Working For/With Equity and Leadership Toward Sustainability

I. General Information

The 36th annual UCEA Convention will be held **November 17–20, 2022** at the **Hyatt Regency Seattle in Seattle, Washington**. The purpose of this convention is to engage in discussions about research, policy, practice, and preparation with relevance for equity and leadership toward sustainability. The 2022 Convention Program Committee members are Carol A. Mullen (Virginia Tech), Liliana E. Castrellón (Duquesne University), Detra D. Johnson (University of Houston), Dana Nickson (University of Washington), and UCEA Events Manager Karl Gildner.

As a context for our Convention, Seattle provides a unique setting for examining human rights and microcosms of both survivance and damage to become collectively accountable for (re)solutions, advocacy, restoration, reparation, and solidarity, in addition to quality education for all. There are 29 federally recognized tribes throughout Washington (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.), and Duwamish lands make up metropolitan Seattle (Duwamish Tribe, 2018). The state of Washington, a leader in sustainability, advances equity in support of thriving, generative, and just communities. Remedying harm to Indigenous communities is a significant project (City of Seattle, 2021), yet there is still great need to actualize and support decolonizing efforts toward land restitution and reparation owed to Indigenous peoples and communities (LANDBACK, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Seattle offers a salient context for examining connections among educational leadership, equity, sustainability, and justice.

II. UCEA Convention Theme

The UCEA convention theme, **Working For/With Equity and Leadership Toward Sustainability**, provides an opportunity to share ideas about equity, justice, and action toward sustainability. *Sustainability,* equated with longevity, has been conceptualized in educational leadership as "efforts over time" and "throughout the educational environment," with recognition of influences, forces, and changing conditions on sustaining models, initiatives, and reforms (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 4).

There are many ways to think about equity, leadership, and sustainability related to the future of public education. Working *for* equity may suggest advocacy of social and racial justice like using equity-focused leadership as a lever to improve the experiences and outcomes of particular populations or pursuing sustainable commitments/goals/agendas with or on behalf of diverse communities. Working *with* equity may involve incorporating aspects of equity and sustainability in research, practice, pedagogy, preparation, or policy. Equity encompasses a just distribution of resources, cultural recognition and valuing people, as well as sustainability. Dispositions like "equity and cultural responsiveness" are expected of leaders, per the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015, p. 17).

Effective leaders too often leave their positions after a short tenure, and their efforts can be quickly negated by a change in leadership and direction. Therefore, it is essential to create sustainable cultures that foster transformative change around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and justice. Sustainability—an opportunity for imparting lasting change through our work—is a unique lens for exploring authentic, ongoing equity work in leadership. "To have relevance" sustainability and the ecological condition "must center DEI issues" (LeVasseur, 2021, p. 5). The ecological condition refers to environments' influence on teaching, learning, and leading (Brink et al., 2021). Beyond appeals for DEI, genuine equity requires transformation in organizational practices, norms, and culture for furthering a vision of justice. We acknowledge that, too often, calls for DEI have lacked substantive action to retain and nurture diverse leaders.

After more than 2 years of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, working for/with equity by intervening and collaborating provides common ground and an approach for examining what the leadership community does, for what purpose, and to what end. How we as researchers and leaders might join and partner in this work is also of great interest given that communities are often already engaged in equity initiatives. Equity interventions, applications, and collaborations may

include how the context, scale, leadership work, stakeholder involvement, and sustainability can be considered; how equity-focused outcomes can be achieved; and how the impact of interventions or participatory and collaborative approaches can be measured and progress monitored. Qualitative and quantitative investigations of equity phenomena and sustainability may use different types of data to examine and engage with possibilities.

We seek a variety of empowering perspectives on working for/with equity for this gathering. If, as posited, we are living in a time when nationalism and isolationism have overtaken globalism and cosmopolitanism (Silva, 2014), contemplative proposals that advance sustainability, community rebuilding, political commitments, racial justice, humanitarian intervention, and healing on behalf of global citizens have appeal. Looking to a more equitable world, in the words of bell hooks (2001), "Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion" (p. 215). Related aspirations are to bring Indigenous and international ideas and perspectives to light in educational leadership and to improve students' educational experiences and outcomes, regardless of their identities and backgrounds. As such, this call is situated in relation to truth, justice, reconciliation, and internationalism, with a stake in our collective capacity to reduce inequities. Attention is also on the quality of educational experience and improvement, and the state of the leadership profession. Proposals may illuminate equity challenges, breakthroughs, and resolutions in research, policy, practice, and preparation.

