What’s Inside:

Feature
Elevando Las Voces de la Comunidad: Attempts to Center Community Knowledge within the Bounds of Colonial Intellectual Reproduction

Editor’s Note
Narrators of Their Own Stories

Campus Highlight
Encuentros: The Obligation of the Academy and the Praxis of Intergenerational Oral Histories

Director’s Column
All Students Major in Voice. Educators Need to Listen.

In Brief/News and Notes/Travel
- BTtoP Hosts Two Fishbowls at AAC&U Meeting
- Bring Your Voice
- Two-Year and Four-Year Partnerships
- PLACE Summer Convening
- BTtoP Director and PLACE Project Coordinator Conduct Site Visits to Regional Partners
- BTtoP Director David Scobey Offers Remarks at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County
- BTtoP Director David Scobey Attends 20x30 Transformathon

FEATURE
Elevando Las Voces de la Comunidad: Attempts to Center Community Knowledge within the Bounds of Colonial Intellectual Reproduction

By Rosa Noriega-Rocha, Student, University of Southern California; Mary Fernandez, Student, University of Southern California

When thinking about academia as a space for cultivating higher thought, we must actively remember that higher education has historically been a colonial space that excludes many people. First and foremost, academia is a space reserved for folks who have the knowledge and resources to navigate educational institutions. Barriers and access to membership may be especially notable for those who identify as having intersectional backgrounds of historically marginalized or underserved populations, like first-generation students of color. (According to the National Center for Education Statistics, coming from a first-generation background is more likely among African American students and Latinx Students). Reflecting and interrogating where cultures of colonialism linger in higher education is critical given that college students are more diverse


(continued on page 3)
As our readers may know, Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) was generously awarded a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation last summer to advance our Partnerships for Listening and Action by Communities and Educators (PLACE) Collaboratory Initiative. PLACE is a network of academic-community partnerships at eleven colleges and universities from diverse sectors and regions, using the public and cultural humanities to advance civic engagement projects both at the local level and as a national collaborative group. At our inaugural PLACE convening this past October in Greensboro, North Carolina, which included about forty of our colleagues from across the country, we tried to embody PLACE’s core value of engaged listening by building fishbowl conversations into our program. We asked two of our visiting student partners, Rosa Noriega-Rocha and Mary Fernandez, to lead a fishbowl on how to respect and raise student voices. Those two students initiated a powerful dialogue about recentering perspectives that have been traditionally silenced or pushed to the margins in higher education and inspired the topic for this issue of our newsletter.

In this issue, Noriega-Rocha and Fernandez build on that earlier conversation to weave personal experience and ethnographic research practices in our Feature article on decolonizing academic spaces, “Elevando Las Voces de la Comunidad: Attempts to Center Community Knowledge within the Bounds of Colonial Intellectual Reproduction.” In our Campus Highlight, a team of our friends—including professors, students, and community partners from Saint Peter’s University, Cleveland State University, City University of New York Graduate Center, Stella and Charles Guttman Community College, the American Civil Liberties Union, and more—describe Encuentros, a powerful one-day conference of panel discussions and performance art grounded in the use of oral history to “free buried stories” and bring timely social justice issues to the forefront of academic dialogue. And in his Director’s Column, “All Students Major in Voice. Educators Need to Listen,” BTtoP Director David Scobey describes his experience of learning from his students, and how it affirmed his belief that the core purpose of education is to foster agency, give students the opportunity to find their voice, and respect them as co-creators of their own learning.

Placing student perspectives at the forefront of our work has always been central to BTtoP’s mission, but we’ve grappled with the tension of authentically enacting that in our programs. We hope that this newsletter can serve as a point for iteration and growth by focusing directly on the topic of student voice, including students as lead authors, and valuing them as ambassadors for the community that higher education serves. As always, we invite your feedback, resources, and examples of successes or challenges you’ve faced on this theme; you can contact us at info@bttop.org.
Elevando Las Voces
(continued from page 1)

than ever before in US history. \(^2\) Interestingly enough, many elite universities who tout their diversity often make little to no effort to try and foster resources or interventions for such students. \(^3\)

