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Editor's Note

This pandemic changed everything. In the spring of 2020 I remember hearing about the virus, and how it could spread to the United States. Like most people, however, I didn't think it would affect me to the extent that it did. My college soon made the jump to virtual, my dissertation was to be defended virtually, my weekly happy hour would start meeting through Facebook Messenger through the comfort of our individual homes. When I finished my dissertation, I graduated on my front porch, with a parade of faculty wearing N95 masks maintaining those six feet.

This project started because of the pandemic. Nobody tells you what to do when you finish a dissertation, only *welcome to the club*. I had edited for my current college's literary magazine, had been an assistant editor for *Higher Education Politics and Economics*, and had assisted with the *Inquiry* journal for the VCCS. Early in my career I had been employed for Tidewater Community College, and when the *Inquiry* journal made it to my mailbox twice a year, a smile came across my face. It was so amazing to see what faculty, staff, and administrators were researching, reviewing, and pondering across the state. Now that I had more time on my hands could the same journal be brought to North Carolina? I started making connections with faculty across the state. I met with Audrey Jaeger from the Belk Foundation, with James "JW" Kelley from the NCCCS, and was eventually steered toward the North Carolina Community College Faculty Association. With the blessing of the system office, I was advised to write up a proposal for the NCCCFA. Brittany Hochstaetter, Rodney Powell, and NCCCFA president John Etheridge were incredibly pleased at my *pitch*, and John made a comment, "Looks like we have our Editor-in-Chief!"

The NCCCFA was on board, but now what? I had never spearheaded a journal. To get started, I sent out a call for editors. I was surprised to receive thirty responses. I had no idea how this journal would go, so I decided to accept them all. I was pleased to have an editorial staff that was diverse in discipline, demographics, and location. I then decided we needed our aim, vision, mission, logo, and a color scheme (which we borrowed from the NCCCS). John and Brittany had already been instrumental and supportive, so I met with them and JW to construct a blueprint. I then held an editor's meeting through Zoom so that everyone could meet, and asked for any constructive feedback they had. From there, we made minor revisions and moved on toward marketing. John set up the website, and I worked to create a Facebook and LinkedIn page (which I hope you the reader will follow).

Still unsure how this would turn out, we moved toward marketing. I want to personally thank each and every individual who received my various emails, Nation Hahn and the entire EdNC staff, the presidents of all 58 community colleges (my president Jack Bagwell especially), and my editorial staff for continuing to push our call for manuscripts and spread the word about the journal. After our call for manuscripts closed we were happy to accept 11 manuscripts, presented here in our first issue. I am incredibly proud of this first issue, and I think you will be too.

So there are numerous people I need to thank because this is now a reality. To John Etheridge, thank you for listening to me amalgamate this vision, and for all your work with our website. To Brittany Hochstaetter, thank you for being an amazing motivator and for assisting with social media. To James JW Kelley, thank you for helping connect me with NCCCFA and for getting the message out to the presidents. To Sylvan Allen, thank you for helping with intake of manuscripts, countless editing, and reviewing this entire issue a hundred times. To the editorial staff, thank you for reviewing articles, sharing with colleagues, and sharing social media posts. And finally, to all the faculty, staff, and administrators reading this, thank you for being champions of higher education in this great state of North Carolina.

Happy Reading!

Dr. Josh Howell—Editor-in-Chief