

To promote social justice teaching, research, service, and policymaking agendas, with the corollary aim of seeking to proactively improve educational leadership as a means of addressing equity concerns for underrepresented populations throughout P-20 education; also to share innovative, promising, and research-based programs, policies, and teaching strategies and proactively advocate on behalf of underrepresented populations in educational leadership.

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# THE SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADER

ISSUE 1

FALL 2010

## A Message From The Chair...



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Greetings LSJ Members! I hope you are having a great semester! Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of *The Social Justice Leader* newsletter. I want to thank Latish Reed and the Communications committee for their hard work on putting together the 1<sup>st</sup> issue. The newsletter is among other initiatives the LSJ leadership team is pursuing to engage often, and in critical and meaningful conversations with you (and in reciprocation) about social justice issues that are impacting our field, society, and global community. There is a real sense of urgency as many people are struggling to meet the basic necessities of life. As a SIG, how can we constantly shed light on the manifestations of inequities in our schools, communities, and societies? We want to hear from you!

Since June 2010, as the new chair of LSJ, I have had the opportunity to engage in conversations with the

LSJ leadership team on how to build on the momentum past chairs and leadership teams have established. Also, your participation in our recent survey provided insights on issues that are important to you. The LSJ team is discussing the feedback and developing a plan of action on key recommendations. We will also share the findings with our members in the coming weeks. Thank you for participating in the survey.

Good news! We have had an increase in our membership (+25) since May, 2010. Did you know that we have 255 members including graduate students and international affiliates? Through your support, we continue to grow and I encourage you to stay engaged, get involve, and share your ideas. If you have not actively participated in LSJ, why not start this year whether through sharing your work in *The Social Justice Leader*, serving on a committee or as a panel reviewer for proposals, mentoring a graduate student or new faculty, facilitating an open discussion at our UCEA/AERA meetings, etc. The LSJ team will keep you informed about opportunities to serve.

Also, we have a slate of candidates who are running for the secretary/treasurer position. A big thank you

to the Nominations committee (dana christman, Kristin Huggins, Joanne Marshall and Chris Thomas) for doing an outstanding job in soliciting nominees to submit to the AERA election ballot. In January, you will receive an electronic ballot to make your selection for our new secretary/treasurer. As a reminder, in order to vote in the January election, you must have paid your dues. Please remember to renew your member in December, 2010. Additionally, the LSJ Facebook is online and I hope you will join and keep abreast of current issues and updates regarding the LSJ-SIG. Thanks to Leslie Hazle Bussey, secretary/treasurer for getting it started.

If you are attending UCEA, please join us for our business meeting on **Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 am, Sheraton New Orleans, Maurepas, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor**. I wish you safe travels and look forward to seeing you.



It is with great pleasure that I am able to serve you in the capacity of communications chair. As communications chair, I have three main goals: 1) Produce a fall and spring newsletter, 2) Work with Leslie Hazle Bussey, SIG Secretary/Treasurer to provide updates to our new Facebook Page, and 3) Update the LSJ website with current resources for those interested in Social Justice Leadership. If you have authored anything that you would like listed on the site or wish to make recommendations, please feel free to email me the citation and I will add it to our growing list.

We would like to thank Bradley Davis from the University of Texas – Austin for naming our newsletter, *The Social Justice Leader*! *Kudos!* In this issue, you will find a feature essay by Michael P. O'Malley that offers suggestions in educational leadership for scholars, school leaders and students in understanding and advocating for LGBTQ students in our schools. Also, Katherine Cumings-Mansfield, our Graduate Student Committee Chair, provides an update from the graduate student AERA group. We celebrate the accomplishments of SIG members in the "Let's Give 'Em Props" section. Finally, we provide the call for LSJ Awards. Enjoy!!!!



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## Equitable Leadership for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth in U.S. Schools

These past several weeks have been marked by media reports of the incomprehensible loss of so many beautiful young people through suicide in the face of various forms of homophobic harassment and bullying. Such harassment has been visited in unrelenting and spirit crushing ways on both youth identifying as queer and on those whose infraction has been that others perceive them to be queer. The seemingly unceasing reports in the national media of yet another tragic loss following the pain and alienation of sexual and gender identity based harassment has illuminated in the public consciousness that which we involved in educational research and school leadership already know to be true. That is, a disturbingly high proportion of schools in the nation are not emotionally or even physically safe places for queer youth.

