Message from the ISMTE Board President

As the days have turned into weeks and the weeks into months, the abrupt changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have now become somewhat routine – so many of us across the globe have adapted to extended remote work (endless Zoom meetings!), homeschooling, caring for small children while trying to work, avoiding social gatherings, shopping online rather than at stores, and feeling isolated yet connected at the same time. It is clear more than ever that we are amid a historical event that has the potential to forever alter the way we live our lives.

As public health officials in many countries throughout the world start to see the positive outcomes of social distancing (“flattening the curve”), the question I often hear, both in the news media and from friends and family alike is “When will everything go back to normal?”. I’ve pondered the answer to this question regularly and have settled on the very-real possibility that things might never return to “normal” – at least not as we know it. That’s not intended to be a pessimistic view – rather, I see the developments precipitated by COVID-19 as opportunities for positive change – across government, science, politics, healthcare, and even our personal lifestyles. Once the dust settles, and we emerge from this haze of extraordinary uncertainty, we will have an unprecedented opportunity to examine every corner of life and ask ourselves how we might do things better.

As editorial office professionals, ISMTE members are accustomed to change and understand the value of being adaptable and flexible – the scholarly publishing industry has experienced extraordinary change over the last two decades. The era of COVID-19 will be no different - we will draw on our strengths of creative thinking, resourcefulness, and geographical interconnectivity to pull through this time and emerge stronger on the other side. ISMTE will continue its support of the editorial office community by providing resources and education – for example, we recently co-hosted a free webinar on tips and tools for extended remote working with Scholastica and Research Square. Also, in this month’s issue of Editorial Office News, we have a very timely article by Dawn Angel on the same subject, where she describes how to maximize remote work. The ISMTE Board of Directors is also actively brainstorming other ways the society can support its members during this time – if you have particular needs you’d like us to address, please don’t hesitate to contact us at info@ISMTE.org.

I recently came across a quote that read “I trust the change unfolding in my life.” Each day, as new changes unfold because of COVID-19, I hold that sentiment close, confident that all of this will lead to a renewed future. My hope is that you too trust in the unfolding change.

Stay well,
Erin C. Landis