As first-gen students ourselves at the University of Southern California (USC), one of the world’s leading private research universities, we know from direct experience that being the first in your family to attend college can be both empowering and disempowering. We often find that many of the theoretical frameworks that are presented to us in class can be attributed to or help inform our lived experiences. However, it must also be noted that much of the jargon that scholars use to prove their intellectual capacities inadvertently becomes inaccessible to folks who do not come from a formally educated background. The irony of this is that the very people who scholars are theorizing about (e.g., members of gangs, first-generation students, undocumented immigrants, single-parent households) are often excluded from the kinds of conversations validated in elite academic spaces. \(^4\)

bell hooks, a black feminist scholar who is famously known for her decolonial praxis, describes this contradiction in regards to her own experience as a black woman in academia: “Attending a recent conference on cultural studies . . . I was disturbed when the usual arrangements of white supremacist hierarchy were mirrored both in terms of who was speaking, of how bodies were arranged on the stage, of who was in the audience, of what voices were deemed worthy to speak and be heard.” \(^5\) hooks’s observations and critiques of how white people center themselves in these spaces remind us that academia has not been welcoming or accessible, particularly to women of color.

These barriers to inclusion often extend beyond campuses of higher education to other institutions, like museums. However, the Boyle Heights Museum (BHM) in Los Angeles, where we serve on the research team, seeks to transform what conventional history museums look like through challenging what narratives have been previously deemed (un)worthy of occupying actual and physical spaces. The Boyle Heights community is almost 75 percent Latinx, with 50 percent of the total population identifying as a foreign-born immigrant. \(^6\) Our current BHM exhibit, “Traditions and Innovations,” focuses on counteracting the misconception that gentrification is solely responsible for the increase of successful business in Boyle Heights through recording the narratives of local entrepreneurs and their long-}


\(^4\) It should be noted that such conversations do not just occur in institutions of higher education; however, they tend to be culturally validated if and when such conversations occur in academic spaces, especially elite ones.


Elevando Las Voces
(continued from page 3)

standing businesses. Thus, BHM provides these residents with the opportunity to see themselves and their history represented, as opposed to the colonial framework which has often been used to whitesplain the experiences of communities of color.7 Most salient, however, is that the BHM allows residents of Boyle Heights to curate their own history, flipping the role people of color usually play in knowledge production. That is to say, they are no longer subjects being observed and written on, but instead individuals capable of intellectual contribution.

Informed by our own experiences with spaces that proclaimed to support diversity, when we joined the BHM team and set out on our first interviews in the community, we were extremely conscious of our limitations. Neither of us had a personal connection to Boyle Heights, or even to Los Angeles before we attended USC. The only connection we could make to Boyle Heights was that our own hometowns were also being affected by gentrification. We accounted for this limitation by educating ourselves as much as possible on the history of Boyle Heights, and entering interview sites with the intention of listening and bearing witness to the lived experiences of the residents. This is significant because many academic researchers enter their sites of research with the preconceived notion that they already know what is worth knowing. We also found it important to acknowledge what USC and our affiliation to an elite academic institution represented in Boyle Heights.

Unfortunately, USC is a driving force of displacement and gentrification in both South Central Los Angeles and Boyle Heights through the expansions of the Health Sciences Campus.8 To this community (and others), USC might evoke images of power and abuse. We made sure to be aware of our proximity to this institution and the implications this might pose on how community members view us.

Thus, although we are USC students, we criticise the practices USC engages in and actively work to use the knowledge and resources extended to us from our association to USC for the benefit of underserved communities. We prioritize community-based participatory research, paying special attention to accessibility of language and framing research questions so that the community’s needs are centered as opposed to the university’s interests.

“However, it must also be noted that much of the jargon that scholars use to prove their intellectual capacities inadvertently becomes inaccessible to folks who do not come from a formally educated background.”

We establish and respect boundaries that many traditional academic researchers might not consider. For example, our interview with Tomas Delgado, the owner of Candelas Guitars (a historically successful business in Boyle Heights), consisted of us continually reminding him that we were only willing to record ethnographic notes and pictures with his consent. We wanted to respect his personal space and accurately portray him and the history of his shop in a manner he felt comfortable and content with. Because of our approach, which was mindful of histories of exclusion, he welcomed us into his guitar shop and his favorite private room, and he allowed us the special opportunity to see pictures of his family’s previous three generations and drawings made by his children. We have also agreed to essentially coauthor our piece for the BHM with him by running everything from the transcript to the final draft by him for approval and giving him space at the museum exhibition opening to promote his business.

