© Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, Volume 23, Number 3, p. 230, (2019)
 eISSN 2164-8212

Perna, L. W. (Ed.). (2018). *Taking it to the streets: The role of scholarship in advocacy and advocacy in scholarship*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press. 148 pp.

Review by Roy Y. Chan

With *Taking It to the Streets: The Role of Scholarship in Advocacy and Advocacy in Scholarship*, higher education scholar Laura W. Perna provides a comprehensive introduction to the central issues affecting higher education policy advocacy between academic researchers and policymakers. The 17 chapters of this edited volume present narratives written by nationally and internationally recognized leaders that explore the professional pathways and methodological approaches used by faculty to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. The book arrives at a pivotal time for the field of higher education, during which scholars have been increasingly criticized for their inability to impact real-world policy problems with their policy research scholarship (Gordon da Cruz, 2018; Hillman, Tandberg, & Sponsler, 2015; Post, Ward, Long, & Saltmarsh, 2016; Tandberg, Sponsler, Hanna, & Guilbeau, 2018).

In Chapter 1, Perna frames the introduction of her book as a call for early career scholars to proactively disseminate and communicate research findings that resonate not only with the larger scholarly communities, but also with policy actors, both authorized (e.g., government, organizational, corporate) and unauthorized (e.g., teachers, students, administrators). Specifically, Perna calls upon the faculty to design community-engaged scholarship or publicly engaged scholarship that is applicable to college administrators, state policymakers, and the judicial system. She believes that policy, scholarship, and advocacy are vital mechanisms to effect social change, advance the public good, and strengthen democracy. Perna fleshes out several key themes raised in the succeeding chapters, with three guiding orientations: (1) "focus on policy analysis rather than politics," (2) "identify the best solutions from data and research," and (3) "recognize the roles and responsibilities of our positions" (pp. 3–7). She challenges researchers to remain cognizant and data focused as public intellectuals or intellectual leaders when bridging new connections between higher education research, advocacy, and policy. Perna demonstrates that scholars of higher education policy must work collegially and collectively between and within groups when designing policy-relevant research that advances the public good. The author notes the contemporary challenge of connecting policymakers to higher education scholarship but also offers practical solutions in this volume by linking critical models, methods, and research tools for historically underrepresented and underserved populations.

In Chapter 2, James T. Minor urges academic researchers to think and act as public intellectuals utilizing data-informed results or advocacy efforts to lead to improved policy outcomes for students. Pointing out that the role of scholarship in facilitating outcomes among research, advocacy, and policymaking is "more detached than connected" (p. 17), Minor emphasizes that higher education researchers must do more to strategically place their studies in policy environments in which their publication aligns with advocacy and policymaking activities outside the academy. Rather than pursuing purely individual intellectual interests, he urges higher education scholars to develop advocacy research agendas attuned to the interests of policymakers and other advocates, and thus more likely to influence policy issues. Minor concludes that, presently, "higher education research is a day late and a dollar short" (pp. 21–22). He challenges educator-scholars and practitioners to reevaluate the relevance of their research to ensure alignment with the agendas of policy leaders at the federal, state, and local levels.

In Chapter 3, Mitchell J. Chang extends the

argument that higher education scholars must be scholar–activists in the academy if they seek to make an impact in their area of scholarship. Only the second tenured faculty member of Asian descent at UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, Chang discusses his efforts to "gaze outwardly" to advance knowledge by (1) developing an experiential ground-level understanding of problems/issues, (2) publishing his work in a wide range of publications, including journals and newspapers, and (3) working with people outside his scholarly community to apply his research (pp. 25–26). Chang uses the example of C. Wright Mills's *Sociological Imagination* (1959) to suggest that educator–scholars develop research agendas guided by a broader vision and purpose to create social change in both the current and future world. Chang concludes that early career scholars must not only be engaged intellectually with a community of scholars but also should push traditional boundaries of academic discourse to advance diversity and inclusivity in higher education.

Donald E. Heller shares common ground with the authors of the previous three chapters. In Chapter 4 he provides an example of how scholars of higher education can influence public policy in order to improve college access and success of historically underserved communities. Through his work as both a scholar and scholar–activist, he highlights how educator–scholars must identify policy-relevant topics that are of interest, not just to oneself, but also to the greater community. Heller explains that having a passion for a specific research topic is perhaps the most important ingredient to achieve academic relevance and success. Drawing on his prior work with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, he describes the tension between higher education scholarship and policy implementation in the adoption of the Tennessee Lottery Scholarship Program in 2002. Although the Commission did not adopt many of the ideas Heller proposed, policy leaders did consider a few areas of significance when assisting with the policy process of the financial aid scholarship program. Heller concludes that leveraging postsecondary research can best influence policy and practice if university-based scholars are willing to connect their scholarship with outside groups that are accessible to the public.

In Chapter 5, Simon Marginson provides a vivid example of the growing disconnect between policy advocacy and evidence-based policy investigation. From his experience as a policy researcher at three education organizations, he recognizes the ongoing tension between politicians (or public administration) and faculty researchers, and the division of labor between them. Marginson stresses that researchers must work with politicians to pursue empirical investigations that not only challenge our values and beliefs, but also allow their work to inform practice through social activism as intellectual leaders in higher education. He challenges researchers to be self-determining and to design equity-minded policies and procedures as the intellectual activists in the academy.

Christine A. Stanley calls upon the higher education communities to enact their diversity and social justice goals for disadvantaged groups in Chapter 6. Rather than pursuing individual intellectual interests, Stanley challenges researchers of all demographic backgrounds to engage in critical community-engaged scholarship and to be equalizers who advocate and inform change for the public good. From her research on the experiences of faculty of color in predominantly White institutions, Stanley argues that scholars must hold themselves accountable for inclusive excellence. She offers the late Maya Angelou as an example of a public intellectual who sought to critique systems of oppression and advocate for social change as a scholar. Stanley emphasizes that researchers have a moral obligation to use research for engaging with the community.

