

From the Editor...

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As the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* publishes the fourth and final issue of 2024, our editorial team is reflecting on a productive year of supporting quality, peer-reviewed community engagement scholarship. This year, the journal published three regular issues and a special issue—28(3)—with the theme of “Community-Engaged Scholars, Practitioners and Boundary Spanners: Identity, Well-Being, and Career Development.” Across our four issues, the journal has been privileged to work with 176 authors from diverse countries, communities, and institutional contexts, truly making the journal a global enterprise.

Research Articles featured in this issue present various approaches for understanding service-learning’s impact on student learning, evaluations of programs in underserved rural communities, and new practices for promoting community dialogue. Leading off, Ngai et al.’s development of the Process and Outcomes From Service-Learning (POSL) questionnaire is an important contribution to the literature on service-learning’s impact on student learning. An ongoing weakness in service-learning research is the continued reliance on the single case study or class experience in research studies. POSL addresses the need for reliable and validated measures for conducting service-learning research. This represents a next step in developing validated tools that can be deployed across institutional and cultural contexts and addresses a serious research gap in the service-learning field.

Page et al. add another dimension to understanding the impact of service-learning through a study in a school-based setting in Stellenbosch, South Africa. “Positive Youth Development Service-Learning Opportunity for University Students” examines participants in the LifeMatters train-the-trainer (TTT) workshop, a program designed to train youth facilitators in the positive youth development approach. In this study, the authors employ a mixed-methods approach

consisting of surveys and post-implementation focus groups to examine the way participation in this TTT effected psychology and sports science university students’ self-efficacy, self-esteem, and personal growth as they work with adolescents in a school setting. This study has transferable lessons and implications for training university students to work with youth-serving organizations.

Harvey et al.’s evaluation for Oklahoma State University’s Rural Scholars Program reveals key lessons from both student participants and community mentors involved in a program that places students into rural communities to conduct research overseen by faculty mentors. Findings indicate that students developed a greater appreciation and understanding of issues facing rural communities, and rural residents and community members found value in the research projects students led in host communities.

Finally, the City Symposium is a public dialogue series focused on health equity topics developed through a partnership between university and community organizations in London, Ontario, Canada. The City Symposium used strategies designed to improve the communication and application of academic knowledge in communities, while also learning from and respecting community members’ lived experience. Wathen et al. combined surveys and interviews in a mixed-methods study investigating the impact of these symposiums. This study provides models for scholars seeking more effective ways to address broader impacts as well as presenting positive strategies for communicating about research with communities in mutually beneficial ways.

In the journal’s **Project with Promise** section, authors present early to mid-stage studies on a wide variety of engaged work in different contexts, investigating both promising practices and early evidence for impact. In “School Engagement Projects as Authentic, Community-Based Learning for STEM Undergraduates,” McClure et al. ana-

lyze an evaluation of education-related capstone projects at Queen University Belfast's School of Biological Sciences in collaboration with local schools. The outcomes of school engagement projects on both students and teachers were explored through focus groups that resulted in five themes that can inform future development of education-focused capstone experiences, particularly for STEM students.

Next, Fertman and De Los Santos Upton delve into the concept of *nepantla* identities as a way of understanding and interpreting the experiences of undergraduate students involved in community-engaged learning courses at the University of Texas at El Paso. As a university on the border between the United States and Mexico, the authors posit that the framework of *nepantla* can help instructors better understand and support the intersectional identities of their students. This study also provides strong evidence for the positive impact of community-engaged courses on UTEP students and the need to expand these course offerings.

Our final two Project with Promise articles delve into the impact of community-university partnerships in different settings and disciplines. Minnick et al.'s longitudinal study examines the impact of a strategic community-academic partnership focused on substance misuse. This study provides an example of ways other campuses and communities can replicate this partnership model for addressing critical issues such as substance misuse and other intractable problems facing communities. Wrapping up this section, Qutieshat et al. examine the initial impact and lessons learned from a partnership between Oman Dental College and agencies in Zanzibar to address dental decay, the importance of sustained oral-hygiene preventative measures, as well as the impact of involvement on dental students' preparation for practice.

Reflective Essays offer a space for scholars to explore new ideas, frameworks, theories, and research areas that may shape the community engagement field in the future. Often, these essays ask us to think about topics common to our work but in new ways. This approach is evident in our first reflective essay which explores justice-oriented collaboration using a blend of community-based participatory research (CPBR) and research-practice partnership (RPP) approaches in a long-term school-university partnership. Through this work, Renick et al., developed five relational principles to build a sustainable and equitable relationship with Title 1 school stakeholders. These relational principles provide social justice-inspired values as a framework for bridging CBPR and RPP practices.

Wrapping up our issue, our last essay presents results from a roundtable discussion hosted by the Pacific Institute on Pathogens, Pandemics, and Society (PIPPS) based at Simon Fraser University (SFU) that was focused on understanding the impact of COVID-19 on scholars conducting community-engaged research. Purewal et al. summarize important themes from this discussion and potential interventions to prevent the disruption of community-engaged research during future public health or other global crises.

On behalf of the editorial team at JHEOE, we thank the editorial board members, associate editors, reviewers, and scholars who contribute to the vibrancy of the journal and are part of the diverse community that make our quarterly publishing process possible. We invite you, dear reader, to become part of this community in the years to come.