In order to actively work toward a decolonial framework, we must first acknowledge the fact that academia is a space in which the voices of historically marginalized people are traditionally compromised and decentered, and to be mindful of our own personal privilege and context. Once we have acknowledged this, we can work toward adopting frameworks that allow spaces like college campuses and museums to be more inclusive and accessible to all.

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7 Whitesplaining is the act of a white person explaining topics to people of color, often in an obliviously condescending manner, and especially regarding race- or injustice-related issues.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHT

Encuentros: The Obligation of the Academy and the Praxis of Intergenerational Oral Histories

By Li Adorno, Organizer, Movimiento Cosecha; Jennifer Ayala, Education Professor and Director of the Center for Undocumented Students, Saint Peter’s University (SPU); Karim Azzam, Youth Activist, Roxboro Middle School, Cleveland Heights; Maria Del Cielo Mendez, Youth Organizer, Make the Road New Jersey, and Student, SPU; Elsy Cruz, Graduate, SPU; Michelle Fine, Professor of Critical Psychology, City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center; Samuel Finersuey, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Stella and Charles Guttmann Community College (GCC); Anne Galletta, Professor of Education, Cleveland State University; Juan Carlos Garcia Rivera, Doctoral Student in Critical Psychology, CUNY Graduate Center; Katie Haas, Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union; Angelica Houston, Graduate Student in Education Policy, University of Pennsylvania; vanessa jones, Founder, Artivist InK; Viandry Mena, Student, GCC; Andrea Níkte Juárez Mendoza, Doctoral Student in Urban Education, CUNY Graduate Center; Dion Mungo, Student, Cleveland State University; Rosa Santana, Program Director, First Friends of New Jersey and New York; Hermanica Thelusca, Student, GCC; Ariadna Villeda, Student, GCC

After a year of conducting participatory action research, the authors of this article gathered at Saint Peter’s University in Jersey City, New Jersey, just miles from a major immigrant detention center. The event, “Encuentros in the Borderlands: Activism, Critical Youth Research, and Obligations of the University,” was a one-day gathering that included panel discussions, performance art, and community dialogue. Collectively, our efforts sought to identify obstacles to justice for immigrants and other marginalized people and to offer scholarly tools to support each other in our respective struggles to combat persecution on the basis of race, ethnicity, or migration status.

Our work is situated in soil already tilled by Antonio Gramsci, who wrote in his Italian prison cell one hundred years ago about the “morbid symptoms” that appear in moments of crisis.1 It is inspired by the passions of people like Oscar Romero and Ignacio Martín-Baró, two slain Jesuit martyrs whose legacy of fighting for human rights challenged dominant lies.2 We lean on the inspiring words of the late Chicana poet Gloria Anzaldúa, who understood how all struggle in the borderlands resides among love, laughter, and resistance in a space where radical possibilities are borne.3 We imagine our academic institutions—Saint Peter’s University (SPU), Stella and Charles Guttmann Community College (GCC), Cleveland State University, and the City University of New York Graduate Center—as bold enough to bear witness, provide sanctuary, and build with students an archive of never-heard stories that reveal both structural violence and radical possibilities.

Through our Encuentros conference, we aimed to provoke a conversation about the responsibility of institutions of higher learning to engage students as scholars and activists in moments of national crisis. With particular attention to oral history, our work as students and faculty offers qualitative material for researchers and activists looking to revolutionize notions of race, nationality, and belonging. In this


(continued on page 6)
Encuentros

(continued from page 5)

project and on our campuses, we take oral history seriously as a pedagogy to free buried stories of those like working-class students, immigrants, and students of color; and to spread forms of knowledge that augment or question what passes for hegemonic histories.

