

## Message From the President

Greetings colleagues and readers! Welcome to the second issue of Volume 14 of *Excelsior: Leadership in Teaching and Learning*, the professional journal of the New York Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NYACTE). In this issue, you will find six different pieces related to the preparation and practice of teachers. Thanks to the work of our editors, Christy Ashby and Julia White, all of these papers speak to current issues related to our collective work in supporting the development of both novice and experienced teachers in a variety of settings.

Three of these articles explore the impact of innovations on the learning of pre-service teachers in educator preparation programs. For example, James Rigney and Gage Jeter describe their work in revising the content of an introduction to education course to include the topic of gun violence in schools as a means to stimulate student thinking on controversial issues in education. Their work illustrates how including topics in education policy and politics in course content can enhance student thinking and learning about the profession at the beginning of their preparation. Authors Melissa Martin, Alison Puliatte, and Emily Blankenship Bostedor took a different approach to enhancing the preparation of teacher candidates when they introduced an undergraduate research group at their university. Students in this group were mentored and supported to complete all aspects of a research project. Similarly, in their piece on integrating principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and selected online tools in their pedagogy courses, Lin Lin and Krystal Barber recount how they helped their candidates gain a better understanding of UDL and teaching with technology. These students were better prepared for creating accessible classroom environments both in person and online. Both papers provide clear descriptions of the innovative interventions used in their studies so others can learn from their work.

Shifting from teacher preparation to a focus on inservice teacher professional development, Henry Miller and Gage Jeter's paper describes their work with two inservice teachers who participated in a workshop related to writing for publication on the blogs of national organizations. The case studies of these two teachers reveal how their participation and engagement in this workshop shifted their ideas both about blogs as a genre and about themselves as scholars. Finally, in their piece on addressing teaching shortages in the area of teaching English learners, authors Rui Niu-Cooper, Tom Reeder, Mayda Bahamonde-Gunnell, Shirley Johnson, and Carol Lautenbach describe a very different setting for research. Their work focused on a large scale, collaborative study involving a research university and several of its neighboring school districts. Their paper describes the group's methods for increasing the districts' capacity for preparing more teachers and provides recommendations for doing so in other contexts. This issue of *Excelsior* ends with a review written by Ana De Jesús and Alesia Mickle Moldavan of the book, *Going Gradeless, Grades 6-12: Shifting the Focus to Student Learning* by E. Burns and D. Frangiosa (2021). The reviewers provide insightful analysis of the text's content and suggest the book provides a useful guide for teachers and leaders looking to revise their assessment practices.

I am grateful to the authors of these pieces for sharing their work with us in this issue of *Excelsior*, and the reviewers and editors that made such sharing possible. One of the hallmarks of our discipline is the many opportunities we have to collaborate and learn from one another. NYACTE is proud to support this work through *Excelsior*, and we look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

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