This book contains two lessons that will allow teachers at the high school level or faculty at the college level to engage their students in reflection about UNESCO’s mission. It includes also a series of short essays on Human Rights, the Right to Education, Teaching Human Rights and the role of Teachers and of Universities in Teaching Human Rights which will be useful to educators interested in educating their students to advance the values of freedom and justice.

“In a world where too many people who don’t know what they’re talking about screech uninformed opinions into planetary megaphones, it is music to the ear to listen to Fernando Reimers speak the truth about the global education movement, UNESCO, human rights and, quite literally, world peace. Teachers are learning how to bring these subjects to life in our classrooms. Dr. Reimers guides us with a treasure of information.”

Lily Eskelsen
1989 Utah Teacher of the Year
President, National Education Association

Fernando M. Reimers is the Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice of International Education and Director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative and of the International Education Policy Masters Program at Harvard University.
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO

And other writings on Human Rights

Fernando M. Reimers
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About the Author

Fernando M. Reimers is the Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice of International Education and Director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative and of the International Education Policy Master’s Program at Harvard University.

Professor Reimers is an expert in the field of Comparative and Global Education. His research and teaching focus on understanding how to educate children and youth so they can thrive in the 21st century. He studies how education policy and leadership foster educational innovation and quality improvement. As part of the work of the Global Education Innovation Initiative he leads, he and his colleagues conducted a comparative study of the goals of education as reflected in the curriculum in Chile, China, India, Mexico, Singapore and the United States, published as Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century by Harvard Education Press, a book which has also been published in Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish. A forthcoming book, also to be published by Harvard Education Press, studies programs around the world which support teachers in developing the professional competencies to teach holistically for the 21st Century.

Two recent books present innovative global citizenship curricula. Empowering Global Citizens a complete K-12 curriculum of global citizenship education, examines why global citizenship education, aligned with helping students advance human rights and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is an imperative of our times. Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons. Version 1.0, presents a strategic framework and protocols to help teachers and school leaders develop strategies and curriculum for global citizenship education.

Two recently edited books compile the results of informed dialogues, designed to foster collective impact in the areas of teacher education in Massachusetts (Fifteen Letters on Education in Singapore) and in the area of Scaling 21st century education programs Empowering All Students at Scale.
His recent book *One Student at a Time. Leading the Global Education Movement*, is an analysis of the leadership challenges faced by those advancing global efforts to equip students with essential competencies to our times.

He recently chaired a Global Alliance which produced a framework for collective impact in strengthening teacher preparation and support: *Connecting the Dots to build the future teaching and learning*. This report has been translated and published in Arabic, Portuguese, and Spanish and used to steer national dialogues on how to create conditions to strengthen the teaching profession and improve the relevance of instruction.

Professor Reimers has led the development of several innovative programs designed to advance the contributions of colleges and universities to develop leadership that advances cosmopolitanism, democracy, and economic and social innovation. At Harvard University, he leads the master's degree program in International Education Policy and various executive education programs. He designed and led a program to support education leaders working for UNICEF and a collaboration with the Universidad de Juiz de Fora in Minas Gerais, Brazil, to develop a master's degree program in education leadership. He is a founding co-chair of the Advanced Leadership Initiative, a program which brings to the university outstanding individuals who are interested in devoting themselves to addressing significant social challenges who have retired from a primary career. As chair of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education he works with all public institutions of higher education in the State developing institutional strategies to enhance the relevance of their programs. He has advised a range of institutions of higher education on strategies to advance the global awareness of undergraduates and serves on the board of Laspau, a Harvard affiliated organization whose mission is to strengthen institutions of higher education in Latin America.

He has advanced the development of programs to provide students and recent college graduates opportunities to engage in service and to develop civic, global and leadership competencies through his service on the boards of numerous education organizations and foundations including Teach for All, World Teach, the Global Scholars Program at
Bloomberg Philanthropies, Envoys, and the scholars advisory council of Facing History and Ourselves. He is a commissioner in the US Commission on UNESCO.

In 2017 he received the Global Citizen Award from the Committee on Teaching about the United Nations for his work advancing global citizenship education. In 2015 he was appointed the C.J. Koh Visiting Professor of Education at the National Institute of Education in Singapore in recognition of his work in global education. He received an honorary doctorate from Emerson College for his work advancing human rights education. He is a fellow of the International Academy of Education and a member of the Council of Foreign Relations.
Fernando M. Reimers
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO

The US Secretary of State recently announced that the US would withdraw from UNESCO at the end of 2018. It is important that we, ordinary citizens understand the implications of this decision. To do this, they need to know what UNESCO is, and to understand the mission the organization advances.

This book contains two lessons that will allow teachers at the high school level or faculty at the college level to engage their students in reflection about the organization’s mission. I provide a collection of my previously published writings on Human Rights which will provide additional support those teaching these lessons.

I appreciate the editorial assistance of Kristin Foster, Ana Teresa del Toro and Tatiana Shevchenko in preparing this book.
Two Lessons About UNESCO


(with appreciation to Sabine Detzel, Soo-Hyang Choi, Cynthia Guttman, Alexander Leicht and Jordan Naidoo from UNESCO for the bibliographic references they provided as background to these lessons)

A group of graduate students, former students, colleagues and I developed these two lessons to assist high school teachers and college faculty in leading their students in a series of conversations which will help them gain introductory knowledge about UNESCO and think about how this organization contributes to Human Rights. The lessons could be used in a variety of ways. They can be inserted into an existing high school or college course, drawing appropriate connections with the discipline or focus of the course. They can be taught as an extra activity, outside the context of a course. They can also be facilitated by students, organized in the context of student organizations, or self-organized specifically for the purpose of gaining knowledge about a current event.

Summary and Rationale: These lessons are designed to help high school and college students understand the mission of UNESCO, the reason the organization was created, the work it does, how it is structured and funded, and how its work relates to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Grade: The lessons can be taught at the High School or College level. They can be taught in a variety of courses including social studies,
history, humanities, and can be integrated in courses in other disciplines.

**Time Frame:** These lessons could take a minimum of one hour of instructional time each, plus an additional three hours of independent work from students. The proposed discussions could be extended over a longer period than the suggested minimum of one hour. The lessons could be taught over a period of several classes, or in a single intensive two hour period.
Lesson One of Two Lessons About UNESCO.

Instructional Goal: In this lesson students will learn which are the Universal Human Rights and their history, and examine how these rights are relevant to their lives.

Understanding Goals:

- Why are Human Rights important?
- How does the United Nations relate to the advancement of Human Rights?

Some big ideas or enduring understandings from this lesson:

- Throughout history, great violence and harm has resulted from denying equal dignity to all and recognizing the shared humanity that unites us across differences in identity. The Genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people and other crimes perpetrated by the Nazis, during World War II, is an example of the consequences of not recognizing our common humanity and the violence this can lead to.

- In 1948, after World War II, Human Rights were formally recognized as a Universal Right to help create conditions that ensured equal dignity for all persons.

- The United Nations play an important role in the development and enactment of Human Rights.
Essential questions:

- What are Human Rights?
- In the wake of World War II what were the hopes that drove the crafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Creation of the United Nations and of UNESCO?
- What role does the United Nations play in the advancement of Human Rights?

Student Learning Objectives, the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Explain how the creation of the Universal Declaration relates to World War II.
- Define the concept of upstanders and bystanders, and relate those concepts to the genocide during World War II.
- Explain how their lives are influenced by the existence of Human Rights and hypothesize the implications of the suppression of some of those rights for their lives.
- Identify groups of people who are denied some Human Rights in their communities or in the globe, describe the rationale for this denial, and argue whether those rights should be restored.
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO and other essays on Human Rights

Assessment:

Teachers will observe whether students have achieved the intended learning objectives from their participation in class discussion and from their written answers to the two questions which students must prepare prior to class. Students will write a short reflective essay on key takeaways learned during the class and teachers will use this essay to assess whether the learning objectives were met.

Sequence of Activities:

Before class 1.

In preparation for this lesson students will think about the following questions, and write down their answers which they will bring to the class:

Question 1. Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, identify five rights and reflect on the role they play in your daily life. Now imagine your life without five of those rights. What would change?


Question 2. Read the article ‘Anne Frank’s Final Entry’, Which Human Rights did Anne enjoy while living in the Annex?

In class.

Teacher explains the goal of the class, reminds students of the questions that they prepared before class. Asks them to take five minutes to share with the person next to them what issues these questions made them curious about. (5 minutes)

After the initial five minute discussion the teacher calls on a few students to hear the themes they are curious about, or to raise questions they would like to understand. (5 minutes)

Discussion of answers to the two questions students prepared for class and to some of the questions raised by students during reflection time. (10 minutes)

Teacher then presents the following statement:

“During World War II, 3% of the world population was murdered. Who was responsible? What responsibility did the rest of humanity have for this genocide? Why did more people not stand up to stop this violence? The United Nations was created to create conditions that would prevent such violence from happening again and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted to provide a foundation for the work of the organization”

Teacher shows the students the following video (6m:10s):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RR4VXNX3jA

Teacher asks the following questions to the students (15 mins). During the first five minutes students discuss these questions in pairs, during the remaining ten minutes students discuss in class:
1. What is the significance of the declaration of Human Rights to you today?

2. What is the significance of a common Human Rights declaration that individuals share across the globe? How would it have made a difference to Anne Frank?

3. What is the importance of an organization like the UN in light of these rights?

Teacher engages the students with the following questions. (20 mins) First ten minutes students discuss those questions in pairs, remaining time they discuss with the entire class.

1. Can you think of people in your community who are denied these rights?

2. Can you think of people across the globe who are denied these rights?

3. How can you protect these rights today?


To conclude the class the teacher asks a few students to identify key takeaways from the discussion.
Lesson Two of Two Lessons About UNESCO.

Instructional Goal: In this lesson students will learn about UNESCO, how the work it does relates to the Universal Human Rights and to the United Nations. They will also analyze the US decision to leave UNESCO and decide for themselves if the decision holds any significance.

Understanding Goals:

- UNESCO works across the globe in areas of education, Peace building, poverty eradication, science, culture, and intercultural dialogue.

- Understanding the US choice to leave UNESCO and to be able to better evaluate this decision.

Essential questions:

- What does UNESCO do and why is that work important?

- What are the implications of the US decision to leave UNESCO?

Student Learning Objectives, At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how the creation of UNESCO relates to the inclusion of education as a Universal Human Right.

- Articulate how the achievement of universal education is important to the achievement of other Human Rights.

- Evaluate the implications of the US leaving UNESCO.
Assessment: Teachers will be able to check whether students achieved the learning objectives from their answers to the three questions they must prepare before class and from their participation in class discussion. Also, students will write a reflective essay at the end of class discussing their answers to the five questions that will guide the whole class discussion.

- How does the work of UNESCO relate to human rights?
- Why is this work important?
- What would it take to make UNESCO more effective?
- What are the challenges facing UNESCO?
- What are the likely consequences of the US withdrawal from UNESCO?

Sequence of Activities:

Before class 2.

Write your answers to the following three questions.

1. What is UNESCO?

Resources to guide your answer:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASJ0CYP8oNY
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188700e.pdf

2. How does the creation of UNESCO relate to education and human rights?

3. What are the possible consequences of the US leaving UNESCO?
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO and other essays on Human Rights

Resources to guide your answer:

https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/10/274748.htm


https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/this-is-no-time-to-leave-unesco-but-to-educate-for_us_59e030c4e4b02e99c583555f

Review the list of resources about the UN and UNESCO provided at the end of this lesson and identify those that are pertinent for the in-class discussion of the relationship of UNESCO to the focus of this class.

In-Class Activity - Discovering UNESCO - 30 Minutes

In small groups students investigate and discuss some of the work of UNESCO. [If feasible, based on the course you’re teaching, guide students to search for work done by UNESCO in this field. Try to connect to the particular class in which this is discussed. Use the list of resources provided at the end of this lesson and feel free to use bibliographic research to identify additional materials.]

As students investigate the work of UNESCO, they can reflect on the following questions: (Questions for discussion)

- Why is the work of UNESCO important?
- How does the work UNESCO does relate to human rights?
- What are the challenges facing UNESCO?
- What would it take to make UNESCO more effective?
- What are the likely consequences of the US withdrawal from UNESCO?
The teacher concludes the class by encouraging the students to explore the UNESCO themes, and pick one they are interested in and ask themselves: *how can I get involved?*

The themes can be accessed here:


*Whole class discussion- 30 minutes*

Teacher asks teams to summarize the results of their individual work investigating some of the work of UNESCO and their answers to the five questions for discussion and leads a short discussion on the question of what are the implications of the US leaving UNESCO.
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Additional Resources:

About UNESCO

http://en.unesco.org/

https://opendata.unesco.org/

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/history/

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001887/188700e.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASJ0CYP8oNY

http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001812/181226e.pdf

“Qu’est-ce que l’UNESCO?”
https://www.facebook.com/FRANCE24/videos/10155213138766936/

About UNESCO and Global Citizenship Education

Three teacher guides on UNESCO’s priorities in Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development, and Climate Change, developed for the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet).

https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/publications.aspx
The ASPnet Best Practices contain many ideas and concrete examples of what schools, teachers and students can do to promote UNESCO’s ideals and values.
https://aspnet.unesco.org/en-us/Pages/Best-practices-sharing.aspx

Global Citizenship Education

Webpage: http://en.unesco.org/gced

Visuals:
Infographic 1:

Infographic 2:

Infographic 2 (Mother Language):

Videos:
Global Citizenship Education:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPdtGrnj7sU&feature=youtu.be

Learning to live together in Peace through Global Citizenship Education: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuKzq9EDr-0

Preventing violence through education:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79MTkVumCcQ

International Mother Language Day:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMDxFbkle_M
UNESCO Works to build Peace:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASJ0CYP8oNY

Documents:

ABC of Global Citizenship:  

Teacher’s Guide on the prevention of violent extremism:  
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002446/244676e.pdf

Making textbook content inclusive: a focus on religion, gender and culture:  
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002473/247337e.pdf

Education about the Holocaust:


Memory of the World:


Documents:

Education about the Holocaust and preventing genocide – a policy guide:  

Why Teach about the Holocaust?  
Education for Sustainable Development

Webpage:
http://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development

Videos:
Learning about Biodiversity
http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/?s=films_details&id_page=33&id=2666

Education for Sustainable Development: Children speak up!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-Wl3crN8eU

Education for disaster preparedness:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USLHmwvpjX8

Learning to address climate change:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJbRnv7rMkk

Documents:

Education for sustainable development goals: Learning Objectives
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002474/247444e.pdf

Getting climate ready: A guide for schools on climate action
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002467/246740e.pdf

Towards a Learning Culture of Safety and Resilience. Technical Guidance for Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction in the School Curriculum
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002293/229336e.pdf
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Disaster Risk Reduction in School Curricula: Case Studies from Thirty Countries

Stay Safe and Be Prepared
Student's guide:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002287/228798e.pdf
Teacher's guide:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002287/228798e.pdf
Parent's guide:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002289/228964e.pdf

Not just hot air: Putting Climate Change Education Into Practice
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002330/233083e.pdf

Climate Change in the classroom: UNESCO course for secondary teachers on climate change education for sustainable development
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/ccesd

Climate Change Starter’s Guidebook: An issues guide for Education Planners and Practitioners

YouthXchange Climate Change and Lifestyles Guidebook
On Human Rights, UNESCO,

the United Nations and the Right to Education
This is No Time to Leave UNESCO, but to Educate for Peace
(Huffington Post Blog, Published October 12, 2017)

Today, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced that the United States would be withdrawing from the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). The alleged reason for withdrawing is the organization’s ‘anti-Israel bias.’ This is a major foreign policy decision, materially and symbolically. Materially, it will diminish the capacity of this UN agency to advance international cooperation in education, culture and science. Symbolically, it will either signal that the United States conditions participation in international organizations to single issue positions of those organizations, or it will signal the US withdrawal from multilateral institutions as an avenue to advance American foreign policy. More generally, this withdrawal abrogates our commitment to the shared responsibility of advancing education for all, assumed at the time the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted abandoning the agency created to advance the right to education for all.

This decision of the US Government makes no sense. It appears that the consequences of this decision have not been thought through. The material consequences of a world in which UNESCO is unable to continue to do some of the work it does, advancing education for all, education for Peace, are not good for humanity. They will slow down the continued education of people around the world, which is the cornerstone of social and economic progress, and a foundation for Peace and Sustainability. How is a world with more ignorance in anyone’s interest? UNESCO is by no means a perfect institution, as with any complex organization there is room for improvement in its effectiveness in advancing this mission. Imperfect as the organization is, however, cutting funding and withdrawing from its governance does nothing to help improve it.
Far greater than the material consequences of the withdrawal are the symbolic consequences of withdrawing from a multilateral institution because of alleged disagreements with decisions made by the organization to grant membership to Palestine, or to declare the Old City of Hebron in the West Bank an endangered World Heritage site. The multilateral institutions created to increase Peace and security after World War II were created precisely because of the recognition for the need of supranational bodies that could help resolve conflicts between nations before those conflicts could escalate into the use of violence between nation states. Those who created the United Nations understood that the commitment to multilateralism would slow down and complicate the resolution of international disputes, but this was in hopes of reducing the likelihood that war between states would be the only option available to nation State to address such disputes. The violence witnessed during World War II led many to prefer the slow process of multilateral diplomacy to the trigger happy attitude of Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito.

Should the international community conclude, from watching the US abandon an institution that it helped found, that we now prefer a trigger happy approach to advancing our interests and resolving disputes? A cursory examination of the history of UNESCO reveals the grave significance of this misguided decision. It was in the middle of World War II, in 1942, that the governments of the European countries confronting the Nazi aggression convened a conference of Ministers of Education to discuss how international cooperation would help accelerate the reconstruction of the education systems the war was decimating. Three years later, in 1945, the United Nations convened a conference to design an education and cultural organization. The United States joined forty three other countries in establishing an organization that would create and sustain a culture of Peace to prevent another major war. Towards the end of 1946 the first General Conference of UNESCO convened representatives from 30 governments in Paris.
Over the last seven decades, UNESCO spearheaded and contributed to a global education movement which transformed the shared experience of humanity. In 1946, the vast majority of the world’s children did not have access to school. They do today, in part, because of the efforts of the professionals who work in UNESCO and the programs they advance. That about 1.2 billion people are enrolled in educational institutions today as a result of the global education movement UNESCO started, is a remarkable accomplishment for an organization to which the United States would contribute about 80 million dollars a year, accounting for about 20% of UNESCO’s budget. The US contribution would represent less than 0.4% of the 21 billion dollars which the US Department of State spends in international assistance per year.

The decision to withdraw from UNESCO is nonsensical because it does not seem to advance any global or US interest, it is however a decision consistent with a form of nationalist populism which threatens the Wilsonian approach to global engagement which has prevailed since World War II. Abandoning UNESCO, as well as abandoning multilateral efforts to address shared challenges such as climate change, is consistent with this view. If this is indeed the ideological underpinning and the real justification of this decision, we should expect other forms of withdrawing from global institutions to follow as I explain in the recent book *One Student at a Time, Leading the Global Education Movement*. And as the order built to prevent another world war crumbles we should fear the spread of a trigger happy approach to resolving conflicts between nations.

Before that brave new world sets in, educators should reflect on the ethical foundations of the work we do, on education as an avenue to Peace, to advance Human Rights, Freedom and Justice, and on the advancement of education as a work that necessitates solidarity across nations, the very global cooperation which those suffering the violence of World War II could so clearly understand as necessary to prevent
another return to a major global conflict. Let us engage our students in thinking through and understanding the difference between a trigger happy world, and a world at Peace advancing the very global citizenship education and Peace education which UNESCO has advocated throughout its seventy years’ history. The recent books *Empowering Global Citizens* and *Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons* offer curricula to do just that. It is time to keep present the lines in the preamble of UNESCO’s constitution that read ‘since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of Peace must be constructed.’
The 72nd regular session of the United Nations General Assembly convened in New York City last week. The General Debate will begin this week, focusing on the topic of Peace and Sustainability. The priorities following this debate will be: making a difference in the lives of ordinary people, preventing and mediating to sustain Peace, migration, advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and progress on climate change, human rights and equality.

This session builds on the political momentum generated by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals at the 70th General Assembly two years ago. The goals articulate a framework to achieve Peace and Sustainability on the planet. These goals will build on the Millennium Development Goals, previously adopted at the United Nations. They will provide direction and offer a common language that will enable collective action across the many agencies at the local, national and international level working to advance progress and well-being for all.

This assembly, however, convenes at a time when an emerging populism, in the United States and in other countries, challenges the global order and cross national collaboration created after World War II with the establishment of the United Nations which set out to sustain Peace and prevent conflict. The sources of this populism are multi-pronged. They include discontent created by globalization; by the speed at which globalization has transformed communities and nations, dislocating the sense of what was customary and familiar, challenging for many their own identities. They include the pervasive economic and social inequalities, and the uncertainty about the future caused by shifting economic conditions resulting from automation and trade.
The reasons for the populist rise include also a growing discontent with political institutions, even with institutions more generally, and a growing mistrust of experts and elites. We don’t yet fully know where this re-emergent populism will take us. If history serves us, it will undermine economic and democratic institutions, and in extreme cases it may lead to social instability, violence and the breakdown of democracy.

But global institutions and covenants such as the Sustainable Development Goals, or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will be challenged much earlier than Democratic institutions and national Constitutions will. This will imperil the gains which have been achieved since 1947 as a result of global collaboration resulting from the creation of the United Nations. This new populism will also imperil the prospects for Peace and Sustainability.

These risks create a new urgency around educating all people about the Sustainable Development Goals and about the United Nations, its role and history. In the prescient language of the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO: “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of Peace must be constructed.”

Since the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted two years ago, a number of teaching resources have been developed to assist in the effort to educate students and the public. With a number of collaborators, I developed two comprehensive school curricula, from kindergarten to high school, which are available at no cost from Kindle this week: *Empowering Global Citizens and Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons*. Supporting the adoption of programs of this sort at a large scale, will require effective collective leadership, as discussed in my previous publication *Empowering All Students at Scale*.

Central to these efforts will be leaders, who can depend on tested leadership lessons in addressing the core challenges of making
education relevant, as discussed in the recent book *One Student at a Time, Leading the Global Education Movement*.

As the General Assembly convenes this week to discuss how to make a difference in the lives of ordinary people, let us with renewed urgency, remind people of the pain and devastation which were the very reason to create the United Nations, and thus plant the seeds of Peace in their minds helping them gain the competencies that will help us all advance Peace in our everyday lives.
Gwang Jo Kim, A Steward of Peace
(Huffington Post Blog, Published August 12, 2017)

I met Gwang-Jo Kim when we were both students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, more than three decades ago. I learned a great deal from his work ethic, his extraordinary determination and focus on his studies, and from his intellect. We were brought together by our shared broken English, our shared doctoral advisor, Professor Russell Davis, and the many courses we took together. We also bonded over the fact that we both came from far away, were living extremely frugally out of necessity more than disposition, and did a number of poorly paid student jobs, such as painting student dorms, to pay our bills. Gwang Jo’s hopeful spirit and humor lifted me up on more than one occasion from the pressing burden of having to write many research papers in a language that was very much foreign to us then, during the short days of winter, with little money in our pockets. Our conversations as we painted those rooms or crossed paths in the library helped to keep me focused on the long term, on the better world we were going to build as a result of our efforts to advance educational opportunity. Amidst those demands and pressures we lived as graduate students, Gwang-Jo made time to be with his family by sleeping few hours.

Over the last three decades I had the pleasure of seeing Gwang-Jo pursue an extraordinarily successful career in international development, and achieve the dreams he had discussed as we painted the student rooms in the Cronkhite Graduate Center at Harvard. He became a Deputy Secretary of Education of South Korea, a senior education official at the World Bank, and eventually Director of UNESCO’s office for Asia and the Pacific. These were remarkable accomplishments for a man who had come from the most humble beginnings, accomplishments he had earned purely as a result of talent and effort. But to Gwang Jo, GJ as his colleagues in UNESCO
Bangkok called him, these accomplishments were important only because they provided him a platform from which to serve others, especially children. It was a joy to watch his sophistication in engaging ministers, premiers, members of royalty, and his colleagues in the international development community, and in getting them to collaborate to produce valuable results for the education of children.