Educational equity—a high strategic priority for educational institutions—is defined as a "focus on the fairness of opportunities and outcomes [in] an unequal playing field" and driver of change in closing disparities (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, p. 374). In a socially just world, not only would resource "distribution" be "equitable and ecologically sustainable," but also humans would be "safe and secure, recognized, and treated with respect" and, importantly, "self-determining" and "interdependent" (Bell, 2016, p. 3). Equity intervention can cultivate "conditions for learning" and leading through which leaders act "intentionally" (Rigby & Tredway, 2015, p. 6), such as to remedy inequities.

With this call for proposals, we acknowledge that *equity,* while widely adopted in advocacy work and codified in educational leadership standards, has lost its original intent. Like social justice, equity has become a buzzword. Equity's meaning for radical change in education has been diluted (Dantley & Green, 2015) owing in part to its confusion with *equality* and reliance on resource and opportunity distribution at the expense of systemic and structural disruption. Even though school administrators may recognize that they need to include equity in policies and treat everyone justly, individual action is infrequently powerful enough to change dominant cultures. Likewise, neoliberal educational policies and practices justify educational inequity; as such, efforts toward equity are ruptured, often reifying systemic and structural inequity. Educational equity is thwarted at so many turns, even with legal frameworks and interventions like *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947), *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) intended to disrupt the harsh realities of racial inequity (Ladson-Billings, 2004). Regressive bills introduced in state legislatures attempting to limit what educators can teach in schools about race and gender fuel divisiveness (Diem et al., 2021).

In a "call to arms," UCEA 2022 participants can ask these questions: What might we impart that is powerful and potentially impactful with respect to working for/with equity? How might we latch onto the enthusiasm to see/treat equity and justice more expansively, demonstrate ways of working for/ with equity, uplift community, empower educational leaders and professors, amplify community advocacy and partnerships, and sustain communities? What might we want to share about equity, leadership, sustainability, and commitments that are reflected in teaching, learning, and leading in today's world? What is the role of educational leadership in enabling and facilitating sustainability through crisis situations? Operationalizing equity can proactively support quality education; build capacity within communities and home cultures and across states; and pave opportunities for healing, reconciliation, sustainability, and positive futures.

At the convention, we will be learning together about working for/with equity and leadership toward sustainability and healing in community from systemic and structural inequities that have prevented sustainable educational equity or racial and social justice. Equity is "everyone's work" because "interventions to support minoritized students have not been successful at scale and often operate through a deficit mindset, placing the burden of change on students and communities" (Kezar et al., 2021, p. 1). Living in isolation, students with disabilities, English language learners and emergent bilinguals, immigrants, and other underserved and newcomer groups have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic's interruption to their education. Inequities are also affecting students in areas experiencing high

poverty and barriers to quality education. Critical equity challenges in schools, exacerbated by COVID-19, are seen in impacts from teacher turnover, online education, loss of learning, mental health, dwindling supports, and scant staff guidance (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2021). Massive preK–12 teacher shortages—worsened by principal and superintendent turnover (DeMatthews et al., 2021; NASSP, 2021)—occur across U.S. states and frequently in high-poverty urban and rural schools serving students of color, including reservations. The educational leadership pipeline is fracturing, depleting diversity. Further, we must consider the disproportionate strain on youth, families, and communities of color that have stewarded vital functions of educational leadership, often countering systemic pitfalls and injustices (Horsford et al., 2021; Ishimaru et al., 2021; Washington, 2021; Wilson et al., 2021). "Mega" equity challenges for public education are to create sustainable cultures with youth, families, and communities that retain strong teachers and leaders; vigorously recruit and retain dedicated leaders and personnel, including those of color; proactively support teachers and staff; and diversify administration and pools of aspiring teachers and principals (NASSP, 2021). Working for/with equity depends on attitudes and conditions that are conducive to rebuilding systems. For example, educational leadership program redesign typically addresses current problems of practice that meet needs by attracting more diverse applicants and graduating culturally competent leaders whose positive affect on school cultures fosters equitable learning.

