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From the Editor: An Early Goal: Finding Ways to Include More First-Time, Student, and Community Authors in JCES

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An Early Goal: Finding Ways to Include More First-Time, Student, and Community Authors in *JCES*

In less than a decade *JCES* has moved into a position of excellence and now serves as one of the flagship publications in the field of community engagement scholarship. We have extended our reach beyond North America to include international contributors and readers, and our articles represent diverse disciplines—from social work to nursing, from urban design to civil engineering, and from natural resources to medicine.

I have been asked to step up and continue the exemplary lead of Dr. Cassie Simon, under whom I have been privileged to serve as *JCES* associate editor. This not only allows me to further serve a field that I am passionate about, but will also indeed be a special privilege to serve with and learn from the best—the *JCES* editorial team is second to none! *JCES* was founded as a “new kind of research journal.” We will continue to evolve, mature, and transform as we explore the challenges and opportunities of the day.

While we must continue to innovate as we reward good scholarship, champion bold applications of knowledge, and lend our support as credible experts as we focus on understanding the myriad of challenges that face society at home and around the globe, we must also remain rooted to our primary cause: “disseminating the scholarly works on community engagement that would promote the integration of teaching, research, and outreach.”

As editor, any change I foster will be incremental, spawned as a consequence of the interaction between our contributors, editors, advisory board, and staff. Community engagement is all about becoming better citizens. I see *JCES* as a way to transform that experiential learning and to create great scholarship and contribute to the scientific, artistic, and humanistic basis of our engagement endeavors.

An early goal I have is to see more first-time authors, students, and community partners published in *JCES*. These are the people who will carry *JCES* and its message into the future, and these are the people who are often disenfranchised by



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traditional refereed scholarly publications. As an associate editor, board member, and reviewer I read many compelling manuscripts that simply needed enhancements to structure and organization to better convey their story to make a significant contribution to the scholarship of engagement. We must be the journal that provides such space and encouragement. By enhancing the connections between existing knowledge and practice, we can expand the transference of their knowledge and become a more inclusive platform for a larger community of scholars.

As a member of a community of scholars working in a world of practitioners, I look forward to a rewarding, challenging, and productive tenure as editor, and I am thrilled to be working with exceptionally talented and always helpful staff at the University of Alabama and elsewhere in the *JCES* world.

Some other changes are also taking place at *JCES*: Dr. Marybeth Lima, professor of Biological and Agricultural Engineering at Louisiana State University, where she serves as director of the Center for Community Engagement, Learning, and Leadership, has agreed to become our new associate editor. She was the winner of the 2007

Thomas Ehrlich Faculty Award for service-learning at LSU, has an extensive background in community engagement, and has been a most effective and active board member. Welcome!

At the University of Alabama, Dr. Ed Mullins has stepped down as our production editor, and Ms. Karyn Bowen has agreed to step in and fill his big shoes. Dr. Mullins will remain on staff as an editorial assistant so we will continue to benefit from his sage and practical advice. I'd also like to thank Dr. Samory Pruitt for his faith and persuasion; Assistant to the Editor Vicky Carter, a UA doctoral student in Social Work, for her unparalleled ability to “herd cats”; and to our new and continuing Editorial Board members and the many other reviewers, who share so freely of their time.

Finally, thanks once again, Cassie, for the leadership, guidance, and friendship that you have offered me. I hope I can continue to earn your trust and deliver your vision.



Dr. Cassandra E. Simon accepts an award for her work as founding editor of the *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship* at Penn State in September 2015 during the annual Engagement Scholarship Consortium (ESC) Conference. Simon was *JCES* editor from 2008 until 2015. ESC is a sponsor of the journal.