Gwang-Jo Kim represented the best of UNESCO in his commitment to the enduring mission of the organization: the advancement of human rights and the promotion of Peace and sustainability through education. His capacity for innovation and his imagination to bring people together on behalf of bigger purposes were inspiring, to his staff, to me, and to my students, as was his resiliency and determination to see projects through until they achieved results.

With grace, Gwang-Jo steered UNESCO towards meaningful and relevant work even as financial resources dwindled. He brought together often all ministers of education of Asia and the Pacific to examine how to create jobs for youth, how to promote entrepreneurship, how to build a culture of innovation. He was passionate about helping to rebuild education in regions in conflict, and had a firm belief in the power of schools to help societies heal from the wounds of violence. In his last years, he was focused on finding ways to work with governments so they could support public schools to more effectively promote socio-emotional development and happiness.

Gwang-Jo led UNESCO’s office for Asia and the Pacific, one of the jewels of the organization, with great humility. At gatherings of Ministers of Education, I saw him bring his guitar, and conclude a full day of meaningful and productive discussions with a performance in which he sang songs in several languages. He had learned to play the guitar, and to make and fly kites, while serving as Director of UNESCO in Bangkok. He explained it helped him put life in perspective and keep balance. He advised me to pick up a hobby years ago, as I visited him.
and his wife in their apartment in Bangkok; with the demeanor of an older brother he explained that a hobby would help me be ready for the changes life would bring as I aged. The next time I saw him, when he took a detour on a trip to the UN to come speak to my students at Harvard, I showed him a garden I had started and he seemed pleased I had followed his advice.

Gwang-Jo was generous, always a giver, never a taker. He made time for the small stuff of life like taking me and my wife shopping in an open market in Bangkok, or trading stories about parenting, even as he lived an extraordinarily productive life serving much bigger purposes. He mentored generations of professionals who work today in the field of international development. When we admitted at Harvard graduate students who had worked with him, he always took the time to call and ask that we mentored that student well. It gave me great pleasure to hear former students of mine who went to work for him speak with great admiration about Gwang Jo.

At our last conversation in person, during a visit I paid him in Thailand, he shared plans he was just sketching for life after retiring from UNESCO, to return to the village of his roots, perhaps to teach, to continue to give of himself to the children, to educate the next generation so we could have a better world. Our last exchange, three weeks ago, was over an innovation award he had helped establish to recognize programs to strengthen the capacities of teachers in Asia. He confirmed he would be retiring at the end of August, as he had planned to do some time ago. ‘I will soon update you about my retired life.’ he wrote. I was hopeful we could persuade him to come and do some teaching to our students, as I know how good he would have been to them.
Gwang-Jo made UNESCO a much better institution than he found it, during a time of severe financial constraints and complicated geopolitics. He helped advance the education of children through his service to the government of his country and as an international development leader, and he did it with distinction and effectiveness. He did more than his share to improve the world, with the same humble, generous and humorous spirit that I remember from our days as graduate students at Harvard, over three decades ago. He reached great heights in his profession while never forgetting his humble roots.

My heart goes out to his widow and his two sons, to his colleagues and friends. I know he will always be with us in our memories.

Thank you Gwang-Jo, for all you taught me and so many others, for your example, for your leadership, for your love and relentless work for Peace.
One Student at a Time. Leading the Global Education Movement
(Huffington Post Blog, Published August 8, 2017)

One Student at a Time. Leading the Global Education Movement the title of a book, just published and written in collaboration with sixty one of my former students, alludes to how best to improve the world through education. In this collaborative project, I reached out to the almost one thousand students who have graduated over the last twenty years from the International Education Policy Master’s Program which I direct at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I surveyed them on four topics: what work they did, what impact they had, what challenges they faced, and what lessons they had learned in addressing those challenges. I also asked ninety of those students to write extended essays on those topics. The book includes an analysis of the results of the survey and of the essays, and also the essays my former students wrote.

I wrote this book because I am persuaded that the global expansion of the opportunity to be educated, which has taken place since education was included as a universal human right seventy years ago, is a remarkable achievement which constructed a shared experience for humanity. This shared experience is rooted in the aspiration to expand freedom and equality, the tenets of a global project that gave rise to democracy, public education and the modern university. This cosmopolitan and humanistic project is currently challenged by a rising populist movement that devalues the notion of universal human rights, as well as global collaboration, reason and expertise as avenues to help advance freedom and justice. Rising populism poses also challenges to the institutions of democracy, public education and higher education.

The future of the global education movement to educate all is squarely in the hands of leaders such as those I studied in this book, of ordinary people who do the extraordinary thing of providing other people’s children the opportunity to become architects of their own lives and
contributing members of their communities. The work of these leaders of the global education movement is extraordinary. It involves challenging mindsets, norms and institutions, to do more, to continuously seek in search of helping all gain the capacities that will set them free.

These leaders describe a wide range of professional challenges, from the challenges underlying the education problems they are trying to address, to the challenges of mobilizing and empowering others to collaborate in order to address them. The education challenges they describe involve inadequate organization, capacity, funding or alignment and coordination among the various agencies and actors. The challenges these leaders describe are complex: they require innovation, strong alignment between different moving pieces, a high degree of coordination between complex processes, and high levels of resources, among other elements. The long time it takes to produce results increases the fragility of the consensus and coordination necessary to produce alignment between the different moving pieces of the education system. Politics, organizational as well as national politics, often undermine this consensus. Many of these leaders speak of how prevailing mindsets and deficient capacities limit openness to change. These leaders highlight ten lessons drawn from their experience in addressing these challenges of making education relevant to the demands of the twenty first century:

1. Lead ethically.
2. Understand the education challenge you are trying to solve.
3. To understand the challenge, understand the people involved. Map key stakeholders.
4. Understanding how to solve an education challenge requires continuous learning.
5. Collaboration is key to learn and to act: There are opportunities in Collective Leadership.
6. Collaboration requires good personal relationships
7. Attend to execution and to the details of getting the work done.
8. Communication is critical to learning and to execution.
10. Do we need to educate for a new kind of education leadership?

I wrote the book for three reasons:

First, I was genuinely curious to spend some time thinking through what work my graduates do and what challenges they face. As a result of following their careers I had learned that some of them followed paths I had not expected. This study was done to help me re-examine some of the hypotheses on which I base my teaching and the direction of the program.

Second, I do think that leading this global education movement is hard and difficult work that requires expert knowledge. I am concerned by the trend in the world that devalues expertise and institutions, including universities, and I think it is necessary that we codify the expertise that undergirds professional educational practice. This expert knowledge is available to some who do this work; they have earned it as a result of experience and study. But it is private knowledge, shared often only in the context of workplaces or with close friends. I thought it would be valuable to make some of this knowledge visible to others, as a way to invite others to do the same, and to stimulate dialogue on the challenges of this valuable form of global education leadership.

My third motivation to write this book is to test an approach I think would benefit many educational institutions: to take the time to follow our graduates and to learn from them. Most of the goals we care about in education are long-term. Unfortunately, we have few instruments that provide ready access to the long-term outcomes of our work for
guidance. As we displace metrics on long-term outcomes with metrics of short-term results (grades, graduation rates, satisfaction of students) we run the risk of displacing also the most meaningful goals and of losing sight of what really matters.

I hope that this book will be valuable to others as well. I invite you to read this book, and to let me know your thoughts once you do.
(Huffington Post Blog, Published December 12, 2016)

Today, Saturday December 10th, we observe Human Rights Day. This practice began 66 years ago when the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 423 (V), inviting all people in the world to commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights two years earlier, on December 10th, 1948.

The crafting and adoption of the declaration 68 years ago was a visionary effort aimed at creating a world in which we recognized the common humanity of all people, regardless of nationality, race, religion, socioeconomic background, or other aspects of their identity. The adoption of the declaration recognized that such common humanity obligates all of us to advance in solidarity to help one another achieve some basic rights we have, simply because we were members of the same species.

The idea of human rights and of individual rights had long historical intellectual roots. It was the horror of the violence perpetrated during World War II, and the extermination of over 15 million people by the Nazis as a result of an ideology that espoused that members of a particular race had superior rights to members of other races, that gave impetus to the creation of a global compact making explicit the fundamental equality of all people and certain basic human rights that would supersede particular practices, norms, or laws, enacted to justify violence of particular groups over others, as the Nazis had done.

The declaration served also to make explicit that our shared membership in humanity created not only rights as humans, but obligations to the rest of humanity. It made visible that to directly
perpetrate, or to be a passive bystander, to violations of human rights made us complicit in such violence.

In the aftermath of the violence of World War II it was self-evident that the murder of over 15 million people was the result not just of the acts perpetrated by those who had directly taken the lives of Jews, Soviets, Roma, Homosexuals, Political Opponents or People with Disabilities of a regime inspired by an ideology that proposed that the Aryan race was a superior race, with rights and privileges above all others, but that those who had done nothing to prevent such violence, who had gone about their lives as usual, or who had with small actions enabled such crimes against humanity, were equally complicit.

It takes not only the person who takes the life of another in the name of racial superiority to perpetrate that murder, but the many whose small actions allow this to happen, all while going about their business, following custom, or norms, or the law, or just minding their own businesses. Hannah Arendt has termed ‘the banality of evil’, the fact that many of those who perpetrated and enabled the grave human rights violations during World War II thought of themselves as good citizens and good people, following law or customs.

Sixty eight years after the declaration of Human Rights was adopted there is still violence that undermines those basic human rights around the world. In the United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented 867 incidents of hate just in the ten days following the recent Presidential election. Extremist movements around the world, whether the Islamic State in the Middle East or neo-nazi groups in the United States and in Europe, continue to perpetrate violations of human rights in the name of ideologies of racial, ethnic or religious supremacy. Many states around the world abuse the human rights of individuals or groups who challenge them, murdering, incarcerating or harassing political opponents. Even more prevalent, ordinary forms of human rights violations are so customary around the world as to be
invisible, such as the systematic denial of educational opportunities of members of particular racial, ethnic or religious groups, for example, or the prevalence of discriminatory practices against women or minorities in employment or in elected office. In his book *A call to action*, former US President Jimmy Carter has identified violence against women as the single most prevalent human rights violation in the world, reflected for example in rape on US college campuses and in the military, in sex trafficking, in systematic denial of educational and job opportunities in many countries around the world or in practices of genital mutilation or female infanticide.

The declaration of human rights adopted sixty eight years ago is an invitation to all of us, to all members of the same species, to recognize our common humanity, to develop a global consciousness that our common interests as members of the same species are far greater than the differences we see through the other dimensions that define our identities. This invitation to global citizenship inherently recognizes our differences, in fact obligates us to accept those differences respectfully. It transcends the simple minded and false dichotomy that suggests that global citizenship is at the expense of citizenship in a nation state, or membership in other groups. It recognizes that our identity as members of the same species, does not negate our identity as members of particular religious groups, gender, nationalities, race or culture, just like our identity as members of a national group is compatible with those other identities. This notion of global citizenship is under assault by individuals who espouse that certain groups have superior rights than other groups. Others challenge it because they see it as antithetical to national citizenship. At a rally in Cincinnati, Ohio, this week, President-elect Donald Trump’s remarks echoed that view that global citizenship is antithetical to national loyalty "[t]here is no global anthem. No global currency. No certificate of global citizenship. We pledge allegiance to one flag and that flag is the American flag". Two months ago, British
Prime Minister Theresa May expressed similar sentiments: “if you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere. You don't understand what citizenship means.”

I disagree with these views expressed by Mr. Trump and Ms. May and think that understanding our obligation to advancing universal human rights, what I term global citizenship, is absolutely compatible with strong loyalty to and membership in a national community. In fact, human rights are generally violated and can be advanced within the jurisdiction of a nation-state, but efforts to advance them often require challenging national customs or laws, this is called social progress. The ‘banality of evil’ that Arendt describes happened, in part, because Hitler and his followers changed laws that justified crimes against Jews and others. Those who sent them to be murdered in gas chambers were acting within the law. The leaders of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States challenged an apartheid regime predicated on notions of racial superiority that was enshrined in laws and customs, they received inspiration and support from around the world to support changing legislation and practice to advance human rights. Dr. Martin Luther King was inspired by India’s Mahatma Gandhi’s views on nonviolence as an avenue to advance human rights, and traveled to India, with support from India’s Prime Minister Nehru and others, to deepen his understanding of non-violence. The end of the apartheid regime of racial violence in South Africa, similarly was inspired and received support from individuals, organizations and governments around the world who understood that to stay silent to the racial violence which sustained that regime was to be complicit in such human rights violations.

Sixty eight years is a short period in human memory, while the history of advancing human rights around the world since the declaration was adopted is indeed remarkable, humanity’s progress towards greater justice, inclusion and Peace is not inevitable, but a road fraught with obstacles and detours. On Human Rights Day let us commit to doing
two simple things, to review what those rights are, to reflect on them, and to ask in what way can we, personally, continue to move the moral arc of our shared human experience towards greater justice.
Refugees, Immigrants And Human Rights
(Huffington Post Blog, Published January 30, 2017)

last Friday, I participated in a conference at the United Nations organized by the Committee for Teaching About the United Nations, to discuss the global refugee crisis. Refugees receive assistance from nations, organizations and individuals who understand that refugees have human rights, and that it is solidarity towards those whose rights are threatened that ultimately ensures the rights of all, including our own.

It was appropriate for this conversation to be taking place at the United Nations as the organization was created in the aftermath of World War II, in an effort to create conditions that would ensure Peace and Global Stability. There were many in the 1940s who, horrified at the violence that had been perpetrated by a regime built on the notion that one race had superior rights to others, asked themselves whether they could have done more to prevent it or stop it. Those sentiments were expressed by Martin Niemoller, a protestant pastor who spent the last seven years of the Nazi regime in a concentration camp, and who believed that leaders of Protestant churches had been complicit in the Holocaust with their silence. Niemöller wrote:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

From those reflections emerged the idea that crafting a compact that identified the basic rights of all people, which they have simply because they are human, and working to help all achieve the conditions where
they would be able to live with such rights, would help us prevent the kind of violence perpetrated by the nazis from ever happening again.

The rights named in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are not, of course, self-executing, they require the agency and courage of individuals, organizations and governments, to advance a world in which those rights are protected for all. The United Nations was created to advance those rights, and does much to help advance them. But it is not just international organizations and governments that advance Human Rights, ordinary people do most of the work in building a world ruled by respect for those rights. In the United States the civic education organization, Facing History and Ourselves, has advanced the concept of *upstander* to define the person who takes responsibility to advance those rights, when they are challenged.

Refugees, like the rest of us, have human rights. Those rights are challenged by the countries they leave, which is the very reason they leave. The reason the office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees exist is precisely because ensuring the protection of the rights of refugees is essential to the notion of universal human rights. This is also the reason governments assist and protect refugees, by granting them asylum and helping them resettle.

A very small proportion of these refugees are able to resettle in ‘third countries,’ countries other than the one they first arrived to. The United States receives a significant absolute number of that small percentage of refugees who are permanently resettled, even though this number is very small relative to the size of the population in the United States. Traditionally we have given priority to those at the highest risk and most vulnerable. In order to be resettled in the United States refugees already undergo a process of extreme vetting that includes multiple interviews and extensive background checks by multiple US intelligence agencies and by the State Department.
I am not aware of any evidence that beneficiaries of this program have engaged in actions that threaten the security of the United States. In my own view, our security is significantly more endangered by the almost one thousand hate groups which exist in the country, such as the KKK, whose hate actions have been reported by the FBI to be on the rise, and by the chief strategist of the White House and member of the US Security Council, Mr. Stephen Bannon, who has declared that the Press is the ‘opposition’ to the Government and ordered them to ‘shut up’. A free press is essential to a functioning democracy and governments who attempt to control the press threaten a basic tenet of democratic life.

The United States, along with many nations, contributes to the efforts to provide assistance to refugees. Relative to population size, however, the United States absorption of the total number of refugees who are received in a third country is one of the smallest in the world. The number of refugees resettled relative to population is many times greater in nations which are in the regions where the refugees proceed from. Lebanon and Jordan, for instance, the absorption rate of refugees is many times greater than in the US.

Small as a share of our population as the United States Refugee Resettlement Program is, it is a beautiful expression of fundamental American values. It is a small expression our commitment to the ideas expressed in Emma Lazarus’ poem New Colossus, which is inscribed on a plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch,
whose flame Is the imprisoned lightning,
and her name Mother of Exiles.
From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome;
her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”
cries she With silent lips.
“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

As we were meeting in the United Nations last Friday discussing the urgency to protect the human rights of refugees, and how little is been done to address this global crisis, President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order that will significantly undermine the United States program of resettlement of refugees. The order bans immigrants from Muslim majority countries in the Middle East, except those where the President’s immediate family has business interests, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Turkey.

Furthermore, this order affects also non refugees, and includes students, scholars, people with permanent residence visas who were born in the countries listed in the order. A permanent residence visa is the necessary step anyone who wishes to become an American citizen must go through before being able to apply for citizenship. Applicants for permanent residence also undergo background checks by the department of homeland security, which coordinates with intelligence agencies.

The ban has already affected students and scholars at some of our universities. The Executive Order caused Harvard’s International Office to send a letter yesterday to all students, scholars and faculty who are foreign nationals advising them to avoid any unessential travel.
The letter includes this paragraph:

“The executive order also contemplates that additional countries could be added to the banned list. Accordingly, until more information becomes available, and given the possibility of a change in government policy that could go into effect immediately, all foreign nationals should carefully assess whether it is worth the risk to travel outside the country.”

In the thirty years I have worked at Harvard University I have been privileged to count among my students and colleagues many who have been refugees, immigrants and citizens of the countries now included in the executive order. They have been, without exception, talented individuals, committed to working to advance educational opportunity around the world, the kind of force for good that helps us advance a world governed by reason, by respect for human rights, the very conditions that are essential for Peace and Sustainability. They are the messengers of hope that we will never see the horrors of the Holocaust again. To pose restrictions on their ability to come to the United States is to restrict our own ability to collaborate to do the important work of Peace.

I am saddened and concerned that the President of the United States has signed an order that undermines some of our most basic values and commitments to protecting human rights and that limits our ability to collaborate with colleagues from around the world in the shared enterprise of advancing Peace and Sustainability. For this reason I have signed a petition signed by academics opposing the ban, which is available here:

https://notoimmigrationban.com/
As the misguided supporters of this ban try to convince us of the grave risk that Muslim refugees and immigrants pose to our security I invite you to read Warsan Shire’s poem *Home*, which I reproduce below, and to ask yourself, along with Martin Niemoller, whether our silence makes us complicit in a grave violation of the basic conditions we need for Peace in the world.

**Home**
Warsan Shire

no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbors running faster than you  
breath bloody in their throats  
the boy you went to school with  
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory  
is holding a gun bigger than his body  
you only leave home  
when home won’t let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you  
fire under feet  
hot blood in your belly  
it’s not something you ever thought of doing  
until the blade burnt threats into  
your neck  
and even then you carried the anthem under  
your breath  
only tearing up your passport in an airport toilet  
sobbing as each mouthful of paper  
made it clear that you wouldn’t be going back.

you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
no one burns their palms
under trains
beneath carriages
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled
means something more than journey.
no one crawls under fences
no one wants to be beaten
pitted

no one chooses refugee camps
or strip searches where your
body is left aching
or prison,
because prison is safer
than a city of fire
and one prison guard
in the night
is better than a truckload
of men who look like your father
no one could take it
no one could stomach it
no one skin would be tough enough

the
go home blacks
refugees
dirty immigrants
asylum seekers
sucking our country dry
niggers with their hands out
they smell strange
savage
messed up their country and now they want
to mess ours up
how do the words
the dirty looks
roll off your backs
maybe because the blow is softer
than a limb torn off

or the words are more tender
than fourteen men between
your legs
or the insults are easier
to swallow
than rubble
than bone
than your child body
in pieces.
i want to go home,
but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home chased you to the shore
unless home told you
to quicken your legs
leave your clothes behind
crawl through the desert
wade through the oceans
drown
save
be hunger
beg
forget pride
your survival is more important

no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear saying-
leave,
run away from me now
i dont know what i’ve become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here
China and Mexico want Peace, as do We.
(Huffington Post Blog, Published April 18, 2017)

Contentiousness regarding the impact of certain foreign nations, particularly China and Mexico, on American society and its economy has characterized this year’s electoral campaign. The utter absence of factual support for the hateful positions adopted is shocking. To quote Mark Twain “First let’s get the facts straight then distort them as much as you like.” Here then are the facts.

I have thought long and hard about sharing publicly these views because my role as a professor causes me to want to keep my political views private. Because my fundamental loyalty to my students and to my graduates I want them to know that I respect them and their ideas, including their political ideas which may differ from my own. Because my right to my political views should not interfere with my professional obligations to my students, and because my expertise as an educator does not give me special expertise or authority on political matters, I work very hard to keep my views private, outside the classroom or the university where I work.

The heightened distortion of the facts in this campaign, and the grave consequences I foresee from the exacerbation of bigotry that it is inducing, make this campaign different. While I will continue to keep my views outside the classroom or the University, and will continue to extend all of my students, whatever their views, my respect and dedication as their professor, I need to share these thoughts publicly in writing in my blog. I do this as a private citizen, in ways that do not represent the University where I work. As an American by choice I elected to swear allegiance to the United States. I studied the history and the Constitution of this nation and I made the choice to actively contribute, as citizens do in a democratic society, to make this society better and true to the principles on which this country was founded. I
am deeply concerned that the extreme chauvinism and bigotry that has become the new normal to serve short term political gains is unfortunate and gravely damaging for three reasons.

First, because the claim that China and Mexico have somehow taken advantage of the American people is untrue, and this falsehood prevents the American public from focusing attention where we should: in the economic, education and social policies we pursue. The living conditions and opportunities that the people in China, Mexico, the United States or any other nation experience are fundamentally the result of the actions taken by the economic and political leaders of those nations in creating opportunities, as well as the result of decisions made by individuals in response to those opportunities.

When China’s Premier Den Xiaoping led a series of reforms known as the four modernizations starting in 1978 he unleashed the creation of many opportunities that improved the living conditions for the people of China. The policies Chinese leaders have advanced since, in particular the policies to expand access to and improve the quality of education, have produced the largest change in the level of education of a nation the world has witnessed in a single generation. It is no wonder that policies like these have produced the most dramatic reduction in the level of poverty experienced by people in history. Chinese leaders did not achieve these gains taking anything from anyone, but making smart policy choices, creating opportunities and reinforcing cultural practices that encouraged individuals to work hard in response to those opportunities. In my visits to schools and universities in China, I see students who are dedicated to their studies, who spend time cultivating their talent, and take full advantage of the many opportunities that equally dedicated teachers and supportive parents create for them.

Mexico’s progress is similarly the result of smart choices by that nation’s leaders. When the Mexican Congress passed legislation, a decade ago, providing free and mandatory early childhood education
programs for all children, at great cost and sacrifice to that nation, it made a smart choice reflecting the willingness of an entire nation to provide for their children opportunities they themselves had not had. Similarly, the education policies and programs advanced by the Federal Government in Mexico to raise the standards of entry into the teaching profession, and to invest in the professional development of their teachers, are increasing the quality of the education, providing the current generation of students opportunities their parents did not have.

That two nations with significantly lower income per capita than the United States should choose to make these kind of investments in the education of their children, and of their most disadvantaged populations, should be a reason for admiration. It should cause us to be curious and learn, not be a cause for disparagement, for the same reasons we should hope other nations could learn from and admire American policies which produced progress in our nation.

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act in 1944, providing benefits to returning World War II veterans, he stimulated a dramatic expansion in the opportunity to attend college. This expanded access in time produced a significant increase in the number of college graduates in the United States. This simple act caused the United States to remain, for the next four decades, the nation with the highest percentage of high school graduates who attended college. This policy, and others that supported expansion to college access, were the backbone of the remarkable economic development the United States enjoyed for many decades.

