

A Y E A R O F
F O R W A R D
T H I N K I N G



»»»»»»»» What Is A Year of Forward Thinking? »»»»»»»»

A Year of Forward Thinking spans the 2020–21 academic year and engages the entire Princeton University community — alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends — in a global conversation about pioneering solutions for today’s challenges.

forwardthinking.princeton.edu

FORWARD

THINKERS



Jennifer L. Jennings '00

Professor of Sociology and
Public Affairs and Director of the
Education Research Section



Adam Kapor

Assistant Professor of Economics and
Public Affairs



Stacey A. Sinclair

Professor of Psychology and
Public Affairs



Melissa Wu '99

University Trustee; Chief Executive
Officer of Education Pioneers;
Forward Fest moderator

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2021

5:00 PM – 6:15 PM EST

Thinking Forward Equity in Education

forwardthinking.princeton.edu/forwardthinkers

THINKING FORWARD: EQUITY IN EDUCATION

AS AN INSTITUTION of higher learning committed to service and excellence, Princeton University has taken a national leadership role in addressing educational inequities that limit individual potential and create societal division. Princeton scholars, including those at the [Education Research Section](#), are thinking forward how K-12 and higher education can become more effective and equitable for all students. The University has also joined with a coalition of universities to form the [American Talent Initiative](#), a collaboration driven to graduate an additional 50,000 low-income students at all institutions of higher learning by 2025. Equity, opportunity and access are top strategic priorities on campus as well. Twenty years ago, Princeton instituted its no-loan financial aid program, designed to encourage all qualified students — regardless of financial circumstances — to consider applying to Princeton, and making it possible for them to graduate with little to no debt. From research to boots-on-the-ground practice and programs, our faculty, students, staff and alumni are working across disciplines to address inequities of access, socioeconomic status, social justice and government policy to think forward a more just and equitable future for all.

“Until we get equality in education,
we won’t have an equal society.”

– SONIA SOTOMAYOR '76, associate justice of the
Supreme Court of the United States

FORWARD

THINKERS

Jennifer L. Jennings '00

Jennifer L. Jennings '00 is a professor of sociology and public affairs and the director of the [Education Research Section](#), an interdisciplinary unit within the School of Public and International Affairs that promotes the use of research for education policymakers and on-the-ground practitioners. As a graduate student in sociology at Columbia University, she published the acclaimed education blog, *Eduwonkette*, which dissected education data and challenged the assumptions and policies of the New York City school system. Today, her research focuses on how education policies affect inequality in children's outcomes by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender. Most recently, her team implemented interventions to help more than 50,000 NYC eighth graders choose higher-quality high schools.



Photo: Egan Jimenez, School of Public and International Affairs

FORWARD THINKER OF NOTE

Christopher Neilson

Christopher Neilson, assistant professor of economics and public affairs — an applied microeconomist whose research focuses on [the study of public policies](#) and regulation in education markets.



Courtesy of Industrial Relations Section

» In policy after policy, we've demonstrated astounding hubris in ignoring the whole life of students — often setting up a false choice between improving education or improving social conditions outside of schools. »

FORWARD

THINKERS

Adam Kapor

Adam Kapor is an assistant professor of economics and public affairs and a faculty research fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research. His research investigates the role of information frictions in education and housing and the regulation and design of markets and matching procedures to promote equity and fairness in access to these socially important goods. In work with [New Haven Public Schools](#), he and coauthors measured families' misperceptions about the school choice process and its impacts on their school assignments. This research led to the redesign of the district's school assignment procedure. In other work, he and coauthors designed an online "warnings" system and an application simulator to help families discover high-quality schools and submit applications with a high chance of success. This system is now deployed nationwide as part of Chile's school choice process.



Photo: Kevin Birch

FORWARD THINKER OF NOTE

Rhae Lynn Barnes

Rhae Lynn Barnes, assistant professor of history — a scholar of American popular culture and the history of racism who launched "[The Show Must Go On: American Culture in Times of Crisis](#)," a free online curriculum to help teachers during the pandemic.



