

President's Message: Summer Rest and Celebrating the 7th Biennial National Summit for Building Healthy Academic Communities

It always amazes me how fast the summer months fly by. We are quickly approaching Independence Day. Summer is my favorite season; I am a warm weather person. I never want it to end but inevitably before I know it my children are back in school, and the autumn semester is ramping up. I hope you are able to take some time away this summer for restoration and recovery. With the whirlwind and uncertainty that has been the first half of 2025, taking time for what is most important to you is necessary for our well-being.

What has already been almost three months ago seems like last week! I am referring to the 7th biennial National Summit for Building Healthy Academic Communities, which took place April 10-11 at the University of Virginia. If you have never been to Charlottesville and the surrounding area before, is a great destination spot. UVA is a beautiful campus. This was my third visit to UVA, and it never disappoints.

If you were unable to attend the Summit, it was a terrific two plus days. On Wednesday evening, we held a reception for attendees. It was so much fun seeing friends and colleagues and meeting new like-minded professionals. On Thursday and Friday, keynote and plenary sessions were given by J. Bryan Sexton, Vic Tringali, Jean Eby, and Bernadette Melnyk. A roundtable discussion on well-being in higher education took place on Thursday afternoon. Representatives from the American College Health Association, National Intramural Recreational Sports Association, Health Enhancement Research Organization and BHAC shared perspectives from their respective organization. There were breakout sessions, wellness activities, networking opportunities, poster sessions, and BHAC awards. Dr. Melnyk was awarded the inaugural “Dr. Bernadette Melnyk Creating a Culture of Wellness Leadership Award at the BHAC Summit.” As founder of BHAC, Bern’s vision was to create an organization focused on comprehensive approaches to creating and sustaining cultures of wellness. Dr. Christina Lightner from Penn State University was awarded the “BHAC Impact Award.” In addition, poster awardees represented Stony Brook University and Western Kentucky University. We are fortunate enough to have our to the current edition of the BHAC Journal, so please read them for a snippet of the focus and scope of their well-being projects.

I have many people to thank for their support of the BHAC Summit – the Summit planning committee, BHAC Board of Directors, UVA team, all of the individuals who helped make the conference a success, and Summit sponsors TIAA, Personify Health, Fidelity Investments, and HoosWell from the University of Virginia.

I realize for some of you, your work has been impacted by national and budgetary events. You are in my thoughts, and I am here if you need a listening ear. Wellness and well-being are not a nicety, they are a necessity. I know each of us will make sure this message is not lost in the noise. Our students, faculty, staff, and communities depend on it. I wish you a healthy and happy rest of the summer season.

Take care,

Megan Amaya, PhD, CHES, NBC-HWC, AFAA-CGFI

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