

The connections between urban/metropolitan universities and their local K-12 schools are arguably their most important interactions with the broader community. One can find several obvious reasons for the centrality of this connection--urban/metropolitan universities draw their students primarily from the public schools in their local areas, for example; moreover, most teachers and administrators in local public school systems are likely to be graduates of the colleges of teacher education within urban/metropolitan universities. Other more subtle reasons may be as important, however, in this university-school connection--in particular, that efforts to improve the quality of public schools in the nation's cities and metropolitan areas depend to a significant degree on the intellectual resources available within the faculties of urban/metropolitan universities, as well as in the willingness and ability of these institutions to change their own ways of doing business, whether these be in methods of instruction, admissions procedures, and the like.

The articles assembled for this issue of *Metropolitan Universities* offer a varied but, it is hoped, complementary set of viewpoints on urban/metropolitan university interactions with K-12 public schools. The moral imperative for the role of higher education in creating a better world for children is emphatically and clearly set out by one of the nation's foremost education leaders, Ernest Boyer. He urges that urban/metropolitan universities pay far more attention to the very earliest years of life of the nation's children--years which can play the most important part in the development, or lack of development, of a child's future educational achievement and opportunities for success. The education of the very young child has been the focus of only a few school-university collaborative efforts; Boyer's call for action reminds the reader at the beginning of this issue that attention to all levels of education is, in the end, a compelling idea for universities committed to deepening their connection with local cities and communities.

Dr. Boyer's article sets the stage for what follows. Most if not all the articles take what might be called a K-16 approach toward school-university relationships--that increasingly the nation's public education system needs to be viewed as a single system serving largely the same clientele and oriented toward the same goals of increasing access to and success in high quality education for much larger numbers of students, particularly in urban/metropolitan areas.

This approach is most explicit in the next two articles. Kati Haycock lays out a general case for rethinking the involvement of colleges and universities in K-12 public education, arguing that postsecondary institutions need to move from "helping" local schools via small projects affecting small numbers of students and teachers, toward more "systemic" approaches to education reform that link more closely and clearly changes in teaching and learning at the K-12 level with parallel changes and reformulations within colleges and universities themselves. My companion article (Nevin Brown) then discusses current efforts engaging urban/metropolitan universities in six U.S. cities, stimulated by both a national foundation and a national higher education association, to develop mechanisms and strategies for long-term educational improvement from kindergarten through the baccalaureate degree.

Taking a K-16 approach to education can become a defining moment for the urban/metropolitan university, both in terms of securing a distinctive image before the larger public in a city or metropolitan area or in giving the urban/metropolitan university a uniquely important role in the history of late twentieth-century American cities. Robert Smith provides a general overview of the ways in which interactions with K-12 education have shaped a particular role for an urban/metropolitan university in a small Western city, while Tennant

McWilliams and Barbara Lewis view similar interactions in a mid-sized southern metropolitan area within the context of social change and moral imperatives which have reshaped that region during the past thirty years.

To argue for a comprehensive, long-term, K-16 approach to education reform is not to suggest that more immediate actions cannot be taken or near-term benefits not found in the work urban/metropolitan universities do with local K-12 schools. Recruitment and retention of larger numbers of students, particularly those from minority populations, has been one particularly fruitful area for school-university collaboration. The contributions to this volume by Arturo Pacheco and James Renick speak to some of the issues and problems, as well as benefits, that have been encountered by urban/metropolitan universities in Texas and Virginia.

For urban/metropolitan universities to engage effectively with their K-12 counterparts, a number of institutional and internal questions and obstacles must be confronted. If the reader takes to heart the call for mutual "K-16" reform made in the Haycock article previously cited, the investigation of the "infrastructure" for school-university engagement provided by Lee Teitel offers some initial observations and suggestions for internal structures which may be particularly helpful in ensuring its long-term effectiveness.

All this is not to ignore, however, that urban/metropolitan universities have for a number of years already been engaged with K-12 schools in a wide range of collaborative programs, projects, and initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Indeed, many lessons are already being learned from many of these efforts, including those which have focused on the improvement of the education and preparation of teachers themselves. Some of the most widely known of these efforts have been the development of professional development schools involving the close cooperation of local school districts and many urban/metropolitan universities. Jianping Shen has obtained views from the field on the professional development school effort. These are not always congruent with those of the higher education participants and have interesting policy implications for universities seeking to initiate or deepen their engagement in this form of teacher preparation.