Imagining America

The Tangled Web of Diversity and Democracy

George J. Sanchez

Foreseeable Futures #4

Position Papers from:

Imagining America:
Artists and Scholars in Public Life

Dear Reader,

"What happens when the rhetoric of civic engagement smacks into the realities of the current limitations of access" in American universities? That is the question that George Sanchez poses here.

This publication of Sanchez's "Crossing Figueroa" marks the expansion of Imagining America's *Foreseeable Futures* series. Until now, these position papers were our way of creating a broader audience for the keynote addresses delivered at Imagining America's annual conferences. We will continue to publish the keynote lectures. But we are enlarging the series to include other timely interventions in debates about the public and democratic dimensions of the humanities, arts, and design and of higher education in general.

Professor Sanchez, Director of the American and Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Southern California (USC), presented "Crossing Figueroa" as the 2004 Dewey Lecture, sponsored by the Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning at the University of Michigan. We are grateful to the Center's director, Lorraine Gutierrez, and to the rest of the Center's staff for creating the occasion for this address.

Sanchez sets forth here an important argument about the two pathways to democracy in U.S. higher education: first, *engagement by the university* through connections of faculty, staff, and students with specific communities and publics, and, second, *access to the university* for members of all communities and publics through inclusive admissions and hiring policies. Sanchez challenges our understanding of how engagement and diversity are connected—and how, increasingly, they are becoming disconnected. Under these conditions, he asks, how will universities "sustain [their] credibility among the urban neighborhoods and organizations that dominate the national landscape"?

His answer is grounded in the powerful story of his own Boyle Heights Project, a partnership on the history of a multi-ethnic and multi-racial neighborhood in Los Angeles. The Boyle Heights project brought together USC faculty and students, the Japanese American

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National Museum, public libraries, high schools, and other community organizations over a period of 10 years.

In "Crossing Figueroa," Sanchez points to "the wide-spread growth in service-learning and community engagement at universities across the nation," and, at the same time, the "rapid erosion of support for programs of access…for minority students." He addresses "the seeming inconsistency" of two trends in the period after the Supreme Court's ruling, in June 2003, on the University of Michigan's affirmative action cases, *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger*. In particular, Sanchez explains the stark way in which these contradictory trends are experienced by minority faculty members, who are

> *pulled between the commitments to communities of color almost all bring with them to the academy and a departmental culture which tells them…to abandon those ties or risk professional suicide*.

Imagining America is committed to developing a robust, thoughtful connection between public scholarship and "critical multiculturalism" (Jay and Jones, "The Grass-Roots Approach to Curriculum Reform," 2005). Sanchez's discussion is of the utmost importance for makers of knowledge and culture in a locally migratory and globally networked world. Through intercultural practice, the work of public scholars and artists has nearby consequences and global reach.

Sanchez's respondents on the occasion of the Dewey Lecture, Professor Maria Cotera and Professor Matthew Lassiter, both of the University of Michigan, spoke vividly of their own experiences in negotiating the potential, and tensions, of work in this "third space" of American higher education. Their remarks are included here.

We hope that you will join the conversation that is aired in these pages and take part in the work of Imagining America. Please visit our web site at www.ia.umich.edu

Julie Ellison
Director

Crossing Figueroa: The Tangled Web of Diversity and Democracy

George J. Sanchez

Photo Courtesy of the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences, USC

George Sanchez is Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, and director of the Center for American Studies and Ethnicity there. He holds a Ph.D. (1989) and M.A. (1984) from Stanford University in History; his B.A. (1981) is from Harvard College in History and Sociology. Sanchez's work addresses historical and contemporary topics of race, gender, ethnicity, labor, and immigration. He is the author of the award-winning book, Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900 - 1945 *(Oxford University Press, 1993), and is one of the co-editors of the book series,* American Crossroads: New Works in Ethnic Studies, *from the University of California Press. He is working on two projects: a book on the impact of contemporary Mexican migration on the culture and politics of Los Angeles at the beginning of the 21st century, and* Remaking Community: A Multiracial History of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood of East Los Angeles, California, *a historical study of the ethnic interaction of Mexican-Americans, Japanese-Americans and Jews. Sanchez was the first fellow of the John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation of Los Angeles, which funds social science research on Los Angeles. He has served on the Committee of International Migration of the Social Science Research Council, as a principal investigator for the Japanese American National Museum, as a board member of the Los Angeles-based Korean American Museum and the Immigration History Society, and has served as President of the American Studies Association. He came to USC in 1997 after serving on the faculty of UCLA and the University of Michigan.*

Two Universities

I want to thank Lorraine Gutierrez and the Edward Ginsburg Center for Community Service and Learning for the opportunity to return to Ann Arbor and talk with you about my own ideas regarding the future of public scholarship and civic engagement in the 21st century. I am honored to present the fifth annual John Dewey Lecture, particularly given the stellar scholars who have presented this lecture before me. As a former faculty member at the University of Michigan, I have a deep fondness and respect for many of the commitments of individual faculty members, students, and the institution as a whole that have provided national leadership in the areas of public scholarship and community engagement.

Having served as the former director of the Program in American Culture here, I first need to acknowledge the enormous role that generations of scholars and teachers in that program have played and continue to play in engagement with the critical issues facing American society, from some of the early directors like Robert Berkhofer and David Hollinger, to the generation that I knew, including June Howard and Alan Wald, to the current generation of leadership of Phil Deloria and Kristin Hass. And over the past few years, I have gotten to know the wonderful work of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life. Headed by Julie Ellison, whose work in steering a national conversation about the role of the humanities in community service has been dramatic. In addition, the Arts of Citizenship Program, headed by David Scobey, has played a critical role in facilitating humanities and arts engagement with the local Michigan scene. But I have been most proud of the University of Michigan when I have watched the intellectual and political work of Pat Gurin and former Michigan faculty Sylvia Hurtado and Earl Lewis who, with friends and colleagues from around the nation, stood up to right-wing foundations and fought for the sanctity and sanity of affirmative action in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. This was community engagement of the highest order, combining the importance of diversity in what we see daily in our classrooms and scholarly communities with institutional support to take on those who would limit opportunity in this country. Of all those efforts, the

Surrounding each university is a world – actually, many worlds – as divisive, insular, bounded, and contested as one can imagine.

University of Michigan can be very proud. But I come also today to talk with you of my new institution, the University of Southern California, which is getting to be known for more than its number one football team, as one of a handful of urban universities with serious engagement in its local community. Unlike the history of land grant universities, which in 1862 were mandated to combine "soil and seminar" in order to help rural communities in this nation to prosper, the mission of the urban universities, both public and private, has been more contentious, more susceptible to dramatic changes over time. This difference is particularly meaningful as the urban communities around them have been utterly transformed by migration, racial strife, industrialization, then de-industrialization, and increasingly by forces of globalism in which the basic infrastructures of jobs and economy are governed by entities as likely to exist outside as inside the nation. My journey home to Los Angeles, in other words, has taught me much about the interaction of the city and the urban university in matching each other's needs and wants, promoting visions of the future, and crafting strategies to improve the lot of its residents. And while I plan to talk a lot about USC and Los Angeles, I know that much of what I will say relates as well to the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Columbia, Trinity College, the University of Chicago, and other colleges and universities that find themselves surrounded by the urban environment.

