

Fall 2020

Editor's Note

Mario D'Agostino
Nova Southeastern University, mdagost0@nova.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/elthe>



Part of the [Educational Methods Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

D'Agostino, Mario (2020) "Editor's Note," *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education*: Vol. 3 : No. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/elthe/vol3/iss1/5>

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education* by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Editor's Note

MARIO D'AGOSTINO

Nova Southeastern University

The onset of March 2020 presented unique challenges to our profession that no instructor, administrator, or institution was exempt from. The presence of COVID-19 forced practitioners the world over to amend courses and programs on the fly, while maintaining a level-headedness to move forward in an uncharted academic landscape. My institution, like many others, suspended in-person classes in early March and recommended all instructors to make plans to fully transition their courses online.

Reflecting on this time now only augments how surreal of an experience it was. I had just arrived back into the United States after traveling to Europe with an undergraduate course. The course, "Genocide in the Twentieth Century," brought students to sites of genocide across Eastern Europe (e.g., Poland, Hungary, Serbia, and Bosnia); a dear colleague of mine who instructed the class asked me to join the class as a chaperone. Almost at the very moment we entered back into the United States, myself and two other colleagues on the trip were confronted with the mandate to begin moving our courses online. For me, this included trans-

itioning five writing courses, along with a film studies course that investigated depictions of science in American cinema.

These courses presented their own unique challenges in becoming online synchronous, while maintaining the fidelity of the courses. The film studies class demanded that I get especially creative. The class could no longer congregate in person for a watch and chat, as we did pre-COVID. Rather, Netflix Party and Discord became new modalities for pedagogical success. As I think back on this time now, my greatest challenge concerned humanistic issues. So many of my students were no longer on campus; they now found themselves back at home where they were unequipped with proper technology or a stable internet connection. The transition did not simply present problems pertaining to course management or syllabi; rather, it galvanized our responsibility to ensure that all students were participating on a level playing field, and that they all had access to course materials.

While my perspective was certainly not unique, it was our shared chal-

lenges that led to the creation of this special issue's CFP. As *ELTHE*'s editor-in-chief, Kevin Dvorak, noted, we are all combing through an uncertain landscape. As such, it is important that we collect the testimonies of our peers, with hopes that their experiences will inform other experiential practitioners that find themselves in a similar position. The many voices and perspectives that you will find in this issue speak to the challenges of the last six months.

This first part of a two-part special issue includes five contributions from experiential educators across the disciplines. Joy Guarino shares her experience moving SUNY Buffalo State College's dance program fully online. R. Louis Hirsch and Aardra Kachroo describe transitioning an Agricultural and Medical Biotechnology (ABT) program online, providing important advice on how to salvage students' research experience despite lab closures. Kathy R. Doody, Pamela Schuetze, and Katrina Fulcher reflect on moving a collaborative and multidisciplinary service-learning project online, specifically changing assignments requiring in-person developmental screenings to online formats. Ryan Hargrove and Travis Klondike rethink face-to-face interactions in two institutional contexts, focusing on how instructors address a void in communal interaction and emotional connectedness. Finally, Elizabeth Lucas Combs and Aaron Kyle Schwartz discuss how they maintained innovative experiential learning for dietetic interns in Supervised Practice Programs (SPPs).

We are excited to share these articles with you and hope that they provide guidance and insight to

others as we collectively navigate the 2020-2021 academic year. ■