

UC BERKELEY

# PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Annual Update 2014



Celebrating 15 Years, 491 Alumni Strong

**Welcome** to the 2nd edition of the Principal Leadership Institute Annual Update! We are pleased to provide exciting updates on our programs and the accomplishments of our alumni. Thank you for your ongoing support of PLI!



Rebecca Cheung, Program Director



## Leadership for the 21st Century: The Role of the Arts in PLI

Numerous studies and reports identify creativity as one of the most necessary skills in the 21st century. Research shows that creativity supports leaders in more effectively challenging the status quo, examining alternative ways of solving problems, and inspiring and motivating others. The complexity of the challenges involved in creating more equitable and just outcomes for vulnerable students requires strong school leaders with a highly developed creative capacity.

For PLI Program Director Dr. Rebecca Cheung, the arts are a vehicle and method for helping leaders to tap into and develop their creativity. “The arts,” she says, “have a unique power to inspire, educate, and organize individuals and communities. Art cultivates the imagination, opens the heart, and generates new possibilities and responses to persistent problems. Art can be used to advocate for equity and social justice. Art can promote collaboration and shared decision making while mobilizing people to action. The arts are an important tool and resource for school leaders who face 21st century challenges such as implementing Common Core, increased technology demands, and expanded roles of communicating school priorities and visions related to funding and resources.”

With this in mind, Cheung has increasingly integrated the arts into the PLI curriculum over the last year. This is not a new trajectory, as PLI has a long history of incorporating art experiences into its program. Unfortunately, the funding that supported most of this prior work dried up in 2011. “2014 is a great time to refocus on creating an arts infused curriculum for PLI,” she says, “because of new partnerships and new funding opportunities.” Over the next three years, Cheung hopes to secure funding and partnerships to use the arts to enhance the PLI core curriculum.

### ArtCorps

The first of two partnerships came in the form of **ArtCorps**, a nonprofit organization that strengthens the creative and leadership capacity of individuals and organizations to effectively achieve social and environmental change. The ArtCorps collaboration was completed with members of Cohort 14 and supported by the UC Berkeley Graduation School of Education Equity Project Collaborative Scholarship Fund.

Cohort 14’s collaboration with ArtCorps was a result of the fall 2013 defacing of a poster of Trayvon Martin in Tolman Hall. The poster was hung in response to Cohort 14’s class discussions about Martin’s death and the results of the Zimmerman trial. Following the removal of the poster and a discussion among the students, the cohort expressed a desire to use art as a method of response to the incident.

With the support of Cheung and PLI instructor Dr. Frances Kendall, a PLI student leadership team applied for the Equity Project Collaborative Scholarship Fund. This was an opportunity for PLI students, faculty, and staff to receive training in the use of arts-based tools and strategies, to design a creative response to the poster incident, and to experience and learn innovative approaches for more effective collaboration and dialogue around systemic racial issues in communities and schools. With the support of the grant, the student leaders and instructors received 16 hours of training with ArtCorps via a “Creative Leadership Workshop.” The training culminated in the design and creation of the **Quilt of Hope** and **Roots of Racism**, both of which are on long-term exhibit in the Graduate School of Education.



Cohort 14’s Stephanie Khaziran, Heidi Ramirez-Weber, Tricia Speid, and Aaron Jorgensen present the *Roots of Racism* installation

# Leadership for the 21st Century: The Role of the Arts in PLI

## AileyCamp

The second PLI arts partnership this year was with **Cal Performances**, the performing arts presenting, commissioning, and producing organization based at the University of California, Berkeley. The partnership has multiple components including working with AileyCamp, a nationally acclaimed full scholarship summer program conceived by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and run locally by Cal Performances since 2001 (and nationally since 1989). AileyCamp is six weeks of rigorous dance preparation, mentoring, and personal development offered to underserved Bay Area youth, many of whom do not have dance experience. According to the program's mission, "With professional-level instruction aimed not as a training ground for dancers but at developing self-esteem, self-discipline, creative expression and critical thinking skills... Students finish camp with valuable life skills and a sense of accomplishment before entering the challenging high school years."

For members of PLI Cohort 15, AileyCamp was a space to collectively understand and interrogate visions of socially just instruction. As part of their summer coursework, Cohort 15 observed AileyCamp classes, attended an open house, went to the summer performance dress rehearsal, and engaged in a Q & A with the AileyCamp instructors and Berkeley/Oakland AileyCamp Director David McCauley. This was an opportunity for students in Cohort 15 to begin to see how AileyCamp enacts culturally responsive pedagogy and addresses issues of access and equity. For many PLI students, this was also an opportunity to take on the stance of researcher for the first time.