The Encuentros conference began with a panel of experts on the current immigration crisis in the United States. The discussants detailed their work, which exposed the trauma faced by immigrants attempting to seek asylum, those living with the fear and reality of state-sponsored family separation, those from Central America facing painful realities once they are deported, and those participating in grassroots resistance efforts that challenge current systems of power. Presenters included Li Adorno, an SPU alumnus and activist with immigrant justice group Movimiento Cosecha, who described his individual and collective journey as an organizer advocating for immigrant dignity and permanent protection. Katie Haas, an attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, offered an overview of the national picture on immigration. Liberation psychologist Juan Carlos Garcia Rivera detailed his work with “returnados”—those returned to El Salvador—sharing tales of humanity amidst crises of fear and belonging. Youth organizer and education scholar Andrea Nikté Juarez Mendoza, who has been working with and writing about the detention camps at the US-Mexico border, amplified the struggle of people whose freedom has been stolen and whose suffering has been silenced by the US government.

The panel was moderated by Rosa Santana, an advocate working with First Friends of New Jersey and New York on behalf of those in detention, who also shared her experiences in this work.

The second panel explored oral history as a practice of theory braiding, critical student development, and movement building. Maria del Cielo Mendez, a student at SPU and youth leader at Make the Road New Jersey, described her work as an organizer and oral historian gathering narratives of those who risked their safety to accomplish the incredible final passage of the New Jersey Dream Act. As Maria noted in her comments about the role of community in achieving tuition equity and financial aid access for undocumented students in New Jersey, “The whole fight was based in community. If they cried, they cried together. If there was a setback, they came up with a solution together. If they won, they won together.”

Guttman students Viandry Mena and Ariadna Villeda followed, speaking about their work as oral history instructors and mentors for immigrant ninth graders in New York to collaboratively document the trajectories of the ninth graders’ former classmates from School in the Square middle school in Manhattan. Mena and Villeda explained that these youth researchers were selected from the first graduating class to study ninety of their fellow students, mostly Latinx graduates, over a five-year longitudinal inquiry as they navigate high school in one of the most socioeconomically divided cities in the nation. This study will offer windows into communities targeted by anti-immigrant rhetoric and policy.

Researchers from Cleveland State University partnered with the Cleveland Public Library system to draw on archives and oral histories in the retelling of a school boycott against racial segregation in 1964. Project team member Karim Azzam spoke of connections between the structural violence experienced by black students and their families and the violence of anti-Islamic views he experienced while in elementary school. In his oral history project, Dion Mungo, a student at Cleveland State University, traced ties between himself and a youth he supported in the past, noting the intergenerational dimensions of oral history. Angelica Houston, a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, outlined methods to recruit youth as oral historians and elders to narrate their experience of the school boycott. And vanessa jones, founder of Artivist InK, spoke of exploring forms of racial justice within the research space in a manner that “holds the academy accountable for bringing theory to practice” through the Crafting Radical Histories project.5

“The students spoke of their new-found strengths as interviewers and their deep responsibility to carry and curate stories that had been buried.”

4 Maria del Cielo Mendez, “Encuentros in the Borderlands: Activism, Critical Youth Research, and Obligations of the University” (presentation, Jersey City, New Jersey, September 26, 2019).

5 vanessa jones, “Encuentros in the Borderlands: Activism, Critical Youth Research, and Obligations of the University” (presentation, Jersey City, New Jersey, September 26, 2019). (continued on page 7)
Encuentros
(continued from page 6)

Guttman student Hermanica Thelusca led a conversation on the Texas-based HBCU Truth & Reconciliation Oral History Project. This project, piloted by black Christian organizations, HBCUs, and the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University, is dedicated to documenting experiences of African Americans and Chicanx who have been subjected to historic and modern manifestations of white supremacy. Thelusca recalled the testimony she collected of a black woman who, upon receiving news of Martin Luther King Jr.’s death from a white woman on a bus, felt obligated to “contain her rage” and to engage in a public display of double consciousness until she could find safe refuge to mourn.

Once the individual oral histories were presented, we gathered on stage—across institutions, generations, and projects—to contemplate on the delicate responsibility of oral history and what it means to carry stories of elders who fought so hard, only to see schools remain segregated today. We reflected on topics like learning to heal wounds that are still open, what it’s like to be so intimate with a grandfather that “told me what he never told anyone,” and how an oral historian “realized that my struggle is so different from, but related to the trauma” of those interviewed. The students spoke of their new-found strengths as interviewers and their deep responsibility to carry and curate stories that had been buried.