Framing, leveraging, and assessing equity are strategies for operationalizing leadership and new learning. Possibilities follow, based on the convention theme, for generating proposals.

Framing an Equity Orientation in Leadership and Systems: Equity-oriented frames target systemic problems and sustainable change. Theories that offer a "critique of the inequities" in systems provide "guidance for transformation," not a "recipe for intervention" (Shields, 2021, p. 128). Working for/with equity holds leaders and others responsible for addressing national threats to quality education like colonialism; racism; teacher, principal, and superintendent turnover; and online learning for dependent, high-need, and younger learners. Restorative justice, a framework, emphasizes prevention of misconduct and institutionalizing nonpunitive approaches to building and repairing relationships in schools and elsewhere (Mullen, 2021). Problematizing policy relationships in Indian country (Mackey, 2017) is another way of thinking about engagement within environments designed to become just and equitable. Examples of university partnerships with school communities using equity-oriented approaches include leadership programming that incorporates Indigenous knowledge and cultural immersion; initiatives for countering anti-Blackness; and efforts to reduce academic and socioemotional, health, and wellness disparities. Critical theories and methods are increasingly popular in educational leadership and policy (e.g., AsianCrit, DisCrit, LatCrit, restorative justice, storywork, TribalCrit).

Leveraging Equity-Minded, High-Impact Leadership Practices: Beholden to a "vision of excellence," equity-minded, high-impact practices counter exclusion and oppression and demonstrate "excellence" across student groups (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, p. 386). Implementing visions of justice requires integrity and collaboration with participating communities. "High-leverage" practices for remedying inequity include "engaging in self-reflection and growth for equity," "developing organizational leadership for equity," "constructing and enacting an equity vision," "supervising for improvement of equitable teaching and learning," "fostering an equitable school culture," "collaborating with families and communities," "influencing the sociopolitical context," "allocating resources," "hiring and placing personnel," and "modeling" (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015, pp. 382–385).

With systemic problems taking time to resolve, actionable ideas for advancing equity are implemented in the short term (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012). In higher education, these include acknowledging that equity is rooted in racial justice, supporting the work of equity by faculty in recognition that social justice cannot be about "just us," hiring people of color and equity-minded faculty who mentor effectively, professionalizing doctoral mentoring through compensation and sustainability, and championing culturally responsive mentoring and matches (e.g., race, gender, etc.; Gooden et al., 2020). Addressing justice intentionally and comprehensively bridges immediate and distant goals, as long demonstrated by the UCEA Jackson L. Scholars Network.

Assessing Equity-Minded, High-Impact Educational Practices: The Equity Scorecard, used to assess high-impact practices, aims to reduce "equity gaps" through a participatory process of change (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012). "Peer equity coaching" with teachers has developed their racial and cultural awareness, benefiting students and school cultures

(Bussman & Seashore Louis, 2021, p. 164). Green's (2017) Community-Based Equity Audit has guided urban leaders' understanding of community assets, "solidarity" with stakeholders, and "context-specific, equitable school–community solutions" to inequities (p. 3).

This convention call recognizes that "equity" is present in much of what we do and is sometimes a driver in theory, research, practice, and policy. Our call also acknowledges systemic and structural inequities that hinder equitable outcomes. Submissions are encouraged that explore the themes described; however, UCEA 2022 also welcomes proposals focused on leadership preparation toward improving schools and outcomes for students, program design, and improvement efforts. Also of interest are partnerships and networks that enhance leadership and policy work, collaborative research and cooperative initiatives that enrich the community, and other issues that impact the practice of educators and policymakers and their beneficiaries.

III. UCEA Convention Session Types

Individual Session Submissions

Paper Sessions. These sessions are intended for in-depth reporting of current/completed research and results, analyzing educational policy issues, or presenting theoretical/conceptual frameworks that inform educational leadership.

