



UMFCNAfME Spring 2023



Presidents Message

Dear NAFamily,

First and foremost, I must congratulate you all on completing yet another semester. Completion of each semester for our degree is no small feat, and with that I share a sincere congratulations! As we go to the summer, and take a much-earned academic break, I'd love to take a moment to reflect on all our Chapter's accomplishments this semester.

Starting at the FMEA Conference in Tampa and then to our Secondary Instrument Concert with our incredible judges; another thank you to Dr. Coffman, Dr. Deroo, and Cameron! Memorable performances at that Concert to say the least! :) Next was our Advocacy Week where we shared the joys of Music Education and brought back the Instrument Petting Zoo tradition and tried out some new events! And of course, our beloved NAFcafes and Bake Sales have been of wild success this semester, all thanks to each of you, raising a near total of \$1,000 in just one semester! And to top it all off, we were awarded the 2023 SOARS Award from Excellence of Programming in Performing Arts!

While we do incredible work here together, I am most excited to see what each of us accomplish outside of Foster 239's ... wait no Volpe 103's walls. I gave a short presentation this semester on Music Education at Frost and one of my concluding remarks was, "Strike up a conversation with any of my peers, and you'll see undeniable evidence of our passion for the field of education and all the incredible goals we have for our futures." It gives me such pride to be able to make that statement and believe it whole-heartedly.

With that, to our graduating Seniors, I wish each one of you the absolute best for your futures. This time is scary, but exciting! I can't speak from experience of this transition, I acknowledge such, but we've all entered new chapters of our lives, and I know what gets me through is knowing the transition is temporary and a few words of encouragement. So rather me, I recruited a little help from some friends:)

Congratulations! Well-done! You've overcome the upheaval of the COVID pandemic to achieve this goal. Your MED faculty are proud of you! I'd like to offer two thoughts.

First, I wish to thank you...

Thank you for choosing music education for your undergraduate degree. We certainly need fine educators like you! I hope our paths cross in the future, and you can tell me some wonderful stories about teaching.

Thank you for choosing the Frost School. I am better for having the privilege of guiding you. You have enriched my life through the sharing of your lives.

Second, my best wishes for your future. I suspect that you're feeling (or soon will) a mixture of pride, relief, excitement, and perhaps some unease...

What does your future hold? I know that much remains for you to discover. You will have successes and setbacks. How might you face the uncertain?

I encourage you to consider this point of view from Sharon Salzberg, who wrote, "Few people are powerful enough, persuasive, persistent, consistent, and charismatic enough to change the world all at once, but everyone has the ability to affect the three feet around them by behaving more ethically, honestly, and compassionately toward those they meet." Theodore Roosevelt expressed more succinctly—"Do what you can, with what you've got, where you are."

In an age of Instagram Influencers reaching hundreds of thousands of followers, I remind you to be aware of your three feet of influence, to simply focus your attention on the here and now, on the things that you are good at or enjoy doing, and on the people immediately in your vicinity. Be your best possible self with the people that really matter: your immediate family, closest friends, student, and colleagues.

You've heard me say, "We don't teach music, we teach people." For me, the process of teaching is more important than the product or performance. Your words, actions and example really matter.

So much of the world today is frankly a mess. And there seems so little that one can do. Rather than wish the world was better, strive to act in ways that reflect how you believe the world should be.

- Dr. Coffman

Dear Graduating MED Canes:

As we approach graduation day, I thought I'd share a short verse to set you on your way:

*A new chapter in life, you will soon start,
and I am delighted that Frost MED played a part.*

*Your talents, intelligence, and much preparation
will guide you in becoming a teaching sensation.*

*Teach with great passion, with all of your heart
with wonder and care also playing a part.*

*As you write this new chapter, please don't forget
that your impact on students will have a lifelong effect.*

*May your love of music and teaching come through
and inspire your students to write their own chapter too.*

Best wishes to you all!

Dr. Abril

Dear Music Education Seniors,

Congratulations to you all. You are about to embark on the journey of a lifetime. How exciting! Although truth be told, perhaps it would be more accurate to say "disembark?" You see, for the last four years, you've been an undergraduate, which is neither a naïve high school student nor a professional. For four years you've been observing, practicing, learning, leading, reading (I mean, presumably you've been reading. Please don't correct me if I'm wrong... I'd rather live in ignorance). You have been dutifully doing all the things you're supposed to do, honing your skills as an educator and steeling yourself for what is to come. You've been student teaching, making lesson plan after lesson plan (after lesson plan), organizing concerts and fundraisers, and managing all those insane things Overland threw at you. You've done all the things... except the actual thing.

But college is not real life. Not yet, not quite. College, for all its amazing experiences, is its own bubble of reality – a vehicle of transport, a ship unto itself, charged with sailing you from the mainland of your high school years to the vast uncharted islands of actual teaching. You've been able to see the mountains of this brave new world slowly growing in the distance, I'm sure. Cliffs rising, birds weaving

along the shores, waves splashing, just waiting for you to plant your flag. You may even be able to see some of the local denizens waving at you in anticipation of your arrival. They're excited to meet you. You'll be gliding up to the dock soon to walk across the gangplank of the graduation stage to pick up your diploma; your certification from the University that, yes, we do in fact believe in you—now here, take this piece of paper and go get on with it. It's your receipt to prove to the world you actually did make it after all.

Your day is here. It's time to disembark. It's time you take your first few steps off this crazy pirate ship we call "Undergraduate School" and into the real world, like the adventuresome buccaneer you are. Say "yarr" to yourself in the mirror every so often. It helps, trust me. It's ok, you know what you're doing... even if you haven't done it yet. Even if you don't even know for sure you know what you're doing. Your content expertise isn't in question... that's what the diploma is for. Nerves, maybe, but you'll feel differently one year from now.

Until then, all you have to do is this: every day, find one human... just one, and make their life just a little better. Doesn't matter how. Maybe teach them a scale they didn't know. Maybe introduce them to their new favorite song. Or maybe just know their name when no one else does. It doesn't matter what you do. But that is your role. You must do it, even if you are having a rough day. ESPECIALLY if you are having a rough day. If you can do that, you will be a success as a teacher. If you never win a medal or trophy, then fine. So be it. As long as they are better off and more in touch with their own music than when you first met them, you can sleep well, knowing you've done your part. School can give you the content, but integrity can't be taught – that's your contribution. All of the rest will come in time.

It's been a joy and a pleasure to sail these seas with you, and I look forward to hearing about your future adventures. Who knows? Maybe someday you will hop behind the wheel of your own ship and return the favor to your own crew of tiny pirates. If you do, tell them I say "yarr."

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To conclude this letter, I must share a sincere thank you to the respective 2022 and 2023 Executive Boards. To the Ben, Emma, Jose, and Kara, I thank you for tireless efforts for 2 years, your problem-solving mindset leading this Chapter through the effects of the Pandemic, and selfishly, for equipping me with the skills to lead this Chapter. To Izzi, Jonah, Noah, and Sarah, I thank you for your undeniable passion for this organization, your fresh ideas and the "take-action" mentality attached

to them, and most importantly, your unwavering support. This Chapter would be nothing but maybe some rogue Einstein's bagels without the work of these incredible individuals.

I hope you all have a rejuvenating summer, and always, remember, you've got a small army of people who care about you, believe in you, and support you here with NAFME :)

All my best,

Janie Lobel, UMFCNAfME President 2023