With over 31,000 students, USC has committed itself to an extensive program of service-learning throughout the university's 18 separate schools. Currently service-learning is a component in over 80 classes in over 25 departments. Each year, some 3000, or 18% of all undergraduate students participate in these courses, receiving academic credit for the community involvement and reflective work that they do in the context of the course. USC has approximately 250 community partners, ranging from 20 K-12 public and parochial schools to an assortment of nonprofit organizations that serve as vehicles for improving the quality of life of residents of communities that surround both the main and the medical campuses. The newly adopted version of USC's strategic plan calls for delivery of a learner-centered education, and the expansion of service-learning is a critical part of this

new strategy for education in the 21st century. Unlike developments at other institutions like the University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania, which have adopted centralized approaches to the service-learning curriculum, USC maintains a decentralized approach. This system capitalizes on the independence of each of its professional schools and the thirty-year history of the Joint Education Project (JEP) in the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences.

Despite this widespread effort, service-learning at USC sits at an important crossroads in its development, much like the programs at other urban universities. Indeed, what I want to concentrate my remarks on today is the seeming inconsistency of the widespread growth in service-learning and community engagement at universities across the nation and the rapid decline in programs and commitments to make our own university communities more inclusive and diverse. I will argue that on the resolution of this inconsistency hangs the role of the university of the 21st century as a democratic institution, one that either is able to fulfill its rhetoric concerning civic responsibility, or one that is judged by the communities in which we reside to be full of empty promises and selfish motives.

I consider the growing commitment of universities to civic engagement as one of the most important changes in higher education at the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st. Across the country, university presidents have taken up the 1994 call of Ernest Boyer for creating a new American college committed to improving the conditions of its own immediate surroundings. The Campus Compact, a group of university presidents committed to the growth of service-learning communities bringing students and community residents together, has grown from 13 members in 1985 to over 550 member institutions. The growth and importance of efforts on this campus, such as Imagining America, and the Ginsburg Center, all speak to the central role that community engagement plays at Michigan in supporting and encouraging students and faculty to encompass in their education a commitment to improving the lives of other Michigan residents.

Other campuses, of course, have also developed extensive programs. One of the national leaders among urban campuses is the University of Pennsylvania, whose work in "enlightened self-interest" in West Philadelphia you heard about through Ira Harkavy, the first Dewey Lecturer for the Ginsburg Center, and the first director of Penn's Center for Community Partnership, created in 1992, a centralized vehicle to support efforts to engage the community throughout the campus. Penn, like USC, initiated these efforts because the university's reputation was suffering from its location in what most believed was a run-down ghetto neighborhood. At the University of Pennsylvania, the murder of a professor sparked serious recent efforts at community engagement; at USC, it was clearly the 1992 Los Angeles Riots, occurring right outside the doorstep to the university.[1]

My own institution, the University of Southern California, won Time magazine's coveted College of the Year 2000 Award because of the many partnerships it has forged between the university and community groups in the area immediately surrounding the university. Its neighborhood outreach programs have reversed a trend dating from the Watts Riots of 1965 to close itself off from the surrounding neighborhood. Currently more than 60 percent of our students volunteer at some point in their undergraduate careers in university-sponsored programs with our neighbors. One meaning of the title for this talk, "Crossing Figueroa," celebrates the active encouragement at USC for literally and figuratively crossing one of the four streets surrounding the main university campus, Figueroa Avenue, to engage in this sort of volunteer activity.

USC students offer free Web design services to area nonprofits, act as coaches in USC-sponsored sports programming, serve as teachers in after-school science and math enrichment programs, and engage in multiple activities to improve the lives of those living around the campus. The campus has adopted the five public schools closest to the South Central Los Angeles campus, and regularly sends students to act as tutors at those schools. In an early example of direct community engagement, school parents, worried about crime in the neighborhood and their

own children's safety walking home from school, asked USC to help organize them into watch patrols. This program has been successfully duplicated throughout southern California. My history department, along with the campus library, has digitized the archives of one of the oldest African American churches in Los Angeles, thereby preserving important primary materials, and is involved in helping the church design small exhibits in its own sanctuary. Clearly USC, like so many other colleges and universities, has taken community engagement seriously and is working on many levels in the diverse neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

Civic Engagement and the Retreat from Inclusiveness

Yet at the very same time, I strongly believe that we are currently witnessing the rapid decline of institutional support for programs built since the civil rights movement to open predominantly white institutions of higher learning to a diverse community of scholars, students and teachers. Despite the heroic efforts of Michigan faculty and administrators, as well as a host of other educational leaders, who participated in support of affirmative action programs in advance of last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision, and despite the fact that most legal scholars hailed the 5-4 decision as a victory for affirmative action, the past year has seen the most rapid erosion of support for programs of access and support for minority students in recent history. According to an article in last month's *Chicago Tribune*, "throughout the country, schools . . . are opening up minority scholarships, fellowships, academic support programs and summer enrichment classes to students of any race," and "colleges are interpreting the ruling to mean they can no longer offer race-exclusive programs designed specifically to help minority students." The article goes on to cite evidence from many of the same universities and cities that have led efforts at community engagement: Northwestern University in Chicago; Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut; the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.[2]

While campuses have largely made these changes quietly over the summer of 2004, the world of major foundations

that support higher education provoked a noisier reception when it, too, cut back and changed criteria. Foundations have been less able to make these changes quietly because they regularly interact with minority scholars who have received their funding in the past. Two years ago, on Halloween 2002, the James Irvine Foundation in California, the largest foundation in the state, eliminated their Campus Diversity Initiative, which had funded 28 private colleges and universities for diversity work. The Irvine Foundation eliminated its entire Higher Education Division one fateful day *before* the U.S. Supreme Court Decision. This year, both the Mellon and Ford Foundations have "broadened" their eligibility requirements for undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral fellowships that had previously been available only to "members of selected racial and ethnic minority groups whose under-representation in the faculties of American colleges and universities was deemed severe and longstanding." In short, both programs are now open to non-minority scholars who support "diversity," and both programs have been renamed: "The Mellon-Mays Fellowship Program" and "The Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships."[3] Neither public announcement made clear another rationale for the change: the letters sent to about 100 colleges and foundations in 2003 by the Center for Equal Opportunity in Virginia, a conservative advocacy group whose general counsel is the familiar Roger Clegg, "threatening to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights if their race-exclusive programs weren't changed."[4]

If, as John Dewey wrote so long ago, "Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself," then what life lessons have been learned by current minority scholars witnessing this retreat on the frontlines of higher education? This summer, I attended the first Mellon-Mays Retreat where undergraduate, graduate, and faculty scholars expressed heartfelt feelings of abandonment, resentment and anger towards the Mellon Foundation for caving in so readily. In August, I read the words of minority Ford scholars from around the country that showed that similar sentiments were widespread, based both on their reaction to the Foundation's policy shift and on intimate knowledge of the lack of faculty diversity on their own

campuses. From a scholar in Puerto Rico: "I do not think, sincerely, that we have achieved a significant representation in many research institutions, and we are going to see our presence even more diminished with measures like this." Another scholar in Connecticut noted that "writing from these parts . . .where I am a visiting prof, the Terrain looks pretty lily white WITH affirmative action – I tremble to think of what it would look like without." Another scholar, from a research-extensive university in Missouri that "values diversity," reported a similar on-the-ground situation: "Only 3 African Americans have made it from assistant to full professor [since 1969, and] over 75% of the departments have no African American faculty whatsoever."

