

Note from the Guest Editor . . .

In our conversations about higher education's public purposes and mission, we are hearing and speaking less and less about "service," and more and more about "engagement." This rhetorical shift reflects something more than the popularity of the latest buzzword. It reflects a serious and substantive conceptual turn in our collective thinking about the nature and location of academic work. Still in its relatively early stages, this turn is challenging presumptions that academic work is and always should be conducted from a stance of apolitical detachment from civic life. It is inviting us to imagine and explore the ways that civic engagement might serve as a means of advancing not only public, but also academic interests and ends. It is encouraging us to retrieve and reconstruct a civic professionalism that situates academic professionals as active participants in civic life: not as volunteers and helpers, but as scholars and educators who join with their fellow citizens beyond the campus in public work.

There are many voices urging faculty members to become more directly and deeply engaged in civic life through a variety of approaches, including service-learning, the scholarship of engagement, action research, and public scholarship. But it is highly doubtful that faculty will choose to become engaged in civic life just because someone tells them they should be. This raises important questions for the relatively new field of the study of university engagement. How and why do faculty (and other academic professionals) choose to become engaged as scholars and educators in civic life? What motivates them to adopt a service-learning pedagogy, or to practice a public scholarship of engagement? Taking up these questions can help us to gain a better understanding of the range of influences and factors that motivate faculty engagement. It can also help us to gain a richer understanding of the nature, value, meaning, and significance of engagement for both the academic profession and the larger society.

The research articles in the first two issues of volume 12 of this journal take up questions related to the theme of faculty motivation to engage in public scholarship and work. Using a variety of research methods, the authors of these articles have grounded their empirical studies in such theories as intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation, civic professionalism, partnership identity, and motivation systems theory to understand what motivates the faculty who are already actively engaged in public scholarship and work, whether or not they receive external rewards for their efforts. All but one of the research papers included in these special issues were first

presented in 2006 in a symposium at the national conference of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). We hope that readers will find them to be both enlightening and provocative. We hope, too, that they will stimulate others to join in the pursuit of this exciting new line of research and inquiry.

- Scott J. Peters is an associate professor in the Department of Education at Cornell University. His research program combines the study of the history of American higher education's public purposes, mission, and work with narrative inquiry and analysis of the civic practices and experiences of contemporary academic professionals and community educators. He can be reached by e-mail at sp236@cornell.edu.