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Guest Editorial: Community, Collaboration, and Celebration: The Launching of SoTL-CHEd

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Community, Collaboration, and Celebration: The Launching of *SoTL-CHEd*

Kina S. Mallard

It has been 15 years since the Carnegie Foundation's report on scholarship legitimized the study of teaching as an important and worthy form of scholarship. By launching the *SoTL-CHEd* journal, faculty at Oral Roberts University are embracing both the importance of scholarship of teaching and learning and the importance of the Christian perspective in the realm of ideas. This launch is a time for reflection and celebration highlighting the progress Christian higher education has made in the last decade. Unapologetically teaching-focused, many Christian colleges are embracing a dual calling—one of both teaching and scholarship. The study of pedagogy is a worthy focus for teaching institutions.

The ethos of most academic institutions encourages isolation and competition; however, the Christian college moves us toward a community of inclusion and collaboration. Conducting research studies on pedagogical processes is a natural outflow of our calling to a community whose centrality is teaching and learning. In a recent study, Christian faculty report collaboration with colleagues as a top motivator for producing scholarship, stating that they are always searching for a community of scholars that will encourage and support what they do. The same study found that teaching and scholarship support one another and almost half the respondents reported they receive ideas for research from their students (Mallard & Atkins, 2004).

We celebrate the creativity and diligence of the ORU faculty in starting this journal. We will celebrate the research published here that will impact teaching practices and transform and extend our knowledge. Celebrating our collaborative work is a privilege of Christian community. N. Thomas (personal communication, March 10, 2005), faculty development director at Union University, stated, "The cross gives us the freedom to have compassion on those who have more than us...more ideas, more publications, more awards, and more recognition. The Cross frees us to acknowledge and celebrate other's accomplishments." The Christian community allows us to lay down the burden of being the best *in* the world and focus on being the best *for* the world.

I encourage you to add *SoTL-CHEd* to your favorites list, read and learn from the scholarship of others, and submit your own work as we strive together to shape our hearts and stretch our minds for God's service.

References

- Mallard, K. & Atkins, M. (2004). Changing academic cultures and expanding expectations: Motivational factors influencing scholarship at small Christian colleges and universities. *Christian Higher Education*, 3, 384.

Kina Mallard is Academic Dean at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts. Before accepting this position, Dr. Mallard served in several leadership roles at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. She is Senior Fellow for Faculty Development for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities and is a frequent speaker on college campuses in faculty development and departmental leadership topics. Dr. Mallard holds the Ph.D. and M.A. from University of Tennessee. She can be reached at kina.mallard@gordon.edu.