Others discussed more readily feelings of losing voice during the unfolding process. A scholar in California noted: "I do think that we could have been afforded the opportunity to give our voice and experience on how the fellowship has opened avenues for us." "I was saddened," said another senior scholar from Missouri. She went on to relate that her own program had faced similar pressures to rewrite the parameters for awards and that university counsel had made it very clear that changes must be made because of "repeated, litigious attacks on such programs by They Who Must Not Be Named." Another scholar from Michigan wrote that she wasn't sure white scholars would ever feel the same sort of responsibility towards minority students: "I feel like I embody for my students of color, the possibilities that lay before them [and] I also feel a deep sense of responsibility to them." A more frustrated reaction from a senior scholar in California asked the question, "Why, oh why, must they [non-minority scholars] have every space? And why isn't the Foundation willing to fight more to make that case?" Another senior scholar from California summed up the general sentiment by stating: "The fact that the concept of 'institutionalized racism' has been replaced with the feel-good term of 'diversity'. . .is, fundamentally, about white liberal institutions not wanting to share power in a truly authentic, democratic, and meaningful way."[5]

Rather than raise these feelings of anger and abandonment to place blame or produce guilt, I hope that I can

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put forward more general questions that all of us committed to civic engagement should be concerned about: How can our colleges and universities become symbols of civic democracy when our own faculty and students question our commitment to true democracy and civic commitment embodied in concepts of diversity? What happens when the rhetoric of civic engagement smacks into the realities of the current limitations of access and fundamental retreat from concepts of inclusiveness, whatever the root causes? I will return to the consequences of this policy shift in the closing moments of this talk.

I raise these issues in this forum because they mirror some of the critique of service-learning that comes from practitioners of multicultural education, especially those who are trying to combine the two approaches.[6] While service learning has been embraced by university presidents, as well as U.S. presidents of both parties, multicultural education and affirmative action have struggled since their inception, attacked by many as too radical or divisive. Critiquing white racism and a focus on eliminating racial oppression seems to have an explicit political and social change message, while there are some in the service-learning community that are more comfortable with "a thousand points of light" than with analyzing the forces at work producing societal inequities.

Changing Demographics and What They Mean for University Engagement

To highlight the centrality of these questions, I think it is critical to introduce the third leg of my analysis of our current tangled web of diversity and democracy: changing demographic trends for the 21st century. Nearly every demographer in this country will tell you that in this century the population of the United States will be dramatically altered by continued immigration and differential birthrates. It is very likely, for example, that by the time the current incoming assistant professors are nearing retirement, the majority of the U.S. population will be of color. Already, almost one-third of the U.S. population is of color, with Latinos and African Americans both at about 13 percent of the U.S. population. In other words, the very "public" in the United States we will seek

Critical Frame

engage in community partnerships will shift dramatically, and will look less and less like the faculty in our colleges and universities over the next 25 years.

Of course, this is already dramatically felt in the state of California, the most populous state in the Union, despite the warped public image of the state put forward by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the entertainment industry. Since the year 2000, non-Hispanic whites have been a minority in the state, and currently over half of all babies born in the state and half of all children in California's K-12 public education system are Latino. Less than 5 percent of the students in the L.A. Unified School District are non-Hispanic whites. In Los Angeles County, the most populous county in the nation, with a total population that is larger than 35 states, non-Hispanic whites make up less than 30 percent of the total population. This past week the U.S. Census Bureau reported that, for the first time, non-Hispanic whites were a minority of the population in neighboring Riverside and Orange Counties—yes, in the O.C., home of the currently hot television show featuring an all-white cast, racial minorities form the majority of the county.[7]

At USC, "crossing Figueroa" means entering a world which, demographically, is starkly in contrast with the demographics of the current USC faculty. With only 35 African American faculty in a total faculty of 2900 and only 40 Latino faculty, most USC faculty members exist in a world in which their peers are overwhelmingly white. Yet, "the community" which surrounds USC is decidedly made up of racialized minorities with nearly no residential whites (except for temporary student residents) for miles. Another way of putting this stark contrast is that the population that makes up no more than 15 percent of Los Angeles County's population—white men—are over 65 percent of the population in USC's faculty. USC, of course, is no different in these figures than most research I universities who find themselves in urban communities in the United States. But in all these settings, the stark difference between the racial backgrounds of the faculty and that of the community is growing wider each year.

The very "public" in the United States we will seek engage in community partnerships will shift dramatically, and will look less and less like the faculty in our colleges and universities over the next 25 years.

Of course, we know that the differences in background between our faculty and our communities are not just about race. A disturbing newspaper article this past week pointed towards the educational inequities that are currently embedded in most urban neighborhoods and that mark one critical difference between the fate of our faculty's children compared to the future facing most children in the community. This article, entitled "Just One Day to Make a Difference," discussed a rather noble effort by exclusive private school counselors to bring their wisdom and experience to hundreds of high school seniors from public schools interested in going to college. Public school students face a student-counselor ratio in Los Angeles County that can be higher than a thousand to one—indeed at Banning High School there are 3,400 students and one counselor—while at Harvard-Westlake private school, 10 deans manage 90 students and only 30 seniors. As one frustrated counselor noted, "Our kids come from so much privilege. It's just two very different worlds."[8]

Indeed, much of the student volunteerism that goes on at USC directly takes on the loss of services to inner city communities that has been created because of federal and local government cutbacks and embedded structures of inequality that affect surrounding communities. In California, for example, cutbacks in funding of K-12 public schools forced school administrators to eliminate music from school budgets, particularly damaging in communities in which parents cannot afford private weekly music lessons. Jazz studies graduate students in USC's Thornton School of Music stepped in to direct public school music ensembles at the group that USC calls its Family of Schools, while undergraduates receive college credit for providing private and group music lessons. This coming fall, performance and music education majors will begin to offer keyboard and voice lessons as part of the schools' regular in-classroom curriculum.