Reflecting upon the experience, members of Cohort 15 indicated that they saw new value in the role of the arts and transformative learning spaces in education. "AileyCamp challenged my notions of possibility in education," said one student. Further, many students commented on witnessing the politics of care, a concept investigated in PLI summer coursework, in action.

Seeing the interplay between high expectations and relationships at AileyCamp was a central theme of Cohort 15's reflections. "Through the careful nurturing of relationships, students engaged and excelled to create a performance that brought many of us to tears," reflected one PLI student. Another captured the feelings expressed by many classmates, saying, "AileyCamp furthered my desire to continue to build schools that focus on experiential, culturally relevant instruction. AileyCampers deeply engaged with the curriculum that reflected their experience, and to which they could bring their full selves."

“To become who you are and become what you are capable of is the only goal worth living.”

– Alvin Ailey



Photo: AileyCamp New York Final Performance. Photo by Nan Melville.

# Leadership for the 21st Century: The Role of the Arts in PLI

## Future Directions

Given the successful collaborations with ArtCorps and AileyCamp and their impact on the development of PLI leaders, PLI will continue to focus on the integration of the arts into its curriculum. Specifically, collaborations will continue to focus on using the arts as a vehicle for social justice. “In the age of school accountability, arts education has been de-emphasized in public schools K-12,” states Cheung. This has been especially true in schools with “under-performing” students, she argues. “At PLI, we believe that giving future leaders an opportunity to experience the power of the arts is one step towards bringing comprehensive arts education back for all students.”



When a wrong has been committed, either on a personal or societal level, sometimes the question is asked: what can be done... Those are the harms we must begin to address through art. Art gives form to the unspeakable, makes meaning of the incomprehensible. Educators face these harms everyday as their school communities wrestle with racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ableism, and other forms of oppression. It is for this reason that learning how to use art as a leadership tool is so important. Social justice leaders must not shy away from the hardest conversation, nor can they speak when something exists beyond words. Art gets us talking.



– D.M. Kloker,  
Cohort 14 Alumnus

## Welcome Cohort 15 to the PLI Family!

After a great summer session, Cohort 15's fall semester is nearly over. As many of you may remember, the fall in PLI is an intense semester, full of both professional obligations and PLI coursework. The 24 students of Cohort 15 are taking on the challenge with aplomb!

### Cohort 15 at a glance...

**75%** female, **25%** male

**54%** elementary, **46%** secondary

**45%** people of color

**63%** come from PLI's  
four partner districts

**63%** are fluent in two or more languages



## PLI Goes Global

This fall, PLI is introducing its newest offering: Programs for Visiting School Leaders (PVSL). The mission of PVSL is to provide quality, short-term opportunities for school leaders who work domestically and internationally to learn about school leadership. Additionally, the program aims to provide opportunities for PLI alumni to learn about school leadership from educators around the country and world.

PVSL was borne of numerous inquiries that PLI has received over time from international school leaders and university groups who have wanted to visit UC Berkeley to learn about the U.S. school system and how PLI prepares new school leaders. Until this point, says PVSL Coordinator Kristin Tavernetti (Cohort 6), learning experiences for visiting groups were created on an ad hoc basis.

After many months of gathering information and program design, PVSL was introduced with four initial program offerings: Learning Exchanges, Leadership and Innovative Learning Institute, Educational Leadership Preparation Seminar, and the Survey of School Leadership in the US Seminar. All PVSL offerings are tailored to meet the participants' professional development goals and engage the expertise of scholars at UC Berkeley, as well as the knowledge of local school leaders and teachers.

The first PVSL program was held in early October when Norwegian middle and high school leaders participated in a three-day Leadership Exchange. The visitors learned from PLI instructor Dr. Tina Trujillo and visited alumni-led schools. Thanks to the following leaders for opening their schools and sharing their time with the Norwegian visitors: Jen Corn



(Cohort 10) and Quise Rodriguez (Cohort 15), Thousand Oaks Elementary School; Luis Argueta (Cohort 13), REALM Middle School; Shannon Williams-Zou (Cohort 14), REALM High School; Audrey Amos (Cohort 10), John Muir Elementary School; Sonya Martin (Cohort 6), Jefferson Elementary School; Carolyn Gramstorff (Cohort 2), North Oakland Community Charter School.

