



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**AACTE 73rd Annual Meeting
February 26 – 28, 2021, Seattle, WA**

Resisting Hate, Restoring Hope: Engaging in Courageous Actions

Collectively, we are losing traction in our democracy and experiencing reversals in the civil and human rights that leaders such as Cesar Chavez, Delores Huerta, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Harvey Milk all fought to advance. Children are being educated in an environment fraught with violence on our school campuses and in our communities. They are assaulted by guns, words, and legislation that create an unsafe, hateful, and fearful climate. We are living in a time when children are taken from their families, retained in deplorable circumstances, and denied access to basic needs and education. The term “all” seems to only mean some, and people who speak out against these injustices are attacked by words and actions.

As educators, our unique lens allows us the opportunity to witness, document, and take action against these inequities in real time. We know efforts exist to mobilize teachers, administrators, counselors, and psychologists to address issues related to trauma associated with violence, forced separation of immigrant families, disparate policing policies, and intolerance to the LGB and Trans* community. We also know that people of color, students with disabilities, and individuals from low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by punitive classroom and disciplinary practices. These individuals have unequal access to high quality teachers, which is the best predictor of school success. Apathy and complacency have allowed de facto segregation along racial, ethnic, linguistic, ability, geographic, and socio-economic lines at levels that exceed legally-enforced segregation policies of the past, thus entrenching inequalities in schools.

In our profession, we have long realized the strength, beauty, and power of local communities. However, we must continue to promote ways to raise consciousness and use our professional knowledge to collectively build upon these assets. It is time that we, as educators, become the driving force to lead collaboratively in addressing the challenges facing PK-20 students and the communities in which they live. As individuals and as part of a professional community, we must set aside our differences and apply our collective wisdom to establish a new paradigm in educator preparation. The imperative is ours to create an empowered mindset, to renew democracy, and to respond to an entrenched system of inequities and fear. We must dig deep to resist hate, and restore hope, by Engaging in Courageous Actions.

By participating in the 2021 AACTE Annual Meeting, you join a united effort to disrupt inequities while educating for inclusion and change. Proposals are invited that explore research, innovative practice, community partnerships, activism, and advocacy that demonstrate strategies for resisting hate and restoring hope. How can teacher preparation engage in courageous actions that infuse equity and

inclusivity, renew democracy, conceptualize practices for establishing a sustainable and diverse profession, and demonstrate successful partnerships and collaborations that advance clinical partnerships and promote community engagement? In addition to the sociocultural frameworks that are commonly utilized, we also welcome the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT), DisCrit, LatCrit, indigenous methodologies, womanism, queer theory, ableism, and other frameworks not commonly represented in educator preparation work.

Strand I: Equity and Inclusivity in Preparation and Practice

Schools serve individuals and communities with diverse perspectives and needs, and educators must be prepared to work in this complex environment. Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that should guide all educational policies, preparation programs, and practices. To do so effectively, educators must recognize the principle that education, particularly in an inclusive democracy, is both a fundamental right and the foundation for more equitable, inclusive, and cohesive communities. Ensuring that all learners have access to quality education acknowledges the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity. In this way, differences are seen in a positive light, and as the stimulus for fostering learning. The principles of inclusion and equity are not only about ensuring access to education, but also about the educational spaces themselves. Quality learning spaces and pedagogies enable students to thrive, understand their realities, and work for a more just and democratic society. Therefore, it is important to find ways of addressing the needs of the most underserved students that do not necessarily demand extra funding and additional resources. A culture of inclusion and equity in education needs a shared set of assumptions and beliefs among educator preparation programs and school districts. Central to these assumptions and beliefs is valuing differences, believing in collaboration, and being committed to offering educational opportunities to all students.

Using this knowledge, educator preparation programs must advocate for the integration of the principles of equity and inclusion into content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, STEM, English, social studies), programming, and practice. We must build a collective understanding that more inclusive and equitable education systems have the potential to promote equality, develop teacher and system capabilities, and encourage supportive learning environments. These various efforts will contribute to overall improvements in educational quality.