Courtesy of Rhae Lynn Barnes

» We find that imperfect information and biased beliefs cause [low-income] families to live in neighborhoods with lower-performing, more segregated schools. »

FORWARD

THINKERS

Stacey A. Sinclair

Stacey A. Sinclair is a professor of psychology and public affairs. Her lab examines how interpersonal interactions translate culturally held prejudices into individual thoughts and actions, with special attention on “social tuning” — how an individual subconsciously adjusts personal biases and values to the apparent views of peers or colleagues when they like the other people or feel uncertain. By this theory, prejudice can be contagious, but so can egalitarianism. Sinclair, who also teaches the course, “Prejudice: Its Causes, Consequences and Cures,” has conducted research on how institutional and individual behaviors stemming from culturally held prejudices can predict race-based achievement disparities. In 2019, she co-led a study that [analyzed implicit racial bias in U.S. schools](#), finding that Black students are subject to disciplinary action at rates significantly higher than white students — a disciplinary gap that reflected county-level rates of racial bias.



Courtesy of Princeton University Humanities Council

FORWARD THINKER OF NOTE

Casey Lew-Williams

Casey Lew-Williams, professor of psychology and co-director of the Princeton Baby Lab — a developmental psychologist who [examines how early-age experiences differ](#) for children and how they give rise to different learning trajectories.

» If you're clear that you value diversity, you really can change the minds of the people around you. »

FORWARD

THINKING

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FOR EQUITY, ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Freshman Scholars Institute (FSI)

FSI is an eight-week summer program that allows a cohort of about 75 entering Princeton students the opportunity to experience the intellectual, co-curricular and social life on campus prior to the beginning of the fall semester. FSI scholars immerse themselves in the intellectually vibrant culture at Princeton through seminar-style courses and/or laboratory research experiences, engage with their fellow scholars in a variety of community-building activities and work closely with faculty members from a range of academic disciplines and fields.

Scholars Institute Fellows Program (SIFP)

SIFP provides mentorship, academic enrichment and a welcoming scholarly community to students from backgrounds historically underrepresented at Princeton. SIFP fellows, which include first-generation and low-income students, as well as military veterans and transfer students, benefit from workshops, roundtable discussions and advising events that support academic achievement, facilitate mentorship across cohorts and provide ongoing academic and professional development opportunities throughout their tenure at Princeton.



Photo: Denise Applewhite



Photo: Edwin Coleman



Photo: Nick Donnoli

FORWARD

THINKING

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

Teacher Prep

For over 50 years, the Program in Teacher Preparation, commonly referred to as [Teacher Prep](#), has prepared students to serve as teachers and educational leaders in our nation's schools. The program is open to Princeton undergraduates, graduate students and alumni, who may return to Princeton at any time to complete the program. Students completing the program earn a University certificate and are eligible for a New Jersey State teaching license, which is transferable to other states. The program also supports numerous professional development initiatives for teachers in the public and independent schools of the greater Princeton area.

Presidential Postdoctoral Research Fellows Program

Established in 2019, the [Presidential Postdoctoral Research Fellows Program](#) is designed to enhance diversity in the professoriate by recognizing and supporting scholars from groups that have been historically and are presently underrepresented in the academy or in certain disciplines. Postdoctoral research associates are supported each year for a one-year appointment, and the award is renewable for a second year. "More and more, the path to the professoriate requires the completion of at least one postdoctoral research experience," said Rodney Priestley, vice dean for innovation and the Pomeroy and Betty Perry Smith Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering. "This program helps to increase such opportunity to those underrepresented in their discipline while simultaneously enhancing research on campus."



Courtesy of Teacher Prep



Photo: Denise Applewhite, Office of Communications

FORWARD

THINKING

COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS

Princeton University Preparatory Program (PUPP)

PUPP is a rigorous academic and cultural enrichment program that supports high-achieving, low-income high school students from local districts in the Mercer County region. PUPP scholars are selected during their freshman year in high school, and participate in weekly after-school academic enrichment sessions and three summer institutes at Princeton University before graduating.

