

Early College Folio

The House of Education Needs Overhaul

Issue 1 | Spring 2021

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Transcript *Early College Folio* Launch and Roundtable Discussion

EDITORS' NOTE: *This is a transcript of a recording of the June 24, 2021 Early College Folio launch event in celebration of [the journal's first issue](#). The transcript has been edited slightly for publication. You can view the recording at this link: <https://youtu.be/LdbC7dq8TTc>.*

HOSTS & PANELISTS

John Weinstein, Host
Brian Mikesell, Host
Erin Donahue, Host

Francesca Gamber, Panelist
Donald Heller, Panelist
Kristy McMorris, Panelist
Michael Sadowski, Panelist
Patricia Sharpe, Panelist

[BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION]

John Weinstein: Good evening everyone. I'm so excited to welcome you to the virtual launch party for our new journal *Early College Folio* being published by Early College Research Institute and the Center for Early College. Let's give ourselves a round of applause for being here and getting to this moment. [Applause.]

I would say, conceptually, this idea has been a very long time coming. I don't know the first time I was at an early college meeting, either here at Simon's Rock or elsewhere, where someone said, "We should have a journal." I know this has happened many times. We do need some catalyzing and that really came from the Early College Research Institute, from Brian Mikesell and Erin Donahue becoming the people to really make that happen. So I do want to thank them for their work as managing editors; that has really made this all come [together]. So, a round of applause for Brian and Erin, please. [Applause.]

So it's really, really exciting to be in this moment. I certainly encourage

everyone to read through—at whatever pace is the comfortable reading pace for you—the various articles. There’s a lot of different kinds of content. I think at some point we wanted to make sure the first journal wasn’t too thin or didn’t have enough in it; I would say we maybe over-shot that. It is *super* full. Future issues don’t necessarily need to have quite as much in them, that would be okay. [Laughter.] But we had a lot to say, and it’s exciting to have it all out there.

One of the elements that we included this time, again the theme of this issue is “The House of Education Needs Overhaul.” This was the title of a piece that Elizabeth Blodgett Hall, our founder of Simon’s Rock, wrote in 1967. It’s one of the articles that really outlines a lot of the vision for what became Simon’s Rock and what has become our Bard Early College model—a model that has many different elements to it. I think that’s an exciting piece. And we have many of our different campuses represented here, also some scholars from outside of the Bard world directly, which is great.

And I think, in a way, the fact that this vision for early college can vary so much is one of its strengths. I also wanted to note that it’s great that this first issue is celebrating so many aspects of early college within the Bard world. We’re certainly looking for this journal to be a center for the study of early college both around the nation and as well as around the world. We do have some people lined up for future issues who have nothing to do with Bard in any way, which I think is a great piece—either talking about the early college models they’re in, or talking about what we do from their own fresh perspective on it. So that, I think, is going to be a really exciting direction.

In terms of our main event for tonight, and one of the things we have in this issue is, we asked six different scholars to write a piece in response to Betty Hall’s “The House of Education Needs Overhaul,” which turned out to be a really cool assignment. You might think, “Okay two or three of those are going to end up saying something kind of similar, maybe.” Absolutely not. They each went in such different directions, which really was the intent of it, and that was more than realized. It was really a very exciting exercise to say, “Take this and respond to it from your perspective,” and we got really different pieces.

So, I’m going to be engaging five of those authors tonight in a roundtable discussion, and then we’ll have some other pieces as well and some more recognitions.

Those who will be on the roundtable tonight will be Francesca Gamber, Frankie Gamber, from BHSEC Baltimore; Pat Sharpe, Patricia Sharpe, [from here] at Simon’s Rock; Michael Sadowski from Bard College and the founder of Bard Early College in the Hudson Valley, though he has

now moved onto other things within Bard; Kristy McMorris from here at Simon's Rock; and Donald Heller from University of San Francisco. Now, many people have more than one affiliation piece with that as well, so many of us have worked at multiple, multiple [places] within this world, and they are certainly welcome to reference and talk about that if they like. That is where we are, we presently are. So I'm going to start by asking each person— I think I'll go in the order in which the pieces appear in the [issue]—about a specific thing that they talked about in their response, and then we'll go into some dialogue around this. I'm going to start with Frankie.

