Greetings from Dr. Nicholas J. Altiero, the President of ASEE

Greetings from ASEE. I hope that your event is off to fantastic start.

We are unable to send a representative to your annual conference, but fully support JSEE in our mutual efforts to improve engineering and engineering technology education.

While our cultures and approaches to education may differ, we share a common challenge in educating the engineers needed for the 21st century. Our graduates must be ready to face grand challenges: managing impacts of climate change; providing access to clean water to the hundreds of millions who struggle without it; developing clean energy; and securing cyberspace, among many others. In addition, they must be prepared to work across disciplines, borders, and languages.

JSEE and ASEE recognize that creating such students requires approaches, practices, and a culture much different from what existed in our universities even just a few decades ago. We must be the driving force in creating this change.

I write to you from my permanent post in New Orleans, where I am Tulane University's Dean of Science and Engineering. Like parts of Japan during the 2011 tsunami, unfortunately, my city washammered by the sea in 2005, in the form of Hurricane Katrina. As we re-emerged from the devastation after a four-month closure, we had a unique opportunity to re-shape our approach to education. The president of Tulane asked me to be the dean of a new school, where science and engineering are more tightly interconnected. This was hard for me, as we eliminated some engineering departments in the process, but I saw this as indeed the wave of the future, to have the disciplines intermingled, and what we have now is much stronger than what we had before.

At Tulane we were forced to take a fresh look and make this tough decision, which would not have occurred without the tragedy of Katrina (of course, combining schools of science and engineering is not the solution at every university). I do hope that our approach can be a model – to universities in the U.S. and elsewhere – as a way to surmount challenges and think through how to best serve our students and society by creating engineers the world needs.

I wish you the best of luck with your event and look forward to future opportunities for collaboration.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Altiero
President, ASEE

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