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JANUARY 19, 2022

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**NAPOMLE**

## **NAPOMLE Presidential Updates**

**By: Hilary Dack**

Dear NAPOMLE members-

I hope this message finds you healthy and rested as we begin a new year. Thank you for your support of NAPOMLE events at AMLE21 in November. It was wonderful to learn and connect with so many of you.

At my institution, I teach each cohort of undergraduate middle grades teacher candidates two semesters in a row – once in the fall and once in the spring. When we re-group as a classroom community after winter break, I always invite my students to reflect on the big ideas of what they learned during the fall about teaching early adolescents. I challenge them to recognize how their thinking about middle school has changed at this point in their program.

During this exercise, I also share reflections on what I learned from being their instructor during the previous semester. This year, I told my students that watching them learn and grow so much in the fall kept me motivated as a teacher educator, despite the challenges I sometimes experienced in other aspects of my work.

I think my students had not considered this before – that teacher educators can be motivated by the learning of the pre-service or inservice teachers they support. When my students heard that I would be sending greetings to teacher educators across the country through this newsletter, they gave me permission to share their reflections so that you could be reminded of how you have helped support and shift the thinking of future or current middle school teachers in your work, too.

Here are some of the thoughts they shared.

- I used to think kids this age didn't care about school, but now I know that the right kind of one-on-one support can do a lot to motivate learning.
- I used to think middle school students were too old to need "handholding," but now I know that kids this age really benefit from the right type of guidance.
- I used to think middle school students were always choosing to be difficult, but now I know that those behaviors often come from developmental changes or from trauma.
- I used to think that everything kids this age do can be chalked up to pure hormones, but now I know that cognitive psychology and neuroscience can explain so much more.
- I used to think great lessons were the result of teachers making good decisions while teaching, but now I know that great lessons are also the result of tons of planning.
- I used to think middle school students didn't pay attention because they chose not to, but now I know there could be many reasons why students have a hard time engaging.
- I used to think it was always the student's fault if they weren't understanding something, but now I know my teaching choices are related to student learning.
- I used to think it wouldn't be possible to connect with learners who were very different from me, but now I know I can - and should - build relationships with all my students.

My students asked me to thank you for the work that you are doing on behalf of future middle school teachers everywhere – and to close with the following message from my students:

*Please keep equipping future and current teachers with resources and information to help middle school students from different backgrounds and with different learning needs. Keep helping your students to feel prepared to advocate for their decisions with their colleagues as they work to support student needs.*

*Please keep being there for your students so that, in turn, they'll be there for their students. Keep thinking about your students' needs and your students' perspectives while they're working hard to become better teachers. Keep being patient with them and advocating for them.*

*Please keep working to break the stigma around middle school and around working with early adolescents. Keep helping future teachers to be optimistic about middle schoolers, and keep telling others about how much value early adolescents really hold. Please remember that you make a difference in the lives of your students.*

As you enter a new semester that will come with both challenges and rewards, I hope you will take a few moments to reflect on the impact of your work and how you make a difference to our field.

Best wishes for 2022.

Hilary Dack, NAPOMLE President

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# NAPOMLE AWARDS 2021

THANKS TO ALL WHO JOINED US AT OUR BUSINESS MEETING DURING THE AMLE CONFERENCE

Join us in congratulating our award winners for 2021!

## Outstanding Professor of Middle Level Education

**Amanda Wall**

Georgia Southern University

## Honorary Professor Emeritus

**Dave Strahan**

Retired Botner Distinguished Professor from WCU

## Outstanding Middle Level Teacher Education Candidate

**Elizabeth Gebhart**

Shippensburg University



Please consider nominating a colleague and/or program for recognition at the AMLE conference in November. NAPOMLE has five awards that recognize outstanding contributions made to middle level education. Here is a list of the awards:

- 1) Outstanding Middle Level Teacher Education Program
- 2) Outstanding Professor of Middle Level Education
- 3) Outstanding Middle Level Teacher Education Candidate
- 4) Honorary Professor Emeritus Award
- 5) Outstanding CMLA Chapter

The criteria for each award can be found on our website. Please send your nominations/letters of support and a current vita (if applicable) to Michelle Williams at [williamsdm@sfasu.edu](mailto:williamsdm@sfasu.edu) by September 1, 2022. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle.

## Call For Awards

# NAPOMLE

Does your organization have good news, awards, or job announcements to share? We would love to spread the word! Email good news to [hhpinter@wcu.edu](mailto:hhpinter@wcu.edu)

## Job Posting!

Clinical Assistant Professor  
Faculty in Middle Grades  
and/or Secondary Education  
UNC Charlotte. [Details Here.](#)

### CMLA, At-Large Chapters

If your college/university does not have a CMLA chapter, the CMLA at-Large Chapter model is a great option. The CMLA at-Large Chapter is divided into East and West, and faculty advisors for each region help to mentor and guide participating students. If you are interested in connecting students at your institution with the at-large chapter in their region, please reach out to Sarah Pennington (West) or Kristie Smith (East).

#### CMLA at-Large Chapter Faculty Advisor Email Addresses

West- Sarah Pennington: [sarah.pennington2@montana.edu](mailto:sarah.pennington2@montana.edu)

East- Kristie Smith: [smith\\_kristie@columbusstate.edu](mailto:smith_kristie@columbusstate.edu)

States served by the CMLA at-Large Chapter, West

AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, MI, MN, MO, MT, NE, NV, ND, OH, OK,  
OR, SD, TN, TX, UT, WA, WI, WY

States served by the CMLA at-Large Chapter, East

AL, AR, CT, DE, FL, GA, KY, ME, MD, MA, MS, NH, NC, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, VA, WV

For more information, visit the [CMLA page on the AMLE website.](#)