

Idiom Letter from Past President Susanne Marcus

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Dear Colleagues,

More than two years ago, I wrote my first President's Letter for *Idiom*, then available only in print. Now, we are online. We've all heard the old adage, "Everything happens for a reason," and I do believe there was a reason that I remained president of NYS TESOL for two years. The additional year has given me an opportunity to witness changes in our organization that I likely would not have seen in just one year of the presidency. For this, I am humbled and deeply grateful to each of you.

My initial goals as president included moving us forward in the digital age, collaborating with our sister organizations, and increasing advocacy efforts and our membership. I am proud that during my presidency we had our first online ballot, which was very successful. On October 25, 2014, at St. John's University, we held our first jointly sponsored event with NYSABE in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the *Lau vs. Nichols* decision. We now offer more to our members on our website, with *Idiom* online and our new online *NYS TESOL Journal*, thanks to Rebekah Johnson, my presidential mentor. More Salons and activities throughout the state have sparked renewed camaraderie among members in and across many regions.

Having participated in the statewide meetings on revisions of CR Part 154 for the past several years, I am thrilled to see them made public and fully implemented in 2015–2016. While that huge undertaking is now complete, we must realize that revising NYSED regulations is an ongoing process, reflecting our ever-changing demographics and federal and state mandates. Indeed, we may be reviewing and revising many documents in the future. This is why we need more of you to become involved at all levels of NYS TESOL.

A highlight of my presidency began as a discussion in spring 2012, during my term as first vice president (also known as incoming president). Realizing that NYS TESOL is over forty years old, it was thought that a restructuring of our organization was overdue. In an effort to develop a strategic vision for the future of NYS TESOL, we sought an outside view for insight and inspiration that could energize us and help us as we plan for the future. After much research, late last summer we began our collaboration with Holly Duckworth, the CEO of Leadership Solutions International. Thus far, Holly has facilitated our strategic planning, which led to our updated business plan as well as our new vision statement:

NYS TESOL advocates, advances, and enriches TESOL education and professionalism statewide.

Now, as immediate past president, I chair our NYS TESOL Transition Team as we develop a strong volunteer program that recruits, retains, and maintains volunteers who ignite NYS TESOL's vision statement. People are busier today than ever before, and this may be even more so with educators. Yet, ESL teachers have passion for what we do. So, we are seeking ways to use our memberships' passion to complete smaller tasks within NYS TESOL. The team is also charged with clarifying job descriptions that include the multiple benefits of volunteering for NYS TESOL.

In closing, I thank you for the privilege of serving as your president these past two years. As an organization concerned with advocacy, advancement, and enrichment of TESOL education, we have gracefully moved into the 21st century. These years have been opportunities for both personal and professional growth, greater understanding of what our various SIG and Region

needs are, and friendships that I know will continue long after I am off the Executive Board. I encourage each of you to consider taking a more active role on our Board. Just as we encourage our students to develop their voices, so must we as well in order to support and facilitate their learning and our professional growth. The psychic income you'll gain is greater than what could ever be put into a paycheck!

In solidarity,

Susanne Marcus

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