



UCEA Convention 2023 Call for Proposals

“A Call to Action: Imagining a Hard Reset in Educational Leadership”

General Information

The 37th annual UCEA Convention will be held **November 16–18, 2023** at the **Hyatt Regency Minneapolis** in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The purpose of the 2023 UCEA Convention is to engage participants in discussions about research, policy, practice, and preparation in the field of education with a focus on the socioemotional and mental well-being of our learning communities. Specifically, we acknowledge the awareness and shifts, and hardships brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to engender collective responsibility among ourselves as scholars for the reimagining of our education system through Ladson-Billings’s (2021) notion of a “hard reset.” Members of the 2023 Convention Program Committee include Lisa Bass (North Carolina State University), Zorka Karanxha (University of South Florida), Darrius Stanley (University of Minnesota), Daniel Moraguez (Florida State University), Mario Jackson (North Carolina State University), and Karl Gildner (UCEA Events Manager).

Local Context. As a context for our Convention, Minneapolis has been and continues to be a space of historical significance. The Twin Cities (and metro areas) were originally inhabited by the Dakhóta and Anishanaabe (Ojibwe) peoples. For the Dakhóta, this land located at the mouth of the Mississippi River, or Bdote, is known as a sacred space (Minnesota Historical Society, 2022). The Twin Cities continue to be a space that has both the presence and influence of local, Indigenous communities. Moreover, the Twin Cities have attracted cohabitants from across diasporic communities: Hmong, Black (African American), Somali, Indian, Ethiopian, Swedish, Vietnamese, Mexican, Norwegian, and many others (Minnesota Compass, 2018). The Twin Cities have also been shaped by a host of racialized catastrophes including, but not limited to, the destruction of the historically Black Rondo Neighborhood in St. Paul, Indigenous relocation acts, housing segregation, and the murder of George Floyd (Campbell, 2016; Montrie, 2022). In the face of these atrocities, the Twin Cities remain a ripe space for a hard reset through racial solidarities, healing, protest, and collaboration. Prince Rogers Nelson brought the towns together through his unique Minneapolis sound developed on 1st Avenue. Dr. Josie Johnson, a Black woman, educator, activist, organizer and lobbyist, fought vigorously to eliminate legal housing discrimination for Black Minnesotans. Currently, Peggy Flanagan, a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, serves as the 50th lieutenant governor for Minnesota. Her work has focused on education, human rights, and ending sexual violence in Indigenous (all) communities. Additionally, utilizing participatory research, mental health, and the arts, local Hmong community leaders and organizations are advocating for LGBTQIA+ inclusion for Hmong communities. The Twin Cities emerge from the rubble of the pandemic and unrest, with a renewed spirit and commitment to imagining new possibilities. The Twin Cities are home to multiple professional sports teams; institutes of higher education, including the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan State University, Macalester College, and others; African American, Hmong, Somali, Ethiopian, and Indigenous businesses and cuisines; and a host of cultural, ethnic, community-based collectives. As such, Minneapolis provides a unique context and opportunity to deepen our commitments, solidarities, and collective efforts to heal and reset.

UCEA Convention Theme

The 37th annual UCEA Convention theme, *A Call to Action: Imagining a Hard Reset in Educational Leadership*, is an opportunity to share and coconstruct knowledge, reflect, and react.

We are reminded daily that we continue to live in unprecedented times. Our current social and political conditions are coming together to create a storm of uncertainty, fear, and doubt in many, which are manifesting as a mental health crisis, a social political crisis, and economic upheaval. These conditions trickle down into U.S. school systems and show up as underperforming inequitable schools. To extend the metaphor of a *hard reset*, we consider how a reset is used in technology. Systems are *reset* when they crash or are clogged. In short, a phone or a computer may reach a point where it is no longer operational and must be shut off and restarted. We see this connection to the current state of our nation and education systems. We have come to a point where systems are no longer functioning. We suggest that scholars consider our state and adjust policies, practices, procedures, and dispositions to position school systems and students for success.

Ladson-Billings (2021) noted, “The challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed many of the nation’s vulnerabilities—health care, economic, climate, and educational disparities—and put us all on alert.” This high alert challenges educational workers to reconsider our approach to our schools and communities so that we might rise to address the elevated set of responsibilities we now face during our new reality. We must consider how we will survive and thrive during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, times of racial inequity and inequalities, and controversial political times in which our most basic freedoms are threatened. A reimagined *normal* should disrupt the status quo and minimize the vulnerabilities, especially those that affect our most historically underserved and marginalized students. Ladson-Billings conceptualized this reimagining as a hard reset.

