

Letter from the Editors

I (Andy) volunteered to write an opening letter to our readers for our new academic journal, *The International Journal of Equity and Social Justice in Higher Education*. The plan was to get an initial draft on the page and then send it to my colleagues, Elizabeth and Alfredo, for their input. We'd kick it back and forth until we had a document that we'd be proud of. That's how we've done most of the work on this journal over the last year. We work together. There are no egos involved. Just a passion for equity and social justice issues and a desire for change. Elizabeth, Alfredo, and I are a great team, and I am incredibly proud to be working with them.

But when I started writing, what appeared on the page was garbage. All writers have had this experience where it seems like you're just pushing words around on the page. I spent over a week working on this opening letter only to get a couple paragraphs of well-written, precisely worded mush. The sterile, third-person, objective, academic language that I am so comfortable using wasn't working. It wasn't capturing what I wanted to say. I wasn't saying anything (although I wasn't saying anything really well). Then Elizabeth, as she often does, gave me a nudge. She said, "Let your voice speak." Let your voice speak. She was right of course. In fact, she was more right than she perhaps realized because this is a metaphor for this journal. Let your voice speak. Say what needs to be said. Enter into the hard conversations. Use your voice to create transformative change. That is our goal for this academic journal. Let your voice speak.

Let your voice speak. Yes, this is an academic journal, and it's going to be a mighty fine academic journal because we're going to let your voice speak. Traditional academic journals haven't done this. They've acted as a filter, allowing only certain voices to speak in certain ways about certain topics for an audience who is certainly more similar than not. But our goal is to give voice to traditionally marginalized and silenced voices. Let your voice speak. We want you to say what needs to be said in a way that you want to say it. We seek to create an expanded conversation for more voices speaking

about a wide range of topics in different ways and from different perspectives. Make us uncomfortable. Point out errors, injustice, and inequities. Describe a better way. Show us what justice and equity should look like. Let your voice speak.

In traditional academic journals many voices are not allowed to speak. In these journals, articles are submitted for peer review and they are either accepted or rejected. Sheep or goats. In or out. This journal puts a different twist on this. When work is submitted, it's still subjected to blind, peer review; however, if the submission needs a bit more work, we work with you. Artists and authors can join one of several learning communities where they are able to engage with others in conversation or collaboration. As a managing editor my goal is to help get those voices out, to let your voice speak. However, it is important to note that we do not lower the bar for academic publishing; rather, we create a ladder to enable more people to get up and over the bar.

And notice in the paragraph above that I said artists and authors. We invite you to speak to us using a variety of medium: visual art, creative writing, poetry, satire, humor, cartoons, podcasts, videos, as well as traditional journal articles. We want your voice to speak in English and also Spanish. And now, our voice will be silent as we let our artists and authors speak to us through their work. Welcome to Volume 1 of [International Journal of Equity and Social Justice in Higher Education](#).

Elizabeth, Alfredo & Andy