Ignite Presentations. These sessions are specifically intended to present innovations, effective strategies or tools, problems of practice, collaborations, etc. Presentations are no more than 5 minutes long. View a 2-minute video on Ignite Presentations: https://bit.ly/2RVkQ63

Roundtables. Roundtables allow for extended discussions among a small group of individuals and are excellent venues for giving and receiving targeted feedback, engaging in in-depth discussions, and meeting colleagues with similar research interests. Roundtables are excellent for new and emerging research projects.

Group Session Submissions

Symposia. A symposium should examine specific policy, research, or practice issues from several perspectives, contribute significantly to the knowledge base, and allow for dialogue and discussion.

International Community-Building Sessions. These sessions, regardless of format (i.e., Paper, Symposium, Critical Conversation, etc.), require participants to be from two or more different countries. These sessions must focus on critical issues of leadership practice, development, or research from multiple international perspectives.

Critical Conversations. These sessions are intended to stimulate in-depth discussions around a series of provocative questions, current issues, or research in process and may be structured in a variety of ways.

Innovative Sessions/Mini-Workshops. Proposals utilizing innovative presentation/interaction strategies are encouraged, such as web-based projects, films, and the use of technology to increase interaction and participation.

Post-Convention Work Sessions and Workshops. These sessions, which provide both 2-hour or 3-hour sessions for scholars of similar interest, are encouraged for (a) groups of scholars who are working on projects directly related to the core mission of UCEA and (b) scholars who wish to present a workshop for faculty members attending the convention.

Click here for a complete description of each session type.

IV. Submission Guidelines

Submission length **must not exceed 3 single-spaced pages** (about 1,500 words or 6,000 characters) using 12-point font (Times New Roman). References are **required** and **must not exceed 1 single-spaced page** (about 400 words or 2,200 characters).

Through the act of submitting a proposal, an individual is entering a professional agreement to review proposals for the convention; to attend and deliver the content described in the proposal; and, in the event that a paper is being presented, to share a copy of the work with convention attendees. Furthermore, lead authors are required to email an advance copy of their paper to the session facilitator and other session participants by November 1, 2022. Ignite presenters are expected to email a two-page summary of the talking points they will be sharing at the convention with the session facilitator prior to the October 25 deadline.

V. Participation Limits

To promote broad participation in the annual convention, an individual may appear as first author on no more than two proposals. In addition, an individual may appear on the program no more than four times in the role of presenter. The participation limit does not include service as facilitator or participation in invited sessions or any session connected with UCEA headquarters, committees, or publications.

VI. Criteria for Review of UCEA Convention Proposals

All proposals will be subject to blind, peer review by three reviewers, which will occur electronically. *Proposals MUST NOT include names of session organizers or presenters.* Primary authors of submitted proposals agree to serve as proposal reviewers.

VII. Proposal Reviewers

UCEA invites all convention attendees and participants to serve as reviewers for the 2022 Convention. **Through the act of submitting a proposal, an individual is entering a professional agreement to review proposals for the convention.** UCEA encourages submitters to invite their coauthors to participate in this important professional activity. Individuals can volunteer to serve as a reviewer on the UCEA website. **The deadline for completed proposal reviews is May 31, 2022.**

VIII. Participant Registration and Attendance Requirement

All presenting authors of accepted papers and all participants in accepted sessions (including session facilitators) are required to register for, pay in full, attend the annual Convention, and to be present at the scheduled sessions. Submission is a commitment to do so.

IX. Proposal Submission Deadline

Proposals must be received by Sunday, May 15, 2022, by 11:59 pm EDT. The deadline is a week later than previous proposal submission deadlines. Therefore, **no deadline extension will be provided this year**. All proposals must be submitted electronically through All Academic by visiting the UCEA website (http://www.ucea.org). This site will officially open March 23, 2022.

X. Graduate Student Summit

Successfully launched at the 2012 Convention in Denver, the Graduate Student Summit will be returning once again this year for the 2022 Convention in Seattle, WA. Doctoral students from UCEA member institutions are invited to submit proposals for this preconvention event. **Further details regarding the Graduate Student Summit call for proposals can be found on the Graduate Student portion of the UCEA website: http://www.ucea.org/graduate-student-opportunities/graduate-student-summit/**

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