The Princeton University Summer Journalism Program (PSJP)

PSJP aims to diversify college and professional newsrooms by encouraging outstanding students from low-income backgrounds to pursue careers in journalism. Every summer, the program welcomes 35-40 high school juniors from low-income backgrounds to Princeton's campus for an intensive, 10-day seminar on journalism.

AI4ALL

AI4ALL is designed to teach artificial intelligence technology to high school students from underrepresented groups, and Princeton is one of several universities that hosts a summer camp. Through a combination of lectures, hands-on research projects, field trips and mentorship, the AI4All program aims to inspire tomorrow's leaders to use the technology ethically.



Photo: Adena Stevens



Photo: Brian Rokus



Photo: Nick Dornoli, Office of Communication

FORWARD

THINKING

COLLEGE PREP PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS

Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA)

LEDA is dedicated to diversifying the national leadership pipeline by helping high-achieving students from under-resourced backgrounds gain admission to the nation's most selective colleges and supporting their success at these institutions. Princeton has served as the host and sponsor of the program's Aspects of Leadership Summer Institute since the inaugural summer session in 2005.

W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute

The **W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute** is a leadership development organization for adolescents and secondary students from families and communities who have experienced historical barriers to achievement and opportunity. Princeton hosts the Institute's programming.

Warrior-Scholar Project

The **Warrior-Scholar Project** empowers service members as they transition from the military to higher education and into the workforce. Princeton is one of the national universities that hosts immersive, one- and two-week academic "boot camps" for serving military personnel and veterans.



Photo: Nick Donnelly, Office of Communication



Courtesy of W.E.B. Du Bois Scholars Institute



Photo: Denise Applewhite, Office of Communication

FORWARD

THINKING

STUDENTS

Trenton Arts Fellows

Five Princeton students were selected by Trenton Arts at Princeton (TAP) as [2020-21 fellows](#), leaders who will help teach and mentor one of TAP's four youth groups: Orchestra, Singers, Dancers and Theater. "I'm most looking forward to meeting and interacting with others who might be new to, or newer to, theater," said Tanaka Dunbar Ngwara '24. "Because watching them fall in love with it reminds you why you did in the first place."

Petey Greene Program

Since 2008, Princeton students have volunteered to support the academic aspirations of incarcerated people in nearby prisons. Founded by two Princeton alumni, Jim Farrin '58 and Charles Puttkammer '58, the program recruits, selects and trains students to serve as tutors in weekly one-on-one sessions, [helping prisoners attain a high school diploma](#) or equivalency.

Community House

[Community House](#) is a program with the John H. Pace, Jr. '39 Center for Civic Engagement that has been dedicated to supporting families and underrepresented youth from the Princeton area for more than 50 years. Princeton students serve as tutor-mentors for younger students. "I may help with geometry or AP U.S. History, but the amount I learn from them is immeasurable," said Krystal Cohen '21. "When you reach a point when they trust you with their stories, their experiences, their worries and their hopes, it's the best feeling in the world."



Photo: Denise Applewhite, Office of Communications



Courtesy of the Petey Greene Program



Photo: Nick Donnoli, Office of Communication

FORWARD

THINKING

ALUMNI



Bridget Terry Long '95

economist, education professor

The Saris Professor of Education and Economics at Harvard University and the dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), Long is an internationally recognized economist whose research focuses on the transition from high school to college and beyond. Her work has shaped understanding of the impact of affordability and academic preparation on access to higher education and on student success once there. She has studied the role of financial aid in increasing college enrollment, the effects of postsecondary remediation and [the impact of policies and programs on student outcomes](#). She and co-authors have developed and tested interventions designed to support families and students as they save for college, complete financial aid forms and confront the challenges of earning a degree.

