CTLs Vs. Greg Maddux--
An Optimistic Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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About a week away from my shipping this issue to our webmaster for publication, I felt compelled to thank Todd Zakrajsek once again for his contribution. As part of his special series for this journal, his contribution to this issue, I think, reclaims a sense of optimism for Centers of Teaching and Learning (CTLs). It certainly has been easy over the last two years to devote our attention to loss—loss of funding, of face-to-face programming, of projects that had been well underway. While I don't for a second want to underestimate the degree of loss many of us have indeed experienced, professionally as well as personally, I hope that this issue of *JCTL* might provide faculty developers with a moment to pride ourselves in what we have learned about ourselves and the possibilities of our work.

Among trends that I see manifesting in this issue include our ability to adjust quickly, a trait that Todd identifies as a key lesson learned in this time of virus. In each article, COVID becomes part of the story, as contributors indicate revisions they have had to make to existing plans in the face of the pandemic. In most cases, it seems to me, authors mention the virus almost incidentally, as if its hazards had come to be expected and some shift was now more the natural course of things rather than a crisis barely averted. In the case of Bose and Nyland's "Are We Prepared to Teach Flexibly?," the concept of flexibility becomes a defining significance; the authors explore the degree to which it might have been more central to previous research and the value now of pursuing flexibility as our norm.

Along with these revelations that change in higher education need not be so glacial as we had previously believed, we also see in these articles a sense of CTL as happening, one wherein various institutional entities gather to enhance teaching and learning. Through the articles collected here, you encounter not just CTL workers, but also their partnerships with libraries (Brinthaupt et al.), writing centers (Brinthaupt et al.), and colleagues from across disciplines who enter into CTL spaces to share their expertise (Gurbutt & Houston; Saucier et al.). Along these trajectories, you see participants collaborating in ways that range from the edification of those individuals directly involved to cultural changes across an institution. I'm left with the feeling

that despite the often-deadly obstacles that COVID has presented us, there is this enduring sense that we can still do anything we put our minds to.

As I sat down to write this introduction, I had in mind a description of CTLs as what mediated discourse theorists would call a "site of engagement," a site where education's social practices, materials, histories, expectations, discourses, and values "come together to form an action in real time" (Scollon, 2001, p. 28). I'm still rather wed to this idea, but think now I might save the thought for some future issue. Here, now, to advance optimism, I find myself (unexpectedly) recalling a televised baseball game I watched nearly thirty years ago. At the beginning of that game, the network presented a graphic detailing the scouting report on the day's starting pitcher, Greg Maddux. For those of you who don't often watch these games or are too young to remember, Maddux in the mid-1990s was already a sure hall of famer. When a network would flash a pitcher's scouting report, it would often say something like "Relies on the fastball; often has trouble locating breaking pitches" or "Excellent command of off-speed pitches; fastball often hittable when behind in the count." What I recall the network posting as Maddux's scouting report read as follows: "Can throw any pitch at any speed to any location at any time." I realize I might be stretching things a bit (optimism can be elusive in times such as ours), but I start to see here how a CTL's scouting report might say something very similar: "Can involve any group of individuals from any site on campus who can effectively develop any kind of program in any form at any time." The assessment might not make it as an annual summary submitted for administrative review, but for the moment, and probably in times to come, I'm going to hold onto this report, keep it in mind.

References

Scollon, R. (2001). *Mediated discourse: The nexus of practice*. Routledge.