

From the Editor . . . The Journal at 25

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On April 1, 1996, the first issue of the newly created *Journal of Public Service & Outreach (JPSO)* was published by the University of Georgia with great fanfare and an expressed desire to become *the* forum for emerging interdisciplinary scholarship and practice around public service. Reading through its pages today, you can sense the excitement about this new venture, buoyed by the posthumous publication of an article by Earnest Boyer (1996) introducing the “scholarship of engagement” in *JPSO*’s inaugural issue. With Boyer’s challenge to higher education to recommit its considerable resources, influence, and knowledge to the public good, the journal was launched!

Fast forward a quarter of a century, and *JPSO*’s name is now the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement (JHEOE)*. This change was designed to reflect and embrace a shift in scholarship and practice toward a broader conception of university–community engagement, wherein public service and outreach are part of a larger continuum of engaged scholarship. The introduction to *JPSO*’s first issue was penned by S. Eugene Younts, the journal’s founding publisher who was at that time serving as UGA’s vice president for public service and outreach. Younts writes with excitement about taking up Boyer’s challenge to reaffirm higher education’s approach to its public commitments. Over the last 25 years, this gauntlet has been thrown down and taken up again and again in innumerable, innovative ways in the journal’s pages as scholars and practitioners advance the engagement movement.

Yet, kicking off the first issue of the fledgling journal, Younts (1996) describes the forum he and other members of the international editorial board hoped to create, saying—

Future issues of *JPSO* will cover the diverse nature of outreach, with an emphasis on awareness, apprecia-

tion, and innovative responses to the radical changes facing higher education today. Topics slated for upcoming issues include:

- involving students in outreach
- using technology to broaden outreach
- examining the many unanswered, pedagogical questions related to distance learning,
- escaping from the paternalistic approach of “top-down” outreach to create partnerships—from the beginning—with those being served,
- accepting the challenge of serving increasingly diverse publics,
- analyzing critically the importance of interdisciplinary connections,
- solving the nagging problem of faculty incentives and rewards, and
- making technology transfer work successfully. (p. 7)

Revisiting the beginning, I somehow expected there would be stark differences in the journal’s editorial focus and approach, and an opportunity to smugly look at how far we have come. However, the first issue of *JPSO* is still a great read and feels, well, *current*. Yes, there have been shifts in the language and methods we use, and emerging scholars today find diverse outlets for their scholarly work; *JHEOE* is now one of many outstanding journals with broad support and readership focused on different dimensions of community engagement, service–learning, outreach, and partnership. Yet, 25 years on, don’t we recognize these points of inquiry? What Younts describes are topics that remain at the core of our work in higher education outreach and engagement and are jarring in their familiarity.

As we mark the 25th anniversary of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, it is perhaps fitting that as scholars focused on ways in which universities and communities must work together to address the “big hairy questions,” we should acknowledge that these questions have endured because this work is difficult and the inquiry will continue well beyond our own time. Considering the growth in our field, yet the lingering discussions around familiar questions, it seems time moves slowly and very fast all at once. If

JHEOE represents the span of a human life, at 25 it would finally be entering the world of young adulthood, accountability, and carving out its own path. In other words, *JHEOE* would finally be a “grown-up.”

Many thanks to those who birthed this journal, raised it carefully, and will befriend it as it ages with purpose over the next 25 years.



References

- Boyer, E. L. (1996). The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Public Service & Outreach* (1)1, 11–20.
- Younts, S. E. (1996). JPSO: A forum for outreach. *Journal of Public Service & Outreach* (1)1, 2–8.