For purposes of this Convention, we conceptualize a *hard reset* as acknowledging the sociopolitical times in which we live and all of the extant issues that we currently face and adjusting our policies, behaviors and dispositions to match the needs of the constituents we serve. Specifically, we acknowledge the political challenges that are beginning to affect equitable educational policies in multiple states. We acknowledge the mental health crisis, the challenges amplified by the COVID-19 crisis, and the general lack of well-being felt by students and faculty at large. *A hard reset for educational leadership also calls for our field to move away from oppressive policies and practices by partnering and centering cultures of our students and youth, parents, and communities we serve.*

Our hope for this Convention is that we trouble the status quo, and reconceptualize our modus operandi, thereby initiating a hard reset (Ladson-Billings, 2021) of our systems and processes. In short, we are charged as educational leaders and researchers to reflect and think deeply through our motives, processes, methods, and policies so that we can best serve the youth we say we care about. As such, we challenge the field to begin to incorporate an ethic of radical care (Rivera-McCutcheon, 2021), an ethic of care in which we concern ourselves with the well-being of students, parents, teachers, and the greater communities in which our schools reside. With this, we must deeply consider the needs and outcomes of those we serve.

For this Convention, we seek to operationalize the notion of radical care as we imagine a *hard reset* of schools/educational systems/leadership preparation in our current sociopolitical context. Inspired by Ladson-Billings's (2021) concept of a hard reset, we challenge proposal submitters and conference participants to operationalize this concept in various aspects of education such as current laws and policies, technology, engagement with local communities, ethics, well-being, and leadership responsibility. The demonstration of an ethic of care is linked to corrective action, so we also include several opportunities in which participants can engage in efforts to write or coauthor a white paper, policy brief, or case study that challenges our current legislative contexts.

Below you will find a description of the topics we suggest. We feel these categories best illuminate the issues and challenges currently faced by educational leaders as well as reflect the areas of concern explicated in Ladson-Billings's (2021) notion of the hard reset.

Legal and Policy Implications of Equity Efforts. We are living and working in a political milieu that has given rise to legislation that intends to limit freedom of speech and academic freedom of faculty in the K-12 public school system and higher education public institutions. A September 2020 executive order by then-President Donald Trump, which banned certain types of diversity training in federal agencies, served as a catalyst for a flurry of legislative acts across the country to counter "wokeness." Throughout the 2021 legislative session, Republican-dominated states passed or considered bills that centered on a list of prohibited "divisive concepts," with critical race theory (CRT) at the center of these attacks. Republican state lawmakers continued their efforts against CRT through the 2022 legislative session, passing new legislation in Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and other states that further regulates how the nation's teachers can discuss racism, sexism, and issues of systemic inequality in the classroom. Since January 2021, according to Schwartz (2023), 44 states have introduced bills or taken other steps that would restrict teaching CRT or limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism, according to an *Education Week* analysis. Eighteen states have passed anti-CRT legislation, 14 states have stalled or vetoed such legislation, and 12 states have legislation in process. In 2022, Florida legislature passed HB 7, otherwise known as the "STOP W.O.K.E. Act" that replaced section 1000.05 of the Florida Educational Equity Act. This legislation included public higher education institutions, thus for the first time curbing faculty's First Amendment freedom of speech and academic freedom rights.

The purpose of these sessions and paper presentations is to generate discussion, knowledge, and research on ways we as a field can push against these antiequity policies. We invite research papers and sessions that speak to diversity and equity, impact of antiequity legislation, protections in higher education, and collective responses. We seek proposals from diverse theoretical, methodological, and conceptual perspectives to help us operationalize and/or reimagine our work as educational leaders and faculty in this sociopolitical milieu.

The Role of Technology in Educational Leadership: Can it Bring Us Closer? The pandemic served as a stress test for educators in K-12 schools and beyond. The results of the stress test revealed that schools and institutions are highly susceptible to external forces, which can result in forced closures on one extreme and innovative uses of educational technologies on the other. Those results also revealed that one-size-fits-all approaches do not work and often leave vulnerable students and families behind. Whether for granting access to educational platforms, linking teachers and students, developing leadership competencies, facilitating collaborative learning, or communicating with families, technology and its applications continue to address problems of practice both evident and obscure. This call also seeks research revealing the power of technology, technologies, and technological tools to educate, inspire, and connect us—as well as research that helps close technology inequities exposed by the ongoing pandemics.

