



## Invited Letter: Greetings from the National Science Foundation!

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As a program officer with the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education Program (ATE), I am pleased to support the Journal of Advanced Technological Education (J ATE) and all its contributions to the technician education community. Congratulations to J ATE for 2 Years and 3 issues of publishing success.

The theme of this issue, Industry Engagement, is well aligned with work being done in the various Projects and Centers that make up a significant portion of the ATE program's portfolio. One of the many assets of the nation's community colleges is their opportunity to create and align credentials of economic value with regional industry needs. Meaningful engagement with regional industries is a dynamic process that has the potential to result in a partnership with a noticeable impact.

One of the core principles of the ATE program is that the degrees and certificates from two-year colleges hold enormous value. They have the kind of value that is occasionally sought after in the baccalaureate degree, but they require less time and are more accessible. The value of degrees and certificates increases with the participation of regional industry. When industrial partners see that their role on an advisory board or a business and industry leadership team (BILT) results in students completing with high-demand skills, the path from education to employment becomes easier to navigate. Industries that are able to hire local residents are in a good position to drive economic development for all residents.

The Journal of Advanced Technological Education supports two-year community and technical colleges with technician education programs in advanced technology industries. These programs include micro and nano technology, biotechnology, autonomous vehicle technology, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, environmental technology, and engineering. J ATE also disseminates important information about mentoring and evaluation in these programs. In addition, this journal supports all two-year colleges looking to establish, refine, or grow their advanced technology programs.

I encourage all members of the ATE community to consider the publication of your program's results. There are more than 1,000 community and technical colleges throughout the United States, and they are simultaneously similar and unique. Projects dealing with the conversion of automotive programs to hybrid and electric, for example, are of great interest throughout the country. A rural college with the only automotive program in a six-county area, through a published article in this peer-reviewed journal, has the potential to inspire similar colleges throughout the country. The same can be said of an indoor agricultural program located at a community college in the heart of a city. With each publication, the value of the ATE program grows, and more community colleges can gain the confidence to engage regional industry to drive regional economic growth.

I am one of three program officers at the National Science Foundation on rotation from a community college. With the entire division, we are working to advocate for community colleges at the agency. Serving my country as a program officer and supporting the goals of the ATE program is a truly rewarding experience.

As a proud supporter of technician education and a public servant with the National Science Foundation, I encourage your active participation in this community. You can support the ATE community by telling your story through submitted articles and by reviewing the articles submitted by your peers. Finally, you can be part of the dissemination process by sharing these articles with your peers and the colleagues who can benefit from them.



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