

CAPED Family,

7 months ago, we were in a very different place. We were not yet concerned with the state budget, we were preparing for the Spring Drive-In, we were mid-way through the Spring semester, and we were just finalizing plans for CAPED 2020 in South Lake Tahoe. It is amazing how much can change in the blink of an eye. I, like many of you, am working from home, supporting my own team virtually, and balancing my own struggles with the struggles of my students and staff in light of the pandemic. Has it been difficult? Has it been hard? Has it been different? Unpredictable? YES!!!



But what did we learn? We as a profession always look to support our students first and foremost and make their struggles the priority over ours. We are adaptable, resilient, and unapologetically passionate about the access and support of our students with disabilities regardless of the situation. In spite of Covid-19, we have banded together to ensure our students have the proper access, the proper accommodations, as we supported and coached our faculty counterparts in the changes to technology; while ensuring captions, interpreters, technology, and access were of the utmost our priority regardless of the form or function of instruction. We have found innovative ways to serve our students, spent way too many hours in front of our computers zooming from one meeting session to the next, and in some cases, found an opportunity to be more efficient in how we serve and meet our student's needs. I am sure we all have stories of the struggles, the trials, and the success we have had through this unique time; but above all else, we have continued to keep our mission and vision for serving our students the priority and I have to say I am proud of all of you! I wish I could say it was getting easier and we are getting ready to return to "normal", but we still do not know what that "normal" looks like. My district like many of yours is remaining online for Spring as the CSUs and many of the community colleges are making the same decision. So, where do we go from here?

We continue to stay focused, determined to adapt, innovate, and come together as a CAPED family to find best practices and standards for working within this environment while ensuring our students have all the support and access to be as successful as they possibly can. We lean on each other for moral support, for problem solving, and for the motivation and validation that we are doing our best. We give ourselves grace as, after all, we are only human, and we are doing our best given the situation at hand. Many of us are working at home, with partners

or significant others also working from home or in the field as essential workers, with kids going to school from home, and remaining cautious, safe, and healthy while trying not to lose it ourselves.

But just like you, CAPED continues to stay strong and focused on moving forward and has been busy planning, developing, and preparing for what is coming next. Many of our CIGs jumped into action as they delivered essential content and trainings in response to a virtual environment. The Access Technology CIG developed and presented multiple workshops and trainings to the field. The LD CIG jumped into advocacy and support to assist campuses in new ways that LD Specialist could still collaborate and serve students and programs and has even developed an advisory structure that they are rolling out. Officers and Executive members came together to speak out in support of Black Lives Matter and aimed to remain vigilant in the efforts of equity and equality. We have been working on updating our bylaws and planning the CAPED Convention and addressing key issues in advocacy and legislative issues regarding the State budget and bill initiatives. We are planning our Fall Professional Development Zoom in and trying to make adjustments to our CAPED 2020 Convention in 2021 in hopes that we can safely come together again soon. More details of all of these areas will be announced soon, but rest assured CAPED did not stop working; just like you we meet the challenges and continued to push forward so we can continue to serve our members and represent our students and our profession across the state of California.

I am personally sad that we did not get the chance to be together as we normally have and that my term as CAPED President is coming to an end. I will still be there to support your new President Nicole Smith as Past President and will continue to support the mission and vision of CAPED. If you would like to get involved or participate in any of the convention planning or committees let me know. We cannot do this without the help of all our members. WE ARE CAPED and will continue to be there for you. CAPED is my family, and I wish you all health, safety, and security through these times.

Chad Bowman, Ed.D.
CAPED President