But true service learning must go beyond volunteerism—some have called it "charity" work—to analyze why these cutbacks have so crippled public education in our era of "No Child Left Behind." And how do these crippling inequities in schooling affect the way selective col-

leges and universities decide on who is meritorious in college admissions? Do we have obligations to admit and train those from schools that immediately surround us? And given the racial and economic disparities in Los Angeles that are reflected in the differential availability of music education and college counseling, how do we confront the possibility that our very acts of service delay the time when the larger society would have to confront the embedded inequalities in education and government services?

Pablo Freire, analyzing this form of charitable work towards the poor in Brazilian society, called these efforts "false generosity"—acts of service that simply perpetuate the status quo and thus preserve the need for service[9]. Let me be clear: these acts are well-meaning and do immediate good, yet they also insidiously act to perpetuate a system of immense inequality and racial oppression. In 1970, Freire wrote:

> *In order to have the continued opportunity to express their "generosity," the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this "generosity." . . . True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity. False charity constrains the fearful and subdued, the "rejects of life," to extend their trembling hands. True generosity lies in striving so that these hands . . . need be extended less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which . . . transform the world[10].*

How can those of us who are committed to civic engagement in these communities operate effectively given the stark inequalities that mark the urban condition in the 21st century? Of course, it might be easy to step aside and believe that we should not engage with this enormous struggle because the gulfs between our universities and the communities they exist within are just too wide. And I suppose that many of us might be involved in civic engagement simply from a posture that to do nothing is to lose any semblance of individual power to effect change. I want to suggest that we must be strategic in our civic engagement in the 21st century in order to do

good in our communities. Engagement must begin by making our own universities more open, more diverse, and more flexible. If we cannot change our own institutions towards these goals, it is highly unlikely that our efforts in surrounding communities will not be taken seriously as movements for community empowerment and transformation.

The importance of diversity in our educational mission was one of the central themes of the research evidence that University of Michigan faculty put forward last year in front of the U.S. Supreme Court. To foster a true learning environment requires diversity of background and opinion among the student body in the classroom. No where is that more evident, I believe, than in service-learning environments, where having a diverse group of students encounter, reflect and learn from the community members they work with is critical for an expanded learning environment. Imagine a classroom where some students actually come from the communities they are studying, some from similar communities, others from quite different, much more privileged environments. Service-learning and community engagement may mean something quite different for each of these students, but having a diverse classroom to return to and discuss the implications of these differences is vital to both understand oneself, one's peers, and the community members with whom we engage. As W.E.B. DuBois wryly said over one hundred years ago about both studying "the Negro problem" and experiencing it, "being a problem is a strange experience."[11] Out of that "strangeness" can come profound observation and path-breaking theory.

The Boyle Heights Project

I learned that lesson during one of the first service learning classrooms I organized as an assistant professor at UCLA. The class took place soon after the 1992 Los Angeles Riots and its purpose was to understand the history of multiracialism in urban communities by exploring Boyle Heights, a neighborhood just east of downtown L.A. that lies adjacent to the USC medical campus. Working with several community institutions and organizations, such as the International Institute, a social service provider in the neighborhood, Self-Help Graphics, a

Learning

Chicano arts collective, and Roosevelt High School, the one public high school in the area, we collected names of individuals who had lived in Boyle Heights in the 1930s and 1940s, during its heyday as a multiracial community. The students learned about the work of these community organizations, and each picked an individual that they would extensively interview, placing this person's life in the context of the wider multiracial history of Boyle Heights. The histories that were produced by the students were then given back to each community member, as well as to the community institutions that we had interacted with.

But before the class began, I knew it would be critical to come into that community with a wide diversity of students, reflecting the diversity of 1992 in the classroom. I particularly focused on the three main ethnic groups in Boyle Heights—Mexicans, Jews, and Japanese—and recruited students into the classroom by working with UCLA's student organizations representing these groups. This was a time of enormous polarity and tension among UCLA students, exacerbated by the racial tensions of Los Angeles as a whole, and I was determined to make the classroom as multiracial as the Boyle Heights community of the 1940s was. Some students chose to interview members of racial groups that were similar to them, while others chose to interview across ethnic lines. The key was that we learned across those lines in our classroom, hearing about the individual stories from the interviewers, and asking collectively about how each individual influenced Boyle Heights, while shaped by their own racial, economic, and personal background.

Years later, after a sojourn in Michigan, I would have the opportunity to take that research back into Boyle Heights in a different forum as a faculty member at USC, working with another multiracial group of students. In collaboration with the Japanese American National Museum, another community institution in downtown Los Angeles, I organized a research team investigating this multiracial history that led directly to an exhibition that turned out to be the single most attended exhibition in the fifteen-year history of the Museum. At one of the many community forums which this project organized, I witnessed our USC undergraduate and graduate students leading discus-

Histories

sion groups at the International Institute that brought together current residents of the community with former residents who had left Boyle Heights over fifty years ago. Sharing memories about the same location, these individuals bridged the racial, temporal, and geographic gap that prevents people in Los Angeles from connecting over common ground. When the exhibition opened months later, folks from all over Southern California would come together again to share in these collective memories and think about what was in order to dream about what could be. The exhibition inspired others, from Roosevelt High School students to elementary teachers in Long Beach, to construct their own historical projects looking at multiracialism in the past as a way to understand our 21st century future. In the end, this decade-long project produced a wide range of public scholarship from many of its practitioners: a major museum exhibition, a teacher's guide made free to all teachers, high school student radio projects, undergraduate and graduate research papers, and hopefully, within a year or so, my own next book.

Other USC faculty members are engaged currently in similar multifaceted experiences in community empowerment and social change. Two assistant professors in the American Studies program that I direct are political scientists who directly work on issues of immigrant empowerment. Ricardo Ramirez has joined forces with Janelle Wong and their community partners, NALEO, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and the Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center. Together, they study, support, and engage the process of citizenship formation and electoral voting with teams of graduate and undergraduate students working in multilingual Los Angeles neighborhoods. Other faculty, such as Terry Cooper of the School of Policy, Planning and Development, are studying and working with newly formed Neighborhood Councils to broaden the level of public engagement in poor communities with local government. Each of these projects embodies a philosophy of citizenship and democracy that goes well beyond electoral politics.

Given Los Angeles' connection to a broader world community through immigration and culture, many project

have expanded well beyond immediate neighborhoods of the campus. Students in another course on Race and Ethnic Relations in a Global Society investigated the impact that immigration and sexuality had on the work of health care providers in Mexico. Their findings were used in a proposal to fund an AIDS education center and clinic on the U.S.-Mexico border. This past semester, business and engineering students worked with the African Millennium Foundation, a local nonprofit that raises money to fund women entrepreneurs in Africa. With a consulting group of 15 faculty who have conducted research in Africa for years, engineering students worked in teams to suggest how a principal of a school in the Congo could get electricity to her school, while business students served as "consultants" to women entrepreneurs in Burkina Fasso to help them negotiate higher prices for their products. USC students serving as tutors to local 8th and 10th graders helped them to sharpen their writing skills in preparation for the new handwritten SATs by creating a pen pal program between the L.A. youth and their counterparts in South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

John Dewey and the Racialized World of Civic Engagement

I believe deeply that what I have been engaged with through the Boyle Heights project, and what other faculty and students have done through their engaged community work, is what John Dewey would recognize as "education for democracy." But key to this form of education is the fact that both community members and those from the institutions of higher education could dream of a multiracial democracy within their midst. For everyone in the Boyle Heights project could imagine a time and place where folks lived side-by-side in Boyle Heights and were forced to work out their problems, and we dreamed of a Los Angeles of the future where this could happen in our lifetimes. All of us, however, looked at ourselves and saw a team of researchers and students who were ethnically diverse. Consequently, we could imagine institutions of higher education as democratic institutions where access and knowledge would not be limited by one's race or economic circumstance.

