



Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy

## EDUCATING FOR ETERNITY

**E**ducation is front and center! It is the focus of a year-long series of conferences and church publications globally. Education was the cover story for the February 2017 issue of *Adventist World*.<sup>\*</sup> This issue of *THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION* shares a collection of talks and presentations made during the 2016 General Conference Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Conference, the North American Division Year-end Meetings, and the 2017 Pan-African LEAD Conference. Each one presented stakeholders with a call to action to ensure that all God's children are taught of the Lord (Isaiah 54:13, KJV).

The 2016 LEAD Conference took place October 5-7, 2016, in Silver Spring, Maryland. The theme "Educating for Eternity" underscored daily devotionals, plenary and invited addresses, panels, and sessions that outlined plans for each region of the world. Topics ranged from Adventist education's educational imperative (George R. Knight), the divine plan for education (George W. Reid), and cognitive and non-cognitive factors contributing to academic success (Elissa E. Kido), to the state of Adventist education (Lisa M. Beardsley-Hardy), and challenges to increasing access (David R. Williams). Within this special issue are the adapted transcripts of the plenary and invited presentations shared during the conference.

The LEAD Conference "Educating for Eternity" will be replicated throughout various regions of the world church during 2017 and 2018. The first of these planned conferences, the 2017 Pan-African LEAD Conference, took place in Kigali, Rwanda, February 15-19, 2017. There was a lot of energy in these meetings as educators and church leaders from every part of Africa formulated educational plans to incorporate local, national, and regional priorities and objectives. They

made recommendations on how to achieve higher visibility for education globally and how to coordinate action through a united, empowered network. Educators especially appreciated the discussion across different regions and the participation of division officers and treasurers. Presentation topics addressed current trends, steps to overcoming challenges, and the influential role of Adventist education in the lives of those who become and remain Seventh-day Adventists (John Wesley Taylor V).

Adventist education in the North American Division (NAD) is addressed within this issue (Jerome Thayer, Anneris Coria-Navia, Aimee Leukert, Elissa E. Kido, and Larry Blackmer).

This article reports the findings and recommendations from two study groups—The North American Division Education Taskforce (NADET) and the Strengthening Adventist Education (SAE) research project. Officially shared with attendees at the 2016 NAD Year-end Meetings in October, this report is made available through *THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION*. A concurrent article, with specific recommendations for pastors who are the gatekeepers for church schools, will be available in the June 2017 issue of *MINISTRY*.

Work continues through the three remaining regional summits in Slovenia (May 30-June 4, 2017), the Dominican Republic (August 7-11, 2017), and Thailand (January 29-February 3, 2018). But the real work occurs day in and day out in thousands of classrooms around the world where committed men and women faithfully and creatively carry out the teaching ministry of Christ. This issue is especially for them.

<sup>\*</sup>Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, "Adventist Education: Rediscovering Our Mission," *Adventist World* (February, 2017): 24-27.