As she prepared for the group's visit, Tavernetti was looking forward to seeing the exchange between Bay Area school leaders and the Norwegian leaders. She says, "collaborating and reflecting on issues that are relevant to us all provides big opportunities for improving our schools and providing a better education to our students, near and far."

**Click here** to learn more about PVSL. To find out how you and your school can participate in PVSL, contact Kristin Tavernetti at [ktavernetti@berkeley.edu](mailto:ktavernetti@berkeley.edu).

### Chatting About Leadership

Thank you to all of the PLI alumni who participated in our Fall 2014 EdChats, co-sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa International. EdChats bring together PLI alumni and an alumni facilitator to talk about pressing issues in education leadership. This fall's topics focused on "flipping" PD and restorative justice. Fueled by great food and drinks, the discussions were lively, engaging, and left all participants reinvigorated. Special thanks to our EdChat facilitators Cheryl Agrawal (Cohort 4) and Linda Kingston (Cohort 4).

There will be three more EdChats in Spring 2015, so be on the lookout for registration. Want to host an EdChat? Have a topic that you think should be chatted about? Email us at [pli@berkeley.edu](mailto:pli@berkeley.edu).



*Tricia Speid (Cohort 14), Assistant Director, North Oakland Community Charter School*

# Alumni Spotlight: Enacting Collective and Team Leadership— PLI Leadership Teams at Work

In September, PLI released its third of four reports on the impact of its leadership preparation program. In this report, “Collective and Team Leadership: Preparation for Urban Schools,” authors Dr. W. Norton Grubb and Dr. Rebecca Cheung analyze the impact of leadership preparation by focusing on administrative teams comprised exclusively of leaders who graduated from the Principal Leadership Institute. Because PLI alumni are densely populated in schools in the Bay Area, there are now more than 10 school leadership teams composed entirely of PLI alumni. This led Grubb and Cheung to ask the questions: What difference does it make to have several PLI graduates with the same leadership preparation on an administrative team? What might be easier or more effective? What might be more difficult? Does common preparation make a substantive difference in everyday leadership practice?

To seek answers to these questions, Grubb and Cheung interviewed 28 PLI alumni who are leaders on 10 different administrative teams (representing each of PLI’s four partner districts, each school level, and charter and traditional public schools). At the time of the study, the 26 alumni had administrative experience ranging from one to ten years. They all also had some experience working in schools without other PLI graduates, so they could compare their experiences working with and without fellow alumni.

From their interviews with members of these PLI teams, Grubb and Cheung report four major findings. First, their data indicate that school leadership is complicated, difficult work with many demands. Because of these overwhelming and varied demands, PLI graduates in the study report that they value the rigor of the preparation they received, even though it was difficult. Study participants repeatedly noted the ways in which readings and course practices are frequent reference points in their work.

Second, the authors report that preparation does indeed influence future leadership practice. Leadership programs,

they argue, can instill their graduates with the basic values and broad perspectives that are taken into practice. These deep understandings are what stay with graduates, even over long periods of time, and, they claim, such capacities are crucial on the job.

Third, many preparation programs, the national and state standards that drive them, and employers focus on individual traits. But Grubb and Cheung argue that it is necessary to go beyond the laundry list of such beliefs and capacities because they alone cannot foster the collective leadership that is so necessary in schools — particularly in urban schools with their contentious personal relationships, lack of trust, incoherent policies, and lack of consensus necessary to develop consistent reforms. In leadership preparation, then, the right kinds of collaboration, problem-based exercises, and leadership practice in workgroups are necessary to prepare graduates for collective leadership.

Finally, Grubb and Cheung find that leadership teams composed of graduates from the same preparation program have many inherent advantages. In the case of PLI, all-alumni teams enact collective leadership built upon the pillars of increased trust, common language and practices, and shared philosophies and values that enhance the leadership capacities of each individual and team. This, they claim, accelerates the complex process of reforming schools. In contrast, when a graduate works as an assistant principal or instructional coach under a principal with a very different orientation or when a graduate is a principal working without like-minded administrators and teacher leaders, it becomes much more difficult to implement a collective strategy and affect change under the traditional hierarchical model.