Frankie, you took this as a take on how Betty Hall's vision for you really applies to the work in Baltimore, working with a different student population demographic than maybe Betty Hall was thinking about in her work at Concord Academy and how this really applies to social justice and racial justice in the world of Baltimore. So, can you tell us a bit about that perspective, what you brought, and where you saw the relevance of "The House of Education Needs Overhaul" to your work.

Francesca Gamber: Thanks John, for that and for this event, everybody, for this evening. Yeah, I really zeroed-in in my essay on the idea of having praise for what the original essay calls— now I can't remember the phrase—["powerful, head-strong] youth." Because to me that resonates so much with this idea in postcolonial studies about the distribution of sentiment, and the idea that as much as the colonial project—in various contexts, but of course we're talking specifically in the United States—that the colonial project is as engaged in regulating how people feel and how they express feelings and emotion, and who's allowed to feel which thing and express it in what way as much as the colonial project uses things like *law* and *punishment* to inscribe race and gender domination.

What I see in my students is that the early college environment doesn't necessarily make them any more powerful or head-strong than they already were, but it gives them—it *affirms*, I think their understanding that they, too, are entitled to express and to feel things in a society where there's not only a stereotype around people of color being sort of unruly or overly governed by their emotions, irrational—that's a stereotype particularly for black women, but also that that assumption can also have deadly consequences.

So in many of the conversations that we've seen about the use of excessive force by law enforcement, I think this is kind of under the surface but it's definitely there, that a feeling of *threat* on the part of maybe a law enforcement officer comes from seeing a person of color acting in

what is perceived as an irrational fashion. All too often the response is deadly force. I think that what's really powerful about what early college does, particularly in cities like Baltimore that have sort of a population that is majority minority students, is that we are offering a corrective, I think, to the stereotype that an emotional, forceful voice of color is necessarily dangerous or irrational or violent. So it's both a historical corrective, and it's an important contemporary message to our students not to be intimidated or threatened into silence.

JW: Thank you, thank you for that Frankie and for what you wrote in this piece. Now, Pat, in yours, you started with contextualizing the '60s, which is when Betty Hall's writing about this, and who the student of the day was or wasn't. It also then moved into another key event, September 11th, which coincided with the start of the first Bard High School Early College—so, students in another tumultuous moment in history—and some ways how these messages that Betty Hall had, these ideas, connect to both. So I'd love to hear about one or both of those time periods and how you connected that to what Betty Hall was doing and how her ideas can therefore kind of continue, over time, to be relevant.

Patricia Sharpe: I was struck in reading her piece, which I have read before, with an expression of fear about the rebellion of the '60s. [In] 1967, I was just starting graduate school, and I was in Texas. I was tear gassed at the capital. You know, we held classes off campus because we were protesting the Vietnam War. And at the same time for me those were all very joyful expressions of optimism that things could be different.

So it was interesting to me that in a way I think Mrs. Hall was saying, "We need to do this to direct the energy, the rebellious energy, and kind of keep them under control. I was really protesting that view. And I was definitely writing as someone who myself attended a girls' school of the type of Concord Academy. So, and again, that was a world that I was very much rebelling against as privileged, and closed, and basically educating women to be the wives of doctors but not really to take a role in the world ourselves.

So, I enjoyed coming back at Mrs. Hall with a very different vision of that time. And it's also true that the very first BHSEC, which you and I were together at, that 9/11 happened on the third day of the school. And I think, made it—you know, we had a very diverse population of students who were taking a huge risk to come to this school that nobody had ever heard of on the fourth floor of a junior high school in Greenpoint with a derelict swimming pool across the way, and we didn't have enough chairs. . . . Anyway, somehow feeling that really Earth-shaking event that we didn't know how to process made education—and especially the

education of a very diverse population that we had—feel really crucial.

