

# Comments From the Manging Editor

**Kathleen Hagen**

**H**mm. In 2004 I had yet to take my first online class, and my most persistent image of what a distance education student might look like was a person writing at a rickety table, huddled next to a kerosene lantern in a lonely shack out in the middle of nowhere. I must have been thinking about correspondence courses—my imagination did not conjure a laptop (or a computer, or Wi-Fi, or even electricity for that matter). What a change 15 years can make! Since then I have taken and taught online courses, completed a degree in educational technology and distance education, and acquired

a very different perspective on distance education.

I anticipate that the next 15 years will accelerate the rate of change in our society and in distance learning. More people are discovering that life-long learning is a reality that must be embraced. Shifting student demographics and different perceptions on the worth of degrees are bringing about seismic changes in who is pursuing higher education and the formats in which they seek it. Distance learning is a solution for adults who wish to (or who must) continue their education without upending their life commitments, for those who live far away from brick and mortar schools, and for those whose curiosity and passion for learning propel them past degrees and certificates.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to fuse my enthusiasm for distance education with my persnickety editor's eye, and I very much look forward to doing my utmost to maintain the high standards of this journal. I cannot fill Dr. Schlosser's shoes, but I aim to continue walking on the path he created. I am so pleased to join the exploration of distance learning with the other members of the editorial team and all of the readers of the *Distance Learning* journal. Thank you for letting me be a part of this community.

