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One Learning Experience Ends and Another Begins

Hello! We are almost at the end! This semester has been moving exceptionally fast for me, and I hope that you are all pushing through and making the most of your time. What has felt to be moving even faster than this semester is my term as president! This is my last newsletter writing to all of you, and I truly have enjoyed the entirety of my year spent on the NYSSMA® board.

I have met a large number of you through social media, conferences, Zoom meetings, and via e-mail. These exchanges have led me to feel so much closer to all the colleges, and also that we, as college musicians, are a united community. Although I am leaving and haven't accomplished all I was hoping for, my successor Austin Stroup is raring to step in and continue to fight and advocate for your concerns. Austin is a junior tuba player at Nazareth College, and he is passionately full of ideas for his presidential term. Over this past year I have had the pleasure of getting to work closely with Austin, and I couldn't be more excited for you all to meet him!

Working with NYSSMA® leaders

One of my favorite parts of being on council has been all the musicians I have met, especially the NYSSMA® officers, and all of you fellow college students whom I had the opportunity to talk to at the winter conference. For those of you who may not have had a chance to meet the Executive Council members, I would just like to take a moment to tell you how hard working, responsive, and invested they are in making NYSSMA® the best it can be, including reforming some of the NYSSMA® issues that have become more prominent as we move toward a more progressive and inclusive society.

As the only collegiate student on council, I was intimidated going into my first meeting, but all the officers were welcoming and interested in my point of view. I bring that up because I know that these council members can feel unapproachable, but that couldn't be further from the truth! They want to hear from you! Their ideas and initiatives are working toward the future, and we are the future. I encourage you not to hesitate to reach out; you may be surprised by the connection you can make. Our population of membership is continuing to increase; there is power in numbers!

Maintaining communication

One of my struggles this year has been getting information pushed out in a way that is accessible to everyone and that each of you are able to get the info we are sending to each chapter. As of now, Dr. Koster and I write newsletters and push those out to our province representatives, who then push them out to your NAFME chapter president and advisor via email.

It has come to my attention that not everyone is getting all of the information that we send. I want to extend a reminder to advisors and presidents to please forward the information that we send to you to your entire chapter membership. There are often important dates and opportunities in those e-mails that students benefit from. As for chapter members, if you are not getting our info, please reach out to 1) your president/advisor or 2) me or your province rep. If there is a better form of communicating information to your chapter, please let us know!!

Lastly, as a perfectionist (like many musicians are), I wanted to give a little anecdote about my biggest mindset challenge during student

teaching. I don't like to fail. I hate failing even more when someone is watching me, which when you are student teaching, is all the time!

I walked into the building the first few days so scared to relax, to be myself and to make mistakes. I was extra cautious and reserved and, therefore, not as "fun" and engaging as I could be. It's like you have a big solo in a concert and although you've practiced and prepared the part, you don't play it as big and musical as you could out of fear of messing up. That is essentially how I operated the first week.

I then made a mistake during a lesson by starting to teach the complete wrong song. As silly as it may seem, that was the point at which I realized that I could mess up and be corrected and that doesn't make me any less of an educator. Little by little I started to get sillier with the kids and allowed myself to take more risks in my lessons and try things that may fail, and that is OK!

This is the time to try out different things and have the space to create your teaching personality. Take advantage of having a mentor there to guide you and pick you up if you fall. I promise, once you allow yourself to make mistakes you will grow so much more.

Thank you all for being exceptional people and musicians to work with this past year! I wouldn't trade this opportunity for anything, and I hope that some of you decide to run for a state officer position at some point during your undergrad. As always, don't hesitate to reach out to me via my phone or e-mail. See you at the All-Eastern Conference!

Emma Uruburu
NYSSMA® Collegiate President