From the Editor…

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I t is a pleasure to introduce the spring issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* (*JHEOE*). Articles selected for publication typically address broader institutional issues in higher education connected to scholarship that advances theory and practice related to *all forms* of outreach and engagement between higher education institutions and communities. As a result of this broad lens, the collection of articles in this issue represents a spectrum of engaged scholarship and community engagement approaches, and the many ways this work has matured and become part of regular institutional discourse. In these pages, authors examine ways service-learning and community engagement are tied to ongoing questions and issues of higher education policy, praxis, quality, and social concerns. As further examples of this broad scope, some of these topics include the challenges of scaling service-learning in large courses, assessing critical service-learning approaches, recognizing engaged research in the tenure and promotion process, and ways community engagement has expanded globally.

The Research Articles in this issue of *JHEOE*, foreground questions and topics ranging from studies addressing gaps in service-learning course design and implementation to a study that provides new approaches to mentoring in the sciences. "The Struggle Animates the Learning" leads off this section with Suiter et al.'s qualitative study conducted over five semesters in a community-engaged applied evaluation course. In this course, students applied their formal knowledge of evaluation practices and honed their evaluation skills through a community-engaged project. This study assessed students' experiences and perceptions of the impact of experiential learning, community partnerships, and interdisciplinary collaboration on their professional development as evaluators. Authors cite the value of ambiguity in community-based projects as a challenge and asset to student learning and development, and reveal practical applications for teaching evaluation skills using a community-engaged approach.

An ongoing question with implications for many higher education institutions is how to implement service-learning through large enrollment courses and the many attendant challenges of scaling up. Scheffelaar et al., tackled this concern through a qualitative multiple case study of three large-scale university courses with enrollments of over 100 students at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Large enrollment service-learning courses present not only logistical challenges, but also issues of adequate supervision and concerns about the quality of the service-learning experience for students and community partners. Based on findings from this study, the authors present strategies for overcoming these challenges and enumerate many benefits for incorporating service-learning in large courses. For example, not only do large courses allow for more students to experience service-learning, but also community partners interviewed for this study revealed that the sheer number of students working on projects resulted in a benefit to their organizations because of the large amount of work that could be completed.

Another frequent challenge for community engaged institutions is town-gown relationships and the perceptions of "the city" by college students who may have limited exposure and understanding of the surrounding community. In a multimethod study, Hannibal and Galli Robertson conducted pre- and postsurvey and interviews aimed at understanding college students' attitudes and perceptions toward the surrounding city after participation in a 3 day community engagement immersion program at the University of Dayton. REAL Dayton (which stands for "Reach Out, Encounter Dayton, Act with Others, Lead Together") takes place during fall break and has been offered since 2010 with approximately 30–50 participants in each cohort. Students learn about the city of Dayton by serving at nonprofits and reflect upon their roles as community leaders. Results demonstrate an increase in positive

perceptions of the surrounding city as well as impact on the students' civic minded-ness and interest in continuing to engage with community issues in the future. This study provides a structure for designing and assessing similar community immersion programs along with suggestions for future studies, which could include research on measuring the perceptions of community members and organizations involved in these partnerships.

Shileche et al., shift the focus of research on student learning in study abroad programs to the impact of these programs on host communities, and present strategies for successful partnerships. This article examines a study abroad project created by the University of Prince Edward Island in partnership with Farmers Helping Farmers, a Canadian nonprofit, as well as a group of Kenyan universities and organizations in Eastern Kenya. The purpose of this examination of a multiyear (2015–2018) study abroad program was determining the impact of research-based interventions on the emotional and social empowerment and increased civic engagement of a group of 20 Kenyan women farmers in comparison to a control group of 20 farmers not engaged with the project. In this unique program, university students were engaged in community education and research related to dairy, horticulture, and human nutrition projects with members of the Naari community. Results outlined strategies that can be employed by others seeking to develop an effective study abroad program with a research-based intervention focus.

Finally, Klein and Bell's research focused on a science mentoring program called STEM OUT, which paired graduate-level science students and high school-aged youth. Using reflective data from youth focus groups and mentor interviews, this study analyzed participant data from two iterations of the program, and outlined a mentoring structure designed to promote the concept of relational equity (DiGiacomo & Gutiérrez, 2016), where expertise is distributed across mentors and mentees and relationship building is prioritized. Findings indicate that designing science mentoring programs to position all participants as having expertise that can be shared, and prioritizing the development of positive relationships in pursuit of relational equity may help broaden participation in science, particularly from marginalized youth or youth who are dis-engaged from science. This study presents a novel approach to mentoring in not only the sciences, but for many forms of youth engagement.

