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This February, when I received an email inviting me to join the University Research Magazine Association, I briefly wondered if I was being catfished.

Our university's research magazine had dropped into my lap in the fall of 2015. An unexpected turnover in our university's main communication office brought the project "in house" to the Office of Research and Economic Development, where I work. The magazine's previous editor and creative director were out of the picture, and I had no experience with this or any periodical publication. Our team cobbled together a magazine production process on the fly, and our first issue went out, on time, at the end of the semester. But there was so much I wanted to improve.

I was desperate for advice and a better sense of the parameters of the research magazine endeavor. And suddenly, with *deus ex machina* perfection, there it was in my inbox. An association of people dedicated to the specific task suddenly consuming my work life. I was thrilled and grateful.

Meeting much of URMA in person at the 2016 conference has only increased that sense of gratitude. I don't hail from a journalism background and am relatively new to research communication in general, so I expected to feel like an outsider at the conference. That was emphatically not the case. Every URMA member I met was warm, welcoming, and helpful. For me, a hallmark of the URMA conference experience was a sense of encouragement, support, and solidarity.

The conference also was a fire hose of useful information. We heard from the chief medical writer for the AP, the editor in chief of Discover magazine, Pulitzer Prize winners, and many more. The impressive and interesting speakers covered media interactions, design, photography, magazine management, moving content online, potential pitfalls in science journalism, public engagement events, and the complexities of reporting on collaborative work. The array of topics was well designed to appeal to and edify attendees at all levels, from beginner to old hand. Each day, I fired off excited emails full of new ideas to colleagues at home.

At times the amount of information and ideas for avenues of improvement could have been overwhelming. However, there was a sense that this was a continuing conversation, not a one-time opportunity. Powerpoints and video from the 2016 conference went to the website, part of a robust collection of resources for URMA members. Cards were exchanged. Attendees made plans to continue discussions on the listserv.

I walked away with new tools and new confidence.