



ASSOCIATION FOR
Orientation • Transition • Retention
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

NODA Strategic Plan - 2026 Priorities

NODA Mission

As an inclusive community, NODA enhances and elevates orientation, transition, and retention practices in higher education that cultivate the professional development and education of undergraduate student leaders, graduate students, practitioners, and scholars.

NODA Core Purpose

To create a community of practice that defines and enriches the fields of orientation, transition, and retention.

NODA Vision

To be the premiere association in orientation, transition, and retention in higher education.

Background

In May 2025, the Association staff held a planning retreat to review NODA's current strategic priorities and programming. In light of the evolving political landscape and the complexities facing higher education, the team reaffirmed a focus on organizational sustainability, and membership growth/retention as guiding priorities for the next two years. A member Needs Assessment will be conducted in 2027 to inform future direction, culminating in a comprehensive review and recommendations for an updated strategic plan.

Central Theme

Organizational Sustainability

Evolving to meet the current and future needs of NODA members is vital for organizational sustainability. NODA will build a strong infrastructure that emphasizes and enhances community development through networking opportunities, professional development, and educational resources that adapt to the needs of our members, institutions, and the profession. There will be a coordinated approach between mission alignment, strategic priorities, and financial planning that allows the Association to be nimble during environmental/contextual changes. Through various assessment modalities we will make changes to strengthen engagement, access, and the development of our volunteers who play a key role in the organization's vitality. NODA will be known for an environment that promotes connections of people and ideas.

The Association will successfully educate key constituents regarding the central role orientation, transition, and retention plays in student success and academic mission. There will be universal recognition that NODA is the premier association in orientation, transition, and retention in higher education.

Strategic Vision

Membership Growth

NODA's path to organizational stability is rooted in membership growth and sustainability. As institutions face increasing budget constraints, NODA remains committed to supporting orientation, transition, and retention professionals. By cultivating a strong and engaged membership base, NODA builds both financial stability and professional community, positioning the Association to remain resilient in a changing higher education landscape.

Goal:

Increase market share of US-based institutions from 7% to 20% by the end of Fiscal Year 2028-29 with increased focus on recruitment of members from two-year institutions and minority serving institutions.

Strategy:

[Membership Strategic Growth Plan - Exec Summary](#)

By focusing on retention, engagement, conversion and data-driven decision making, the association will strengthen its value to members, expand its reach across diverse institutions, and ensure a resilient foundation for the future.

Retention - Sustaining Member Loyalty and Value

- Strengthen first-year and ongoing engagement through timely, high-value touchpoints.
- Reinforce renewal messaging with clear benefits and potential flexible options for institutions under budget strain.
- Develop onboarding, re-engagement, and targeted member initiatives to highlight ongoing value.

Engagement - Fostering Connection and Investment

- Expand opportunities for participation through workgroups, NODA Connect, and short-term volunteer roles.
- Create pathways for long-term leadership development, from new volunteer to board service.

Conversion - Turning Interest Into Membership

- Launch campaigns that highlight member stories and showcase ROI.
- Expand recruitment to underrepresented institutions (e.g., two-year colleges, HBCUs, HSIs, global).
- Offer flexible dues and referral incentives to remove barriers to joining.

Data & Assessment - Using Data to Drive Decisions

- Implement dashboards to track engagement, renewal, and participation trends.
- Collect and apply member feedback regularly to adapt programs and services.
- Use data to guide recruitment, retention, and financial sustainability planning.

Unified Strategic Efforts

This focus on Membership Growth does not lose sight of the original strategic priorities from the board. Instead it offers an opportunity to reframe every task, program, and priority of the Association through the lens of bolstering our membership. The initiatives below are led by the Association staff in collaboration with the Membership Engagement Committee.

Initiatives like Spring Learning expand access and engagement opportunities, while fiscal planning and new revenue strategies ensure sustainability. Volunteer and leadership development are supported through committee restructuring and the addition of working groups, which offer members more flexibility in ways to contribute. By connecting these priorities to membership, we create a well-rounded strategy that not only creates a consistent and enriching membership experience but also reinforces the central theme of organizational stability.

Initiatives	2026 Strategies for Consideration	Lead
New Member Growth	Aim to increase the number of members by 15% each year	Association Staff Membership Engagement Committee
Prospect to Member Conversion Rate	Of all the people who show interest in	Association Staff Membership

	NODA (i.e., attend a webinar, download a resource), aim to convert at least 10-15% into paying members	Engagement Committee
Lead source tracking	Track how new members found NODA (i.e., email, referral, conference), and identify the top 3 to refine outreach.	Association Staff
First Year Retention	Keep 75% of new members beyond their first year. i.e. If 100 people joined, at least 75 should renew	Association Staff
Overall Member Retention	Retain at least 80% of total members from one year to the next. This shows long-term value.	Association Staff
Lapsed Member Reinstatement Rate	Bring back at least 10% of members who let their membership lapse.	Association Staff
Volunteer Participation	Increase the number of members who volunteer by 20% over two years. i.e. If 200 members volunteer now, aim for 240	Association Staff Membership Engagement Committee Leadership Development Committee
NODACONnect Participation	Grow member activity (posting, replying, logging in) on the NODA Connect platform by 30% within a year	Association Staff Membership Engagement Committee Community Leads
Event Participation	50%; At least half of all members should attend at least one event per year.	Association Staff

	(shows they're finding value in programming)	
Member Satisfaction	At least 85% of members should report they are satisfied with their NODA experience based on the annual survey Benefit awareness - 85% members should say they are aware of NODA's primary benefits, particularly outside of NODAC discounts	Association Staff Membership Engagement Committee

Themes, Goals and Strategies for Committee Work

The other three themes in the Strategic Plan are connected to the work of standing committees in Engagement and Access, Educational Initiatives and Scholarly Practice and Resources (proposed to become a part of Educational Initiatives). The strategies and the development of a timeline will be reviewed by the committees by the end of the calendar year as planning begins in January for 2026.

Engagement & Access

Goal	Strategies for Consideration	Lead
By 2028, NODA will enhance engagement and access across all member experiences by creating and implementing a comprehensive set of standard practices and procedures, achieving 100% integration in event planning and evaluation.	Survey "first-adopters" and make revisions based on feedback Rollout guidebook to all NODA leaders; provide educational information sessions and trainings via multiple modalities Implement the assessment plan	Engagement and Access Committee

	Assess usage and effectiveness for NODA leaders and event attendees	
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Educational Program Quality

Goal	Strategies for Consideration	Lead
By 2027, NODA will achieve 100% adoption of educational guiding principles across all educational programs to elevate quality and ensure consistency, providing program attendees with exceptional experiences that showcase leading practices.	Develop learning outcomes and metrics to assess the outcomes for all educational initiatives Require review of and/or training related to the guide for faculty, instructors, facilitators, conference planning teams, etc.	Educational Initiatives Committee

Scholarly Contributions

Goal	Strategies for Consideration	Lead
By the end of 2027, NODA will increase member engagement in scholarly activities and contributions in OTR by 30%.	(From 2025) Develop foundational resources and opportunities to encourage entry-level Scholarly contributions. This would include Beginner-friendly resources (step-by-step guides and webinar).	Scholarly Practice and Resources (within Educational Initiatives)

	Provide training via webinars or working groups on advanced scholarly topics.	
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Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board of Directors revisit the Strategic Plan at the Spring Board meeting in 2026 to review and take appropriate action for future planning.