As I gathered my thoughts for this talk, this contradiction in the world of John Dewey kept making its way back into my head. I am convinced by the voluminous writings of John Dewey that he was a major visionary who imagined a world where institutions of higher education would make substantial progress in advancing democracy and bringing true equity in the widest possible sphere. The Department of Pedagogy, which took him from Michigan to the University of Chicago in 1894, was intended to combine theory and practice in an innovative program of education research and training founded upon the new fields of psychology and philosophy. With the University Elementary School (later known as the Lab School) at its center, Dewey believed that education could forge a dynamic public sphere.[12] In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey wrote:

> *A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education that gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind that secure social changes without introducing disorder.*[13]

All students of American culture should recognize this intense American desire for "social changes without disorder." U.S. notions of democracy and individualism have long stressed that change happens through democratic processes and a general concern for the common good. In the early 19th century, de Toqueville argued that social change in this nation arises from the exercise of civic responsibility on the part of educated and morally motivated individuals. Mitigating social tension has traditionally driven many volunteer programs to help the poor, from the Salvation Army to Jane Addams' Hull House. Many in the service-learning community trace its antecedents to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the National Youth Administration (NYA) of the Depresssion era, government attempts to control the tensions arising from widespread joblessness.

Yet these communitarian impulses endemic in American reform, and so championed by John Dewey, rarely

actively and persistently engaged the multiple sources of power that created inequality and persistent discrimination, and, indeed, the possibility that social disorder might be necessary to overturn structural inequality. They sought to ameliorate the results of social oppression, without fully intellectually engaging the actual sources of that oppression. Certain service learning beliefs, for example, that people on the local level can solve their own problems, conveniently ignore the reality of the interdependent global village that we now live in, where the multitude of critical decision makers and economic producers are likely to live well outside our local neighborhoods. Indeed some in the neighborhood are quick to point out that the university itself, through its employment or real estate practices, may be perpetuating systems of inequality while its students are engaged with the community.

There is a long history of these contradictions in the life of John Dewey himself. The same university that had recruited Dewey to lead its efforts also increasingly supported neighborhood organizations pushing for racial restrictions to fight back the growing African American presence in Chicago, beginning in 1894. The university's financial support of the Hyde Park Protective Association insured the value of the real estate around the campus and helped protect its borders from "undesirable elements."[14] Indeed, when I hear some contemporary practitioners of service-learning romanticize about the university before the corporatization our institutions and the massive government funding of the military-industrial complex of the mid-20th century, I wince in remembering just how homogeneous the faculty and students actually were. These were institutions where W.E.B. DuBois, the author of the magisterial *The Philadelphia Negro*, could not find employment due to the color of his skin.

Not too surprisingly, William Rainey Harper, the first president of the university and the person who had recruited Dewey to Chicago, would eventually lock horns with him over questions of academic centralization that conflicted with Dewey's notion of democratic social engagement through progressive education. Given the success of the Lab School, Harper sought to control and coordinate all facets of education in Chicago, profession-

alizing the teacher corps by requiring a college degree and encouraging disparity of pay between male career professionals and female teachers. The Harper Plan was opposed by the Chicago Teacher's Federation in 1897, whose members wanted to preserve the connection between teachers and the communities they served. Dewey and several of his colleagues opposed the Harper Plan, but ultimately lost out when the Illinois State legislature outlawed union membership for teachers and sided with Harper. As Robin Bachin argues, in a wonderful recent book on the history of the University of Chicago in the South Side, "the more activist and democratic model of civic engagement promoted by Dewey became an auxiliary function of the university rather than a defining component of it."[15]

Moreover, the new model of civic engagement at the University of Chicago would spawn other intellectual efforts whose relationship with communities of color would continue to be wrapped in contradiction. In my own scholarly work on Los Angeles and urban culture in the early twentieth century, no institutional entity looms larger than the University of Chicago's Sociology Department. At the first school to commit to the field of sociology in 1892, John Dewey would enter a university brimming with new fields poised to use urban communities as laboratories for the production of knowledge. Robert Ezra Park would take courses from Dewey and eventually emerge, as leader of the Chicago Sociology department, to conceive of the major theoretical and spatial ways we think of race, ethnicity and urban society. Dewey, Park, and almost all the major theorists in Chicago grew up in a small rural towns—Park in the Midwest, Dewey in New England—which sparked their outsider imagination for viewing highly urbanized society, "a highly individuated, cosmopolitan arena where everyone was a stranger."[16] Although Park and his budding cadre of sociologists were among the most sympathetic university professors of the 1920s and 1930s, a recent study by Henry Yu makes it clear that their civic engagement with the residents of Chicago and other urban areas produced research which was highly suspect for its unacknowledged positionality.

Yu argues that the outsider's perspective, cosmopolitan and interested in all cultures, was an illusion founded upon a denial of the one perspective that sat at the center of definitions of modernity. The deracinated, universal perspective removed from all points in space was imagined by elite white intellectuals as the embrace of all. In fact, this perspective fostered the 'collection'of seemingly exotic nonwhite cultures, while it denied the relevance of the privilege and power of the collector. According to the sociologists, their studies reflected the point of view of knowledge itself.[17]

Yu's work, however, does not stop at this critique of the sociologists in the University of Chicago. He goes on to analyze the careers and intellectual work of a small group of 20 graduate students of sociology recruited by Park and others from Japanese American and Chinese American communities. These scholars, originally recruited as translators and insiders to the larger professorial studies, often went on to do their own independent scholarly work, yet few could obtain permanent employment in academia due to discriminatory practices. For these fledging minority scholars, Yu argues, "objective detachment" was even more critical to their respect in the field than for white scholars.[18]

The 'Third Culture' of Faculty Engagement: Between Academic Departments and Communities of Color

Two years ago, Julie Ellison wrote a thought-provoking paper for "The Research University as Local Citizen" conference at the University of California San Diego that confronted the "Two Cultures Problem" of liberal arts faculty in American research universities. In this address, she pointed to two professional cultures among faculty: the first was the dominant departmental culture and the second was what she called the "counterculture" of engagement which involved the "pleasures of insurgency" and the "growing, if still tenuous legitimacy" of those involved in service learning and community engagement.[19] Henry Yu's book, along with the thoughts of current Ford Fellows and others in ethnic

We need to promote an approach to scholarly engagement with communities that welcomes all to the intellectual table, and that is willing to examine all forms of community empowerment and dispossession.

studies, suggests a third faculty culture: one of professional ambivalence and bridge work between geographically close but socially distant communities of color; that is, the current culture for minority faculty at predominantly white universities.