JW: Thank you, thanks for that. So we've had some historical contexts, spatial contexts. Michael, in your approach of it we went more into the developmental direction, and I think that human development has an interesting relationship to early college discourse because sometimes we sort of talk about it more, sometimes less. I do think it's something to be thinking about more. And I was really interested in this concept of "moratorium" that you talked about, Michael, in your piece. If you could tell us about that and why that's the concept that you linked to Betty Hall's piece then, that'd be great to hear about.

Michael Sadowski: Sure, so there was a quotation in Hall that I really latched onto. She writes, "These are the middle years, before vocational or professional training, for finding out about oneself and what one is interested in and able to do, without regard for what one has to do for living. These are the years for liberal education. . . ." So this idea that John's referring to, of developmental moratorium, is one that I work with my teacher education students at Bard Annandale. I kind of start my development course with studying the work of Erik Erikson, who wrote, whose major contribution, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, came out right around the time that Hall published this piece. I have no idea if she had read Erikson or was a follower, but people criticized Erikson's work for, I think rightly so, for its sort of focusing primarily on white, middle class—he based his models on white, middle class or upper class, male adolescents. But, the way he frames the whole idea of development is so persuasive that—and I think my students tend to agree with this—that it really is worth, as long as you don't throw the baby out with the bathwater, it's worth sort of considering that.

This idea of moratorium has to do with the idea that as an adolescent is developing, there's a way in which—the moratorium is in the development, so it sounds like a negative thing, but it's actually that it's a moratorium in a young person going toward a life course too quickly. So it's like a pause, an opportunity to sort of pause and find out different parts of who you are. And certainly a liberal arts education is all about that. And often adolescents don't get that opportunity, at best, until they're 18 or 19 years old. So the idea of early college is capturing that developmental need to explore different sides of oneself in Erikson's model.

The *problem* comes with the flip side of moratorium, which is foreclosure. It is this idea sort of built off—James Marcia is a psychologist who wrote more about this, sort of building off Erikson—it's this idea of you,

you settle on a sense of who you are and a life course without really exploring different parts of who you could be. This tends to happen, especially with students who might feel limited by perceptions of themselves based on race, gender, sexuality, if they have a disability; they might have a really narrow framework for what they are and can be. So, developmental moratorium, broadly, and liberal arts education, more narrowly, I think, present students with opportunities to see sides of themselves that they would never have otherwise even considered.

And that's the whole idea behind developmental moratorium. We certainly saw this with the early college students in Hudson, many of whom came into the program—we're not a four-year BHSEC we're a two-year BEC—so students come in as high school juniors, many of them knew they were kind of “done” with what was going on at the high school, but they didn't have that sense necessarily that they wanted to go to a four-year college either. So watching students who have developed that love of just sort of the exploration that happens in Seminar, or in an elective, and taking different electives that we offer in the Early College, is really kind of a perfect example of what this idea of avoiding identity foreclosure and having an opportunity for a developmental moratorium is all about.

JW: Thank you. Kristy, in your piece you talk a lot about learning communities and different forms of collaboration and the social responsibility of the collective to learn together. I'm interested to hear more about how you connected that to various early college approaches as well as what Betty Hall's talking about.

Kristy McMorris: Sure. When I was first thinking about Mrs. Hall's essay, what came far was the immediate connection between what she saw as an opportunity to offer a different type of education, kind of echoing what, Pat, you described in terms of your own secondary schooling, echoing parts of what you described, Michael, in terms of opening up the possibilities. And so thinking about Simon's Rock as a way to open up the possibilities to create a new, a different—not even that, to create a new track—but allow for a new horizon to emerge through education.

