

JCES Continues to Bring Disciplines Together



As we begin our fourth year of publication, it is difficult for me to imagine the field of engaged scholarship without the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* (even at the risk of sounding a bit boastful). I say this not with arrogance, but with a confidence that *JCES*, even in its infancy, has helped to shape the quality, type, and rigor of engaged scholarship. Have we had growing pains? Sure we have. Have we made mistakes along the way? Sure we have. Will we continue to make them as we grow? Sure we will, but not as many. Very much as in the tradition of engaged scholarship, we will take our lessons learned and use them to improve *JCES*. Our goal is to be the premiere scholarly outlet for the scholarship of engagement and related issues.

Recent communication from Dr. Hiram Fitzgerald, a world renowned scholar in engaged scholarship and President of the Board of the National Outreach Scholarship Conference and Associate Provost of Outreach and Engagement at Michigan State University, underscores that we are definitely doing something right. Dr. Fitzgerald wrote, “Congratulations to you and your staff on the absolutely first rate issue of *JCES* [Vol. 3, No. 2, Fall 2010]. A nice standard to live up to.” We gratefully accept the compliment and are acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with it.

JCES operates from an action orientation, a foundational principle of engaged scholarship, and as such we value hearing from all segments of our readership. We recently received an email from a potential author whose manuscript was not accepted for publication in *JCES*. Our policy is to share manuscripts critiques with the author, regardless of whether the manuscript is accepted for publication. Because of this policy, the author told us, “Thank you for your letter rejecting my article. I’m disappointed but the reviewer comments are extremely helpful. Hopefully, I will improve my writing skills from this experience and submit an article worthy [of publication] in the future.” We are proud that we are able to provide a supportive scholarly environment throughout a process often wrought with unnecessary harshness. It is because of our dedicated international editorial board and reviewers that we are able to provide such quality feedback, especially to developing scholars, community partners, and students.

Continuing with the action spirit of engagement, the manuscripts in this issue challenge the status quo by addressing a diverse set of situations, conditions, and environments. Whether raising national questions about the institutional place and space of engaged scholarship, examining community engagement at the local level, broadening perspectives of teaching and learning experiences, or exploring how fatherhood programs can be more relevant, each manuscript in this issue addresses action in some way. Similarly, international topics like the social economy research network in western Canada, indigenous resilience in the Arctic, and capacity building for developing higher educational systems in underdeveloped nations like Tunisia also demonstrate social action and the long reach of engaged scholarship.

The commitment and excitement we feel toward *JCES* is further fueled by the wonderful opportunity we have to partner a special issue of *JCES* and NOSC 2012, which will be hosted by The University of Alabama at our home in Tuscaloosa. Although we hope to see many of you at the NOSC 2011 conference this year at Michigan State, we also want to encourage you to begin looking forward to the NOSC 2012 conference with the theme: **Partner. Inspire. Change.**

About the Editor

Cassandra Simon is an associate professor in the School of Social Work at The University of Alabama.