Interested in learning more, including the implications of Grubb and Cheung’s findings for districts and policymakers? Read the full report, “Collective and Team Leadership: Preparation for Urban Schools,” [here](#).



*Jeff Manassero (Cohort 12) and Alex Horowitz (Cohort 14), Academic Deans, Leadership Public Schools: Richmond*

## Leaders Learning From Leaders



This fall marks the start of the fourth year of PLI's Leadership Connection Online (LCO) program. LCO brings together small groups of 4-5 PLI alumni with a trained facilitator to examine leadership dilemmas and problems of practice. This professional development opportunity is based upon the belief that leaders can learn from one another in order to increase their individual and collective expertise. To this end, participants meet once a month over the course of eight months, using synchronous video conferencing.

Though using an online meeting format to delve deep into dilemmas about equity is new to many people, all of last year's participants found that forming meaningful relationships and building trust in this environment was very possible. LCO participants from last

year commented that they "felt energized and inspired after each session" and realized that they were "not alone" in the struggles they faced as school leaders. An added bonus was that many participants realized that this type of online learning could be brought back to their schools and districts as a form of professional development.

Another advantage of the online format is that it brings together alumni near and far. Jason Bono (Cohort 8) participated in LCO last year while serving as Head of School at a PK-8 independent school in Nosara, Costa Rica. Suddenly finding himself in a completely different leadership context in which he felt isolated and was already experiencing burnout, Bono turned to LCO for support. "I find myself wanting to repeatedly use the prefix "re-" as I think about how to describe the LCO experience," says Bono, "revisiting, reflecting, refocusing, realigning, remembering, refreshing, reconnecting, revealing, and reinvigorating. Ultimately, LCO re-PLIed me."

According to Bono, "My key rediscovery was of the power of structured reflective practice and professional learning community, particularly a professional learning community that has clearly identified shared values. LCO was, by far, the most engaging and valuable online professional learning experience I have had to date."

If you would like to learn more about how you can be part of LCO, contact LCO Coordinator Kristin Alvarez at [kesmit@berkeley.edu](mailto:kesmit@berkeley.edu) and visit the [website](#).

*Pictured: Jose DeLeon (Cohort 8), Principal, and Summer Sigler (Cohort 12), Assistant Principal, Richmond High School*

**Do you know a great candidate for PLI Cohort 16?**

The application deadline is **December 19th**.  
Details available on our **website**.



*Hazelle Fortich (Cohort 11), Principal, Cragmont Elementary School*

## Faculty Profile: Dr. Tina Trujillo



*Dr. Tina Trujillo is an Assistant Professor at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education. She earned her Ph.D. in Education from UCLA and her M.A. in Education from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is a former urban public school teacher, school reform coach, and educational evaluator. At Berkeley, she teaches Ph.D. students in Policy, Organization, Measurement and Evaluation (POME) and school and district leaders in the Leadership for Educational Equity Doctoral Program (LEEP) and the Principal Leadership Institute (PLI).*

*Dr. Trujillo uses tools from political science and critical policy studies to study the political dimensions of urban district reform, the instructional and democratic consequences of policies and reforms for students of color and English Learners, and trends in urban educational leadership.*

### **Q: What do you most enjoy about teaching your PLI course “Urban School Leadership”?**

I enjoy working with committed educators to bridge theory and practice in ways that further equity-oriented goals for their schools and communities. Each summer, I look forward to diving deep into the literature that explores the historical, political, and cultural dimensions of urban schooling with students who don't get regular opportunities to step back and reflect on these “big picture” aspects of their professional lives.

I also really enjoy seeing students make connections between certain macro-level educational policies and their micro-level instructional experiences. It's sometimes tough for educators to see how their daily work is shaped by different federal and state policies, so it's really rewarding to watch them begin to understand how particular decisions in Sacramento or Washington D.C. influence their daily work. These policy conversations can be really eye-opening for future urban school leaders.

### **Q: In your course, PLI students read an article in which author Stephen Davis (2007) says, “...it can be argued that scholars and practitioners must redouble their efforts to bridge the gap between theory and practice”. As a scholar, how do you work toward bridging this gap?**

I think scholars and practitioners have several opportunities, even responsibilities, to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Researchers can complement their academic scholarship with writing that's tailored to practitioner audiences. Practitioners, too, can seek out literature that includes empirical findings about the work in which they engage, not just literature that advocates for practices that may have an intuitive appeal, but that aren't supported by research evidence. I think practitioners can also bridge this gap by pursuing professional development from university-based preparation programs. These are the programs that are most likely to mobilize rigorous, research-based knowledge to address problems of practice.

