

From the Editor...

Exploring Our Impact

“How do you capture impact?” For any community-engaged scholar or practitioner, this is a common refrain on campuses and among community partners. In the world of university–community engagement, what is meant by *impact* is an ongoing and contested question. In this issue of *JHEOE*, a recurring theme examined by authors is how to measure impact and, in turn, assess the quality of engaged scholarship and learning, along with its attendant partnerships. Capturing and presenting evidence for why the work we do as engaged scholars matters for community partners, students, and faculty, and has impact on the life and culture of an institution and a community, can be approached in diverse ways. In this issue, authors explore multiple avenues in demonstrating how our work has impact and how impact can be defined.

To explore this recurring thread and the concept of impact, this issue of *JHEOE* leads off with Garber and Adams’s retrospective essay on a decade of community–university engagement work through the University of Georgia’s Archway Partnership. The authors employ the collective impact model to analyze the principles that have guided the Archway Partnership and demonstrate how it functioned as a “backbone organization.” Through examples and evidence from 10 years of community–university partnerships across the state of Georgia, they demonstrate useful strategies based in practice for achieving shared goals necessary for collective impact.

In another reflective essay, Davis, Kliever, and Nicolaidis present a hypothetical case study that examines how reciprocity and power in partnerships can be explicitly “mapped” in order to be understood by all partners. Using a framework for a deliberative civic engagement process drawing on democratic principles, the authors advance an approach to promoting transformative learning for all stakeholders that is a negotiation between the dynamics of power and mutual benefit that is often buried beneath the surface of partner relationships, but that can impact the health, quality, and success of the partnership and related outcomes.

Another dimension of understanding impact is assessing the quality of community-based experiences and whether a common assessment can be developed and implemented across institutions. Murphy and Flowers’s study on the creation of the Community-

Based Learning (CBL) Scorecard addresses this question through a multi-institutional research project funded by a Teagle Foundation planning grant. This research sought to develop a quantitative instrument that provides feedback to faculty on ways to improve the student learning experience in CBL courses based on best practices identified from service-learning research. The rigorous process of developing the scorecard is documented in this study, and the authors also consider the purposes and applications of an assessment instrument focused not on evaluation of a course or faculty member, but on improving the quality of the student learning experience.

Understanding the influence of academic disciplines on the forms publicly engaged scholarship may take, and how the disciplines may impact faculty practice, is the main focus of a unique study conducted by Doberneck and Schweitzer. These researchers coded faculty promotion and tenure packages using the Biglan classification of academic disciplines. This framework provides a method for conducting a content analysis to look at the type, intensity, and degree of engagement in public scholarship activities faculty engage in, and whether these vary according to discipline. The findings of this research have implications for how institutions develop support, recognition, and eventual promotion expectations for faculty involved in publicly engaged scholarship based on disciplinary considerations, which in turn affect the diverse forms of engaged scholarly activity that they might undertake.

In the final research article of this issue, Gauntner and Hansman explore the concept of “role conflict” (*Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970*) that is experienced by university staff who function as boundary spanners in various community engagement roles and contexts. Interview participants in this qualitative, grounded theory study explore points of tension between the competing expectations, organizations, personal values, and other elements of their professional roles. This study also examines the strategies these boundary spanners employ in order to negotiate the competing interests and conflicts that are seemingly inherent in positions that must bridge organizational and sometimes cultural differences. Findings include recommendations for how institutions can reduce this role conflict experienced by higher education staff occupying these unique jobs.

How faculty create quality experiential learning courses that can have impact on students and community partners is the focus of this issue’s Project With Promise. Willness and Bruni-Bossio introduce the curriculum innovation canvas, a tool that incor-

porates the principles of design thinking, such as collaboration and rapid prototyping, to facilitate creative and entrepreneurial thinking about the development of community-based learning experiences.

Once again, *JHEOE* features a diverse array of book reviews that remind us of the richness and breadth of engagement scholarship. Shaeffer leads off this issue's book reviews with an examination of *The Optimal Town-Gown Marriage* by Stephen Gavazzi. As the title suggests, Gavazzi explores relational aspects of institutions and their home communities, drawing from his experience as a dean at The Ohio State University at Mansfield. He further explores ways of gauging the quality of these relationships through his experience implementing the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) tool as way of gathering perceptions and data from the community on the health of the town-gown relationship. Moving beyond town-gown relations to the vexing questions explored by faculty engaged with and immersed in communities in crisis, Renee Zientek reviews Reardon and Forester's edited volume, *Rebuilding Community After Katrina: Transformative Education in the New Orleans Planning Initiative*. According to Zientek, the contributors to this book illustrate the importance of putting into practice principles of good partnerships, and knowing the history and cultural landscape of a community in order to gain traction when working through a crisis together. Finally, Ann Vail offers a review of Nichols and Kay's book *Remaking Home Economics: Resourcefulness and Innovation in Changing Times*, which takes a historical look at the impact of the discipline and profession of home economics as it relates to everyday issues affecting people and communities.

As always, we thank the authors, peer reviewers, and associate editors of articles in this issue for their role in shaping these stories of impact and attempting to find ways to measure quality. With new ideas and findings that emerge from the long, hard work of engagement, articles in this issue pose provocative questions and illuminate research findings that we can learn from, implement, and, in turn, take a critical eye to as we explore new questions for scholarly inquiry.

Reference

- Rizzo, J. R., House, R. J., & Lirtzman, S. I. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15, 150-163.

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