

Ernest Lynton Remembered

Deborah Hirsch

As Ron Simpson mentions in his discussion of the scholarship of outreach and engagement, the late Ernest Lynton was a pioneer in the effort to elevate the work of public service and outreach faculty to the status of legitimate academic contributions. Formerly the senior vice president for academic affairs at the University of Massachusetts, he ended his career as a Senior Associate of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The current director of the Center, Deborah Hirsch, provides a fitting introduction to this ongoing feature of the *Journal*.

Ernest Lynton would be pleased with the publication of this particular issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* for several reasons. He would be gratified that years after he identified and named faculty professional service as a legitimate and important venue for faculty scholarly activity, it is a growing and enduring feature of the academy as clearly evidenced in this journal, and in particular in this special issue authored by Lynton award nominees. He would be honored by this particular issue authored by faculty nominated for the award created in his name, the Ernest A. Lynton Award for Faculty Professional Service and Outreach by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE). This award was created to pay tribute to his vision and contributions toward challenging and enlarging notions of faculty roles and scholarship. The award, established before his death in 1999, is given annually at the American Association for Higher Education's Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. The award recognizes faculty from across the country who are deeply engaged in community work that draws on their knowledge, skills and expertise, and affiliation. In the past five years, nearly five hundred faculty have been nominated from every institutional type and location and from a broad range of departments and disciplines. Their commitment to excellence is a tribute to Ernest Lynton's work and his life.

In 1987, in his book with Sandra Elman, *New Priorities for the University*, he identified the themes that would engage him for the remainder of his life—the role and responsibility of the “metropolitan university” bringing to bear its resources to the knowledge needs of society, and the need to translate knowledge into understandable

and usable forms. In November 1993, he wrote what could be the introduction for this volume in an e-mail to his colleague:

“In an age of growing complexity, subject to accelerating technological, social and political change, colleges and universities need to engage increasingly in professional service activities. . . . The details of this outreach will vary according to the nature of the academic institutions and of the clientele for its services. However, the common element is that inclusion of professional outreach in the mission of the institution means that it must become, as well, a dimension of faculty work, and a factor in the system of faculty incentives and rewards.”

The articles in this volume demonstrate that faculty service and outreach is a vital part of faculty work for a range of institutional types, disciplines, and issue areas. Ernest was always clear that a “one-size-fits-all” approach would not suffice; instead, he advocated that every campus—and even units within that campus—arrive at formulations and language that had meaning and resonance with their individual mission and constituents.

What was and continues to be the unifying feature of this work is the extent to which the activity represents and adheres to the principles underlying scholarship broadly defined according to Ernest Boyer’s rubric. Thus, at the end of his life, Ernest Lynton focused his energy on helping faculty document their professional service as scholarship that could be subjected to peer review through professional service portfolios. In order to do this, faculty needed to be able to provide information not only about the products and outcomes of their work, but also on the process they followed in knowing what was done and the reasoning behind it. The portfolios provided a mechanism to capture the expertise informing the scholarly process, the originality and degree of innovation of the activity, the level of difficulty of the task to be accomplished, as well as its scope and importance, and the effectiveness or impact of the professional service activity.

This journal provides a venue for faculty to publish articles based on their outreach oriented scholarship in a peer-reviewed journal. It demonstrates that this is a legitimate and significant area for faculty who are struggling to live out their personal values and commitments in their research, teaching, and service. Ernest Lynton

would be pleased at the progress that has been made, and insistent that we continue to push for eliminating the artificial distinctions between elements of the traditional academic triad in favor of a more seamless and holistic understanding of scholarly work.

Ernest Lynton raised the profile and status of faculty professional service both nationally and internationally. He championed a vision of service that embraced collective responsibility, a vision of colleges and universities as catalysts not only in the discovery of new knowledge but also in its application throughout society.

About the Author

Deborah Hirsch is director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts in Boston. The Center was founded in 1988 and is dedicated to providing innovation in higher education by focusing on community building, collaboration, and civic engagement (<http://www.nerche.org>).