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## Editor's Message: JCES Steadily Improving its Position

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**A**s editor, and on behalf of the editorial board and local production team, I proudly present the second issue of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* (JCES). Since release of the inaugural issue in fall 2008, JCES finds itself better positioned to fulfill its vision of providing the premier venue for advancing authentic engaged scholarship. Response to the journal has been tremendous.

In talking with editors of other journals, I have learned that the number of manuscripts submitted to JCES is above average for a new journal. This leads me to thank the editorial board and reviewers, whose generous donation of time ensures the journal's academic integrity. JCES would not be possible without them.

Inaugural issue feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with readers using such words as "innovative," "wonderful," "refreshing," "excellent," and "impressive." At the 2009 Gulf South Summit on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement through Higher Education hosted by Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, JCES was the focus of a roundtable discussion arranged by editorial board member Richard L. Conville of The University of Southern Mississippi and led by Meta Mendel-Reyes, director of Service-Learning at Berea College. The program drew the largest number of pre-registrants of any roundtable. The overall summary from the roundtable strongly supported JCES, with roundtable participants specifically mentioning and appreciating "inclusion of student and community partner voices."

Recognizing a quality product when it sees one, the highly respected University of Alabama Press has taken on marketing and distribution of JCES. Its partnership with the University of Chicago Press will increase visibility and accessibility of the journal, especially by increasing circulation in libraries and with professional associations. This increased circulation and visibility will serve not only to expand our readership, but also to increase our influence in the world of engaged scholarship as JCES moves toward quarterly publication.

Adding to JCES' visibility, an interview with production editor Ed Mullins was published in the Spring 2009 newsletter *Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life*. On the international front, Mullins and I, along with publisher Samory Pruitt, will be on a program at the Ninth International Research Conference on Service-Learning and Community Engagement in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada in October. JCES will also be on display at the National Outreach Scholarship Conference in Athens, Georgia, September 28-30, and at the Imagining America Conference October 1-3, in New Orleans.

The current issue of JCES reflects the diversity present in engaged scholarship. You will find insights from Gulf Coast researchers staying their course during Hurricane Katrina; a practice piece on the poetic arts in a prison setting; research gleaned from 20 years of service-learning at a prominent college of medicine; an insightful commentary and review of civically engaged scholars swimming against the academic tides to fulfill personal and community goals; and senior and junior scholars seeking ways to learn research while practicing service-learning. And we get all of this as well as innovative research from the field and perceptive book reviews. Community and student voices are once again present, stressing the importance of acknowledging and understanding what their expertise contributes to our mission.

Just as the specific manuscripts and topics in the journal are diverse, so are their methodologies, presentations, and writing styles. We recognize the need to accommodate the diversity of disciplines and approaches reflected in engaged scholarship and the need to be accessible to lay readers, while maintaining a level of quality that will keep JCES on the radar of the nation's best engagement scholars. This issue demonstrates this awareness and provides something of interest to a wide variety of readers.

As always we welcome your insights, suggestions, and feedback. Send notes to [jces@bama.ua.edu](mailto:jces@bama.ua.edu). You may remember from the first issue that I said that, by definition, JCES is not completely charted, and we look to you, our readership, to help us shape it into what community engagement needs. I remain excited about JCES and its potential and am looking forward to seeing what future issues have in store. I hope you are too.

## About the Editor

Cassandra E. Simon, from Lake Charles, Louisiana, is an associate professor of social work at The University of Alabama. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Texas at Arlington. She can be reached at [cSimon@bama.ua.edu](mailto:cSimon@bama.ua.edu)