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# Going Against the Grain: Battling Market-Based Individualism in Higher Education by Establishing an Open-Access Collectivist Journal

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“ Now more than ever, those acting to deconstruct these oppressive systems rely on critical and new perspectives, insight, **community-based solutions**, creative opportunities, and complex ways of thinking **about the future of education.** ”

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With great pride and humility, we present to you the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs* (JCSHESA). When we first decided to start a new journal, we were motivated by our desire to challenge the named and unnamed norms of publishing and scholarship in higher education and student affairs (HESA) studies. Even then, we could not have hoped for a collection of manuscripts as powerful, unique, critical, and game-changing as the ones we were fortunate to receive. They represent the work of graduate students, community members, faculty scholars, and scholar-practitioners domestically and internationally. However, there was not an ounce of surprise that the manuscripts flowed in once we sent our call for manuscripts. We knew these articles, perspectives, and people were out there. They were just seeking a venue to entrust the development of their stories and hard work without sacrificing their intent, integrity, and critical bend.

Our journey began in the fall of 2013, when we brought together a broad group of individuals into the journal's founding working group. Members of this group included some of our graduate peers in Loyola University Chicago's (LUC) School of Education, scholar-practitioners from across several Chicagoland institutions, and Chicago community advocates and entrepreneurs. Community is deeply central to our mission, having played a significant role in the journal's formation and our continued involvement in its sustainability, accountability, and knowledge creation. Over the course of six months, and countless meetings, the founding working group constructed a journal driven by a social justice mission that examines issues of power, privilege, oppression, and marginalization, and how these social realities impact our institutions, communities, and society at large.

We believe there should be a continual critical analysis of the higher education and stu-

dent affairs landscape. We seek to establish this journal as a venue for international and interdisciplinary scholarship that critically examines higher education and the ways we conduct our work within our institutions, around them, and across community-institution relations and boundaries. Increasingly, external forces are pressuring institutions to move away from a historical social contract that envisioned higher education as a public good for all. Institutional leaders are forced or choose to engage in actions guided by neoliberal logics that embrace market-driven institutional behavior and individualism. These actions continue to marginalize and oppress multiple groups within our communities in varying and devastating ways. Now more than ever, those acting to deconstruct these oppressive systems rely on critical and new perspectives, insight, community-based solutions, creative opportunities, and complex ways of thinking about the future of education. This journal aims to be a venue where this knowledge is shared and acted upon.

If we are to challenge neoliberal thinking and actions in HESA, we also need to deconstruct systems of power within the academic publishing world. Through open-access copyrights and open-review processes, we seek to problematize and dismantle the ownership of knowledge. This is a unique perspective in publishing within higher education studies and we hope to continue to push the envelope on how scholarship is understood and constructed in education. Authors can, and we urge them to, engage in an open-review process whereby the identities of reviewers and authors are known. We have already seen how powerful developmental feedback and review can be to the nurturing of scholars, particularly those scholars new to or outside of academia. No rigor is lost in the process; however, dignity and respect is ensured. The open-review process also supports sharing groundbreaking critical work and research quicker, in order to embolden praxis more urgently, unhindered by multi-

year long backlogs that quell and subdue calls for action and social change.

We choose to be accessible, not only by being open-access, but also by providing an accompanying research in brief for each manuscript and by expanding our digital presence, thus presenting scholarship through multiple formats. We also work with our scholars to help them write in language that is accessible to a wider array of audience members through an “ordinary language clause” in our submission guidelines. This ordinary language philosophy is influenced by Indian writer and activist Arundhati Roy who said,

I think it’s vital to de-professionalize the public debate on matters that vitally affect the lives of ordinary people. It’s time to snatch our futures back from the “experts.” Time to ask, in ordinary language, the public question and to demand, in ordinary language the public answer. (Roy, 2001)

It is with these values that we move forward in our work with this journal. We believe they make us stronger and move us toward the public good mission of higher education.

many of them are doing in the communities in which we all live and the organizations they lead, as well as the unique perspectives they bring to the table. This journal would not be what it is today without their stories, labor, resources, and knowledge. With humility and purpose, we do the work of the journal in partnership and solidarity with those in the community at large.

Personally, facilitating a group of amazing colleagues, friends (old and new), and scholars through this process has been a deeply privileged experience. We thank those around us who planted the seeds in our minds to pursue this opportunity, those who continually support us, those who gave so much of their time and hearts to putting together the information presented in this journal, and those who will continue to embrace and live the mission of this journal. We are thankful for the authors and reviewers who entrusted us with their manuscripts and patiently worked with us through the learning curves and bends of a new process and continue to engage with us on making it a rewarding one. We acknowledge you all explicitly on the inside cover of this issue.

“ This is (y)our venue, and we look forward to **transforming** higher education together. ”

Esponsing and operationalizing these values, however, are two connected but distinct matters. It is here that our community partners significantly contribute to awakening us to the myriad ways that the hidden curriculum is embedded in how we, as university-based academics, seek, produce, review, disseminate, and activate scholarship. They remind us and push us to think more critically about the decentering of academia as the source of all knowledge. We are inspired by the work

Especially, we thank both Dr. Michael Dantley and Dr. Terri Piggot, former and current deans of the School of Education at LUC respectively, for enthusiastically and fiscally supporting this endeavor, Dr. Bridget Kelly, associate professor and journal advisor, and the entire faculty of the Higher Education program for pushing us daily to be critically minded and engaged social justice educators.