Recently released results from GLSEN's 2009 *National School Climate Survey* (Kosciw, Greytak, Diaz, & Bartkiewicz, 2010) found that *at school* in the past year 84.6% of LGBT youth surveyed had been verbally harassed, 63.7% had been physically harassed, and nearly one in five had been physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation. Similarly, because of gender expression 63.7% had been verbally harassed, 27.2% had been physically harassed, and 12.5% had been physically assaulted at school in the past year. Of these students harassed or assaulted at school, 62.4% did not report these incidents to school staff due to belief that no positive action would be taken and 33.8% of students who did report such incidents say school staff did not respond. Both of these figures represent a slight increase from the 2007 survey data. In addition, 61.1% of students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 39.9% felt unsafe because of their gender expression. Furthermore, the rate of LGBT youths' experience of severe forms of harassment has remained rela-

tively constant over the past decade. Such incidents of victimization were found to have negative effects on student attendance and academic achievement, to increase levels of depression and anxiety, and to decrease self-esteem. The reality of these experiences is not unknown to secondary school principals, with only one third of those surveyed reporting that LGBT students feel very safe at their schools (GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2008).

If the systematic body of empirical knowledge represented above and extending through extant literature in the social sciences is one way of understanding the current experiences of queer youth in US schools, an additional worthy perspective might be termed an episteme of the gut. That is to say, the visceral, raw, unnamable experience one might have when honestly trying to come to terms with the reality of a *child* ending her or his own life for any reason at all, inclusive of suffering homophobic bullying and harassment. If the scientific body of knowledge represented here is in itself insufficient for the task of compelling school districts and principal preparation programs to take radically new action to heal communities wounded by homo- and transphobia, as appears to be the case, then perhaps an embodied knowing that rises from our gut and embraces subjectivity as more than rationality offers a path of possibility. This is clearly not a question of singularly choosing either rationality or gut to frame knowledge, but rather a willing sinking into one's own embodied subjectivity in order to *feel* the weight of what one knows. This seems to me to be a dangerous place from which to know, in that it transgresses the epistemic closure maintained by institutional and localized portrayals of the queer subject as dysfunctional, disordered, or immoral by affectively confronting the human cost imposed by such a colonizing

worldview.

An episteme of the gut might be understood as a complement to Maxine Greene's (1995) incompleteness, that which summons us to the joint tasks of knowledge and action. Viscerally knowing the isolation that can become despair in many queer youth in US schools calls forth the need for activism and advocacy. An example of such is found in Dan Savage's *It Gets Better* project, an invitation to queer adults to post video to YouTube acknowledging the difficulties that they experienced in school but highlighting the meaning and joys in their lives now (for an example, see the *It Gets Better - Youth Pride Chorus* submission on YouTube). Deceptively simple, the project is a sophisticated critical social intervention. Born out of Savage's gut anguish at the loss of queer youth to suicide and resonating at a similar level with countless contributors, the project seeks to interrupt the structural obstacle that often prohibits queer adults and agencies from being invited to speak formally in schools to and about queer youth. Media, internet, and pop culture become modalities through which queer adults circumvent the regulating function of many schools in regards to sexual identity and gender expression (Blount, 2000) in order to reach queer youth with compassion, solidarity, and experiential knowledge. Distinguishing the message to queer youth suffering harassment in schools that *it gets better* from the obligation of adults in society to actually *make it better* for queer youth, this project poses very particular challenges to action for us as educational leaders for social justice. I would like to offer just two possible trajectories for action here and defer to you, my LSJ colleagues, to synergistically fill our meeting, conversational, teaching, and publication spaces with a multiplicity of other action possibilities generated from your unique perspectives, expertise, and resources.