Alexandria Walton Radford *09

sociologist

Radford is a managing researcher and director of the Center for Applied Research in Postsecondary Education (CARPE) at the American Institutes for Research. Her primary responsibilities include leading a team and working with partners to improve postsecondary access for underserved groups, a topic she examined in her books:

“No Longer Separate, Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admissions and Campus Life,” and [“Top Student, Top School? How Social Class Shapes Where Valedictorians Go to College.”](#) “Some families who would have qualified for [college] aid were so misinformed that they did not even explore it as a possibility,” she wrote in The Atlantic. “Top students who have earned their place at the best colleges — and who would thrive from attending — continue to slip through the cracks.”



FORWARD

THINKING

ALUMNI

Melissa Wu '99

chief executive officer of Education Pioneers; university trustee

Melissa Wu '99 is the CEO of Education Pioneers (EP) and previously served as their chief program officer. Based in her Boston office, she leads the national nonprofit to realize its vision to identify, train, connect and inspire leaders from diverse backgrounds to accelerate systemic change across the education sector. She has spent much of her career advocating on behalf of teacher retention, school and system improvement, and performance management. Notably, she led a two-year research effort to produce "[The Irreplaceables: The Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools](#)," a study that inspired multiple districts to take up reforms."



Courtesy of Education Pioneers

Jason Kamras '95

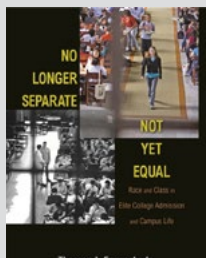
teacher

The 2005 National Teacher of the Year and a former adviser to Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, Kamras is the superintendent of Richmond (Va.) Public Schools, a district that serves more than 25,000 students, 85 percent of whom are students of color. Since taking the job in 2018, he's tackled longstanding issues that include aging school buildings, and low graduation and accreditation rates. Richmond was one of the first Virginia school systems to opt for remote learning due to the pandemic, and Kamras made the decision to remain virtual for the rest of the current academic year. "We have literally reinvented our school system," he told [Richmond Magazine](#). "I really do think [education is] the most powerful lever we have in America today to give every kid a shot in life."

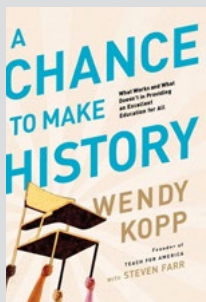


Courtesy of Richmond Public Schools

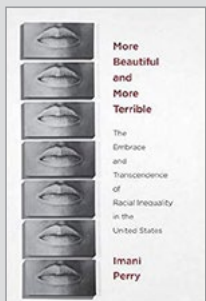
RECOMMENDED READING



NO LONGER SEPARATE, NOT YET EQUAL: RACE AND CLASS IN ELITE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND CAMPUS LIFE, by **Thomas J. Espenshade '72** and **Alexandria Walton Radford '09** (2009): Princeton-trained sociologists take a rigorous look at how race and social class impact who gets into America's elite colleges and universities, who succeeds, and why.

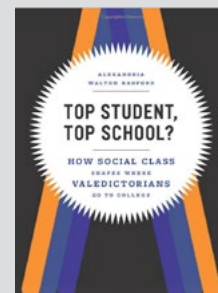


A CHANCE TO MAKE HISTORY: WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T IN PROVIDING AN EXCELLENT EDUCATION FOR ALL, by **Wendy Kopp '89** (2011): Two decades after she founded Teach For America, Kopp shared her experiences and best practices to reform schools so that every child has the opportunity for a quality education.



MORE BEAUTIFUL AND MORE TERRIBLE: THE EMBRACE AND TRANSCENDENCE OF RACIAL INEQUALITY IN THE UNITED STATES, by **Imani Perry** (2011): The Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies, Perry dissects the modern racial inequalities that lurk in our institutions, less overt than Jim Crow, but just as damaging.