And one way that that also kind of crystallized in my mind was also thinking about Writing and Thinking practices and the ways that that informs and frames the ways that we teach and invite our students to be a part of the learning process alongside us as we are also learning. And so, something that I wrote is that when I encounter students, whether they be ninth-graders, or first-year students, et cetera, or tenth-graders, there's often this thinking like, “Okay, I have to do this. I have to be the best. I have to be competitive. I have to get an ‘A.’ I have to. . .” all of this

kind of anxious thinking about this kind of singular track of education. And there's a kind of culture shock when they get in my classroom, and they realize that, "You know, let's just put the 'A' conversation a little bit on hold, and let's just think about what we're doing together." We're thinking through these ideas together, we're learning together and through each other. That culture shock and. . . encouraging students to see another possibility for their education is something that takes some time over the course of a semester, but it's really beautiful to see.

Something that I noticed when I was looking back over the essay in preparation for tonight was that there was something kind of metacognitive happening as I was thinking about loosening some of that anxious thinking about ". . . have to get to the 'A,' have to get to the best" that I was also doing that myself as I was thinking about my deep terror of teaching *Beloved* for the first time and all the weight that I was putting on my shoulders to make sure I do a good job because Toni Morrison, because Margaret Garner, because *everything*. And relaxing into, even for myself as a teacher, learning in community with my students, learning through practices where we're all together reading, annotating, responding creatively to the texts. As I look back it was like, "Oh, I'm doing the thing too!" My own high school Kristy was like "No, you have to be the best." Learning to be next to my students so we're all reading and growing together, it was interesting to see that metacognitive thing happening as I was also following that process that the Simon's Rock model allows us to bring to our students, but I guess it [also] brings to us each semester as we continue to learn and grow.

JW: Thank you. And Don, in your section, you took a longitudinal educational history piece of early college and, you know, when Betty Hall wrote this piece in 1967 early college was not really yet a thing; it was being newly created. It's become quite the thing in the ensuing time, especially when we look at dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and some of the other things within the early college family of practices. [There were] more than two million students doing some type of college course [while being of] high school age before the pandemic. I could see ways in which the pandemic might have increased that number or decreased it. So there is that question: what is the role and relevance of a small piece of this, of a small place that Betty Hall started more than 50 years ago as this world expanded. So Don, you really looked at the question of "What is the role and relevance of this vision now?" and I'd love for you to tell us about what you looked at and what conclusions you drew from that question.

Donald Heller: Sure, and thanks, John. Good evening everybody. I came to this assignment from a couple of perspectives. The first one is my background as a researcher in educational policy. Most of my research is focused on access to post-

secondary education. Particularly, I look at the transition of students from high school to colleges and universities. The second perspective was that I'm the parent of an [alumnus] of Simon's Rock. So, I have that personal experience of following my child's educational journey through high school and Simon's Rock and beyond Simon's Rock. So it was an interesting assignment for me, and I really enjoyed the opportunity to read Betty Hall's piece and to think about it in the context of those two perspectives.

As John said, we've had a huge expansion, certainly in the last 15 years but even in the last 20 years, in the number of students who are earning college credits before typically, well, historically, [unintelligible] 18 years old, leaving high school and enrolling in postsecondary education. And as I said, we've seen this huge expansion of students. Yet one of the things that has really struck me for some time, is that there hasn't been a huge expansion of institutions like Simon's Rock. In fact there are very, very few residential early colleges around the United States, and in fact I think that Simon's Rock may be the only standalone—at least geographically, of course now we have the link with Bard—but the only residential standalone early college program in the country. The question I was really thinking about was, "Well with this huge expansion of other types of early college opportunities for students, do we still need a Simon's Rock kind of place with that unique mission and [unintelligible]."