The economic challenges experienced by part of the American population in recent decades are not the result of what other nations have done, but of what we have failed to do in response to the transformation of the ways in which goods and services are produced.
What is key to address the misfortunes of those who rightly fear the future for their lack of economic opportunity is what we do, not what others do. Certainly we need to be able to create new jobs, not because immigrants are taking jobs, but because technology is changing how we produce goods. We should anticipate a world where artificial intelligence will increasingly do work that people used to do, and a world where advanced skills are essential to participate economically and civically.

We should also anticipate a world where other nations have a more educated population than we do, the current trends in educational attainment and achievement suggest we are already there. There is much we could learn from other countries in how they are transforming their education systems to expand the opportunities for their population, and keeping communications and collaboration with those nations, rather than building walls or blaming them for our problems, are the smart responses that we should demand of our leaders.

The second reason the bigotry and chauvinism, which characterize this campaign, is unfortunate is because it moves part of the electorate in the opposite direction of what is necessary to advance progress and opportunity in the world. As a result of the revolution caused by telecommunication technologies in the last three decades the world has become smaller.

The world is smaller in that we all have many opportunities to collaborate with fellow human beings across the earth in multiple ways. These include creating businesses, creating arts, advancing scientific knowledge, promoting human rights, and finding ways to address shared challenges, such as the damage humans are causing to the earth’s ecosystem. The potential of those expanding forms of collaboration now possible is unlimited. Those collaborations have already produced, remarkable advances in basic scientific knowledge, in the development
of technologies, in addressing shared challenges like terrorism or other forms of criminal activity, in improving the state of the planet,. Based on these demonstrated benefits of global collaboration we have every reason to believe that this century could be one of unprecedented human progress in helping us substantially improve the conditions of life for all people on this planet, and for the rest of living creatures and the planet itself. We can create a world of abundance in opportunity in collaboration with others, but not with a mindset that the opportunities available are fixed.

The ideology that retreating from these opportunities of global collaboration will help advance the interests of a particular nation or tribe, advanced for example by the leaders of misguided groups such as ISIS or the Taliban or Al Qaeda before them, is factually incorrect and dangerous to those who will be deprived of the benefits of the progress that global collaboration yields. The sorry state of life for those in the small areas which have fallen temporarily under the control of those chauvinistic and bigoted groups prove how much more limiting of human well-being life and opportunity those ideologies are.

The bigotry that is undermining the support for collaboration with people from other nations is also creating large holes in the fabric of American society, as it is undermining the trust among different ethnic or cultural groups. An American born student in one of the schools in the town where I live, whose father is a naturalized American of Mexican origin, has been harassed by some of his peers who have indicated that they hope one of the candidates wins, so we build a wall and he has to ‘go back to his country.’ Those who bully him ignore the fact that, by law, America is this child’s country, as well as the country of his parents’
The prevalence of incidents like this across schools, neighborhoods and towns in America is deeply concerning. While it is easy to see how the tenor of this campaign is inciting such hateful bigotry, it is harder to predict how these forces of hate will be reined in, once unleashed.

The third reason this bigoted rhetoric is regrettable is because it may fuel stereotypes about America in the rest of the world which are untrue, harmful to this country, and harmful to the fundamental principles on which this experiment in self-rule stands. Those who have limited exposure to life in the United States and who take seriously the claims of the candidate who espouses these bigoted views, or who believe that his supporters endorse him for those views, might conclude that this is a nation of people who condone that members of a particular ethnicity should have superior legal rights to others, that this is a nation that discriminates on the basis of religion, and that we endorse the abuse of women or individuals with disabilities. Some might perhaps even take seriously the irresponsible claims made by this candidate that the President of the United States conspired to create a criminal organization like ISIS or that the government is conspiring to not count the votes in the election as casted by the voters. Others, recognizing the absurdity of these claims, but realizing the reality that the candidate in question was elected by a majority of the voters of one of the two leading political parties in the United States, and anticipating that he has a serious chance at becoming the next President of the nation, might conclude that American democracy is a joke, a dysfunctional aberration in government at best, or largely the privilege of a racist society.

It would be absurd, of course, to think that a candidate who advocates bigotry speaks for the United States, even if he were elected. The United States is a big and diverse country, a country with a great history as a remarkable experiment of self-rule, a country with strong institutions and with the benefits of checks and balances that make American democracy work. It is a country where we honor the freedom
of people to speak their mind, even when what they say makes little sense. Hopefully the voters will in time show that we don’t endorse candidates who incite hatred, who have no respect for the facts, and who challenge the very institutions that allow this nation to be a nation of laws.

Amidst this diversity, the people of the United States want Peace, with each other and with people from other nations around the world. In that we are more alike than different to the people in China and in Mexico, nations where I have worked with colleagues in the field of education for many years. These too are large and diverse countries, with strong institutions, with their challenges, but above all with people who want to live in Peace, with each other and with people from other nations of the world.

Demonizing other nations, as one of our Presidential candidates has done recurrently over the last year, has nothing to do with the principles and ideals of American democracy. In fact this country was founded to a large extent because of the solidarity of another nation, France, who supported the audacity of a group of rebels who risked their lives to build a society where individuals could rule themselves and all could be fundamentally equal. I see many of the views this candidate has espoused as un-American, and see his election by the majority of the member of the party of Abraham Lincoln as a disgrace, that I hope the members of that party, which includes many honorable and committed people, will recognize and correct. My loyalty to these United States, my adopted country, causes me to share these views publicly in hope they will cause others to see how damaging the claims I have discussed are, even if sharing these thoughts means violating a long held belief and practice that sharing my politics is not in my best interest as a professor or in the best interest of my students.
This time things are different because the hateful discourse of this candidate is causing much harm to this country I love so much and to its most fundamental institutions. His hateful narrative against China and Mexico is unfounded, untrue, misguided and harmful to the American people and to the prospects for collaboration across borders that are so essential to advance global well-being and to sustain Peace. In my experience of many years working with colleagues around the world all the people in China and in Mexico want is Peace, as do we. For this they need progress, as do we. On these shared interests in Peace and progress I hope we will keep an unwavering commitment to the facts and to the truth as we approach the next American presidential election in November, with a focus on the smart choices we need to make to improve people’s well-being, now and in the future.
Messengers of Hope in a Time of Reckoning: Educating Refugees.
(Huffington Post Blog, Published April 12, 2017)

I just spent three days in Stockholm with two students at the Sorbonne in Paris. They are Aya Hamadeh, a student in computer science, and Mortaza Behboudi, a student in international relations. Both are refugees, the victims of political violence. Mortaza is from Afghanistan and Aya from Syria. Meeting them is to bear witness to the power of the human spirit, to the beauty of human agency and resiliency, to the gift of hope in the face of adversity. Aya and Mortaza are students at the Sorbonne because a number of people understand their responsibility to assist those who have to leave home because the violence is such that they fear that life under such violence is worth less than the suffering and the pain of the journey to hope that refugees travel, so beautifully expressed in the poem Home by Warsan Shire: “No one leaves home, unless home is the mouth of a shark”.

Aya and Mortaza are not alone in their journey, they are two of 65,3 million people who have left their homes because of conflict and violence. Of those, at least six million should be in school, but more than half of them are not. For those in school, many receive an education that will not help them heal the wounds of conflict or empower them with the competencies that allow them to live fulfilling lives.

The reason Aya and Mortaza are thriving is because Sorbonne’s President, George Haddad, understands how education is the best way to break the cycle of violence. He calls Aya and Mortaza and other students like them: Messengers of Hope. For many of those 65 million people displaced by conflict, there is no George Haddad. On the contrary, too often there are those who close doors, who harass them, who humiliate them, who make them scapegoats for their own
anxieties, who tell them to go home, to the very living hell that they are fleeing. In the vividly painful words of Warsan Shire’s poem:

the
go home blacks
refugees
dirty immigrants
asylum seekers
sucking our country dry
niggers with their hands out
they smell strange
savage
messed up their country and now they want
to mess ours up
how do the words
the dirty looks
roll off your backs
maybe because the blow is softer
than a limb torn off

As they push them back to the violence they are fleeing, many explain this to themselves as following the rules, their leaders, or the ideologies that suggest some people, those who are like us, have superior rights to those who are different. What is that causes people like George Haddad to see themselves in the humanity of the refugees, to extend them a hand, while others push them away and add to their suffering is at the core of what I try to understand in my work in global citizenship education. We live times when we need to help more people develop the moral compass and the courage of George Haddad. With a group of colleagues, we have written Empowering Global Citizens, a K-12 global citizenship curriculum designed to help all students understand Human Rights, and our responsibilities to each other, and to this planet we share.
I met Aya and Mortaza at a conference convened by Education International, the International Federation of Teacher Unions. The conference brought together leaders of education unions, government officials, students who are refugees, teachers who are refugees and who teach refugees, academics and members of international development organizations. The goals of the conference were to take stock of the nature of the challenge, and to identify solutions and make commitments to create conditions to achieve the right to education for refugees. It is especially courageous of the leadership of Education International to have convened this conference at a time when the rise of xenophobic and intolerant views and their normalization around the world stimulate political and private actions that threaten the human rights of refugees. A new banality of evil adds to the suffering displaced people have experienced in the homes they have left in the form of the violence they continue to experience along their journey, as described by Shire:

or the words are more tender
than fourteen men between
your legs
or the insults are easier
to swallow
than rubble
than bone
than your child body
in pieces.

It was a refugee, a victim of religious persecution, Jan Amos Comenius, who laid the cornerstone of public education in proposing that education for all was essential to have Peace in the world. On this foundation were built public education systems, largely to advance democratic and Peaceful coexistence, across all lines of difference. The
global movement to advance education for all accelerated with the inclusion of education as a right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations at the end of world war two, as a moral compass that would guide human solidarity towards global Peace and sustainability. A compass that would keep us from the banality of evil.

Given the origin of the idea of public education in the painful experience of a refugee, it is fitting that at a time when humanity confronts an unprecedented refugee crisis, the result of human violence to people and to the environment, we should honor Comenius memory focusing on how to educate the children of those who have lost their home out of necessity and suffering. That education is, after all, a right included in that moral compass devised to keep us from the banality of evil.

There is urgency in educating well refugee children and youth. 3.7 million refugees of primary and secondary school age have no school to go to. They are significantly less likely to be in school and to be learning in school than those who have not been displaced.

In six design workshops, the participants in the conference organized by Education International addressed some of the core questions and dilemmas in educating refugees. Those led to specific actionable steps which can now inform the development of specific national strategies and action plans. To illustrate how much knowledge those involved in the practice of refugee education have already, I mention here some of the actions identified by one of the two design workshops, which I had the pleasure to lead.

There is a need to support teachers of refugees in four interrelated ways: addressing teacher shortages, supporting effective teaching in refugee settings, providing effective professional development and support to teachers working with refugees, and providing refugees who
are teachers work opportunities. These are tractable problems, and those in the workshops formulated concrete actions that could address them. The first decision to be considered is whether to integrate children in regular schools, as is done in Lebanon or Sweden, or in separate segregated facilities, as is done in Jordan. Teacher shortages can be addressed with multiple pathways into teaching, including opportunities for career switchers, with appropriate support so those entering the profession are adequately prepared; providing additional compensation to those teachers working with refugee students; providing extra support for students in high levels of need, and allowing temporary employment of volunteers and casual teachers.

The following options can support teaching in refugee centers: a supportive policy framework to accommodate voluntary teachers, contract teachers and casual teachers; develop participatory processes in the camps with the involvement of key stakeholders, including refugee students, parents, teachers and support staff to identify needs and develop a contextually relevant strategy which mobilizes existing assets in the camp; map existing resources in the camp which can support education of refugee children, including space, personnel, opportunities for community partnerships and that recognize and build the agency of refugees themselves and empowers them. Adopt an appreciative inquiry mindset, look for things that are positive and good in the setting; develop multidisciplinary approaches to teaching that enable teachers to teach out of field and across the curriculum; review the curriculum so that it is contextually relevant, helps students develop skills that empower them in that setting and build the resiliency for their continued journey until resettlement. Develop competency based curriculum that builds competencies for conflict resolution and Peace building, vocational and technical skills, music and sports, life skills, including those that allow students to heal from the trauma experienced in their journey. Plan for appropriate pedagogies to help students
develop those skills in ways that empower them and build their character, emotional development and cognitive skills, for example, using project based learning, engaging in problem based pedagogy, entrepreneurship education, design thinking and other approaches to build the resiliency, creativity, leadership and entrepreneurial skills of students.

Effective professional development and support to teachers working with refugees should help them gain confidence and ability to teach in a multilingual and culturally diverse classroom, empathy with and high expectations for culturally and racially diverse students, capacity to foster the socio-emotional development of students who have been traumatized by conflict or by the experience of migration, versatility in the notions of inclusion and integration and the capacity to negotiate those goals with other key stakeholders and to translate those into effective curriculum and pedagogical practices.

Providing teachers who are themselves refugees with opportunities can be achieved having them teach in teams with host country teachers, providing them with mentorship and support, hire them as teacher assistants, who work under the supervision of a fully accredited teacher, creating bespoke programs, competency based, that allow multiple pathways to gaining and demonstrating the necessary skills.

At the conference there were many more actionable steps developed by the participants, and this makes now even more clear that there is a path to educating refugees, that there is much more we could do to support them effectively. This makes our collective moral failure to take action only more evident and the actions and inactions that close doors for refugees, who push them back, only more evil. In Warsan’s poetry:

   no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear saying-
   leave,
run away from me now
i dont know what i’ve become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here

The Genocide perpetrated against the Jewish people by the Nazis was an evil resulting from another collective moral failure. It wasn’t just those who imprisoned and murdered over fifteen million people who perpetrated this crime, but those who collaborated with small actions, denouncing a neighbor, boycotting their business, questioning their loyalty, and the many more who ignored what was happening under their watch. After World War II, as people tried to make sense of that horror, it became evident that many explained their complicity in this atrocity saying they were just following rules, the law or their leaders.

The normalization of these horrific practices caused many people to not think of what they were doing as evil. Most of them saw themselves as good people, law abiding, patriots. It was this banality of evil, discussed by philosopher Hannah Arendt, that allowed millions of ordinary people to be bystanders and enablers of the Holocaust that was as horrific, if not more, than the paradox that military commanders, some with multiple doctoral degrees, would plan and execute such monstrous plans of mass violence animated by a white supremacist and racist ideology that denied so many their humanity and led to the murder of 6 million Jews, 5 million non-Jewish Soviet civilians, 3 million Soviet prisoners of war, 1.9 million non-Jewish civilians, 312,000 Serb civilians, 250,000 people with disabilities, 200,000 Roma people, 1,900 Jehovah’s Witnesses and 70,000 criminal offenders, plus an undetermined number of German political opponents and homosexuals (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).
It was to prevent such banality of evil that Eleanor Roosevelt and others led the development of a compact that would remind us that all humans have basic rights, and that our obligations to those universal rights transcend the rules enacted by leaders, and that we should not allow their violations to be normalized, even if leaders or hate groups create rules that justify their violation. It is those Universal Human Rights that expose racist ideologies, including white supremacy, for what they are: sheer evil to justify the perpetration of violence. Refugees have human rights too, they are our brothers and sisters, members of our same species, denying them those rights would make us perpetrators of violence, complicit in this banality of evil. One of those rights is the right to education, and there is much we know should be done to advance that right. Not taking action on this knowledge is our own moral failure.

And so it is that the spirit of Jan Amos Comenius, that refugee who had the moral courage to call for Peace at a time of reckoning when violence had ravaged his life, and who had the vision to see education as a path from violence to Peace. This vision, moves us still today, four centuries later, at a time when our own violence displaces children and their families so we too can have the vision and the moral courage to do what we know, in our hearts and in our minds, is the right thing to do at this, our own time of reckoning.
Standing Up For Human Rights In The Face Of Challenges To American Democracy
(Huffington Post Blog, Published March 2, 2017)

― Remarks at the Student organized Solidarity Rally at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, February 16, 2017―

Thank you for the invitation to say a few words at this gathering. It is encouraging to see so many of you here this afternoon, standing together for the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. Getting together helps us recognize that in our work to advance those values we are not alone, for these values are central to who we are as a community at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Near this place in which we stand together now, others before us have done much to advance the same values.

Like many of you, I am concerned by some of the executive orders, presidential memoranda and proclamations signed by President Trump over the last three weeks. For example, the Executive Order of January 27, the immigration ban, which barred people from seven Muslim majority nations from entry into the United States. Or the Executive order of January 25 to build a wall alongside the border with Mexico and directing the immediate detention and deportation of undocumented immigrants, all of whom are declared by the order as a significant threat to national security and public safety. Or the executive order cutting federal funding for sanctuary cities. Or the presidential memoranda to expedite construction of oil pipelines. Or the presidential memorandum to ban American non-governmental organizations working abroad from discussing abortion. Or the executive order of January 20th declaring the intention to repeal the affordable care act.
The implementation of these actions will cause incalculable and irreversible harm to millions of people, violating their human rights. Democratic leaders should be thoughtful about enacting actions that will predictably cause so much human suffering. The power of a democratic State should not be used to perpetrate such violence without restraint. The process followed to advance these violent directives demonstrates singular disregard for the necessary deliberation, respect for divisions of power, or for the views of the electorate, in short for the very essence of democracy as a form of government and as a way of life. Some of these directives are strongly opposed by more Americans than those who support them. In a recent poll conducted by CNN-ORC, for example, 53 percent of the population opposes the travel ban, 55 percent of the population favors taking in refugees, 55 percent see it as a ban on Muslims; 60 percent oppose building a wall in the border with Mexico.

My biggest concern is that these decisions, and the process followed to reach and implement them, and others that may follow, and the disregard for checks and balances, might over time contribute to the breakdown of democracy in this country. The current issue of The Atlantic magazine has an excellent essay by David Frum on this subject, titled ‘How to Build an Autocracy’ which I encourage you to read.

I am alarmed when the President referred to Seattle judge James Robart, a federal judge who ruled to suspend the travel ban, as a ‘so-called judge’ and when his Press Secretary Mr. Sean Spicer, qualified the judge’s ruling as an ‘outrageous order.’ I am profoundly upset when President Trump’s chief White House strategist and member of the National Security Council, Steve Bannon, in an interview he arranged with mainstream media calls the press unintelligent, lazy, lacking integrity and describes them as the opposition party and tells them to shut up. I am concerned when leadership in Congress uses an arcane rule to silence Senator Elizabeth Warren as she brings up a letter from Coretta Scott King with relevant and important historical information
to the appointment of Senator Sessions as Attorney General. I am concerned when President Trump attacks Senator Blumenthal after the Senator conveyed that Judge Gorsuch finds attacks on the judiciary demoralizing.

I am worried over such lack of respect for the independence of the judiciary, of Congress and of the Press. The reason we can trust that representative democracy will be used to advance public well-being and not private aims is because the checks and balances that we can expect from the independence among the three branches of government, and of the press. For those checks and balances to operate, self-restraint and respect for due process are essential. The office of a judge deserves the same respect as the office of the president, or as the institution of Congress or as the institution of the Press. Deliberation and process are designed to enhance human judgement over complex issues with high stakes consequences.

But just as I am concerned by these decisions, I am also heartened by the courageous actions of many who are challenging them and standing up for human rights. It is this courage that will give us the checks and balances we need. I am heartened by the courage of Judge James Robart, who challenged the immigration ban and by the three federal judges who refused to reinstate it, and by Attorney General Sally Yates who refused to enforce it. I am heartened by the nearly 1,000 diplomats and staffers of the US Department of State who signed a letter expressing disagreement with the executive order. I am heartened by Harvard University President Drew Faust calls on the administration, the Congress, and the courts to reconsider this order in defense of the University’s “vital interests” and by the letter she and the presidents of 48 colleges and universities, including all Ivies, Stanford and Georgetown, signed which states that “If left in place, the order threatens both American higher education and the defining principles
of our country.” I am also heartened by the more than 43,000 university faculty who have signed a letter explaining why this ban challenges basic academic values and by the hundreds of rallies such as this one taking place around the country. I am heartened that Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch called the President’s attacks on Judge Robart demoralizing. I am heartened that Harvard Law School Dean Martha Minow and Yale Law School Dean Robert Post publicly stood in defense of judge Robart and censored the attacks of the executive on this judge.

I am heartened by the courage of more than one hundred Mayors of a number of sanctuary cities around the country, who said that the White House order will “not change who we are or how we govern our cities,” and vowed at a legal challenge as the President seeks to implement his plans. I admire the 97 leaders of major technology companies who filed an amicus brief opposing the executive order placing immigration restrictions. I am heartened by Boston Cardinal O’Malley’s call for mercy for those ‘fleeing violence and persecution’ and by the letter of the Conference of Catholic Bishops describing the Muslim ban as “devastating,” “chaotic” and “cruel” and calling on Church leaders to speak out against Trump’s actions and “in defense of God’s people,” and called on “all the Catholic faithful to join us and unite voices with all who speak in defense of human dignity.”

I am heartened by the hundreds of thousands of people who participated in the women’s march on January 21, affirming that women’s rights are human rights. I am heartened by the courage of journalists who are fact checking our leaders, such as the editors in the Boston Globe who have explained what immigrants contribute to the Massachusetts economy, or denounced the ways in which Mr. Bannon’s actions are a threat to National Security, or by journalist Jorge Ramos of Univision who has explained how the rise of white supremacist groups pose a grave risk to national security. I am heartened by the courageous work of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the American
Civil Liberties Union or the Anti Defamation League denouncing the rising hate crimes and civil rights violations perpetrated by the growing number of white supremacist groups. I am especially heartened by the work of teachers and education organizations such as Facing History and Ourselves who continue to educate students for democratic citizenship and who are responding to emerging challenges to our democracy with new content and programs.

It is in this same spirit that I am heartened by your presence here today. I hope it indicates not only the importance you assign to human rights, but your commitment to work, as educators and as a citizens, to advance those rights.

Public schools are joined at the hip with democratic government. Both were ideas of the Enlightenment and one cannot live without the other. We stand on sacred ground where the ideas of democracy, education and human rights have been advanced by many before us. All of them faced obstacles in advancing these values.

Just a few blocks from this place, 242 years ago in October of 1775 George Washington and Ben Franklin, met with the revolutionary council to approve a Continental Army that would work to advance a long battle for this experiment in self-rule which is American democracy.

It was in this state that Horace Mann launched a movement of public, universal, non-sectarian and free public education to prepare students for democratic citizenship. It was Mann who proposed that those leading schools should be professionals and who established the first system of teacher education institutions.
It was in Boston, in the early 1800s, that Elizabeth Peabody opened the first kindergarten, and advocated for early childhood education and for the value of play in the development of children.

It was here, in 1879, that Radcliffe College was founded to challenge Harvard’s practice to deny women a college education.

It was a few blocks from here that William Edward Burghardt Du Bois majored in history in Harvard College, and then completed a doctorate in sociology in 1895 to become a preeminent sociologist, historian, and civil rights activist, and the founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and leader of the Niagara Movement, a group of African-American leaders who fought for racial equality.

It was in one of our Universities, Boston University, that Martin Luther King earned a PhD in systematic theology in 1951.

It was in this University that James Coleman completed his doctorate in 1953, to go on and lead one of the most important studies of the role of schools in advancing educational opportunity in the United States.

Four decades ago, one of our graduates, Margot Strom, created the civic education organization Facing History and Ourselves.

Aware of the history of this place in which we now form a community, we must each decide at this time, when some of the fundamental values of democracy are being challenged, what each of us will do, as citizens and as educators, individually and collectively, to advance the values of equity, diversity and inclusion.

As members of a community of educators, we should remember how important it is that we develop skills, advance knowledge and ideas, and engage with communities and schools throughout the nation. In this way we will be able to help educational institutions live up to their obligations in a democratic society, to prepare students to make
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO and other essays on Human Rights
democracy work for all and advance human rights, even as this work becomes more contested and the courage necessary to do it much greater. May we draw this courage from this community and from our history.
On Teaching Human Rights
Teaching About Totality and About Charlottesville
(Huffington Post Blog, Published August 28, 2017)

As teachers get ready to start the school year, I want to suggest that they start engaging their students in conversations about Totality, and about Charlottesville.

