

1999 ITAA Fellow – Rita Kean



Rita Kean has a rich history of service to the organization, serving on Council as President, President-elect, Counselor, and VP for Operations. She has served on the Board as chairperson of two committees: Four-year Institutions and Strategic Planning and served on the *CTRJ* Editorial Review Board. Rita is highly visible at ITAA conferences, not only through research presentations, but also as chair of provocative and well-attended sessions that have addressed topics such as “Societal Issues for the 21st Century: The Researcher’s Responsibility for Making an Impact” and “Majoring in Textiles and Clothing: So What?”

In the words of her colleagues, “in ITAA leadership roles, Rita has identified opportunities and challenges facing our organization and has effectively provided viable solutions to move ITAA forward.... She instituted two programs to enhance [the professional development of ITAA members]: New Member Reception begun at the Banff conference and the Council Interest Form, a means to elicit members’ interest in an ITAA leadership role. ... She is a ‘natural leader.’ Rita has the capacity to vision, plan, **and** implement organizational change.”

Dr. Kean is also a highly respected researcher and teacher. “She is well read, open to new ideas and always full of enthusiasm. Dr. Kean has a very good grasp of industry practices and trends, which greatly enhances her ability to develop applied research that is pertinent to the field. Her research exhibits a very strong programmatic thrust related to the merchandising of goods and services. Her work is not scattered and diffuse. Rather she has focused on three inter-related areas of tourism and craft marketing, home-based businesses, and rural retailing.”

In 1997-98, Dr. Kean served as an American Council of Education Fellow. She also served as Chair of the Department of Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design from 1991-2001, Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs from 2001-2003, and as Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln from 2003-2011 when she returned to her faculty position. She retired from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in June, 2015.