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From the Editors' Desk

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From the Editors' Desk

“Write an introduction.” This is one of the last items on our Journal to-do list and “introduction” could not be more appropriate when thinking about how to describe the production of this first issue. We have submitted our own manuscripts to journals, have had them rejected and accepted, and have served as reviewers and guest editors; but being the founding editors of a journal was new for us. And it was new for the Association as well. IARSLCE (The International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement) had published *Advances in Service-Learning Research* (an annual, edited collection of papers), published the Proceedings (<http://www.researchslce.org/publications/proceedings>), but had never before supported a journal. In spite of the travails of our mutual introduction to the world of publishing an on-line, high quality, peer-reviewed, academic journal, no one ever lost sight of the important role this Journal will play in advancing our field.

Thank you to those who submitted manuscripts and gave us the privilege of reviewing your work, prevailing through web glitches and delays. Though some manuscripts were not ready for publication at this time, all demonstrated the capacity of the field to engage in research that is multidisciplinary, draws on different theoretical frameworks, employs a variety of methodologies, and offers multiple lessons on the impact of and value to service-learning and community engagement.

The mission of the *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement* is realized through the articles that make up this first issue. One part of the mission is to provide a forum for the critical examination of our field. Gelmon, Jordan, and Seifer discuss the challenges of traditional notions of peer review when it is applied to community-engaged scholarship, and challenge us to think about how we develop mechanisms that honor the core values and principles of both scholarship and community engagement. Ethan Kolek calls on us as researchers to take a critical look at the surveys we are using to assess student engagement. Another part of this Journal’s role is to examine the impact of service-learning and community engagement across the entire educational spectrum, from kindergarten through graduate school. Andrew Furco challenges us to do a better job making a compelling case for the positive impact of service-learning on academic outcomes for K-12 students. Nicotera, Brewer, and DesMarais report the results of a mixed methods study of public high school youth who designed and led their own community action. Sessa, Grabowski and Shashidhar discuss the implications of research focused on 300 first semester freshmen and their choice to enroll in a service-learning course. Graduate students, often overlooked in service-learning research, are the focus of a study by Stewart-Sicking et al., who explore the impact of service-learning within the context of a three-semester graduate course. This Journal is also international in scope and Shalabi addresses the important and often overlooked area of community partnerships, and does so within an international context. Finally, one of the Journal’s goals is to help inform the field about new publications, and is reflected in Bowen’s review of a new collection of essays on international service-learning and a forthcoming review of a new book on community partnership.

We agree with Gelmon et al. that we publish a journal that allows us to challenge, critique, and share our work, all while we conduct business a bit differently. This is still a work in progress, and we welcome your interest, involvement, and feedback as we move forward.

Alan Melchior and Cathy Burack, Co-Editors
Jodi Benenson, Assistant Editor

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