Also, I don't find it necessarily constructive to always dichotomize these two groups. In my classes, I aim to develop leaders who can think like researchers so that they can be critical consumers of research when they're making choices on behalf of their schools and communities. Likewise, I'd like to see more scholars asking how usable our findings are for leaders, teachers, policymakers, and families. Educational

research is an applied field, so if we can't answer that “so what?” question, we risk not generating knowledge that can inform some of the most pressing, profound problems of practice. Eisenhart and Howe (1992) remind us that educational research studies can be well designed in technical terms, but their validity also depends on their relevance to the real issues that face practitioners.

### **Q: What are some of your recent research findings that you hope PLI alumni, and other practitioners, will take up in their work?**

As a part of a larger study that Professor Janelle Scott and I are conducting, we've been analyzing Teach For America alumni and current corps members' notions about what types of leadership they believe could best increase educational equity. In our sample, most of whom were on a professional fast track to becoming leaders themselves, the majority of our participants described a model of a bold, charismatic leader who focused primarily on achieving dramatic, test-based results through mostly top-down, managerial changes.

I agree that we need brave leaders who aren't content to merely continue to do business as usual, but we know from the literature that focusing narrowly on these types of concerns can edge out considerations about schools' full range of needs. To meaningfully address inequities in schools, we need leaders who regard children's socio-emotional needs and their civic awareness, not just their test scores, and who advocate for sometimes less popular, but important investments in schools and communities that address longstanding social and political inequities. These types of leaders are profiled less often in the media, and they're less frequently found in the literature on educational leadership, but they're the types of leaders we need more of if we're committed to designing more socially just school systems. You can read more about these findings [here](#).

## Faculty Profile (cont'd)

### Q: What research are you currently working on or about to embark upon that our alumni should be on the lookout for in the future?

I've been studying, along with Professors Na'ilah Nasir and John Powell, the Oakland Unified School District's experiences rolling out some very ambitious, equity-oriented reforms. Part of this work investigates the district's full-service community schools initiative.

Developing district-wide, full-service community schools is an impressive, admirable goal for any central office, and I think the lessons they're learning as they pioneer this work are going to be incredibly helpful to district and school leaders—in Oakland and elsewhere—who want to cultivate schools that are responsive to their communities' needs and priorities.

One of Dr. Trujillo's most recent publi-

cations, "Framing Social Justice Leadership in a University-Based Preparation Program: The University of California's Principal Leadership Institute" (co-authored with UCLA's Robert Cooper), examines how the PLI programs at both Berkeley and UCLA bridge theory and practice according to a social justice framework. To read the article, and more of her work, [visit Dr. Trujillo's website](#).

## Giving Back to Pay It Forward



*Teresa Barrera (Cohort 14), Assistant Principal, Ruby Bridges Elementary School*

from K-12 through graduate school cost about \$187,000 in today's terms (K-12 public schools, the scholarship she received for attending a private university and a \$3,000 scholarship to help pay for graduate school). "Today's students will require an even larger investment. Although as an educator I will likely never be able to repay the \$187,000 education I was fortunate enough to have received for free through societal endeavors such as federal taxes, state taxes, real estate taxes and scholarships, I can donate the minimum of a dinner or two out each month," Gómez-Lobo said.

Monthly contributions are easy to establish, with amounts as low as \$20 per month. "If our entire cohort did that, it would amount to more than \$6,000 per year," Gómez-Lobo said. "If all PLI graduates donated \$50 per month, the total would be about \$150,000 per year. Let's do it!"

All gifts to the Principal Leadership Institute's scholarship fund allow these future leaders to immediately pay it forward. "Donating to PLI allows me and others like me to give back what was given – the opportunity to lead in urban educational institutions throughout the Bay Area – to positively affect the lives of enrolled students and their families in these urban schools and ultimately improve their lives and their communities," said Carin Geathers (Cohort 5).

To support PLI, you can make a secure gift [online](#) or contact Teresa McGuire, Director of Development and External Relations at (510) 643-9784 or [tmcguire@berkeley.edu](mailto:tmcguire@berkeley.edu).

Showing appreciation. Helping other school leaders. And because they can afford to now. These are just a few of the reasons that PLI alumni choose to donate back to the PLI scholarship fund.

