



## Invited Letter: Greetings from the National Science Foundation

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I am Olivia Long, and I am currently serving as a rotating program officer in the Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation (NSF). My journey teaching in higher education has been rooted in a small, rural, regional primary undergraduate institution, where I have been deeply committed to supporting all students, particularly those transferring from local community colleges. Recognizing the unique challenges these students face, I have collaborated closely with local faculty and administrations of surrounding community colleges to make my institution more transfer-friendly. By building authentic relationships and clear pathways for students pursuing a baccalaureate degree, we have fostered a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages student success.

The theme of this issue is community college students. The articles co-authored by students highlight the potential for community college students to conduct research, analyze data, and report results with guidance from faculty mentors. Although most of my direct experience is with transfer students, I greatly respect community college faculty's vital role in shaping students' academic journeys. These educators often bring authentic experiences into their classrooms, enriching the learning environment. Similarly, helping students complete and publish their undergraduate research work has been one of the most fulfilling aspects of my career. This process encourages students to think critically, troubleshoot challenges, and gain practical experience. However, many students move on before their projects reach publication due to the short time frame before transferring or graduating. It often takes multiple students, semesters, or even years to gather enough data, making it crucial to continue these projects, publish the findings, and acknowledge the students' contributions. Publishing is essential not only for students' development and future careers, but also for showcasing the valuable research emerging from our students and faculty.

I recently attended the 2024 High Impact Technology Exchange Conference (HI-TEC) where the warmth and support of the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) community struck me. The enthusiasm shared by faculty members from various technical programs and community colleges was inspiring. Many of the sessions I attended were not only informative, but also offered research and insights that are truly worthy of publication. This experience reinforced my belief in the importance of disseminating our work through journals like J ATE, which provide a platform for the valuable contributions of community college faculty and their students.



**Olivia Long**  
*Program Officer,*  
*Division of Undergraduate Education*  
The National Science Foundation