Leadership...An AECT Perspective

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I joined AECT 25 years ago when I was a doctoral student on the sage advice of one of my program professors. This prof (Dr. Ed Caffarella) would eventually serve as AECT President, but his advice to me was couched in the understanding that we are a relatively small field in terms of number and that AECT was *the place* to develop the professional connections that could support me as I entered the field in whatever type of practice I might choose. This has certainly been true for me and I give the same advice freely to others because I believe it is still true... but AECT offers even more...

Through AECT, I have gained knowledge, professional skills, and leadership practice, in addition to dozens of professional connections. As I write this, I have only one-quarter of my year left as President of AECT and I am reflecting on (a) how I came to be the President (Who would have ever imagined?) and (b) the work yet to be done in this thriving professional organization. At my very first AECT convention (1991 in Washington, DC) I volunteered to be on a committee. Though still a student, I was welcomed and this began a long period of active engagement that even included service on a national level NCATE committee. Eventually, I served as Chair of the committee and I volunteered for other committees that interested me at the Division level and at the AECT level.

I volunteered to lead, or work on, various task forces. I helped others create TED, develop by-laws, and I eventually ran for President of TED. I stood for election as an At-Large Board Member. Through each of these *service* activities, I have gained invaluable leadership practice and I think this is how I came to be the President of AECT. So, what does this have to do with the future of AECT? I think AECT thrives because of the leadership of our members.

“lead · er · ship [lee-der-ship] The position or function of a leader, a person who guides or directs a group. Synonyms: administration, management, directorship, control, governorship, stewardship, hegemony.” (edited from <https://whyleadnow.com/2014/03/07/leadership-is-a-verb/>)

For me, “leadership” is a verb. Being in any position of leadership requires constant attention, communication with others, commitment to organizational goals, and action. There are hundreds of our members with the experience and desire to take on leadership roles in AECT, and those members will support the next Presidents and Boards of Directors as they expand their own practice in leadership. Thanks to ALL who have demonstrated leadership commitment so far and know that YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF AECT!

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