The total solar eclipse which was viewable in all of North America on Monday, August 21st brought together millions of people to share in the awe of the celestial event. As I watched CNN’s coverage of the eclipse from an airplane flying over the Atlantic, I was also in awe at how this phenomenon had brought together people all across the United States. As beautiful as the eclipse itself were the images of people of diverse backgrounds, races, across hundreds of towns, sharing the emotions of contemplating an infrequent, and beautiful, natural phenomenon. Contemplating those images brought into focus how easy it is, with a little perspective, to see that we are all one. How much we share in common with each other, how much we are together in most things that matter, particularly, in our relationship to our planet and to the universe, or in matters of any consequence to our lives and to our individual and collective future.

To the awareness of our common humanity that the shared joy over experiencing it brought forth, the media coverage of the eclipse added the awareness that we are also a species with awareness of our past. Time and again we heard those interviewed by reporters explain that part of what made this eclipse special, was the fact that it had been a century since another total eclipse had taken place in North America. To our awareness of our past, the predictions of the next eclipse brought into light that it is also our awareness of our future, our interest in it, our curiosity to predict it, to make plans for ourselves into the future, that makes us fully human. We don’t just live in the present, and we don’t just wait for the future, we shape it.
Awareness of our common humanity, our sense of past and awareness of the future make us distinctively human, and a beautiful species. A species worthy of the same awe as the eclipse itself.

What a contrast this shared experience was, and the insights about our humanity that reflecting on it make visible, to the images and narratives prevalent the last few days, covering the hateful acts of a group of white supremacists in Charlottesville and the failure of our President to take a clear and unequivocal stance denouncing such acts.

The reports of both events, the shared experiencing of a beautiful natural event by millions of Americans, and the harm and death caused by a few misguided individuals, help put in proper perspective that most people are ready to embrace their common humanity with others, and that it is a very small number of Americans who embrace a hateful ideology.

That they are a small number, of course, does not mean we should ignore the harm they have caused and could cause. We live times when the ubiquity of technology, and of weapons, make it relatively easy for a small group of individuals to cause harm disproportionate to their numbers, as another group of terrorists just demonstrated in Barcelona.

But the images of the millions of people who joined others to share the total eclipse, or the thousands who marched in the city of Boston to stand for anti-racism, dwarfing a rally that many saw as too closely associated with the racists who killed Heather Heyer and hurt dozens of others in Charlottesville are the proper frame to understand the direction in which the arc of history moves. The larger number of people participating in Boston anti-racist rally led Mayor Walsh to state that the rally had made clear that our city stands of Peace and Love, not Bigotry and Hate. A good example of what leaders do to build a narrative that speaks to people’s better angels, and a clear contrast to
the equivocal narrative that President Trump used following Charlottesville tragic actions.

Discussing Totality with students in all grades as the school year begins will provide many valuable learning opportunities for students, especially opportunities to draw on multiple disciplines to pursue multiple angles in understanding the eclipse. The opportunity to appreciate how much Astronomy, one of our oldest sciences, helps us understand, and to predict, events which link us to our ancestors, generations ago. The opportunity to understand the importance of studying science to make sense of the world around us, and to appreciate how such commitment to education has been understood as the cornerstone to participating in public life for at least twenty centuries, since the romans included Astronomy as one of the seven liberal arts which prepared a person for civic engagement.

Going back to the last total solar eclipse which took place in 1918 will also offer a window to appreciate how much society has changed for the better in one century. Women did not yet have the right to vote, legal barriers denied African Americans this right, there was racial segregation and a strong anti-immigrant sentiment had led to the Immigration Act of 1917 which had reversed the nation’s open door policy. It is to that bigoted past that those advocating for white supremacy, under the guise of nationalism, want to take the country back.

The study and discussion of Totality, and of the tragedy of Charlottesville, will help our students develop important and enduring understandings about the beauty of the universe and of our place in it, of our shared humanity, the fragility of our planet, and the value of scientific and social progress. It will cultivate their humanity by helping them develop an understanding of our shared history, and an
appreciation of our capacity to project, and to build, a future that is better than the past.
Remembering September 11
(Huffington Post Blog, Published September 11, 2016)

On a recent summer evening, my wife and I visited the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City. As our fingers touched the names inscribed in the parapets of the walls, our sights followed the water flowing down into the open square pools, an edge of mist covering the angles at the bottom of the walls in the summer night. At the center of the pools water fell gently into a smaller square into the void. As we stood there, watching the water flow, we remembered the almost 3,000 people whose lives were taken by the actions of 19 young men who hijacked four planes to crash them into buildings and kill and hurt innocent civilians, not engaged in combat.

The size of the Memorial is evocative of the enormity of the loss. The design of the open structures, two large empty squares leading to more void, mark the absence of the lives taken. The water flowing gently into the pools speaks softly of lives cut too short, traveling where only the heart can know. The dark and empty square in the center of the structures speaks of the fragility of life, not just of the lives lost on that day but of all lives. One can imagine the entire globe suspended above that void, the full seven and a half billion people on this planet traveling together on our fragile earth.

As I prepare again this year to remember those victims whose lives were taken fifteen years ago, I realize how for me and for many others that day and those which followed defined much of how we would come to view the world, and our place in it. I remember the moment on that Tuesday, minutes before 9 am, as a colleague I was communicating with on the internet asked ‘what is happening? Go see CNN now.’ I went and saw the repeated replay of the image of the first plane crash into the World Trade Center as the anchorman described with confusion what we were all watching. Minutes later, we saw the
next plane crash into the second tower. I remember the numbing feeling, the disbelief, the questioning of who could possibly be doing what soon became evident was an intentional murderous act. I remember going to pick up my sons in school and bringing them home, only certain that I wanted to be close to those I loved in that moment of loss. Slowly, the awareness of the many lives taken sank in. It hit me with the same pain I had felt at the loss of my mother just a year earlier. It felt as senseless as my father’s death had many years before. In the aftermath of such tragic loss of lives we all knew these were our brothers and sisters, and we felt deeply the pain of their parents, spouses, children, siblings, and friends. Amidst the tragedy of that loss, we were all one.

This shared pain brought extraordinary levels of solidarity in communities and workplaces in the days and weeks that followed our shared loss. In my town, we all went out of our way to greet and check on each other on the street, in soccer fields, in supermarkets, as we picked up children in school, in houses of worship. At work, we all went out into an open courtyard to mourn together as we held hands. We had services for those lost, and recognition for the courageous firefighters and policemen who attempted to rescue victims of the attacks. Amidst the mourning and the grief, we were all one.

My sons and their friends talked about the loss of lives as personal, as one of the victims was the uncle of children in our schools. I think even without such close proximity to the devastation of that day, the entire town would still have felt the loss of each of these lives as the loss of a loved one.

In the days following 9/11 I heard from many friends of colleagues in other countries, as they sent condolences and expressions of grief and solidarity. They too felt our pain, the loss their own, and reached out to let us know that we were all one and were not alone.
I’ve often wondered these fifteen years: Why did it take such pain and sadness to make us realize, at that dark time, that we are all one? And as I still grieve the loss of 2,977 beautiful lives, and feel for their children, their spouses, their parents, their siblings and friends, as I remember each moment of that senseless horror, and feel their absence in the water of the Memorial flowing gently to an unknown place, as I picture our planet suspended over that void, seven and a half billion of us traveling together, I remember especially how we honored them then with love for strangers and neighbors, with the deep certainty that we are all one.
Globalization, requires a new emphasis on global citizenship education. This means helping students understand and appreciate human rights and shared global challenges thus becoming engaged citizens. To do this well, purposeful and high quality global citizenship curriculum is essential. To be able to ‘create space’ for new curriculum, and to support it, schools must develop and implement an intentional strategy of global citizenship education. In partnership with some of my graduate students at Harvard I have just published a book designed to assist students, teachers and school leaders in the process of creating and teaching global citizenship curriculum.

The book *Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons* offers three tools. The first is a protocol to design and adapt global citizenship curriculum. The second is a protocol to design a school wide strategy for global education. The third is an actual curriculum prototype, a sixty lesson global citizenship curriculum, developed following the process presented in the book.

The book is addressed primarily to teachers and school and district leaders, interested in creating opportunities for their students to understand the world in which they live, and to learn to improve it. It can also be useful directly to students in elementary and secondary education who may, in some cases, take the initiative to themselves create curriculum or partner with their teachers in creating opportunities for them to learn about globalization in their schools. Parents and others who can support schools in becoming more relevant may also find the book helpful.

One of the steps in the thirteen steps process proposed in the book involves the development of a prototype, such as a global studies
curriculum, much like the 60 lessons presented in the book. Developing such a curriculum is within the reach of most schools. Having a concrete prototype makes it possible to obtain feedback, to have clarity among many different people about what we mean when we say global citizenship education, to try it and to learn from it. I shared this curriculum with a group of highly recognized teachers from several different countries and their views on the potential utility of the curriculum served as a point of validation.

Our aim in developing this curriculum was to design something that would be simple and within the reach of a wide range of schools, working in a variety of conditions and with varying levels of resources and support. The curriculum requires only teaching five lessons in each grade, a task within the reach of most schools. In spite of such simplicity, the curriculum is a rigorous and robust sequence aligned to a clear set of learning outcomes, which are in turn aligned to an ambitious vision to improve the world. The curriculum is aligned to a map of global competencies that characterizes a high school graduate who understands globalization and appreciates the opportunities it offers for people to collaborate, across lines of difference, in improving the communities of which they are a part, from local communities to global communities. These competencies are, in turn, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, a compact of seventeen targets intended to create a world which is sustainable and where Peace can be lasting.

I had three goals in leading this group of students in developing the curriculum:

The first goal was to serve a pressing need for high quality instructional materials which can help K-12 teachers educate for global citizenship. The second goal was to prototype an approach to develop global citizenship curriculum which would be widely accessible, replicable and scalable.
The third goal was to collaborate with my students as part of their education.

The task of educating students to understand and improve the world in which they live, collaborating with others along multiple lines of difference, has never been more urgent. My hope is that *Empowering Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons* will be valuable to those who understand that urgency, so they can bring others along in educating students so we can sustain Peace.
Education and Democratic Citizenship in Colombia
(Huffington Post Blog, Published May 4, 2017)

Public schools were a result of the Enlightenment, a philosophical movement that put forth the revolutionary idea that ordinary people could rule themselves, improve their own circumstances and, in collaboration with others, advance their communities. The philosophers of the enlightenment placed great hope in human reason, aided by science, as the faculty that would help people rule themselves and improve the world. Democracy, a form of government of the people and for the people, was also a result of the Enlightenment.

Democratic government developed alongside the idea of human rights, a way to define the notion that people are essentially equal, core to democracy as a way of life. Public schools were invented to help all people develop the capacities to rule themselves, to assist them in developing their rational powers and capacity to act based on scientific understandings of the world, so they could improve it, and to help them understand and uphold a social contract which advanced the human rights of all, given the fundamental equality among all persons.

The leaders of independence in Latin America were keenly interested in the role of educational institutions in building a democratic spirit. They understood that democracy requires democratic citizens. One of those leaders, Francisco de Miranda, who served on the battles for Independence in France, the United States and South America. Miranda studied with interest universities in various countries, and brought together Joseph Lancaster, the inventor of a method to educate low income children in England, with Simon Bolivar and Andres Bello, Bolivar’s teacher. Bolivar, a major leader of South America’s independence, became fascinated by Lancaster’s method, and brought him to Caracas to work in the first teacher education institution he established there. Bolivar understood, as did Thomas Jefferson,
Benjamin Franklin, Andres Bello, or Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (the founder of public education in South America), that democratic life depends on democratic citizens, and that one is not born with the skills that make democracy work, one develops those competencies in school and as a result of engaging in the practice of democracy itself.

Democracy as a way of life is a process, its genius lies precisely in the trust it places in the capacity of ordinary people to continually perfect it, to advance the arc of justice towards greater inclusion and continuous advancement of the human rights of all. The history of public education, like the history of democracy itself, is therefore a history of continuous improvement in the capacities of schools and teachers to equip citizens with the competencies they will need to make democracy work. When schools excluded children of ethnic minority backgrounds, as they once did for African American children in the United States, or for Indigenous children in Latin America, those who advanced democratic aspirations challenged them to educate these children as well as others. When schools segregated girls and boys in the preparation they received according to the pre-established roles of patriarchal societies, those advancing democratic aspirations challenged them to offer equal opportunities to learn. When schools offered unequal opportunities to learn to children of different socioeconomic contexts, they have been challenged by those advancing their democratic goals to be just in providing all decent opportunities to learn.

The journey of advancement of schools alongside the arc of democratic justice has also involved ensuring that schools help students learn the competencies that are essential to live in a democratic society, that affirms the equal rights of all. This includes teaching the legal frameworks that sustain the rule of law, teaching students to reason ethically, and teaching them ways to live together which are appropriate to life in democratic societies. Effective democratic citizenship education requires intentional curriculum, and high quality
opportunities for teachers to develop the capacity to teach a curriculum that supports democratic values and practices. In the United States, for example, Facing History and Ourselves is a leading institution in the design of curriculum and of teacher preparation programs of democratic education. Their curriculum engages students in deep reflection on ethical dilemmas, historical crucibles and helps them discover the role of individual responsibility in history. Facing History works to turn people into upstanders for justice and democracy, rather than bystanders.

Colombia has, over the last two decades, made extraordinary advances in promoting education for democratic citizenship. Those have included developing national curriculum standards for democratic citizenship, the inclusion of assessments of student knowledge and skills for democratic citizenship as part of the national assessments which include also language, mathematics and science. With support from the Inter-American Development Bank, Colombia hosted, under the leadership of then Minister of Education Cecilia Maria Velez, a Latin American observatory of democratic education which supported the assessment of students’ democratic skills, and the identification and dissemination of programs of democratic education. Colombia has a robust network of researchers and practitioners focused on how best to educate children and youth for democratic citizenships which have highlighted the importance of school climate, and the harmful role of school violence, in educating youth for democratic life.

In its remarkable efforts to negotiate a Peace agreement with a long standing insurgent force, Colombia has remained steadfast in its commitment to schools’ role in educating democratic citizens. As part of those efforts, the Minister of Education, Gina Parody, is leading a vigorous campaign to make sure students learn in school that all children have the same rights and responsibilities, and to curb violence
and discrimination of all kind in schools. These efforts in democratic education include programs to stop homophobic bullying, a frequent practice in Colombia called ‘matonismo’ which subjects gay youth to various forms of socially sanctioned violence by their peers. These programs of civic education also include programs that educate high school students on the existence of various gender identities, including LGTBQ identities.

These efforts of Minister Parody, to uphold the rights of gay students, have generated vigorous opposition from some political, civic and religious leaders in Colombia. They have accused her of promoting a ‘gender ideology,’ and of taking away the rights of parents to choose how to educate their children on these matters. The opposition to Minister Parody has turned personal, with several of those opposing her bringing up the fact that Minister Parody is gay as an attempt to undermine her authority.

Minister Gina Parody, and those who preceded her in these efforts, are to be applauded in understanding that gay rights are human rights, and that homophobic bullying is a savage practice that all educators around the world should cooperate to abolish. In her work to teach students to understand that all people are fundamentally equal, that all have equal rights, that we need to learn to accept our differences as a source of strength, essential to help us collaborate in the important task of improving the world, and that democracy requires the cultivation of human reason, assisted by science, so we can build societies that advance the well-being of all, Minister Parody’s work is fully aligned with the vision of those audacious leaders, Miranda, Bolivar, Bello, Sarmiento, who hoped that ordinary people could rule themselves in the Americas, and who understood that democracy was only possible with democratic citizens. Gina Parody is moving schools in Colombia one step further in the long arc of justice and democracy.
Saving E Pluribus Unum in Our Schools and Colleges
(Huffington Post Blog, Published May 4, 2017)

_E Pluribus Unum_, this thirteen letter phrase, has long been understood as the unofficial motto of these United States. The phrase means _Out of Many, One_, and its origins date back to Cicero’s paraphrasing of Pythagoras discussing the bonds that are the foundation of societies ‘When each person loves the other as much as himself, it makes one out of many.’ Political scientists translate this concept of ‘love’ into ‘trust’ a core element in the functioning of democratic societies. Large holes in the fabric of American Democracy challenge the trust that is essential for democracy as a way of life in America. In particular, trust among groups of different racial and ethnic identities, essential for people to make democracy work in an increasingly diverse country, is inadequate for us to rise together in addressing the challenges the country faces. We need to rediscover the strength that exists in our diversity. _E Pluribus Unum_, or, _from many, one_, has never been more critical.

Our public schools were created to help develop a shared democratic culture, to help children learn to accept and work alongside others from different cultural identities. When Horace Mann launched a campaign for public education, proposing that it would be ‘the social wheel of the social machinery,’ he was making a case for their civic purposes in building the necessary trust among all groups so that we could find strength in our diversity. Today, schools must embrace this, their original purpose, with passion, for the sake of repairing the impairments to this essential trust caused by the current presidential campaign. To do this, they must explicitly commit to their democratic civic purposes, teach all students at very high levels so they can develop the competencies to be engaged citizens, and support teachers in developing their competencies to cultivate the democratic sensibilities of their students. We need to teach our students to love others as much as they love themselves, to trust, to see the strength that lies in our
diversity. To achieve this, all groups who care about the future of democracy must come together and collaborate. This is no time for petty turf battles, the stakes are too precious and the goal much bigger than any of us can accomplish alone.

The erosion of trust among the many groups that form America has suffered greatly from the narrative used by Donald Trump in his bid for the presidency of the United States. Trump has disparaged minority groups, especially Hispanics and Muslims, and repeatedly resorted to a narrative that brings into question who belongs in America. He has embraced a narrative not of love of the other, not of trust, but of mistrust, perhaps even of hate. He has referred to immigrants from Mexico as criminals and rapists, and proposed massive deportations of immigrants. He openly harassed Mexican-American journalist Jorge Ramos, questioned the impartiality of Mexican-American judge Gonzalo Curiel, falsely accused New Jersey resident Muslims of celebrating the terrorist attacks on 9/11, proposed special examinations for Muslim visitors and immigrants, closing mosques as part of his counterterrorism strategy, and ridiculed a Muslim couple of parents of a fallen American soldier.

This bigoted discourse capitalizes on prejudice and reinforces it. It is the antithesis of *E Pluribus Unum*. Trump’s campaign has legitimized the public expression of racial prejudice and discrimination. This is likely to exacerbate various forms of race-based violence. A 2016 study of violent manifestations of Islamophobia conducted by the BRIDGE Initiative at Georgetown University devotes an entire chapter to ‘Trump inspired violence’ and documents a significant increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes during Trump’s campaign. Some of these have involved students and taken place in schools. A Muslim mother and her nine year old daughter were physically attacked at a restaurant in Indiana by a nineteen year old college student, a group of 12 year olds physically assaulted a sixth grader Muslim student in school in New York, punching her as they called her ‘ISIS,’ a seventeen year old ran
over a Sikh man in California, and a seventh grader threatened to shoot a Muslim schoolmate in Ohio. In the town where I live a middle school student of Mexican descent has been bullied by classmates who have taunted him indicating that they hope Trump wins so he builds a wall and he has to ‘go back to his country’. Journalist, Nick Kristoff, has reported similar racial bullying resulting from the campaign throughout the United States.

In response to the increased risk of violence resulting from Mr. Trump’s bigotry, educators have a responsibility to help students and the public reduce the foreseeable damaging consequences. Equally importantly, we have a responsibility to help our students develop the competencies to help our students understand what E Pluribus Unum means and how central it is to the future of this democracy. In effect, we have to urgently undo the damage to the fabric of American democracy that this bigoted campaign has caused. In doing this, in equipping students for respectful and accepting coexistence in a pluralistic society, teachers would be doing the work public schools were created to do, teaching students to live democracy as a way of life, which is after all how democracies succeed or fail.

The bigoted campaign of Mr. Trump preys on ignorance. Polls among GOP voters before his nomination show a significant divide by level of education. Among those without college degrees, Mr. Trump was the favorite of 37% of the voters, compared to 19% for those with college degrees. He was the top choice for those without degrees, but not for the college educated. After his nomination, some of the most educated republican voters remain uninspired by his bigoted campaign. The Harvard Republican Club, a student organization, recently issued a statement indicating that it will not support Donald Trump, and called on GOP leaders to withdraw their support in clear reference to how he has undermined E Pluribus Unum, stating:
“His authoritarian tendencies and flirtations with fascism are unparalleled in the history of our democracy…He hopes to divide us by race, by class, and by religion, instilling enough fear and anxiety to propel himself to the White House.”

In polls of electoral preferences, Trump has a clear lead over Clinton among the least educated voters who were educated many years ago. Among voters older than 65 who did not attend college, Trump leads Clinton 49 to 33 percent. In contrast, Clinton leads Trump 51 to 34 percent among those with postgraduate degrees, and 45 to 40 percent among those with college degrees. This lead is much greater for those who have graduated more recently and who are under the age of 34, 54 to 30 percent.

Such disparities in the electoral preferences of voters with different levels of education are likely related to the type of argumentation used by each candidate. In addition to appealing to bigoted and racist prejudices, Donald Trump has consistently depended on a narrative unsupported by facts. That the most educated among Republican voters are unpersuaded by those tactics is indicative that education indeed develops the cognitive skills necessary for people to make the complex decisions involved in selecting someone to represent their interests. At the core, public schools are about equipping people with the necessary skills to participate effectively in a democratic society. Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed this best when he said: “Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.” There are three concrete steps educators can take and five essential conditions to restore E Pluribus Unum in our schools.

One of the things educators should do, in earnest, is to make sure all students can read and communicate with understanding, critically, at the levels necessary for participation in a modern democratic society. There is much work to be done in this respect in America. The
Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has designed assessment of student knowledge and skills in various domains, including the capacity to understand written texts with the sophistication necessary to participate in a knowledge-based economy and in a democratic society. In those assessments, administered in all OECD countries, the performance of US students is mediocre and there are larger disparities among students than the average for all countries. Educators must work in earnest helping ALL students develop the capacity to read, with understanding, to think critically, to be able to assess the evidence which supports claims, such as those made by people who ask for their vote.

Being able to think about the issues that those who hope to represent us must decide upon requires more than literacy skills, it requires knowledge and skills in science, math, history, geography, political science or economics. Only with knowledge and the capacity to think critically can voters hold candidates to account in the claims they make about how they plan to create jobs, close trade deficits, promote national security or reduce crime. Especially important in a democracy is that citizens know the laws and history of the country and its institutions, so they can participate effectively.

In addition to such knowledge and skills, democratic participation requires dispositions to work with others in the ways expected in a democratic culture, respect for instance, or acceptance of differences. There are many ways in which such dispositions can be cultivated, all involve well designed curriculum and teachers well prepared to teach it. We the people, for instance, is a program designed and implemented by the Center for Civic Education that engages upper elementary and middle school students in the history and principles of constitutional representative democracy. Facing History and Ourselves, is a curriculum and teacher professional development organization that supports learning experiences in which students analyze historical cases
to develop an awareness of the role of individual responsibility in advancing human rights. Schools and districts should assess to what extent there are sufficient opportunities in the curriculum for all students, and not just for those who participate in student government, to learn to think and act as expected in a democratic society.

The following five conditions would enable educators in taking those three steps to restore E Pluribus Unum:

Ensuring that the students who are enrolled in schools and colleges are indeed prepared in the ways expected by F.D. Roosevelt requires that education leaders first make explicit their commitment to educating for democratic citizenship. State boards of education should approve and widely disseminate a statement of principles to this end, providing direction, as the Massachusetts Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education did recently incorporating civic learning and engagement in the definition of college and career readiness. Districts and Schools could do the same. We need to remind ourselves, and all who care about our schools, that schools were invented to make democracy work, to teach us how to make out of many one, *E Pluribus Unum*.

