

### *A Note from the Guest Editors . . .*

**T**ransformation through Engagement was the theme of the Outreach Scholarship Conference held at the University of Georgia October 2–4, 2005.

Participants attending the conference represented a wide range of institutions and localities. The breadth of representation is reflected in this special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, with authors from thirteen different institutions distributed among twelve states. The geographic spectrum of institutions was diverse, ranging from Oregon to Florida and Texas to Massachusetts. A rich diversity of perspectives is shared by the contributors in exploring the theme of universities and communities working together to achieve mutual transformation. To organize these perspectives, the journal volume is separated into three broad, often overlapping, sections: Community Transformation, Academic and Institutional Change, and Policies for Engagement.

The goal of Community Transformation is shared universally among participants in engagement endeavors. The community is the literal landscape in which engagement typically is realized. Several of the articles included within this issue highlight instructional insights and exemplary practices. Brown and colleagues (pp. 9–23) articulate foundations of important metaprocesses underlying university-community partnerships needed to facilitate attainment of mutual goals. The broad impact of institutions on communities is exemplified by rural outreach through initiatives of Texas Tech University (Paton, pp. 25–39) and by land use and planning facilitation modeled by University of Wisconsin–Extension (Cadwallader and Lersch, pp. 41–56). School-based partnerships were the focus of two of the articles, with one describing collaborative school communities (Clark and Amatea, pp. 57–70) and another evaluating the impact of a violence prevention intervention within in a grade school setting (Scharrer and Cooks, pp. 71–86).

A second theme in this special issue is transformation within higher education, with the goal of Academic and Institutional Change. At Michigan State University (Lunsford, Church, and Zimmerman, pp. 89–104) an institutional framework to embed

outreach and engagement has been developed to integrate these functions with academic activities. Another article examines a similar transformation within a liberal arts institution (Heffner, Curry, and Beversluis, pp. 119–132). Another form of change is the preparation of students for leadership roles in organizations and communities, which is the focus of an undergraduate leadership certificate (Langone, pp. 105–117). The final articles illustrate the range of opportunities that can effect important institutional change through creative initiatives involving extension faculty (Conway, pp. 133–143) and international service-learning in the ecological arena (Baker, pp. 145–159).

The final section, Policies for Engagement, encompasses a range of experiences and insights that promote cultural and ideological shifts. Bridger and Alter (pp. 163–178) address the importance of embedding community engagement in the future status of the American university. A model of public deliberation (Williams, Daugherty, and Powers, pp. 179–193) incorporated in work across two states, Oklahoma and Missouri, envisions the potential for public policy implementation in the arena of American democracy. An important study of the relationship between poverty and population density (Tinsley and Bishop, pp. 195–208) offers a context to understand economic policy and engagement. Finally, reflections on the roles of ethics (Pittella, pp. 209–220) and academic politics (Hill, pp. 221–231) are examined in relation to the larger policy environment.

Development of this special volume of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* was a highly collaborative effort. The authors of the various articles have been a wonderful group who took seriously reviewers' feedback and adhered to the strict deadlines. In particular, however, we would like to thank a few individuals and groups by name as their contributions were meritorious! Faculty and other professionals at the University of Georgia were exceptionally generous in providing their time and expertise to carefully conduct blind reviews of the unusually large number of submissions. Particularly notable were the volunteers from the Service-Learning Interest Group, who shouldered much of the reviewing load. Sherry Allen of the Office of the Vice President for Instruction provided able administrative assistance to the co-editors. Melvin B. Hill, Jr., the journal editor, provided both helpful advice and creative latitude to the co-editors in crafting

the volume. As guest editors, we are pleased with the quality and breadth of content that is contained within this special issue. Our hope is that the ideas stimulate continued discussions and additional action in forming academic and community partnerships.



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