

# Take 3 with the *Transformational Times* Editorial Board



*On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Transformational Times, Adina Kalet, MD, MPH, Director of the Kern Institute; Bruce Campbell, MD, FACS, Editor-in-Chief; Wendy Peltier, MD and Kathlyn Fletcher, MD, Editorial Board members; Erin Weileder, Managing Editor and Eileen Peterson, student member of the editorial board reflect on the last two years of Transformational Times and COVID-19...*

## 1. What do you find unique about the *Transformational Times*?

**Wendy Peltier:** The *Transformational Times* began at a time of crisis, with the goal of keeping the MCW community connected despite forced isolation from the pandemic. It created a unique platform to share reflections and stories in real time. It has stimulated me, and I hope all our readers, to take a moment to pause, reflect, write and share. The commitment and tenacity of my fellow editorial members in sustaining a weekly publication has been extraordinary and inspired me to focus on new opportunities despite the constant strain of the pandemic and tumult in our world. It has been an honor to be part of the process.

**Kathlyn Fletcher:** I love our focus on getting different voices into the *Transformational Times*.

**Erin Weileder:** *Transformational Times* does an amazing job of lifting all voices at MCW – Faculty, Students and Staff and giving people the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences so that others can learn and grow from them. The part the students

play in the newsletter is tremendous to me and the enthusiasm they show for finding the student voice to share is something I'm personally very proud of.

2. Why do you think we've been able to keep it going for two years?

**Eileen Peterson:** I think the biggest reason we've been able to keep this going for 2 years is because of the people. We continue to have talented writers who share their unique points of view, invested readers who come back every week, and tireless editors who bring everything together for that Friday morning gift to your inbox. This newsletter has helped us all connect with one another as we find our way through many iterations of "the new normal." There is something truly special about this form of connection for faculty, staff, and students.

**Bruce Campbell:** We knew from the start that we wanted to reach out to a diverse group of contributors so that as many voices as possible could be amplified. We wanted to hear from people who might not otherwise feel empowered to speak up. I was surprised and gratified to find out how willing people were to contribute (after that first email response that almost always included, "Me? I can't write!"). We received some amazing contributions. As the *Transformational Times* gained a readership, recruiting people to write became easier.

There were guardrails, of course, but we always wanted people to write from their hearts, explain topics about which they were passionate, share stories that reflected first-person experiences, and discover that they are not alone. It was raw, at times. The honesty came through.

From the start, we wanted writing that mattered. We sought to be a resource for our community that never wasted people's valuable and limited time. I hope we have, as much as possible, succeeded, and will continue to improve.

**KathyIn Fletcher:** I think our ability and commitment to addressing current events and their implications for medical education have kept people engaged. Also, some of the essays are just so honest, raw and beautiful. I think people find the authors and their pieces relatable.

3. Have you developed a new habit during the pandemic that you will carry forward?

**Eileen Peterson:** One habit I have developed during the pandemic is trying to set more intentional time for myself. More time at home meant exploring new hobbies such as

baking and virtual workout classes, and I found that these hobbies helped me feel less anxious and more present. Now that we're not stuck at home, I try to set aside more time for baking and workouts than I did pre-pandemic. I'm hoping to carry this form of mindfulness forward.

**Adina Kalet:** Well, because I have committed to writing an essay a week (almost), I have gotten into the habit of capturing my "stories" in writing whenever I can. Every person I interact with, every newspaper or magazine article, every podcast, television series or movie, every book I read becomes potential material. This has made me much more observant and curious, and helped me get through some of the COVID challenges because it has kept me engaged. I now have a document entitled Director's Corner Notes which is almost 100 pages long and contains all sorts of snippets of paragraphs and lists of topics. Recently, I took some time to insert a table of contents into the document to give me more of an overview for when I need inspiration for the Director's Corner. I have intermittently kept a journal since I was a kid. I started my first after reading The Diary of Anne Frank. These journals have mostly focused on keeping track of the things I was doing and the people I was meeting, not terribly interesting stuff. What I am doing now is very different. For the first time I find myself keeping an "intellectual" journal, tracing my thoughts, memories, and ideas from their inspiration to their implication for our work in the Kern Institute. This is a habit I will carry forward.

**Wendy Peltier:** For me, personally and professionally, the COVID pandemic has really cast a light on the importance of family and connection. When I look back at this historic time years from now, I will certainly remember the fear, disbelief and sadness, but also reflect with gratitude on the intense time with my nuclear family. I will remember how it felt the first time we could finally allow family visitors again for patients on hospice, to support those sacred moments. As we return to many of our normal pre-pandemic activities, I hope to authentically re-connect with extended family, friends and colleagues with a new ability to be more present.

**Erin Weileder:** COVID has taught me that my family is my number one priority. I wouldn't have survived the last two years without their love and support, as well as so many laughs, silly jokes, dancing and other distractions to help us get through some pretty rough times. I have also learned that it's important to hold on to your tribe even tighter and that isolation has shown me who that tribe should be.

#### **4. Would you recommend service to the T. Times Editorial Board to others, and why?**

**Adina Kalet:** We meet every week for 30 minutes to connect, review our plans and brainstorm. This is fun, energizing and stimulating. We try to stay "in the moment" so that any current events can be addressed, but we have a general rhythm and infrastructure to make the TTs happen weekly. Then each of us takes responsibility for soliciting brief essays from others and working with them to provide support, light editing, and encouragement. This process has brought out the "writer" in many people

who didn't believe they could or should write, it has lifted and amplified the voices of many students, residents, nurses, and staff who otherwise might not have seen their point of views represented. We have discovered a few poets and photographers in the community and have done our part to keep the community together during the challenges of the past two years. I think serving on our board is a great way to keep abreast of what is current, to contribute to the community and be creative. If you have a point of view on the transformation of medical education, join us.

**Bruce Campbell:** I have learned so much over the past two years. I have met people (mostly via Zoom, unfortunately), learned about topics, taken deep dives into medical education science, and worked with an amazing, committed team that spans departments and generations. It has been great fun. We need to expand the diversity and inclusion of both voices and leadership as we move forward.