

The Provost's Forums on the Public University and the Social Good

Monday, May 2, 2016

New Research Methods for Critically Engaging the Equity Question in Higher Education

Estela Mara Bensimon

Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California



Estela Mara Bensimon is particularly interested in place-based, practitioner-driven inquiry as a means of organizational change in higher education. Her current research is on issues of racial equity in higher education from the perspective of organizational learning and socio-cultural practice theories.

Dr. Bensimon has received grants from the National Science Foundation to study Latina and Latino students in higher education, the Bill and Melinda Gates and Ford Foundations to complete system-level work on college completion in Colorado, and the Teagle Foundation to examine the expanding role of private institutions in transfer pathways. Her publications about equity, organizational learning, practitioner inquiry, and change include: *Confronting Equity Issues on Campus: Implementing the Equity Scorecard in Theory and Practice*; *The Underestimated Significance of Practitioner Knowledge in the Scholarship on Student Success*; *Doing Research that Makes a Difference*; *Equality in Fact, Equality in Results: A matter of institutional accountability*; *Measuring the State of Equity in Public Higher Education*; and *Closing the Achievement Gap in Higher Education: An Organizational Learning Perspective*.

Previously, Dr. Bensimon has held the highest leadership positions in the Association for the Study of Higher Education and in the American Education Research Association Division on Postsecondary Education. She has served on the boards of the American Association for Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

In her lecture, Dr. Bensimon will discuss how the elimination of affirmative action has generated a strong and comprehensive line of research that documents empirically the educational benefits of diversity. This movement provides legal and value-free justification for use of race in admissions to public universities. Despite its legal persuasiveness, this body of work has not eradicated inequity in higher education outcomes for subordinated groups. Professor Bensimon will analyze the intractable nature of racial inequity in higher education as an organizational learning problem. She will then discuss research methods pioneered by the Center for Urban Education, which seeks to assist scholars and practitioners to address racial inequity and remediate institutional practices and campus cultures, structures, and policies.

Lecture:

3 to 4:30 p.m.

Multipurpose Room

Student Community Center

Reception:

4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Upstairs Patio

Student Community Center

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