



February 15, 2017

To Members of AAIDD,

The Board of Directors just held its mid-winter meeting on January 18-20. On behalf of the Board, I would like to let you know about several things that AAIDD is doing and considering.

First, the Board has been considering the role of AAIDD in a new period in Washington, with a new President, and multiple questions in the disability community about the impact of new leadership and policies on services and supports to and with people with disabilities and their families. A lot is clearly unknown. Disability is not a partisan issue, and AAIDD expects to continue to serve as the key source of evidence-based information to inform policy and practice. As you know, the AAIDD is also a long-time co-sponsor of the [Disability Policy Seminar](#), a major annual event that is used to help educate policy makers about how pending legislation and regulation will impact people with disabilities and their families. Given the pace of change so far, there is bound to be much to discuss at this March 20-22 event, as well as emerging recommendations for collaborative action. We encourage our members who are deeply concerned about policy to come.

Second, the Board has been thinking about ways to translate knowledge into formats that can be used by policy makers, practitioners, and others. A core strength of AAIDD in knowledge generation and dissemination stems from the contributions of the internationally-recognized researchers and thought leaders who contribute to our journal, book, conference, and online education programs, which in turn, shape the future of disability research, practice, and policy. We hope you have seen some of the new, short, animated Facebook posts that highlight the content of individual AAIDD journal articles. This is a first step in developing new ways to translate knowledge gained through research into formats that can be easily accessed by professionals, families, and advocates in their day-to-day practice.

Third, the Board has been considering how to increase the visibility of and to support the work of the Association's professional interest groups. A Committee, composed of Board members and leaders from the Conference of Professional Interests Groups, developed a series of recommendations and a new operations manual. We hope to come into the Hartford meeting with a new, more responsive structure for the Conference of Professional Interests, a new organizing term or identifier for all interest groups and divisions, and clearer strategies and expectations for action within the AAIDD structure. You should be hearing about this through the divisions or interest groups of which you are a part.

Finally, the Board has been exploring ways to welcome and include new members and conference attendees into the life and work of the AAIDD. Many ideas are under consideration, including changes to our Awards categories and processes and creating new opportunities for

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information sharing. More ideas are also welcome! We also hope to see you at the [annual meeting](#) in Hartford, June 26-29, 2017; registration will open in early March.

We close this letter with a call for new ideas for the Association to consider and/or feedback on the initiatives listed above. If you have ideas, please feel free to share them with Maggie Nygren and/or members of the Board.

Sincerely,

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