



September 2020

Farewell and Appreciation from a Senior AHEC Director

When a Missouri AHEC (MAHEC) program or center director writes these messages, they are generally not personal. Since September was Northwest Missouri AHEC's assigned month to write an article for the MAHEC monthly newsletter and my last month with AHEC, I took the liberty to change the format.

In 2001, I attended the graduation for what would be the last of the summer PRIMO Academies (summer academic camps) and that year MAHEC developed and implemented the statewide AHEC Career Enhancement Scholars (ACES) program. Across Missouri, many health professionals became interested in a health career by participating in our ACES program. Kristin Alexander, DMD, in Poplar Bluff was literally the first person to graduate from Missouri School of Dentistry and Oral Health at A. T. Still University in Kirksville. She was a member of Southeastern Missouri ACES and worked in that AHEC office prior to dental school. Mary Reid Williams, BSN, from Bosworth told me she was going to be a pediatric nurse when I met her. Her parents made certain she and her sister attended many workshops and Mary worked in our office while attending Missouri Western State University (MWSU). She was on a poster for MWSU announcing that she "got her dream job" after she became an oncology nurse at Children's Mercy Hospital. Two AHEC medical directors at NWMO AHEC/Mosaic Life Care were in the ACES program (Brad Grier, DO and Ben Reine, DO); a Sarah Wiederholt, MD, current MU AHEC Medical Director for NWMO AHEC was one of the first medical students I had the privilege of meeting. I could list names for pages, but only because in AHEC we develop relationships, provide resources, and keep in touch with them as they become valuable Missouri health professionals – accomplishing the MAHEC mission **to enhance access to quality healthcare, particularly primary and preventive care by growing and supporting Missouri's healthcare workforce.** The AHEC pipeline is important! Many health professional that helps us with workshops says they wish they had been involved in AHEC in high school if they weren't!

I would like to express much appreciation for the support of Mosaic Life Care, our Advisory Board members, staff—past and present, preceptors, parents, MAHEC and NAO colleagues, and again, the list goes on. Special thanks to state and federal legislators who push for continued AHEC funding—we would not be here without your help!

Paula Overfelt, Executive Director, Northwest Missouri AHEC

MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health.



*Northwest Missouri
AHEC ACES 2020*

MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University Kirksville
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- East Central Missouri AHEC– St. Louis
- Mid-Missouri AHEC-Rolla
- Northeast Missouri AHEC- Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC-St. Joseph
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri
- West Central Missouri AHEC – Lexington