

## Message From the President

I hope this message finds each of you and your loved ones safe and in good health. What an extraordinary and extraordinarily challenging spring semester we have had! To say that it has been difficult would be a huge understatement. I know that all of you have been doing the exhausting tasks of transitioning to online work practically overnight, keeping up with ever-changing guidance around educator certification, caring for students academically and emotionally, and so much more while in the midst sheltering in place during a global pandemic. I don't believe anyone would ever have predicted that this would be where we would find ourselves at this moment in time.

Throughout this ordeal, remaining connected to our colleagues while staying physically separated has become especially important. At the beginning of 2020, NYACTE and NYSATE leaders were eagerly planning our annual fall conference to which we look forward every year. When campuses began to close and news became increasingly dire, we remained optimistic that we would all still be able to gather in beautiful Saratoga Springs in October, and our conference planning meetings continued to bring us a ray of hope. Unfortunately, as spring progressed, the boards of both organizations made the agonizing decision to cancel this year's fall conference. While I'm sure that all our members understand the necessity of doing this, I recognize that for many of us, this is one more loss during a time of many losses, both large and small. We wish that things were different.

In the wake of this decision, we have been brainstorming ways that we can continue to foster a sense of community among our members and to provide resources to help better serve our students during this period of tremendous change. Although not a replacement for the conference, we are planning to schedule some virtual meetings for our members with representatives from the New York State Education Department, possibly some of the Regents, and well-known educators who may provide inspiration and encouragement as we continue moving forward in preparing teachers under such uncertain circumstances. We will update you as these opportunities take shape, and I welcome any suggestions you might have for ways in which NYACTE can offer you support throughout the remainder of the year.

One of the ways I have always engaged with a professional community is by keeping up with the latest reading in my chosen fields. The current issue of *Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning* comes at just the right time to help us remain connected through our shared reading of new articles in the field of educator preparation. This issue includes research-based articles across a broad range of topics including speech-language pathology, family and community engagement, and collaborative lesson study. I want to thank the editors of *Excelsior*, Christine Ashby and Julia White, for their commitment to publishing this issue in a timely manner when so many other responsibilities were also vying for their attention. I hope that each of you, our members, will find time in the (hopefully) slower and calmer days of summer to read and discuss how the ideas presented in the journal ignite your thinking about preparing and supporting effective educators.

Above all, I hope each of you has a chance to relax, reflect, and recharge over the summer and that you stay well and strong while finding ways to connect with those you hold dear.

With warmest wishes,

April Whatley Bedford, NYACTE President  
Dean, Brooklyn College School of Education, [abedford@brooklyn.cuny.edu](mailto:abedford@brooklyn.cuny.edu)