, budget, staffing, etc. rather than region
- **Ensure Board members plan to be SCA for full Board term**
- Spread appointments across membership
- Post opportunities and allow members to volunteer

## Enhancing Communications

- Explore use of webinars, videoconferencing, teleconferencing to increase communication
- **Use Connected Community for more real time communications and repository for information (e.g., survey results)**
- Accommodate those who cannot travel but want to be involved—it's to COSCA's benefit
- Update web site and make more member-friendly
- **Provide survey questions upfront to ease responding**
- Find method to share committee information that doesn't rise to priority for Business Committee report





## Attachment C

### **COSCA Mission Statement—suggested changes following 3-23-19 meeting**

The mission of the Conference of State Court Administrators is to provide a national forum to assist state court administrators in the development and preservation of a more just, effective, and efficient system of justice, by:

- Identifying and studying issues and, when appropriate, developing policies, principles, and standards relating to the administration of judicial systems.
- Providing an effective network for the exchange of information, ideas, and methods to improve state courts.
- Facilitating cooperation, consultation, and exchange of information by and among organizations directly concerned with court administration.
- Assisting in the formulation and implementation of national issues that affect state courts.
- Establishing and maintaining an organization that is open, inclusive, participatory, dynamic, proactive, and responsive.
- Offering educational opportunities.