And the conclusion I came to—and I will fully admit that my conclusion was probably biased a little bit by the experience in our family, not just from the research that I've done—but my conclusion was the fact that there is a need for Simon's Rock and the kind of opportunity it offers to students. I'm still a little bit bewildered that there aren't more places like Simon's Rock around the country. I think, in particular, as people are thinking more and more about alternative pathways to a bachelor's degree, and people are thinking more and more about the cost of postsecondary education, the experiences that students have, and the gaps in achievement and success between students from different racial groups, social groups, an income groups, I would have expected that there would have been more places like Simon's Rock popping up. So one of the questions about maybe something [unintelligible] is, "Why hasn't that happened? Why haven't there been more places that cropped up as standalone, residential, early college opportunities for students?" And I don't know if it's something that I will tackle in my research in the future, but I think it's certainly an interesting question. The conclusion I came to in my piece is that there is a real need for a place like Simon's Rock and that the opportunities that it provides to students who are looking for a very different pathway for secondary as well as postsecondary education is [unintelligible].

So, again, thanks John for the opportunity to participate. I look forward to reading all of the [unintelligible].

JW: Thank you, Don. Thank you everyone. Right, I think I'm the one who's read everyone's pieces but now it's like you get to read what others did for the same assignment. It's such an exciting array. I can really see us using this material in many ways for ourselves and for our students because we've now got an essay and then many responses to it, I'm sure there's lots of plans we could create after that.

I'm going to ask a question to the full group of the panelists, and then I will invite space for others in our audience to ask questions, though I've got a few more I may still get in.

Often when I say what I do, people have very interesting responses, right, when you say you work in early college. I've certainly found that. And when people say, "Well, why are you trying to kind of rush through high school" or you know, the sort of rushing, accelerating phase. I think it's a really interesting question, "Is that even part of it?" And so, in what you're seeing, either in Betty Hall's work, or in your own work on this topic, as you think through this overhauling of the house of education, in what ways is early college a *speeding up*? In what ways is it a *slowing down*? How do those concepts intervene? I'd love to ask our roundtable panelists to give us some thoughts on that, and again this can connect to what you wrote for this piece or to other thoughts and experiences you have in the early college world.

I guess if we, if we go with the "raise hand" that will probably help me at this point. Okay, we can use the actual hand, Michael...

MS: Yeah, I mean I what you just said makes me think of the students that we have had in Hudson who have told us over and over—and this and this is no shade on high school—but we have heard over and over from students that they really had kind of checked-out of what was going on in high school because they were just. . . and they didn't really put it this way, but the message was that they were ready to move on. They were doing a lot of memorizing. They were doing a lot of *workbook* and *textbook*, and it was almost as if they sensed there was something more out there that they were ready for, but they didn't get the opportunity. So I think that the idea that students are being "rushed," again I'll sort of go back developmentally, it's that a lot of students are ready for this and are kind of hungry for it and are kind of biding their time. So that's my response to that.

JW: And, Don?

DH: Thanks Michael, that was really interesting, what you said. And as you did, I was thinking back on my child's college experience—excuse me—their high school experience. And, you know, they were pretty bright kid, and what happened in the high school that they were in was that when you were a bright kid you were put into AP classes, of course. AP classes were exactly the wrong kind of class for them and their learning style. So, it was not a good experience for them [recording cuts out] ... Simon's Rock.

To go back to your question, John, "Is it too early? Is it too late?" I think part of the reason why we think of the question that way is because we had these very discrete parts of our educational system in this country. We have elementary school. We have secondary school, and there's been some blurring of those lines [unintelligible] of elementary school, secondary school. And then of course we have postsecondary education. And we always had very, very distinct lines between secondary education and postsecondary education; they were different institutions, they were different styles, you often went away to college. So it was a very, very, direct and concrete line between the two. What's happened in a lot of states in recent years, really the last 25 years or so, is that there has been more and more focus on blurring the line between secondary education and postsecondary education, and trying to create more of a seamless Pre-K to 16 pipeline. That's one of the things I talked about in my piece.