The goal of preparing students for democratic citizenship should find expression in the State Standards, and accountability framework. Effective citizenship requires sophisticated skills, in language and mathematics, for sure, in science and technology, certainly, but also ethical competencies, values and dispositions that allow students to love others as they love themselves, ways of making sense of self in the context of a diverse society, in a way that is not threatened by, or threatens, the sense of self of others with different cultural identities. If this is indeed the most important goal of our schools we should hold them accountable to this. We should care as much about incidents of racial bullying in our schools as we care about students who don’t learn to read.
Options for teacher professional development could then be made available to help teachers build their skills and knowledge to provide their students excellent preparation for democratic participation. We should do more than hope that students absorb by osmosis the norms and values of life in a democratic society, for much of the current narrative and actions in fact challenge these basic democratic norms. When a presidential candidate questions the citizenship rights of American born children of immigrants he is challenging the US Constitution. When he suggests that the elections will be rigged, he is challenging the institutions that are at the very core of representative democracy. When he suggests that the President of the United States is complicit in the creation of a terrorist organization like ISIS he is undermining the most basic trust in our elected officials. Teachers need deep knowledge and expertise to help students develop into competent democratic citizens.

As important, but undoubtedly more challenging, will be providing similar opportunities to develop democratic sensibilities and competencies to the adults no longer in school, in particular to those with the lower levels of education and to those who were educated a long time ago. Just as they need the opportunities to develop skills for workforce participation in an economy that increasingly demands more skills, they need to develop their capacities for democratic participation, in a democratic process that requires competency. This involves knowledge and skills, as well as dispositions. A citizen who ignores the legal framework of the country, who ignores or disregards the facts or the rights of others, or who believes that they can act on prejudiced hatred is a burden to democratic coexistence. It is in the best interest of American democracy that all be provided opportunities to gain the necessary competencies to participate in a democratic society. This will require serious efforts in adult education, and the creation of an effective infrastructure to effectively reach the least educated adults.
Universities and community colleges have here a special responsibility through their extension programs.

Achieving these simple but important goals will require collaboration across a range of institutions. Among school and district leaders, leaders of higher education institutions, teacher unions, schools of education, voluntary movements, business, philanthropic organizations. None of them, alone, has the necessary authority or power to produce the depth of commitment and the seriousness of effort that will help us align our schools with the goal of repairing our democracy. This effort will require, most certainly, collaboration across political partialities. This is not a Democratic, Republican or Independent issue. This is not about particular individuals and their followers, it is not a Bush issue, a Rubio issue, a Clinton issue or a Bernie issue. This is about the basic trust and competency that will either make this democratic republic succeed or fail. If our education institutions are to truly teach all students and adults what *E Pluribus Unum* means, we all have to build bridges across the boundaries of our institutions and demonstrate that we too understand that we can value our diversity and out of many become one and achieve great things.

Educators touch eternity as they help students anticipate and bring about a world that is better than the present. At no time has this been more urgent in this country than at present, when the undemocratic demons of bigotry and racism have been summoned by a reckless candidate. Before those demons cause more violence and suffering, before they blind us all to the essential truth of *E Pluribus Unum*, teachers should, with renewed urgency, get on with teaching their students what democracy is, and how to perfect it each day with our actions.
Hate Rising, The US Presidential Election and The Day After
(Huffington Post Blog, Published April 12, 2017)

I just saw an excellent documentary produced by journalist Jorge Ramos titled ‘Hate Rising’ [http://fusion.net/story/359130/jorge-ramos-hate-rising/]. In this documentary Ramos demonstrates how hate groups have become emboldened by the narrative used by Donald Trump, and how hate speech, organizing and actions have become more visible and prevalent over the last year. The interviews Ramos and his colleagues conduct with white supremacist leaders who openly argue for the superiority of the white race and for social structures that give whites superior rights and privileges are painfully revealing of the imperfections of American society and of the work in progress which are the efforts to make American democracy live up to the ideals of fundamental equality for all on which it was established.

This public and visible hate and racism will be the legacy of the presidential campaign of Donald Trump, likely to last beyond November 8th. The authorization of such public hatred sets the nation back in the progress made towards greater racial equity since the Civil Rights Movement. To those of us who believe that American society should be one that lives up to the idea that all people are fundamentally equal and to the ideal that all deserve equal opportunities there are three ways to respond to this hate rising.

The first is to vote for Hillary Clinton for President, for Tim Kane for Vice President and for democratic candidates for Congress on November 8th. The campaign of the Democratic Party has been one of inclusion, in stark contrast to the hate risen as a result of the campaign of Donald Trump, of those who elected him and of those in the GOP who still support him and who have failed to denounce this hatred. The larger the gap between the number of votes received by Democrats and Republicans the clearer the message regarding how many people in...
America renounce the hateful campaign of Mr. Trump. This means that every vote matters, beyond the votes necessary to win the electoral college. Even in states where a victory is expected for the Democrats, it is important to give them a resounding majority that speaks loudly about where we stand on who belongs in America, and which hopefully discourages any politician in the future from trying similar tactics of divisiveness and bigotry. I also hope a colossal defeat in this election will give the leaders of the GOP committed to democratic values the mandate to kick out the extremists who hijacked the party of Lincoln and reestablish it as a party committed to the constitutional norms of this democratic republic.

This means that it is important not only to have Hillary elected, but to give democratic representatives for Congress a resounding victory and a mandate that speaks loudly to all, including and especially to those who chose the side of hatred, about where the majority of the voters in this country stand on the fundamental question of the equality among people of all races and ethnicity.

Beyond this victory which I hope the values of inclusion and equality will have over the value of hatred, division and exclusion on election day, the hatred Jorge Ramos documents in his excellent program is likely to continue after the election. This is now The Problem We All Live With, to use the title of the iconic Norman Rockwell painting depicting the struggles of the Civil Rights movement in the form of six year old Ruby Bridges walking to school escorted by four Marshalls, against a wall marked with racial epithets and marks of white supremacist groups.

So in many ways the real hard work begins the day after the election, and it should include addressing the racism and hatred that was exploited and exacerbated by Donald Trump’s campaign, and empowering those who are the targets of such hatred with the psychological resources and skills to resist the most damaging effects of
hate. Doing this will require important attention to schools, particularly to the way those embrace their civic mission.

For all students, haters and non-haters alike, schools should help them understand the basic principles on which this democratic republic was founded, its history, and help all students develop the dispositions to understand that our strength lies in our diversity and in advancing opportunities for all. Supporting these efforts in democratic citizenship education is the second thing we could all do to undo the harm of the hate rising as a result of this campaign.

For those students who are the targets of these hateful groups, members of racial and religious minorities, schools should help them develop the skills and dispositions to adjust well, to advance themselves, and to improve their communities. Supporting such efforts is the third thing we could all do to repair the damage caused by this hateful campaign to the basic trust and inclusiveness which are essential for democracy to function.

The best way to do this, in my view, is to support the educational opportunities of Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Muslim, of racial and ethnic minority children and youth and low income students and to systematically look for ways to help these our children and youth develop agency, and understanding of the political process and of the many opportunities to make democracy work in the acts of ordinary citizens, to discover and master the codes of political participation and power, to develop political efficacy.

Many of these children and youth face serious education challenges. These challenges can be solved. Some are so simple as providing them with information on what it takes to prepare an application to college, or with the knowledge to be able to chart a path to college. Other
challenges are more serious, such as ensuring that they have consistent access to high quality teachers.

It is important that we get a significantly greater percentage of all of our children, from all groups, to graduate from college, until college graduation rates represent the percentage of each demographic group in the total population. The main reason to do this is that the country needs more college graduates, and unless more students from all groups graduate from college we will not be able to achieve this goal, given that minority youth are a growing percentage of the population. Whereas 30 years ago the country led the industrialized world in the percentage of students who had the opportunity to go to college, the rest of the world made progress whereas we did not. This had two consequences, one is that it diminished the relative level of education of our labor force, the second is that it increased social inequality in the opportunity to go to college. Whereas 30 years ago 40% of the children who came from the richest 25% of the population went to college, today 85% of them do. In contrast, 30 years ago 6% of the children from the poorest 25% of the population went to college, and today only 7.5% do.

Educationally, our standing relative to our global peers has been declining. Three decades ago we had the labor force with the greatest percentage of college educated, about 40%. Many of them, now 60 years or older, are retiring. This percentage of college educated, however, is also 40% among our younger generations, suggesting that our levels of college access and completion have barely kept up with population growth, leaving us, in relative terms, in the same place. In contrast, 56% of the younger labor force in Canada has at least an associate degree, compared to 47% in the US. Only 70% of our high school graduates transition to college, and of those only 57% will graduate in six years. Of those in community colleges, less than 25% will graduate in three years. These low levels of college access and completion are substantially lower for minority students. Only one in
five Hispanics, and 30% of African Americans between the ages of 25 and 34 have an associate degree or more.

These figures suggest that it is urgent that we address the pathway of opportunity to access and complete college for African Americans, Hispanics and for our lower income students. To do this successfully will require studying and addressing the specific barriers faced by each of these groups.

Hispanics face the unique challenge that most of them have families who have not attended college, and many are segregated in neighborhoods that similarly lack college educated people. Exacerbating the lack of opportunity to access information about the advantages to attend college and about the steps involved in supporting a college track for Hispanic students many Hispanic families who have immigrated recently speak limited English, which constrains their opportunity to access information available on college websites and other resources, and which creates challenges for successful communication with teachers, principals and school counselors. In addition, many Hispanic students are segregated in schools of low quality, where high school counselors have unmanageable caseloads.

How do we support Hispanics in gaining the academic skills to be ready for college and to participate politically?

Research shows clearly that high quality teachers make a very large difference in the academic success of their students, more so for low income students. To quote from an interview that Steve Jobs gave:

“I know from my own education that if I hadn't encountered two or three individuals that spent extra time with me, I'm sure I would have been in jail. I'm 100% sure that if it hadn't been
for Mrs. Hill in fourth grade and a few others, I would have absolutely ended up in jail.”

So certainly teachers can make a big difference and those who do are the teachers who are well prepared, who know their subject, who know how to teach, who have very high expectations for their students, who get to know their students and figure out how to connect with each student, how to personalize their teaching so all can learn, and who can spend a little extra time with students like Steve Jobs so all their students can go on to do great things as he did.

To have those kinds of teachers we need to prepare them, Universities and districts need to take teacher preparation seriously. State Departments of Higher Education and of Elementary and Secondary Education need to see teacher preparation and support as one of the most important strategic options to improve education. Holding teacher preparation institutions and districts accountable so they provide the best preparation and support to teachers, we have to figure out ways to help teachers learn what so many of them say they need to learn, like how to personalize instruction, how to manage discipline in their classrooms, how to integrate technology into their teaching, how to implement culturally responsive instruction. We also need to help teachers develop professional ethics, understand that theirs is one of the most important professions, that they are literally shaping lives and minds and that we cannot afford to lose a single one of those minds. It is essential that our teacher force reflects also the cultural makeup of our population.

The worst teachers are those who have low expectations for their students, who don’t think their students will learn very much or go very far in life, and because they are incapable of teaching some of those teachers end up with very disengaged students… some of them end up using suspensions as a way to manage this problem, and this normally does not resolve the problem that is at the root of the issue.
A large proportion of Hispanics live in poverty. The first thing low income parents and their children need is access to high quality instruction and to information about their rights. They need teachers who are qualified, appointed on day one, who show up regularly and who take responsibility to make sure all their students learn. We don’t have an education system that consistently does this and in general in our schools students whose parents know how to advocate for them get more attention and better services from the school. This is a problem for parents who don’t know the system or whose command of the English language limits their opportunities to advocate for their children. We need community organizations that empower the parents and that work with districts to ensure that teachers and school principals are accountable to do the job they are paid to do. We need to recognize those who do good work and differentiate them from those who don’t. We need to give school principals the authority and flexibility to keep the teachers who produce results and are committed to teaching their students to high standards and to let go of the teachers who are not capable or motivated to teach students who desperately need access to excellent teaching.

This “Problem We All Live With,” the result of the rising hatred of this electoral campaign, provides each of us an opportunity for leadership. It gives us the opportunity to make this democracy work in the acts of ordinary people. The reason we should do it is because, as Americans, we are stewards of the aspirations set out by George Washington, Thomas Jefferson or Abigail and John Adams. We stand on the dream of freedom advanced by Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth or Harriet Beecher Stowe. We advance the efforts of inclusion led by Jane Addams. We carry on the dream of those who led the civil rights movement. Standing on the shoulders of Lyndon Johnson, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Height, Diane Nash, Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, Amelia Boynton, Daisy Bates and many others who lived to
make this a country with justice and freedom for all we too can contribute to expand opportunities for all our children and youth, Hispanic-Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Americans of European Descent, White or Black, Muslims, Christians or Jews, so together we can collaborate and contribute fully to the success of this democratic experiment.
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO and other essays on Human Rights

Moving on to Educate all Children Well
(Huffington Post Blog, Published April 12, 2017)

As an educator I am guided by the belief that all people are fundamentally equal and have equal rights and by the belief that education has the power to help each person gain the skills that help them gain the autonomy and the freedom to live the life they want to live and the disposition and ability to join others in improving their communities. Schools and colleges, and the idea that they should be accessible to all people, are the best human inventions to help us improve the world.

In order to help educational institutions realize their potential it is important to have clear goals that provide direction for what it means to prepare students to improve the world. Educational improvement is teamwork, and teams work better when they share a vision about true north. I find true north in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a compact outlining what are the basic rights that each person has because they are human. I find also guidance in the Sustainable Development Goals, approved by the United Nations a year ago, outlining a vision of the conditions necessary for global Peace and sustainability.

I am concerned that the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States might pose some challenges to advancing some of these goals. Since he has no record of public service, I can only make scenarios of what his likely educational priorities will be based on his campaign rhetoric. On that basis, I expect challenges for advancing the educational rights of ethnic and religious minorities, of LGTBQ communities, of students who live in the United States undocumented. I expect also challenges to educating students to behave in ways that reverse climate change. I also hope to be wrong in these predictions, and that his actions as President reveal a different set of priorities than
those revealed by his campaign. It is entirely possible that he will appoint a team to oversee education that will advance educational opportunities for all. That would be very valuable, in my view, to advancing economic and social prosperity and inclusion in this nation. But regardless of what the education priorities of the new administration are, I am hopeful that we will continue to make progress in this nation in addressing the educational challenges that we face. My hope stems from knowing that there are many avenues and institutions which contribute to addressing the educational challenges we share.

While the President of the United States and the executive branch of government have significant power to influence education, this power is limited and shared with other levels of government—states and districts matter more to what goes on in schools than the federal government—and with other branches of government—the courts exert as much power as the executive, as does Congress. Civil society and private organizations exert also important influence in our schools.

There are many private organizations, foundations, and groups of civil society from which we can make determined progress in addressing our educational needs. Teachers’ organizations and colleges and universities, providers of teacher professional development, and school districts all have significant influence over the educational opportunities of students. It is this plurality of institutions and avenues from which to advance educational opportunity that sustains our schools and supports our students in gaining the competencies to be self-authoring individuals and advance their human rights. There is much work ahead for this ecosystem of institutions to do in advancing human rights and sustainability through education and I am confident this work will continue, perhaps even with renewed urgency given the deep divisions in American society revealed in this last presidential campaign. For this work to continue at greater levels of effectiveness robust dialogue on the goals and purposes of our schools is essential. We need a national conversation on our educational priorities, one that can facilitate the
necessary collective action for this ecosystem to be coherently aligned and to achieve synergies, so we produce deep, meaningful and sustainable educational change.

One of the urgent tasks ahead is to build the civic agency of our students and to repair the damage caused to the social fabric of this democracy by the narrative used in this campaign appealing to bigotry and suggesting that the political process was corrupt, that the elections might be rigged, that the media is biased, or that politicians are corrupt. These ideas are likely to have left an impression on the public, perhaps fueling cynicism about politics and about the democratic process, and undermining the trust in institutions and in one another, across lines of difference, which are essential for the functioning of representative democracy. This cynicism is harmful to the future of our democracy. It leaves people with no option other than marching in the streets or withdrawing from participation. Educators should work in earnest to help students develop the skills and dispositions essential to building this trust in one another, in our institutions and in the democratic process. They should help students understand that democratic politics, imperfect as they are, work best when people engage with the process, and not when they disengage. Students should learn in school what are the avenues for effective political participation, and gain the skills to participate effectively.

Educators should also create opportunities for all students to understand that there is strength in our diversity and to advance opportunities for all. We need to recommit to the civic mission of our schools and universities so they help students gain the knowledge and the dispositions that make democracy work in the acts of ordinary citizens, in how we relate to one another, in how we collaborate and in how we take responsibility to improve the communities of which we are a part, engaging in civic life and in politics. This opportunity, indeed
requirement, that we all engage in democratic politics as equals, is the genius of democracy, a genius public schools were created to help realize.

The first thing our schools should do to empower students is to teach all of our students well, to help them develop the full range of competencies which enable them to participate in the economy and in society, to develop their mind and their character, their capacity to think critically, to understand and appreciate evidence, to work with others in ways that are respectful, accepting and productive. We need to look for ways to help all of our children and youth, including minority and low income youth, access high quality education that helps them develop agency and the skills to participate effectively economically and civically. In order to empower our youth in schools we need to help minority and low income students gain greater access to a high quality education, and to college, and support them so they can complete their degrees. To do this we need to expand our accountability frameworks so they foster the education of the whole child, not just focus on a few basic skills. We need to also promote personalization of learning, so each student can thrive and achieve at high levels.

To provide all students these opportunities for deeper learning we will need to commit to producing high quality teachers. State Departments of Higher Education and of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as school districts and organizations that work with them need to see teacher preparation and professional support as one of the most important strategic options to improve education. We must invest seriously in the development of real teacher expertise, supporting teachers throughout their careers, in ways aligned to meaningful career ladders and in ways that give teachers voice to develop and rely on the expertise that should guide the practice of a true profession.

In advancing this national agenda of educational opportunity schools of education and universities can play a very constructive role, mobilizing
the educational expertise which undergirds high levels of teacher professionalism at home and abroad, and preparing the teachers and school leaders with the skills to support their students’ deeper learning. In response to the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957, many of our top universities made a serious commitment to developing high quality science curriculum and to preparing excellent science teachers, as a way to help advance American airspace ambitions. In the wake of an election that shows deep divisions in American society, universities need to again step up and ask again how to best contribute to bringing this country together, supporting the improvement of our public schools.

America has some of the best universities in the world, but K-12 schools that are far less exemplary when compared to those of other nations. We must connect these two sets of institutions for the sake of educating all children to advance prosperity, social inclusion and democratic governance. This will require not only efforts in initial preparation of teachers or leaders, but especially of deep, sustained and coherent opportunities for ongoing professional development, aligned with career ladders for teachers and administrators, and with helping students master the competencies necessary to participate effectively in the 21st century. Schools of education can play a critical role strengthening educational practice with expert knowledge, built in partnership with the teaching profession in service of effective learning opportunities in schools so our students are equipped to make democracy work in their daily actions. Universities have also a special obligation to create meaningful post-secondary opportunities for those currently excluded from such access. Initiatives such as the Commonwealth Commitment of public institutions of higher education in Massachusetts, which offer the opportunity to earn an undergraduate degree at a cost of less than 30,000 dollars are an example of the kind of innovation that is possible and necessary.
There is much work for educators to do in these United States educating a population that can make democracy work. I hope that the new administration will contribute to advance that agenda. I am grateful that there are so many avenues from which we can all contribute to the important and urgent task of preparing all students for meaningful work and to participate, so they can revitalize our economy and maintain our democracy advancing the human rights of all and ways to live and relate to the earth which are sustainable.
Jimmy Carter, Donald Trump and Violence Against Women
(Huffington Post Blog, Published October 12, 2016)

In November of 2014 I attended a lecture by former President Jimmy Carter in Memorial Church at Harvard. He spoke about violence against women around the world, the topic of a book he had published that year. In his lecture, President Carter argued that violence against women is the most serious human rights violation around the world, perpetrated and sustained by cultural practices that have roots in misguided interpretation of religious scriptures. He argued also that violence against women was perpetrated in all countries around the world, even when it violated the law, including in two of the institutions we most respect in the United States: our universities and the military, institutions where there is a high incidence of sexual assault and rape.

President Carter argued that this culture of violence is sustained to a great extent because people who could denounce these practices or sanction them, turn a blind eye to them or enable them. In his words:

“Exactly the same thing happens in universities in America that happens in the military. Presidents of universities and colleges and commanding officers don’t want to admit that, under their leadership, sexual abuse is taking place,... Rapists prevail because they know they’re not going to be reported.”

President Carter’s talk impressed me by the clarity of his moral argument and by his command of the facts, and also by his one hour delivery in which he cited facts and figures without the use of any written notes. As I left Memorial Church that evening I thought of him as a remarkable leader, someone with the moral courage to take on a most difficult issue, and to invite all of us to not stand by, and to do our share to right this wrong.
As I left his talk, I picked up a copy of the book *A Call to Action. Women, Religion, Violence, and Power* from the Harvard Coop, our university bookstore, and after reading it, decided to follow his call to action. A few months later I received a nice handwritten note from President Carter in response to a letter I had sent him explaining how his book had persuaded me of the urgency of this issue. I had assigned his book as required reading in a course on education policy I teach, joined a task force at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to discuss the findings of a climate survey to examine the incidence of sexual assault at our University, organized a Think Tank at Harvard on how to address gender inequality and co-chaired a task force on violence prevention in public universities in the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Had President Carter not been diagnosed with cancer in an advanced stage I would have invited him to join us at the Think Tank I had organized on this topic or to join us at a recent conference the Department of Higher Education of Massachusetts organized to discuss the findings of a report on this subject produced under the oversight of the committee on violence and sexual assault prevention I co-chaired.

What I have learned about this subject since listening to President Carter in the fall of 2014 has convinced me that there is much work to do to eliminate violence against women in America, including in our Universities, and that it is critical that we all take a clear stance and act decisively to advance this work. In September of 2015, the Association of American Universities released a report of a campus climate survey conducted in the spring of 2015 in 27 institutions of higher education, including Harvard. It took courage on the part of the Presidents of the Universities which participated in this study to do so and to make the results public and take clear steps forward to advance the recommendations of the task force. Harvard’s President Drew Faust, established a high level faculty task force that produced a report of Sexual Assault on our own University, and that outlined clear recommendations for action to eliminate it. The report was widely
discussed by groups of faculty and students, and much greater emphasis on education and prevention is in place since.

The AAU study revealed that the incidence of sexual violence was higher than that reported in previous studies, a relatively small percentage of even the most serious incidents are reported to an organization or agency. That study revealed that more than one in ten students had experienced nonconsensual penetration or sexual touching by force or incapacitation.

In 2015 The U.S. Justice Department released a report that showed that 90 percent of the rapes committed on college campuses are committed by four percent of the men. One in five women is sexually assaulted before graduation and one in 10 is raped. Furthermore, assault rates are higher in institutions of higher education than among women not in college.

In this context, the recent revelations that Donald Trump reported having engaged in sexual assault of women, and that he seems to believe that his status as a ‘celebrity’ gives him the right to kiss or fondle women, or to aggressively incite married women to have extramarital affairs with him, is very grave. It is not only unethical behavior, possibly criminal, it is a form of grave violence and offense that should be unacceptable in a society that lives by the rule of law.

The behavior he reports having engaged in exemplified exactly the kind of conduct that Jimmy Carter describes as perpetuating this grave violation of the most basic human rights of women, as does the silent by-standing or complicit enabling of those who witnessed him in perpetrating this violence. I imagine those who taught him as an undergraduate at Fordham University and at the University of Pennsylvania are reflecting on what they could have done differently to
better prepare him to live ethically. All of us who work in higher education should think deeply about what it means that a graduate of an Ivy League university in America has said and done the many things Donald Trump has said. These words and actions challenge the core values of a democratic society, and it is troubling that so many college graduates seem to identify with his views.

Donald Trump has admitted that he did indeed say and do these things, and he has apologized. This apology is insufficient to undo the damage that the public knowledge of his practices, his bragging about them, and the complicit enabling of those, like TV host Billy Bush, present when he discussed his plans, has caused to the ongoing efforts to eliminate these practices in all institutions where they happen. Many who hear about Trump’s behavior might wonder whether there is anything wrong in emulating what a powerful man did as an affirmation of his power and status as a ‘celebrity.’

