Sharing Scholarship is an initiative of the National Society for Experiential Education that expands access to quality research and practice in experiential learning. NSEE’s initiative provides a portal for resource sharing among educators at all institutional levels through a collegial, collaborative, and inclusive process. The project is structured to foster deep levels of engagement in experiential education for a growing audience of scholars and practitioners. The Society’s plan to lead the way in resource sharing through this initiative highlights the value domains associated with experiential learning and emphasizes the high impact academic practices located in experiential pedagogy. At the heart of the project are the contributions of relevant actors who have committed to the ideals of experiential education from across the broad spectrum of institutions, nationally and internationally.

The genesis of Sharing Scholarship is found in Conversational Spaces, a conference session format introduced in 2011 during NSEE’s 40th Anniversary Annual Conference. Conversational Spaces was predated by Meet the Expert and, later, Resource Connections. At the time of the 40th Anniversary, this approach was viewed among NSEE’s leadership as a way to shift a segment of the conference focus to a participant-engagement model, encouraging the exploration of experiential learning within the context of current priorities and evolving directions in higher education. The open door structure of this new format reflected movement away from traditional conference presentations to topic specific ‘conversations’ to engage participants in examining the big picture of experiential education on national and international levels.

During the 2012 Annual Conference, which was held in Milwaukee, Conversational Spaces offered topic specific sessions. Two of the Conversationals, as they later became known, are of particular significance in setting the stage for the Sharing Scholarship initiative presented here. Dwight Giles recommended a session entitled Sharing Scholarship, inviting members to share the findings of their research including case studies and qualitative and quantitative approaches to their work. Sharing Practice, a session suggested by Jim Walters, invited members to share innovative practices that demonstrated effective outcomes and withstood the test of time, application, and/or publication. Many readers will recognize characteristics of these conversations in NSEE’s new approach to resource sharing, which has been identified
by the organization’s leadership to be both an effective and affirming method for expanding access to a vast array of pedagogical resources.

Why is **Sharing Scholarship** important to the NSEE organization and its members? We look at this initiative from two entry points: “sharing scholarship”, a conceptual idea to create a unique opportunity for sharing resources including independent research, curricula, and innovations in practice across and between institutions, roles, and positions; and **Sharing Scholarship**, a repository in which to hold these resources creating, by virtue of its structure, a shared relationship between experiential educators. The initiative grew out of the Society’s commitment and the contributions of its members and leaders in the field to further the ideals of experiential education in a real and authentic way. The initiative exemplifies the values and ideals of NSEE’s mission, the establishment of effective methods of experiential education as fundamental to the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that empower learners and promote the common good. Collecting, preserving, and disseminating specific categories of research and practice draw on the work of scholars and practitioners who have committed to the ideals of experiential pedagogy not only as currently understood and practiced but also with a view towards its future growth and potential. Three categories of research and practice form the core of the initiative: **graduate research** in fulfillment of dissertation requirements highlighting, in particular, the work of emerging scholars; **peer-reviewed publications** to promote expansion of the experiential education literature; and **campus innovations** to profile high quality, rigorous, and flexible practice across the breadth of academic organizations and the diversity of their respective programs. Each category has been identified for its contributions to the rich tapestry of resources that broaden and deepen the student experience; influence collaboration and enriched levels of communication between campus departments and within the larger community; open up the range, diversity, and quality of such programs; and identify benchmarks for evaluation and assessment.

