



Greetings!

As your director of education, I am honored that President Rolando has commissioned me to write a monthly column for *The Postal Record*. Its focus will be to provide members with information about the educational opportunities available to them within the NALC and to discuss methods and tools that branch leaders can use to educate and inform their branch membership as well as to develop and mentor others in the branch.

I was appointed to this position in May 2009 upon the retirement of Ralph Goldstein, who had served the NALC for more than 23 years, the last 19 as the director of education, and who helped produce many of the NALC's educational programs and materials over the past several decades. I joined the NALC in 1978 and became a member of Branch 290 in Santa Barbara, California. In 1980, I transferred to Kent, Washington, where I had the opportunity to serve Branch 2038 in various capacities, including six years as president. I was also the director of education for the Washington State Association for 12 years, an arbitration advocate for more than 23 years, a Step B team member for six years and served five years as a regional administrative assistant before moving to Washington, DC. It's hard to believe that I've been here more than a year already; time really flies when you're busy doing something that you love. But that's enough about me; on to the good stuff.

Attention all members!

The NALC is now accepting applications for the 2011 Leadership Academy classes. Four applicants from each of the 15 NALC regions will be selected to participate in either the winter/spring class or the summer/fall class. Those interested in applying can obtain a copy of the application form on the NALC's website at nalc.org or from their national business agent. Applications must be completed and received at NALC Headquarters by September 30. Those who have previously applied must submit a new application form with updated information and renewed commitment from their mentors.

The Leadership Academy was established in 2005 as a

way to identify and develop future leaders in the NALC. Participants are exposed to a wide variety of subjects designed to enhance their knowledge and build the skills necessary to be successful activists and leaders within their local branches as well as at higher levels of the organization.

The Academy consists of three one-week sessions held over a five-month period at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland. Students are also required to complete two outside learning projects in between these sessions and will spend a week at their national business agent's office following graduation. Transportation, room, meals, lost wages and other associated costs while attending the Academy and working in the business agent's office are paid for by the NALC.

All active NALC members are eligible to apply to the Academy. Students have come from branches of fewer than 10 members and from those with 7,500-plus members, and with as little as two years in the Postal Service to as much as 30 years. The only prerequisite, other than having a mentor, is a willingness to work hard, complete all assignments and to fully participate in all of the learning opportunities at the Academy.

One of the most important components of the Leadership Academy and essential for each student to be successful is having a mentor who is committed to interacting with them on a regular basis to provide encouragement, guidance and feedback. Mentors should be in a position to provide opportunities for the student to practice the skills they have been building at the Academy. While anyone may be a mentor, branch officers are often in the best position to maintain regular contact with the student and can provide them with timely feedback and additional learning opportunities. NBAs, RAAs and state officers have also mentored many of the past graduates and are another good source.

I encourage anyone who is interested to apply. If you've applied in the past and have not yet been selected, by all means reapply. In next month's article, I'll share what some of the graduates of past classes have to say about their experiences at the Academy. ☒