

## Goodbye to Another Year of Changes

This is the last blog post of 2021 and a goodbye to another year of transitions. COVID is still with us, requiring us to be flexible and ever changing as the state of the pandemic hits highs and lows. It has been almost two years of unpredictability. At times, it feels like the state of uncertainty will never end. What will our new normal be? Some changes are here to stay; for example, WebEx hearings (see G.S. 7A-49.6 (S.L. 2021-47)). Others, I hope will be left behind.

It has been a difficult year. **On behalf of the School, thank you for the work you do. We know it has not been easy, yet you have persevered. We see you; we hear you; we respect you.**

We appreciate your flexibility in adjusting to the changes we've had to make – riding the roller coaster of ups and downs with us. This year, we started welcoming some of you back to the building as we began to transition to some in-person courses. We saw some of you at off-site in-person conferences. It was nice to see your faces, even when only your eyes were visible. It was great to feel the energy in the room. It was wonderful to see you all interact with one another and to interact with you without the need for a computer.

2022 looks like it will start out with more necessary transitions. We can hope it will end on a much better note – one with more consistency and less loss. The U.S. has passed a devastating number of 800,000 COVID-related deaths. We have lost loved ones. We have lost colleagues. We have lost so many. We remember those we have lost.

We also celebrate you and your strength and recognize your commitment to serving the citizens of North Carolina. **Goodbye 2021; here's to a better 2022.**