2015 Letter from the Director

Dear colleagues and friends of the Leadership Institute,

Last year, 2014, was a time of tremendous learning and growth for us. It has been a time of introspection and boundary-crossing within the traditional cohorts of the Leadership Institute; and we have been pleasantly enveloped by the curiosity and excitement of old and new companions and partners within USD and in the San Diego region.

Over the year, we continued to provide our strongest events and activities from the past, and also initiated new activities and partnerships. Our Leadership for Change conferences continued to provide space for complex learning and transformation for our students and community members. Our Women’s Leadership Academy organized the 2014 Women in Higher Education Leadership Symposium, with very positive feedback from participants who came from all over the United States. We partnered again with KidsEcoClub to provide a program of youth leadership development. Our Leadership Conversations project successfully organized The Power of Dialogue and Letting Go to Lead workshops for our students and the wider community.

With support from the Orca Fund at The San Diego Foundation, we provided organizational consulting to the “Art of Science Learning” project of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership. We also formed a new collaboration with The San Diego Foundation to design and supervise a community coaching program for their Great Neighborhood Challenge initiative. We are partnering with USD’s Caster Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research to convene dialogues among local grantees and funders, aimed at building productive communication and relationships that will help the sector serve our region’s needs more effectively. These grantee-grantmaker dialogues have been funded by The Whitman Institute, based in San Francisco. RISE San Diego, a new nonprofit, has invited us to partner with them to design and deliver an Urban Leadership Fellows Program for neighborhood leaders from the underserved urban communities of San Diego. These are a few of the various opportunities and partnerships that emerged over the course of 2014.

With the goal of creating space for scholarship and practice to encounter and shape each other across different frameworks, we initiated a monthly colloquium series and a formal working paper series. We also sponsored and supported: the Peace and Justice Studies Association Conference held at USD; a Leadership Talking Circle, led by Cree leader and SOLES alumna Pat Makokis and her daughter; and reflections on leadership offered by Sri Lankan Sarvodaya founder Dr. Ariyatne.

We are eager to see what challenges and opportunities 2015 will bring as we continue to build learning spaces for our students and serve communities around us. We wish all of you good health and success in your endeavors to bring more wellbeing and beauty into the world.

Meenakshi.