### For Those We Have Lost

Raymond Chase, 19,  
Monticello, NY, September 29

Asher Brown, 13, Cypress,  
Texas, September 23

Tyler Clementi, 18,  
Ridgewood, NJ, September 22

Seth Walsh, 13, Tehachapi,  
CA, September 19

Billy Lucas, 15, Greensburg,  
IN, September 9

Justin Aaberg, 15, Anoka, MN,  
July 9



## Equitable Leadership for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth in U.S. Schools (cont')

The first trajectory for action I would like to address involves our role as educational researchers. It has been two decades since Sedgwick (1990) began her landmark *Epistemology of the Closet* with the notion that the homosexual/heterosexual binary has become such a central organizing principle in contemporary Western societies that failure to interrogate it renders analysis of “virtually any aspect” of culture “damaged” (p. 1). It is time for us as researchers for social justice to collectively take this critique seriously in our research questions, designs, and methods by setting a standard that inquiry investigating raced, classed, gendered and other forms of difference ought to either locate sexual identity and gender expression diversity within the project or acknowledge limitations of operating within a heteronormative matrix. To do otherwise is to perpetuate heteronormativity, defined by Warner (1993) as the view that humanity and heterosexuality are synonymous. As some queer educational scholars working on the AERA initiative on LGBT research are currently arguing, the absence of sexual and gender identity categories from demographic questions constructing the federal educational data infrastructure has a profound effect in erasing queer populations from policy, practice, and consciousness. Another way to consider the implications of Sedgwick’s claim is to construct research projects recognizing that identities are assembled and re-assembled from among a multiplicity of intersecting possibilities, discourses, and experiences (Lugg, 2008). Pragmatically, this helps us to recognize the overlapping complexities of race, gender, sexual identity, and more rather than fragmenting subjects into artificial, and apparently singular, representations. Such work seeks to interrupt racist, classist, and sexist as well as heteronormative structures (Lugg, 2008).

The second action trajectory that I would like to consider involves possibilities within schools that can be enacted by school leaders and incorporated within educational leadership preparation in higher education. Koschoreck and Slattery (2010) offer a comprehensive organizational schema for interrupting heteronormativity in schools which involves integrating LGBT inclusive student organizations, curriculum, school policy, and professional development as four selected sites to enact asset based strategies promoting a positive school climate for queer youth. Such strategies benefit both queer and non-queer youth by creating inclusive and safe schools for all students. For school leaders less familiar with queer persons or less inclined to pursue initiatives addressing the circumstances, experiences, and school-based needs of queer youth, deliberately seeking an episteme of the gut may prove highly valuable. School principals, for example, might meet with a group of queer students to learn about their experiences on the school campus, speak with a queer parent about unique legal, social, cultural, or familial challenges she or he has encountered in raising her or his child, or discuss the complexities of “coming out” with a queer teacher, colleague, or community member. Such critical conversations hold the possibility of a different kind of visceral knowledge, one that rises up in companionship to construct unexpected alliances across difference rather than by identity (Brady, 2006).

Finally, I offer a brief discussion of LGBT inclusive school communities and about queer youth themselves. In this essay, I have followed both the research based evidence and the recent attention to the loss of queer youth in order to demonstrate the compelling need for school leaders and principal preparation programs to act differently in the work of equitable leadership for LGBT youth. That some schools continue to perpetuate exclusionary or hostile environments for queer youth is not acceptable, given both the possible outcomes and the demands of a shared humanity. But it is also crucial to recognize the many educators, students, and school communities who, despite the data trends noted above, have created safe and vibrant schools for queer youth and all youth. In regards to understanding queer youth in schools, caution is required when interpreting the extant data regarding the exclusion, bullying, harassment, and assault that a significant number of queer youth experience in the nation’s schools. Following from Sedgwick (1990), researchers and school leaders need to locate such data as diagnostic of homophobic and heteronormative assumptions in the larger population rather than as primarily descriptive of queer youth. This distinction is important in order to avoid a kind of patronizing or pathologizing victimization discourse in leadership practice that presumes queer youth to be more depressive or less resilient than other youth, a view often reflective of unfounded two-dimensional stereotypes. This perspective does not contradict the data regarding instances of depression among queer youth, but does map such in relation to harmful environmental conditions and interpersonal experiences encountered by these youth rather than as somehow fixed within a queer subjectivity. While posing significant challenges to school communities the issues represented in this essay likewise offer an urgent opportunity to enact leadership for social justice.

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## Graduate Student Committee Corner



A big “thank you!” goes out to Anjalé Welton, Assistant Research Professor at the University of Connecticut. Anjalé served as LSJ-SIG’s first graduate student representative this past year. We greatly appreciate her efforts to begin defining and crafting the possibilities inherent in a brand new SIG! Under the direction of Dr. Jean-Marie, we hope to use Anjalé’s ideas as a spring board and move onward and upward!

In conjunction with Anjalé accepting her faculty position at UCONN, I have been appointed to finish out Anjalé’s second year as the Chair of the Graduate Student Committee. I am excited about this opportunity of service and look forward to contributing to the growth and health of this new organization.