The purpose of this strand is to share innovative perspectives, orientations, strategies, and technologies designed to address equity and inclusivity among diverse groups of learners and school contexts.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How can educator preparation programs ensure that school leaders and teachers understand, embrace, and incorporate the principles of equity and inclusivity into content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, STEM, English, social studies), programming, and practice?
- What strategies and skills must teachers develop to provide differentiated instruction to students with disabilities, immigrant, gifted, neurodivergent, and students who have experienced trauma?
- In what manner are educator preparation programs adjusting their practices to address the needs of learners in urban, suburban, and/or rural districts?
- How are diverse institutions (HBCU, HSI, MSI, PWI, AANAPISI, tribal, and community colleges) addressing and supporting equity and inclusivity?

- Which methods are used to collect, collate, and evaluate evidence on barriers to education access, participation, and achievement?
- What strategies are used to engage key education and community stakeholders to foster the conditions for inclusive learning and a broader understanding of the principles of inclusion and equity?
- How can asset-based approaches facilitate inclusive and equitable learning environments?
- In what ways can technology foster more inclusive and learner-centric environments?

Strand II: Activism for Renewing Democracy

The current global climate continues to threaten the sustainability and foundation of our democratic society. As such, it is essential for educational stakeholders to embrace and engage as activists and advocates. An activist is someone who makes an intentional action to bring about social or political change. An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of another person or group. Both are necessary to disrupt inequities and educate for change in our schools, communities, and educator preparation programs. Scholars, practitioners, and colleagues from the field already engage in this important work (e.g., YPAR, TRANS* youth advocacy, GLSEN, disability studies). Stakeholder voices at all levels must be heard and attended to by educators serving as activists and advocates. In these roles, educators must promote effective and equitable practices necessary to transform education and provide equity for all students. This work cannot be done in a silo; our engagement with stakeholders and across systems must be considered if we wish to transform and promote democratic education.

The purpose of this strand is to identify spaces in which activism and advocacy is taking place, explore lessons learned from this work, and determine how to foster courageous action.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one of more of the following questions:

- How can educators be informed about, and participate in, structured activism and advocacy to promote a democratic education?
- How can stakeholders develop an activist and/or advocate stance to respond to political events and ensure equity and access for all?
- How do we weave concepts of activism and advocacy into teacher preparation while still maintaining program integrity (i.e., ensuring that our graduates attend to the academic and social emotional needs of all learners)?
- How can activism and advocacy lead to building human capacities and impacting society?
- In what ways does critical reflective practice inform activism and advocacy?
- What role does activism and advocacy play in a systems approach, and how might they transform teaching and learning?
- What strategies and activities are needed to establish activism and advocacy in influencing policy decisions in educational settings?
- What role does self-care play in sustaining the activist and/or advocate?
- How do we foster interdisciplinary collaboration to promote activism and advocacy within, across, and beyond institutions and organizations?
- How does positionality, power, and privilege influence our approaches toward activism and advocacy?
- How can we best use our advocacy and voice in the policy arenas at the local, state, and federal levels?

Strand III: Establishing a Sustainable and Diverse Profession

For several decades the teaching profession has come under attack and been held solely responsible for the outcomes of PK-12 learners. “Alternative facts” and unsubstantiated opinions defame and slander the teaching profession, and alternative pathways compromise professional standards, all of which impact the teaching pipeline. Resisting the degradation of teacher preparation programs across the United States and restoring hope requires educational stakeholders to engage in courageous actions. Such action should include new and compelling ways to establish and sustain a diverse work force of teachers and leaders. The U.S. Census Bureau and other demographic data indicate that the American population is undergoing a radical majority-minority shift. For the first time in our history, our public schools are majority minority students. It is imperative that our children are taught by teachers and leaders who look and sound like them. For example, research suggests that students of color who have access to at least one teacher from a similar background are more likely to succeed. Additionally, it’s important to note that educators with disabilities are vastly underrepresented within our workforce.