We are in a time of significant change in our communities and on our campuses. Shifting paradigms in K-12 and the higher education landscape, responding to challenges in socio-economic and political environments at home and across the globe, require that we look deeply into the work we do and the impact of our work on student outcomes. As practitioners we have a responsibility to foster greater levels of participation in the range of modalities that define the current landscape of experiential learning. The values inherent in experiential education influence new scholarship, openness to new ideas, innovative models for replication, and redefined educational environments that celebrate and support the transfer of learning and understanding to multiple contexts. Real world, hands on approaches to a curriculum that integrates guided reflection into the learning environment demonstrate shared responsibility for student learning and the importance of embedding experiential applications into the cultures of our institutions. The outcomes are especially significant in providing us with a lens into the ways in which students can take responsibility for their learning, adjust to their emerging roles in community and professional contexts, and move beyond initial frames of reference as active participants in how and what they learn.
*Sharing Scholarship* has been conceptualized as a vehicle to more readily make available to practitioners and others the richness of experiential programs as they evolve from practice. The initiative encourages intentional collective efforts to expand the various modalities identified with experiential learning, motivating advanced levels of scholarship that dig deeply into the origins of experiential pedagogy and its connections to 21st Century learning environments. The project celebrates unique energies associated with these modalities and supports the scholarship of faculty, professional staff, and administrative leaders whose research, campus activities, and interactions with students help to identify changing attitudes and evolving directions in education. As practitioners we have an important role in this initiative. On our various campuses we are in positions to promote experiential learning more broadly, furnishing our campuses with tools that support students in their experiential endeavors and honoring the distinctive characteristics of our respective campus programs.

The three categories of *Sharing Scholarship*:

**NSEE Dissertation of the Year:** a repository of excellence in experiential education graduate research in fulfillment of dissertation requirements. Emerging scholars frame and examine new questions through individualized research and study design, identifying new approaches for developing, implementing, and assessing experiential pedagogy. The scholars selected for this award bring new voices, new attitudes, and new experiences to the discussion that extends to the wider realm of teaching in dynamic and challenging environments. Each dissertation provides fertile ground for identifying new pathways to explore the diversity of our institutions and their respective programs. Each awardee’s work advances our base of understanding about experiential practice.

**Scholarship in Experiential Education:** a collection of peer-reviewed publications that expand and enrich the experiential education literature. Recent scholarship is collected, preserved, and disseminated through this portal of *Sharing Scholarship*. The collection furthers the experiential education research agenda and promotes NSEE’s goals that are made explicit in its mission: *Education, to support educators’ professional development and leadership skills; Scholarship, to engage in research, and share theory and the application of principles of effective practice; and Communication, to advocate for integrating effective experiential learning throughout the educational system and the community.* The publications in this collection represent depth of commitment to experiential learning and highlight opportunities for educators at all levels to examine new attitudes about and innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

**Campus Innovations in Experiential Education:** an anthology of individual campus initiatives. In this category of *Sharing Scholarship*, innovative practices in which students, faculty, institutional leaders, and community actors are engaged are contextualized by NSEE’s Special Interest Groups or SIGs. Examples of such practices encompass course and activity-based projects, internships and field-based education, service-learning, social justice initiatives, and education abroad, among others. The
Campus Innovations portal provides access to initiatives that promote campus synergies; demonstrate the integration of theory with practice; identify benchmarks for evaluation and assessment; challenge the structural dimensions of organizations to pave the way for innovation and change; and celebrate the achievements of institutions that advance new directions in education. Submissions may include new ways to think about program development, features that distinguish institutionalized programs, and campus initiatives that are models for replication. Each campus innovation reflects the work of both senior and emerging scholars and the new generation of teachers and learners who have committed to the ideals and values inherent in an education that, in its heart, embraces the unique energy, intellectual empowerment, and range of possibilities associated with experiential practice.

NSEE’s guiding purpose is ‘to serve as a national resource for the development and improvement of experiential education programs nationwide’. *Sharing Scholarship* contributes to the Society’s purpose and in fulfillment of its mission by providing us with this opportunity to gain greater expertise in the field, learning from each other in a shared environment while benefitting the students we teach, mentor, and advise. To move forward we encourage NSEE’s members and others from the educational community to support its ongoing development and expansion through individual participation and collegial advocacy. Educators from across the full range of educational institutions are invited to participate by self-submitting or recommending others in any of the three categories. The resources of *Sharing Scholarship* are freely accessible through NSEE’s website. The links below connect you to the appropriate submission forms for each category of scholarship. For more information please contact Joanne A. Dreher, Ed.D. Coordinator of the *Sharing Scholarship* initiative at gjdreher@verizon.net.

*The author expresses appreciation to Mary King for her support and for providing the background documentation to trace the origins of Sharing Scholarship.*