In my experience at UCLA, Michigan and USC, minority faculty, because of the scarcity of their numbers as well as continual challenges to their scholarly legitimacy in the academy, operate in this third culture, pulled between the commitments to communities of color almost all bring with them to the academy and the departmental culture which tells them either directly or mostly indirectly to abandon those ties or risk professional suicide. Many of the books mentioned by service learning professionals—Robin Kelley's Freedom Dreams or Vicki Ruiz' Unequal Sisters—are incredibly successful and rare examples of negotiating this third cultural position. But too many other minority faculty are caught feeling their inability to negotiate the competing demands that they confront each day from colleagues on and off campus, students, friends, and families. In many ways, these faculty may be the most valued members of that counterculture of service learning, but they can only arrive there through the tortured processes we have developed in a departmental culture that is particularly alienating yet required.

But as the best practices in social change have shown, staying with departmental culture is not enough. In the post-affirmative action world that I believe we are quickly entering, there will need to be an academic rationale for the diversity we want in the classroom, in front of the classroom, and in the community through service-learning. The new Ford Fellowship guidelines, for example, make awards based on maximizing the "educational benefits of diversity" and increasing "the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students."[20] Nowhere is that value more exemplified than in the realm of service-learning and community engagement, where breaking down the boundaries between the academy and the community needs to be a critical goal of any successful program.

Cultures

I worry that with a diminution of commitment to the further diversification of our faculty and research communities we may well return to the awkward social positioning of committed scholars of all colors that the works of intellectual history like Henry Yu's are uncovering. We need to promote an approach to scholarly engagement with communities that welcomes all to the intellectual table, and that is willing to examine all forms of community empowerment and dispossession. In order to promote a different world of scholarly engagement than that produced by John Dewey and his colleagues in the early 20th century, we must first begin to acknowledge that our own institutions of higher learning are communities that must be nurtured to be truly democratic. Only then will we be able to sustain our own credibility among the urban neighborhoods and organizations that dominate the national landscape. This is my vision of a truly engaged university for the 21st century, in which both students and faculty regularly cross Figueroa and other border streets in both directions, enlarging dramatically our collective public sphere.

Footnotes

[1] For a wonderful description of the efforts at service learning at the University of Pennsylvania, see David J. Maurrasse, *Beyond the Campus: How Colleges and Universities Form Partnerships with Their Communities* (Routledge, 2001), pp. 29-64.

[2] Jodi S. Cohen, "Minority programs eroding on campus: Supreme Court ruling has prompted colleges to rethink and re vamp offerings that promote affirmative action," 29 September 2004, *Chicago Tribune*.

[3] Letter from Ray Gamble, Director, Fellowships Office, National Academy of Sciences, and Janice Petrovich, Director, Education, Sexuality, Religion Unit, Ford Foundation, to "Colleagues and Friends," 16 July 2004.

[4] Cohen, *Chicago Tribune*, 29 September 2004.

[5] All quotes are from email discussions in August 2004. I have kept names and institutions secret to protect those who expressed themselves so eloquently on these issues.

[6] See, for example, the wonderful essays in *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education in Colleges and Universities*, ed. Carolyn R. O'Grady (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000).

[7] Joel Rubin, "O.C.'s Whites a Majority No Longer," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 September 2004, p. B1.

[8] Stephanie Chavez, "Just One Day to Make a Difference," *Los Angeles Times*, 10 October 2004, p. B1.

[9] Cynthia Rosenberger, "Beyond Empathy: Developing Critical Consciousness Through Service Learning," in O'Grady, ed., *Integrating Service Learning and Multicultural Education*, p. 33.

[10] Pablo Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1997; originally published in 1970), pp. 26-27.

[11] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 7.

[12] Robin F. Bachin, *Building the South Side: Urban Space and Civic Culture in Chicago*, 1890-1919 (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 67-68.

[13] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 99.

[14] Bachin, pp. 58-61.

[15] Bachin, pp. 70-72.

[16] Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), p. 33.

[17] Yu, p. 89.

[18] Yu, pp. 147, 169.

[19] Julie Ellison, "The Two Cultures Problem," September 2002, especially p. 3.

Responses to George Sanchez On the Occasion of the 2004 Dewey Lecture Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning University of Michigan

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What Kind of Community? What Kind of Service?

George Sanchez has laid out some of the contradictions that all of us have faced when trying to manage the political, pedagogical, and, yes, even emotional dimensions of the community service learning experience. His complex enunciation of these contradictions raises serious questions for teachers interested in the pedagogical value of experiential learning. How might we move students from mere experience to learning? How do we structure a student's interactions with the community "out there" in a way that pre-empts the pitfalls of an uncritical volunteerism? Too often, students, especially students who are relatively privileged, envision the community service learning experience as a way to help "unfortunates"

while earning college credit. And too often, the experience reifies deeply entrenched ideas about race, class, and social processes.

I'm glad George Sanchez has raised these difficult questions, because they have been nagging at me since the Winter of 2003. That was the semester that I taught my first community service learning course, "Learning Through Experience: The Vista Maria Women's History Project" a project that teamed University of Michigan Students with female juvenile offenders. As part of that class, students made a weekly trek to Vista Maria, a detention facility in Dearborn whose mission is to address the emotional, psychological, and educational needs of young women within the juvenile justice system. Under the supervision of Vista Maria counselors and art faculty, students in my class formed research teams with Vista Maria girls to learn about women's history with the ultimate objective of creating five small-scale murals to be displayed at Vista Maria's year-end event honoring women in history. From the start, I envisioned this course as one that would provide university students with an opportunity to learn about structural inequality as it relates to gender, race and class in a productive and non-judgmental atmosphere. By providing students with a project to work on in collaboration with people who have had very different life experiences from their own, I hoped to create a space in which relatively privileged individuals might come to a deeper understanding of the social forces that weigh upon different "life choices."

At Vista Maria, my students encountered bright, sensitive, and highly creative young women, who because of their race, gender, and especially their class, found themselves veering toward unhealthy lifestyles and juvenile delinquency. Yet these young women expressed a keen critical sense when discussing their own lives, and were highly sophisticated observers of the ways in which structural inequalities limit one's life choices. Thus, though they viewed the University of Michigan students as surrogate teachers, they themselves did most of the teaching. Through their interactions with the girls at Vista Maria, students in my "Learning From Experience" class learned more about the social realities of urban youth and women of color than they could have ever learned from a social science textbook alone. In some ways, the class was a wonderful, fulfilling experience. But that's not the "happy ending" of this story. Indeed, the real, less-rosy end of my classroom story turns, ironically, on the success of my original pedagogical intent. Yes, the students learned more from the girls at Vista Maria than they could have learned from a textbook alone, but what did this do for the girls at Vista Maria? And what do students really learn when the "community" (and the people who live there and

must *remain* there) becomes just another pedagogical tool?