After graduating from PLI more than 10 years ago, Greg Ko (Cohort 2) still draws on the experience today. "The education, training, and focus on equity that is so intrinsic to PLI helped increase my capacity to be a positive leader in education and help bring change and reform to students and teachers," Ko said. "Donating back to PLI has been my way of supporting a program that not only helped prepare me for leadership in education, but will ultimately help continue to prepare additional leaders for the next generation of students," according to Ko.

For other alumni, they like to do the math. Jimena Gómez-Lobo (Cohort 13) estimates her own education

## Staff Updates

### W. Norton Grubb's "Retirement"



Since retiring from the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley in 2013, Dr. Norton Grubb has maintained a schedule that sounds less like retirement

and more like a full-time job. Grubb continues to serve as PLI's Faculty Coordinator and, in addition, he reports pursuing three major areas of work.

First, he's been working on a project about high schools, examining whether recent reforms have been responsive to the lengthy historical critiques of the high school. Says Grubb, "The high school has the least amount of research and has been the most resistant to change, so I think it needs more attention."

Second, Norton has continued to work on various PLI publications, in addition to reading lots of LARPs. "Rebecca and I wrote an article based on interviews with PLI graduates who work in schools with other PLI grads called "Collective and Team Leadership: Preparation for Urban Schools" (see article in this issue). Additionally, PLI Research Assistant Patrick Liao, Rebecca, and Norton have completed a paper trying to examine the student outcomes associated with the PLI. "Evaluating Berkeley's Principal Leadership Institute: Experiments with Student Outcomes" is available on the PLI website.

Finally, Grubb "has been trying to keep track of the burgeoning writing about inequality in the U.S. (and the world) in general, not just in education. One particular little project has been to read Thomas Piketty's massive book *Capital in the 21st Century* and then to write a summary and critique of the book since it is quite long and complex. I'm happy to send the summary to anyone who requests it." Thanks to Norton Grubb for his continued commitment to PLI and education research!

### Lynda Tredway: On the move in DC



Unsurprisingly, former PLI Academic Coordinator Lynda Tredway has spent the last year busy as ever, working in DC, the Bay Area, and beyond. She has continued to work at the Institute for Educational Leadership to coalesce school leaders committed to equity and to work with colleagues from the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) to use CLE pedagogies to inform the

work of leadership in and with communities.

Lynda also piloted the Oakland leadership rubric and asset observation and evaluation format, co-facilitated a two-day workshop on leadership at the Coalition of Community Schools National Forum with former PLI instructor Janette Hernandez and USF's Chris Thomas, and developed a framework and guide to facilitating conversations about race, class, and equity. Be on the lookout for her recently completed chapter, co-authored with UC Berkeley alumna Jessica Rigby, on the work of equity warriors. "Actions Matter: How Leaders Enact Equity" will appear in the soon to be released *Handbook on Urban School Leadership*.

Lynda has also been busy with "activities that are gradually taking up more space than work." She returned with more fervor to fabric art (stay tuned!), entertained many friends and family at her home with vegetables from her garden ("a basil and tomato crop to die for!" she says), focused on reading and exercising, and welcomed her daughter, Ayanna Lee, back to DC. Lynda also "had an amazing and transformative journey to Palestine, Israel and Jordan" (pictured here). And, with PLI never far from her heart, Lynda wrote letters of reference for program alums and hosted PLI alumni when they traveled to DC.

### Show Your PLI Pride!

Shopping in the PLI Online Store supports the PLI scholarship fund and enables you to show your alumni pride. The store features PLI apparel and merchandise, including polo shirts, hooded sweatshirts, t-shirts, long-sleeve t-shirts, hats, and water bottles. All orders will be shipped directly to your home.

**Click here** to start shopping!



# Staff Updates

## 5 Minutes with Viet Nguyen



PLI alumnus Viet Nguyen (Cohort 5) returned to the UC Berkeley campus as the Leadership Support Program Coordinator in July 2012. Nguyen can't get enough of Cal, holding his undergraduate and master's degrees from the university. Viet joined the PLI staff after 15 years in the Oakland Unified School District, including five serving

as the founding principal of East Oakland PRIDE Elementary School. This year, he supports 90 Tier II administrative credential candidates in LSP and LSPO, the online hybrid program in partnership with UCLA PLI, now in its second year.

