

Taylor Kelly – NYSSMA®/NAfME Collegiate President 24-25 - SUNY Fredonia



## Tuning into the Future

As the academic year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on my time serving as your Collegiate NYSSMA® President. It has been an incredible journey, one filled with opportunities to grow, advocate for music education, and collaborate with inspiring future educators across New York State.

As I prepare to pass the torch, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude, share some lessons learned, and look ahead to the bright future of music education.

### Thank you

First and foremost, thank you for your passion, dedication, and enthusiasm. Whether we connected at the winter conference, through social media, or elsewhere, your commitment to music education and advocacy has been a constant source of inspiration.

To my fellow executive board members: your teamwork and vision have helped shape collegiate initiatives and pave the way for a stronger future. I am also deeply grateful to the educators and mentors who have guided me throughout this journey, offering wisdom, encouragement, and unwavering support. This experience has been truly transformative, and I cherish every moment of it.

### Lessons learned

Over the past two years on the Collegiate Executive Board, I've learned that leadership isn't about having all the answers; it's about listening, collaborating, and lifting others up. The strength of NYSSMA® lies in the collective voices of its members. Whether advocating for music education policies, organizing events, or simply supporting a peer, I've witnessed firsthand how our combined efforts create meaningful change.

As an undergraduate student, there were countless moments when I felt disconnected. At the start, I struggled with a loss of identity, torn between the roles of teacher and performer. Without early-level teaching courses, it was difficult to stay in touch with my "why." In those moments of uncertainty, I turned to my peers, my

mentors, and to NYSSMA®.

Four years ago, I attended my first winter conference and I never looked back. There, I found clarity and inspiration, surrounded by educators and musicians who reminded me of all that I had to look forward to in the best field around!

The conference gave me fresh perspectives, a renewed sense of purpose, and a supportive community that continues to challenge and uplift me. Now, as I prepare to graduate, I reflect on how NYSSMA® has shaped me — not just as a student but as a future educator.

### Staying involved

As we move forward, I encourage you all to stay connected. If you're continuing your degree, maintaining your NafME Collegiate membership and staying active in your university chapter will keep you engaged in our vibrant music education community. To my fellow graduating seniors, congratulations!

The transition from student to educator is both exciting and a bit daunting, but know that you are not alone. Now is the time to explore NafME/NYSSMA's professional membership opportunities, which offer continued professional development, access to publications, and support for students through programs like Tri-M and solo festivals. Plus, former NafME Collegiate members can take advantage of a reduced membership rate during their first year of teaching, a valuable resource as we embark on our careers.

As my time as Collegiate NYSSMA® President comes to an end, I am honored to introduce and welcome your incoming president, Sophie Wood from Hofstra University. Sophie has been an integral part of the Executive Board for the past two years, bringing dedication, insight, and a deep commitment to supporting music education. I have no doubt that under her leadership, Collegiate NYSSMA® will continue to thrive. It has been an absolute pleasure working alongside her, and I am excited to see how she will lead and inspire the collegiate community in the years ahead.

### CLAS and Hill Day

NAfME Hill Day will take place on June 12 in Washington, D.C., following the Collegiate Leadership Advocacy Summit (CLAS) from June 10-12, 2024. If you have the chance to attend — whether with your chapter or a group of friends — this is an opportunity you won't want to miss.

Attending the summit last year was one of the most impactful experiences of my undergraduate journey. Surrounded by new faces (fellow students from across the country who shared the same passion for music education) I worked alongside them to meet with legislators, share our stories and inspirations, and advocate for the future of our profession. Together, we spoke about what led us to music education, the challenges we've faced, and the importance of ensuring every child has access to a quality music education.

The experience reinforced just how powerful it is when we come together for a common cause, even with people we've only just met. If there's one event that can inspire, empower, challenge, and prepare you to make a difference in the future of music education, it's this one. By attending CLAS and NafME Hill Day, I left feeling more confident in my ability to advocate for our students and our profession, and I know you will, too.

As I step into my own future as a music educator, I do so with immense gratitude for all the opportunities, growth, and community that Collegiate NYSSMA® has given me. This experience has shaped me as a leader, an advocate, and a future teacher, and I know it will continue to do the same for many others in the years to come.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as your president. I can't wait to see all that you will accomplish, and because of you I know the future of music education in New York is brighter than ever.

Keep striving, keep advocating, and keep making music. This is only the prelude! ||

With gratitude,  
Taylor Kelly  
Collegiate NYSSMA® President