Based on her 25 years of experience as a faculty member, Ann E. Austin makes the case, in Chapter 7, for higher education scholars to design and disseminate data-informed research that advances the public good. Informed by her various roles and responsibilities at Michigan State University, she encourages educator–scholars to conduct publicly engaged scholarship in their research, translation, and advocacy. The author believes that engaged scholarship should be a scholar's ethical responsibility as a faculty member and that advocacy must be integral to that work.

Gary Rhoades further adds that community-engaged scholarship is necessary to fully engage nonacademic audiences (policymakers, administrators, practitioners) in public scholarship in Chapter 8. He asserts that

an inner dialogue between academics and nonacademics is vital to ensure that public scholarship remains accessible to different audiences, in different contexts, and at different points in time. Because faculty members are pressured to publish in top-tier journals, Rhoades suggests that it is vital for us to rethink our work as scholar–experts to ensure that all people are included in the scholarship. He helpfully explains that "choosing how, why, and to whom we profess" is an important step toward negotiating "between the norms and forms of professional neutrality in . . . scholarly work and public scholarship" (p. 58).

In Chapter 9, Estela Mara Bensimon offers compelling evidence that higher education researchers must create more powerful tools "in order for inequity to be viewed as a *contradiction* to professional and institutional values" (p. 68). The author argues that using theory-based tools, rather than reporting or measuring what is observed, can help scholars and practitioners shift their roles from being knowledge producers to consultants or facilitators of action when discussing topics like stereotypes, microaggressions, and racial biases. Bensimon encourages higher education researchers to utilize their knowledge as effective change agents to impact decisions and actions that can best facilitate racial equity in higher education.

The remaining chapters by Cheryl Crazy Bull, Shaun R. Harper, Sara Goldrick-Rab, Danial G. Solorzano, William G. Tierney, Adrianna Kezar, Adam Gamoran, Jeannie Oakes, and Anthony A. Berryman share themes that are similar to those of the first nine chapters, stressing that scholar–activism is risky and messy, but necessary to ensure justice, fairness, equity, and respect in higher education. The authors provide evidence that advocacy and academic rigor are not mutually exclusive but may instead be intertwined or integrated into higher education scholarship. In addition, the chapters express a strong belief that all scholars have an obligation to "ground . . . advocacy in research rather than opinion or anecdote" (Perna, 2016a, p. 331). Although risks are involved in pursuing advocacy work, the authors of this volume send a clear message that democracy is stronger when scholars and higher education practitioners include the voices of diverse people in their studies (e.g., women faculty, nontraditional students, marginalized populations) and take into account race/ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, generational status, socioeconomic status, family income, marriage status, dependency status, and/or place of residence.

The 17 contributors to this book share a collective vision that we as higher education researchers must have a moral and ethical obligation to use our privileged positions to engage in advocacy as proclamation and persuasion in order to connect research and policy in the era of posttruth and fake news. Perna provides evidence that academic researchers and policy leaders have the capacity to engage in critical community-engaged scholarship or public scholarship that can best combat the persisting inequities and injustices within higher education systems and structures. Although the book provides several great examples of why academic researchers should develop scholarly agendas that promote open pathways for equity-minded policymaking, I believe the book falls short on how academic researchers and practitioners can better connect their scholarship to the policymaking process in higher education.

I believe that the editor could have added more substantive content in the beginning or end of this book to articulate and frame the growing disconnect between policy and practice, and offered key recommendations designed specifically to address the inequities in higher education outcomes among underrepresented college students (e.g., low income, first generation, students of color, ethnic minorities). As evident from a wide body of literature, scholars of higher education policy have struggled to connect and present findings to state and federal policymakers that address the knowledge needs of both parties (Hillman et al., 2015; Perna, 2016a; Tandberg et al., 2018). These struggles consist of challenges in language usage, method and methodology, and differing perspectives, as well as goals and timeframes (Perna, 2016b). As noted by the editor when she served as president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, "Despite the important role that state policies can play in meeting the nation's needs for increased educational opportunity, social mobility, and economic growth, too little scholarship offers theoretically grounded and empirical examinations of the influence of state actions on these outcomes" (Flores et al., 2016, p. 1). Because policymakers often conceptualize

research and policy in vastly different ways from academic researchers, the volume would have been strengthened by the inclusion of an additional chapter that offered some sort of guidance on how researchers can better advance their public policy agendas to serve as the "intellectual backdrop" for framing and guiding policy alternatives. As academic researchers typically analyze what has occurred after the fact, making their work largely reactive, policy leaders tend to be proactive and seek to advance their political agendas by shaping public policy (Flores et al., 2016). Because of their different approaches, I believe that this book would have been more beneficial if the editor had provided some real-world examples of how and when scholars and advocates can act assertively, based on the data available regarding a specific policy issue, and consistent with the preferences of their constituents.

Nevertheless, this book is timely and relevant for teacher–scholars and policy agents seeking to enhance community–university partnerships between higher education research, advocacy, and policy. The book clearly calls upon higher education researchers and practitioners to develop scholarly agendas that are *problem-directed* rather than *discipline-directed*, with the goal of addressing the knowledge-needs of policymakers and the policymaking community. The reflective essays will give readers some hope that higher education scholarship can be "taken to the streets" and used in policy-relevant ways that are *instrumental*, *conceptual*, and *political* to all constituencies (Flores et al., 2016). As stressed by Perna (2018), "merely conducting it [research] is not sufficient to create policy change. Advancing these goals also requires academic researchers to connect research and policy" (pp. 1–2).

About the Reviewer

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