

From the Editor...

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With this issue, the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* ends its 25th year of publication. Looking back on the journal's inception in 1996, it is doubtful our founders could have imagined how transformative the idea of the scholarship of engagement—introduced in the pages of the journal's first issue—would become, and how a scholarly field would be born and subsequently documented within *JHEOE's* pages over the last quarter century.

During this milestone year, *JHEOE* has had a substantial increase in the number of article submissions the journal typically receives, including a record number of submissions from international scholars. *JHEOE* has long strived to represent a diversity of thought and perspectives in its pages, so seeing a marked increase in international voices and scholars not only submitting work but also being published in the pages of the journal is a welcome trend.

Along with publishing three regular issues this year, 25(3) was a special issue devoted to exploring the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on community engagement work, the impact of which, unfortunately, is still ever-present in many of the new manuscripts we receive. Our editorial team works hard to publish robust and diverse issues four times a year. This issue, 25(4), is no different and features 14 articles, essays, book reviews, and a dissertation overview exploring a wide range of topics. We are so grateful to the authors who entrust their manuscripts to *JHEOE* and who put forward ideas that advance the field through the peer review and publication process.

However, with a rise in submissions, our editorial team has documented a more trou-

bling corresponding trend of a decrease in reviewers, a challenge unfortunately shared by many journals. As we end this year and look to our next quarter century, I challenge all of us to consider the importance of the peer review process, not only to improving the quality and rigor of scholarship in our field, but in creating a scholarly community that reflects the ideals of community engagement. In practicing this work, we strive for bidirectional communication and exchange of resources and ideas. In theory and practice, our communities, institutions, and individuals are best served through a true commitment from all of us to working in partnership, whether that is through a service-learning course, community-based research project, or the development of an article for publication. As we move forward, let's reframe the peer review process not as one of competition and gatekeeping, but instead as a true community building process. I challenge all of our authors that for each manuscript you submit, volunteer to provide two reviews in service to the field and in gratitude to those who agree to review your work. Let us be in dialogue with one another through the peer review process and approach this critical component of the creation of scholarship with the care it deserves. From the editor's chair, I see the difference peer review makes in the quality and depth of everything we publish, and it is a community effort.

As we close out this year and this volume of the journal, thank you to our authors, reviewers, associate and managing editors, editorial board, readers, and supporters for making the last twenty-five years of publication possible.