As we prepare for a *hard reset*, we must go beyond our current conceptions of technology—a way to address pedagogical shortcomings or inefficiencies—to consider how we may partner with technology to bring a new ethic of radical care to scale. Beyond simply adapting to technology and technological advances, the future demands a new relationship with technology that brings new understandings about the ways we can maximize the use of technology to address mental health, facilitate democratization and access, critically analyze educational practices, disrupt systems of oppression, empower students and communities, ensure student-first pedagogies, foster trust and community, and embrace diversity and inclusion. A *hard reset* must include a more symbiotic relationship between educational leadership and technological innovations if we are to tap into those new knowledge. As such, we seek proposals from diverse theoretical, methodological, and conceptual perspectives that help us operationalize and/or reimagine the role of technology and radical care in the field of educational leadership.

Facilitating Community Connectedness/Connections. Black, Brown and Indigenous community solidarities have consistently emphasized notions of communal caring as a way to reset and recharge. We leverage our ancestral, community-based collectives to catalyze our efforts to heal and combat oppressive policies, practices, and rhetoric. Educational leadership and policy that seeks to care for, respond to, and center historically disenfranchised communities should be informed by ancestral, Indigenous, and community-based ways of knowing and being (Khalifa, 2018, 2020). More specifically, leadership preparation and policy-making praxis should reflect Indigenous knowledges and notions of care (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008); support community-centered liberation efforts intended to combat anti-Black educational exclusion (Siddle-Walker, 1996); and build multiracial, intersectional solidarities that explicitly challenge settler colonialism, anti-Blackness, and other forms of oppression (e.g., anti-LGBTQ, sexism, ableism). Hence, we encourage proposals that center solidarities across historically disenfranchised communities; offer insight into the role(s) of community connectedness in our healing efforts; and challenge us to envision educational leadership as a collectivist, community-centered, and coalition-building praxis. Further, we encourage proposals that center radical care (Rivera-McCutchen, 2021) as a central idea of our leadership efforts and policy-making processes. Proposals might consider sharing research in the following areas: centering of radical care in both K-12 and higher education leadership practices, collective healing, role of youth and communities, enactment of radical care, and deepening relationships with practitioners and policy-makers. Further, we seek proposals from diverse theoretical, methodological, and conceptual perspectives to help us operationalize and/or reimagine community connectedness and radical care in the field of educational leadership.

Mental and Emotional Well-Being. As the world recovers from the psychological and socioemotional scars caused by COVID-19 isolations and quarantines, untimely deaths of loved ones due to the coronavirus, and longstanding legacies of systemic racism as highlighted by the murder of George Floyd, we cannot ignore the impact these events have had on our communities. Emerging pandemic-related studies have already started to illuminate the disproportionate and traumatic impact of these episodes, especially on communities of color (Horsford et al., 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2021; Novacek et al., 2020; Sneed et al., 2020). DeMatthews et al. (2021) also pointed us to the increased school shootings and student suicide creating significant disruptions across our schools following these events. As we reflect on how our education system is affected by these challenging times, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) compelled us to also consider how schooling practices such as zero-tolerance policies and exclusionary discipline are often complicit in reifying these traumatic experiences for marginalized communities. Our efforts to reset our education system must engender culturally relevant practices that engage with the social, emotional, and mental well-being of our learning communities (Ladson-Billings, 2021). We invite research that examines the relationship between the COVID-19 conditions and systemic racism, as well as the social, psychological, mental, and emotional well-being, of our learning communities. This includes research that explores burnout among stakeholders (students, teachers, leaders, faculty), mental health issues and challenges, self-care, and coping strategies; equity-oriented and inclusive and trauma-informed schooling practices likely to benefit the socioemotional well-being of our most vulnerable children; the socioemotional and mental impact of these events on our communities and education stakeholders' agency; and responsiveness of educational leaders and leadership preparation programs.

Responsibility of Educational Leadership. The roles and duties of educational leaders change with social and political context. What is constant is the challenge to run safe and equitable schools where students feel cared for, feel connected, and are able to learn to their full potential. Educational leaders in our current context, at both school and district levels, are charged with creating these idealized spaces and, during times of social and political upheaval, mitigate individual and collective trauma. And as we witness decreased test scores and increasing opportunity and achievement gaps, expectations and pressures are soaring. Parents and society at large are crying out for school improvement. There is a press for a *hard reset* in school leadership so that we might see the desired improvements. We welcome research and papers including but not limited to the following areas: school leadership during times of trauma, leading schools that generate a sense of belonging when society is exclusive, creating and/or leading accelerated schools and programs postpandemic, educational leadership that facilitates breakthrough instructional leadership, leading just and equitable schools when political entities push back, and radical care in school leadership. Further, we

seek proposals from diverse theoretical, methodological, and conceptual perspectives to help us operationalize and/or reimagine the responsibility of educational leaders and situate this within the radical care framework.