TOP STUDENT, TOP SCHOOL? HOW SOCIAL CLASS SHAPES WHERE VALEDICTORIANS GO TO COLLEGE, by **Alexandria Walton Radford '09** (2013): Radford surveyed 1,369 public high school valedictorians and discovered that many from low-income families never applied to top colleges due to cost or lack of encouragement.



THE PRICE OF INDEPENDENCE: THE ECONOMICS OF EARLY ADULTHOOD, co-edited by **Cecilia Rouse** (2008): The former dean of the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs — and recently nominated to be chair of the White House's Council of Economic Advisers — and a team of scholars focus on the economics of education to better understand why young Americans are taking longer to finish college, buy homes and get married.



HIT THE DRUM: AN INSIDER'S ACCOUNT OF HOW THE CHARTER SCHOOL IDEA BECAME A NATIONAL MOVEMENT, by **Sarah Tantillo '87** (2019): A former charter school teacher in northern New Jersey, Tantillo examines why and how charters came about beginning in the 1990s and how they might look in the future.



WATCH AND LISTEN



THE FLI SIDE OF PRINCETON: Princeton students and administrators, including Khristina Gonzalez, associate dean of the College and director of programs for access and inclusion, discuss how the University supports first-generation, low-income students.



JENNIFER L. JENNINGS: EDUCATION FOR ALL: Jennings '00 joined the Before the Ballot podcast to discuss the need for policies, resources and leadership to level the playing field throughout the decentralized U.S. education system — during and after the pandemic.



WENDY KOPP: ON 30 YEARS OF EDUCATIONAL DISRUPTION: In this 2019 episode of the She Roars podcast, Kopp '89 explains how her senior thesis helped transform American education.



THERE'S NO LIFE AFTER PRINCETON. THERE'S ONLY LIFE WITH PRINCETON.: This "Meet Princeton" podcast from the Office of Admission explains the University's need-based, no-loan financial aid program and resources for first-generation, low-income students that help make a Princeton education possible.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS: COMMUNITY HOUSE: Krystal Cohen '21 and Princeton high schooler Benjamin Bailey share how they've made a connection through the Pace Center's tutor-mentor program.



THRIVE: PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION: At 2019's THRIVE Conference, Cecilia Rouse moderated a conversation with President Eisgruber; Lily D. McNair '79, president of Tuskegee University; and Ruth J. Simmons, president of Prairie View A&M University.



TRENTON ARTS AT PRINCETON: Lou Chen '19 transformed the Trenton Youth Orchestra that he founded as an undergraduate into Trenton Arts at Princeton — a vibrant arts outreach with orchestral, choral, dance and theater programming for local middle school and high school students.



DISCUSSION

As you continue to think forward about equity in education, brainstorm these questions in order to extend and deepen the conversation.

1. What did educational equity and opportunity look like in your own schooling, as you consider your K-12 experience? When you consider your own journey and those of your friends and family, what impact did it have on your lives?
2. Does America's decentralized education system, which emphasizes state and local control, help or complicate efforts to achieve equity in education? If greater collaboration across state and national borders would be helpful, in what ways can that be done while retaining the beneficial parts of local governance?
3. Can educational technology — including tools that teachers are using during the current pandemic — be the path toward greater equity and opportunity, or will it only further magnify the socioeconomic disparities between students?
4. How can public and private college tuition be made affordable for every student?
5. Think big: What innovative policies and incentives could be implemented nationally and locally to encourage greater equity in education in K-12 schools?

A YEAR OF FORWARD THINKING



Forward Fest is a monthly online event series open to the public.

February's theme:

ALUMNI FORWARD THINKERS RESILIENCE AND EXPLORATION

Saturday, February 20, 2021

10 AM EST | RESILIENCE

12 PM EST | EXPLORATION

What Are YOU Thinking Forward?

Share it now.

forward@princeton.edu

[#PrincetonForward](https://twitter.com/PrincetonForward)

For more information on future programming, visit

forwardthinking.princeton.edu/festival

forwardthinking.princeton.edu

