



from the president

**Doug Simpson**  
President

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## Dear Colleagues,

**I**n 2009, the AAM Board of Directors approved a strategic plan, *The Spark: Championing the vital role of museums in the 21st century, 2010-2015*. It's a concise document and worth reading if you haven't already (<http://www.aam-us.org/aboutaam/strategic.cfm>). In addition to outlining AAM's core beliefs and values, it spells out specific goals and strategies. One of these goals is:

*Alignment: Align internal and external resources, culture, and structures with our strategic plan, vision, values and beliefs.*

*This "Alignment" is an organization-wide effort involving AAM staff, board, and many affiliated entities. I'm involved in one aspect of it as chair of NAME; I serve on the Professional Network Council (formerly the Standing Professional Committee Council) which is actively engaged in bringing the Professional Networks (formerly SPCs) into better "alignment" with AAM's mission. The goal is to strengthen the benefits we offer AAM members while making them more accessible to the entire organization.*

*There's a great deal of diversity among the 13 Professional Networks (PNs). They represent disciplines from Public Relations and Marketing (PRAM) to Curators Committee (CurCom) to folks like us involved in exhibition development and design. Some PNs are large and very active, others less so. We are working to strengthen all 13 and better serve the full range of AAM members. We are assessing our commonalities and where we can coordinate our activities and achieve efficiencies to better deliver services to you, our members.*

*For example, we've reexamined the fellowships offered by the PNs. NAME has long offered students and emerging professionals financial assistance to attend the AAM conference while matching them with mentors who could help them get the most out of this experience. They have been largely funded through the generosity of our sponsors.*

*Under a new system in place for the 2012 conference, there will be a common application form and deadline, simplifying AAM staff management. Funding for a baseline number of PN Fellowships will come through AAM so that all of the PNs can provide fellowships. And after reviewing the full range of Fellowships offered by AAM, which include International Fellowships, Diversity Fellowships, and Emerging Museum Professional Fellowships (including student fellowships), it was felt that mid-career professionals were underserved. So now PN Fellowships will focus on supporting these emerging leaders who would otherwise be unable to attend the conference.*

*NAME is committed to recognizing talent and strengthening the exhibition community through these fellowships. And we're excited to share insights from these Fellows; you might have noticed a new feature we began in last Fall's issue of the Exhibitionist. Look for insights from this year's crop of Fellows in Fall 2012.*