

January 18, 2024

ACA Members,

It was wonderful to see more than **3,000 ACA members at the 2024 Winter Conference** in National Harbor, Maryland.

This was the best-attended Winter Conference in years and I was delighted that so many of you took the time to tell me how much you were enjoying it. It was also gratifying to see the diversity of corrections professionals in attendance, ranging from front line staff to leaders of state and federal corrections agencies to critical private sector representatives. Thank you **all** for coming together at ACA's Winter Conference.

This was Rob Green's first conference as ACA Executive Director and I want to thank him and all of the ACA staff for their diligence and tireless pursuit of excellence that made the conference a success. I am also grateful for the dedication and hard work of the ACA Executive Committee, Board of Governors, Past Presidents, Commissioners, Committee Chairs, Delegate Assembly and others.

I'd just like to recap a few highlights from the conference:

On Thursday, we were deeply honored to welcome **US Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona**. Secretary Cardona came to open the first ever Education in Corrections Symposium that took place concurrently with ACA's Winter Conference. Hearing Secretary Cardona talk about his personal commitment to making sure individuals in corrections have access to Pell grants and other tools to support their education and rehabilitation was inspiring.

On Friday, **Misty Copeland**, artist, athlete, activist and inspiration, joined us at the General Session. The conversational format allowed us to discuss her thoughts and experiences around changing the image of a profession, leadership, motivation, self-care and more. I appreciate everyone who told me how much they enjoyed hearing from a renowned person who was not from the corrections profession but who could speak so eloquently about the challenges we have in common.

On Saturday, we took advantage of the conference's proximity to Washington, DC, and shuttled members to the **National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum**. As both the daughter of a police officer and as a corrections professional, I was deeply moved by the exhibits and remembrances at the museum. I look forward to working with ACA members to update the museum's corrections exhibit so it reflects the range of programs and continuity of care in the corrections profession today.

On Sunday, we had time for one last look at the exhibitors at the conference before the grand prize drawing. ACA is fortunate to have high quality exhibitors who are committed to adding value to members' operations – their support is greatly appreciated.

Over the course of the conference, I hope you found multiple workshops, wellness activities, special sessions, committee meetings and/or other events that helped you feel renewed, recharged, and in possession of new tools for your professional development.

**Your feedback after the 153<sup>rd</sup> Congress of Corrections was essential in shaping the Winter Conference.** The Education Symposium and offering social work continuing education credits for the first time are the direct result of your input.

**Please continue to let us know how ACA can best serve you** and how our conferences can best support your professional development and other goals by sending your thoughts to [President@aca.org](mailto:President@aca.org).

As always, thank you for choosing to be a corrections professional and thank you for your membership in ACA.

I look forward to seeing you in Nashville for the 154<sup>th</sup> Congress of Corrections that takes place August 15 to 18, 2024.

In service,

Denise M. Robinson  
108<sup>th</sup> President, American Correctional Association