

## **EBA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

As my term as EBA President draws to a close, I would like to thank all of our volunteers for the terrific work they did this year in putting together amazing programming for our members. It has truly been a stellar year. In addition to our Annual Meeting & Conference, Mid-Year Energy Forum, and Chapter Annual Meetings, we hosted more than sixty events in 2016-2017 from a natural gas primer in New Orleans to an electric reliability primer at the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's offices in Atlanta to EBA's third annual Canadian Program in Toronto to name a few. This amount of high-quality, dynamic programming would not be possible without the exceptional work and dedication of our volunteers.

Last year, we challenged our members to each recruit one new member. This year the EBA Board challenged ourselves to determine how we might continue to improve our service to all of our members and assure the health and vitality of the EBA for years to come. We have undertaken a number of efforts designed to provide the EBA's leadership with insight as to how we may serve our members better. First, building off of our 2016 member survey, we undertook to revise and update our Strategic Plan. The EBA Board adopted a new Strategic Plan on January 11, 2017. The Strategic Plan incorporated the member survey, interviews with our Chapter Presidents, and the results of the EBA Board's strategic planning session. The Strategic Plan affirms the EBA's Mission, Vision, and Values and sets forth objectives for the Association over the next three to five years to: (1) build and grow our regional focus; (2) optimize our membership strategies and model; (3) enhance our content value and accessibility of content; and (4) expand participation and leadership opportunities.

We also set up task forces this year to focus on specific issues of interest to the Board in thinking about how we can serve our members better. The Board has received a report from the Solo and Small Practitioner Task Force regarding what the Association could be doing to better serve our members in solo practice and small firms, and as a result has approved the creation of a Solo and Small Practitioner Council. The Board has also received a report from the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force on measures the EBA, CFEBA, and the FELJ should take to ensure that we make our membership and all of our opportunities fully available to all, and in so doing, gain the benefits of the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experience.

The Board has already adopted several of the recommendations in the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force Report, including: (1) appointment of the Vice President (or other officer as designated by President) as Diversity & Inclusion Facilitator with responsibility for overseeing implementation of the Diversity & Inclusion Policy, reporting annually and recommending further measures to the Board, and working on guidelines for the Professional Education Council; (2) establishing a Champion for Diversity award; (3) directing Staff, with support from various EBA Committees and Councils, as appropriate, and subject to budget availability, to work on video conferencing, recording of CLE sessions to make

them available on demand, including references to the revised Diversity & Inclusion policy in our training materials and on the website, etc.; (4) directing the Joint Enterprise Committee to work with the Committees, Chapters, and Councils to achieve a goal of having three cross-promotional events per year with other, diversity-oriented bar or energy professional associations; (5) drafting up proposed amendments to the Bylaws to be presented to the membership for vote that would add non-voting Board positions for an energy professional and a law student; (6) requesting that the Finance Committee review the financial impact of holding a Mid-Year meeting outside of DC; and (7) asking a Task Force to further explore the creation of and develop a Diversity in Leadership Program for implementation in the 2018-2019 program year. This report marks the culmination of our Spotlight on Diversity and Inclusion this year, which has also included an emphasis on diversity and inclusion programming, and events co-sponsored with organizations in the diversity in the energy sector space.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the honor and privilege of leading the EBA this year and to encourage everyone to please consider joining one of our committees and volunteering for a leadership role in the Association. Seek out the opportunities within the EBA, CFEBA and FELJ to make a difference -- your participation matters!

Emma Hand