

# COLLEGIATE CORNER

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



## The Future Awaits

**T**hank you NYSSMA® family! I am pleased to have served as Collegiate President this year and to have been involved with the state Executive Board for the past two years. NYSSMA® will always have a special place in my heart, and I am sincerely grateful for the opportunities granted in this position.

C-NYSSMA® had an engaging year through collegiate NAfME chapter events, the Winter Conference, and our first-ever virtual Collegiate Conference. We are again hopeful for a collegiate chapter to host the 2026 Collegiate Conference. I am confident that next year's C-NYSSMA® leadership will continue to offer thoughtful and engaging resources for professional and character development across the state.

To those of us graduating this year, congratulations! The future is bright in the music classroom. There is so much potential in future students. No matter where we end up, may we never stop making musical memories. For those who are on their way to graduation, I would say the same thing to you! Music education is powerful and we have an obligation to manifest that as educators to the generations we are teaching.

### A resilient cohort

I am among those graduating and the journey toward graduation has been

chaotic but fruitful. As a whole, the Class of 2024 entered their undergraduate career amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, navigated hybrid, online and asynchronous classes, and managed to come out of it strong. We were able to face it head on and persevere.

Within my presidential term, I got married and my wife and I had a baby, all in addition to school and work. What a journey it has been and what a road



it will be. I have grown so much as an educator, husband, and now father. This sounds like a selfish plug, but we all have a story to tell about our journey through life and we should share that and know it is not finished yet! It has only just begun. You can find more of my story on my social media or reach out to me.

The C-NYSSMA® story continues with presidential leadership under Taylor

Kelly of SUNY Fredonia. She is a music education major, French horn primary. She has been a great president-elect and a person to get to know. I believe she has a lot of energy to offer to the C-NYSSMA® family. She kicks off her presidency on May 1 and it continues for the year.

### Stay involved

I encourage you to continue your collegiate membership if you are remaining in college, and for those of us who are graduating, NYSSMA® is also an organization for you to engage in beyond collegiate membership. There are professional membership benefits including professional development opportunities like adjudication and winter conferences, access to magazine publications, and lots of support for your school's activities like solo fest, Tri-M, etc.

I say my farewell as Collegiate President in May, but I will always be a part of the NYSSMA® family.

Thank you to NYSSMA® Executive Council, my mentor Dr. Keith Koster, and all of you for your participation in Collegiate NYSSMA®. Thank you to my family for their love and my friends for their support.

Life will get busy and surprise you, but as Bryce W. Anderson explains "... no matter what life throws at [you], music softens the blow."

See you around. ||