

Message from the Chair

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My first “Message from the Chair” took me longer to write than I care to admit. But after multiple drafts and starting over from scratch a few times, I came to one overall conclusion. It’s all about perspective; not just the type of perspective we may use when we create and view drawings, but perspective in how we view our students and the ways we teach them, perspective in how we view our careers and our colleagues, and even perspective in how we view this Division. This past June, right after I assumed the duties of Division Chair, I moved 500 miles to take a new job in a new state. The climate is different, both meteorologically and academically. My colleagues are different, my students are different, and even the courses I’m teaching are different. I am back to teaching engineering design graphics in an environment where the content is valued. And now that I’ve completed my first semester here, I find myself busier than ever, having fun, and looking at many things from a different perspective.

Wait a minute. Did I say I was having fun? Are we as faculty allowed to have fun? Yes, and I believe it’s a matter of keeping the right perspective. If you’ve been at the same job for 10 years or more like I was in my previous position, or even if you’ve just started a new job, I suggest you take some time and think about how you view that job. When is the last time you seriously thought about how you teach? When was the last time you changed your textbook, revised the way you taught a particular lesson, or added or removed content from a course? How do you view your students and your colleagues? Do you still get excited about preparing for a new semester or teaching a new course? Are you stuck in a rut, or are you having fun? Or are you somewhere in between?

One of the most important benefits I’ve received as a member of the EDGD, beginning with my first Midyear conference in San Antonio in 2001, is the opportunity to hear different perspectives on teaching and research in engineering design graphics from other Division members who are among the most accomplished and outstanding people in our field. This year the Midyear was hosted by our colleagues in Ireland at the University of Limerick. It was the first time a Midyear was held outside the Continental United States and we as a Division were excited about the opportunity to interact with a wider audience. The theme of the conference was “Universal Graphics – Multiple Perspectives” (there’s that word again!) and I believe it was a success in that it met, even exceeded, the goal of bringing a variety of people with a range of experience together to discuss engineering design graphics. Especially for those who could not join us in Limerick, I hope you enjoy the conference papers that are included in this special edition of the Journal. They may just give you a new, perhaps international, perspective and inspire you to think a little bit about how and why you do what you do.