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President's message

Shan Jmper, PhD, ATSA President

So much has happened in our world since I last addressed you all in the Forum 3 months ago. Reviewing that message to the membership just now, it seems like we were living in a different world then, which I guess we were. Over the last 3 months I have witnessed countless examples of ATSA members' compassion, flexibility and resilience. We are adapting to our new way of life with dedication to caring for the persons we serve in safe, effective and helpful ways. I continue to be impressed as I watch the spirit of ATSA thrive regardless of what is happening in the world. Despite personal hardships and tragedy, ATSA members remain committed to our vision of a world without sexual violence. I am very proud to be a part of this organization.



Its official – the ATSA 2020 Conference is going digital! Once it became clear that it was unlikely the world would return to normal by October the office staff began exploring options for hosting a virtual conference. Maia and Kelly successfully negotiated with the hotel to cancel this year's conference without what would normally be hefty financial penalties and the ATSA board voted to move the conference to a digital platform. Your 2020 Conference Chairs Mark Olver and Jill Stinson will be working with the office staff and conference planning committee to digitally revise this year's conference, "Blending Voices, Strengthening Lives". The choices for doing so are expansive thanks to modern technology. We will be able to make the conference experience accessible to more people via this platform and even host on-line social gatherings to capture the value of connecting with colleagues that so many ATSA members count on each year. Hosting conference on-line creates new opportunities for partnering with sister organizations that are also dedicated to eliminating sexual violence. The potential value of this year's conference is very exciting, truly an unexpected benefit of the pandemic. More information will be coming soon – I know you'll be thrilled with all the options created by the work of the office staff and the conference committee.

It is time once again for ATSA elections. Voting will begin soon for President-Elect, At-Large Representative and the Public Policy and Prevention Representatives. The remaining two appointed positions, Education and Training, and Chapter Engagement and Development will be filled once the elections are complete. I discussed this at length in my previous message, so will just take a moment here to stress how important it is for all members to vote in the ATSA Board elections. The more voices we hear, the better we can represent the interests of the membership. One of the primary vehicles for making your voice heard is through voting and responding to member polls. If all ATSA members who do typically vote in elections commit to convincing another ATSA member who usually does not vote to do so, we will double the participation rate in the ATSA election process.

Earlier this spring the ATSA membership voted overwhelmingly (93% of those responding) in favor of a new structure for ATSA membership. Our current 9 membership categories will be collapsed into four: ATSA Member, ATSA Clinical Member, Student Member and Associate Member. These changes have also been designed to make the organization more welcoming and easier to join for all professionals who work in the area of sexual abuse prevention. More information on the steps for transitioning to the new membership categories will be coming out soon from the ATSA membership

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coordinator Tegan Waring and Brad Johnson, acting ATSA membership chair. Full implementation will take place during the 2021 membership renewal process.

Although the world's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the financial hardships that many individuals, businesses and organizations struggle with, I want to reassure everyone that in this respect, ATSA is quite fortunate. Membership renewals are about on par with how these unfold each year – we should again settle around 3000 members. Thanks to the hard work and dedicated negotiating skills of the ATSA office staff, last year's conference in Atlanta generated revenues well in excess of what was expected. Typical operating expenses are down in response to the pandemic so we are well ahead of the game financially this year.

As you know, the ATSA office has been closed for some time and the entire staff have been working remotely, which I'm sure makes the ambivalent status of conference even more of a challenge to manage. Despite working from home, the office staff have provided the same level of service to our members and stakeholders as always. Your ATSA board is also finding new ways to work together from afar. Another unexpected benefit of the pandemic is the board's ability to meet more frequently when travel is not involved. With much to do in the coming months, we look forward to increasing our ability to ensure ATSA's growth and continued success. We don't know what the future will look like but lately with respect to ATSA I think often of this quote by author Andy Andrews: "Adversity is preparation for greatness". Please join me, your ATSA board and the office staff in ATSA greatness.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve ATSA. Be healthy!



Shan Jumper

ATSA President

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