LSJ-SIG is looking to build an active graduate student committee. One way to establish continuity is to change how we organize our burgeoning student leader team. Instead of appointing one student to lead as “Chair,” we would like to have two student representatives: A “Senior Representative” and a “Junior Representative” similar to how many of the AERA Divisions build their student leadership teams. Accordingly, instead of me serving two years as “chair” I will serve one year as “Senior Rep.” Meanwhile, we need to find a student who has *at least two years left before graduation* to serve as our “Junior Rep.” Ideally, the Junior Rep will be mentored by the Senior Rep and then move into the Senior Rep position when the Senior Rep graduates. Then, the former Junior Rep becomes the new Senior Rep and mentors the newly appointed Junior Rep. The hope is that this continuous student leadership mentoring cycle will facilitate greater continuity and enable our student leaders to successfully work with the lead-

ership team to develop a vibrant and engaging graduate student committee.

I am very excited about my new role as “Senior Rep.” I so enjoy coming alongside my Junior student colleagues and serving, learning, and growing together. If you are a doctoral student planning to graduate between May 2012 and May 2013 and wish to serve LSJ-SIG by committing to two years of service as first Junior Rep and then Senior Rep, we would like to hear from you! Please send a copy of your CV with a one-page statement of interest that includes: 1) name; 2) institution; 3) program and advisor; 4) anticipated graduation date; 5) why you would like to serve as LSJ-SIG Sr/Jr Representative, and; 6) prior experiences that may help you serve in this capacity to Dr. Gaetane Jean-Marie at [gjeanmarie@ou.edu](mailto:gjeanmarie@ou.edu) and Katherine Mansfield at [kcmansfield@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:kcmansfield@mail.utexas.edu) by 10/26/10. The executive committee will make their decision shortly following the UCEA meeting in NOLA.

If you are unable or do not care to serve as Jr/Sr Rep, we still need and want your participation! There are many other ways students can get involved. Details are forthcoming. Please e-mail Katherine Mansfield at [kcmansfield@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:kcmansfield@mail.utexas.edu) to express your interest in becoming involved. We’ll be in touch!

See you in NOLA!

### Implexus—Education, Critique and Complexity

Implexus aims to explore the possible benefits of an online social network constituted by individuals and groups interested in the critical dimension potentially associated with any educational approach. Implexus is designed to provide a space for everyone to introduce, share, and discuss practical and theoretical stakes inherent in the development of a critical capacity, at any age and in any context of life. More specifically, Implexus aims to bring together communities of practices and/or research separated from each others because of cultural, linguistic, institutional, disciplinary or theoretical compartmentalization. Doing so, Implexus aims to contribute to the development of both a reflection on the complexity of critical learning and a critique of the conditions framing any kind of learning opportunity. At this time, this community counts 225 members (mostly scholars, but also students and practitioners) from 25 countries. Feel free to visit the site [implexus.ning.com](http://implexus.ning.com) and join in!

Michel Alhadeff-Jones, Ph.D.  
Teachers College, Columbia University

# LET'S GIVE 'EM PROPS!!



**Judy A. Alston**  
Ashland University  
Promoted to Full Professor



**Catherine A. Lugg**  
Rutgers University  
Promoted to Full Professor



**Anjale (AJ) Welton**  
Hired at University of Connecticut  
Assistant Research Professor



**Lee Anne Belle**  
Barnard College

Authored (2010) *Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching*.



**Christopher N. Thomas**  
Named Education Professor of the year by The Association of California School Administrators



**Leslie Hazle Bussey**  
Director of Research & Policy  
Georgia Institute for School Improvement



**George Theoharis**  
Syracuse University  
Promoted to Associate Professor



**Noelle Witherspoon Arnold**  
Hired at University of Missouri  
Assistant Professor

Appointed Assistant Editor of The International Journal of Leadership in Education



**Decoteau Irby**  
Hired at The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee  
Assistant Professor



**Gaetane Jean-Marie & Anthony Normore**  
Edited (2010) *Educational Preparation: Innovation and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Ed.D. and Graduate Education*.

# LSJ AWARDS

## "Bridge People" Award

Description: Inclusion and community are cherished values of the LSJ SIG. In their chapter, "Bridge People" Civic and Educational Leaders for Social Justice," Shoho & Merchant (2006) describe individuals who "were committed to creating a bridge between themselves and others, for the purposes of improving the lives of all those with whom they worked. As such, they functioned as 'Bridge People' in the fullest sense" (p. 86). This award is meant to recognize individuals or groups whose work "creates a bridge between themselves and others" through scholarship and research.