Other Submissions. In addition to the above topics, the 2023 UCEA Convention Call for Proposals encourages submissions focused on quality leadership preparation, effective preparation program designs and improvement efforts, successful coalitions that enhance leadership and policy work, collaborative research that enriches the community, and other issues that impact the current and future practice of educators and policymakers. Whereas this convention calls for a hard reset that is undergirded in an ethic of (radical) care, we seek proposals from diverse theoretical, methodological, and conceptual perspectives that advance the field of educational leadership.

UCEA Convention Session Types

Session types include paper sessions, Ignite presentations, roundtables, symposia, international community-building sessions, critical conversations, innovative sessions/mini-workshops, post-Convention work sessions and workshops, and virtual posters. Click [here](#) for a complete description of each session type.

Submission Guidelines

Click [here](#) for submission guidelines, participation limits, proposal reviewer information, and other details.

Proposal Submission Deadline

Proposals must be received by Friday, May 12, 2023, by 11:59 pm EDT. All proposals must be submitted electronically through All Academic by visiting the UCEA website (<http://www.ucea.org>). This site will officially open March 22, 2023.

Graduate Student Summit

Successfully launched at the 2012 Convention in Denver, the Summit will be returning once again this year for the 2023 Convention in Minneapolis, MN. Doctoral students from UCEA member institutions are invited to submit proposals for this preconference event. **Further details regarding the Graduate Student Summit call for proposals can be found on the Graduate Student portion of the UCEA website:** <http://www.ucea.org/graduate-student-opportunities/graduate-student-summit/>

References

- Campbell, A. F. (2016, October 12). How America's past shapes Native Americans' present. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/10/native-americans-minneapolis/503441/?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=share
- Castagno, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 941–993.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Schachner, A., & Edgerton, A. K. (2020). *Restarting and reinventing school: Learning in the time of COVID and beyond*. Learning Policy Institute.
- DeMatthews, D., Reyes, P., Solis Rodriguez, J., & Knight, D. (2021). Principal perceptions of the distance learning transition during the pandemic. *Educational Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048211049421>
- Horsford, S. D., Cabral, L., Touloukian, C., Parks, S., Smith, P. A., McGhee, C., Qadir, F., Lester, D., & Jacobs, J. (2021). *Black education in the wake of COVID-19 and systemic racism: Toward a theory of change and action*. Black Education Research Collective, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Khalifa, M. (2018). *Culturally responsive school leadership*. Harvard Education Press.
- Khalifa, M. (2020). *Centering ancestral knowledges: Leadership in learning environments*. The Family Leadership Design Collaborative. https://familydesigncollab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Khalifa_Ancestral-Knoweldges.pdf
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). I'm here for the hard re-set: Post pandemic pedagogy to preserve our culture. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 54(1), 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2020.1863883>
- Minnesota Compass. (2018). *Cultural communities: Voting-eligible population that voted in midterm election years, 1998–2018*. <https://www.mncompass.org/cultural-communities>
- Minnesota Historical Society (n.d.). *Native Americans*. <https://www.mnhs.org/fortsnelling/learn/native-americans>

- Montrie, C. (2022). *Whiteness in plain view: A history of racial exclusion in Minnesota*. Minnesota Historical Society Press.
- Novacek, D. M., Hampton-Anderson, J. N., Ebor, M. T., Loeb, T. B., & Wyatt, G. E. (2020). Mental health ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic for Black Americans: Clinical and research recommendations. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(5), 449–451.
- Rivera-McCutchen, R. L. (2021). *Radical care: Leading for justice in urban schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Schwartz, S. (2023, February 27). Map: Where critical race theory is under attack. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06>
- Siddle-Walker, V. (1996). *Their highest potential: An African American school community in the segregated South*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Sneed, R. S., Key, K., Bailey, S., & Johnson-Lawrence, V. (2020). Social and psychological consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in African-American communities: Lessons from Michigan. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(5), 446–448.

<http://www.ucea.org/conference/2023-annual-convention/>

DEADLINE: Friday, May 12, 2023, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

