



Cumulus Newsletter • December 2021

President's Message

2021 Cumulus Year in Review

As we were putting together this last issue of our newsletter last week, I was getting ready to write a somewhat more triumphant reflection; one more in the lines about 2021 being the year that brought us pedagogical innovation, resilience, and the beginning of discrete experiences of international mobility and celebratory re-uniting of in-person instruction and a return to a semblance of many taken-for-granted ways of teaching and learning pre-pandemic.

But because of the timing of this short editorial coinciding with a very concerning resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic across higher education with the new variant spike, I am reminded of the required vigilance and flexibility that will continue to be the norm and modus operandi for us all to keep collaborating across borders to ensure our communities stay healthy and safe as we plan for 2022, whether that is the spring semester in the Global North, or a summer semester for colleagues in the Global South.

Focusing on the many “triumphs” large and small for the Cumulus community in 2021, I will only point to a few. I want to celebrate the academic chairs and organizing teams of our two Cumulus Conferences. They are colleagues who worked tirelessly to design and adapt their programs for hybrid and virtual delivery under very trying circumstances. They did so with admirable creativity and results. A big bravo to Sapienza University colleagues for bringing [Cumulus Roma: Design Culture \(s\)](#) to life and to the Universidad de las Artes team for the [Cumulus Guayaquil: Arts Imagining Communities to Come](#). The Cumulus Conferences remain a cornerstone of some of the magic that happens for our members as they get together to exchange knowledge, scholarship, and insights and network to shape new collaborations. Despite the limitations of all online platforms, our two conferences showed the strength of a very intentional effort supported by our team at the Cumulus Secretariat, our Board, and all members who participated in creating a sense of community and engagement outside the academic programs of each conference. It was thrilling to witness many of my colleagues back, together, and in that mode. The dialogue and engagement of our distributed community were also palpable in joint partner events, but also in smaller groups and engagement touchpoints, many of which happened among our Working Groups, and some via the [Cumulus Connects](#) satellite site. Now that we have launched our [new website](#), we will be looking to fully activate many functionality aspects envisioned for this new digital ecosystem for our association to amplify the access and reach of our network's resources. 2021 is when we also toasted Cumulus 30th anniversary, one the history section of our new website also highlights, via the voices of our leaders and former presidents, and notably via a short narrative film compiled from member submissions and their voices that you can watch again [here](#). This short piece was especially touching as I believe it captures an aspirational message of hope that I hear in many of the conversations I have with the educators and students that belong to our many institutions around the world.

Wishing everyone a healthy and peaceful holiday season!

Mariana

Mariana Amatullo, PhD

President, Cumulus

Associate Professor, Strategic Design and Management, Parsons

Vice Provost for Global Executive Education and Online Strategic Initiatives,

The New School