

From the Guest Editor's Desk . . .

With this special issue, the *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* continues a long tradition of exploring the themes of the National Outreach Scholarship Conference. In October 2011, the Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) convened its 12th annual meeting in East Lansing, Michigan, on the campus of Michigan State University. It was the first time the conference had visited Michigan and organizers invested considerable effort in preparing what they hoped would be a thought-provoking event. University leaders; faculty members; academic, Extension, and professional staff; and community partners engaged in a planning process for over 18 months, supported by the feedback and reviews of colleagues from ESC universities and other institutions.

The theme selected for the 2011 conference was “Engaged Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice,” in recognition of the contributions both scholars and partners bring to effective university-community collaborations. Thematic tracks were developed to support this theme, by attracting presentations from broad a range of interests and areas of practice. Five tracks were identified:

- Methods and Practices of Community-Based Research and Creative Activities
- Translational Science and the Diffusion of Innovation
- Globalization and International Engagement
- Technologies as Tools for Engagement
- Leadership and Professional Development for Engaged Scholarship

In order to anchor the tracks in the program, a general plenary session was organized around each, featuring presentations and discussions by a panel of notable invited speakers. Concurrent sessions were organized in three formats: workshops, symposia, and poster symposia. The program also included two poster sessions (further discussion of the 2011 poster sessions appears later in this issue). Presentation proposals were accepted on the basis of their likelihood to advance discourse about engaged scholarship and evidence-based practice by communicating research findings, program designs and impacts, lessons learned, and curricular and policy development reflective of diverse contexts, partnerships,

populations, and institutions. Invited topics included, but were not limited to: community-based research, urban/rural interactions, international contexts, business and industry, distance-based delivery, underserved populations, Cooperative Extension, service-learning, continuing education, and university-wide outreach and engagement programs. In all, the program included 19 symposia (comprising 49 presentations and panels), 34 workshops, 6 poster symposia (for a total of 37 posters), and 104 poster presentations.

The 2011 program also included a number of sessions that have, over the years, become signature events of the National Outreach Scholarship Conference. These include:

- The Emerging Engagement Scholars Workshop – an intensive professional development program for advanced graduate students and early career faculty members;
- The Outreach and Engagement Staff Workshop – a professional development, networking, and community-building initiative for academic and professional staff who work in outreach and community engagement;
- The NOSC Journal Editors Panel – a panel featuring the insights and advice of representatives from scholarly journals that publish articles on community-engaged scholarship and university outreach;
- The International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame Symposium – a session including talks on conference themes by senior academic leaders who are members of this prestigious hall of fame; and
- The Outreach Scholarship W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Award Presentations – recognition of the regional winners whose work is publicly presented and juried as finalists for the national C. Peter Magrath University/Community Engagement Award, which is presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

Finally, the program offered special preconference workshops on “Perspectives on Developing Engaged Scholars” and “Utilization-Focused Evaluation” (the latter offered in partnership with the Michigan Association for Evaluation and Capital Region Community Foundation).

The 2011 conference attracted more than 500 attendees from 75 universities and colleges in 29 U.S. states and five additional

countries, including Australia, Canada, Chile, Japan, and South Africa. In addition, nearly 100 people participated in preconference workshops, without attending the conference itself.

This special issue contains articles, abstracts, and reviews by 34 authors from 14 colleges and universities and one community-based organization. The issue includes:

- A white paper from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities Council on Engagement and Outreach that explores current approaches to community engagement and considers the role of engagement in achieving the knowledge enterprise of the modern university;
- A reflective essay examining the World Grant Ideal developed by Michigan State University President Lou Anna K. Simon as an affirmation and elaboration of earlier land-grant principles for contemporary global society, and as a broadly applicable model for university-community partnerships;
- An autoethnographic essay reflecting on the complex experiences and sense-making about collaboration as gained through an evaluation partnership with a performing arts organization;
- Five abstracts describing the work of the inaugural recipients of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium Outstanding Poster Award, a special recognition program for scholarly work presented at the National Outreach Scholarship Conference as a poster;
- Four articles describing the work and impacts of the community engagement projects named 2011 recipients of the regional Outreach Scholarship which were W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Engagement Awards and the national C. Peter Magrath University/Community Engagement Award; and
- Four book reviews: a new edition of a reference volume on American higher education updated to explore contemporary challenges, a book on effective citizen participation in addressing complex public issues, an edited volume on service-learning with government agencies, and a study of the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Project, offered as a model for community engagement in urban settings.

I would like to convey my deepest appreciation for the commitment of the many colleagues who helped bring this issue to press.

The list is longer than this space can accommodate. It includes the authors, for their contributions both to this issue and to the scholarship of engagement more broadly; the guest associate editors of the *JHEOE* 16(3), Philip Greasley, David Procter, and Ann Ricketts, for their thoughtful reviews and helpful suggestions; the *Journal's* editor Trish Kalivoda for her leadership, unending support, wise counsel, and friendship; associate editor for book reviews Ted Alter, for shaping the book review section; associate editor for reflective essays Hiram Fitzgerald, for his mentoring and advice throughout the publication process; Michigan State University staff member Linda Chapel Jackson, for major and indispensable editorial contributions; the many guest peer-reviewers, for their commitment to improving the literature for us all; University of Georgia staff members Katie Fite, Julia Mills, and Drew Pearl, for tireless effort and patience; and the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and its 2011 planning team, without which there would have been no conference. I hope all who read this issue will appreciate what the authors have given us. I also hope they will consider attending future meetings of the Engagement Scholarship Consortium and finding ways to support its important work.

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