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FROM THE EDITOR

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How Do We Build an Inclusive Learning Community While Still in a Pandemic?

For me, the holidays and the start of a new calendar year often stirs reflections on what is to come. The burden of the pandemic has been high and, yet, at the same time, we have learned many lessons from its transformative impact on education at all levels. Although the conditions of the pandemic continue, I am optimistic we can—and need to—build a more inclusive learning community going forward.

Our fledgling journal has been successful to date, and we have a steady stream of submissions. That said, we need to do a better job of being more inclusive. We need to get others outside of the greater Portland area more involved with the journal. So please share with us any ideas you may have. We have made good efforts in diversifying our editorial board, and have included a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement on our website. However, we can do better at having a more diverse pool of reviewers and at attracting authors from all professions.

We highlighted the use of inclusive language in our August 2021 issue. The recent controversy surrounding the chancellor of Purdue University “joking” about Asian language at a commencement ceremony reminds us of the need for persistent anti-racism efforts in our educational institutions. We must all be mindful and use respectful language in all communications. As individuals, we may not change systematic or organizational challenges

that are anti-inclusive. But our day-to-day language can greatly impact our learning communities in a positive way.

We can be more inclusive by offering more educational opportunities across our state. Before the pandemic, we faced challenges in facilitating widespread learning because of the ingrained culture of in-person learning in urban centers. We now know that hybrid and/or virtual learning can work. We also know that interprofessional education and teaming is central to improving the care of our patients. The inclusive question needs to be: why shouldn't every educational activity be interprofessional? Going forward, we need to provide easier access to effective learning for busy, front-line clinicians across a wide geographical area. “Effective” learning means using evidence-based methods from the growing literature on learning science.

Some of my colleagues know I have used the Merlin Exercise to forecast what the future should look like. If you recall, Merlin was living his life backward, so he could assist King Arthur by avoiding future obstacles. Once one knows the future, one can work backward to ultimately achieve the future state. So, what does an inclusive learning community look like to you 5 years from now? Do you have a vision in mind? I'd love to hear more about your vision and talk about how we can build that inclusive learning community together!

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