We have decided, together, to produce materials for the communities we work with, to write a collaboratively authored article on critical pedagogy in the neo-liberal academy, and to produce short documentaries for use by organizers, educators, youth, and immigration-justice workers. We are now editing four hours of video to create a series of short clips on the immigration struggle, the obligation of the academy, the intellectual and ethical power of oral history, and our collective responsibility to restorative justice.

We had many goals, but student voice was central to these projects. In Cleveland and Washington Heights, in Jersey City and at the US-Mexican border, in El Salvador and in our sweet Encuentros space, we designed a medley of cross-generational voices, engaged in intimate learning across generations, and ethically brought buried stories to light—perhaps our most sustaining accomplishment. Our work was enormously enriched by transgenerational dialogues building up to and planning Encuentros; our interviews with each other and others across time and space; the wisdom, dedication, and curiosity of the undergraduate researchers documenting struggles that came before, carving paths yet to be realized, and giving voice to elders who sacrificed and have never been recognized. As emergent historians, these young people are developing their own academic, cultural, and ethical voices. They, and we, now embody an ethical inheritance, an obligation to carry sacred stories of struggle to audiences.

With our rich audience and a panel of lawyers, scholars, teachers, and activists, we are friends and comrades brought together with two small grants from Bringing Theory to Practice and APA CODAPAR, who believe that the university campus—like areas along the Rio Grande River—is a borderland marked with blood, conquest, and elitism, but also of ideas, laughter, and social movements. Across campuses and projects, our intellectual passions brought us together by our beliefs that universities are places where we can weave tapestries of knowledge, solidarities, and perspectives that don’t usually fit together; where we can invite students to hear their own voices and produce knowledge that honors the voices of their elders; and where we can involve community members and academic partners like librarians in archiving the stories of who we have been, who we are, and who we will be.

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“I always felt less-than,” Wendy said. “Coming here has helped me find my voice. It helps me move through the world.” She was sitting at a seminar table at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, one of a group of undergraduates telling me about their histories with higher education. A naturalist at a wolf conservation center, Wendy was enrolled in Evergreen’s adult-serving Evening and Weekend Studies (EWS) program, some two decades after her first foray in college. Around the table, other EWS students offered their own accounts of studies, setbacks, and detours. Many echoed Wendy’s feeling of being “less-than,” of embarrassment and even anger about past experiences with higher education. But just as powerful were the expressions of pride in returning to school and appreciation for EWS’s welcoming community. “Coming here has helped me find my voice. It helps me move through the world.”

Wendy’s words affirm something essential about our purposes as educators. It is not only aspiring musicians who major in voice. All students do. Whatever, wherever, and whenever they study, they come to college to find their voice. Voice is freedom, power, and self-direction. It helps them move through the world.

“It is not only aspiring musicians who major in voice. All students do. Whatever, wherever, and whenever they study, they come to college to find their voice. Voice is freedom, power, and self-direction. It helps them move through the world.”

And finding voice is doubly crucial for those who don’t fit the historical norm of the undergraduate: students of color, first-generation students, working-class students, parenting students, immigrants, and working adults like Wendy. Too often, these college-goers encounter a campus where they are unseen and half-heard, where the noise of other voices can leave them with a kind of social laryngitis. Colleges and universities are beginning—just beginning—to realize the urgency of building communities, curricula, and classrooms where all voices are heard and amplified, where all students can find their voice and hear themselves being heard. The essays in this newsletter offer stories of such “voice work” by students, educators, and institutions. Bringing Theory to Practice is committed to supporting it.

Yet I also hear something more in Wendy’s words. For when students find their voice in college, they also find their voice about college. They speak back to us about their learning, their life as students, and their campus experiences, good and bad. “I couldn’t stand the traditional model of college,” another Evergreen student, a veteran government worker named Jesi, recalled about her first stint in college. “Everything was in columns—take these distribution requirements, those disciplines. And learning in columns isn’t how I learned. I’ve always been a worker, and what you find in the workplace is the interdisciplinary model. Everything is connected to everything else.” It’s hard to imagine a more eloquent critique of the familiar failures of general education—or a more pointed call for integrative, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning.

