FOREWORD

Holders of doctorates are looked upon as experts. Whether they are academics or practitioners, we expect these experts to hold specialized knowledge or skills that afford them the ability to *do* or *be* more than the average person. As such the title of "Doctor" comes with respect and regard that historically has signified a certain achievement ascertained through years of study and research. However, with the increasing number of doctoral degrees being awarded around the globe and the increased accountability surrounding doctoral preparation (e.g., completion rates, relevance of dissertation) the definition of this achievement has come under scrutiny. On the one hand, the increase of doctorates being offered around the globe has raised concerns about the purpose and quality of doctoral preparation. On the one hand, the traditional methods for preparing doctorates are outdated. Scholars Walker, Golde, Jones, Conklin Bueschel, and Hutchings (2009), for example, pointed out that doctoral preparation ill-prepares graduates for the "full range of roles they must play" (p. 2). Additionally, discussions have surfaced among the arts and humanities about the need to prepare doctoral students for positions outside of academia. On the other hand, the proliferation and massification of the doctorate has left the creditability of the degree in question as it becomes more akin to a credential or avenue to salary and promotion gains in practice fields.

In recent years, higher education organizations such as the UK Council on Graduate Education, the US Council of Graduate Schools, and the Australia Quality in Postgraduate Research have taken a closer look at doctoral preparation as a means to better define the purpose of the doctorate and the goals of doctoral preparation. In its 2007 *Task Force Report on the Professional Doctorate*, the US Council of Graduates Schools (USCGS) clearly defined the doctorate (research and professional) as representing the "preparation for the transformation" of a discipline or field (p. 6). The USCGS definition suggests that doctorate holders have a responsibility to employ their expert knowledge and skills

for change. Change, in turn, suggests that doctoral preparation must go beyond expertise into the domain of leadership. Doctoral preparation, therefore, must be intentionally designed to form leaders of change who utilize knowledge and inquiry as tools for the transformation of their field or discipline.

What the editors Blessinger and Stockley have assembled in this volume are numerous examples of how universities and their faculty understand the demands on and current practices of doctoral programs and the ways they are rethinking doctoral preparation to meet the contemporary needs of transformation. The editors have commissioned their authors to explore the opportunities, challenges, and successes of doctoral programs in Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In doing so, they have advanced the conversation around the purpose and intent of doctoral preparation across a variety of disciplines and contexts.

A key feature that this volume brings to the conversation is the *determined intent to improve*. Through the understanding of current practices or implementation of innovative changes, the authors offer purposeful ways to make the doctorate more relevant. Authors such as Gigliotti, Agnew, Goldthwaite, Sahay, Dwyer, and Ruben, for example, demonstrate how merging traditional academic training with the 21st century needs of the academic profession can result in graduates who can both advance scholarship and lead in higher education. Chapters by Ford, Polush, and Brooks and by Gambrell and Topuzova provide examples of the need to include social justice in the design and delivery of researchers and practitioners preparation programs. Haywood, Allen, and Myers describe the implementation of the dissertation in practice, one aspect of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, and how this purposeful exercise benefits both the doctoral students and the community within which the student employ educational interventions. These and other chapters demonstrate how faculty are actively trying to improve doctoral preparation.

The volume speaks to a variety of stakeholders who want to see doctoral preparation transform disciplines of study and fields of practice. For those of us who are charged with preparing doctoral students, we take away tools for understanding our own contexts and our own practices. University administrators, professional organizations, policy makers, and accreditors will see ways in which university faculty are responding to external needs for change, making the doctorate more relevant. Future doctoral students will be made aware of on-going

discussions around purpose and goals of doctoral preparation as they seek out programs that meet their professional needs. Broadening the conversation to these varied stakeholders will surely contribute to the improvement of doctoral preparation and relevance of the doctorate.

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