

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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This issue of *Reflections* tells the stories of administrators who purposively embraced the paradoxes and struggles inherent in their roles. The business of keeping things moving forward is the job of administrators in academia, non profit agencies and government bureaucracies, where service to others is the primary goal. Often times the secondary goal of organizational survival displaces the primary goals in these organizations: focus is lost, roles are blurred and the need for homeostasis and organizational survival overwhelm the original mission of the institution. Administrators struggle with this paradox and the best ones keep their eyes on the prize, in spite of the siren song of ambition and internal power struggles. Another difficult aspect of an administrator's role is the need to resolve the tension between empowerment and accountability. Administrators serve two masters: the professionals or faculty they seek to inspire and the administrators to whom they in turn must answer. This issue pays tribute to administrators' struggles to honor both commitments, in spite of the sometimes conflicting demands of each.

I have had the privilege of working with two outstanding administrators at California State University, Long Beach. The first, James Kelly, is an editor of this issue of *Reflections* and former director of the Social Work Department. Jim was both blessed and cursed with a vivid imagination of how things might be and the personal resources to make the possible happen. He was more comfortable with change than most people have a right to be, and this comfort led him to take bold and creative risks as an administrator. One such risk was his decision to provide the seed

money for the new journal of narratives founded by Sonia Leib Abels that you are now reading. Jim has been called a visionary many times and with good reason. His faith in what *Reflections* could become allowed Sonia Abels' grand vision to become reality.

The second administrator that I have been fortunate to work with is John Oliver, the current director of the Social Work Department, who appointed me as the second editor of *Reflections*. He demonstrated his moral courage when he published a narrative about his childhood experience of segregation. Written for our special issue commemorating the 1954 Supreme Court decision known as *Brown v. Board of Education*, John Oliver's narrative told of growing up in the South under conditions of discrimination and racism, conditions which reappeared regularly during his adult life. John has been an unwavering source of support for the journal, and a steady guide during the rocky episodes that crop up in all such enterprises. He allowed the journal to develop according to its own rhythms and has given me the creative space and freedom that are the reasons most academics seek this life. As far as the journal is concerned, he has resolved the tension between accountability and empowerment wholly on the side of empowerment.

Other administrators may craft their roles in a different way and to different ends; some of these are described in this issue. But *Reflections* has flourished under the leadership of James Kelly and John Oliver. For that I thank them both.

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