Selection/Eligibility Criteria: Potential recipients for this award should demonstrate work that has created a bridge between themselves and others through scholarship and research. Nominees may include but are not limited to, individuals, groups or organizations whose recent work or body of work have been a catalyst for bridging people or organizations, especially when those people or organizations have not historically been connected.

Nomination requirements: Nominations, including self-nominations, should include a description of the individual or group to the LSJ SIG Awards Committee Chair by Friday, December 3rd. The awards chair will notify the award recipient by February 4.

Award: A plaque presented at the LJS-SIG Business Meeting at the 2011 AERA Annual Meeting, and recognition on the LSJ-SIG website.

The work of the award nominees should embody the LSJ mission: To promote social justice teaching, research, service, and policymaking agendas, with the corollary aim of seeking to proactively improve educational leadership as a means of addressing equity concerns for underrepresented populations throughout P-20 education; also to share innovative, promising, and research-based programs, policies, and teaching strategies and proactively advocate on behalf of underrepresented populations in educational leadership.

## Social Justice Dissertation Award

Description: This award recognizes an exceptional dissertation that expands our knowledge of the complexity of social justice issues, whether in post-secondary, K-12, community related, and/or social policy-related, is the focus of this award. We are looking for unpublished dissertations by graduate students. This award is to recognize the outstanding research of our graduate students. This award will also encourage early scholars to join LSJ SIG and grow the scholarship in the area of social justice.

Selection/Eligibility Criteria: Dissertations must be completed within the previous three years from the award date. For example, a dissertation award presented at AERA annual meeting 2011 must have been completed by 2008 or later.

Dissertations considered for the LSJ SIG Dissertation Award should:

1. Be completed within the previous three years of the award date. Dissertations completed prior to 2008 will not be considered
2. Be submitted by a LSJ SIG member or the student of a LSJ SIG member
3. Align with the LSJ SIG mission
4. Seek to address significant research question(s)
5. Contribute to the literature on leadership for social justice
6. Be methodologically rigorous
7. Relate significant findings
8. Discuss the applicability of findings to practice and theory

Nomination requirements: Nomination, including self-nominations, should include a blind and original copy of a six-page abstract of the dissertation to the LSJ SIG Chair by Friday, December 3rd. The awards chair will notify the award recipient by February 4.

Award: A cash award of \$250 presented at the LSJ-SIG Business Meeting at the 2011 AERA Annual Meeting, and recognition on the LSJ-SIG website

## Social Justice Teaching Award in Educational Administration

Description: This award recognizes outstanding social justice teaching by a professor or instructor in the field of educational leadership.

Selection/Eligibility/Criteria: Nominee must have been a teacher or instructor of record in a leadership preparation/development program affiliated with a university or school district during the previous academic year (2009-2010 for the 2011 award).

Nomination requirements: Nominees should demonstrate social justice teaching that promotes equity, diversity, inclusion, and social reconstructionist education by providing a syllabus from a course taught within the past two years, submit a cover letter of no more than three pages describing their teaching philosophy as it relates to social justice, and supply a letter of support from a student and/or faculty colleague. Nominations, including self-nominations, should include a blind and original copy to the LSJ SIG Awards Committee Chair by Friday, December 3rd. The awards chair will notify the award recipient by February 4.

Award: A plaque presented at the LSJ-SIG Business Meeting at the 2011 AERA Annual Meeting, and recognition on the LSJ-SIG website.

**Direct any questions and all nomination materials by Friday, December 3, 2010, to AJ Welton or Michael O'Malley, LSJ Awards Co-committee chairs to:**

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Assistant Research Professor  
anjale.welton@uconn.edu

**Michael O'Malley**  
Texas State University—  
San Marcos  
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## WE WANT YOU!!!!

The Social Justice Leader is seeking the following types of submissions:

Promotion Announcements

Awards

Special Opportunities

General Announcements

Brief Articles

Please send your submissions by to:

Latish Reed [reedlc@uwm.edu](mailto:reedlc@uwm.edu) or

Gaetane Jean Marie [gjeanmarie@ou.edu](mailto:gjeanmarie@ou.edu)

### Submission Guidelines

The LSJ Newsletter considers publication of brief articles on issues that are trenchant and of interest to LSJ members. Restrictions for publication will apply (preferably no more than 1,000 words or 5 to 7 pages of double-spaced text) in order to meet newsletter page limitations (2-3 pages). The editors reserve the right to edit for style and length. Please submit an author's head shot photo or other relevant photos or graphics.



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### LSJ SIG Officers

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