The various studies on sexual violence in higher education indicate that a factor underlying such violence is lack of clarity about what is acceptable behavior. To clear up any misunderstandings on the minds of students it is important for educators, in high schools and colleges and universities, to convey to their students that these practices are a violation of the law and of basic ethical norms to live in a democratic society that respects the equal rights of women and men. The evidence Carter cites in his book, and the other reports I have mentioned, demonstrate that there is urgent work to do to educate the next generation to understand how wrong behavior such as the one perpetrated by Donald Trump is.

This is not a time to stand silent by the sidelines, to be a bystander as many who emboldened Trump have been, but a time for anyone with responsibility to educate the young to take a clear moral stance about how unacceptable this form of violence Trump has perpetrated is. I am heartened that a number of leaders of the Republican party, including
Condoleezza Rice, Mitt Romney, John McCain and Paul Ryan, understand the gravity of the situation and have repudiated Trump’s behavior. I hope university professors, high school teachers, and higher education leaders will do the same.

References


AAU Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct. http://www.aau.edu/Climate-Survey.aspx?id=16525


The Road to The World Course
This Interview was conducted in December of 2011 by staff at the Global Citizen Initiative and published in their website http://www.theglobalcitizensinitiative.org/

TGCI Interview with Fernando Reimers, Ford Foundation Professor of International Education and Director of the International Education Policy Program at Harvard University.
12/21/11

**TGCI:** How did you become interested in global education and global citizenship?

**Fernando Reimers:** I have been thinking about global education for a number of years. This evolved gradually from my original interest in expanding educational opportunity globally. After decades consulting for governments and development organizations on how to ‘teach the world,’ I came to understand that I had to ‘teach global education leaders’ and eventually understood that to do this I had to ‘teach about the world.’ I left the World Bank to join the faculty at Harvard where I started the International Education Policy program because I realized that in order to improve education systems around the world it was critical to have capable leaders who could make change happen and I thought this program would contribute to the cultivation of a new generation of global education leaders. But I discovered that not everyone at Harvard understood why these issues were important. I found myself having to explain to others why Harvard should be interested in developing leaders to expand educational opportunities in other countries. I learned much from sitting in conversations where people would debate whether a small school of education should really do international education, and if so, whether the focus should be on developing countries or in advanced countries. In these conversations I
noticed that it was not self-evident to many that all people are interdependent. A question I commonly encountered was “why should we care about improving education for children in other countries when there’s plenty of improvement needed right here at home?” I had long believed that people around the world should share responsibility for education for all, not just education for their own communities and countries. It was a small logical step for me to extend to a global scale the same rationale that in a country we all benefit from supporting the education of all children, not just our own. I realized that just like I had gradually come to that understanding, others would need opportunities to develop their own understanding about how we all share responsibility for the well-being of humanity. I see global education as a way to help people achieve that understanding and to develop that compassion.

**TGCI:** Once you recognized the need for this kind of global responsibility and awareness, what did you do?

**Fernando Reimers:** At first I began to lecture about global education, to various groups of undergraduate and graduate students, at Harvard and elsewhere. I also engaged with various groups of educators interested in global education, including chairing the global education advisory board to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, and lecturing at various professional development programs for school principals, teachers and district leaders. In these exchanges I realized that there was a need for a clear definition of global competency and global education. So I wrote several chapters and op-eds in an attempt to conceptualize global education, to define the target. In this work I drew on conversations and observations with the many people I had met in over 20 years of international development work, with my wonderful students, many of them truly exceptional global citizens, in writings of others, in study of programs of international education. I observed that there were certain cognitive and experiential prerequisites for the development of global awareness. First, there was international
travel and experiential learning. I found that if a person had traveled or lived abroad, he or she could more easily develop empathy with people from other cultures. Additionally, I found that those who had personal experience with injustice, like those in persecuted minority groups for example, could more readily develop empathy with other situations of injustice and understand the need for global compacts that could support the rights of all persons, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Finally, I found that cognitive ability was essential for people to be able to understand the interconnectedness of the entire globe on a range of issues, environmental, political, demographic, and recognize their importance.

TGCI: In your writings to conceptualize global education you often use the term “global competency.” Can you say more what you mean by this term??

Fernando Reimers: Global competency encompasses the skills and the interest to understand the basic interdependence of human beings and the environment on a planetary scale, as opposed to a local, more immediate level. Do you pay attention to what is happening beyond your immediate community? Do you follow news that go beyond your immediate surroundings? Do you have the curiosity to educate yourself about global affairs? Do you have the habits of mind to know where to find the knowledge that can help you understand global affairs? Do you care about what happens to your fellow human beings in other countries and regions? Can you feel the pain of those who suffer the effects of political conflict, hunger, poor health, or poverty? Do you see yourself as a steward for global well-being? Can you find ways to contribute to global Peace, stability and sustainability within your sphere of influence? I am not talking about engaging people in heroic acts to save the planet, but about simple and ordinary practices, that can be done without heroism, and which make a difference, such as
supporting organizations that promote global health or education or engaging in environmentally sound practices.

We must prepare the next generation of leaders to find solutions to the problems of the future, to invent the future, so to speak, and in order to do this they must be globally competent because their future will be completely intertwined with the future of their fellow human beings on this small earth. These will be challenges of negotiating demands on natural resources in ways that are sustainable, to providing all people access to health and education, to manage demographic pressures and migratory flows, to manage shocks caused by natural disasters, or by epidemics, to address man-made challenges to the cyber structure on which so much of our lives depend. For many of these challenges, preparedness and prevention and the skills to manage risks would be very helpful. We may not be able to avoid earthquakes and natural disasters, but we can prepare for them, and in this way, mitigate their most devastating impact. We may have to grow accustomed to the risks of cybercrime or breakdown of critical cyber structure, but we can mitigate their impact by preparing for these risks. We can certainly eliminate extreme poverty, hunger and provide basic health and education. The same with political conflicts, we might be able to prevent them, or to mitigate their impact in a number of ways. To paraphrase the preamble to the UNESCO constitution: ‘since wars begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defenses of Peace must be built.’ Preparing people to mitigate global risks and to invent the future, a future that is sustainable, humane for all and Peaceful, is the core of global education.

**TGCI:** How would you describe global competency and global education?

**Fernando Reimers:** Global Competency is first, fundamentally, about values and ethical dispositions. These include a commitment to the fundamental equality of all persons, to accepting the intrinsic value and dignity of life, the sacredness of life, if you will. I find the Universal
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Declaration of Human Rights a good attempt at developing a global ethical compact that can help us works towards Peace. We can’t take for granted that all people share these global values or that they will be able to adopt them unassisted, and for this reason they must be taught. This is the ethical foundation of global education. Second, it’s about knowledge. There are certain domains of understanding that must be cultivated, such as geography, knowledge of other cultures and religions, and knowledge of world events and politics, knowledge of environmental issues and sustainability, demography, public health, natural resource use and distribution. This knowledge helps people to understand globalization, global affairs and global interdependence. Third, it’s about multilingualism. Language is more than just a means of communication; it is the foundation of thinking, of making sense of the world. Being able to make sense of the world in multiple languages enables new layers of insight into the human experience, allows us to gain a unique form of socio-cultural empathy, of seeing the world through new eyes, civilizationally and culturally. This empathy allows us to relate to others who are different in more sophisticated ways. Global education is about crafting the experiences that allow people to develop those skill sets.

**TGCI:** What is the difference between civic education and global education?

**Fernando Reimers:** Because we live our lives in local communities and nation states, citizenship is an important piece of global citizenship, and civic efficacy likely generalizes to some aspect of global efficacy. The person likely to be interested in following national political affairs is more likely to also be interested in international affairs. The person interested in the geography of a nation, is also likely to be interested in world geography. The person interested in understanding cultural variation within a nation, is also likely to be curious about global
Fernando M. Reimers

cultural variation. But having well-developed citizenship skills is not enough to make you a competent global citizen. Global citizens understand civic duties and rights and responsibilities not only in the domestic realm, but also on an international level. They are able to engage in advocacy efforts and projects that reach beyond their national borders.

**TGCI:** We’d like to hear more about the *World Course*, which you designed to improve global education at the Avenue School.

**Fernando Reimers:** Working with the Avenues project has been a singularly satisfying experience and a unique opportunity to develop a complete proposition of how to do global education. At the invitation of the leadership team of the Avenues School I led the design of a global studies curriculum, called the *World Course*. I worked with a group of graduate students and graduates from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, along with staff from the Avenue School, developing a curriculum that would promote the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that form the basis of global competency. The international human rights framework and the Millennium Development Goals anchor this course in values that are commonly held across cultures and nationalities. These are common values that all members of our diverse human race can support, and the World Course aims to instill some of these in students.

In forming the framework of the World Course, we began defining the learning outcomes we sought to help students achieve. To do this we drew on various forecasts of future scenarios as well as the World Economic Forum Global Risk Assessment Framework. We wanted to prepare graduates that could mitigate the risks of the future. This includes responding to natural disasters like earthquakes, managing political conflicts more successfully, and turning difficult situations into opportunities for good. Graduates need to know how to address issues in a variety of subject areas, which correlate to the five threads of the
TGCI: So what does the course actually look like in practice? What is the curriculum like?

Fernando Reimers: It is a K-12 curriculum designed so that each new year of school has a coherent theme and builds upon the previous year’s material. For each of the five parallel threads, we identified the smallest unit of knowledge that could be used to build toward the course’s greater goals, and then developed the scope and sequence of these units. Often, we had to negotiate according to time and resource constraints, as well as limits on students’ abilities to digest and internalize the material in a constructive way. We didn’t want to depress the students by dwelling on all of the world’s problems, but it was important to make them think about these problems, to recognize ongoing efforts to address them and to exercise their own agency as global citizens.

In addition to emphasizing ethics, the World Course teaches cultural and interpersonal skills. One way this is accomplished is by allowing students to share their projects and ideas with students in other countries and collaborating with peers in other countries using technology to support global project based learning. The Avenue Schools plan to open schools around the world that teach students the same curriculum, and establish a platform that allows students in different geographies to engage with each other.

The following videos offer a description of the World Course:
http://www.avenues.org/global-vision-studies
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVTB91VwxrQ
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIGi8SflDow
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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs8hkMYwWts
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D55DCjBDFtc&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p8Ca-5hIt8&feature=related
http://www.avenues.org/Parent_Welcome_Event/fernando-reimers.html

**TGCI:** What are the challenges that this curriculum faces?

**Fernando Reimers:** It is my hope that at some point there will be forms of a ‘World Course’ taught in many different kinds of schools, not just in the schools in the Avenues network. As I think about scaling up this curriculum in that way, one challenge is that each year builds on the previous year, so students who enter the system at a later age, say in grade 4 or 5, will need help in catching up. Another challenge is that teachers will need professional development in order to effectively teach the curriculum. Just as global competency is scarce with the general population at present, so it is with teachers so when teachers who have not in the past taught global studies encounter this curriculum there is the obvious risk that they will turn it into something completely different, closer to what they know, understand and can do. Because the World Course proposes some units in which students are confronted with complex challenges, for which it is not expected that we currently know the answers or solutions. This will test the confidence of many teachers, to engage with their students in discussions of dilemmas or topics for which they –the teachers— do not know the answer. This may be uncomfortable to some teachers. In order for this curriculum to be taught successfully, teachers will have to be willing to tread on somewhat unfamiliar ground with their students, which can make for very valuable teaching and learning moments, and very empowering moments for students, but also unconventional moments for some teachers.
TGCI: What makes this curriculum unique?

Fernando Reimers: There are a number of good global education units and programs being implemented in schools. Typically something which can be included into a conventional discipline such as geography, world history or economics. In general they are short sequences, not entire year long courses, much less multi-year curricular sequences. The World Course is a sustained, multi-year, course with an integrated, interdisciplinary, coherent approach to global education that is reinforced year after year for students, and on which students can achieve depth and advanced understanding as a result of the extended learning time devoted to this activity.

TGCI: As the budding field of global education progresses, what is needed to ensure its success?

Fernando Reimers: Several conditions would help establish this new field of practice. For one, we need more conceptual work to define and recognize good global competency in students. We need to define desired outcomes so that we can measure global competency. We also need to build a community of the practice of global education. It’s extremely important that people come together to share ideas about global education and learn from one another. A field is advanced by teams, by collaboration, and so we need to find institutional spaces for those doing this work to come together to share what we are learning.

Also we need innovation and entrepreneurs to advance the field, to design new programs, new pedagogies, new assessment approaches, new forms of teacher professional development, and new instructional resources. If teachers, students and others see themselves as agents of change with the responsibility to help define global education in practice this can offer very rich possibilities to make education more
relevant and of higher quality. Supporting this is the fact that the US Department of Education is working on a strategy for international education, to advance global education in K-12, which is an excellent first step.

If global education is to become more widely available, we will need to engage a wide coalition of education leaders, in schools and service organizations, including publishers and providers of professional development as well as foundations. The Gates Foundation has in the past supported internationally themed schools. Goldman Sachs did for some years support an excellent program of the Asia Society to recognize exemplary practices of international education at the K-12 level. At the higher education level the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors awards every year the Paul Simon awards for international education, which recognize institutions that have developed exemplary programs to promote global competency. Outside the US, many countries have made great commitments to teaching multilingualism and intercultural skills. Good things are clearly happening in the global education space, and this gives us the opportunity to build on all this good work and take it to a higher level of excellence. Perhaps we need some international organization, maybe UNESCO, to serve as an observatory to take stock of what is happening in global education, and to evaluate what is working well, with what effects, so that good practices can be disseminated to further expand the opportunities for all students to become more globally competent.

**TGCI:** On a more personal note, do you see yourself as a global citizen?

**Fernando Reimers:** I see global citizenship as a process, as a work in progress, not as an event. I see myself in the process of becoming a global citizen all the time. It’s an aspiration, but I don’t think you ever completely get there, because every new level of understanding brings
with it awareness of the limitations of your knowledge and understanding to fully appreciate the complexity of global affairs, and more awareness of your limitations to be able to contribute to global sustainability and Peace.

I suppose my own perspective on global citizenship has been shaped by my background and experiences. I come from an itinerant family. I was born and raised in Venezuela, where my parents had immigrated from Spain. My mother had lived through the Spanish civil war, a horrific episode in Spanish history which had an impact on my mother’s life that made its way into conversations at our dinner table as I was growing up, perhaps planting the seeds for my interests in Peace. My father’s grandparents had immigrated to Spain from Germany and Switzerland. So growing up amid histories of relatives migrating and with relatives in several parts of the world helped me understand that we all have complex identities. That I was Venezuelan, by birth, by upbringing and by the choice of my parents, but that I was also in part Spanish, and in a small and distant part perhaps German or Swiss. I saw cultural traditions, and languages, and customs, carry over from one country to another in my own family. Because I grew up at a time of a very large influx of immigration to Venezuela from many different countries, I was in frequent contact with others who had similarly multifaceted identities. As a child I began a postal stamp collection, and the variety of countries represented in that collection was a window into the many cross-national networks that shaped the demographics of my classmates. My elementary school was a small French school, where I learned to read, write and speak French, a school that had a very diverse student population in terms of the cultural origin and race of the students. Eventually I learned that there was an interesting history to the school, the founders were anarchists who had left France after the principal’s husband escaped imprisonment by the Nazis, where he had been detained because of his political views, as well as his religion.
Some years ago I had the opportunity to visit the principal of that school, then retired in France, and asked her what her goals had been in creating the school, and her answer suggests to me that her views were shaped by her experience of the horrors of World War II. She told me her desire had been to create a school where every child could learn what it was like to be like everyone else, and that to do this she knew she would have to work hard to have a school with as diverse a student body as possible. I think in this way she helped us all develop an ethical commitment to the basic equality of all persons, as a result of how she structured the demographics of the school. I did not ask her what she thought of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or of the preamble of UNESCO’s constitution, and I certainly didn’t study those documents in that school, but her actions in establishing and leading that school suggest to me that she would have agreed with the aspirations reflected in these documents.

Eventually, coming to the United States, and becoming an American provided me with additional opportunities to reflect on cultural similarities and differences, as did working for years in very different countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, Jordan, or in a number of countries in Latin America. These experiences probably shaped the way I see the world and myself in the world. They helped me crystallize the things that were really important to me, and to realize that these concerns were not uniquely national but often global in nature. My interest in equality of educational opportunity, for example, is not tied to a specific country, nor does it spring from something I read in a book. It is the result of interacting with people all over the world and understanding the global importance of this issue first-hand in many different societies, including the United States where we still have much work to do, but extending into other countries as well. I have seen and talked to children, in school and out of school, in many different societies, and once you have done this it is very clear how similar we are in our potential, and once you understand this bond, it comes naturally that you would see it as your business to do what you can to help all people
develop that potential. In addition, in these travels there are so many people whose generosity taught me, who opened their hearts, and their homes, and dinner tables to me, despite cultural or ideological differences, and in these simple forms of sharing, of hospitality to a stranger, taught me what it means to be a global citizen. I hope to be able to do the same for others.

TGCI: Now you are an American, living in Massachusetts. How does this shape the identity of your family? How do your children engage in global citizenship?

Fernando Reimers: As an American by choice I try to be civically engaged, in local affairs in my town, particularly in schools, as well as in the State, and nationally. I have strong interests in U.S. politics and the events that shape our nation. I am concerned by our growing trade deficit and our external debt, by the high levels of unemployment and inequality and poverty. I think we all need to contribute as much as possible to rebuilding the commons, the institutions that support the common good, so we can have a viable and vibrant democracy, and so that we don’t pass to the next generation the consequences of our inability to steward this beautiful democratic experiment. However, I care about a lot more than just issues of national concern, and my work, and the choices I make about how to spend my time, allow me to remain engaged with these issues all over the world. I am especially interested in contributing to reduce global poverty and inequality through education and I certainly see it as my business to do what I can to expand educational opportunity wherever there are children and youth. I hope to have instilled some of these values in my teenage sons, but I understand that ultimately they will have their own identities. Their experiences and mine are different in a number of ways. They have grown up in the US, whereas I grew up in Venezuela. While I have often talked about the Spanish Civil War at our dinner table, I
obviously don’t do it with the same first-hand knowledge as my mother had. They have traveled more than I had at their age and they have sometimes accompanied me as I traveled internationally for work. Their experience of my work related travels may focus more on my absence than on what it is that I do when I am abroad. They speak English and Spanish and have studied Mandarin in school for a number of years. They have been the beneficiaries of meeting my many students, from so many different countries, who come to our house several times each year. As the world becomes more globalized, opportunities to develop as a global citizen become more plentiful, and I hope that my children continue to take advantage of these opportunities.

**TGCI:** To sum up, what are the main arguments for global education in our schools?

**Fernando Reimers:** The main goal of global education is to develop human potential in ways that are relevant to our globalized world. This kind of development has some really beneficial byproducts. If the next generation is educated globally, they will be more attuned to the risks of global conflicts and more motivated and capable to secure Peace. When people come together around the common values promoted by global education, a mutual understanding is created that makes Peace possible, improving the quality of life for people everywhere. They will also be equipped to collaborate on international projects with others who are different from them. Global education is a key element in furthering the values, principles and practices of global citizenship.

Update 10/7/2016 The World Course was published in the summer of 2016, it is free as a Kindle edition for Amazon subscribers and can be obtained here [http://amzn.to/2aYhSKM](http://amzn.to/2aYhSKM)

On Teachers and Human Rights
Teaching Students To Live By Paris, An Opportunity For Leadership
(Huffington Post Blog, Published June 2, 2017)

The President of the United States this week reneged on a commitment to adopt measures that would reduce greenhouse emissions which the country had negotiated with 195 other nations (which is to say, the entire world, except Syria and Nicaragua) on December of 2015, and signed on Earth Day just over a year ago, in April of 2016.

The goal of the Paris Agreement was to begin to adopt measures that would address one of the most significant challenges humanity faces: global warming. There is indisputable scientific evidence that temperatures are rising at rates that will challenge the capacity of living species on our planet to adapt. While complete undoing of the damage already caused to climate is highly improbable, significantly reducing the rate at which climate is changing is within reach, provided that humans change their patterns of consumption and life and provided that we pay the costs necessary to bring such changes about. Fundamentally, reversing global warming requires a planetary shift in consciousness, culture and lifestyle. The Paris Agreement was a commitment on the part of governments to develop and implement national plans to achieve certain goals in mitigating climate change, goals which many scientists consider insufficient: to bring the increase in global temperatures to less than two degrees Centigrade of the temperature of the planet before the industrial era.

The decision of President Trump to withdraw from the agreement will cause irreversible damage to the environment, given that the United States is the largest contributor to the rise in global temperatures since preindustrial times (about 20 percent of the 0.7 degree centigrade increase since preindustrial times). The decision to unilaterally pull out of an agreement which so clearly expressed a decision of all nations of
The world to collaborate in addressing what most people recognize as the gravest challenge we share as a species will cause the nation irreparable damage in global leadership.

These grave costs to the nation and to the planet imposed by the poor judgement of our president could be mitigated by the leadership of our teachers. The fundamental goal of the Paris Agreement was not just to get governments to cooperate, or to develop plans, it was to induce changes in human behavior, in people’s mindsets, in how we live our lives. Local and State governments and business can still continue to adopt the measures that are essential to reducing the rising temperatures, increasing the use of renewable energy, for example, or reducing carbon emissions, or stopping deforestation. In order for them to do these things, the only thing that is needed is not the will of an ill-informed president, but the will of the people. We the people can Continue to Live by Paris, to act in ways that show our understanding of the gravity of the risk of climate change, to support and pay for the measures that reduce global warming.

What is most critical is to do these things is education. There are abundant resources to help teachers educate their students about climate change and about sustainability, resources that provide access to high quality content on scientific evidence, such as the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, or NASA, or the Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network. Developing high quality curriculum to teach about global topics such as climate change is within the reach of all teachers. Our best allies in that work are our students.

With a group of graduate students I recently published a curriculum resource that includes a protocol to create a school wide global education strategy, a protocol to design curriculum, and a prototype of 60 lessons, one lesson per grade, addressing themes such as climate change. The book is titled Educating Students to Improve the World in Sixty Lessons and has a cost of one dollar as a kindle book. Over the next five
days, from June 2 to June 6, to support what I hope will be a
groundswell of local leadership to correct the catastrophic decision of
President Trump, this kindle book will be free.

The leadership that most matters in this grave moment of crisis for the
planet generated by the lack of leadership of our president, is the
leadership of our teachers, and the responsibility to educate themselves
and to act of our students.
My goal tonight is to invite you to think about the lasting impact of teachers. Those teachers we meet in elementary school, who teach us how to read, how to relate to others, to know ourselves. Those teachers, in short, who help us become who we are. Close your eyes for a moment and try to remember the first year you went to school. Can you remember the place? the sounds? the smells? the temperature? who was there? what do you remember about that teacher? do you see any connections between what you learned then and who you are today? I will share some of my memories.

I remember the big mango trees. I remember the large shades they provided from the tropical sun of Caracas. The joy of watching the mangoes mature, and the excitement of grabbing a mango or two when they fell on the courtyard. Hanging from a branch of one of those trees was a bell. Pulling from a rope Madame Chirik rang the bell to signal the time for all of us to line up in the courtyard, and to walk to our classrooms in neatly formed rows. That bell marked the beginning and the end of the school day of my first five years of school at the Ecole Jean Jacques Rousseau. A small school where a few dozen teachers taught about three hundred students in French how to read, mathematics, science, history, arts, and morale, the short stories with ethical dilemmas which we discussed once we had sat down at our desks at the start of each day.

In their conversations with us, our teachers shared memories of growing up and living in France, and talked about relatives still living there. Our history lessons talked about the early history of France and Europe, about the French Revolution, but did not talk about the most
recent war, the second world war, the painful memories too recent. For many, students and teachers, the reason they had left Europe.

Probably because it was such a small school, Madame Chirik was a very involved principal. She visited our classroom often, at which point we would all stand up and in unison recite ‘Bonjour Madame Chirik.’ Each Friday, she visited each classroom, to take all of us to the school library, leading two lines of students, as she held the first child in each line by the hand. There she would talk to us about these wonderful books, opening with excitement packages of newly arrived books, and made each of us borrow a book that we would read that week. The next Friday, she would repeat the ritual, and asked us what we had thought of the book, as she recommended new titles for us to read. She visited each class also in the afternoons when we rehearsed for the theatrical performance each grade would contribute to the end of the year production. A major event for families in which each grade performed a play, all of them neatly presented in programs each of them decorated with individual drawings made by the students.