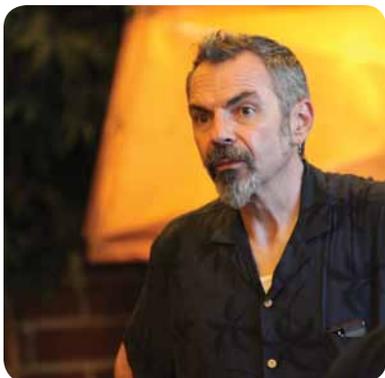
Nguyen says he "always thought that working for PLI was a potential next step but thought that it would come at the end of my career." However, when the opportunity arose to run LSP, he jumped on the chance, "thinking that's a great way to give back but also to continue learning about the art and craft of being a leader." The support of novice leaders, he says, is a big gap in the education landscape and one he is eager to close. Viet remembers his own experience as a new leader and how challenging that was for him. He feels that coordinating LSP gives him the chance to bring these first-hand challenges to bear on supporting practicing leaders.

In his work, Nguyen says he most enjoys "the direct contact with the students, like when I get to run a retreat or facilitate a group." These types of interactions and immediate grati-

fication of helping are the things that he misses the most about being a principal and teacher. In addition, Viet says he is really enjoying his work with the program's coaches and facilitators. This, he says, "reminds me of the work that I used to do as a principal with my teachers, so there's that parallel."

When considering the biggest opportunities in school leadership today, Nguyen says that this is a time of incredible change in education. "And when there is change or transition," Nguyen asserts, "there is also the space for opportunity." For example, working with Common Core may be a challenge in various ways, he says, "but it can also be reframed as an opportunity to get people reset and get people excited again. It's an opportunity to dig into who we are and how we serve children and how we can do it in a different way." This disposition to change excites Viet and it is one that he shares with the leaders in LSP, helping them to "see and seize the opportunities."

So what does Viet do to unwind in his off time? He likes to cook: "I tend to throw things together instead of following a recipe." He is a self-proclaimed devotee of "bad TV" and he watches a lot of sports. In addition, he is a sports writer, covering Cal women's basketball for the website BearInsider.com. A fan of the team since his undergrad days on campus, Nguyen has been writing for the site for almost 10 years. He says that talking to the coaches and witnessing the young women develop as athletes and as people is "a chance to look at leadership in a different way." There, "leadership, teamwork, and collaboration play themselves out on and off the court" in a way that he can relate to as a program coordinator and former school leader. And of course it's great fun to cheer on the team to victory, he says.



## Farewell to Ben Grandy

After nearly nine years at the helm of the PLI office, Ben Grandy left his position as program assistant in late September to join his partner and three children in Canada. As all of you know, Ben has been the go-to person when you have a question, and his encyclopedic knowledge of all things PLI has kept the office humming smoothly. An indispensable member of the PLI team, Ben will be greatly missed. Thank you Ben for all that you have done to support PLI instructors, coaches, and students. Please join us in wishing him all the best on his next chapter in Canada!

# Professional Reading Straight from the PLI Curriculum

Looking for the latest in educational research? Wondering what PLI students are reading? Here's a list of some of the newest additions to the PLI curriculum.

## ***Why school? Reclaiming education for all of us***

by Mike Rose

## ***Words were all we had: Becoming biliterate against the odds***

by María de la Luz Reyes

## ***The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts and language and culture in the classroom***

edited by Lisa Delpit and  
Joanne Kilgour Dowdy

## ***Black male(d): Peril and promise in the education of African American males***

by Tyrone C. Howard

## ***Taking It Personally: Racism in the classroom from kindergarten to college***

by Ann Berlak and Sekani Moyenda

**Acknowledgements:** Thanks to Kristin Alvarez, Caleb Cheung, Dara Tom, and Tina Trujillo for their contributions to this edition of the Annual Update.

Cover Image: Sonya Martin (Cohort 6), Principal, Jefferson Elementary School, and Michelle Sinclair (Cohort 13), Coordinator of Professional Development, Berkeley Unified



Cohort 16's Marlon Escobar, Monica Olivares, and Jenna Ogier-Marangella

Stay connected with PLI. Follow us on Facebook, join us on LinkedIn, and find us on Twitter for local events, great discussions, and interesting resources.



Be on the lookout for the Alumni Survey in January  
and

Save the date!

The Behring PLI Celebration will be held on March 14, 2015.

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