March 2022 President’s Message

Dear MaFLA members,

As we enter into what my colleagues and I find to be the longest month of the year, take heart! You have what it takes to get through this marathon month of MCAS and no days off. Whether your heart grieves for the violence in the Ukraine, the horrific anti-LGBTQ+ laws, refugees struggling to land in a safe place, or a more personal matter, I hope you can find time for yourself to soak in beauty, immerse yourself with friendship, and drink in the warmth of the sun during those unusually nice days.

I recently took some students abroad for an exchange program. One of our visits was to the UN in Geneva, and we saw those in power beginning to make decisions on Switzerland's reaction to Putin's decisions. Another moment, we were speaking with the canton’s senator and house representative about LGBTQ+ rights (see upper right photo), particularly the right to being able to give blood and be gay. On the language and culture front, we battled our own misconceptions about Swiss French, Swiss schooling, and Swiss chocolate and cheese (right center photo). While we spent time on our thématique linking our visits of "affirmer et intégrer la diversité", we also asked ourselves how life is lived differently. Time and time again, we came back to their wonder of natural beauty all around. When the sun is out, folks take advantage of its warmth, the beauty of the water and the mountains — this connection begins to ground us. As our plane took off, I found myself snapping a hundred photos of how the light was reflecting off the Alps with the brilliant colors of sunset (left center photo). As I reflect on the hiccups and life-changing moments of our time together, I can't help but smile for the incredible experiences we offer our students every day to make tomorrow’s world a better place.

Whether you are bringing diverse perspectives to your students (or your students to diverse perspectives!) or wading through a discussion on traumatic events, know that MaFLA is here to support you. Let us know how to help you feel welcome, connected, and seen.

Beckie Bray Rankin

MaFLA Leader in the Spotlight

Sheng-Chu is a leader who stepped up to fill a sudden vacancy in the middle of the Exhibits and Sponsorship Coordinator's term to tackle raising money for our virtual conference. If you see an ad in our newsletter, on the website, or during a PD, know that it’s a team commitment to find, secure, and maintain these connections. Sheng-Chu is naturally interested in the collaboration between companies and world language educators and so she embraced the learning curve to ensure close, continued relationships with our vendors. The board is grateful to Sheng-Chu's dedication to this behind-the-scenes, important role! Sheng Chu is a Mandarin teacher at the Pingree School and a former MaFLA Teacher of the Year.

Upcoming Events

While March Madness overtakes us, don't miss MaFLA's events: Core Practices, OPI familiarization, Proficiency Academy, and Summer Institute. Also, remember that your MaFLA membership gives you the ACTFL member rate at their convention here in Boston!