

Note from the Editor . . .

It is spring-summer 2010, and many, if not most, colleges and universities across the country are grappling with tight budgets. For land-grant universities, decreasing state support is having a severe impact on meeting the instructional needs of students, on retaining faculty members, and on serving the needs of the state through faculty and student outreach and engagement. Many observe that state legislators no longer view higher education as a public good, and thus are less inclined to support it with state funds.

In a January 3, 2010, article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “Needed: A National Strategy to Preserve Public Research Universities,” Courant, Duderstadt, and Goldenberg observed that “Highly trained and skilled labor has become more mobile and innovation more globally distributed. Many of the benefits from graduate training—like the benefits of research—are public goods that provide only limited returns to the states in which they are located. The bulk of the benefits is realized beyond state boundaries. . . . Today, not only is state support woefully inadequate to achieve state goals, but state goals no longer accumulate to meet national needs.”

As a result, now more than ever, colleges and universities need to demonstrate—through intentional and sustained commitment—their civic connections to their local communities as well as to other communities of place, interest, and purpose. These civic connections must represent reciprocal and mutual university-community partnerships. Still, however, many university faculty members, administrators, and staff have not acquired (and in some cases do not value) the skills and practices requisite to cultivating effective community partnerships.

As we assembled the manuscripts for this issue of the *Journal*, we realized that most of the articles acknowledge the importance of reciprocal and mutual university-community partnerships in addressing critical social, political, environmental, health, and economic needs; and in supporting community deliberation and political engagement in a democratic society.

- This issue’s research article outlines a method of inventorying faculty community-engagement activities with the goal of strengthening university outreach endeavors.
- The practice story from the field tells how four community organizing strategies contributed to the gradual development of a college-community network characterized by a reciprocal and relational process. The article offers the reader

perspectives of university administrators as well as community partners.

- The reflective essay encourages the reader to learn from community organizing strategies and deliberative practices to change the traditional siloed academic culture in order for higher education to play a leading role in reinvigorating American democracy.
- The three books reviewed speak to deliberation as a mode by which university members can participate in broad societal discussions; how service-learning activities in a variety of disciplines can encourage student political engagement; and the contribution higher education can make to American democracy through public scholarship, civic education, and reciprocal and equal campus-community partnerships.

Colleges and universities have much to contribute to the public good. They face a number of challenges, however, including breaking the barriers of campus organizational structures; enhancing the skills of faculty members and supporting them as they practice the scholarship of engagement; and continuing to expand the quantity and quality of service-learning experiences for students. This issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* provides suggestions, insights, and examples to further these endeavors.

As always, there are many to thank in bringing Volume 14(2) to press, including the *Journal's* associate editors Ted Alter, Hi Fitzgerald, KerryAnn O'Meara, and Scott Peters; the *Journal's* editorial review board members and guest peer-reviewers; copy editor Cathy Krusberg; and University of Georgia faculty members and staff, including Nick Ciarochi, Katie Fite, Kathy Hoard, Julia Mills, Libby Morris, Gwen Moss, Drew Pearl, Susan Sheffield, Virginia Sorrow, Pam Ward, and Steve Wrigley. Collectively, we hope the reader will find the articles and book reviews helpful and inspiring.

With warmest regards,

Trish Kalivoda

Editor

Reference

- Courant, P., Duderstadt, J., & Goldenberg, E. (2010, January 3). Needed: A national strategy to preserve public research universities [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. 56. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/A-Plan-to-Save-Americas-Pu/63358/>