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An Editor's Farewell

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This note is a parting love letter to the authors, associate editors, Editorial Board members, reviewers, publication coordinators, and copyeditors who have invested their time and talent to bring you the *Journal of College Student Development*. With my five-year term as Editor ending—and after managing nearly 2800 submissions—this is my final issue to oversee. I am pleased to pass the reins to Professor Vasti Torres of Indiana University.

Serving as the 10th Editor of *JCS*D has been a privilege and a joy; it has allowed me an unparalleled view of the scholarship that defines and shapes our work in higher education. Editors are gatekeepers, stewards, and coaches, but doing this work well requires building a team of talented and trustworthy leaders. Over the past five years, I was humbled to partner with D-L Stewart, Jan Arminio, Tricia Seifert, Dawn Johnson, Maureen Wilson, Patrick Biddix, and Robert Reason—all of whom served various terms as associate editors. This team represented broad and deep expertise and perspectives that differed from my own. Together we built a vision for the *Journal*, and I trusted all of them completely to execute it. I employed three publication coordinators during my 5-year tenure: Gwendolyn Archibald, Deidre Freeman-Huff, and Alex C. Lange. Together with our longstanding Managing Copy Editor and Layout Manager Mark Suggs, they made it all possible. They communicated with authors and reviewers, proofed final drafts, and met deadlines.

As gatekeepers of scholarship, editors must protect their intellectual autonomy because academic freedom is the backbone of truth-seeking and truth-telling. Editors must be free from personal and professional influence—free to reject a submission by an esteemed senior colleague by avoiding any dual relationships or competing interests. In a small field like ours, avoiding all dual relationships can be tricky. Our leadership team decided to reassign any papers to other team members when dual relationships may have left the appearance of clouding our judgment. The double-masked review process was another way to ensure fair and impartial reviews.

As a team, we sought to offer feedback that centered and preserved everyone's humanity—feedback that was constructive, direct, and compassionate. Whether or not a submission was one of the less than 10% accepted, we tried to give authors straightforward suggestions on improving their paper. The same was true of our work with reviewers, when feedback was necessary.

Finally, we sought to promote and honor ACPA's legacy and commitment to scholarship. Since its humble beginnings nearly 100 years ago, ACPA has centered evidence-based practice and theory as a core component of student development. As a leadership team, we were committed to upholding ACPA's stature as the premier

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association supporting and publishing cutting-edge scholarship about the student experience. Likewise, in 2017 as ACPA leaders centered racial justice and decolonization in its strategic imperative, the leadership team decided to use our platform as a way to bring together a collection of scholarly, refereed works with this focus. Special issues are significant commitments that can slow the average pace of a publication queue; however, this timely topic required urgency and a concentrated effort. To accomplish this, we issued an open call for proposals and applications for special editors, which were evaluated by a group of external senior scholars. Stephanie J. Waterman and D-L Stewart were chosen to shepherd their vision for this issue, titled *Race, Indigeneity, and Relationship in Student Affairs and Higher Education*. All manuscripts for the issue underwent a masked review process by reviewers solicited specifically for the special issue. Their vision for this issue was “to imagine futures that reflect right relationships among faculty, staff, students, and local and global communities guided by philosophies of anti-racism and decolonization.”

Eighteen months later, in the face of flagrant, murderous, and racist acts across the US, I am proud that my final issue of the *Journal* reflects the insightful scholarship to deconstruct systems and dynamics that oppress, and *reconstruct* systems and relationships designed to empower. As Palmer (2020) stated: “While protesting has power, what is even more powerful and pragmatic is to formulate an agenda that will help to facilitate meaningful change.” It is my hope that this issue will help inform your own work toward that end.

The 10 articles comprising this special issue are revealing and illuminating by centering anti-racism and decolonization in and through higher education. This is not a definitive action blueprint, but rather a clarion call for perspective-taking and discernment. The immense work of planning for and implementing change in higher education requires deep learning, collaboration, resources, and a will to change systems that have historically benefited only some of us. While I think there is rich material in this issue suitable for all higher education professionals, scholars, and students, I particularly urge my white colleagues to approach these readings with a spirit of humility and learning. As Sue (2017) so stated: “Becoming a White ally is a monumental task that presents many internal (personal) and external challenges. It is a constant lifelong journey” (p. 709). I urge readers to strive for more than becoming the white ally. Making allyship the goal of one’s work continues to burden our Colleagues of Color, as we sideline our own efforts in some supportive role. The work of dismantling racism and deconstructing colonialism falls on white people who have benefited from these oppressive systems. Instead of an ally, I urge white colleagues to instead aim for centering an anti-racist identity that honors and lifts up the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in our scholarship, our service, and our teaching.

Thank you again for the opportunity to shepherd the work of this important journal.

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