And in fact, most states have not done very much of a job at all trying to make it more seamless. Most states still have what I would describe as two very different structures: secondary education and postsecondary education. This is reflected in the policies and the bureaucracies we have. In most states there are separate governing boards for elementary and secondary education, and then for postsecondary education, and there just have not been really many good examples where we created more of a seamless pipeline.

So, I think, to get back to your question, if we had more of that seamless pipeline and if there wasn't this hard break between secondary school and postsecondary education, then we wouldn't be asking that question that you asked, John. It would be more fluid, and there would be more opportunities for people to move through this pipeline without it being seen as "Oh, I'm leaving secondary school and going to postsecondary education."

JW: Got it, thanks. Frankie?

FG: Thanks. Yeah, I'm going to make a very similar point to Don's about disrupting this idea that there's this neat binary between secondary and postsecondary education, and understanding early college as its own.

It is itself, it is a thing to itself. And I think that's particularly so for the urban early colleges, and I would imagine there's probably an issue of *Early College Folio* somewhere, you know, that focuses on the particularities of the urban early colleges.

In the work that we do in Baltimore, I'm very sensitive to not wanting our program to appear as though it's just trying to replicate what students in affluent, private high schools are getting. I think that there are some school models in public school systems that kind of do that for their own reasons, but it's really important to us to assert that this is not a tuition-free, private school model here. This is a very specific kind of education; it's an urban early college education. It's not going to be for everybody, and that's okay. But we're not trying to—you know, it's sort of a unicorn of sorts. I can see, I can really see the truth in that when I'm doing. . . . I do alumni interviewing for college admissions for my alma mater, and I have the occasion to talk to a lot of students who go to public high schools in affluent districts or who go to really expensive private high schools. The education that they're getting is not the same as what we're offering in the early college, and that's a judgment-free statement; I'm not imputing any sort of moral anything to what they're getting versus what we're offering. I'm just observing that it's different. So, our goal in Baltimore is not to provide what the kids are getting at Gilman for instance, which is a very expensive all-boys private school. We, our goal, is to be ourselves, which is the Bard Early College in Baltimore. And what that means is something that I think we're still figuring out as we wrap up year six here.

JW: Thank you. Pat?

PS: Well, what Frankie said makes me what to rethink in a way where I was coming at this, but I think it's important that Mrs. Hall was fighting redundancy. And she was coming out of, you know, elite private schools where everything was about overtraining us, making sure that whatever college you went to you would be able to do whatever you're asked. So, you took a really great chemistry course and then the chemistry course in college was boring because really you'd had something that was probably more challenging, more individualized, more conceptual than what you get in a college lecture. I think in a way Mrs. Hall was trying to take the best of what those private schools were doing, but get rid of the idea that it was over-preparing the privileged so that they could meet any challenge, and instead saying, "Let's give the challenge, let's make this real. This is college, and you will build on this, not repeat it."

JW: Thanks. Kristy?

KM: And thanks for your question. I think it's a great one, feels like I encounter it often between students and families. I would say in terms of the

idea of speeding up I think oftentimes our students come with the idea that they're getting ahead, "I'm going to be ahead of my peers and I finished at 19 or 20." The idea of speeding up is very present for them. What I think I find in working with them in the classroom and beyond is that it's not really a matter of speeding up or slowing down. It's like they're, we're, students, all of us, are entering into a new dimension where time, space, and self, are constantly in a state of reconfiguration. As they sit around a table and look for an hour at a sentence or a word, in terms of speeding up or slowing down it's just like—it feels like walking on the moon, figuring out how I can think even more deeply about this thing. I could say, "That's a word, it means this. I'm done with it." No, we're going to spend some time with that. Or even when they see themselves at 17 or 18 facing a senior project and really encountering the reality like, "I'm 17 or 18, and I am tasked with doing a senior thesis, thereby saying that I have something very profound at 17 or 18 or 19 to say to the world unique and original to me." Or even when they see themselves as BA grads at 19 or 20, and suddenly they have to make these really big decisions about their lives and their futures in ways that are definitely out of time and/or out of step with their peers.

