From the Editor

Changing Venues

It has been over fifteen years since the first issue of the *Journal of Technology Education* was published. It has been housed at Virginia Tech from the outset. The founding Editor was Mark Sanders and I served as Associate Editor. Mark and I switched roles about six years ago. Around the first of July of this year, the *Journal of Technology Education* will move from Virginia Tech to Millersville University of Pennsylvania. I will follow it there, having accepted a faculty appointment in the Department of Industry and Technology.

Millersville University is a fitting place for the JTE. The University began as a Normal School in 1855, dedicated exclusively to the preparation of teachers. The technology education program there has a long history of accomplishment. It is among the four largest undergraduate programs in our field in the US and among five undergraduate programs that were designated as Outstanding by the Council on Technology Teacher Education. The faculty serve the technology education community in a variety of scholarly, leadership, and service roles. The Ganser Library holds the official archives of the International Technology Education and its councils, including the Council on Technology Teacher Education. The administration at Millersville has made a commitment to supporting the JTE in its new home.

The venues where work is done in this field are changing as well. In the US, land grant universities (LGUs) have been the principal locus for the conduct of research in this field. But over the past two decades, many LGUs have eliminated their undergraduate technology education programs or closed the doors on technology education all together. There seems to be a continual pattern of reorganization, usually in response to budget crises. One colleague remarked to me that for nearly one-fourth of our careers, the administrative unit in which we worked was undergoing reorganization. Actually, that is an underestimate.

Reductions in resources have forced LGUs to seek alternative sources of revenue, relying less and less on state tax revenues and more and more on benefactors, tuition increases, and especially on externally funded research projects. Though there has been a considerable amount of research dollars available in recent years for the support of education, they pale in comparison to research dollars in the hard sciences, engineering, and especially bio-related areas. At the same time, competition has become severe among LGUs on all

fronts, especially to maintain or move up in national rankings for research. Virginia Tech is one example, where the quest is to move into the top thirty research universities within ten years. Several other universities have similar, formally stated goals.

With this as a context, I have several observations and possible implications I wish to share. First, the vast majority of technology education teachers are now prepared in regional colleges and universities, not in LGUs. This is nothing new, but the proportions have been changing. This is a sort of "back to the future" situation since most teachers in the past were prepared at normal schools and many of these schools evolved into regional colleges and universities. Typically, these aspiring teachers take most of their technical course work alongside their peers who are headed for careers in industry. The venue for preparing technology teachers is these regional institutions, even more than it has been in the past.

Second, there are very few doctoral granting institutions remaining that provide a concentrated study in technology education. Yet, it is critical that the professoriate of the future be supplied with adequately prepared members, whether they end up in LGUs or in regional institutions. Though there are huge political problems to surmount, it seems logical that regional colleges and universities will offer doctoral degrees in increasing numbers. In the past, faculty in regional institutions often did not have doctoral degrees and were therefore unqualified to participate in the delivery of doctoral programs. Now, however, the vast majority of faculty have doctoral degrees, regardless of the type of institution in which they are employed. The venue for the granting of doctoral degrees in technology education may be shifting toward regional colleges and universities.

Third, research and development is no longer the primary domain of LGUs. For reasons mentioned above, faculty in regional institutions are, by and large, every bit as qualified to conduct research as their LGU counterparts. Typically, they earned their doctoral degrees at LGUs where the curricular emphasis was on research. Several large-scale, funded research projects have been awarded to regional institutions and the completed projects have been innovative and of high quality. Often these institutions have a much lower indirect cost rate as well, making them a better return on investment than many of the LGUs. Moreover, grants are increasingly being awarded to organizations, right along with higher education institutions. The venue for the conduct of research is clearly expanding.

Fourth, innovative ways in which technology education teachers are prepared will no doubt continue to be developed. Teachers may increasingly receive their undergraduate preparation in classical disciplines, such as engineering, architecture, and product design. Then, they will receive their pedagogical preparation at the graduate level, following the Holmes Group model. My colleague Mark Sanders, in collaboration with faculty in Virginia Tech's College of Engineering, has put together an innovative program along

these lines. It was reported in the December 2003 issue of TIES Magazine Online (http://www.tiesmagazine.org/).

Other options may surface as well. It is possible that community colleges will become more responsible for the preparation of teachers. Cooperative regional centers, perhaps sponsored by school districts, are another possibility. Distance education is already playing a significant role at the graduate level and it will no doubt have a more significant role at the pre-service level. If the field continues to become more cognitive, then distance education will become even more pervasive. It is even possible that a significant part of the preparation of teachers could be privatized. This seems particularly plausible in the context of programs that use learning modules developed and marketed by the private sector. The venues in which teachers are prepared will be much broader than has been true in the past.

Finally, a stronger connection between the world of theory and the world of practice must be made. There is a great chasm that is yet to be crossed between institutions of higher education and the practitioners in the public schools, regardless of the idealism one might adopt through reading the literature. The venue for research must go beyond the lip service now typically given to the importance of the context of the public schools.

The articles in this issue of the JTE validate several of the points I have made above. A science development center, a technological literacy center, and a prestigious engineering academy are represented. One public school teacher and one aspiring teacher are represented. No one who is currently employed in a land grant university is included.

It is interesting how certain words suddenly become part of popular jargon. The word "venue" was first popularized by the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996 and it suddenly became part of our vocabulary. Despite my study of Latin and Greek, I must admit that I had to look up the word in the dictionary during the '96 Olympics. This is my first public use of the word.

JEL