

*Comments by W. Norton Grubb, Recipient, Chancellor's Award for Advancing Institutional Excellence, June 14, 2012*

I know this is not the Academy Awards, but I do have some people to thank. First of all, the members of the Haas Diversity Research Center and Gibor Basri, the Vice-Chancellor in charge of the Center. Second, I'd like to thank Chancellor Birgeneau in particular because he was active and instrumental in setting up the Research Center. Finally, I thank the selection committee, whom I believe to be 5 faculty from my own institution. It's rewarding to be honored in my own country – that is, my own department – as well as by the university as a whole.

Andy Warhol promised each of us 15 minutes of fame. I am not going to talk that long – I'll use perhaps 5 minutes of MY ALLOTTED FAME, but I do want to mention some aspects of my research and public service so that you know what I may have done to merit this award.

My research has not followed the usual approach to equity of focusing on groups who have suffered inequality – for example

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African-Americans, Latinos, or women, or, in this age when women have surpassed men in their educational attainment, the plight of men themselves. Instead, I have focused on the institutional practices causing inequity in schools and colleges that apply to all individuals, not any particular group.

My earliest work was on school finance and specifically the *Serrano* case in California, which attacked inequity in spending among districts in the state.

More recently, I have expanded my focus beyond just money and financing to address the **resources** that money might or might not buy. Money by itself is not enough; it is NECESSARY but NOT SUFFICIENT. Other resources – like instructional approaches and school climate – are central to educational outcomes, and the lack of such resources causes a large number of inequalities in our schools. The notion that money by itself will cure those inequalities is what I call the Money Myth.

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Another example of my research is examining the relationship between schooling and employment. This is an issue of EQUITY because schools over the 20th century became increasingly vocationalized – that is, focused on preparing students for vocations and economic life. But when that happens to schools and colleges and universities, then the labor market begins to dominate schooling as well. Schooling starts to follow the patterns of labor markets – including all THEIR inequities, like discrimination against racial minorities and women and the unequal distribution of earnings.

A third example of my research into equity issues is my work on community colleges. Most of you know that community colleges are the point of access to higher education for lower income students, for racial minority students, and for students who have not done well in high school. However the dark secret is that community colleges they don't allow such students to complete in as great numbers as they enter. Thus, my research on community colleges is

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part of a “completion agenda” of scholarship. My most recent work on community colleges deals with basic skills courses and the ways they are barriers to completion.

But in my few remaining minutes of fame, I want to stress the public service that I've devoted to equity issues. One example is the work that took place during the 1990s at the national Center for Research in Vocational Education. Some people were puzzled about why we wanted this national Center at the Graduate School of Education. The reason was that vocational education had become one of the most obvious forms of tracking; working-class students and racial minority students wound up in a dumping ground from which it was hard to get out. But just eliminating Voc Ed would not have worked very well since the same students would probably have gone into debased forms of academic education. Our solution was to press for eliminating the split between academic and vocational education by promoting different approaches to integrating the two. I am pleased to say that this approach is now

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increasingly used under the name of MULTIPLE PATHWAYS pathways or what the Irvine foundation calls LINKED LEARNING, so the idea is now embedded in practice.

The example that I'm most proud of and that I hope will be my longest-lived legacy is The Principal Leadership Institute or PLI. This is an innovative program at Berkeley to prepare principals and vice-principals for urban schools. We started planning in 1998, admitted the first students in 2000, and now have the 13th cohort starting this summer. There are now about 400 graduates, mostly in the Bay Area. PLI is committed to equity and social justice in several ways. First, we decided early on to focus on the principalship in urban schools, because that's where problems are the most intense. Second, the admissions process emphasizes the experience and leadership positions that candidates have achieved and every year out about half of our students are people of color. Third, the program makes a great effort to engage in discussions of race and ethnicity and class so that PLI graduates can participate in the tough,

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TOUGH discussions about these inevitable subjects in urban schools.

Finally, the PLI teaches its students about methods that are most

likely to benefit the children that our schools serve poorly, like

culturally relevant approaches to teaching, participatory pedagogy,

and appropriate discipline.

The PLI has been a collective effort and I want to thank in particular Linda Tredway, the program coordinator for about 12 years. I often get credit for her good work, I'm afraid to say. I want to thank Rebecca Cheung, the new program coordinator. I want to acknowledge the many areas of PLI work done by Daphannie Stephens, and her predecessor, Janette Hernandez –who now works for the Oakland School District. And I thank the many other instructors, coaches, and staff who have put hard work into sustaining the PLI. My personal hope is that the PLI will keep expanding until it dominates school leadership in the Bay Area and is celebrated in the wider world of education.

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So what have I learned from my years of research and public service? There are several conundrums in doing work on equity. One is that it's a noisy world out there, which is hard to penetrate. Another is that there are a lot of contradictory narratives. At the moment there's one that says the BA is crucial for all individuals and we need a higher level of schooling for our competitive position in the world; but the contrary narrative from various political parties is that we need to cut back on public spending. This has created a stalemate affecting almost all of education in CA and across the country, and I only hope that we can break out of it in the next decade. Finally, working on equity issues in the US is surprisingly tough, because among developed countries, we have the highest level of inequality. This won't change anytime soon, and those of us who care about inequality in all of its forms have a great deal of work to do. As they say, "More research is needed!"

There are no easy solutions to these conundrums. The only approach is to keep on working on these issues of equity and

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diversity, and that's exactly where the Haas Diversity Research Center comes in. It supports work on these issues into the future and for this we should all be grateful. So, again I thank you for myself personally but also on behalf of the larger community that stands to benefit from the ongoing research and public service on behalf of equity, inclusion, and diversity.