And so, it neither feels like a speeding up or slowing down, but reckoning with time in a way that there are no precedents for them (other than what we tell them) where they're making this kind of womb of creativity, like "I have to figure this out as I go because the tracks have told me something else. I've chosen to do an alternative thing, which is out of track, which is out of time, and figuring out my own sense of time on my own, creatively speaking." Yeah.

JW: Thank you. Yeah, I was thinking in putting some of these pieces together given that (and we're reminded that Betty Hall was trying to do something *different* than the elite private high school) if what we were doing in our early colleges was recreating that in a sense, right—if BHSEC Baltimore was providing the elite private high school experience for students involved, it would be a shame if Betty Hall had created something to break free from that model only to then have it be the thing that's replicable. So I'm really glad that that's not what happens in Baltimore, or else it would seem like we hadn't learned a lot from Betty Hall, the real pieces of it. And as I think about what Kristy and Don were saying and also to take it back to the "moratorium" piece, it may be that often schools turned into both "hurry up" and "wait" all at the same time. And neither of those are great educational moments. I think to really sit and think about something, right, if that disappears from all of those, that's not what we're aiming for.

In that way, thinking about the origins and the worlds in which Betty Hall was coming from, it's not that she was not trying to replicate that world for others, she was trying to replicate that world for those

for whom it was kind of their standard school model at that point. It's something to really be thinking about. I want to give some time for people other than me to get to ask questions of our panelists, so I'm going to open up that floor again. If you can raise either a physical or electronic hand—I was going to say like an analog or digital hand. [Intelligible.] Any questions you'd like to ask, either the group or a specific panelist? Or also a thought you'd like to share that is more of a comment than a question?

PS: Well, I'd like to raise something, and Kristy I'll ask you because you and I both have—and John—have both the Simon's Rock experience and the public early college experience. I love both, but I think in some ways the character of the education itself and what happens in the classroom, and its impact is more clear in the public early colleges. Because at Simon's Rock so much of the growing up is about, for most of the students, being on your own for the first time, managing your time, learning how to do your laundry . . . living as an adult in a very different way. Many of the students in Queens already had a lot of responsibility for overseeing their siblings, for traveling in New York City, for having jobs. So that issue of the life outside the classroom seems to be less about what was different than an actual classroom experience of the kind you've been talking about: of learning what it is to have a shared conversation that leads to insights that none of you, no one in the room, including the teacher, had before that conversation happened.

KM: I'll take that as an invitation to think about these different contexts. And I think, you know, I love what you said and totally see the ways that place and context. . . and maybe just to offer context for myself: I started in BHSEC Queens and in 2009 taught ninth grade in the college for four years, and then I went on to be the founding director of the Bard Early College at Harlem Children's Zone in 2013. I taught in the high school program, pre-college program, and the college for three years, and I've been *here* for five years.

There are ways in which—I totally understand what you're saying—in terms of thinking about the opportunity that early college has, in terms of the work they can do within the public context. Seven of my twelve years in the Bard Early College network have been within the public context. And I think something that I've found is that there's something to the kind of alchemy—sorry, everything sounds so magical this evening—alchemy of possibility that happens in early college in all of these contexts.