I enjoyed most of my time in that school, with the exception of the punishment for talking too much in class, while the teacher was trying to teach, and with the occasional times I was sent to the office of Madame Chirik as she had to adjudicate some dispute between students, times when she made us listen to each other’s grievances and views, and repeat what we had heard, in an effort to help us see the issue from the other persons’ eyes. Most of the times that method worked well, and the two parties left Madame Chirik’s office holding hands, renewed in our intuitive knowledge of our common bonds.

As the school year of 1968 ended, I was so pleased to take part in a mis en scene of *The Little Prince*.. That year’s theatrical performance was based on the book, each grade performing a scene based on one chapter in the book. I was the businessman, who counts the many stars
he owns in the universe and engages the little prince in questions about the point of owning all those stars.

As that summer ended, a week or so before the school year was to resume, my mother told me we had to go visit Madame Chirik to say our goodbyes. Madame Chirik was returning to France, and the school would be closing down. We would have to find another school. It was a sad visit for me. Not only was I sad to visit my school for what I knew would be the last time, Mme. Chirik was sad, as she explained to my mother in ways I did not fully understand why she was forced to leave.

I felt the sadness of the *Little Prince* in my heart as he says good bye to the rose he loves.

I went to another school, and saw for the first time some of what made the Ecole Jean Jacques Rousseau unique. Not all schools taught in French. Not all had students from so many different races and religious backgrounds, who lived in so many different parts of the city. Not all had principals who took their students to the library on Fridays, or who came to watch their rehearsals of theatrical performances.

In time I could find answers to some of the questions of why Madame Chirik had been forced to leave Venezuela in 1968. It was only in 2006, however, that I could have the questions I most cared about answered. I had to give a lecture in France, and looked up the name of Madame Chirik in the online phone directory. There she was, living in Paris. I rang her up on a Sunday afternoon, just a few hours before getting on a plane. She answered, when I asked her if she was Clara Chirik she replied yes. When I asked her if she was the former principal of the Ecole Jean Jacques Rousseau she went silent. I told her I had been a student at the school. We agreed to meet and that Wednesday I showed up at her small apartment to spend a wonderful three hours looking at
old pictures of each class in the school, looking at copies she had saved of the programs for the theatrical plays the students had performed each year. I was able to ask her why she had left. She explained that the reason she had first arrived in Venezuela was because her husband, a union organizer, had been detained by the Nazis as they had occupied Paris. This and the fact they were Jewish made Mme. Chirik get the courage to, with the help of some friends, get her husband out of detention, and in a few days get on a ship for Venezuela to start a new life. She knew her husband would continue his political activities, which involved publishing a newspaper, writing, and meeting with young people to discuss how to build a more just society. He did that the entire time they lived in Venezuela, and the reason they had to leave in 1968 is because the political police found out copies of the newspaper he edited in the campus of the main university, and concluded that his work was subversive and dangerous, so they raided the school while he was in France. Mme. Chirik went to seek support from the French embassy and they advised her to leave the country as the politics at the time were unfavorable to people with her husband’s views.

So back to the time when Mme. Chirik and her husband arrived in Caracas, the only French school in the city was a religious school for boys only, she may have taught there initially. In time she opened the Ecole Jean Jacques Rousseau. It would be a secular school, for boys and girls, from different social, racial and religious backgrounds, and she would help us learn from books and from the arts, from physical activity and from each other, we would learn math, science and morale.

I asked her the question I had wondered about in the almost four decades since I had last seen her ‘what was your purpose?’ and she replied, with the calm Peace of someone who has given thought to the question, ‘to help you all learn what it was like to be just like everyone else, to help you understand that, in spite of your differences, you were all one. I had lived through a terrible war in which millions had been
murdered because so many had not seen this, so I had to help you all understand this, so you could make the world better.’

At that moment, as the sun was setting outside the window of her apartment in Paris, I understood how much courage it must have taken for Madame Chirik, a refugee from political persecution, supporting a family with a husband engaged in political work that was unpopular, and placed him in danger, to have the courage to create a school that would help a small group of students learn how much they had in common with their fellow students, and that she had intentionally created a school with a few hundred students of different nationalities, religions, races, social backgrounds, to help us learn that we were all one. It would have been so much easier for her to stay in the school that taught one religion to boys only than to create that which did not exist.

I had always known that I had learned much in the Ecole Jean Jacques Rousseau, but it was at that moment, that summer afternoon in Paris, that I learned some of the most valuable lessons Mme. Chirik taught me. Leaders with the courage to follow their conscience, and whose moral compass is shaped during times of great suffering, can bend the arc of history towards greater justice.

On my way to the metro that afternoon, I heard the whisper of Antoine de Saint Exupery in the Little Prince saying ‘We can only see well with our heart, what is essential is invisible to the eye.’

As I look at a world where only a few people alive have lived the human made tragedy that Madame Chirik survived, I am hopeful that we may still have the courage to do all in our power to prevent such suffering from happening again, and to continue to bend that arc of history towards justice.
So, if you can still find one of those teachers who helped you become who you are, reach out to them. Send them a copy of this talk and tell them it reminded you of them. Tell them also I send my love.
Recognizing Teachers and Preparing For Peace
(Huffington Post Blog, Published March 20, 2017)

Last night I had the pleasure to attend the ceremony at which Maggie MacDonnell was awarded the Global Teacher Prize, an award recognizing her outstanding contributions as a teacher that includes a one million dollar prize, along with much support during the year to disseminate her ideas about teaching globally.

Maggie is an admirable teacher in Canada. After five years working in HIV-AIDS prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa, she moved to the Canadian Arctic to work in a small Inuit village. There she is demonstrating extraordinary skill in engaging her students, and in empowering them to address the challenges they face. The community credits her with having motivated students who were alienated from school to re-engage with their studies and develop positive aspirations for their future. She has served as a foster parent to some of her students, engaged her students in collaborating with a day-care center, supported them in creating a nutritious program, engaged with her students in exercise, developed an arts program to help students find their voice, and used project based learning to help her students develop 21st century skills. Maggie is a teacher who offers her students a balanced education, who educates them as whole persons. Her success demonstrates the extraordinary impact that good teachers can have in students and in their communities.

Maggie was visibly touched as she received the honor, and so were the other ten finalists for the prize, as well as the many other teacher finalists to the Global Teacher Prize who had come to the ceremony, and the more than 1,500 people from all over the world who had made a point to come to Dubai to be present at the event, including the Secretary General of Education International, Fred Van Leween, the
founder of Teach for All, Wendy Kopp, the Director of UNESCO Irina Bokova, OECD’s Director of Education, Andreas Schleicher, as well as several current and former heads of State and Ministers of Education. The award ceremony culminated a two day conference on Global Citizenship Education.

Maggie’s work so clearly illustrates that she is a global citizen, and that she works to empower her students to improve their lives, their community and the world. The theme of the conference, ‘How do we educate real global citizens?’ was especially significant in a global context which Mikhail Gorbachev has characterized as ‘it looks like the world is preparing for war.’

Maggie was recognized by the ruler of Dubai, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, as well as by Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and other political, civic and cultural leaders. Representatives from more than twenty countries announced at the conference that they had established national programs of teacher recognition, inspired in the Global Teacher Prize.

Given the importance of the work they do, good teachers need and deserve recognition. Recognition sustains their good work, and signals to others the value of professional excellence. It also contributes to how the profession is perceived in different societies, influencing how attractive teaching is as a career. A recent report of an Alliance on Teaching, underscores the need to recognize teachers as a critical factor to support high quality candidates to the profession.

Quietly smiling as the winner of the award was announced from the International Space Station was the creator and supporter of the prize, Sunny Varkey, an education entrepreneur whose philanthropy supports the Global Teacher Prize and the annual conference which convenes such a wide range of leaders of thought and practice. In partnership with the CEO of the Foundation, Vikas Pota, Mr. Varkey has
succeeded in creating an evolving and growing process of teacher recognition, and in creating a community with many of the finalists to the prize and others collaborating across all lines of difference in supporting those who prepare the young to invent the future. This kind of global citizenship demonstrated by Messrs. Varkey and Pota, and by those who form part of this community, also deserves recognition. It gives me hope that, while some in the world are preparing for war, there are many more, especially Maggie MacDonnell and her fellow teachers, who are preparing for Peace. We need to accelerate the efforts to prepare for Peace doing all what is within our power to normalize the recognition of the good work of teachers who empower their students as global citizens.
An Invitation To Dialogue About Teachers And Teacher Education
(Huffington Post Blog, Published March 3, 2017)

Consider this a personal invitation to you, the reader of these pages. It is an invitation to read a short document, so you can take action. We live in times of great possibilities to improve human well-being on every corner of our planet. Our times are also fraught with peril. We may collectively act to eliminate poverty, to support social and economic progress, to repair the damage we have already caused to the earth. Or we may use our resources to cause more harm to each other and to the environment. What choice we make rests on how one third of humanity currently enrolled in schools is educated. This is the hope we place on the world’s teachers, that they will teach their students well to make the choices that give us Peace. Ours is the choice to support our teachers in this important work. I describe here a short document designed to support essential dialogue about how to do to this.

The document, titled *Connecting the dots to build the future teaching and learning (PDF document)*, is an invitation to see the big picture of teacher support and to take action connecting the dots in ways that can produce systemic change. This document was produced collectively by a team of educators from multiple countries and continents. As we set out to produce a guide that would have practical value to creating essential and adequate support for teaching we decided that we would craft a simple tool that would invite a process of policy dialogue and support the professional development of teachers. We hope your response to this invitation will contribute to close the gap between what is known about how to increase teacher quality and policy and practice.

What a joy and privilege it has been to work, over the last year, producing this document along with an extraordinarily wise group of colleagues from many different countries, united in our desire to
support teachers around the world in the important work they do. I was thrilled when Vikas Pota, CEO of the Varkey Education Foundation, invited me to join Esteban Bullrich, Beatriz Cardozo, David Edwards, Stefania Giannini, Vandana Goyal, Jacqueline Kahura, Jari Lavonen, Vikas Pota, Linda Rush, Oon Seng Tan, Ramya Venkataraman, Oley Dibba-Wadda, Brett Wigdortz in the Teachers Alliance of the Varkey Education Foundation. Each from their unique vantage point and position, all of them have much knowledge and experience relevant to how to support the development of teachers so all students have the opportunity to develop the competencies that are necessary for life and work in our times.

There are many recent reports that summarize good research and practice in teacher professional development and we thought there would be little to add in producing yet another. Instead, we sought to create a synthesis that invited dialogue among all key stakeholders in each education system to enable collective action in creating conditions that produced meaningful change in support of teacher education and professional development.

The operative words in our intent are dialogue, system and collective action. 1) Dialogue, because we see the current gap between what is known about how to improve teacher education and policy and practice as one that calls not for more research, but for learning. Learning within organizations, within the institutions of education. Such learning requires dialogue, the exchange of views and knowledge that each actor derives from their particular perspective and role in the educational process. 2) System, because the architecture of teacher support requires coordinated actions among various institutions. 3) Collective action, because no single individual, or organization, has the authority or the power to produce the changes which are necessary to provide continuous support to teacher quality. It is our hope that this short document we have crafted will invite such dialogue across the world, in cities and towns, in states and countries, in teacher education centers.
and universities. We would be delighted if this document is translated into multiple languages, debated, challenged.

Our invitation takes the form of a seven point strategy to create a system of continuous improvement of teacher quality, on behalf of providing all students an excellent education. This strategy is within reach of those with the political will to make teacher quality a priority. We invite educational and political leaders to publicly commit to preparing high quality teachers, to making this a national priority.

A first step to act on this commitment is to create a high level blue ribbon commission to develop a strategy specific for the jurisdiction. This commission will audit the existing policies and programs which currently influence teacher quality, those that undergird the current system of teacher preparation and support. The mapping of such policies and programs, and the assessment of their alignment and coherence, will allow this group to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of such a system. These opportunities can then become an appropriate strategy.

This strategy will seek to make teaching a respected and attractive profession, ensuring adequate supplied of qualified candidates into the profession. Will outline clear professional teaching standards and career trajectories for teachers, that will provide a pathway to teacher professionalism. Such professionalism will begin with an excellent initial teacher preparation, extending into effective programs of professional development, school based, aligned with the needs of teachers, and involving teachers in their social and professional contexts, programs which transform organizations and systems rather than just support individual development.
I hope you accept the invitation, to read this document, http://bit.ly/2nOXLDc) and participate and lead in its discussion. I hope these discussions lead to support for our teachers in their important work, so they can teach students to make the choices that give us Peace.
This coming Thursday, I look forward to hearing a presentation by Hanan Al Hroub, a teacher in the Samiha Khalil school in al-Bireh, in Ramallah the West Bank. She will be speaking at an Askwith Forum, the flagship public forum at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Hanan will be introduced by Jim Ryan, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She will be speaking about Education as a Human Right. Following her presentation, it will be my pleasure to engage with her in conversation about the educational approach she has developed, to educate the whole child through games, play and the love for reading, about her experiences as a teacher, and about her views on the teaching profession, more generally.

Hanan will come to Harvard because she is the winner of the Global Teacher Prize in 2016, an award established by the Varkey Education Foundation to recognize exemplary teachers around the world with a cash prize of one million dollars. The selection process is open to any teacher in the world, and is made by a jury of 177 leaders from many different countries, including Dean Jim Ryan, as well as a number of outstanding teachers, past top finalists for the price, including Joe Fatheree, a former US Teacher of the Year who works with the National Teacher of the Year Organization to advance teacher voice, and Stephen Ritz a teacher in the Bronx who developed the Green Bronx Machine, an innovative approach to educating students addressing issues of nutrition and sustainability. Members of the selection committee include leaders from many different countries, such as Esteban Bulrich, Minister of Education of Argentina, education innovator and advocate Wendy Kopp, or President of the Inter-American Development Bank, Jose Antonio Moreno.
One million dollars causes people to pay attention, which is the point. To cause people to pause and think about the work teachers do, and to help all of us reflect on teaching as a practice that can reach global levels of excellence. Nominations for the 2017 Global Teacher Prize are now open, and any teacher in the world can self-nominate or be nominated by others.

Hanan is indeed a remarkable teacher. She grew up in the Dheisheh refugee camp, in the outskirts of Bethlehem, and credits her teachers in the UNRWA Elementary School for Girls in Dheisheh as playing a significant role in her intellectual and social development. She has fond memories of the quality of instruction, of the rich collections of books in the library, and of the many sports and games they played, which helped all students develop. In her work as a teacher, Hanan says her goal is to break the cycle of violence by focusing on the socio-emotional development of students who are exposed to violence.

She has developed an approach, described in her book Play and Learn, that uses games to create safe spaces, where students can find a supportive community that enables them to engage in learning. The question of what does it mean to educate the whole child and of how to support teachers in developing effective practices is important and timely around the world. Furthermore, at a time when more than half of the six million refugee children in the world are not in school, Hanan’s presence and life story will make visible the power of effective education for refugee children to support them in developing a positive sense of self, voice and agency, and the resilience and skills necessary to improve the world.

The goal of extending the right to education to all children in the world is a relatively recent aspiration. The moral outrage about the Holocaust and World War II caused a number of enlightened leaders to ask how to prevent such horror from ever happening again. In less than two years eighteen people composed a text outlining an aspirational vision
of a world in which all people would have certain rights, simply because they were human. The right to education was one of the thirty rights included in the declaration adopted at the General Assembly of the United Nations 68 years ago and its inclusion sparked the most dramatic expansion in educational opportunity the world has ever witnessed. But the right to education, as are all human rights, is a process more than a destination, it inspires ever growing aspirations, based on deeper understanding of what does it mean to include all in a global compact designed to produce Peace. Teachers all around the world help to advance this right not only in their daily work, but as they reflect on its meaning, and of its significance in the broader context of the universal declaration and of its goals to produce a Peaceful Peace world. I look forward to hearing the reflections of Hanan, this exemplary teacher, on education as a human right.

I am delighted that the Varkey Education Foundation sponsors this activity which shines a spotlight on teaching excellence, and causes conversations about what teaching excellence is, and about how to support teachers so they can reach those levels of excellence in their teaching. I wish forms of recognition of excellent teaching were prevalent around the world, reaching every locality, every school, every community, and every district.

The future of humanity would benefit if we took steps to recognize, value and support the work of those who educate our children and youth, those who will build the future. Unfortunately, many teachers feel unrecognized and lacking opportunities to have a voice in shaping their profession. A recent survey administered by the Gallup organization to more than 25 million employees around the world shows that teachers feel less recognized than any other professionals, just 29% of them report receiving recognition for their work, a significantly lower percentage than any other profession.
Hanan received the award last March, at the annual education conference the Varkey Education Foundation organizes in Dubai. The announcement was the culminating event of the conference. As the ten finalists from all over the world were invited to the stage, their pedagogical contributions and achievements were presented to the thousands of participants at the gathering. I had the pleasure of witnessing this ceremony. Once the last finalist had come to the stage, a large screen projected the face of His Holiness Pope Francis as he spoke about the importance of play in helping children develop critical socio emotional skills he announced Hanan Al Hroub as the winner of the prize and recognized for her pioneering work in using play in her educational approach. She was ecstatic, with a big smile her first words were to recognize her fellow teachers, the other finalists, and to say that they were all winners. It was a moving ceremony for all present for as we cheered Hanan we knew we were also recognizing her profession, and all excellent teachers and their important work.

I am grateful that we will have the opportunity to make this recognition of the teaching profession and of outstanding teachers part of our conversation at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as we welcome Hanan this coming Thursday. The Askwith Forum is open to the public and will be livestreamed on the main page of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I look forward to learning about her good and important work, about the pedagogical approach she has developed to educate the whole child, about the sources of support of her good teaching, and to discuss with her what must be done globally, so that all teachers feel valued and respected, and recognized for the important role they play in helping students build a future which is better than the world we are passing on to them.
Learning to Improve the World. A Faculty Reflection.
(Huffington Post Blog, Published April 14, 2017)

I joined the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education hoping that this would allow me to make a contribution to educating leaders who would advance educational opportunities globally. In the eighteen years I have been teaching at Harvard, my views on how best to do this work have evolved from an earlier emphasis in all the content I wanted my students to learn, to a greater emphasis in helping them develop skills to effectively engage in the practice of education policy and leadership. I now believe becoming skilled in this practice requires more than knowing facts about the existing constraints to educational opportunity, about the interventions which cause improvements in educational opportunity, or about the theories that can help us explain why things are the way they are, and requires more than being able to think about those facts and theories.

Becoming skilled in the practice of education policy analysis or of leading educational change requires also the capacity to think clearly about education purposes, and about the alignment between those purposes and the underlying theories of action of alternative approaches to overcoming challenges to educational opportunity. It requires also the capacity to frame a problem, an act of construction, for the reality that development practitioners encounter rarely comes in the form of a problem set or an assignment with a rubric or an example of how to solve it.

Besides the capacity to define what the problem is and to chart a path to solving it, a certain level of confidence that one can make a difference, a mindset that one might be able to influence change, is necessary. This mindset does not emerge naturally from knowing the facts, or the theories, it is a disposition that develops as we engage in the practice and learn from reflection on the results of one’s actions. As
we gain skill in solving actual problems, the confidence grows, and this in turn fuels the drive to mastery. In addition to knowledge and capacity to reflect, I believe that students benefit from gaining clarity about their own purpose, for this clarity is at the root of the passion to push the boundaries in the norms and routines that constrain opportunity, and to persevere in navigating through the many obstacles to change.

To help students gain these skills I create opportunities in my courses for them to solve real problems of practice in the field of international education. I invite them to engage as consultants to practitioners who work in international development organizations, or to design plans to create programs or organizations to advance educational opportunities. Students choose which problems and contexts they want to take on as consultants. This work is often messy, it lacks the predictability of an artificially created assignment. Having as a client a UNICEF education officer responsible for educating a growing number of refugee children in Iraq, for example, comes with some dose of surprise. While learning in real time from clients working in real-time settings is challenging for students, I have found it also provides an authentic context that activates strong inner motivation. The mentorship and feedback these clients provide is also an invaluable resource to help students develop their reflective skills.

The sense that as we are learning in the course we are also contributing, in some small way, to advance educational opportunity in the world makes for very rich conversations in class and is very motivating to me. It makes me think that in this way I am contributing to educating leaders who will indeed be skilled at advancing educational opportunities in the real messiness, complexity, and unpredictability of the world -- leaders who have skill, passion, capacity to reflect and who can think clearly about purpose and work on problems that matter.
Teaching Two Lessons about UNESCO and other essays on Human Rights

Note: This essay was originally written for the series of faculty reflections invited as part of Teaching and Learning Week at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a week-long series of activities designed to support sharing and exploration of pedagogical innovation.
On Universities and Human Rights
Advancing the Civic Mission of Universities in Challenging Times
(Huffington Post Blog, Published August 31, 2017)

Two weeks ago, a group of Harvard colleagues and I were in conversation with senior administrators and faculty from universities in India and Pakistan. We met in Dubai to discuss the role of the liberal arts in educating students to address the current challenges of those nations, and the global challenges shared with others. Our discussions examined the enduring civic purposes of a liberal arts education, as well as its evolving nature, in response to significant societal shifts. We examined also how to promote cosmopolitanism and tolerance at times when those values are increasingly under assault. A few days earlier a group of white supremacists and neo nazis had marched on the campus of the University of Virginia chanting racists and anti-Semitic slogans, followed by a violent demonstration that murdered a woman and injured many others who were opposing the racists. A reminder of the ubiquity of these challenges to human rights.

The enduring civic nature of a liberal arts education has been to help people develop the dispositions to participate in public life. In classical Rome, twenty centuries ago, this civic mission meant preparing the elites which were educated in the liberal arts to participate in public debate, defend themselves in court, serve on juries and serve militarily. The education to provide such preparation consisted of the Trivium (Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric), and the Quatrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy).

During the Renaissance, many centuries later, that mission of the liberal arts—still focused on educating elites—expanded to prepare people for political administration, the clergy or the professions of law and medicine. But the core mission of the liberal arts remained a civic mission. The Trivium and the Quatrivium expanded to include the
growing number of disciplines in the Arts and Sciences, namely: Arts, Mathematics, Natural Science, Philosophy, Religious Studies and Social Science.

The global project of self-improvement and of improvement of the world brought about by the Enlightenment sharpened the civic mission of the University. Indeed, the Enlightenment re-created the University, alongside the creation of Public Education and of Democracy, so that the sisterhood of these institutions would provide the foundation for the advancement of a new social order conducive to freedom and equality.

It was the very same founding fathers who led the American experiment in self-rule, who created the first academic societies. In 1743, Benjamin Franklin established the American Philosophical Society, and six years later an institution of higher learning which would become the University of Pennsylvania. In 1780, John Adams chartered the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, tasked to promote scientific inquiry to advance the public good. The charter of the American Academy recognizes that scientists have an obligation to educate the public so that people can govern themselves. The same year that the American Academy was chartered, John Adams wrote the Massachusetts constitution, whose first article expands on the civic purposes of our universities:

“Wisdom, and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in the various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of legislators and magistrates, in all future periods of this Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the university at Cambridge, public schools, and grammar schools in the towns; to encourage private societies and public
institutions, rewards and immunities, for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country; to countenance and inculcate the principles of humanity and general benevolence, public and private charity, industry and frugality, honesty and punctuality in their dealings; sincerity, good humour, and all social affections, and generous sentiments among the people.”

These civic purposes of the ‘modern’ university crystalized with the founding of the first modern research university in Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt in 1820. A University that would advance three interrelated goals: the advancement of truth through research, the promotion of independent and critical thinking, and the education of the public. A year earlier, in 1819, Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia, an idea he had been developing for at least two decades, to create an institution on the most extensive liberal scale possible.