The Projects with Promise section features early to midpoint scholarship of community-engaged projects, or projects with promising potential for demonstrating impact or addressing gaps in the engagement literature. In particular, most of the articles in this section feature studies of a range of experiential learning approaches and how they may be implemented to support and sustain positive community partnerships and student learning. First up, Light et al.'s article "The Impact on College Students of Service-Learning in After-School Programs" is a mixed methods study gauging the impact of participation in an Honors Afterschool Club on college students' learning and perceived self-efficacy, awareness of diversity and inequality, and career development. In this program, service-learning was embedded in a non-credit bearing course. As such, this research outlines a potential model for creating service-learning opportunities that are course-based but do not pass along additional costs to students, while meeting the need for engagement in afterschool programming—a common concern for many schools looking for positive student partnerships. Similarly, Schwartz and Shreya et al., investigated an ongoing volunteer-based program developed by undergraduate students at The Ohio State University over a decade ago to address social determinants of health in the surrounding community of Columbus, Ohio through weekly screenings with partner organizations. The authors provide a summary of how to set up and maintain a similar program, as well as discuss findings related to the impact of ENCompass on program alumni and community members in comparison to at-large community health data. Adding another dimension to student engagement and learning through experiential learning, Daniel and Riley investigated ways to promote equitable partnerships and student development through a study of a donor-funded internship program focused on reproductive rights and health at Tulane University's Newcomb Institute. The authors assess students' experiences related to career goals and professional development as well as understanding of social justice issues. Survey tools for interns, site supervisors, and alumni are presented and discussed. This study provides a model for

implementation of experiential learning for other universities, examines issues in program development, presents assessment data from multiple stakeholder perspectives, and provides advice for fundraising and donor relations for programs focused on critical social issues.

The Projects with Promise section wraps up with a reminder that 3 years from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still learning about its effects across the globe and ways universities and communities mobilized and partnered. Ramirez recounts the outreach efforts of The University of Asia and the Pacific with the Aetas, Indigenous people who are the earliest known inhabitants of the Philippines. This is a remarkable account of the ways in which the personal and professional lives of community-engaged faculty and practitioners became deeply intertwined during this global public health crisis, and the extraordinary work that resulted. In addition, Ramirez presents a look at community engagement approaches from the Global South, providing a welcome and instructive model for university-community outreach.

Reflective Essays are meant to be thought provoking examinations of current issues related to university-community engagement that are anchored in the literature. The purpose of Weaver et al.'s essay is to build upon Mitchell's (2008) tenets of critical service-learning (CSL)—authentic relationship, social change orientation, and power relations—and consider more concrete strategies for how CSL is assessed. To this end, authors employed collaborative inquiry methodology through focus groups of scholar-practitioners. Through these formal discussions with seasoned community-engaged scholar-practitioners, the authors posed an important question—how do we measure outcomes and impacts of critical service-learning? The authors expand our understanding of CSL's implementation, utility, and impact and the inherent difficulties in developing a standard assessment practice that is not centered around student outcomes as in more traditional service-learning approaches.

This issue culminates with a Dissertation Overview, a journal section dedicated to publishing summaries of recent dissertations addressing a wide range of research questions related to outreach and community engagement. Wendling's (2022) multisite single case study dissertation of five R1 institutions who achieved the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification furthers our understanding of how engaged research is rewarded and evaluated in the tenure and promotion process. In this study, Wendling investigates how school- and department-level promotion and tenure committees evaluate engaged research and associated processes for conducting engaged research; evaluate research products of tenure track faculty; and examines ways institutions attract, retain, and reward the work of engaged faculty.

A special thanks to our associate editors, managing editors, and contributing reviewers for their work in developing this issue of *JHEOE*. A reminder that the journal is actively soliciting new reviewers to support the peer review process and extends an ongoing invitation to fill out the form on the journal website or email the journal directly with interest. In addition, we thank our authors who have shared their work and experiences with us, outlined new directions for continued research, and enriched our thought and practice with their scholarship. We hope you will be sufficiently inspired by the scholarship in these pages to consider contributing a manuscript to the journal.

References

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