Charting the Path Forward: Reflections of a Journey as SNEB President

As I sit down to write this final presidential SNEB editorial, emotions of gratitude, optimism, and happiness overwhelm me. From my beginnings as an international graduate student attending my first SNEB conference in 2008 to the privilege of standing before you today as SNEB president, I am profoundly grateful for the trust and support you’ve placed in me. As we embark on reflecting on this year and preparing for the upcoming 2024 SNEB Conference, I am compelled to underscore key themes that have defined our collective efforts: strategic focus, fostering reciprocity, commitment to collaboration, expanding impact, witnessing members’ empowerment, and our forward-looking perspective.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Throughout this year, our focus has been on strategically planning for SNEB’s future. We started by gathering insights from our members through a survey, the first step in refining our strategic approach. Recognizing SNEB’s dynamic nature, we’re committed to organizing consultations and forming specialized working groups for a thorough and inclusive strategy development process. Our goal is to ensure our actions are carefully considered and impactful. Key areas we’re potentially focusing on include financial stability, keeping our members engaged, creating new collaborations, fostering innovations, and advocating for nutrition education globally.

FOSTERING RECIPROCITY

SNEB embodies reciprocity and mutual support, enriching us with knowledge, innovation, mentorship, collaborations, friendships, and countless opportunities. Aligned with the theme of the 2024 SNEB conference, “Understanding Foodways: Learning, Growing, and Sustaining,” we recognize the significance of giving back to sustain this cycle of learning and growth. Undoubtedly, SNEB’s collective efforts have cultivated a nurturing environment where all members thrive.

COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATION

SNEB leadership is not a solo act. It thrives on collective dedication, drawing upon volunteers from diverse corners including the SNEB board, SNEB Foundation, JNEB, various committees/working groups, and our vibrant SNEB divisions. As one member beautifully articulated, “Thank you for generously sharing your time and expertise within the SNEB leadership team.” This encapsulates the essence of our society—a shared commitment bolstered by the invaluable support of SNEB staff. Collaboration has been pivotal in our journey, fostering innovation and progress through an environment of trust and openness where diverse ideas, expertise, cultures, and talents flourish.

EXPANDING IMPACT

As advocates for nutrition education and behavior, we’ve broadened our reach and influence through strategic initiatives and partnerships. Recognizing the transformative power of food and nutrition education, every member of SNEB serves as a catalyst for positive change. We’ve experienced firsthand the strength of collaboration and trust among our members, inspiring us to extend our reach beyond our society. By engaging external partners from national and international entities, we embrace the diversity of expertise, cultures, and traditions, enriching our collective efforts. As one member aptly noted, “Congratulations on a successful conference. The international sessions, access to UN program information, and networking opportunities have been invaluable. The breadth of research and programs addressing global issues is immensely valuable.”

WITNESSING MEMBERS’ EMPOWERMENT

One of the most rewarding aspects of this journey has been witnessing the empowerment of our members. From presenting groundbreaking food and nutrition education related research to spearheading policy and/or community initiatives, our members have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. Their passion and dedication have been an inspiration to us all, driving us forward in our collective pursuit of excellence. This sense of fulfillment and happiness stems from the profound satisfaction of knowing that our work is making a tangible difference. It’s the fulfillment of knowing that we are part of something greater than ourselves.

FORWARD-LOOKING PERSPECTIVE

As we come to a close, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of SNEB. Let’s continue charting the path forward together.
While celebrating our achievements, let’s also remain agile and adaptable in the face of evolving challenges and opportunities. I’m reminded of the words of a fellow SNEB member who said, "SNEB is my favorite professional organization and conference! JNEB is also my favorite journal. Thanks for your work in making SNEB a great organization to be part of!" Your dedication and contributions make SNEB truly exceptional. Let’s persist in our efforts to ensure that SNEB remains a vibrant and impactful organization. I eagerly anticipate meeting you all in Knoxville, Tennessee, for the 2024 SNEB conference!

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