

# Taking a Moment to Say “Thank You”

Craig R. Denegar, PhD, PT, ATC, FNATA

Like our personal lives, the *Journal of Athletic Training (JAT)* undergoes transition periodically. In June, I completed my final term as Editor-in-Chief (EIC), and the *Journal* welcomes the leadership of Dr Jay Hertel. Life is good.

Transition offers the opportunity for reflection, and the words that jump to mind when thinking about serving as the EIC of *JAT* are “This is the best job I ever had.” The privilege of leading *JAT* over the past 6 years has been immensely rewarding, both personally and professionally. Although the EIC reviews and makes editorial decisions about papers submitted for consideration, the job requires much more. In the past 6 years, I have participated in the selection of Saint Louis University as the home of the editorial office. With the addition of the *Athletic Training Education Journal* in 2012, the *JAT* office became the NATA [National Athletic Trainers' Association] Journals Office. Both journals have grown in measures of success to the benefit of all who read and use the work of the many talented authors who select *JAT* and the *Athletic Training Education Journal* to disseminate their work.

One measure of *JAT*'s growth is the transition from a bimonthly print and online publication to an online-only monthly publication. This transition resulted in a near 50% increase in the pages published annually. The savings from moving to a solely digital publication permitted expansion without additional costs to the members of the NATA. A second measure of success, the journal impact factor, has steadily increased for the past 4 years. One priority I established for *JAT* was the continued pursuit of a worldwide audience. In 2013, *JAT* became the official publication of the Athletic Rehabilitation Therapists of Ireland, and in 2017, an agreement was reached to permit the Japan Athletic Trainers' Organization to translate most of the materials published in *JAT* into Japanese. The number of submissions from international authors continues

to grow and reflects the expanding global recognition of the athletic trainer as the health care provider of choice for athletic and active people.

None of these goals would have been accomplished without the outstanding team in the Journals Office and the exceptionally dedicated editorial board members, associate editors, and senior associate editors who volunteer extensive time and talent to make *JAT* the best it can be. The list is too long to include in an editorial, but please accept my heartfelt thank you for all you have done for me and for *JAT*.

I do want to share a special thank-you to Managing Editor Leslie Neistadt and my wife Sue. I have had the good fortune to work with Leslie for more than 20 years in my roles as associate editor, senior associate editor, and EIC. Without Leslie's dedication and talent, *JAT* would not have grown to the status it has earned across sports medicine. Saying thank you is not enough to convey how much I appreciate her support and work through these many years.

In this age of information technology, the *Journal* operates all day, every day. Sue has tolerated numerous interruptions as my mind wandered to address assigning a new submission or making an editorial decision, tasks that appear in my inbox at any time of the day and night. Thank you for the understanding and support and for allowing me to pursue a dream job.

Finally, I could not be more proud to turn over the EIC's pen to Dr Hertel. It is always rewarding to see a former student achieve great success. When that student has become a great friend, colleague, and collaborator, the rewards are even greater. The NATA could not have selected a better-prepared scholar and editor to guide *JAT* forward to greater success. Congratulations, Jay, and again, thank you to everyone who has made my journey in the editorial and publishing world so enjoyable and rewarding.