

# In Honor of the Educators

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*by Linda Kloss, RHIA, CAE, executive vice president/CEO*

This issue is dedicated to HIM educators, those who teach in the more than 230 academic training programs and the thousands who contribute to our lifelong continuing education. We can all cite an HIM educator or mentor who helped set us on a sure career course. It's graduation month for many and a good time to thank our teachers and mentors. As professionals, each of us should commit to helping a student, a new professional, or a colleague who needs encouragement or advice.

"The Future of HIM" highlights findings from the employer phase of AHIMA's work force research. Researchers interviewed more than 100 executives, managers, and HIM professionals in organizations that are changing HIM practice. These case studies provide context for an e-HIM<sup>TM</sup> world and a better understanding of the competencies that are valued in an electronic practice environment.

We have now completed this important two-year baseline work force research, and I would like to publicly commend the team from the Center for Health Workforce Studies for their thorough research and careful analysis. I would also like to thank the Project Advisory Committee that guided the work. And a big thank you to our corporate sponsors and members whose contributions to FORE made this research possible. All major reports are now on the AHIMA Web site. Taken together, they provide an extraordinary mosaic of our field and its challenges in the future.

## Developing Tomorrow's Work Force

"Preparing Tomorrow's Professionals" describes critical work being done to focus on access to HIM education, curricula design for e-HIM, and faculty development. A framework for HIM education at the master's, baccalaureate, associate, and predegree levels is previewed here. This framework is supported by model curricula and will become the foundation for education in the next several years.

Academic excellence, as we all know, is the combination of classroom and professional practice experience. "In Search of New Experiences" describes how some programs are redesigning experiential education to be more relevant. We encourage all who are working in progressive organizations to open their doors to students.

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## For All Lifelong Learners

In "Tools for Lifelong Learning," Lana Vukovljak and James King remind us that "half of all job skills will become outdated within three to five years." Continuing education is a necessity in a field with a rapidly changing body of knowledge. Fortunately, new educational technologies make it more convenient to be a lifelong learner, and AHIMA has invested in some of these on your behalf.

The rapidly changing HIM field presents unique challenges to those who are developing tomorrow's work force. Professional education has been central to AHIMA's mission throughout its 75-year history. But challenges remain. We need programs in underserved areas. Some programs need more students to be viable. We need qualified faculty who can prepare practitioners for an e-HIM world. HIM is not alone. Many fields, particularly health fields, are feeling the heat of tight budgets in higher education.

The Assembly on Education, AHIMA's community of educators, will gather in Chicago for its annual symposium on June 27–30. The educators will be considering these issues and more. But they can't do it alone. HIM education challenges are an issue for all of us. So let's make June HIM education month and recommit ourselves to strong academic education and lifelong professional learning.

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