



President's Message



Tidings of Renewal

Fourteen months ago, I wrote in this newsletter how New York was a shadow of its former self as it grappled with the onslaught of the pandemic. Today, I am happy to report that my city is springing back to life, due in part to widespread vaccination access and the arrival of mild spring weather prompting everyone to emerge from hibernation and quarantine.

Still, the reacquainting many of us are enjoying “sans mask” in outdoor gatherings and in-person reunions with loved ones is tampered by the awareness of a different reality many of our colleagues, students, friends, and family members continue to face as the global roll-out of vaccinations highlights huge inequalities depending on where you are in this globe. As my colleagues in the graduate program of our International Affairs Division at The New School reminded us last month, of the approximately 1.4 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines that have been injected, 44% have been in high-income countries, accounting for just 16% of the world population. A mere 0.3% have been given in the 29 lowest-income countries totaling 9% of the world population.

The consequences of the lack of a successful and fully collaborative roll-out of vaccinations to date globally—so vital to the end of the pandemic—continues to create much uncertainty for us as administrators and educators with many of our international students and mobility agreements and study abroad programs impacted as we plan a safe return to our campuses for the next academic cycle (those of us in the Global North), or start preparing for the second half of another year of remote teaching and learning (those of us in Global South countries).

Amid the ongoing disruption and the positive hope we witness with the first signs of recovery around us, the Cumulus family represents a source of resilience and global connection. I was deeply energized by the work of my colleagues in the Secretariat and Executive Board as we came together last week to prepare for our report to members during the main governance meeting of our association, the second fully virtual General Assembly that will be held on **June 10**. We also had an exciting preview of the wonderful program our board member Professor Lorenzo Imbesi, co-chair of the Cumulus Roma Design Culture (s), and his conference team at Sapienza University with the leadership of his co-chair Loredana DiLucchio have prepared for us. I am looking forward to joining them in Rome in a few days and supporting them for what will be an incredibly immersive virtual reunion with a few in-person connections for some. There are many highlights to celebrate during this conference that will include inspiring keynotes, paper presentations across many tracks, and ten Cumulus Working Group meetings. I also look forward to celebrating the Cumulus Green 2020 student winners and our announcement of the plans for Cumulus Green 2022. Last but not least, we will have a belated 30th Anniversary Celebration as well, and I cannot wait to share with all of you a series of short films we produced with the voices of many of you, our members, to mark this important milestone for our association. This will be just one highlight among a few other unveilings that you will witness and that we have in store—a tribute to the hard work of our Board and Secretariat at Aalto University.

Tidings of renewal and resilience are afoot. Here's to greeting you all as your president, starting June 8 from Rome.

Warmly,

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