Editorial

When Vance Peterson called me to say that my name had been mentioned as a possible editor of the *CASE International Journal of Educational Advancement*, I was flattered but apprehensive. I only recently had transitioned from my position as Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs at the George Washington University back to the full-time faculty at GW after 30 years in advancement. I was concerned that my research skills might be so rusty after many years in administration that I would not be able even to recognize good research when I read it. Further, I knew that my time already would be stretched in preparing for my new teaching responsibilities and advising several organizations on their fund-raising programs. I did not want these other activities to compete for the time that editorship of the Journal would require and deserve.

However, as many before me have discovered, I have found that there really is no separation among the worlds of research, teaching, and practice. Rather than competing for time and attention, these activities are indeed interwoven and mutually reinforcing of each other. The old cliché that “those who can’t do, teach, and those who can’t teach do research” is not only offensive, it is wrong. Indeed, those who cannot understand the research in their field cannot hope to practice it well, and you never really understand something completely until you are required to explain it to others. Staying current with research in the field is essential to good teaching as well as good practice, and continuing involvement in

practice helps assure that teaching and research are relevant. This is true not only for individuals, but also for the advancement profession as a whole. The spheres of research, teaching, and practice are inseparable in any endeavor that aspires to be taken seriously as a true profession.

Institutional advancement is a profession that developed through the experience of practitioners, rather than as an outgrowth of any theoretical foundation. Successful practices were disseminated through a tradition of teaching and mentoring, a tradition that continues to be a characteristic and core value of CASE. There were a few who took a systematic approach to understanding advancement practice when the profession was still in its infancy. For example, although it is long forgotten by most contemporary practitioners and scholars, I always have admired the pioneering work of John Leslie, *Focus on Understanding and Support*, which was published more than 30 years ago.¹ The study documented expenditures and staffing patterns in the advancement disciplines before the term “advancement” was generally employed and more than five years before the creation of CASE itself. But only in recent years has advancement become a topic of doctoral dissertations and, even more recently, a specialty for some established academics.

Advancement is moving toward being a full-fledged profession—like medicine or law— in which research, teaching, and practice are three components of activity that are related and essential to the

profession's status and success. Creation of the *CASE International Journal of Educational Advancement* was a milestone in the history of the advancement profession and I hope that its continued development will play an important role in continuing to enhance the field.

One challenge is to assure an increasing flow of good research, not only to fill the pages of this journal, but to enhance the development of the profession's body of knowledge. There continues to be a dearth of research that specifically relates to advancement in education. There is a larger volume of research that concerns nonprofit organizations and nonprofit management in general, and some of it focuses on philanthropy, fund raising, communication, marketing, and related disciplines. Indeed, there are a number of university-based research centers and institutes in the field of nonprofit management. But much of the research is not specific, and some is irrelevant, to educational institutions. There also are research centers and journals concerned with higher education, but most devote scant attention to advancement or its component disciplines. "Educational advancement" thus stands at a relatively unpopulated intersection of related, but distinct, research threads.

My hope is that the Journal will serve not only to provide an outlet for research focused on advancement in education, but also as a source of encouragement and inspiration for such work. While the disciplines of public relations or communications have theoretical roots that run deeper, the body of formal knowledge about fund raising remains slim, and relations between alumni and their alma maters is a subject that has barely been explored in any systematic

way. Newer specialties, such as advancement management and advancement services, remain rich in research questions to be examined.

We need studies that apply theoretical models developed outside of education to the practice of advancement in educational institutions. We also need solid, academically sound case studies of successful advancement programs in order to document best practices—not mere anecdotal reports of techniques that "worked," but thoughtful studies of cases that illustrate generalizable principles. Historical articles that help us to understand the profession's roots are both interesting and useful to developing our professional consciousness. Critical reviews of the existing literature on topics related to advancement also can make a great contribution to formalizing our existing body of knowledge and are encouraged. As advancement programs continue to expand in scope and in importance to their institutions, there is a great need for research that is focused on advancement management and that helps to establish benchmarks and appropriate metrics for the deployment of resources and the evaluation of effectiveness. As the profession continues to become more international in its scope, cross-national and cross-cultural analyses will add critical insights. The Journal will welcome submissions in these and other areas and will try to provide guidance and encouragement to those whose intellectual interests may take them in such directions.

I am greatly indebted to my predecessor, Don Hossler of Indiana University, whose three-year editorship of the Journal has provided both a strong foundation and an example to be emulated. In my work on this first issue

of my term as editor, I already have come to appreciate the support and assistance of Brenda Rouse, the publishing editor with Henry Stewart Publications, and to rely on her judgment and guidance. Brianne Miers, the Journal's assistant editor, very capably has kept this first issue of my editorship on track and I can say quite accurately that I would not have been able to do it without her. In the great tradition of sharing and friendship that makes CASE such an outstanding organization, members of the Journal's editorial board and other reviewers have been unsparing in their willingness to help. Those who have contributed articles or reviews to the Journal are especially deserving of our thanks for adding significantly to the continued growth and standing of our profession.

Finally, I am grateful to CASE for its support of the Journal and for having entrusted its editorship for a time to me. I have been associated with CASE since its founding in 1974 and that association has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. I look forward to continuing it in this new way.

Reference

1. J. W. Leslie (1969), *Focus on Understanding and Support: A Study in College Management*, American College Public Relations Association, Washington, DC.

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