

***A warm welcome from the University of Georgia,
host of the Outreach Scholarship 2005 Conference:
“Transformation through Engagement,”
October 2–5, 2005 . . .***

When it comes to outreach, many faculty members are so busy doing that they rarely have time to tell the story. Research is recognized, rewarded, and shared with the sponsoring society through peer-reviewed publications, other types of publications, and conference presentations. Over the last twenty-five years, the same has slowly evolved for teaching. Today, there are disciplinary education journals and conferences for sharing pedagogical strategies. In 2001, Penn State, Ohio State, and the University of Wisconsin–Extension took the bold step to create a venue for intellectual exchange about outreach activities by sponsoring the first Outreach Scholarship Conference, Learning, Discovery, and Engagement, held at Penn State. For what is now an annual conference, the host site rotates to each of the partnering campuses. The University of Georgia joined the partnership of institutions in 2003, and was the host site for the 2005 conference, Transformation through Engagement.

To extend the impact of presentations beyond the three-day conference, the partners linked with the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. A special issue of each volume is dedicated to the Outreach Conference theme. The Journal, founded in 1996, is an interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal. Over the last ten years, the Journal has addressed a variety of themes, including urban outreach, service-learning, technology and outreach, economic development, and international outreach. Most important, both the Journal and the Outreach Conference themes are documenting the changing nature of outreach, which parallels the changing needs of communities in contemporary society.

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Today more than ever before, higher education is called upon to apply its resources and expertise to address critical societal issues—locally, nationally, and internationally. While some universities have strong outreach missions grounded in historical mandate (e.g., the land-grant institutions), most colleges and universities today recognize the important role they play in connecting with and helping society. Institutions with strong commitment to outreach recognize three concepts. First, higher education has an obligation to extend its intellectual resources to help communities. Second, higher education must address community needs not only by using technical and scientific knowledge, but also by applying knowledge of human behavior and complex social systems. Finally, higher education must recognize that when faculty members and students apply their disciplinary expertise to community needs, the lessons learned through that extension have an enlightening, expanding, and positive effect on their research, teaching, and learning. The synergy that comes from outreach interwoven in research and teaching is powerful.

Again, we are proud that the University of Georgia is a partner with Ohio State, Penn State, and Wisconsin–Extension in providing a conference venue for making public examples and transferable models of higher education outreach and engagement. We are also proud that the University of Georgia is home to the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. We hope that the specific examples shared at the conference and in the articles presented in this special issue of the Journal provide you models of outreach and engagement that can be applied to other disciplines and in a variety of institutional and community contexts.

With kind regards from the University of Georgia,

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Vice President for Public Service
and Outreach*



*Trish Kalivoda
Associate Vice President for
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