

Greetings from the Pennsylvania State University, host of the Outreach Scholarship 2004 Conference—Impact Through Engagement: Engaging Communities and Changing Lives . . .

As vice president for outreach at Penn State University, I am pleased to welcome you to this fourth in the series of special issues of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. This issue contains articles and presentations from the 2004 National Outreach Scholarship Conference held at University Park, Pennsylvania, October 3–5, 2004. Containing a striking variety of stimulating and thought-provoking articles and presentations, the issue illustrates the quality and depth of engagement scholarship being conducted at higher education institutions today.

The 2004 conference welcomed almost four hundred participants from twenty-nine states and four countries, representing three continents—the largest attendance in conference history. The breadth and depth of the scholarly initiatives presented at the Conference reflect increased focus on the scholarship of engagement within the academy. The initiatives also demonstrate the collective engagement impact of all participating institutions—a powerful force for addressing the educational, cultural, civic, and social needs of all our stakeholders.

Thanks to the National Outreach Scholarship Conference Planning Committee for arranging exceptional content. Beginning with an energizing keynote address by Freeman A. Hrabowski III, president of University of Maryland, Baltimore County, “University Outreach & Engagement: Responding to a Changing World,” the conference explored issues, raised questions, and invited dialogue surrounding the scholarship of engagement. I would also like to thank Graham Spanier, president of the Pennsylvania State University, for his thought-provoking presentation, “The Engaged University Today,” a highlight of the conference.

In conjunction with the conference, a number of related activities also enhanced the reach and impact of the conference experience, including Engaging Faculty, a joint initiative of the University of Wisconsin–Extension, Ohio State University, and Penn State Public Broadcasting. Engaging Faculty articulated

processes for involving higher education faculty in public broadcasting and for using public broadcasting more effectively to meet the educational challenges of the twenty-first century.

Finally, I would like to commend and thank our cosponsors for their immeasurable contributions to the success of the conference: Art Dunning, vice president for public service and outreach, and associate provost at the University of Georgia; Bobby Moser, vice president, university outreach, the Ohio State University; and Marv Vankekerix, interim chancellor, University of Wisconsin–Extension. The continued leadership of these individuals and institutions is essential to the advancement of our outreach agendas. We look forward to continuing our partnership with them at the 2005 National Outreach Scholarship Conference at the University of Georgia. Thanks to growing interest in outreach and engagement scholarship, we expect an even more rewarding professional experience in 2005. Please join us in October in Athens, Georgia!

We welcome your comments.

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