

### *From the Guest Editor's Desk...*

I grew up in northern San Diego County where my world-view was shaped by geography. In the summers, my mother would drive us to the beach where we would build sand castles, search tide pools for starfish, and cool off in the waves of the Pacific Ocean. My world was defined by knowing my cardinal directions—the sun rose in the East and set over the Pacific Ocean in the West. This perspective was challenged when I traveled to Panama City in the Republic of Panama. I arrived after sundown and did not know what direction my hotel room faced. In the morning, as I looked out the window, I saw a beautiful view—the broad expanse of the Panama Bay leading into the Gulf of Panama; beyond that was the Pacific Ocean. On my left was the mouth of the Panama Canal. Behind me, the sun rose from a direction that did not align with my sense of cardinal directions. Even after consulting a small tourist map in the room, I was disoriented by the view and could not get my bearings. Ultimately, a Panamanian told me that many tourists are confused by this view because the sun rises from the South across the water, not the West. My Panamanian experience challenged a deeply seated orientation to the world.

As a higher education leader, I have found that this experience is applicable to my perspectives about higher education. There are numerous accounts of legislative and university initiatives that challenge the very mission of higher education. With so much dissonance, it is easy to become disoriented and in need of a new view for the future of global higher education. Much of our learned experience about directions has been disturbed in the wake of deep, global change. Scholars and leaders across the world are awakening to the need to change their orientation and get bigger maps. In order to facilitate this transition, in this Special Edition we offer manuscripts from university and community scholars addressing their research and experiences in numerous communities and countries. This volume, and the journey that it represents, was initially generated from the 2013 Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) conference, *Boundary Spanning Across Disciplines, Communities, and Geography*.

A call for manuscripts was issued in October 2013 and generated research papers, practice stories from the field, reflective

essays, projects with promise, and dissertation overviews. In addition, in order to diversify the media utilized in this volume, the 2013 ESC conference poster session award winners were invited to submit their abstracts and links, which are included so that the reader can view the digital posters archived on the ESC website (at <http://engagementscholarship.org/awards/esc-poster-award/2013>). The editorial team of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* managed the editorial process in which all manuscripts were evaluated through the *Journal's* double-blind peer review process, with the exception of those that were invited, the dissertation overviews, and the book reviews.

From a 2013 ESC plenary session, Judith Ramaley's article addresses internal spanning behaviors that traverse the silos of academic departments and disciplines to address "wicked" societal problems that demand collaboration and a larger view. From the ESC 2013 Closing Session, university and community partners from Canada, Brazil, Nigeria, and the United States share essays that describe how they forge connections between universities and communities in various geographical and cultural contexts. In another reflective essay, Romero suggests the power of "riding the bus" to encourage students and faculty to venture into local neighborhoods and communities.

A research article by Gates et al. presents an ethnographic study situated in an international service-learning context. Another research article that speaks to measuring boundary-spanning behaviors utilizing the Weerts-Sandmann Boundary Spanning Conceptual Framework is followed by five dissertation overviews with perspectives on boundary-spanning behaviors and actors in varying engagement contexts. In a practice story from the field, Back describes a strategy that utilized participatory action research with community members in the United Kingdom and the United States. The book reviews entice the reader to investigate further the "third space" of higher education and boundary spanning in organizations. Finally, abstracts from the 2013 ESC poster award winners provide a rich picture from text-based and visual evidence of community engagement partnerships across the United States.

These articles all address the theme of "boundary spanning," but from many different points of view. Authors share their theory building, research findings, reflections, and experiences about

transcending historical and expected perspectives and partnerships in order to generate new learning experiences and knowledge. The volume contributes to the literature of a changing context and orientation for the role of higher education and communities in society—local and global. I am indebted to the authors, community partners, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and its 2013 conference contributors, the many reviewers, and the mentorship of *Journal* editor Lorilee Sandmann, managing editor Diann O. Jones, and associate editor Burt Bargerstock, as we have collaborated together to bring this Special Edition to fruition. It is my hope that works presented here will support further investigation into university–community partnerships and promote boundary spanning that is needed to address the most critical challenges to the future of our world.

With best regards,

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