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Foreword

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Foreword

Winston E. Langley

Change is a fundamental feature of life and living; without it, few things would survive, and fewer, if any, would thrive. The *New England Journal of Public Policy* has undergone a change, having elected to assume an electronic form. Since coming into being in this form three months ago, the success it has realized with its earlier issues has been remarkable. It is as if it were being waited on.

In the month of December 2012, for example, the journal was the second most popular publication series on *ScholarWorks at the University of Massachusetts Boston*, with a total of 2,783 downloads. To date, (just over three months), the 600 publications that make up the run of the NEJPP have been downloaded 17,116 times. And so it should be.

The journal's name, which represents the site from which it is published, is belied by the variety of issue areas it comprehends; the local, national, and international emphasis of its coverage, and the global character of its interests and concerns, as well as the global nature of the leadership the person who edited it for some 25 years, Pádraig O'Malley, the John Joseph Moakley Chair of Peace and Reconciliation, has exhibited. It would be accurate to state that the journal is pan-human in its orientation and commitments.

In its new form, the NEJPP is likely to be even more global in its reach, because the values which inspire it—social justice, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and human security, among others—are at once local and global, and they are interdependent and inextricably linked. The emphasis on these values could not be more important and timely.

The evolving, single global society (with continuing cultural differentiations) in which we find ourselves in is one which faces many, many challenges. One could even say that this society is under natural and socio-political stresses of a kind that is unprecedented: climate change; nuclear weapons proliferation; ethnic and religious conflicts; eroding farmlands; increased scarcity of fresh water; reduced diversity of plants, animals, and forests; increased contacts among cultural groupings who understand little about each other; expansion of income disparities between the rich and the poor; the call of indigenous peoples to recognize and honor their historical, cultural, and human claims; the absence of governance structure to respond to the need for human security,

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including the needs of the most vulnerable such as children, the aged, the sick, and the disabled; and radical reductions in the capacity of the public sphere to analyze, inform, and protect the many publics (local, national, and global) that compose our societies.

Lack of capacity also has to do with education. Colleges and universities, especially research universities, bear a special burden to help educate and champion the education of people throughout the world, so that they can individually and collectively be part of the process of arresting the threat of an increasing number of human beings who cannot fully participate in the joys of freedom, in the full responsibility of participation, and in the liberation of independence. Phrased affirmatively (and this applies particularly to women and girls, despite what may be happening in a small number of countries) the personal, social, and natural stress brought on by illiteracy must be reversed, if human development and the full light of awareness are to be a permanent feature of our overlapping and converging societies.

Likewise, as the reach of information, technology, production and distribution of goods and services (including knowledge), and the institutions with which they are associated become more globally networked, older local, national, and even international processes, practices, and institutions often prove inadequate to accommodate the voices of the powerless, the needs of consumers, workers, investors, and policy-makers. Worse, the moral and ethical insights and orientations that should accompany such networks are either in very scarce supply or are wholly missing.

What we need, among other things, are literary and other scholarly organs that can help meet the challenges on which the stresses mentioned are grounded. Organs that, without fear, can bring the analytical rigor, the social and political orientation, the metaphorical linkages, cultural and aesthetic sensitivity, the moral and spiritual force, and the intellectual and ethical solidarity we will need, on local, regional, and global scales to address them. The NEJPP is presenting itself and one of those organs.