

***Greetings from the Vice President for
Outreach and Cooperative Extension of
The Pennsylvania State University . . .***

As a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, I am pleased to welcome you to this special issue of the journal.

Today more than ever before, higher education outreach connects individuals, organizations, and communities with the knowledge resources of colleges and universities to provide crucial responses to society's problems, needs, and concerns. The articles in this issue come from presentations made at the national conference Outreach Scholarship 2001: Learning, Discovery, and Engagement held at The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel at the University Park campus in October 2001. More than 250 college and university leaders, outreach practitioners, and faculty involved in outreach efforts at more than fifty colleges and universities participated in the conference. I am grateful to editor Mel Hill and the Institute of Higher Education of the University of Georgia for this opportunity to share their work in this important journal.

Outreach Scholarship 2001 was the first conference in a series sponsored by Penn State, Ohio State, and University of Wisconsin–Extension. I would like to thank my colleagues, Bobby D. Moser, vice president for University Outreach at Ohio State University and Kevin P. Reilly, chancellor of UW–Extension, for their vision and collaboration in forming this initiative. Our three universities have established the partnership to support university outreach and engagement and to share and explore best practices for higher education institutions that conduct outreach. Certainly our colleagues from the University of Georgia recognize the importance of this mission and have long been among leaders in this area.

As you will find in the articles within this issue, many outreach solutions are innovative, and best practices are highly diverse. Yet all engaged institutions share a number of important characteristics. We collaborate to deliver solutions and interventions. We make engagement and responsiveness top priorities. And we recognize outreach scholarship as a vital component of the teaching, research, and service missions of our universities.

The Outreach Scholarship 2001 conference provided outreach leaders, researchers, and educators with an opportunity to network, benchmark, and share ideas about the ways higher education can

achieve even greater engagement. The new arrangement between the Outreach Scholarship conference and the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* expands those opportunities, enabling us to continue an important national dialogue that is necessary if we are to continue to make substantial contributions to our communities, our nation, and our world.

Engagement in conferences, publications, and partnerships like these advance the outreach agenda, which, of course, is to make higher education more responsive and to increase recognition for the faculty scholarship in this critical area.

We thank all conference participants whose work appears in this special issue, and we invite you to attend this year's conference at Ohio State University on October 6–8, 2002.

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