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# State of the Association

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# State of the Association

## Abstract

Over the past year, the Visual Resources Association has sustained its dynamism while enhancing its operations. A major milestone was the November integration of a new service into membership management, led by Implementation Manager Meghan Rubenstein with invaluable assistance from Lise Hawkos. The online merch shop, constructed by Maria Nuccilli, broadens member engagement. Core activities continue through workshops, presentations, and small-group gatherings, facilitated by the Regional Workshop Programs, the Summer Educational Institute, the Equitable Action Committee, and the Membership Committee. The association's journal, the *Visual Resources Association Bulletin*, is advancing toward gold-standard open access. Financial support remains active for member projects and conference attendance, with renewed collaboration with ARLIS to sustain the Summer Educational Institute. The Code of Conduct is under review, and the Education Committee has been renamed the Programming Committee to better reflect its scope. The Board also thanks members' participation in the Future Forward Breakfast at the 2025 annual conference and positions the upcoming 2026 virtual conference as an opportunity to grow the community. The speech closes with a call to get involved to sustain VRA's momentum and impact.

## Keywords

Visual Resources Association (VRA), presidential address, State of the Association

## Author Bio

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Editor's Note: The following speech was delivered during the 2026 VRA mid-year business meeting via zoom.

I am happy to report that we have achieved remarkable progress over the last year, while successfully sustaining VRA as a dynamic community.

Last November, we finished the integration of a new service into our membership management. To celebrate this success, we should give a big round of applause to Meghan Rubenstein who led the whole transition as the Implementation Manager. She worked with all stakeholders, from the service provider to group leaders, to the Board, to VRA members. As well, we owe a big "Thank you" to our long-term Membership Services Coordinator and Listserv Manager Lise Hawkos who has supported this transition closely. Her extensive knowledge and experience of the legacy system that we relied on for decades was instrumental to this success.

Another new endeavor is the [online merch shop](#). Members can now engage in a new type of activity. A shout-out to Maria Nuccilli, our social media and Website Content Manager, who single-handedly built the site up.

With the updated membership management system and a new merch site, we are more than ready to expand our community. The virtual format of this year's annual conference offers a great chance to engage with a wider audience. Regarding this, we heard many good ideas from the members during the Future Forward breakfast at the 2025 annual conference. Here I want to say a formal "Thank you" to members who participated in that round of communication.

Though the annual conference stays the largest yearly event, continuous efforts ensure VRA remains a thriving community all year-round. Members can participate in workshops, presentations, and small group gatherings. This is made possible through the work of dedicated groups, including but not limited to the Regional Workshop Programs, the Summer Educational Institute, the Equitable Action Committee, and the Membership Committee. Our journal, the *Visual Resources Association Bulletin*, is moving toward meeting the gold standard for open access journals. The Board also routinely allocates financial resources to fund members' project proposals and supplement expenses for attending annual conferences. This year, the Board has re-established its collaboration with ARLIS to support the Summer Educational Institute, following several rounds of communication.

Recently, the Board also launched a new round of updates to the Code of Conduct. If you have any thoughts regarding this topic, please share them with us. We want to hear from you. The current version of the Code of Conduct is comprehensive and well-written, however, to keep this document relevant and responsive to emerging situations, we need to update it regularly. Communication challenges are bound to occur in any collaborative setting. A robust document that outlines an established protocol for reporting issues is crucial to prevent these challenges from escalating.

Here I also want to announce the renaming of the Education Committee. This is the committee that closely works with the conference planning group to select content for the annual conference. To better highlight the committee's scope and mission, it has been renamed the Programming Committee.

Our continued efforts contribute to VRA's growing strength. With more people contributing, we can accelerate our progress. To join us in moving VRA forward, please visit our ["get-involved" webpage](#) to see all open positions within VRA.

Let's keep up our good work and anticipate wonderful years ahead.

Thank you!