As a whole, it seems to me that higher ed doesn’t listen well to what students have to say about their time in college and their aspirations for it. We gather data about their experiences through valuable instruments like the National Survey of Student Engagement. We tabulate their responses to courses and instructors through (not so valuable) questionnaires on the final day of the semester. A minority of colleges—generally small, liberal arts institutions like Bard or Hampshire—design the undergraduate experience around threshold moments of academic planning and personal stock-taking. But I’d argue that we don’t listen to students, deeply and slowly, about what they have learned, whether they have flourished, or what they believe college should be.

In my ideal academy, this kind of listening would constitute a core element of both the individual student’s experience and the process of educational design. It would be a benchmark.
of great teaching and learning that every student be able to—and be asked to—voice the kind of critical reflection that I heard from Jesi. It would be a benchmark of institutional practice to integrate student voice in the assessment and ongoing development of the curriculum and the campus community.

Just to be clear: I don’t mean that college should be “design your own major” writ large. I’m not arguing for open curricula or against course mandates. (Indeed I do think that student voice is crucial to the design of any curricular model, from the most flexible to the most highly structured.) I realize that students can become captive to shiny objects or transient fads or intellectual panics, just like faculty and administrators. But I am arguing that we engage them as critical thinkers about—and cocreators of—their education. I’m arguing that when they find their voice, we listen to what they have to say about college.

The history of higher education is filled with episodes when students made their voices heard to great effect. Student agitation ended in loco parentis rules in the 1950s and ’60s. The black freedom, feminist, and other student-led movements resulted in the founding of new academic fields and curricular programs. In the wake of the Ferguson protests and the rise of the Movement for Black Lives, it was a wave of campus mobilizations in 2015 at the University of Missouri, Yale University, and elsewhere that connected demands for equity, inclusion, and student well-being—connections that we emphasize in our work at Bringing Theory to Practice.

But I think that listening to student voice has to go beyond responding to student activism. It ought to be part of the everyday, every-place practice of academics and academic institutions, especially in a time of turmoil and change. In my experience, the results can be powerful. Several years ago, at the New School, I taught a seminar on the recent history of higher education. In an early session, I asked the class to make a video describing how they would redesign college for students like themselves. Garnetta, a former modern dancer, a bartender, and an aspiring therapist, looked into the camera and said this: “What we need is an undergraduate program that gives us the tools and the space to connect our studies, work lives, aspirations, communities, and public value, a program that provides us with emotional support, assistance in academic navigation, healthier relationships between the student body and the administration, and builds student community.” Years before I came to Bringing Theory to Practice, reflecting on her own experience, she had voiced BTtoP’s core values.

It’s a cliché to note that undergraduate education does not consist of the pouring of knowledge from faculty experts into student vessels. College is a relational drama, enacted and improvised (and sometimes undermined) by the interplay of students and educators. Our students are already its cocreators. Let’s draw on their experiences, good and bad and complicated, by helping them find their voice and by listening—systematically, seriously, slowly—to what they have to say.
In Brief: BTtoP News and Notes

NEWS

BTtoP Hosts Two Fishbowls at the AAC&U Annual Meeting

BTtoP was honored to participate in AAC&U’s Annual Meeting, which took place January 22–25, 2020, in Washington, DC. We hosted two fishbowl discussions in which an inaugural circle of four discussants (the “fish”) unpacked a theme in conversation for twenty to thirty minutes, with the surrounding audience overhearing their dialogue. Then, audience members were invited to tap into the fishbowl, replacing discussants and offering their own questions, comments, disagreements, and stories. The resulting conversations were wide-ranging, expansive, and also focused, with room for disagreement and unexpected connections and insights.

This year’s fishbowls included the following topics and “fish”:

1. Listening With: A Model for Community Engagement  
   Anne Galletta, Professor and Chair of the Curriculum and Foundations Department, Cleveland State University; Yesenia Hunter, PhD Candidate, University of Southern California; David Scobey, Director of Bringing Theory to Practice; and Jack Tchen, Inaugural Clement A. Price Chair in Public History and Humanities Director, Rutgers University–Newark

2. Redesigning College: Whole Education for the Whole Student  
   Bryan Alexander, Senior Scholar, Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS), Georgetown University; Adam Bush, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, College Unbound; Joy Connolly, President, American Council of Learned Societies; and Elaine Maimon, President, Governors State University.

