

Austin Stroup – NYSSMA/NAfME Collegiate President 23-24, Nazareth University



# Welcome Back! New Year, New Ideas

**M**y name is Austin Stroup and I am the 2023-24 Collegiate NYSSMA® State President. I am a senior music education major at Nazareth University and my primary instrument is tuba. I also have a passion for conducting that I have been channeling throughout my time at Naz.

I am student teaching this fall and am excited to take the next step in becoming a certified music teacher. Additionally, I play bass guitar for Calvary Assembly Worship at my church, Calvary Assembly of God in Chili, NY. There, I also participate in writing worship songs with the team.

During my time at Nazareth, I have held many leadership positions, including president for the Nazareth NAFME chapter. I was recently informed of the news that our chapter received a Chapter of Excellence Award for its efforts between January 2022 and December 2022. I also was a resident assistant during my sophomore year. Finally, with C-NYSSMA I have been a part of the Belonging, Equity, Diversity, and Representation (BEDR) committee.

Now, a little dive into my personal life. I am originally from Brockport, NY. I have been married to my beautiful wife, Kaitlyn, since July of 2022 and when we aren't working, we love to go on dates, cruises, and soak up as much sun as we can. My wife is also currently a senior in nursing school at Roberts Wesleyan University.

I also enjoy spending time with family, friends, playing golf, and writing music. I recently just released a song that I wrote for my wife for our one-year anniversary called *I Love, Loving You*, so go check it out wherever you stream music! Three quick fun facts about us: 1. we root for the Buffalo Bills; 2. we vote Coke over Pepsi and 3. we love pizza! I hope to get to know more of you as this year begins and continues!

### Preparing for the future

The future of music education is

us. As our world continues to embrace change, we, as college students, must also adapt and prepare ourselves for our professional careers. What ways will you adapt to advance your craftsmanship? The wonderful Executive Board and I are excited to take on this same question to better serve and benefit all of you. I am thrilled to work with all of them to accomplish the initiatives and goals we have discussed and will discuss. You can read all about each of the board members on the collegiate officer page on the NYSSMA® website and get to know their faces!

One goal we hope to accomplish is having a greater social media presence. We realize now more than ever that people want to feel engaged in a meaningful and quick way. We believe social media is the answer! This is why we want to begin creating short videos like reels that are to the point but will keep everyone updated with what is going on with Collegiate NYSSMA®. So, follow our socials and be on the lookout for updates during the year.

Secondly, I want to continue the development of the online platform Past President Emma Uruburu initiated. This platform would allow us to learn from each other through submissions of lesson plan ideas and/or finished products, as well as any other materials that would be beneficial to peer review without the pressure of being critiqued by seasoned teachers. Not that their input is not valid or needed, but this way peers can evaluate each other in a collaborative manner.

It can be scary to be evaluated by people who have a lot of experience, and it is okay to feel that way. But I believe there is importance in having a place where college students can interact without a fear of rejection and lack of confidence. With all that said, this development might take some time to get going, so please be patient as we work out more details.

Lastly, the Executive Board has been re-envisioning the way the 2024 State Collegiate Conference will be conducted. After our meetings, the board has decid-

ed to change the in-person conference format. Our goal would be to have one or two virtual sessions each of the first four Saturdays in March, and on the fifth Saturday we are looking for one university from each province to hold a mini get-together day so the day is accessible for students across the state. Province representatives will be reaching out to the universities they are assigned to see if this day is possible.

We will be continuing to discuss the type of sessions and the rest of the information for the hybrid conference when we have specific details to share. On behalf of myself and the remainder of the Executive Board, we are available to hear all about what will make your Collegiate NYSSMA® experience more engaging and exciting especially as we embrace any kind of change that comes like this one.

### Seize the opportunities

I am excited to fulfill this position and facilitate a positive experience this year for all my collegiate peers especially through our conferences and events. Music education and its appearance in our schools has shifted in the past few years, meaning our minds must follow this shift, but also challenge what is best for us as future educators and for our students.

Take in what you can through schooling, different professional development opportunities, and from peers because living in the “real world” is about networking and building positive relationships with those you meet. Above all, be a good person!

Let's make this year one in which we build community, engage with purpose, and make meaningful music. And, let us not forget that our future as music educators is bright if we shed our light on it. We all have a voice and place to be heard!

I'm hoping for a passion-filled and successful year with all of you. Let's do this! Again, welcome back everyone! ||