In our times, the commitment of those of us who work in higher education is been tested as civility breaks and as fundamental democratic norms and ideals are challenged. In many countries those challenges take the form of limits from authoritarian regimes to academic freedom to pursue truth without restraints or control over the curriculum. In the United States, the most recent challenges stem from the rise of a hateful ideology and violence, not just in American society, but in university campuses themselves. The shameful demonstration of hatred that a group of white supremacists and neo-nazis displayed in Charlottesville, Virginia, three weeks ago, began with a march in the very campus of the University of Virginia. A number of those participating in the march were university graduates and students, of several universities.
As we ponder how best to exercise our civic mission in these challenging times:

a) We should, collectively, join those institutions, and the faculty who taught those bigots, in asking where did we fail, what did we not see, what did we fail to teach them. Frankly, we should be asking ourselves similar questions about the education of President Trump in an Ivy League institution given his failure to lead with moral clarity in the aftermath of the murder, the violence and the hateful words and actions perpetrated by these bigots.

b) We should ask ourselves hard questions about our responsibility to do more to educate those who do not have the opportunity to access higher education, to help them gain skills to provide for themselves and their families and to take responsibility for their lives, so that the despair of those who feel marginalized does not become a breeding ground for recruitment of hate groups who incite them to find scapegoats for their misfortunes and dissatisfaction.

c) We should engage the three activities that we are best at: education, research and invention, in addressing the underlying causes of hate, so we can prevent more violence caused by those who organize around it. We should engage our students in conversation about this rising hatred, with the discipline of mind to gain understanding of the causes of such hate, and of its consequences. We should also engage in historical study of the violence and harm caused by racial supremacy ideologies have led. We should study those causes and consequences with the full force of the scientific prowess that universities offer societies. And we should, finally, invent solutions to the various underlying causes of these challenges, whether they are mis-education, social segregation, lack of economic opportunities, groups organizing and funding radicalization, or the erosion of civic life and institutions.
These actions are all squarely part of the civic mission of the modern university, and of an education in the liberal arts and we should examine whether the rising hatred in our communities, and in our campuses, should cause us to consider it our business, relevant to our institutional mission. Some historical perspective might help inform our thinking.

The modern research university was born in Germany in 1820. A century later, German universities had a well-deserved reputation for educating independent thinkers. Academic freedom and research in German universities were a model that many universities followed, in the United States as well as in other nations. But a form of ultranationalism also developed in German Universities, large numbers of German professors applauded Germany’s war ambitions in 1915, and few supported the Weimar government that emerged after Germany surrendered in 1918. They may have underestimated the evil force that the nascent populist-nationalism would eventually turn into.

Hitler saw academics as an enemy who would resist his attempts to impose an ideology of racial supremacy. Once appointed Chancellor he achieved control of the university curriculum, to eliminate education in the humanities and to control appointments of university faculty and leaders, firing faculty who were Jewish, social democrats or liberals. Academics who spoke against the regime were brought to concentration camps. Many professors and administrators became collaborators of the Nazi regime, including aligning teaching and research with the efforts to create a society based in white supremacy. Many German academics went into exile, when there was still time.

It is of no use to speculate on the course history would have followed in Germany, had universities taken a more decisive stance, early on, in resisting what was initially a small populist movement of misfits. But what we can and should do in America in 2017 is to understand that
universities have a core civic mission to advance democratic values and to prepare students for democratic leadership, and that those values are challenged by groups who are engaged in increasingly open forms of racist violence. That such violence broke out in a University campus three weeks ago should only add to the urgency of doing what we must to strengthen democracy. And just as our colleagues, the senior higher education leaders from Pakistan and India we met two weeks ago to discuss the future of the liberal arts education and the role of universities in promoting civility and cosmopolitanism, so too should we think with a moral clarity that has eluded the nation’s President and a number of higher education leaders and faculty about our civic responsibility in challenging times.
We celebrate this week the 100th anniversary of the birth of John F. Kennedy, a remarkable US President whose leadership appealed to the better angels of the American people, helping all to set high aspirations for the country as well as for themselves. In his inaugural address, Kennedy reminded us of the importance of generous service in challenging times “ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” Kennedy understood how in an increasingly interdependent world, this responsibility of service extended to service to the world. In a speech in the campaign trail at the University of Michigan, in October of 1960, he had asked 10,000 students “How many of you, who are going to be doctors, are willing to spend your days in Ghana? Technicians or engineers, how many of you are willing to work in the Foreign Service and spend your lives traveling around the world?” A thousand students responded with a petition to serve abroad. Two weeks later, in another campaign speech at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, he proposed the creation of “a Peace corps of talented men and women” over 25,000 wrote him letters responding to this call. These were the origins of the Peace Corps which he created early in his presidency, to foster greater understanding between Americans and people of other nations.

Kennedy understood that the preparation of the people ready to engage in such service, to the nation and to the world, depended on Universities, and that Universities had to educate youth for such leadership not just in the work of the faculty in the classrooms, but also in how faculty themselves engaged in finding solution to matters of public interest. In April of 1963, as Boston College celebrated its centennial, President Kennedy addressed a convocation speaking about the role of the University. His audience included not just students and
graduates, but the Presidents of Boston College, Georgetown and Harvard University. In his speech President Kennedy talked about the university’s role in connecting people across their ignorance, and he referred to the critical role of the university in helping solve some of the most important challenges of the times. President Kennedy reminded the audience that Boston College had been founded in the darkest days of the civil war, at a time when the nation was involved in a struggle to determine whether the nation could be half slave and half free, or free, and went on to say that the world was then, a hundred years later, faced with the question of whether it would half slave and half free or whether it would be all one or the other. He intended ‘to impress upon you as urgently as I can, the growing and insistent importance of universities in our national lives...’ to address the important issues of the times. Kennedy underscored four ways in which universities could serve the national interest: 1) ‘The whole world has come to our steps, and the universities must be its students’ and that universities must help accelerate global progress, 2) the explosion of knowledge in all fields, especially science, called for special attention to understanding and cultivation of people as social beings, 3) ‘As the world presses in, and knowledge presses out, the role of the interpreter grows’ underscoring the role of the university in helping educate people to know through one another, to respect truth, and 4) quoting Woodrow Wilson, President Kennedy underscored the importance of universities dedicating themselves to the nation’s service, to the new needs of the age, and ‘the school must be of the nation’.

Last Thursday, upon receiving an honorary doctorate from Harvard, Mark Zuckerberg addressed the graduating class highlighting also the important role of graduates and of universities in focusing on the urgent challenges of our times. He invited all graduates to engage in helping write a new social contract that would help all people find purpose, not just in the United States but in the world. He outlined three grand challenge that would help all people in the world find purpose: 1) taking on big meaningful projects together, such as
stopping climate change, generating employment, curing all diseases, modernizing democracy and personalizing education so all can learn 2) redefining equality so that all have the freedom to pursue purpose, supporting risk taking and innovation, and 3) building community across the world, in defining community, Zuckerberg invited all to see themselves as global citizens: “Every generation expands the circle of people we consider "one of us". For us, it now encompasses the entire world. We understand the great arc of human history bends towards people coming together in ever greater numbers — from tribes to cities to nations — to achieve things we couldn't on our own. We get that our greatest opportunities are now global — we can be the generation that ends poverty, that ends disease. We get that our greatest challenges need global responses too — no country can fight climate change alone or prevent pandemics. Progress now requires coming together not just as cities or nations, but also as a global community.”

In his address to the graduates, Zuckerberg was of course not speaking just to the graduates, but also to those who teach them, to those who lead and support the institution. He was reminding us of our obligation to align our work and the work of the institution to be of service to the world, to address the bigger challenges of our times.

John F. Kennedy in 1963, and Mark Zuckerberg last week, in speaking about the social role of the University where underscoring enduring themes which are of the essence to the modern university. The modern university is, along with public education and democracy, a creation of a global liberal project to advance the values of freedom and equality. A project of humanity that replaced the order of the Middle Ages with an order build on the audacious idea that all people are equal, and that they have the right to self-rule. An order that places great trust in science and human reason as instruments that would help us improve our lives, govern ourselves, and improve the world. It is no accident that five
years after the American Revolution, when the dust had not yet settled in how the new nation was to succeed in governing itself, John Adams and some of the other founding fathers, established the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an institution chartered to bring together the best scientists and public figures of the times to address issues of public importance and to educate ordinary people in understanding them. The first members invited to join the academy were Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.

While there were Universities before the American Revolution, their role was not to educate people to improve the world, but to transmit religious dogma, to maintain a static status quo. Adams, Franklin and other founding fathers understood the importance of higher education to the success of the American democratic experiment. Article 1 from the Massachusetts constitution of 1780, written by Adams and still the law of the land in Massachusetts, speaks eloquently to the public purposes of our universities — at the beginning about who needed to be educated and why, and at the end about virtues they needed to learn.

The quest for the role of the university in shaping a mindset supportive of democracy is illustrated in the visits that Francisco de Miranda, who sparked the war of independence in South America, paid to the Presidents of Yale and Harvard in 1773, thanks to letters of introduction by Benjamin Franklin. A similar role of the modern university in advancing the needs of the nascent democracies is illustrated in the role Andres Bello, the first president of the University of Chile, played by launching a competition for ideas about what kind of education system would best prepare the citizens of the newly independent republics, a contest which Domingo Faustino Sarmiento won with his thesis ‘Popular Education’ published in 1849, which became the cornerstone of public education in South America.

In 1811 Wilhelm von Humboldt, Prussia’s Minister of Education, chartered the first modern university, the University of Berlin, with a
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mandate aligned with the advancement of the liberal values of the enlightenment. Berlin was designed to cultivate the development of critical reasoning, to advance truth through research on matters of public importance, and to educate the larger public. In time, these ideals of the university in Berlin would be embraced by all modern universities in the world.

We live dangerous times where the values of freedom and equality, the institutions of democracy, and the sister institutions of public education and universities, are challenged by a populist ideology. An ideology that mistrusts expertise and institutions, and ideology that does not accept that there is a difference between facts and beliefs. An ideology that has no respect for science or scientific expertise. This ideology places the world at risk, it places democracy at risk, and it endangers the prospects for liberty and equality. In these times, the message of John Kennedy about the social responsibility of the University in 1963, and the message of Mark Zuckerberg last week, that we must press on with renewed urgency focusing on the most critical challenges humanity faces, that we must educate our students to take them on, and that we must make it a priority to educate and serve the larger public, are prescient and urgently important.
Can Universities Save the Enlightenment from Populism?
(Huffington Post Blog, Published March 2, 2017)

The main challenge for higher education in 2017 is to discern how to educate citizens in a world in which the political philosophy of liberalism, the cornerstone of modern universities, is increasingly challenged by populist and nationalist movements.

Universities are a relatively recent invention in the 200,000 or so years in which humans, in forms we would recognize today, inhabit the planet. The oldest universities such as Bologna and Oxford date back ten centuries and along with other medieval universities were first established to transmit religious dogma and support a world order in which most people would endure a stagnant life of misery in hopes of eventual salvation in the afterlife. Those were indeed times in which societies were ruled by very small elites, nobles and religious leaders, whose legitimacy was predicated on claimed links to divinity or prophets. The Italian Renaissance, borne out of the extraordinary convergence of talent from multiple disciplines and areas of human creativity which the House of Medici sponsored in Florence in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, would begin a process of examination of the powerful ideology of the Middle Ages which condemned most humans to a life of servitude to nobles and preachers. Products of the Italian Renaissance were the Renaissance and Humanism which would, over the following two centuries, lay the foundation for an extraordinarily powerful alternative set of ideas. The ideas that ordinary people had rights, and the capacity to improve themselves and their communities. These ideas are central to liberalism the political philosophy founded by John Locke which gave preeminence to the ideas of liberty and equality, and which is the foundation of the freedoms on which democratic societies are founded: freedom of speech, of press, of religion, free markets, civil rights, democracy, secular government, gender equality and international cooperation.
Three products of liberalism are democracy, public education and the modern university. All of them based on great hopes in human reason, assisted by science, to interpret and transform the world. All of them designed on the premise that the aspiration of salvation should be replaced by the aspiration to improve the world. At its core, the liberal project is cosmopolitan, a global project of humanity advancing together towards a world of greater freedom and justice. Each of these creations of the enlightenment is interdependent with the two others: democracy enables public education, and depends on high quality public education for all, modern universities support effective government and enlighten the public to hold governments accountable to people and to the facts, modern universities depend on good public education, and can in turn contribute to the improvement of education.

Globally, access to public education expanded significantly with the consolidation of nation states and the expansion of liberalism in the 1800s, and again after World War II as a result of the creation of a global architecture to promote the values of freedom and equality, liberal ideas, around the world, reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the United Nations system and other global institutions to advance such rights.

Under liberalism it was assumed that public education could serve democratic political and economic goals with limited trade-offs between them. Additional goals such as advancing human rights and modernization were also seen as convergent with political and economic goals. For this reason, most governments advancing education as part of liberalism saw limited trade-offs between the goals of education.

The challenges to liberalism from communism and fascism brought alternative goals for public education, challenging the notion that individuals could be free to choose which education to pursue, and
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emphasizing political and economic goals, as well as downplaying human rights and modernization goals.

The modern research university, chartered by Wilhelm Humboldt in Berlin in 1810, was a product of the liberal project designed to advance truth, through scientific research, the development of rational and critical thought, through education, and the enlightenment of the larger public, through extension. Most universities built since have embraced, to varying degrees, these three goals.

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the main political challenge to these liberal views came from populism. Populism posits that ordinary people are exploited by elites and challenges the notion of representative democracy with direct participation by the masses. Since direct participation by large numbers in complex societies is impractical, too often populism results in autocratic rule by a leader, who claims to be communicating directly with the masses, unobstructed from intermediary institutions such as political parties, elected representatives to Congress, organizations of civil society, the judiciary or the Press.

This notion of direct links between the autocrat and the people undermines the normal division of power and the checks and balances on which democratic government depends. Historically, some political scientists have argued that such autocratic rule of populist leaders can easily give rise to fascism.

Modern populists exploit the following ideas. The first that globalization, and liberal policies, do not benefit all, and that there are important groups of the population who are left behind, and without hope of seeing their conditions improve. They attribute this to elites that are not accountable to those groups, to a model of development that fails to envision a role for these groups which are left behind, and
to a state that is captured by administrators and interest groups who advance their own interests at the expense of those of the people. Populists exploit also cultural divides among the population, deep differences in values and worldviews. In the recent presidential election in the United States, these divisions are between the political establishment, which since World War II followed the views of the Hamiltonians and Wilsonians with the older views of the Jeffersonians and Jacksonians. Hamiltonians embraced the cosmopolitan liberal project so that the United States would play a global leadership role in creating a global liberal order to contain the Soviet Union and advance US interests. Wilsonians also advanced a global liberal order in terms of values that would reduce global conflict and violence. They promoted human rights, democratic governance and the rule of law. Jeffersonians believe that minimizing the global role of the United States would reduce costs and risks to the country. Jacksonian populist nationalists, in contrast, believe that advancement in the conditions of American citizens would best pursued delinking from cosmopolitan enlightenment ideals and from the global liberal order.

Populism is therefore a serious challenge to the idea of a universal project to advance freedom, equality and human rights. It is a challenge to the project of globalization and perhaps also a challenge to the idea of representative democracy, with checks and balances that limit the freedoms of rulers. They are also a challenge to the institutions which were invented to advance the liberal project, public schools and the modern university.

What could the challenge from populism mean for public schools and universities?

It would be congruent with populist ideas to seek more power for local groups to define the goals of education, and less role for government and for inter-governmental institutions. Replacing global and national politics with local politics of course does not mean more consensus, as
competing ideas exist in local communities as well about the goals of education. Local control may in fact mean more conflict, perhaps with less rules of arbitration. Given that the divisions between cosmopolitans and populists exist in local communities, how will these differences be resolved? Will the rule of law and expertise continue to play a role? We should expect less trust in and recognition of the authority of governments, experts and elites, including scientists and academics. It is also predictable that we will see a renewed emphasis on identity politics and culture wars in education.

Universities, in so far as they exist to cultivate reason, advance truth and enlighten the public are at odds with the populist worldview. Science and expertise are a problem for populist autocracies that do not value reasoned deliberation or informed understanding of facts as essential to solving controversies.

There are some risks we can expect to emerge from a world of emboldened populism.

The first is a risk to the idea of human rights. If nationalism is the new organizing force, the notion of in group and outgroup is defined by citizenship, not by membership in humanity. Because one of the consequences of globalization has been migration, non-citizens will be the first target for exclusion. If cultural wars define the politics of education we should expect to see battles over the rights of cultural and ethnic minorities and contention over ‘who belongs’ in America or in other nations where populism is emboldened.

A second risk concerns global challenges. The prospects for collective action diminish as the world moves towards national populism, and the goals of education move away from preparing students to understand global interconnectedness and globalization.
A third risk is a breakdown of the institutions that were created to protect freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and basic freedoms, and a breakdown of public education itself. The risk to these institutions of democracy is the risk that populism might evolve into fascism.

The risk of disorder. Lack of trust in institutions, elites and governments, will make the challenge of resolving conflict greater.

Can the institutions created to advance a liberal world order, such as public education and universities, save it?

Since modern universities were created because of the global liberal project to advance freedom and equality, as that project is challenged by populism Universities should renew their civic mission, embracing a new focus on education for democratic citizenship, including global citizenship. This means advancing human rights education, educating about shared global challenges, educating for engaged citizenship, contribute to build the civic sphere, renew their attention to the development of the dispositions and values of their students, as much as their skills and knowledge, boldly provide opportunities to access higher education to students from the most marginalized groups in society, double down on the extension mission to educate the public, and undertake unprecedented efforts to partner with K-12 schools and help improve them.

While these goals are within the reach of what Universities could do, they are not, at present, embraced as priorities by most universities. Whether universities step up in saving the liberal order which gave them life will depend on whether higher education leaders and faculty understand the grave risk facing the project of the Enlightenment itself.
Can American Universities Protect Democracy?
(Huffington Post Blog, Published February 9, 2017)

A recent article in The Atlantic by David Frum titled ‘How to build an autocracy’, presents a dystopian scenario in which democracy breaks down in the United States under the Presidency of Donald Trump. Frum examines lessons from the actual breakdown of other democratic regimes and discusses what is likely to happen in the United States. The article is a lucid analysis of the role various institutions could play in such a democratic breakdown. Universities are absent among the institutions he mentions, which include the various branches of government, the press, business groups, social movements, political parties and ordinary citizens.

Since Universities in democratic societies contribute to educate democratic citizens, it is surprising that they should be missing in an analysis of a possible breakdown of American Democracy.

Educating citizens is central to the DNA of the modern university, born with the University of Berlin chartered by Wilhelm Humboldt in 1811. This first modern university, an institution of the Enlightenment, set to advance the improvement of the world through the advancement of science and the cultivation of human reason. Best known for the key roles this modern university assigned to research and teaching, the university was also to serve as a counter-balancing force to the Prussian State, engaging in activities that educated the larger public on issues where scientific and academic expertise could enlighten the public interest. Along with two other institutions of the enlightenment, democracy and public education, universities were meant to challenge abuses of power by Church and State, empowering citizens with the understanding that the powerful methods of science, provided. The Massachusetts strategic framework, the Vision Project, for instance,
includes educating students to be active, informed citizens as one of seven key outcomes.

Authoritarian governments are acutely aware of the role that universities can play in defending freedom, the reason they attack them often. As were all German universities at the time, the University of Berlin was seriously attacked by the Nazi regime. Joseph Goebbels and other forces of the regime burned 20,000 books from its library written by professors who opposed the regime. Soon after that, 250 Jewish faculty members and staff were fired, and many students were denied the doctorates they had earned.

Prosecution of Academics around the world who challenged authoritarian regimes preceded the breakdown of democracy in Germany, and continues to this day. Since its founding in 1919, the Institute of International Education has assisted professors who experience prosecution, and played a major role assisting the relocation of scholars prosecuted by the Bolshevik Revolution and Stalinism, by Mussolini’s Fascist regime, by the Nazis, by Franco in Spain, during Apartheid in South Africa, and by other autocracies to this day. In 2002 the IIE created the scholar rescue fund, which in coordination with the Network for Education and Academic Rights, which involves several major US Universities, to assist scholars whose work or activism has placed them at risk from the authoritarian regimes that challenge their freedom as academics. The importance of academic freedom to the mission of the university, while implicit since the creation of the University of Berlin, was explicitly stated by Michel Polanyi in the 1930s, in response to the political control that the Soviet Union exercised of scientific research.

In the United States, Academic Freedom has been generally understood to be central to the life of the University since most universities began to emulate their German counterparts in the early 1900s, with the sad exception of the black lists of university professors developed as part of
the anticommunist furor of the late 1940s and early 1950s, and of those with views critical of US foreign policy in the 1980s. On a book on academic freedom in the modern university, John Boyer defined its importance as follows:

“Broadly understood, academic freedom is a principle that requires us to defend autonomy of thought and expression in our community, manifest in the rights of our students and faculty to speak, write, and teach freely. It is the foundation of the University’s mission to discover, improve, and disseminate knowledge. We do this by raising ideas in a climate of free and rigorous debate, where those ideas will be challenged and refined or discarded, but never stifled or intimidated from expression in the first place.” (John Boyer. Academic Freedom and the Modern University).

Given how central academic freedom is to Universities, and how their mission is to advance knowledge, to promote educated and critical thinking, and to advance progress and democratic citizenship, the cosmopolitan values of the enlightenment, how could the article in The Atlantic miss universities in the lucid analysis of which institutions could protect democracy from breaking down in the United States?

The recent executive order signed by President Trump banning immigrants in all categories from seven nations provides an opportunity to test the role the university community can play in challenging actions that undermine its core values. The ban violates the basic requirement for the advancement of knowledge in universities. Creative insight in universities knows no passport, and is only accelerated by the convergence of scholars from different disciplines and cultural origins. Science is one of the most cosmopolitan activities in the world, and so is higher education more generally. It is for this reason that most universities embrace internationalism as part of their mission. It is
central to the university’s DNA and core mission to advance knowledge, scientific understanding and the cultivation of human reason.

The president’s executive order that severely restricts immigration from seven Muslim nations on any visa category impedes the work of higher education in two ways. First, it limits the opportunity for faculty to engage with colleagues and students from these seven nations. Second, it signals that the government can at any time issue edicts of this sort, possibly expanding the list of nations. This puts any student or scholar on one of those visas, regardless of the country of which they are a citizen, on notice, causing them distress and perhaps to consider that their work would be best carried out in more welcoming settings. This undermines the ability of universities to carry out their work of advancing knowledge and education.

These threats have been appropriately identified and denounced by a small number of university presidents. Harvard University President Drew Faust has called on the government, the Congress, and the courts to reconsider this order in defense of the University’s “vital interests”. 48 Presidents of colleges and universities, including all Ivies, Stanford and Georgetown, have stated that “If left in place, the order threatens both American higher education and the defining principles of our country”. In addition, more than 30,000 university faculty have asked that the order be repealed and a few hundred rallies have taken place around the country challenging the immigration ban.

Indicative as these challenges to the ban are of the courage of some university presidents and faculty to protest the threats it poses to higher education, the number of those who have opposed it is, relatively speaking, modest. There are over 4,500 institutions of higher education and more than 1.5 million faculty in the United States. Most of them have, so far, been silent about this ban.
Universities and higher education faculty manage many competing priorities, and face many challenges, aggravated by what some have described as the coming avalanche caused by institutional arrangements and costs that are unsustainable, and inadequate to meet those pressing and competing needs. It is possible that, in this context, denouncing a Presidential ban that limits the cosmopolitan character of higher education is not a top priority for many. Perhaps faculty need to weigh in the costs they could face, if banned from receiving federal government funding, for expressing dissent with the ban. It is possible that similarly pressing competing priorities explain why the recent creation of a watchlist of university professors who have socialist political views, or the rise in white supremacy activity on university campuses or the increase in hate crimes in universities, documented by the Chronicle of Higher Education, the Boston Globe and the Southern Poverty Law Center have received relatively limited attention from university communities.

David Frum’s article in The Atlantic concludes:

“We are living through the most dangerous challenge to the free government of the United States that anyone alive has encountered. What happens next is up to you and me. Don’t be afraid. This moment of danger can also be your finest hour as a citizen and an American.”

Should Frum’s dystopia materialize, this could also be the finest hour for American academics.