This first issue covers a wide breadth of

topics critically important to the way we do our work on and through our college campuses. From understanding how the prison-industrial complex affects the dignity of incarcerated learners to the experiences of Black women faculty and their relationships to White student mentees, we explore the myriad possible experiences and possibilities within higher education. We open the journal with *Higher Education in an Era of Mass Incarceration: Possibility Under Constraint* authored by **Erin Castro** of the University of Utah and **Daniel E. Graves, Michael Brawn, Johnny Page, Orlando Mayorga, and Andra Slater**, five incarcerated or formerly incarcerated men who are currently or previously enrolled in the Education Justice Project. They collectively argue that education for incarcerated individuals is immensely important for ensuring self-liberation and that education in prison ought to be reconceptualized as not only a tool to diminish recidivism rates, but also as a tool for emancipation. Their powerful and moving narratives help remind us of the power of education and that college campuses are not higher education's only domain.

**Kathleen Gillon** and **Lissa Stapleton** explore the mentoring relationships between Black female faculty members and White female students in *"My Story Ain't Got Nothin' To Do With You" or Does It?: Black Female Faculty's Critical Considerations of Mentoring White Female Students*. Their piece reminds us that establishing a mentoring relationship is more than an ability to match professional interests; true mentor-mentee connections are made based on a nuanced and deeply personal navigation of multiple identities. Race, trust, and perceived epistemological outlooks all play a role in how Black faculty members choose or don't choose mentees who, on one very important dimension—gender—do share an identity.

**Jennifer Massey** and **Sean Field** introduce us to higher education in Canada in their revelation of how student-led courses affect

undergraduate student learning in classrooms in an Ontario university. In *Can They Teach Each Other?: The Restructuring of Higher Education and the Rise of Undergraduate Student "Teachers" in Ontario*, the authors explore how market-based decision making influenced one university's administration to create student-led courses as the institution looked for ways to be more efficient and de-professionalized. Massey and Field challenge us to think about the outcomes of higher education and if we are willing to sacrifice student learning in order to maintain a market advantage.

*"It's Kind of Apples and Oranges": Gay College Males' Conceptions of Gender Transgression as Poverty* shines the spotlight on intragroup gender policing among gay men. **Daniel Tillapaugh** and **Z Nicolazzo** forward a poverty framework to explore how gay men conceptualize masculinity and thereby construct their gender identities. This exploration examines how these students then project those standards onto others and how society, informed by family and peers, pressures gay cisgender men to reify hegemonic masculinity. These pressures ultimately negatively affect gay men's college experiences and social development. The authors urge campus communities to think more critically about how student's openness about their identity can be a liberating and/or constricting practice, depending on how gender presentation and expression are understood and contested.

*Pushing Education: Parental Engagement, Educational Aspirations, and College Access* written by **Darris Means, Katherine LaPlante**, and **Cherrel Miller Dyce** takes an asset-based approach to studying college access by providing voice to the parents of students in a college access program. This perspective reveals new ways to integrate parents into the college choice process. Past literature assumed that parents of first-generation, low-income families were often removed from their child's college choice process. The authors turn that narrative on

its head as they show that parents are invested in very important and varied ways and that college access programs that incorporate parents may find increasingly positive outcomes for their enrolled students.

We close our journal with a section called “The Final Word,” a commentary piece written by an invited author who brings a unique perspective to the critical examination of higher education and student affairs. This person helps us to take a 30,000-foot perspective of the field and asks us to think differently or more deeply about our place in the world. **Henry Giroux** writes this issue’s “The Final Word.” His piece, titled *Democracy in Crisis, the Specter of Authoritarianism, and the Future of Higher Education*, criticizes higher education leaders’ situated and continued move toward a neoliberal market-based, individualistic, and competitive framework. He argues that actions based in neoliberal logic destroy democratic outcomes of higher education by excluding vast populations of marginalized youth, sterilizing the curriculum, ravaging the faculty, and reproducing systems of oppression. He notes,

It cannot be emphasized too much that the slow death of the university as a center of creativity and critique, a fundamental source of civic education, and a crucial public good sets the stage for the emergence of a national culture that produces and legitimates an authoritarian society. The corporatization of higher education may, in fact, constitute the most serious assault against democracy. (p. 107)

This audacious collection of authors enthusiastically and triumphantly responded to our call to rethink the intentions, impacts, and framing of HESA. Their manuscripts push for a discipline that resists corporatization and individualization in its practice and scholarship, and seeks to realign itself towards the public good. In an era of austerity measures and accountability, the current microscope on higher education is not going

anywhere, nor do we assume our institutions ought to be left to their own devices. Rather, through this journal—in its contents, presence, and processes—we question who gets to hold and position the microscope, or decide which lens gives us the clearest picture of the issues to examine and how to address them. Through the mechanisms of institutional racism and colonialism, manufactured poverty, gentrification and dispossession, mass criminalization and incarceration, there are many out there who have been silenced and even made to believe they have no power over or stake in higher education. This is (y)our venue, and we look forward to transforming higher education together.

In solidarity,

**Dian Squire**, Editor in Chief  
**T.J. Jourian**, Managing Editor

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