

FOREWORD

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I am honored to join NACUA President Derek Langhauser in presenting this special edition of the *Journal of College and University Law* in recognition of NACUA's 50th Anniversary. While the practice of higher education law has changed over the past 50 years, the essence of NACUA and the commitment of the attorneys who serve their institutions remain unchanged in many ways. Looking back, NACUA was built on the cornerstones of collegiality and volunteerism; we remain true to those principles and values today and they will continue to guide us as we reach forward to our next 50 years and thereafter.

When the first group of NACUA members gathered at the University of Michigan in 1960, it was to network, share experiences, and discuss issues of common interest. Fifty years later, we still gather to network, share experiences, and discuss issues of common interest and concern. The spirit of volunteerism that made that first meeting successful has been passed on to subsequent generations of NACUA members and today remains the foundation for NACUA's continued success. It is embedded in the culture of the organization and is the common thread that runs through NACUA's very fabric.

Our members' generous spirit of volunteerism has been evident in so many ways over the years, including the scholarly work of those who contribute to this *Journal* and the tireless hours spent by those who referee, review, and edit the myriad articles. These individuals, and the hundreds of others every year who give just as generously of their time and expertise to ensure the viability of all areas of the Association, enable us to pursue our mission "to advance the effective practice of higher education attorneys for the benefit of the colleges and universities they serve."

What have been the most significant changes that we have seen in NACUA and in the practice of higher education law over the past 50 years? Certainly the breadth and complexity of the issues facing colleges and universities. But also the role of college and university counsel. NACUA attorneys have born witness to seminal court cases, legislation, and regulations that have changed the face of higher education and, for many, their role and responsibilities at their institution. What was once a small and relatively unknown area of law has grown into a significant and coveted practice area that requires more and more specialization, knowledge, and expertise, particularly as institutions of higher education

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continue to face an ever-growing list of new laws, government regulations and compliance requirements. The college or university attorney is now considered an essential member of the campus leadership team and a respected and valued advisor to the president or chancellor. Fifty short years ago, just 50 colleges had an office of legal counsel, most employing a single lawyer; today, NACUA's membership includes more than 3700 attorneys, serving 1600 campuses and more than 700 institutions of higher education.

What also has changed is the way we do business. Technology clearly has been the force behind much of this—literally transforming the way we communicate with the membership, the range and delivery of services we offer, and our ability to respond to member requests for information and assistance in real time so that we can send members what they want when they need it. And, while we now form friendships and professional alliances virtually, often before even meeting in person, there still is no substitute for face-to-face contact and interaction. Our founders realized this during their first meeting, and one of the great by-products of being a NACUA member is the deep and life-long friendships that are forged over many years; there is no doubt that the NACUA community is alive and vibrant well beyond the walls of the Association.

And, finally, the faces of NACUA have changed—to everyone's great advantage and benefit. The Association is more welcoming and inclusive than ever before, and we are well positioned to greet the next 50 years. As the higher education world continually changed around us, NACUA's volunteer leadership over the years had the foresight and acumen to ensure that we changed with it. In addition to our early core values of civility, collegiality, service, quality, and respect, we added diversity and inclusivity, both of which have enabled us to further our mission and strengthen our guiding principles. Our diversity—be it individual or institutional—is one of our greatest assets and has propelled us to become a better, more responsive and inclusive organization, which in turn has enabled our members to better serve their institutions.

While much has changed, much is still the same. Our core values 50 years ago may not have been so pointedly recognized or acknowledged, but the small group of attorneys who laid the foundation for the Association modeled them. They built an organization based on volunteerism that every subsequent generation of NACUA members has embraced. I never cease to be amazed by the generosity of NACUA members to share information and best practices, offer each other advice, and give so selflessly of their time and expertise.

The theme for our 50th Anniversary is NACUA's First 50 Years: Looking Back, Reaching Forward. The articles that are included in this special edition of the *Journal of College and University Law* reflect much of the substantive law over this period of time and bear witness yet again to

the dedication and selflessness of our volunteer authors. As we look back, we can see how different the practice of higher education law is today than it was in the *Journal's* early days. And, while NACUA's strategic priorities may vary from year to year to meet members' needs, the culture, values, sense of collegiality, mutual respect, and civility of our members have withstood the tests of time and remain intact.

The future of NACUA and of higher education law most certainly holds new and unforeseen challenges and opportunities. But our foundation is solid, our cornerstones still serve us well, and our membership remains strong and vibrant. I am confident that whatever the future holds, we will continue to model our core values, maintain our historic commitment to volunteer participation in our programming and governance, carry forward our tradition of adapting to changing times and changing member needs, and retain our reputation among institutions and associations as the leading organization on issues related to higher education law.

NACUA will surely embrace the opportunities and rise to the challenges moving forward. The values and sense of camaraderie and common purpose that have sustained us so well during this past half-century will persist, develop, and continue to thrive in the decades to come. It is an honor and a privilege to be part of such a special organization as we celebrate NACUA's many successes and look forward toward its bright future.