Although there have been attempts to diversify the teacher workforce, a comprehensive systems approach is needed to ensure retention of diverse educators as they enter settings, including educator preparation programs, that have been framed predominantly from a Euro-centric perspective. While the percentage of teachers from diverse backgrounds has increased, research indicates these teachers are more likely to leave the profession than white teachers. Thus, simply recruiting teachers from diverse backgrounds is insufficient. Efforts that sustain and affirm these teachers are necessary to the goal of diversifying the educator workforce.

The purpose of this strand is to explore practices that recruit and sustain a diverse workforce. Presentations will describe unique and pioneering efforts to attract and retain a diverse workforce.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one of more of the following questions:

- How will teacher preparation programs adapt to address the demographic change in the American population?
- What strategies will be employed in establishing and sustaining a diverse teaching profession?
- How will educator preparation programs adjust their practices to accommodate the unique needs of students, schools, accrediting bodies, etc., while maintaining program integrity?
- How can higher education and PK-12 educators collaborate to establish a sustainable education profession?
- Which practices create the most innovative, authentic, and sustainable partnerships leading to improved retention of teachers from diverse backgrounds?
- What is the best infrastructure to support mental health, wellness, and teacher self-care?
- What are the best practices to diversify higher education faculty?

Strand IV: Clinical Practice and Community Engagement

As our democracy has been challenged, our schools, communities, and educator preparation programs have had to be nimble in the ways they continue to meet student needs. Educator preparation programs, in collaboration with schools and communities, remain the most effective ways to prepare

educators. Educator preparation, and the time our candidates spend in clinical experiences, is complex and nuanced work. Clinical experiences that are thoughtfully designed and supported by school and university stakeholders result in educators who are confident, learner-ready, and contextually aware. As such, the importance of sustained and supervised practice with resilient models of evidence-based pedagogy is more important than ever.

Programs that capture the complexity of place, pedagogy, and practice have the potential to disrupt inequities, promote growth, and offer pathways to sustainability. Teachers who are underprepared often take positions in our most vulnerable communities, teaching students who have been historically underserved. The art and science of education includes an established, professional knowledge base that continues to be questioned by people who do not have expertise in the field. Vital to the health and recovery of our democracy, educator preparation and clinical practice must be enacted and studied with the highest integrity.

The purpose of this strand is to explore, expand, and inspire new ideas about effective, clinically-rich partnerships in educator preparation. This strand investigates what we know about clinical practice and community participation, but also invites the opportunity for us to engage in courageous conversations that challenge the status quo.

Proposals in this strand are encouraged to address one or more of the following questions:

- How are educator preparation programs engaging communities to expand new ways of enacting clinical practice partnerships?
- How do educator preparation programs and schools work together to ensure culturally sustaining practices and supports are in place for both teacher candidates and PK-12 students?
- In what ways are schools and educator preparation programs preparing stakeholders for active threats in schools and communities?
- How do education professionals disrupt clinical practices that perpetuate cycles of racism and oppression?
- In what ways are educator preparation programs leveraging partnerships to ensure access to diverse experiences and communities?
- How are educator preparation programs prioritizing faculty time and resources to create meaningful clinical practice experiences?
- How are teacher educators challenging the status quo in the preparation of teachers?
- In what ways are schools and educator preparation programs collaborating to support and address the mental health needs of candidates and PK-12 students?
- How are we engaging teacher candidates in clinical practice while they are balancing multiple, and often competing, priorities?
- How do we ensure that clinical practice is preparing educators to meet the needs of underserved students and marginalized communities?
- How are educator preparation programs preparing candidates in all areas to work effectively with students with disabilities?

The final date for proposal submission is May 27, 2020. Acceptance notifications will be sent in August 2020. Visit submit.aacte.org to begin a proposal.