

***Greetings from the Vice President for Outreach at
The Ohio State University and host of
Outreach Scholarship 2002: Catalyst for Change . . .***

Engaging a university's diverse knowledge with community concerns empowers us to be catalysts for change. Only by combining the knowledge, expertise, and talents of community and university partners can we address the complex challenges impacting today's communities and universities. We have a moral and civic responsibility to perform this type of work. But in addition, it makes us a better university. Engagement challenges our thinking, raises new questions, and expands the environment where we teach so that our teaching and research on campus is enriched. This important work is not limited to a few colleges or units within a university. To be truly engaged with the community, our outreach must involve the many diverse university colleges and departments.

We are pleased with the scope of university disciplines that were involved in the Outreach Scholarship 2002: Catalyst for Change conference. The broad perspective on community issues and the scholarship of outreach added to the richness and value of the conference. The 460 participants represented seventy-eight institutions, including land-grant universities, community colleges, and private institutions. Participants came from thirty-eight states to make this a truly national conference.

At the Outreach Scholarship 2002 conference we saw the impact of university outreach on primary and secondary education, economic development, and health and safety issues. We also saw how engagement enriches faculty and staffs' campus work. It is through a multidisciplinary approach to engagement that higher education can be an instrumental partner in addressing the multifaceted issues of communities.

The articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* highlight how engagement is changing our society, and also changing our work within the university. These articles discuss outreach and engagement as a form of scholarship that helps us learn and grow. We are pleased to include Dr. Judith Ramaley's conference keynote address, a thought-provoking challenge to all of us engaging our universities with communities. There are articles sharing insights on the lessons learned

in doing this type of work, and challenging us to think differently about how this work impacts us individually and collectively as a university. The Outreach Scholarship 2002 national planning committee challenges us to think about what outreach as scholarship means.

I am very pleased that we are able to continue the dialogue created at the Outreach Scholarship conferences through publishing this special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*. A special thank you to Mel Hill, editor and the Editorial Board for their support of this partnership. Their contribution to the scholarship of outreach and engagement is contributing to the national dialogue. It is helping us to move beyond thinking of engagement as the responsibility of only a few colleges to recognizing that it is an integrated part of the work of all of our disciplines.

I want to especially thank our many colleagues at the University of Wisconsin—Extension and the Pennsylvania State University for their support and involvement in planning this series of national conferences. In addition, thank you to Kevin P. Reilly, chancellor of UW—Extension and James H. Ryan, vice president for outreach and cooperative extension at Penn State, for their vision and commitment to university engagement, which has made outreach scholarship possible.

I hope you will join us at Outreach Scholarship 2003: Excellence through Engagement, October 12–14 in Madison, Wisconsin. University of Wisconsin—Extension, Penn State, and Ohio State are pleased to sponsor this national conference that challenges us all to be catalysts for change through engagement excellence.

Dr. Bobby D. Moser
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