To learn more about our sessions and speakers, visit www.bttop.org/news-events/events/2020-aacu-annual-meeting-bttop-sessions. For more information and updates on the 2020 Annual Meeting, please visit www.aacu.org/AM20.

Bring Your Voice

As part of our emphasis on community building and collaborative meaning-making, every two weeks BTtoP sends out an informal email update titled Bringing It. We hope Bringing It can be a platform for the whole BTtoP community: a place to respond, share work, share thoughts and readings, brainstorm, argue, and build connections. If you have an idea for a brief post, give us a heads-up about what you’d like to write. If you would like to contribute to “What We’re Reading,” we invite your comments. If you have an idea for a project, feel free to give us a kind of intellectual help-wanted ad. Or, just send us advice, critiques, and kudos. You can reach us at info@bttop.org. We welcome your voices.

Two-Year and Four-Year Partnerships

BTtoP is interested in creating a network of two-year and four-year partnerships seeking to develop and disseminate models of innovative teaching and learning across the transfer seam of community colleges to four-year institutions. Individual projects might include the co-creation of high-impact practices such as community engagement or internships, the shared design of “first-year experience” courses, inclusive pedagogy models for marginalized learners such as parents or incarcerated students, or curricula aimed at introducing students to integrative learning. We imagine this brainstorm to be the start of a new community of practice. Contact info@bttop.org if you are interested in helping create it.

PLACE Summer Convening

This June BTtoP will be joined by approximately 35 academic, community, and student partners from our PLACE Collaboratory for a second convening. Like our Launch Convening this past October in Greensboro, the gathering will be hosted by one of the PLACE collaborating institutions—the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

TRAVELS

BTtoP Director and PLACE Project Coordinator Conduct Site Visits to Regional Partners

From October to December 2019, BTtoP Director David Scobey and Project Coordinator Kate Griffin met in Newark, Baltimore, Greensboro, and Los Angeles with our collaborators (continued on page 11)
In Brief: BTtoP News and Notes

(continued from page 10)

in the PLACE Collaboratory, a national project funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. PLACE (Partnerships for Listening and Action by Communities and Educators) brings together eleven campuses and their community partners in four regions to use public humanities and cultural projects that address significant civic engagement issues. Project themes emerging in site visits include gentrification, climate change, housing affordability, community development, and immigrant justice.

BTtoP Director David Scobey Offers Remarks at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County

On November 5, David Scobey offered remarks at UMBC’s event, “A New Civic Story,” which celebrated the launch of the Center for Democracy and Civic Life and is led by BTtoP friends and colleagues David Hoffman and Romy Hübner. Learn more about the Center for Democracy and Civic Life at civiclife.umbc.edu.

BTtoP Director David Scobey Attends 20x30 Transformathon

David Scobey attended and gave a keynote at the Network for Improvement and Innovation in College Health’s 20x30 Transformathon from November 10 to 12. BTtoP is a proud partner in the 20X30 initiative, a national network of people and organizations working together to transform the well-being of twenty million students in higher education by 2030 and taking a strategy of “unprecedented collaboration and action.” Learn more about 20x30 at collegehealthqi.nyu.edu/20x30/.

Free Publications from BTtoP

Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) is pleased to announce a special offer on our publications! We’ve received such a positive response to our recent RFPs, and to our biweekly Bringing It messages, and we want to thank our community as we prepare for future offerings. So for a limited time, we are making our Civic Series books, designed for use by educators, administrators, and higher education professionals, available for free through our partners at the Association of American Colleges and Universities—you pay shipping costs only. This offer includes bulk orders for those who would like to order multiple copies for distribution to committees, faculty members, and/or community members.

The Bringing Theory to Practice Project (BTtoP) is an independent national effort. It is funded by The Endeavor Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and functions in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in Washington, DC.

The Endeavor Foundation is dedicated to efforts that foster independent thought, ethical understanding, deep appreciation of the arts, and reverence for the natural world. The Endeavor Foundation supports and catalyzes excellence in liberal arts education and related fields, and has supported the curricular and pedagogical development of a significant number of liberal arts colleges in the United States.