From Nancy Cantor and Steven Lavine

Dear [TTI MEMBER NAME]

We are writing to invite you to re-engage with Imagining America’s important work on public scholarship and tenure policy. As national co-chairs of the Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI), we are pleased to provide ongoing leadership for the next phase of this effort.

Your contribution to the TTI has had a significant national impact. The TTI report, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University,* has been enthusiastically received. Praised by a leading scholar as "the most persuasive and comprehensive guide to tenure reform supporting interdisciplinary and engaged research that we have as a field," it is being used as a tool for dialogue, planning, and action across higher education. Following the release of the report at a working conference in New York City in 2008, Imagining America (IA) convened a series of regional meetings in collaboration with Campus Compact. These meetings helped to advance the work by connecting communities of change from a variety of institutions.

It is time to push forward again. The next phase of Imagining America's work will be carried out by the newly formed Scholarship and Tenure Policy Collaboratory. Led by Dr. Julie Ellison and Dr. Timothy K. Eatman, co-authors of *Scholarship in Public,* the Collaboratory brings together a stellar group of research fellows. The Collaboratory represents a commitment to understanding the reverberations of the TTI to date, grounding assessment in the thoughtful collective analysis of new and better information about the regional meetings and other activities. Some of that new data will come from Dr. Eatman's new national study on the aspirations and decisions of publicly engaged scholars at early career stages.

The TTI is not just about the rules for promotion and tenure. The convictions that inspired *Scholarship in Public* will also drive the work of the new Collaboratory, above all a firm belief that diversity and public engagement necessarily go together. In the foreword to the 2008 report, we expressed our belief that "diversity, civic passion, and excellence go together." George Sanchez, Imagining America's Board Chair, points out that it is central to IA's mission to integrate these goals. Engagement *by the university* through connections with specific communities and publics contributes directly to *access to the university* for members of all communities and publics. The ranks of scholars who are committed to the public good include many faculty members of color, women in underrepresented fields, and interdisciplinary pioneers. Their goals often include pursuing community-based teaching and scholarship--precisely the activities that help students to thrive by providing a sense of social purpose, mentoring, and active learning.

If our aim is the full participation in higher education, then, it is time for a rigorous assessment of how we are doing in providing coherent institutional support for public scholarship. The Collaboratory will complete an impact survey and inventory to track the process of effecting tenure and promotion policy changes relating to public scholarship. The resulting report will present evidence-based recommendations and a plan for more ambitious multi-institutional efforts aimed at connecting different communities of effort around these issues.

Imagining America has already built a multi-campus national network and a culture of knowledge-building exchanges. The Collaboratory aims to make knowledge transfer across institutions even more deliberate, focused, and powerful. Therefore we are grounding our investigation in new partnerships right from the start. Drawing on the model of IA's work with Campus Compact in 2008-2009, Collaboratory leaders are forging relationships with other like-minded associations and centers. Joint planning has already begun with the Ford-Funded initiative, "Linking Full Participation and Higher Education's Mission," undertaken by, Columbia University's Center for Institutional and Social Change, Imagining America, and Syracuse University. Other potential partners include the Social Science Research Council, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education, and other higher education associations committed to democratic engagement.

Julie Ellison and Tim Eatman will be contacting you shortly. They will ask you to designate a senior individual in Academic Affairs as liaison for the project and will schedule a short telephone interview with you. Above all, they will want to hear what kinds of findings and resources would be directly useful for your institution.

We are grateful to you for your original commitment and look forward to working with you to sustain this vital endeavor.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: