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# STRUCTURING INEQUALITY AT BERKELEY HIGH

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*Interviewer:* You said you chose yourself to be in prealgebra instead of algebra. Do you think you made the right decision?

*Chantelle:* Yeah, because last year I had prealgebra and this year I'm going to take one semester of prealgebra, and then maybe I'll be ready for algebra, but if I'm not, I'm going to take prealgebra again so I really know what I'm doing. Because, see, my brother, when he came [to Berkeley High], he didn't go to prealgebra. He went to prealgebra in middle school, and then he went to algebra here, and he never went to prealgebra here, so he needed to go to prealgebra this year because it's his last year.

*Interviewer:* You said you had a hard time with math there [private middle school]. So how is it here at Berkeley High?

*Jennifer:* Much easier. I'm in geometry, and it's like "Oh, okay. I know how to do that." I have a [private] tutor now, and she's planning to be a math teacher at Berkeley High, and the [geometry] books she's like an expert at going through because her school created them. So she's, like, "I understand how they think about this." So she understands the books . . . and she helps me with that. So I'm getting a lot better, and I'm understanding things a lot better now, but it's only because of her.

This chapter focuses on how the structures of Berkeley High School contribute to the reproduction of racial and social class-based inequality at the school. By *structures* we are referring to operations and procedures such as teacher assignment, course selection and placement, and resource allocation, which profoundly influence student experiences at Berkeley High School (BHS). Our examination of school structures also includes a focus on the organization of the school—the decentralized nature of decision making within departments, the distribution of authority and responsibility among administrators, the accountability (or lack thereof) and function of special programs (such as English as a Second Language, Advanced Placement, and Special Education). We examine how these structures shape and influence the academic outcomes of students. As we will show, these seemingly neutral aspects of the school structure that too often are taken for granted play a central role in reproducing patterns of success and failure and, by extension, in reproducing inequality and privilege.

The achievement gap at Berkeley High is, in some sense, a source of puzzlement. How, in a progressive community like Berkeley and in a high school that appears to revel in its commitment to diversity—with its African American Studies Department and freshman ethnic studies requirement—does the structure of the school lend itself to reproducing the racial achievement gap? Perhaps even more puzzling, why has it been so difficult to confront and transform the features embedded in the school structure that are responsible for facilitating success for some and failure for others?

The words above of Chantelle, an African American ninth grader, and Jennifer, a white ninth grader, give some indication of how a single school procedure—ninth-grade math course selection—serves to reproduce inequality, despite the well-meaning efforts of many school staff. As the comments from these two students show, some students have more information and a clearer sense of how the school works (such as the classes they need to take) than others. In addition, more affluent students like Jennifer can rely on the resources of their parents (private tutors and counselors, the

know-how, savvy, and advocacy of their parents), while students like Chantelle who come from poor families have access to fewer resources from home and are more dependent on the school. It is obvious that the backgrounds of students contribute to the unevenness of opportunities for academic success. What is less obvious is the way in which the school structure is also implicated in reinforcing patterns of disadvantage and privilege.

There is relatively little that the school can do to address the inequalities in the backgrounds of students like Jennifer and Chantelle. However, it is possible to address school conditions that contribute to disparities in achievement, such as school size, the student-to-counselor ratio, procedures that are used to track students into higher- and lower-level courses, and processes used to provide academic support to students who are struggling. These aspects of the school structure all contribute to the achievement gap, and unlike the backgrounds of students, they can be easily modified and reformed.

Social scientists have identified significant resources, or forms of capital, that play a role in influencing student academic outcomes. Research has shown that economic capital, that is, the wealth and income of parents, is one of the primary factors influencing student achievement (Coleman and others, 1966; Rothstein, 2004; Farkas, 2004). Student achievement is also influenced by more subtle resources such as social capital—the benefits derived from connections to networks and individuals with power and influence (Coleman, 1988; Stanton-Salazar, 1997, 2001; Noguera, 2003)—and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)—the tastes, styles, habits, language, behaviors, appearance, and customs that serve as indicators of status and privilege. All three forms of capital—economic, social, and cultural—play a role in perpetuating disparate educational experiences and differential access to educational opportunities. However, they do so in interaction with seemingly neutral structures that operate within schools and society.

Chantelle's comments reveal how easily a student who lacks economic, social, and cultural capital can become lost within Berkeley High's large and impersonal bureaucratic structure. She

had freely chosen to take prealgebra for her ninth-grade math class, but her reason for making that decision was problematic: she based it on her brother's experience. Even more disturbing, the consequences of her decision are unclear to her. She mistakenly believed that if she became "ready" for algebra after a semester in prealgebra, she then would be able to switch into algebra in the middle of the year—an option not typically available to students at BHS. Based on her brother's own misguided experience, Chantelle believed that if she did not take prealgebra during her first year, she would have to make it up later. Both of these beliefs were based on erroneous information. That she reached the point of enrolling in prealgebra without having these notions corrected is a reflection of the limitations of the school counseling process. However, that her counselor allowed her to make this decision is likely due to his or her assumption that a student like Chantelle—an African American from a low-income family—should be placed in the lowest-level math class, prealgebra, even though she had taken it already.

Chantelle's experience illustrates why students who lack economic, social, and cultural capital are more vulnerable to the impersonal and ineffective structures at the school. Without an adult to encourage her to take algebra, the gateway to college preparatory math and science courses, or to advise her on where she might seek academic support, Chantelle made a decision that is likely to affect her preparation for college and therefore will have bearing in the long term on her opportunities after high school. By taking prealgebra in the ninth grade, Chantelle is all but ensured that she will be unable to meet the admissions requirements to the UC or California State University (CSU) systems. Given that so much is at stake, it must be recognized that a system of course assignment that allows students to choose which classes to take will invariably work better for some than others.

Jennifer's words are equally revealing. Like many of Berkeley High's more affluent, white ninth graders, she did not attend Berkeley's public school system. In fact, according to school records, some 12 percent of Berkeley High School's class of 2000 attended private

middle schools, and most of these students were white. This constitutes a particular form of white flight and reentry to the public system at the high school level.

Thus, Jennifer came to the high school from a private middle school with a more rigorous academic program. This may be why Jennifer reports that she found Berkeley High "much easier" than her middle school. Although Jennifer admits that she struggled with math in the past, she elects to enroll in a high-level math class: Honors Geometry. Knowing that the geometry class was a bit of a stretch for her, Jennifer's parents relied on their economic capital to hire a private tutor. It turned out that her tutor also had quite a bit of social capital because this particular tutor was planning to become a math teacher at Berkeley High and was familiar with the textbook and ways of thinking used in the geometry class. Having access to such expert assistance was invaluable for Jennifer, who credited the tutor for her success.

The juxtaposition of Chantelle's and Jennifer's experiences reveals that student resources—economic, social, and cultural capital—interact with the structure of the school to perpetuate disparities in student outcomes and experiences. It is important to note that the structuring of inequality at Berkeley High is subtle, hidden behind taken-for-granted understandings of the way things work. There is no evidence of a conspiracy to favor affluent students and hold back poor students of color. However, the structure of the school is implicated in the stark patterns of inequality that are reproduced year after year—structures that appear neutral on the surface but actually reinforce unequal outcomes.

This chapter explores the ways in which school structure serves to reproduce inequality. It begins with Beth C. Rubin, Jean Yonemura Wing, and Pedro A. Noguera examining tracking "Berkeley High style," probing the means through which racial and class-based inequalities are perpetuated through course placement. In the next part, Emma Fuentes and Daniel Liou present a profile of the English Language Learner Program, demonstrating how and why well-intentioned staff have not been enough to help immigrant

students overcome the institutional barriers they face at the school. In the third part, Alicia P. Rodriguez illuminates the ways in which gender is implicated in unequal opportunities, through an examination of the treatment of girls and boys. Finally, Lance T. McCready examines the ways in which students participate in extracurricular activities and shows how their choices reflect and reinforce academic and racial segregation throughout the school.

## Tracking Berkeley High Style: Different Pathways to Different Futures

*Beth C. Rubin, Jean Yonemura Wing, Pedro A. Noguera*

In the broadly disseminated statewide public school rankings released in 2000, Berkeley High School scored a 9 on a scale of 1 to 10, putting it in the top echelon of California public schools. Such a rating suggests that this is an excellent public school, one to which parents should be pleased to send their children. However, a closer look at the academic landscape of this highly ranked school reveals striking disparities in achievement and outcome, which appear tightly linked to race and class.

Tracking on the basis of perceived academic ability is a tradition at many American high schools (Oakes, 1985), but it has changed over the past decades. As awareness has grown about the harmful effects of tracking on some students, there has been a shift away from assigning students to rigid tracks that determine all of their classes throughout high school to a more flexible arrangement in which students can vary in track assignment from class to class (Lucas, 1999). Tracking at Berkeley High blurs the sorting process even further.

At BHS, ninth graders are placed in math classes ranging from Math A to Honors Geometry without any form of assessment. Typically students are allowed to choose which course they want to take in consultation with counselors, who make recommendations based on an examination of their middle school transcripts. As for their foreign language electives, ninth graders can choose to enroll in Kiswahili, French. Spanish, Latin, or German, or in no language

whatsoever. Many make their selection without realizing that the most advanced courses are available only in the traditional European languages. A careful examination of students' course assignments reveals troubling patterns with respect to the ways in which choices about math coincide with science and foreign language course placement. This is tracking Berkeley High style, and it has critical consequences for students.

## Ninth Grade: An Uneven Start

The class of 2000 entered Berkeley High in fall 1996 with 764 students. This large cohort provides a starting point in tracing the pathways of students through their four years of high school.

In many ways, all ninth graders start off in the same way. All are assigned to detracked English and history core academic classes, in which small cohorts of freshmen—carefully balanced for race, gender, and achievement level—share the same pair of English and history teachers. Most ninth graders also take the required ethnic studies course, as well as physical education. But a close look at the other course assignments of ninth-grade students reveals how differences related to race, class, and language establish patterns that have profound ramifications for students' subsequent opportunities.

### Math as a Gatekeeper

Math placement typically serves a benchmark for ninth-grade academic standing, and the disparities in math placement by race are striking. As is true nationally, white, middle-class, or affluent students at BHS tend to receive access to advanced math courses early, and thus start their high school careers with a major advantage (Moses and Cobb, 2001; Perry, Steele, and Hilliard, 2004).

The Diversity Project's class of 2000 research team found that 83 percent of the ninth graders who were placed in Math A, the low-track prealgebra class, were African American. In contrast, 87 percent of students from that same cohort of ninth graders who were placed in Honors Geometry, the advanced-track math class,
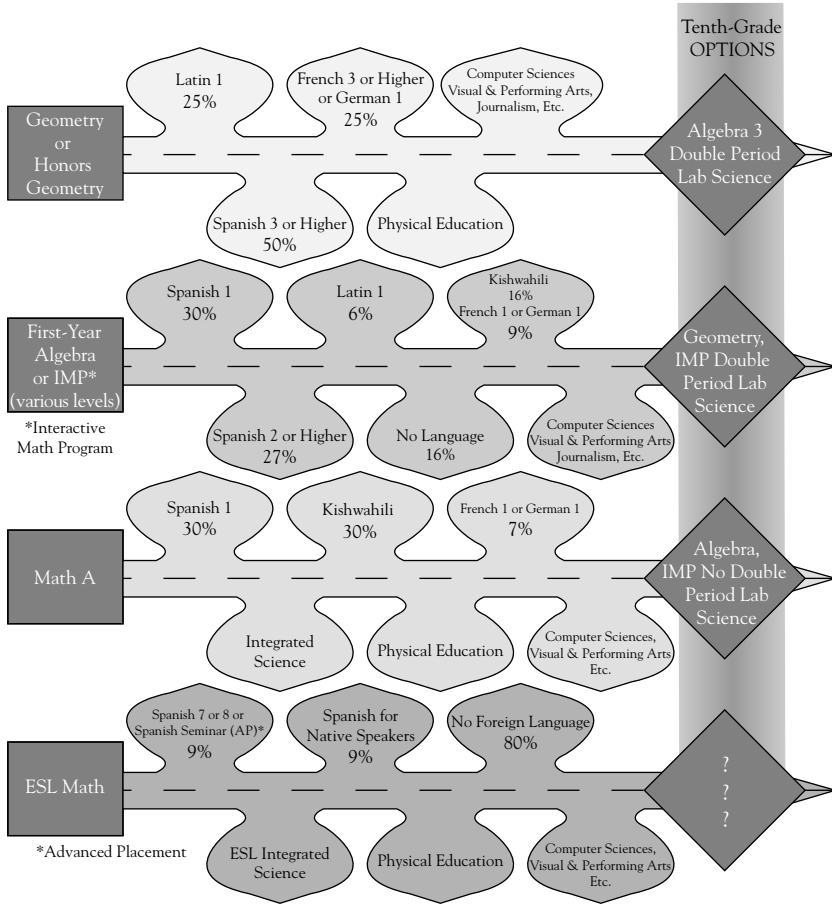
were white. It also turns out that a disproportionate number of these students had attended private school before entering BHS.

Students like Jennifer who came from private feeder schools are at a distinct advantage. Nearly half (46 percent) of freshmen in the class of 2000 who came from private feeder schools were placed in Honors Geometry, compared to just 18 percent of freshmen from Berkeley public middle schools, all of whom took Honors Algebra in the eighth grade. Meanwhile, virtually all students with an undocumented feeder school (students who entered Berkeley High after the semester had already started, mostly from out-of-district cities such as Oakland), who were predominantly African American, were routinely placed in Math A without any assessment of their math abilities.

Math placement at Berkeley High has far-reaching consequences for students' pathways through the Berkeley High course structure. Figure 1.1 illustrates these different pathways by linking ninth-grade math placement with students' course-taking patterns and electives and indicating their corresponding tenth-grade options for math and science.

Students who entered Berkeley High with advanced math standing were also more likely to be placed in advanced foreign language classes. The research team found that 75 percent of ninth graders in "regular" Geometry and Honors Geometry were taking intermediate or advanced-level foreign language classes, with the remaining 25 percent all in Latin 1, a prestigious language typically taken by college-bound students. In contrast, just 27 percent of students enrolled in Algebra I as ninth graders were in intermediate foreign language classes, with 53 percent enrolled in a first-year language course. It is even more disturbing and telling that the remaining 16 percent of Algebra 1 students were enrolled in no language class at all.

## FIGURE 1.1  The Pathways Through Berkeley High School: Class of 2000 Course Options by Ninth-Grade Math Placement

Tenth-Grade OPTIONS

Geometry or Honors Geometry

Latin 1
25%

French 3 or Higher or German 1
25%

Computer Sciences Visual & Performing Arts, Journalism, Etc.

Algebra 3 Double Period Lab Science

Spanish 3 or Higher
50%

Physical Education

First-Year Algebra or IMP* (various levels)

*Interactive Math Program

Spanish 1
30%

Latin 1
6%

Kishwahili 16% French 1 or German 1
9%

Geometry, IMP Double Period Lab Science

Spanish 2 or Higher
27%

No Language
16%

Computer Sciences Visual & Performing Arts Journalism, Etc.

Math A

Spanish 1
30%

Kishwahili
30%

French 1 or German 1
7%

Algebra, IMP No Double Period Lab Science

Integrated Science

Physical Education

Computer Sciences, Visual & Performing Arts Etc.

ESL Math

Spanish 7 or 8 or Spanish Seminar (AP)*
9%

Spanish for Native Speakers
9%

No Foreign Language
80%

?
?
?

*Advanced Placement

ESL Integrated Science

Physical Education

Computer Sciences, Visual & Performing Arts Etc.

The percentages in Figure 1.1 indicate the percentage of class of 2000 ninth graders with a given math placement who also took particular ninth-grade electives.

*Source:* Graphic by Julia González Luna, teacher, and Jean Yonemura Wing; computer artwork by Fredda Cassidy, graphic artist and parent.

Still more striking was the comparison with ninth graders enrolled in Math A, the lowest math level. None were taking intermediate language classes, 67 percent were in first-year language classes, and 33 percent were not taking any language class. In addition, almost half of those taking a foreign language were enrolled in Kiswahili, a language offering no Advanced Placement level. No Geometry students and only 8 percent of Algebra students were enrolled in this African language course.

These links between language and math levels also imply a kind of ranking of foreign languages in terms of academic status for college, with Latin at the top, other European languages next, and Kiswahili at the bottom of the language hierarchy.

## Quality of Teaching and Learning in Different Tracks

Ninth-grade students noted qualitative differences between their advanced and "regular" courses (Talbert, 1990). In an ethnographic study in which five diverse ninth-grade students were shadowed from their tracked to their detracked classes, there were noticeable differences in both classroom demographics and academic tone. One of these students, an African American student with high grades named Natay, who was placed in Algebra I and Spanish I in her first year, found both classes to be quite undemanding. Her Spanish class, she told an interviewer, was filled with classmates who "don't really want to learn." "People say the stupidest things," she said. "I look at them sometimes and I'm, like, 'How many times have you taken this class!'" Although Natay focuses her criticisms on her classmates, our observations revealed that the students were most likely responding to the low expectations and mediocrity in teaching found in her "regular" grade-level classes (Perry, Steele and Hilliard, 2004).

Natay found her Algebra I class to be similar to her Spanish I class in its lack of both order and rigor. Her math teacher was impressed by her work and had advised her to try to get into Honors Geometry as a sophomore. An Honors Geometry teacher

commented, however, that students coming from Algebra I rarely succeeded in Honors Geometry, and he discouraged her from enrolling in the course.

It is noteworthy that Natay had taken both Spanish I and Algebra I in eighth grade, a fact that an examination of her transcript readily would have revealed. However, she was not placed in the higher-level courses as a ninth grader, and she did not challenge her counselor and struggle to be placed more appropriately. "It's okay," she said. "Hey, I'm getting A's." By starting high school in introductory courses, however, this academically oriented student was going to be limited in reaching the highest course levels by her senior year. It is equally distressing that in the lower-level courses, she experienced a lower quality of teaching and learning.

For ninth graders, who are new to the high school, these differences were striking. Natay and other case study students noticed the difference in the racial demographics of their low-level classes as compared to their detracked freshman core classes, which were racially mixed. Mike, a white student, declared that he was the only white student in his Math A class. Leticia, an African American student, noted that the only all-black class she ever attended at Berkeley High was not in African American studies but was Math A. When researchers from the Diversity Project asked members of the Student Outreach Committee to document classroom segregation in photographs, the students picked up their disposable cameras and fanned out across the school, snapping photos of predominantly white AP classes and predominantly black and brown math and English "backup" classes, which provide extra time for homework and tutoring. Wells and Serna (1996) argue that this academic segregation across classrooms discourages higher-achieving students of color from electing higher-tracked classes when given the chance, because they do not want to be isolated as "the only one." It is also likely to act as a deterrent to academically struggling white students enrolling in classes designed to provide remediation and support.

## Easy to Jump Down, Hard to Jump Up

It is difficult, though not impossible, to "jump track" upward (Harklau, 1994). Very few students try, and even fewer succeed. In general, students found that retreating to a lower math track was easier and far more common than advancing to the honors track, especially for students of color.

Such was the case for Manuel, a middle-class Chicano student who had been placed in Honors Geometry based on his strong middle school math record but who found the class too difficult in the way it was taught. Unlike many other students who were experiencing difficulty in this class, Manuel did not have, and could not afford, a private tutor. He asked his counselor for a transfer to a "regular" geometry class, but he was instead placed in Algebra I, a class he had taken already in middle school and passed with high marks.

Zion, a middle-class African American/Latino student, was an exception who managed to jump track. Zion was good in math yet found himself placed in an algebra backup class in ninth grade, where he joined a classroom filled with other students of color. Whether it was his flatlands address or his dark complexion and urban style, somehow Zion was misperceived as needing extra help. Fortunately for him, within weeks his algebra backup teacher realized that he did not belong in the class, and the following year, his teacher recommended him for Honors Geometry.

## Math Placement Opens the Gate to Advanced Placement

Starting math a year above grade level puts all of the Honors Geometry ninth graders on track to take Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus or AP Statistics in their senior year. It also provides an advantage in gaining admission to AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, and Honors Human Anatomy. These AP science classes and other college-preparatory laboratory science classes have math prerequisites, and the AP sciences have entrance exams.

Success in these courses gives students an edge in admission to selective colleges and reinforces the privileges they derive from their access to economic, social, and cultural capital.

## Self-Scheduling Camouflages Tracking

Tracking is not the only school structure that supports the success of high-achieving students. Policies such as self-scheduling also do so by perpetuating the myth that students choose their own pathways through high school. The myth of student choice, integral to the culture of personal freedom exercised by students at Berkeley High, further camouflages the effects of tracking.

How does this happen through free choices made by students through self-scheduling? For years, rather than having a standard curriculum for all students or randomly assigning students to teachers, Berkeley High has allowed students to choose their teachers for at least some of their classes. The process is called "self-scheduling" and is done with little or no counselor guidance. Under this system, college-bound students, often under the guidance of their parents, seek out and choose teachers known for interesting and challenging classes. In contrast, poor students from flatland neighborhoods often use the process to choose teachers who are known for being less demanding—teachers who show videos every day and are easy graders. Students who are new to Berkeley High and have no circle of adults or peers to advise them often wind up with the teachers whom few others choose.

Starting with the class of 2000, a computerized self-scheduling system was launched in efforts to alleviate the gross inequities of the old arena scheduling system, under which students went to tables in the gym and pulled class cards for specific teachers and classes. Under the old system, savvy students would converge on teachers who were known to offer popular and demanding courses and take all the class cards before other students had a chance to pick. The computerized system was introduced because it was seen as more fair and impartial. It allowed each student to choose at least one teacher

in a class that the student designated as high priority. However, savvy college-bound students also realized that for a class such as AP Physics or Latin 7, with only one or two sections offered, it would be a waste to use one's priority teacher choice on these classes, which were guaranteed to have quality teachers for the few students eligible to take them. Instead, such students would frequently use their priority pick for their English or history classes, for which two dozen sections were offered, or for their math class, to get the teacher they felt was the best. Through careful course selection and planning, combined with judicious use of the priority teacher and class pick, a student might be able to schedule all or most classes with a teacher of choice.

This system privileges students and parents who have a way of knowing who the "best" teachers are and who know exactly which classes they need to take to enhance their college applications. Moran, McCready, and Okahara (2000), in their paper on institutional reproduction of racial inequality at Berkeley High, state that these students "are able to 'hoard' the best teachers while the neediest students end up with the teachers deemed least effective. . . . To underscore this point, there is currently an email tree among parents listing the preferred teachers and warning parents against other teachers, and this has obvious consequences tied to income and the 'digital divide,' which are both tied to race" (p. 4).

For many students of color, however, "freedom of choice" too often has meant freedom to fail or to barely get by. The high school allows students to pick an "easy" teacher or to "choose" to retake a failed class in summer school and fall further and further behind. As our research showed, these "choices" are made by students who typically lack information and insight regarding how course selection will affect the opportunities available to them after graduation. In addition, students who have grown accustomed to taking classes that do not challenge their minds are unlikely to embrace the opportunity to enroll in more rigorous courses. Unless adults on the BHS staff take deliberate steps to influence students' choices, it is highly unlikely that these patterns will change.

## The Upper Grades: Widening the Gap

As students move through the Berkeley High system, they become increasingly stratified and segregated by race and class. The racial achievement gap, as measured by course-taking trajectories and grades, does not level off after the ninth grade but grows wider over time. In part, this is because the largely white, middle-class student population, who entered high school at or above grade level in math, spent their ninth-grade year taking care of graduation requirements and prerequisites for advanced science and math classes, and then they took off in tenth grade along a college-bound track. It is also due in part to a cycle of failure among many students of color, who often end up failing Algebra I or Math A and then repeating it in summer school and tenth grade. With each failure and repetition, these students fall further behind.

By the end of the ninth grade, it is clear that while some students are accelerating forward, others are slipping backward. By senior year, the ninth-grade gap of one or two years in math has become equivalent to as many as five years in math courses taken and passed. For the class of 2000, 19 percent of all seniors were able to enroll in calculus: 68 percent of these students were white, 20 percent were Asian, 3 percent were Latino, and only 5 percent were African American. This meant that one out of three white seniors took calculus, while only two out of one hundred African American seniors did so.

Math is in many ways the most striking example of how students become racially stratified over time, but a similar process occurs in other academic classes that become increasingly more segregated as they approach graduation. This segregation represents more than merely a voluntary social separation of students. As seen in the class of 2000 study, racial segregation in classes began in math and spread year by year to nearly every academic subject area. Add to tracking the effects of self-scheduling and teacher choice, and we find a situation in which students who started ninth grade in racially balanced freshman core classes can go through an entire day without any racial diversity in their classrooms.

Thus, while some students build impressive college resumés, filled with AP courses and high grade point averages (GPAs), others fulfill the minimum graduation requirements that actually fall short of meeting admissions criteria for the state universities. Inadequate counseling, institutional barriers, peer influences, and academic difficulties built over years of inferior education before and during high school are some of the forces responsible for this divide.

## Ten-Unit Science Courses

Laboratory sciences are required for admission to the state university systems. At Berkeley High, laboratory science classes are double-period and carry double course credits toward graduation (ten units instead of five). Nearly all white and Asian American students in the class of 2000 took at least one ten-unit science course, while only about half of Latino students and less than 60 percent of African American students did so (Figure 1.2).

**FIGURE 1.2   Ten-Unit Science Courses Taken by Students in the Class of 2000, by Race**
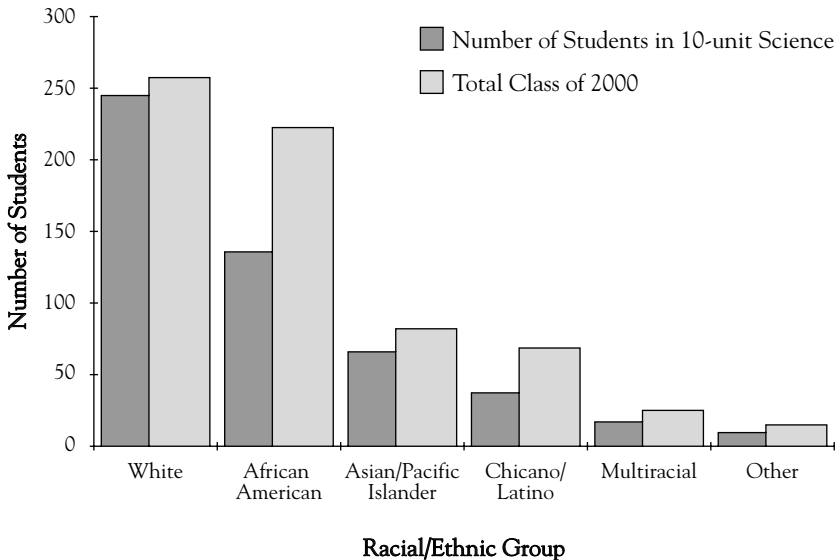
## Advanced Placement (AP)

Figure 1.3, based on data from the class of 2000 cohort at the time of their graduation, shows that white students predominate in every AP subject area. Asian American students are generally represented proportionately and are slightly overrepresented in math and science. African American and Latino students are greatly underrepresented across subject areas, with the exception of AP Spanish, in which Latino students are slightly overrepresented.

**FIGURE 1.3  Proportion of Class of 2000 Students Enrolled in AP Classes, by Subject Area and Race**



AP Classes by Subject Area
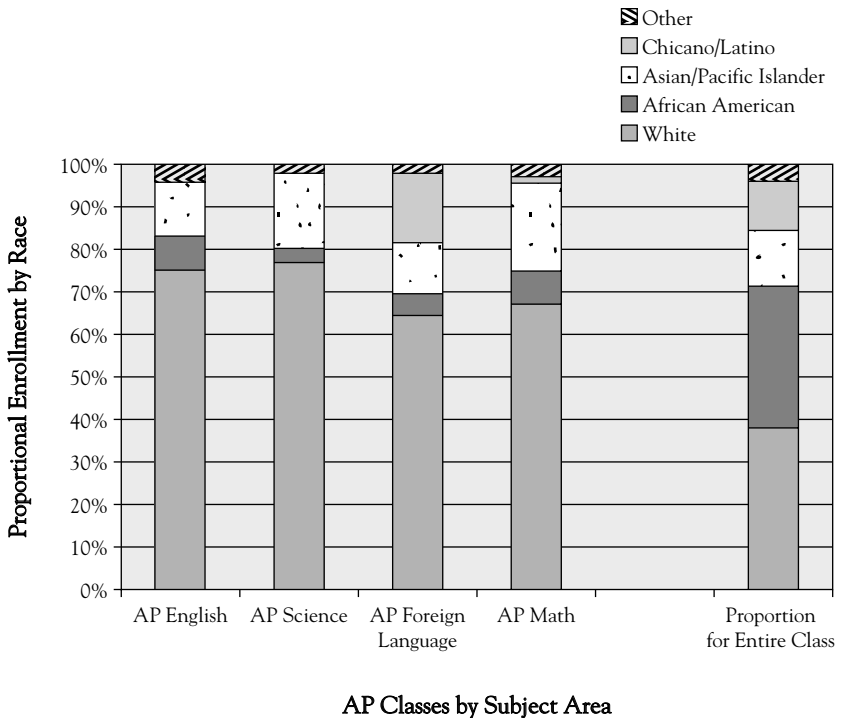
## Grade Point Averages

Grade point averages (GPA), another aspect of student achievement considered in the college admissions process, also reveal distinct racial patterns (Figures 1.4 through 1.6). On a four-point scale, a GPA of 4.0 = A, 3.0 = B, 2.0 = C, 1.0 = D, and 0.0 = F. These patterns start in the ninth grade, and the gap in cumulative GPAs grows wider over time. With the exception of math and foreign language, class of 2000 ninth graders took the same detracked classes in English, world history, and ethnic studies. However, their GPAs at the end of ninth grade, when disaggregated by race, show the beginnings of the achievement gap as measured by grades. Thus, whether they were taking the same heterogeneously grouped classes or more advanced math and foreign language classes, white and Asian American ninth graders significantly outperformed African American and Chicano/Latino ninth graders in terms of overall GPA.

### FIGURE 1.4  Class of 2000 Ninth-Grade GPA Above 3.5, by Race
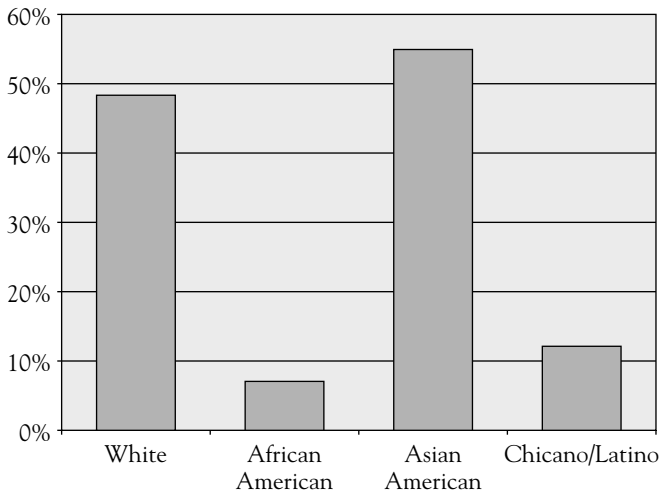
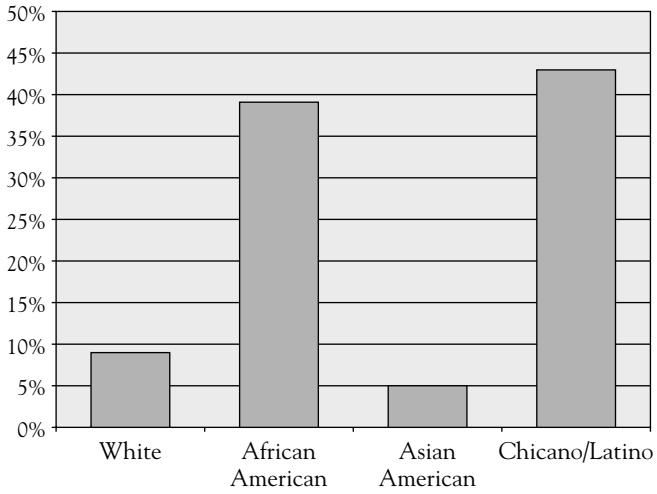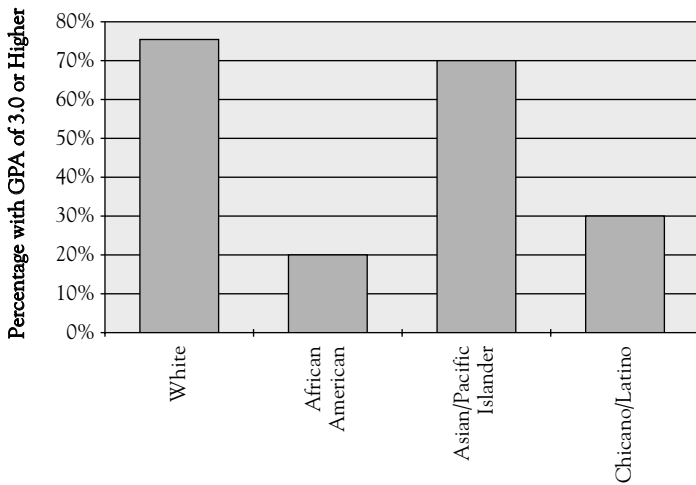**FIGURE 1.5   Class of 2000 Ninth-Grade GPA Below 2.0, by Race**



**FIGURE 1.6   Percentage of Students in the Class of 2000 with Senior GPA of 3.0 or Higher, by Race**

## Consequences for the Future:
## Graduation and Beyond

Tracking results in a student body with different levels of prepared-
ness and eligibility for higher education. The class of 2000 provides
a striking example. About 87 percent of white and Asian American
graduates were eligible for admission to the UC or CSU system,
while only 65.7 percent of African American graduates and 46.3
percent of Latino graduates met eligibility criteria for state univer-
sity admissions.

The post-high school outcomes for class of 2000 graduates
mirror the disparities in their academic pathways through high
school, as shown in Figures 1.7, 1.8, and 1.9 (Wing, 2002). In the
multitiered system of higher education, middle-class and affluent
white students are disproportionately represented in the most
selective institutions, whether public or private, just as they were
overrepresented in the most advanced high school classes. A mere
5 percent of white students took advantage of the CSU system,
whose enrollment draws from the top third of statewide high
school graduating classes. Instead, white students tended to
choose the more selective of the nine UC campuses or to enroll
in prestigious private institutions concentrated in the Northeast,
such as Harvard, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania.
Meanwhile, students of color and the poor were disproportion-
ately represented in the lower tiers of public higher education—
the community colleges and the CSU system. African American
students who chose private institutions enrolled overwhelmingly
in the historically black colleges of the South, such as Howard,
Morehouse, and Xavier. In high school, these students were
underrepresented or entirely absent from the AP classes and
sometimes started high school in English or algebra backup classes
or Math A. And while community college is often portrayed as a
sound, economically viable way for disadvantaged students to
transfer to a four-year public university, the actual transfer rates
are very low.

## FIGURE 1.7  Numbers and Proportions of Class of 2000 Graduates Eligible for UC or CSU Admission, by Race
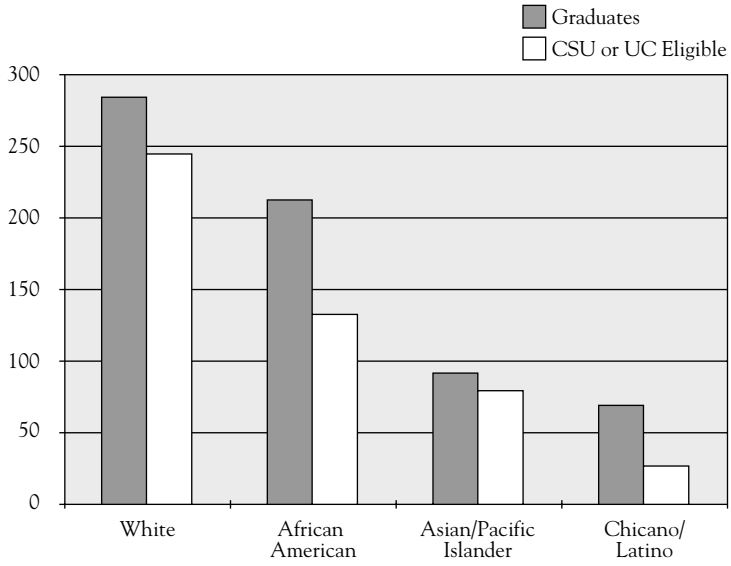


## FIGURE 1.8  Class of 2000 College-Going Rates for Racial Groups, by Four-Year College/Any College
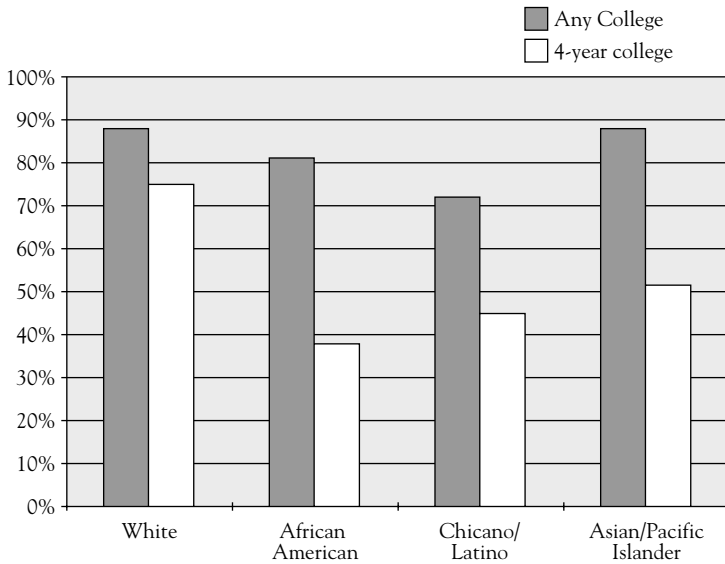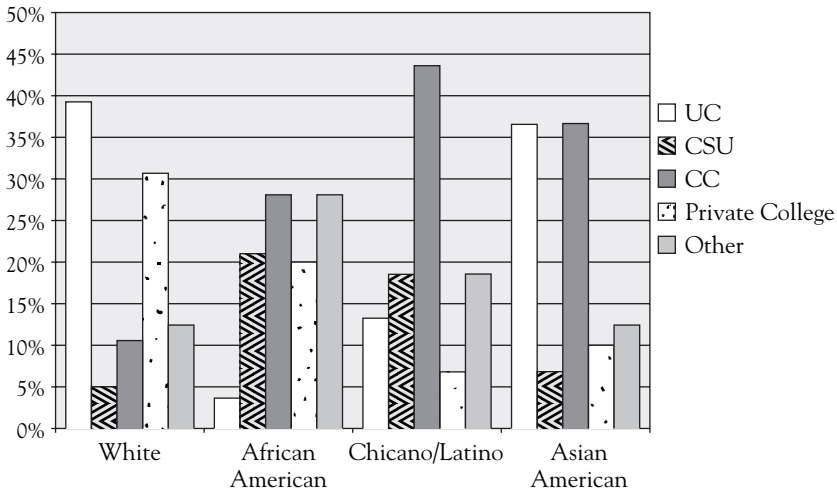
**FIGURE 1.9   Class of 2000 College Enrollment Rates
for Racial Groups, by Type of College**



## Why the Paths Diverge: Navigating the System

Complex forces underlie the ways in which the institution struc-
tures inequality at Berkeley High. The insufficient number of aca-
demic counselors—each with a caseload of 550 to 650 students in
a school with a highly specialized and complex course structure—
certainly plays a role, particularly for the many students without
access to private resources or insider knowledge about the pathway
to college. The experiences of Chantelle, Natay, Manuel, and Zion
are testimony to the ways in which students who lack advocates
and private resources, and who tend to be students of color, find
themselves placed in inappropriate classes. The counseling system
is just one example of how sorting and stratification structures of the
school contribute to the achievement gap and disparate pathways
after graduation.

   What besides economic and social capital explains the differ-
ences in how students navigate the difficult institutional structures
of Berkeley High? Pierre Bourdieu (1977) argues that cultural
knowledge, status, and distinctions mediate the relationship
between economic structures, schooling, and people's lives. Students

at BHS possess different forms of cultural capital, including social skills, norms of behavior, dress, styles of interaction, and language. These vary by race, class, social status, and one's comfort and relationship to individuals with power. For Bourdieu, schools act as institutional agents that reward the cultural capital of the dominant classes and devalue those of the working classes and the poor. In the Berkeley High context, students who possess the cultural capital associated with wealth and power are offered a high-quality education. Such students, who are mainly white and from middle- and upper-middle-class backgrounds, tend to be perceived as smart, skilled, and highly motivated, and they are generally treated with dignity and respect. This is likely to occur even for white students who cut class, use drugs, and are not doing well academically. In contrast, students of color, who tend to lack the forms of cultural capital that are most highly valued, are generally perceived as less intellectually capable and are less likely to benefit from assumptions about their potential. This form of favoritism is not unique to Berkeley High. As Bourdieu observes, schools in general play a key role in the process of reproducing the social order.

Yet the students themselves also play a role in reproducing privilege and disadvantage. The tracking system is not designed to cheat some students and reward others. It has to be navigated, and students and their parents are the navigators. Throughout their time at BHS, students make choices—about which classes and teachers to take, which clubs to join, and with whom to socialize—that influence this complicated dynamic. In *Jocks and Burnouts* (1989), an ethnographic study of a suburban high school, Penelope Eckert writes:

> There is apparently no end to the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which schools direct children into their parents' niche in society. But the relation between the individual students and the school does not simply develop through one-on-one interactions between children and adults in and out of school; instead it is mediated by an emerging peer culture that develops both in and out of school, *from common experience with adults and adult institutions* [p. 11, emphasis added].

Different subgroups of students tend to adopt different social norms in relationship to their education and their experience in school. These norms reinforce their position within school and influence their treatment by adults inside and outside school. Although there are exceptions, the social landscape at Berkeley High tends to be racially polarized, with students forming social groups among peers of the same racial/ethnic background. Given the racialized split in academic achievement at the school, these peer groups end up playing a powerful role in reinforcing patterns of school performance.

This section has provided an overarching picture of how tracking and other school policies are part of an institutional structure that results in the reproduction of race- and class-linked inequalities. The following case study of the English Language Learner program provides an in-depth look at the institutional barriers faced by immigrant students.

## Language, Culture, and Access

*Emma Haydée Fuentes, Daniel D. Liou*

### My First Day in High School

*In December 1996 I came to the United States of America.*
*I went to BHS.*
*There were different classes, and it was big.*
*I didn't know anybody there.*
*I didn't speak English. I saw different teachers.*
*I saw different classmates.*
*I didn't understand what the teacher was saying.*
*I couldn't find my classes and I had no friends in school.*
*I felt lonely. It was a new school for me.*
*Berkeley High School is a new school for me.*
*Everything is new. But I like this school.*

Gene Singh, ESL Level 1, 1996

This poem was written by an English Language Learner (ELL) student. Gene Singh, a recent immigrant from India, describes what it feels like to enter a large school where he did not know other students and was unfamiliar with the rules and norms. It provides a useful snapshot of his first impressions of Berkeley High School: its impersonal nature and a structure that is difficult to navigate, especially for recent immigrant students who do not speak English.

Gene Singh is one of many new faces coming to California. According to a 2004 study by Children Now, 48 percent of California children are from immigrant families. The number of limited-English-proficient students more than tripled in a decade, and the proportion is increasing yearly. Berkeley, like many other school districts throughout the nation, is struggling to serve immigrant students, but as we will show, much of the difficulty is due to an unwillingness to fully integrate these students and treat their needs as a central concern of the school (Olsen, 2000).

Coupled with Gene's feelings of fear about Berkeley High are feelings of comfort in the ELL program. Most ELL students agree with Gene's sentiments about the program, which provides a small, closely knit community where they are known and cared for. They expressed these sentiments during interviews, informal conversations, and focus groups. Throughout the history of the program, the ELL staff has made many attempts to create a nurturing environment for the students. The department has a history of community-building activities, including field trips and its own student yearbook. Teachers make an effort to know their students personally and create classrooms that meet their needs.

Staff efforts to personalize the high school experience for ELL students is partly a response to the ELL program's position within a larger school structure that is not accommodating to the social, cultural, and academic needs of immigrant students and parents. Despite the support that the program provides, ELL students are marginalized in much the same way as many African American, Latino, immigrant, and low-income students at Berkeley High. For

a variety of reasons, English Language Learners are often excluded from school activities. They also tend to lack information and access to resources that would empower them to succeed in school and beyond.

Research on the educational experiences of immigrant students in public schools suggests that the experience of English Language Learner students at Berkeley High School is fairly common. For example, in her research on immigrant youth, Laurie Olsen shows that the U.S. educational system is deeply embedded in structural inequalities of the larger society and subject to "the tenacity of those who seek to slot people into places according to skin color, class, or gender with different levels of access, different resources, and different futures" (Olsen, 1997, p.16).

This section examines the educational opportunities of students in the ELL program within Berkeley High. In order to illustrate the various ways that academic outcomes of ELL students are influenced by the structure of opportunity within the school, we describe the makeup of the ELL student body and then analyze both the broader institutional constraints and the academic and social isolation that is fostered by the program. Our intent is to show how the various constraints—from the larger, external barriers created by funding regulations and federal policies, to the more site-specific barriers that affect student educational experience—work together and make it difficult for ELL students to navigate the system.

This study in no way seeks to imply that ELL programs are ineffective or should be dismantled.[1] On the contrary, our research revealed that students need the services this program provides and that many would have been lost without the program's support. However, especially in the wake of such California propositions as Propositions 187, 209, and 227, it is important to stress that this analysis of the program is made with an explicit desire to strengthen it. Proposition 187, passed by California voters in 1994, denied access to public services to undocumented immigrants. Two years later, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the proposition as unconstitutional. In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209,

which eradicated the state's affirmative action policies. Finally in 1998, in a campaign sparked by billionaire Ron Unz, California passed the "English-only" Proposition 227, which all but eliminates bilingual education programs in California public schools.

Our hope is that research of this kind can help the faculty and staff to find ways to improve the support provided to students acquiring English as a second language. This study attempts to identify the barriers that limit opportunities for ELL students and the gaps in the program as identified by students and staff, with the hope that these issues can be addressed to allow equal learning opportunities for ELL students.

## English Language Learners Department

> We are like a very small school inside of the bigger school [ELL student, 1999].

The ELL Department at Berkeley High serves from 275 to 300 students per year, roughly 10 percent of the high school population. Of these students, half are enrolled full time in ELL classes, with the other half still designated as ELL but making the transition into mainstream classes under a special status that calls for monitoring of progress. Students in the program come from some forty-five language groups and a wide range of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Latino students, primarily from Mexico, make up 40 percent of the population, with East Asian/Pacific Islander (Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, Japanese, Thai, Korean, and Filipino) students at 30 percent, followed by smaller numbers of South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Tibetan), Middle Eastern, African, and European students. Severe economic or wartime conditions in countries of origin cause many students to arrive with interrupted schooling, often rendering them unprepared not only in English but also in content knowledge and basic study skills (Lucas, Henze, and Donato, 1990). On top of these hardships, ELL students typically arrive at BHS unfamiliar with the knowledge needed to navigate this complex school.

As in most other high school ELL programs, students in Berkeley High's program face the dual challenge of simultaneously learning a new language and mastering secondary-level course content. ELL students enter the high school with differing levels of education and at different times of their school careers. Some recent arrivals have never been to school before and are not literate in their native languages. Others, particularly the children of foreign scholars and graduate students, are at or above grade level in some or all subject areas, but simply lack English language and literacy skills. Seventy percent of ELL students are newcomers to the program. Interestingly, 20 percent are designated as ELL but have been in the Berkeley school system their entire academic careers. Another 10 percent of ELL students have transferred to BHS from other districts. Students are placed in the ELL program based on English language proficiency—not by age, grade level, or academic ability in their native languages. Each ELL class is made up of a heterogeneous student body with an array of educational, social, academic, and cultural experiences and needs that differ from students in the larger high school.

## Cycle of Funding and Defunding

Berkeley High School's English as a Second Language (ESL) Department (also referred to as the ELL Department) was established in 1987 in response to a pending lawsuit filed against the school district by bilingual parents and community members dedicated to addressing the needs of underresourced communities of the East Bay.

Prior to the lawsuit, the existing ESL Department was in reality a subprogram of the school's English Department. Under this arrangement, parents and community members felt that newcomers and bilingual students were not receiving appropriate services. In an attempt to forestall the lawsuit, the district provided large block funding toward a new ESL program in the late 1980s and created a handful of classes that became the ELL Department. As

the department grew and became politically empowered within the larger school, it was able to fund a department chair (actually, only 40 percent of this person's time was dedicated to the program), two bilingual community liaisons, a bilingual clerk, a secretary, and sixteen professional instructional assistants.

Throughout the 1990s, student activities also increased, and the department sponsored eight student organizations. These included the first award-winning ELL speech team, the first ELL yearbook (*In Living Cultures*), and a student government that brought first- and second-generation immigrant students together to collaborate on ethnic and culturally specific issues at Berkeley High. In effect, the ELL program functioned as an autonomous school within a larger school—a fact that has never been acknowledged by school or district officials.

As the lawsuit became a distant memory, the program experienced gradual erosion in funding. With annual and midyear budget reductions up for consideration by the school board, defending the fiscal integrity of the program became an ongoing struggle for teachers, students, and parents. Things took a turn for the worse in 1995, when program funding was switched from per program to per pupil allocation. This had the unintended consequence of creating an incentive for staff to keep a consistently high number of ELL students in the program regardless of their readiness for mainstream classes.

By the year 2000, the department had been reduced to program status, left with only two staff positions to oversee services to students. The declining budget allocation greatly shrank the department in staffing and political power. In an interview, the former program director expressed concern that budget cuts during the 1999–2000 school year would affect the scheduling of the ELL exit exam. As a result of the delay, program staff would not be able to redesignate students for the following school year, based on their increased fluency in English. In a community meeting on June 11, 2001, attended by three hundred people including the principal and three school board members, Latino parents expressed frustration

that their children were being kept in the ELL program far too long. One mother poignantly stated, "Many of our youth are making tremendous efforts to advance very little in school. These are the same youth that we know as intelligent, beautiful, and full of possibilities. We understand that the reasons are complex and stem from the school, the community, and especially this society we live in. We no longer accept the lack of success of our children as 'normal.'"

Despite past progress, interviews with teachers, staff, and parents showed that without adequate access to resources, the ELL program has been incapable of fully meeting the needs of its students. As a program dedicated to recent immigrants, who generally lack political power and influence within the school district, the program was subject to regular budget cuts that severely limited the program's ability to serve its students. With decreasing political power within the district and a school administration that had historically allowed the program to function on the margins, its students and their academic needs were made largely invisible within the school.

## Rendering Invisibility

In our research on the ELL program, we conducted a survey of ELL students in which they were asked what they liked most about the ELL program. Almost all of the students spoke positively about their experiences and were effusive in their praise for supportive and caring teachers. A sophomore from Peru responded:

> I love Berkeley High School. In [my country] the teachers are not really close to the students. But here, at BHS, when I first came here I don't speak much English, and as [ELL] teachers I really love them. They really take care of me and, like, now I can really speak English. Like when I came to this country . . . in my first year of school, I really cried a lot. I did not understand everything. Like, she used to tell me everything really, really slowly.

Students also indicated that the extracurricular activities organized by ELL staff and teachers increased the feeling of community within the department. These activities included the annual field trips, end-of-year celebrations, and the Language Exchange program through which immigrant students paired up with native English-speaking students as friends and co-mentors, learning from each other's language and culture through informal cultural exchange. Tom, a senior, shared, "When we go to field trip or the [public] library, we can also learn a lot from talking with the teacher and students. Activities do not have to be in class. In conversations, teachers can also learn about your background and native country. I think outdoor activities are very good."

Despite these positive experiences and the obvious good intentions on the part of the ELL staff to create a school-within-a-school, without the support of the larger school to help ELL students make the transition into the mainstream classes, students in the program were effectively denied access to other resources within the larger high school. This included college preparatory courses in academic subjects, electives and AP classes, and several extracurricular activities. The ELL students' isolation in the program, despite the support they received, also rendered them invisible to the rest of the school. The mainstream staff's unwillingness to accommodate ELL students' presence, in fact, reinforced the program's desire to shelter them.

One illustration of how ELL students were not accommodated by the larger high school took place during the self-scheduling process. ELL students faced limitations because their class schedules were predetermined by their ELL courses, making it more difficult to schedule many mainstream classes for which they were eligible. In response to this situation, ELL staff and teachers often took it on themselves to plan ELL students' class schedules—at times overlooking students' desires to take courses outside the ELL Department.

While this advocacy on behalf of ELL faculty may be well intended, it does not ensure their students' access to college

preparatory courses or teach students how to advocate for themselves. Ben, an ELL alumnus in his third year at the University of California, Davis, said, "To enroll in difficult classes was the most difficult thing about BHS." In the end, the program's way of caring for students inhibits their attempts at self-sufficiency and exposure to a wide range of classes offered outside the program.

One ELL teacher whom we interviewed stated that she believes that the ELL program's physical location is academically and socially detrimental for language-minority students because they are isolated in one wing of the school or another. When we began our work with the Diversity Project, the ELL Department was located upstairs in the B Building, alongside Special Education, the school library, and a teen parents' program. After a major arson fire that destroyed the building in April 2000, the ELL classrooms were relocated three times—first to various marginal locations. Finally, after parent protest, the program was relocated in 2001 to one of the central classroom buildings. But during the time of our research, the program was housed in the B Building, one of the oldest buildings, with poor ventilation and no heat. Most ELL teachers agreed that the physical proximity of ELL classrooms to each other in the B Building was helpful to students and teachers and helped generate a sense of community. However, this arrangement also led to the larger school's lack of awareness of ELL students' existence.

As a result of the physical isolation of the program and the structural isolation of the students, recent immigrants' daily interactions with the larger student body were limited. This lack of meaningful incorporation of ELL students into the greater school community led to the perception of the ELL program and its students as remedial and subordinate to the rest of the academic departments. Recognizing this problem, the ELL program established transition classes in 1999 in an effort to mix ELL and mainstream students in academic classes taught by teachers trained in techniques designed for students acquiring English proficiency. The following is one junior's reflection of the treatment ELL students felt in the larger school:

It's [transition classes] going to be like mix ELL students and regular classes together. Yeah. Because regular class students, they look down on ELL people. Like you don't know anything. . . . And they, like, ignore us, and they leave us, like, in the back. It's too bad for when we go in class [if we had classes together] they can understand us. More understanding so we can be, like, "We can do that  too." And they can be, like, "Oh, okay."

Such perceptions of ELL programs have serious implications for students' success within the program as well as in the larger school. Students within marginalized ELL programs lack a sense of belonging and ownership at the school. This feeling of isolation leads some students to become disenchanted with the educational process as they come to realize how little they matter to the larger school. In a May 2001 issue of the mainstream student newspaper, the *Jacket*, ELL students appeared on the front page with an article entitled, "Forgotten?" in which they documented their sense of academic isolation and neglect:

ELL senior Martin Guerrero . . . feels excluded from the mainstream school in many ways. Guerrero said that the lack of security guards near the portables (where most of the ELL classes are now located) makes him feel as if the school doesn't care as much about the safety of the ELL students. . . . Another discrepancy between the ELL department and other departments that Guerrero noticed is the difference in the classrooms, in his classroom the chairs and desks seem older than those in non-ELL classrooms. "We should be treated equally!"

The article goes on to say that it is easier for the administration at BHS to focus less on the concerns of the ELL students because their families often do not have the English skills to comfortably communicate with the administration, while at the same time the administration does little to nothing to accommodate these parents.

## College (In)accessibility

> I want to go to UC Berkeley, but I know that I'm an ELL student
> and it will be hard for me. But, I'll go to a four-year college and trans-
> fer to UC Berkeley. Something like this. I am really interested in
> biology. So, I want to study biological science or biotechnology.
> And, I want to major in them [ELL student from India].

When looking at the factors that contribute to ELL students' isola-
tion, it is clear that the ELL students are wedged between two
extremes: sheltering and neglect. One of the consequences of the
positioning of ELL students within the school is that there is no sus-
tainable structure that informs, encourages, and advocates for their
college aspirations. Due to a lack of resources, ELL staff have no
data on how many ELL students graduate from high school, matric-
ulate to college, or graduate within four years or more. The absence
of such basic data on students is stunning in view of how many stu-
dents are served.

In our formal and informal interactions with ELL students and
their families, we found that many expressed clear desires to con-
tinue their academic careers after high school. As one ELL student
states, "Every parent has great expectations for their child. My par-
ents wish that I would study hard in the U.S. and get a Ph.D."
Unfortunately, these desires do not coincide with their immediate
reality. The following is an excerpt from field notes written by
another member of the Diversity Project's ELL Committee: "Today
[the teacher] asked how many of the seniors planned to go to college
next year, they all said yes. [The teacher] then asked how many stu-
dents had taken the SAT and/or even knew what the SAT is. Not
one student knew about the test and that it was needed for college."

The reality is that for an ELL student to be admitted to a four-
year college, she or he would have to go through the difficult
process of completing all of the following: ELL requirements,
including the ELL exit exam measuring English fluency; Berkeley

High graduation requirement; and finally the minimum course requirements for state university admissions: two years of history/social science, four years of English, three years of math, two years of laboratory science, two years of foreign language, one year of college preparatory electives, and one year of visual and performing arts, also called the "A through G" course requirement for state university admission. Furthermore, in the case of newcomers who have attended a foreign high school prior to Berkeley High, students' foreign high school transcripts are not typically analyzed to determine the number of earned high school course credits until their senior year, making it impossible for these students to plan for college or prepare applications. Because ELL student assessment is largely based on English ability rather than content knowledge, preparation toward college becomes secondary, even though most ELL courses are regarded as college preparatory. Because there is so much emphasis on students passing the ELL writing proficiency exam, orientations about the PSAT, SAT I, SAT II, and ACT are largely ignored. There is no doubt that students felt they were inadequately informed about postsecondary opportunities.

The following excerpt from Diversity Project classroom observation field notes provides a vivid illustration of the ways in which ELL student needs are often ignored:

> The Daily Bulletin [a page of announcements and news from the BHS administration and college adviser] gets passed around . . . Daily Bulletin gets passed around in second period, not read aloud as it used to be, and today I noticed that several students chose not to read it. I looked at it and noticed that there were many college application announcements from the College Adviser [scholarship and financial-aid deadlines, SAT registration deadlines, free SAT preparatory classes offered at UC Berkeley, and others]. There are several seniors in the class who could benefit from this information, but since the Bulletin is never read, they might never get this stuff.

Efforts to increase college awareness among students is a formidable challenge for students whose parents do not understand the process and therefore are unable to act as advocates for them. Within the ELL program, many teachers and counselors disagree on students' readiness for or capability of handling mainstream classes. While some counselors, teachers, and staff feel that ELL students should focus aspirations on survival and vocational skills due to the hardships they face—undocumented legal status, economic hardship, assumed familial expectations, and lack of English proficiency—others are more likely to encourage students to take academic risks because college preparation would broaden students' chances for social and economic mobility. However, in an environment of ongoing budget cuts, orientation toward college is often viewed as an extracurricular activity. College information is periodically accessible when a college orientation event is organized, and college tours are limited to weekends when most ELL students are working to help support their families (both here and abroad).

According to federal and state bilingual compliance, college preparation is not a mandate. For this reason, ELL students are disproportionately excluded from academic plans that would prepare them for postsecondary education. During the 1999–2000 school year, only 1.5 percent of ELL students were placed in AP courses. Meanwhile, none of the ELL sheltered courses carried AP status, and many students spent their entire four years unaware of the necessary steps to qualify for admission to four-year colleges. As is true in many schools, there is a tendency to assume that ELL students are low skilled and therefore academic offerings should emphasize remediation. Following are two separate field notes excerpts, both reflecting the lack of information ELL students receive:

> The questions students had about the survey were revealing. One of the survey questions was, "Have you taken any Honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses?" At least two students called us over to ask what that was.

Then I showed her [ELL student] the list of requirements for U.C. admissions. She was shocked to discover that [BHS] graduation requirements were not the same as college entrance requirements and that she might never have known she wasn't getting the courses she needed for college. "¡Que pesado!" [How terrible!] she kept saying.

The few ELL students who are knowledgeable about the college admission process seem to restrict their aspirations to local two-year community colleges. Even students with strong academic records generally do not see themselves as worthy candidates for the UC system. As one ELL student reveals: "I can go to a community college. And then make my transfer to San Francisco State. I have two things that I really like. One of them is medicine and the other one is law. I really like it. I need to wait to see what I'm going to do."

While others felt that counselors and teachers discouraged them from applying to four-year colleges, one Latina senior who had been in the program all four years stated:

I got a 2.9 GPA. I don't want to go to community college. I know I'll drop out. I asked the teacher, "What can I do to go to a four-year college?" And the teacher makes it sound like I wasn't gonna be able to, "It would be better for you to go to community college and find out what you want to do." I already know what I want to do. I want to be a midwife or a trauma nurse. I think [the teacher] just says those things to make me feel like I can't do it.

In one conversation, an ELL staff member expressed her opinion about why ELL students aspire toward community college:

A lot of our kids for financial reasons go on to community college, and simply for reasons of transportation. Most go to Laney or Vista [two local community colleges] and don't even think of going to any others. I also feel that by going to community college, they don't run the risk of ending up in a class with three hundred students.

A close look at the various ways ELL students are limited in their access to four-year colleges reveals obstacles that extend beyond the program. In a counselors' meeting, one bilingual counselor who was not part of the ELL program stated, "ELL students do not need to attend a UC school to be successful, and if they [ELL students] want to go to UC Berkeley, they should go through the community college system." It is ironic that the counselor would express such certainty that this pathway to a four-year college would work for a student, given that research by the Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel, a federally funded college outreach association, shows that only 3 percent of community college students in California transfer to four-year schools each year.

The other structural impediment comes from the UC system itself. The acquisition of college preparatory credits in ELL classes leads to the assumption that ELL students will be eligible for UC admission by the time they complete their required courses for redesignation to mainstream classes. However, ELL staff have come to realize that the UC admissions process systematically disqualifies certain ELL courses, even though they are recognized as college preparatory. The 1998–99 *U.C. Reference Guide for Counselors* (University of California Office of the President, 1998) states, "English as a second language courses may be acceptable *for a maximum of one year,* provided they are *advanced* college preparatory ELL courses, with strong emphasis in reading and writing" (p. C3, emphasis added). For this reason, a student like Tom, a senior who was regarded as one of the strongest students ever to be part of the ELL program, chances for attending a four-year college were limited. Despite his tremendous effort and ability, he would not be able to attend a four-year college because he would not receive college credit for many of the courses he had taken. He spent two years in ELL and ELD (English Language Development) levels 4 and 5 (the highest levels), yet received only one year of college preparatory English credit. Moreover, ELL students' participation in the school Forensic Team and ELL yearbook could not be counted as part of the "A through G" state university admissions requirement because

these activities' lack of funding prevented them from being considered courses for credit. Compared to their mainstream peers, those who participate in the school newspaper or are on the school yearbook staff garner academic acknowledgment on their transcripts that can be used in applying for college. Examples like these show some of the ways in which students' college aspirations have been systematically deterred by the combined institutional structures of the ELL program, Berkeley High, and the UC system.

## Equity, Access, and Integration?

We began our study of the ELL program expecting to conduct an analysis of ELL students' learning experiences within BHS. However, as the voices of students, parents, and staff came together through our interviews and observations, a clear picture of structural inequality began to emerge. The voices of those within the program helped to unravel and expose the obstacles students encounter each day: funding constraints, academic and social isolation, college inaccessibility, and several others. In the light of these challenges, ELL students' mobility is limited not because they lack effort or ability, but simply because of the way the school has been organized to meet their academic and social needs.

Both the ELL program and the larger school fail to collaborate to reduce the barriers students face. BHS treats the ELL program as a separate autonomous school within the larger school, even though it fails to provide it with the resources needed to serve its students. Its autonomy allows the larger school to ignore the needs of the students within the program and overlook the program's weaknesses. The program's isolation allows some of the faculty to serve even though they are not well trained. Some do not share the life experiences of the ELL students, and language and cultural differences prevent these teachers from providing the support students need.

Many of the teachers are quite skilled academically and culturally. They are also deeply committed to their students and go above and beyond what is required of them to help their students. However, despite their efforts to create a viable, self-sufficient community

within BHS, the program has not been given the support it needs to ensure that its students will receive the opportunities they deserve. Without recognition from the district and the larger school of the absolute need for quality services in a program like ELL and its potential contribution to the school, issues of equity, quality, and integration will continue to undermine the efforts of students and staff.

In closing, we echo the powerful sentiment of a publication advocating for the needs of new immigrant students: "[We need to] ensure that immigrant students have fair opportunity at school success by restructuring those policies, structures and practices which impede their access to effective instruction and sort them into programs which prepare them for inferior futures" [National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1988, p. 118].

## The Role Gender Plays

*Alicia P. Rodriguez*

In addition to inequalities based on race, social class, and language, there are more subtle, hidden structures of inequality based on gender, sexuality, and perceptions of gender roles that are often overlooked. In many ways, how Berkeley High appears from a gender perspective is very much the same as in most other schools in American society (Sadker and Sadker, 1994). At a social level, girls are valued more for their dress and sexuality than for their intelligence and academic abilities. For youth who are gay, harassment from peers is a regular part of their school experience, and their mistreatment directly affects their achievement. Schools, whether they wish to admit it or not, promote certain attitudes about gender and sexuality that influence the academic performance of boys and girls.

This section focuses on how gender factors into the structures of inequality from a social and curricular perspective. In this part of the Diversity Project's research, we asked, What are teachers' perceptions of the different academic abilities of boys and girls, and how does that affect student course selection and performance? In what ways do these perceptions limit the educational attainments of girls at Berkeley High? General perceptions of gender-appropriate behavior are discussed in relation to the concept of feminism and

sexuality. Despite the dominant rhetoric of equality at Berkeley High—as seen in the course offerings, extracurricular activities, and school ethos—gender often is not considered in the discourse of antidiscrimination.

## Youth Acting Out Gender Identities

*Mari:* Me and my friends also have this little thing, it's kind of a joke, but we always make fun of hoochies.

*Interviewer:* What are hoochies?

*Mari:* They are like people who, girls who dress really scanty like—tight shirts, small revealing shirts, and short shorts and tight pants, stuff like that, lots of makeup. They're, like, glued back to your head in a ponytail. And, well, we look down on them because they have no originality. They are the same. They all do the same things, go to the same parties, think the same. Well, probably not think the same, but in a way they're all the same. They all have the same attitudes toward everything. They don't care. They don't care about school, they just care about themselves, mostly.

*Interviewer:* Are there equivalent terms for male hoochies?

*Mari:* Yeah, there's not really a term for it. But guys who dress in overly baggy pants and, like, Tommy Hilfiger shorts or Polo Ralph Lauren or something.

What does it mean to be a male or female youth at Berkeley High School? Is it all about image, appearance, dress, posing? Is it the same as in mainstream settings? Is it the same for every youth, whether straight, gay, or bisexual? In a progressive school like Berkeley High, is the equality of the sexes taken for granted? Are there dominant views, or is it a belief that may be operative at a more subtle level that sends the message to a girl that her desire should be to find a mate, get married, and have children? Are the expectations for young men the same as for young women?

It is interesting to note from the interview that Mari connects certain styles of dress, of which she is critical, to attitudes about school and academics. She paints a portrait of girls who care more about their appearance than anything else as conformists and uninterested in academics. Her comments about boys are not nearly as critical, suggesting that she holds girls to a different standard.

Rose, a student from Ethiopia, sees the gender codes in a similar way, but through a foreign lens. She also views the "cool" dress styles as heavily coded with academic interests and behaviors:

> If you're a boy, you wear jeans . . . not put their pants on properly [low-rider style]! And also shave your head like they do and listen to the music all the time. Don't listen to your teacher. And not [be] really smart. If you're really smart, they would talk to you, but just for, like, homework or something. Not for real. And if you're not smart, they would talk to you. For girls, it's wear makeup every time, have a lot of boyfriends, and a lot of guys talk to you. Dress like girls do here. And look like white, or something. Just a lighter skin. Not dark color. And when you're in class, you just talk to all the boys and don't care what they do to you. Give them hug whenever you see them, like, all the crazy things.

As an immigrant student, Rose has already learned how to interpret the meanings associated with gender, social performance, and physical appearance. She notes that wearing the right clothes makes girls (and African Americans) cool, but to appear smart does not. This tension between being cool and therefore socially accepted, and being smart, and how that corresponds to race and gender, is one that several researchers (Fordham, 1996; Davidson, 1996; Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1998) have written about. What makes Rose's comments even more disturbing is her belief that complexion, or what she terms "looking white," is clearly related to being seen as more desirable to boys.

Celia has also noticed that girls, including herself, downplay their academic accomplishments in front of boys. In an effort to be

desirable to males, they often want to prove that they are not as smart as boys:

> I've seen people who have lied. They do really well in the class and they lie, like, the boy that's next to them who isn't doing as well. I've seen it. I've seen it. I was talking in my women's studies class. I did it in junior high once. I was, like, "Oh, f_! Like, I got an F on my test. . . . F_! the teacher." And he was, like, "What did you get?" And I lied about my grade. This was in junior high. And I see girls do this all of the time.

It is difficult to say how much the self-belittling behavior of girls comes from themselves, from the culture of youth, from home, or from the culture of BHS. Most likely, it is a combination. However, it is clear that youth who are given the message that their identities (or race, gender, class, or some other characteristic) limit what they can achieve are likely to engage in behaviors that will constrain their intellectual and social development (Erickson, 1987).

The messages related to what constitutes acceptable behavior for gay youth are even more pernicious than for straight youth. Christopher, an openly gay junior who has been repeatedly harassed by peers and school personnel because of his sexuality, tells us that he has experienced a school that condones homophobia and heterosexism: "I have made complaints time and time again and nothing's happened about them. I was told by one of the vice principals that it was my fault because the way I dress and because I was open. And, see, that type of administration would do nothing."

That Christopher is African American has further contributed to his marginalization. Like many other gay and African American students, he has not excelled academically, despite his abilities. On top of the racial barriers that he and others like him encounter, he must also contend with continual harassment and hostility. This has affected his self-esteem and caused him to hate school. Christopher paints a fairly circumscribed picture of youth identity,

one that is heavily determined by stereotypes related to race, gender, and sexuality:

> I think normal here is just, like, everyone should have a girlfriend—every guy should have a girlfriend, every girl should have a boyfriend. You know, guys should be playing sports and being athletic. Girls should be dumb cheerleaders. You know, if you're white or Asian, you should be in class studying, studying, studying. And if you're Latino you should just, like, you try to kill each other. I think that's what is normal to a lot of people here.

## Stereotyping Who Is "Smart" by Gender

While many girls and boys at Berkeley High, as in other high schools around the nation, mark their identities in ways that communicate the different interests and capabilities of girls and boys, many students report that teachers also engage in stereotyping by gender. Students report that white boys are seen as academic and intelligent, and girls are seen as not quite as bright as boys. In other words, young people at BHS are not the only ones who perpetuate stereotypes about what girls can and cannot do; adults also contribute to this. Even in AP classes, where presumably all of the students are high achievers and highly motivated, some girls find that gender stereotyping by teachers prevails. Brooke, a white student who was enrolled in advanced math and physics classes, shared her experiences as a girl in AP classes:

> *Brooke:* Sometimes, I guess, I feel a little bit as a girl, kind of not taken as seriously sometimes. I mean, generally, everyone always sort of tries to be respectful all the time, but I've had before sort of felt, like, my opinion doesn't count as much. . . . Like in math and science, particularly at our school, is kind of, like, "Did you get the right answer?" Then, you go, "You got the right answer." But if you're, like, "Well, maybe we could do it this way, or how about trying this?" people are like, "No, no. I don't think so."

There's two levels of calculus. There's BC and AB. And I started out in BC and there was too much homework and stuff, so I transferred. And now in AB it's not really a problem. But in the BC class, which is supposed to be harder, more people just kind of didn't listen to you.

*Interviewer:* Was it the students?

*Brooke:* Yeah, students.

*Interviewer:* Did the teacher do anything?

*Brooke:* Well, not in that class, but my physics class, the teacher sort of in the beginning, I think, was like that. But there's a lot of smart girls in that class. And he sort of realized that and changed it a little bit. But at first . . .

*Interviewer:* So he had some biases about girls?

*Brooke:* Yeah, I think so.

Brooke's experiences in calculus and physics are common for girls in advanced classes. Her experiences attest to an underlying structure of gender inequality that is especially pernicious for girls in science and math. It is possible that Brooke may have actually transferred to the lower Calculus AB class not because of the amount of homework but because of the message she was given that as a female, she could not compete with the males in the higher-level class. Like many other girls, it could very well be that she accepted stereotyped assumptions about her abilities. Despite being smart, industrious, and sensitive to issues related to feminism, she and her like-minded friends accepted their "inferiority" as being normal: "We've had conversations before about the issue of not being treated as smart as men. . . . They didn't say that those issues were problems. They just said, 'Oh, that sucks that we're not as smart.' They didn't say, 'That sucks that we think that.'"

If academically advanced white girls feel inadequate, it is probable that the less academically inclined girls, such as the girls

described as the "hoochies," might feel even deeper levels of academic inadequacy. Unless deliberate efforts are undertaken by school staff to counter the negative effects of race and gender stereotypes, the social identities of students will determine their academic outcomes. Gender becomes part of the self-fulfilling prophecy related to the achievement gap, and it must be recognized that within a school culture where stereotypes are uncontested, girls will perpetuate gender stereotypes by selling themselves short.

## Achievement: Who is Responsible?

It behooves a school that is concerned about diversity and equality to examine achievement from a gender perspective as well. Why is it that in a school like Berkeley High, complete with a women's studies program, so many girls succumb to narrowly framed gender roles that limit their academic and social development? Why do so many female students reject feminism—the idea that girls can be as strong and as smart as boys? For a student like Brooke, who had taken the women's studies class and supported women's rights, labeling herself as a feminist was scary: "When people talked about, like, feminism and women's issues, it seemed like I don't want to be part of that. . . . It kind of felt bad to be trying to say that I'm a feminist because it seems kind of looked down on."

To those who know the progressive culture of Berkeley and BHS, such comments may seem surprising. The fact that a girl would be afraid of being ostracized if she were seen as a feminist seems unlikely in this type of community. Yet this is what many of the students told us. How can it be acceptable to have a security staff member, as witnessed by Christopher, "yell to a group of girls, calling them hoochies and telling them to 'get their hoochie asses off campus'"? Why do so many girls feel they have to hide their intelligence? Such behavior might seem to be unacceptable at BHS, yet the students we interviewed described numerous examples in which adults demonstrated blatant forms of bias.

Equally if not more disturbing is the way in which hostility to gay and lesbians students is allowed to go unchecked. How can it be

acceptable for a teacher to let students make fun of a gay student in his or her presence, as Christopher experienced on numerous occasions in an English class? Silence in the face of such hostility may be interpreted by students who are being victimized as a form of tolerance. Clearly, the way students dress, the way they express their sexuality, and the values they hold are outside the control of the school. However, building a school culture that protects gay youth and promotes the abilities of females is critical to the realization of creating conditions where all students have an equal opportunity to achieve. Unless adults at the school, starting with those in positions of leadership, clearly and loudly extol the abilities of women and defend the rights of gay and lesbian students, students will continue to care more about how they look than what they learn. They will also conform to stereotypes that limit their chances, because they will have learned that race, gender, and sexuality determine what a person can or cannot do.

## Unraveling the Social Dynamics of Racial Segregation in Extracurricular Activities

*Lance T. McCready*

In spring 1997, Fran Thompson, faculty adviser for Project 10 (the social and support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students), invited me to speak at an upcoming meeting focused on the Diversity Project. I readily accepted.

On the day of the Project 10 meeting, I walked into Fran's classroom expecting to see a collage of students who reflected the racial and ethnic diversity for which Berkeley High is famous. Instead of diversity I found homogeneity: twelve white, female, lesbian, and bisexual-identified students. The racial composition of the group was somewhat of a shock, in part because my experience as an after-school coordinator and community organizer in urban settings had shown me that large numbers of gay students of color did indeed attend public schools. I left the meeting wondering why students of color did not attend Project 10 meetings at Berkeley High School.

The lack of diversity in Project 10 raises the question: Why are extracurricular programs and activities at Berkeley High segregated

along the same lines as academic programs in the school? While much has been written about the ways tracking produces racial segregation in a school's academic program, less is known about informal, peer-driven social pressures that produce and reproduce racial segregation in extracurricular activities. Pedro Noguera (1995) notes that "at-risk," "gifted," and other coded racial language used by parents and teachers during Berkeley school board meetings have contributed to the political paralysis around issues of equity in policymaking at all levels of public discourse. I build on Noguera's premise by exploring how the discourses of faculty advisers for various extracurricular activities contribute to political paralysis in addressing racial segregation in their programs.

Data are based on interviews conducted as part of the Diversity Project's Taking Stock study of extracurricular activities. The interviews show that teachers have a complex understanding of the social dynamics that produce racially defined patterns of participation in extracurricular activities. Most faculty advisers, however, were frustrated with finding ways to challenge racial segregation. Only one, the coach of men's varsity baseball, found a way to diversify his team. By presenting his narrative and those of less successful faculty advisers, I hope to start a dialogue on how teachers can intervene in peer-driven social dynamics that create racial segregation in school programs and activities.

## Taking Stock

The Diversity Project's Taking Stock inquiry team was one of the project's first committees. Its origins can be traced to the summer of 1996 when the Core Team spent a lot of time discussing how Berkeley High School's racially segregated environment affects the academic performance of students, particularly low-achieving black and Latino students. The team had a suspicion that segregated patterns of participation created the impression that students' racial identities determined their level of academic success. Understanding how this link was created was seen as a first step toward undoing it. The team also believed that a study of segregation in clubs

and teams would be less threatening to school staff than a study of the same segregated patterns in the core academic program, so this was a good place to start.

Interestingly, the school never kept data on the racial composition of extracurricular activities. For this reason, the Taking Stock Committee decided to survey teachers who served as faculty advisers for Berkeley High School's forty athletic teams and forty clubs and activities. Survey questions included the racial and gender breakdown of participating students, target populations, recruitment strategies, and purposes of the activities. We conducted the survey through face-to-face interviews rather than putting paper surveys in teachers' mailboxes to increase the faculty adviser response rate. Direct interviews also provided an opportunity for follow-up questions and elaboration in answers.

In analyzing the survey data, one of the first questions we wanted to answer was whether patterns of participation differed by race. We began by classifying each activity as academic/career, athletic, cultural, visual and performing arts, or social, based on the purpose of the activities as stated by faculty advisers. Academic/ career activities such as the *Jacket* (school newspaper), the yearbook, and the Tutoring Center were activities where students could acquire academic or career-related skills. We also considered academic/career activities to be those valued on college applications (Holland and Thomas, 1987).

Athletic activities included freshman, junior varsity, varsity, and club sports for men or women, such as basketball, football, basketball, lacrosse, crew, field hockey, wrestling, and soccer. Cultural activities such as the Black Student Union, Chicano/Latino Graduation, Project 10, and the Vietnamese Student Association were clubs and programs where students could explore, affirm, and celebrate cultural heritage and identity. Visual and performing arts activities such as Dance Projects, the Afro-Haitian Dance Program, Orchestra, and Magic Club were clubs and programs where students could practice visual and performing arts, or stage productions and exhibitions. Social activities were clubs where students could get together for social reasons based on some common interest.

Overall, we surveyed advisers for seventy-three activities: nineteen academic/career, twenty-nine athletic, ten cultural, thirteen visual/performing arts, and two social. Each activity was labeled "mixed," "predominantly students of color," or "predominantly white," based on the racial demographics reported by faculty advisers. Clubs and activities were identified as mixed if the reported demographics mirrored those of the student body (approximately 40 percent white, 60 percent combined students of color). If white students or students of color were disproportionately represented, the clubs or activities were designated "predominantly students of color" or "predominantly white."

What became immediately noticeable was the small number of activities that are mixed. Of the seventy-three activities surveyed, only two were racially mixed. Of the nineteen academic/career activities in our research, only the Key Club, which focuses on community service, was racially mixed. Of the twenty-nine athletic teams surveyed, sixteen were missing demographic information, but the available data showed that they tend to be racially segregated. Five were predominantly students of color, and seven were predominantly white. Only varsity baseball was mixed. Five cultural activities comprised predominantly students of color, three were predominantly white, and two were missing information. Eight performing/visual arts activities were predominantly white, four were predominantly students of color, and one was missing information. Finally, both social activities surveyed were predominantly white.

## Peer-Driven Social Dynamics That Lead to Racial Segregation

Several faculty advisers claimed that social dynamics in students' peer groups were to blame for segregation in extracurricular activities. Faculty advisers of academic/career activities reported that a number of these activities that were predominantly students of color served the needs of students who had been excluded from the predominantly white mainstream groups. For example, the faculty

adviser for *Ujamaa*, the black student newspaper, said the activity serves as "an alternative to the *Jacket*, the school newspaper whose staff is predominantly white students." The faculty adviser for *In Living Cultures*, the English as a Second Language (ESL) yearbook, said it "was created because already existing publications in the school often exclude ESL student life." These responses raise questions about the subtle ways through which students of color are excluded from predominantly white extracurricular activities.

But how and why does this exclusion occur? One possible explanation is that students' everyday lives occur in racially, linguistically, or culturally separate spaces in the school. The ESL classrooms were located in a physically separate section of the B Building that housed administrative and counseling offices, the library, and the health clinic. Much of the academic and social lives of black students also take place in physically separate spaces in the school, in part as a result of tracking.

In the film *School Colors*, students point out different areas of the school that over time have become racial/ethnic enclaves, most noticeable at lunchtime. This happens not only in physical spaces but in other parts of the school as well. Most of the students and parents in the audience at Afro-Haitian Dance performances are black, while most of the students and parents at Dance Production performances are white. Both clubs engage in dance, which suggests that theoretically it should be possible for students from different backgrounds who enjoy dance to participate in either activity. However, because the clubs have been racially identified, it is unlikely that students will cross these racial boundaries on their own. The overall effect of students of color and immigrant students carrying out their academic and social existence in racially segregated spaces is that the white students who participate in the yearbook, *Jacket*, Literary Magazine, and other mainstream extracurricular activities are also alienated from the everyday lives of students of color.

Why do students separate themselves by race? Some of the faculty members believed the roots of racial segregation are developmental and begin in middle school, when students begin to align

their participation in school with same-race peers. The faculty adviser for Jazz Band Lab reported:

> At the junior high level, there is a change beginning: white kids continue [to take music lessons], but there is a lessening of interest by black and Latino kids. Why? It's not economics, it's a social thing. It's a matter of who they want to hang out with. Overall, I just try to keep them interested. As students get to the secondary level, however, the curriculum gets more difficult, more demanding. Student interest veers toward sports, social things, unless there is a passion, a deep commitment.

What the adviser did not add is that students also need to be encouraged and even pushed by adults. Several of the white students in the jazz band received private lessons and strong encouragement from their parents. Most students of color do not receive similar kinds of support. Likewise, the coach of men's and women's cross country observed that although black and Latino students were interested in participating, they were reluctant to join without the support of their same-race peers:

> I have tried to attract people on track who would facilitate diversity, but have not been very successful. The three most successful runners have all been black, but it is difficult to get [black] kids to run because peer recognition is for fastness, not running distance. Plus, this sport is at the same time as football and basketball, which are more popular among blacks. For example, some kids would rather sit on the bench in basketball than compete and do well at cross country. Plus, they want to play with their friends, and basketball is a bigger sport.

As this coach points out, students are drawn to extracurricular activities with status among their peers. It is important to note that the social status of particular activities tends to vary by students' racial identity. Men's soccer, Latino Graduation, and Baile Folklorico are

the most popular activities among Latino students; badminton and Asian cultural clubs are most popular among Asian students; men's and women's basketball, football, cheerleading, and Afro-Haitian Dance are most popular among black students. The faculty adviser for Black Gold, an African American performance troupe, commented:

> You'll notice among black students, if they've been in Afro-Haitian Dance for four years, they walk with a certain swagger among other black students. They have a certain swagger, they have a certain, like, "I'm FRESH because I do this and I get out there and people scream for me." Most people at Berkeley High don't go to Afro-Haitian dance performance. Very few people actually go. People in the circle go, but the white students [and] the general population at Berkeley High doesn't go. . . . But they still have that "I'm a good dancer at this school." It's a status thing, a popularity thing.

Incidentally, the yearbook, the *Jacket* newspaper, Literary Magazine, men's and women's crew and lacrosse, women's soccer, swimming, and water polo, all academically and economically elite activities, are some of the highest-profile activities among white students. The clubs and their participants reflect and reinforce racial patterns at the school. They also reinforce racial stereotypes and send the message that a student's racial identity determines what he or she can or cannot do, both inside and outside the classroom.

How and why do particular activities gain currency among students? The faculty adviser for Jazz Band Lab cited popular culture as an influence. The track and field coach thought it was something more intrinsic, which he described as "heart." However, the varsity baseball coach approached the question of status from a purely social standpoint. When he began coaching during the 1995–96 school year, his team had eighteen white participants and one African American. According to the coach, baseball was not a "glamour sport," and many student athletes who might have played baseball instead were attracted to higher-profile sports such as football and basketball. One year later, the team significantly diversified, with

eight African American, two Latino, seven white, and three mul-
tiracial ballplayers. The coach, who felt "committed to the team
based on service to the community and love of sport and youth,"
did a lot of "informal player relations," such as when he followed up
on relationships that his players had with students of color in the
network of little leagues, summer leagues, and fall leagues. Over his
three years as coach, he was able to increase the number and diver-
sity of students who tried out for varsity baseball. It is important to
note that the team's membership changed not because the stereo-
types changed but because the coach intervened in the patterns of
participation.

At the same time, this coach reported that many Berkeley High
students continued to perceive baseball and a host of other athlet-
ics, such as lacrosse, golf, crew, and tennis, as "preppy white guy"
activities, even though varsity baseball was now over 50 percent
nonwhite. Despite this nagging perception, the coach felt good
about the close cross-racial sense of brotherhood that he witnessed
among the players.

## Challenging Racial Segregation Outside the Classroom

Most of the faculty members we interviewed were either reluctant
or unsure of how to intervene in peer-driven social dynamics that
produced segregated patterns of participation. The one faculty
adviser who successfully diversified his activity, the boys' varsity
baseball coach, did so by tapping into a lot of informal player rela-
tions in the baseball networks of students of color. He knew that
many students of color were playing baseball in leagues outside
school and understood that he could recruit players to his team if
he actively sought them out. This raises the question: To what
lengths should faculty advisers go to recruit underrepresented
groups of students?

The point that needs to be understood here is that this is not
merely a matter of student choice or voluntary segregation. The
Taking Stock study indicates that faculty advisers are much less

proactive than they could be. The work of faculty advisers often takes place above and beyond the regular hours of teaching, which is why some are reluctant to spend even more time recruiting underrepresented students. However, when they do nothing, they contribute to the mistaken belief that racial segregation is normal, if not inevitable, and that students themselves are responsible for racial segregation, at least outside the classroom walls. Our research showed that if the adults do not challenge racial stereotypes, then they should not expect students to do so on their own.

## Conclusion

Although students from diverse backgrounds enter Berkeley High School with the promise of access to a high-quality education, the structure of the school is such that this goal is only selectively achieved. BHS offers a wide array of sports and clubs that are the envy of even many private schools. Yet because of perceived racial barriers to participation, many students fail to take advantage of what the school has to offer. In so doing, they not only limit their opportunity to play an instrument or receive academic support that might be helpful for gaining admission to a selective college, they also limit their opportunities to experience personal growth. While many teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school staff lament the ways in which students segregate themselves, few are committed to evaluating the institutional structures and priorities that allow this segregation to occur. This analysis and reflection needs to happen before significant progress can be made toward educational equity (McCready, 2002).

At Berkeley High, as at most other schools, human and financial resources are bound up in a particular set of school priorities that are often not explicitly expressed. Resources are directed toward maintaining the school's reputation as a public school where middle-class and more affluent students can receive an elite, college-preparatory education and where already well-prepared students can be intellectually challenged and get what they need to be admitted to a good college. Berkeley High maintains a huge

number of elective courses and a wide selection of AP and honors classes, and allows its students to express a preference for particular teachers in the course selection process. Yet the diversity of the school, which parents and students often cite as one of its greatest assets, is rarely part of a student's experience, aside from the diversity they observe in the hallways.

School structures such as the master schedule have the effect of reinforcing existing patterns of racial separation and play an important role in reproducing patterns of academic success and failure. Just as we showed how the course selection process, which appears neutral and available to all, is actually difficult to navigate without informed parental support, insider knowledge, and perseverance, so too are other features of the school, such as the extracurricular activities. Adult intervention is needed to ensure that opportunities for academic success and social support are available.

Struggling students often need more than study halls and extra attention from individual teachers, especially when academic expectations are raised. Targeted tutoring and support classes have been shown to be effective in supporting such students (Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva, 1994). Institutionalized mechanisms for monitoring the progress of students across academic classes would enable the school to target students for comprehensive support rather than the piecemeal supports that exist currently. The school could also build stronger ties with community organizations that offer support services for students and work to maintain better relationships with families to foster genuine collaboration with parents rather than the often adversarial relationship that currently exists.

Berkeley High's baroque course structure creates conditions under which many students fall through the cracks. Chantelle taking prealgebra twice and Natay not being put in geometry as a ninth grader are but two examples of how students make important decisions based on misinformation, and the lack of safeguards within the system to catch such mistakes. A different set of priorities, structures, and programs could be created to prevent such problems. More counselors and more frequent meetings between

students and counselors, dividing the school into smaller units, teacher-led advisories, and respect for the aspirations of all students would help to address the disparities among students with regard to the resources they bring with them to navigate the system.

Finally, the success of equity-geared measures at Berkeley High may be linked to the ability of the school's adults to encourage a change in the social landscape of the school. This could be accomplished through structural reform, creating smaller schools-within-schools or small, autonomous schools sharing a large campus, which should be designed explicitly to foster community and academic excellence among diverse students. Also important is a reconsideration of the social spaces of the school, which in their current starkness (the courtyard) and discomfort (crowded school hallways) encourage defensive huddling rather than friendly mingling. Adult attention to students' social needs and active recruitment of diverse students to the high school's vast array of clubs and athletic teams would be a positive change from the current laissez-faire attitude toward this extracurricular dimension of school life and would facilitate the collaborative interaction of students within and beyond the classroom context.

The point that must be recognized at Berkeley High School and schools like it throughout the United States is that the structure of schooling (tracking, teacher assignment, and so forth) often places low-income students of color at a distinct disadvantage. The structure undermines efforts to provide a consistently high-quality education to all students, regardless of how well intentioned the teachers or how hard working the students. Critical analysis of school priorities and practices, and of racial boundaries, real or imagined, is needed to counter the effects of race and gender stereotypes and the influence of social inequality outside the school (Fine, Weis, Pruitt, and Burns, 1997). Active intervention is needed to support the needs of students who have less support or fewer resources at home, and leadership at multiple levels is required to ensure that excellence in teaching and a rigorous curriculum are available for the lowest-achieving students too. Without such

interventions, the achievement gap will never close, Berkeley's dream of becoming a community that lives out its values of equity and justice will never be realized, and students will be denied the education they deserve.

## Note

1. Four members of the Diversity Project conducted a study (1999–2000) in the English Language Learner (ELL) Department at Berkeley High School. During the 1999–2000 school year, the team spent 180 hours in participant-observation in eight ELL classrooms over a sixteen-week period from February through May 2000. The classrooms included both sheltered English content courses (using specific methods of modified instruction in English without oversimplifying or watering down the content) and English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Language Development (ELD) courses at different levels, including ESL 1, 3, 4, and a transition class. The major sources of data include field notes; interviews with nine ELL students and ten ELL graduates; one student focus group; two student social events; and numerous informal conversations with students, staff, and community members. The study provides a glimpse of the ELL program's dynamics and cannot serve as representative of the whole program. However, it provides some indication of the types of obstacles students face during their time in the program, whether recently arrived or having been in the Berkeley school system for years.