What did not occur to me at the time, but strikes me now as incredible, was just how divided my work in the classroom was from my political work. Indeed, at the time it seemed to me that the classroom was no place for my politics, even though the students in my class were working with young women in the juvenile justice system, all of whom happened to be poor women, and many of whom were women of color. While I am not suggesting that I should have used the lectern as a platform for my politicsæa strategy that rarely accomplishes much more than alienating those students who do not share one's political positionæI do think that teachers who wish to incorporate the "community" into their classrooms need to think long and hard about the politics of publicly-engaged pedagogy. In doing so, they ought to consider not only the obvious questionsæWhy bring the "community" into the classroom? What does it teach students and how does it expand their learning? What does it do for the community?æbut also the less-obvious but nonetheless fundamental questions that underlay all forms of publicly-engaged scholarship. What are the boundaries and interconnections between engaged academic work and social change? What does our work do for the world? Does bridging the artificial divide between the stubbornly hermetic space of the university classroom and the "real" world fundamentally transform the ways in which we (both in the academy and in the community) collectively imagine the world we share, or does it merely instantiate long-held assumptions about the differences that divide these distinct domains of learning?

Not surprisingly, as I became more involved in both the struggle for affirmative action and the struggle against the war, my feelings about the class began to change. I approached the class with increasing frustration and sometimes even annoyance, and though I believe that students were learning more deeply about social inequality, I couldn't help feeling that I might be offering them an experience that would give them knowledge about marginalized "others" without creating within them a real sense of empathy with those communities. Essentially, I felt that while I *was* giving them a "real world" experience, perhaps even teaching them about social inequality in the process, I *wasn't* transforming them into citizens for whom social justice was a *necessity*.

This afternoon, George Sanchez has given me a vocabulary to articulate these contradictions and to make the connections between my politics and what was going in my classroom. One of the things that I found so troubling about our recent fight to protect affirmative action was that our defense of affirmative action was centered on what one might call a mar-

ket-driven pedagogical utilitarianism. Diversityæa miasmic term at bestæwas invoked as a compelling interest in and of itself, a public good. As the argument went: providing students with a suitably "diverse" educational experience would better prepare them to meet the challenges of the new multicultural global reality. One might even draw the conclusionæwithout too much cynicismæthat the ultimate purpose of affirmative action was to train people to manage an increasingly diverse global workforce (both major industrial concerns and the 'friends of the court" briefs filed by retired military leaders in favor of the University's affirmative action policies). The concept that was of course missing from this justification for affirmative action was social justice. In other words, our definition of the greater good was pedagogical and pragmatic, not ethical. In effect, affirmative action was not about making up for past injustices, or even present ones, affirmative action was about creating an environment conducive to producing 21st century global managers. In this formulation, people of color (who arguably already know about "diversity" from the *inside* given their continuing economic and political marginalization in our society) were given a place at the table in the interests of creating a more diverse learning environment. This argument effectively transformed students of color into pedagogical tools, not equal partners in the project to create a new, more just, society. While I honor the University's commitment to defending and preserving affirmative action, and I understand that the "diversity as public good" defense was the most viable legal strategy, I believe that we must take seriously the implications of such a rationale for affirmative action.

When I think back to the discomfort I felt with my service learning class during that tumultuous Winter semester, I now realize that in some ways I felt complicit with this erasure of social justice as a pedagogical goal. While I was providing my students with an unforgettable "experience" one that may well have changed many of them for the better, I was in some ways also reproducing the very unequal power relations I felt so uneasy about. Though my class did the requisite group exercises on "privilege" meant to prepare them for their community service learning experience, and though we read several articles about structural inequality, in some ways their work in the community was just another pedagogical tool, and though they couldn't sell it back to the bookstore at the end of the term, they would never have to go back through those iron gates dividing the young women of Vista Maria from the rest of us. Essentially, I too had relegated those young women to the status of pedagogical objects. What happens to community service learning when social justice as a public good falls out of our collective vision of higher educationæwhen the very people who inhabit our classrooms are envisioned not as equal partners but as peda-

gogical tools? This is a key question for those of us who remain committed to community service learning as a pedagogical practice, because when the class and racial divisions that are frequently part of the service learning experience are left unexamined in our own classrooms, the people our students are simultaneously "helping" and "learning" from can become at best, mere symbols of social facts, and at worst, symbols of one's civic engagement and diversity experience to be proudly displayed on a corporate resumé. What I am suggesting is that the way we talk about diversity right here on campus structures not only the social relations between students, faculty, and staff, but also the framework for understanding what is means to leave the classroom and learn from the community. While I was providing my students with a "diverse" learning experience through their structured engagement with incarcerated young women, I was in no way disrupting the social hierarchies that allow some individuals to prosper and others to fail. The discourse of diversity turned toward merely experiential goals, is no guarantor of a democratic society, nor does it automatically bring about the enlightenment we so desperately want for our students. Unless coupled with a deep desire for social justice and a deep antipathy to all forms of social inequality, diversity will remain a term that can be appropriated in sometimes troubling and even undemocratic ways.

Matthew D. Lassiter

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The Mutually Inclusive Categories of Diversity and Class

In 1998, Richard Rorty published a controversial book called *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America*. Rorty occupies a central place on the intellectual spectrum of the American left, and he is certainly one of the most prominent and influential American philosophers of the last fifty years. In *Achieving Our Country*, he argues that the left constituted a powerful force for progressive reform during much of the 20th Century, for two main reasons. First, a left-liberal coalition focused on the issue of economic inequality as the primary obstacle to genuine democracy. And second, the left forged alliances between academics and labor unions, between affluent progressives and the working class. In Rorty's analysis, the American left lost its way in the 1960s. He believes that the progressive emphasis on the fundamental issue of economics receded with the emergence of a New Left movement that focused instead on gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Instead of remaining a force for the reform of capitalist excess and class inequality, the New Left turned inward and began to emphasize multiculturalism and identity politics.

Rorty is especially critical of what he sometimes calls the "English Department Politics" of the cultural left—a charge that the universities have stopped serving as a base for the reform of the broader American society, as academics and intellectuals have abandoned cross-class alliances and turned their energies to struggles on campus. There are many flaws and some elements of truth in this analysis, although addressing them is beyond the scope of my brief remarks. It is important to note, however, that Rorty's critique of the academic and cultural left is shared by a significant number of contemporary liberals who are skeptical of multiculturalism and identity politics and believe that progressives must re-engage with the class-based agenda of poverty, labor, and economic inequality.

Professor Sanchez's wonderful lecture provides a compelling response to the charge that the contemporary left has lost its way, and specifically to the accusation that the modern academy operates in isolation and detachment from the surrounding community. He argues that the "growing commitment of universities to civic engagement is one of the most important changes in higher education" taking place in our time. He focuses on the rise of service-learning and community engagement initiatives, and he presents a forceful case that the racial and ethnic diversification of the university has served as a primary foundation for such civic involvement programs, including both the faculty and the student populations.

The most important point of Professor Sanchez's talk is his warning that the current commitment to service learning and civic engagement is endangered by "the rapid decline in programs and commitments to make the universities more inclusive and diverse." This might not be exactly how he intended his remarks, but in my interpretation, his talk is part of a growing answer on the left to the false charges that progressives must choose between the campus and the world, between diversity/identity politics and economic analysis, between race/gender/sexuality and class. Within the framework of viewing these categories as mutually inclusive rather than as oppositional, I want to make two points that draw on the issues raised in Professor Sanchez's lecture.

I. Both/And: Race- and Class-Based Affirmative Action

I believe that all of us need to think even more expansively about the role of the modern university in perpetuating inequality in American society, and about our responsibilities in addressing this fundamental dilemma. During the recent Supreme Court case regarding the affirmative action policies at the University of Michigan, the administration defended its admissions formula through what is called the "diversity rationale." Diversity is a very important consideration, but it is unfortunate that it is the primary political and legal grounds on which the affirmative action battles are fought. Since the *Bakke* decision in 1978, the federal courts have not allowed universities to defend affirmative action based on the broader argument that remedial policies are necessary to redress the consequences of historical racism and structural inequality. For example, the 2000 census confirmed that Detroit is the most segregated metropolis in the United States in terms of racial housing patterns, and that the state of Michigan also operates the most racially segregated public school system in the entire nation. In metropolitan Detroit, 90 percent of white public school students are enrolled in facilities that are at least 90 percent white, a direct reflection of pervasive residential segregation. Across Michigan, two-thirds of black students attend public schools that are overwhelmingly segregated. The university as well as outside groups attempted to defend affirmative action based on the historical legacies of the pervasive public policies and discriminatory forces that have established these deep patterns of inequality, but federal judges refused to permit this argument to enter into the admissions debate. I am a strong supporter of the university's commitment to affirmative action, but I also believe that current admissions policies represent an inadequate response to the historical and contemporary forces of racial and class inequality in our state and our society.

In addition to the debates over affirmative action that have dominated higher education during the past decade, there is growing attention to another fundamental problem—that of socioeconomic (or class) inequality. Recent reports in the *New York Times* have publicized a set of facts that should concern us all. About half of the students at the University of Michigan come from families that make more than $100,000 a year, a ratio that is only slightly above the percentage at most other selective state universities. Twenty percent of students at U-M are products of households that earn more than $200,000 a year. The median family income in Michigan is about $53,000, and it is very apparent that the university is not doing nearly enough to enroll students of any race from households in the bottom half of the economic spectrum. During the Supreme Court proceedings, *Newsweek* published a breakdown of the points system (now invalidated) that the University until recently used in its undergraduate admissions process. Many conservatives attacked the granting of twenty points to applicants from underrepresented minority groups. But I found something else much more disturbing. Under the university's undergraduate formula, a white student from a high-performing suburban school in an affluent township of Oakland County, with a parent as a Michigan alumnus, received almost as many bonus points as a minority applicant.

The evidence is clear that despite their worthy affirmative action programs, elite institutions of higher education function in a way that reinforces social class privilege. In my view, progressives need to search for a political language and a social policy that simultaneously pursues race-based and class-based affirmative action, while also maintaining gender-based programs that are under assault as well. Conservatives have largely appropriated the public discourse surrounding class-based affirmative action, but few of them are genuinely serious about implementing a program that tackles structures of economic inequality. For supporters of expanded access to and increased democratization of the modern university, the option should not be to replace race-based affirmative action with a class-based approach. A 2004 Mellon Foundation report by William G. Bowen has shown that this would result in a sharp reduction of minority enrollments. Race-based affirmative action definitely remains necessary, but by itself such a policy represents an inadequate response to societal patterns of segregation and economic inequality, including the failure of diversity programs as currently constituted to target substantial numbers of minority students from lower-income families.

To return directly to Professor Sanchez's main point, if we want to create and expand the conditions for diverse student and faculty populations and for democratic engagement with the surrounding community, we need to expand access to the

universities in a much broader way rather than simply defending the status quo, through an approach that combines race and class. Professor Sanchez raises a legitimate concern that civic outreach programs that bring young people from privileged backgrounds and elite institutions into contact with the poor and disadvantaged might take the form of "false generosity—acts of service that simply perpetuate the status quo and thus preserve the need for service." Building on this observation, I believe that a serious dilemma exists when a university designs its civic engagement programs to assist a high-poverty population that might live nearby but really has no legitimate hope of enrolling in the same institution in meaningful numbers.

II. The Importance of Decentralized Student Leadership

University-sponsored service engagement programs are important, but they are not sufficient. Professor Sanchez mentioned the decentralized model in operation at USC, and I would add that in a very real sense, participatory democracy is a necessarily decentralized process. Social movements gain much of their strength from energetic and often decentralized action at the grassroots. In other words, university faculty cannot script every encounter with the community around us, and it is probably a good thing that they don't. Many of the most important political actions that have taken place during my brief time here at U-M have been student-initiated and student-dominated. An incomplete list would include the self-mobilization of several thousand undergraduate and graduate students to rally in Washington during the Supreme Court hearing on the affirmative action case, the anti-sweatshop efforts of SOLE (Students Organizing for Labor and Economic Equality), and the activism of organizations such as Students for PIRGIM to lobby the city of Ann Arbor for affordable housing.

Civic engagement initiatives and service learning programs sponsored by the university and supervised by faculty members are of crucial importance. But today, as in the past, I suspect that much of the progressive energy will come from young people themselves—organizing at the grassroots, experimenting with methods of direct action, challenging accepted definitions of democracy, and taking on the inequalities in the larger society, not only the immediate community surrounding us but also at the national level and in the global environment.

"How can our colleges and universities become symbols of civic democracy when our own faculties and students question our commitment to true democracy and civic commitment embodied in concepts of diversity? What happens when the rhetoric of civic engagement smacks into the realities of the current limitations of access and fundamental retreat from concepts of inclusiveness, whatever the root causes?"

In this talk, George Sanchez sets forth an important argument about the two pathways to democracy in U.S. higher education: first, engagement by the university through connections of faculty, staff, and students with specific communities and publics, and, second, access to the university for members of all communities and publics through inclusive admissions and hiring policies. He challenges our understanding of how engagement and diversity are connected—and how, increasingly, they are becoming disconnected. In particular, Sanchez points to the stark ways in which these trends are experienced by minority faculty members, and offers models for progress on these tangled pathways. Also included here are responses by Professors Maria Cotera and Matthew Lassiter of the University of Michigan.

Crossing Figueroa: The Tangled Web Of Diversity And Democracy was delivered as the 2004 Dewey Lecture, sponsored by the Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning at the University of Michigan. George Sanchez is Professor of History, American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California, and director of the Chicano/Latino Studies Program there. He is the author of the award-winning book, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900 – 1945.*

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