

## Editors' Introduction

Americans have long maintained faith in public education to facilitate social mobility and the American dream (Hochschild & Scovronick, 2003). However, public schools have never been fully inclusive or equitable, despite numerous policies aimed at expanding educational opportunity and access. Furthermore, despite “reforming again, again, and again” (Cuban, 1990, p. 3), the basic institutional patterns, or “grammar” (Tyack & Tobin, 1994, p. 453), of public schooling, remain virtually the same, with little more than cosmetic changes that fail to meaningfully dismantle persistent inequities. To quote from the title of David Tyack and Larry Cuban’s 1995 book, school improvement has always been a slow, often disorderly, process of “tinkering toward utopia,” often because we neglect to learn from the history of American education reforms. These scholars reject quick solutions that can be easily implemented and call instead for fresh, carefully considered reform ideas informed by history that challenge dominant theories of how to improve schools and broaden educational opportunity.

The articles featured in Volume 7, Number 1, of the *Berkeley Review of Education* offer new perspectives on how schools can be more equitable and inclusive, shedding light on many unacknowledged factors that contribute to persistent inequities. Employing a range of theoretical and methodological approaches, the authors address how the political, social, economic, and cultural issues of the 21st century pose unique challenges to reversing inequitable conditions. For instance, one article calls attention to an institutional model within higher education that has effectively broadened opportunities for historically underserved populations, yet remains largely overlooked in policy discussions and funding decisions. Another article explores technologies that enable more complex and democratic assessments, but are underutilized due to dominant theories about teaching and learning. In a third article, the author describes how laws that are meant to protect free speech have not been accompanied by regulations that protect students from homophobic expression. A collection of short essays focuses on how the 2016 presidential election has created new issues and uncertainties regarding educational equity, inclusion, justice, and activism. Finally, two experienced education faculty researchers discuss the future of scholarly research and the potential for research to inform equity-oriented policies at a time when many Americans are questioning the legitimacy of scholarly expertise.

In our first article, *Minority Serving Institutions: A Data-Driven Student Landscape in the Outcomes-Based Funding Universe*, Marybeth Gasman and colleagues examine the unique contributions of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) in educating low-income students of color in a resource-constrained environment that privileges outcomes typically associated with elite Predominantly White Institutions. The authors use descriptive statistics from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and National Science Foundation to illustrate the relationship between MSIs and outcomes for men of color, their role in growing the teacher pipeline, and their significant presence within the community college sector. The authors argue that MSIs deserve a more prominent position in national conversations if policymakers truly want to engender systemic change.

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In our second article, *Righting Technologies: How Large-Scale Assessment Can Foster a More Equitable Education System*, Nadia Behizadeh and Tom Lynch examine the history of large-scale assessment in the United States. They argue that large-scale assessment has been standardized and predetermined, following the philosophies of Thorndike, rather than student-centered and negotiated, following the theories of Dewey, largely due to a confluence of technological capabilities and political factors of the time. To counter this, the authors offer a framework for “negotiated control” and, using the assessment of writing as an example, propose ways in which modern technologies can support more negotiated and student-centered forms of large-scale assessment.

In our third article, *Homophobic Expression in K–12 Public Schools: Legal and Policy Considerations Involving Speech that Denigrates Others*, Suzanne Eckes reviews Supreme Court and lower court decisions that address the complicated balance of permitting free expression while curtailing hateful speech in public schools. She employs legal research methods to examine how these cases have shaped the current legal environment surrounding homophobic speech in K–12 public schools. The issue of homophobic speech is complex: On one hand, public schools are spaces where students learn to express their opinions freely, but on the other, homophobic speech undermines the goal of promoting inclusivity, tolerance, and safety. To illustrate this complexity, Eckes focuses her analysis on two federal circuit court cases with conflicting rulings on how schools should handle anti-LGBTQ speech. Eckes argues that, given legal precedents, school districts should set policies that simultaneously allow students to freely discuss their viewpoints on sexual orientation and other politically-charged topics, and regulate speech that denigrates LGBTQ students and other vulnerable populations.

We also include a selection of short pieces published in early 2017 as part of our Call for Conversations (CFC), in which we welcomed writings around the theme “Education in the Era of Trump.” Of the 33 pieces published online, we selected eight that embody the range of writings shared and the spectrum of voices represented. These include the poem *For Girls Made of Fire*, by a high school student, about the power of girls under the Trump administration. We also include reflections and essays on the important role that curriculum can play in combatting false and dangerous narratives, and there are additional pieces that speak to the particular experiences of undocumented families under a Trump administration. Our readers will find many more exceptional pieces posted online on our CFC blog, including concrete suggestions for teachers working with children of all ages.

Finally, we close with an interview between the Dean of the University of California Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, Prudence Carter, and UC Berkeley's outgoing Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, Na'ilah Suad Nasir, recorded at the 2017 Graduate School of Education Research Day. Dean Carter and Professor Nasir explore the current and future state of educational research and consider both the role of the scholar and schools of education in that future. They discuss the institution of education and ways to improve certain aspects while simultaneously overhauling practices that perpetuate systemic inequities. They explain that the consideration of equity is crucial as we move forward in a diverse nation and world, and they challenge the broader community of educators (e.g., scholars, educators, administrators, and institutional leaders) to think about what equity means, what it looks like for different students and in

different contexts, and implore this community of educators to consider how equity should inform relevant, meaningful research. They assert that to answer this call for equity, researchers must work collaboratively across disciplines and consider how their research translates to practice and informs the students and systems they seek to study and improve.

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The Berkeley Review of Education invites pieces that continue and extend the conversations started by the authors in this issue as well as work that starts new conversations on issues related to equity and diversity. We encourage senior and emerging scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to submit articles that address issues of educational diversity and equity from various intra/interdisciplinary perspectives. The editorial board especially welcomes submissions that provide new and diverse perspectives on pressing issues impacting schools, educational systems, and other learning environments. We also welcome a broad range of “critical” scholarship. We define critical work as that which aims to analyze, evaluate, and examine power and dominant structures while helping us to imagine something new.

We thank the many people who have assisted in getting this issue to press: the authors, current and former board members, volunteers, reviewers, advisers, and the students and faculty members at the Graduate School of Education who have helped us in many other ways. We especially thank Dean Prudence Carter, Assistant Dean Alejandro Luna, and our faculty adviser, P. David Pearson, for their ongoing support and guidance as we broaden the scope and readership of the journal. Finally, we thank the University of California Berkeley Graduate School of Education and Graduate Assembly for their generous financial support.

*The Editors*

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