

June 29, 2020

Fellow ALE Members –

THANK YOU! Thank you for your patience and engagement as we worked to transition from a physical conference to a virtual one. I am reaching out today to share some updates and exciting information.

If you are continuing to wonder why ALE did not officially cancel our physical conference back in March, please know that it wasn't because we weren't taking the pandemic seriously. As I shared with you at the time, announcing a cancellation then may have put us in a terrible spot financially. Cancelling our hotel and excursion contracts at that time would have cost the association in excess of \$100,000—which would have put us on the verge of bankruptcy. With the help of our meeting manager and an attorney in Tennessee, along with a great deal of patience and persistence, I am pleased to share with you that all contracts for 2020 were nullified without financial penalty to ALE. We were able to negotiate a rebooking of the hotel and conference venue as our site for the 2023 Annual Conference. (We already have contracts in place for 2021 and 2022.) To say this is a relief for the board and a positive financial outcome for ALE would be quite an understatement.

As you know, we are also hard at work putting together the puzzle pieces for our 2020 Virtual Annual Conference. The Conference Planning Committee and the ALE Board of Directors, along with the JOLE Board, have worked very thoughtfully and tirelessly to create something that will serve our members and allow us to share great work without (we hope) getting too much screen fatigue. This message shares some of the big picture highlights today and also lets you know that our website will continue to be updated the week of July 6 as additional details become available.

First and foremost, **the conference is free to all current ALE members!** While we can't guarantee this will be a feature of any future virtual conferences we may want or need to have, we have decided to host the conference through our own website (along with help from Zoom) so that it will not be an additional cost to ALE. This, of course, means that it will not have all the bells and whistles you may have seen at other virtual conferences. But we still think it will be pretty great! **Please visit our website and make sure your membership is current and dues have been paid so that you won't miss out!**

The virtual conference will have a mix of synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Authors of accepted **posters, research proposals and innovative practice paper proposals** will share pre-recorded presentations that will be available to ALE members from July 10-31. Some of these presentations may also include synchronous engagement after July 15 (at the presenters' discretion). The core conference schedule, July 12-15, will be used for **synchronous workshops, roundtables, and FAN meetings**. There will also be a virtual opportunity to engage with the editor and board of the *Journal of Leadership Education* (July 12), and our **Annual Business Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 15**. The core conference schedule is currently available on our website.

<https://www.leadershipeducators.org/Conference-Schedule>

Last, but by no means least, the *Journal of Leadership Education* will be publishing a **special issue** that coincides with our conference. This issue will include a combination of top-ranked research papers and innovative practice papers accepted to the conference.

We encourage a choose-your-own-adventure approach to this year's conference. We don't expect everyone to spend all day looking at their computer screens. We know that gets tough after a while. Feel free to look at the details of the schedule once they are available next week, and decide which synchronous sessions are for you. The **FAN meetings will occur on Monday, July 12**. They will have staggered start times throughout the afternoon, and we hope this will allow members to participate in more than one if they wish. The asynchronous sessions will be available for three weeks so that you can engage with them at your convenience over a longer stretch of time.

That's the big picture! Make sure your membership is current, and be watching the website next week for further details and developments.

We sincerely hope the virtual conference will offer a good mix of real-time and on-demand engagement that will allow you to share your work, learn from your colleagues, renew existing connections, and develop new ones. We look forward to sharing this experience with you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marianne Lorensen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marianne Lorensen
VP & Conference Chair, Association of Leadership Educators