So, to think about starting in Queens—I came in in the second year, but I'll still say that we were kind of pioneers even though you'd already been doing it for a year or for seven years . . . eight, nine years when I came around—but to think about students taking on this new thing

within the public school system and the ways that the New York City public school system creates broader ideological tracks where student say, “I’m smart so I’m going to do smart things and I’m going to go to smart schools because I’m smart” and then suddenly getting to BHSEC and being like, “I’m smart, but what does that mean here? I don’t know. I have to figure it all out all over again with support, with advisors, and all of that.” And similarly, or differently, going to Harlem and seeing that alchemy happening again within an urban charter school and encountering the ways that the students’ own various cultural upbringings and embeddedness in place, kind of creating a chemical reaction with the opportunity that was all so magical and wonderful. I’m also thinking here about the students, whether I’m working with students in the academy or with students in the college, both learning to live independently, but suddenly being in the midst, in the mix, of all these opportunities like, “I’m in tenth grade and yeah I’m ready for Physics 200.” *Let’s think about that, let’s see what happens.* Or, “I don’t know if I can do a thesis.” *You are ready to do a thesis.* So all these like alchemical possibilities happening in all these different places in ways that are unique to context and place have been really kind of amazing to see.

JW: In thinking about that, the students’ life outside of school and their other responsibilities, it actually makes me think, I don’t know that we know that much about that. To add to Frankie’s list of topics for future issues, it would be really interesting to know “What is the early college student’s life like when not at school?” That’s a really interesting area to think about because there’s what we know, what we don’t know, and maybe what we think we know that might turn out to not be the case. And how is *that* different in different models of early college? So we have a growing list of issues. . . . Alright, David?

David Allen: So Frankie raised the idea of the public early college and the nature of it. I think a lot of us who are in public early colleges, we’re attracted to this idea of equity. So, it’s not so much the replication of the experience of more affluent schools, but certainly tapping into the kinds of opportunities that they have.

But over the years I’ve thought about what are the opportunities we’re offering students for equity, and then what are those boundaries. We get tested with those boundaries, right? We think we’re doing great and somebody says, “Here are some students who learn this differently, who have IEPs. Figure it out.” And then we do some work on that and then somebody says, or parents say, “Here’s my student who has these disabilities. How can you work with this student and make sure that this student also has the same kinds of opportunities that other students have?” So I wonder about, for Frankie and for others, what do you see as opportunities and what are some of the boundaries—even if there are temporary boundaries—that you’ve come across as far as equity and the

[public early] college model?

FG: Thanks David. I can start off the responses. I think that one of the greatest opportunities or advantages that comes with extending the kind of social capital that is often the exclusive preserve of people from affluent backgrounds to broadening access to that through the public early colleges. So, I grew up in a pretty solidly middle class background, went to an Ivy League college with people who had a lot more money than I did, and I remember one of the professors there saying, “You know, the whole point of you coming here is not really the education that you’re getting. It’s the people that you’re meeting and the connections that you’re making with like the people who are going to go on and create Facebook” or whatever the case may be. So I think that our ability to use the setting of the early college to close some of the opportunity gaps that students of color face is really important.

I was thinking about this, too, this weekend in the context of our school that we partner with the local Harvard Alumni Club. They do an annual Book Prize for a rising year two [student]. So, we have that relationship because of the Principal’s relationship. As a Harvard alum, I have the relationship with the alumni group, asked for us to be part of this book prize thing. So, maybe—and I’m not saying that the student necessarily wasn’t already thinking about Harvard—but maybe because of that connection, the student receives the award, and then starts to envision themselves as a Harvard-bound student. That I think really has a lot of potential for changemaking. And as far as limitations, I find that facility is just like—like the actual physical plant—is the thing that really bedevils us all the time because, you know, it’s not easy for us to provide like acres of playing fields and state-of-the-art sports facilities in a repurposed middle school building that’s over 60 years old. We don’t try to compete with schools who do that because we know that’s just not a thing that we can offer.

JW: Kristy.

KM: I hesitate to raise my hand because I feel like I’m talking too much. My inner introvert’s speaking. I’m thinking about opportunities for equity and boundaries. Something that I think about often is the way that I see our students, most often, as our best teachers. Each year, each moment, as they bring themselves to the classroom, to our campuses, new questions emerge. New gateways or inquiries to think about, like, “Oh, maybe we can think about how we do this thing a little bit more, because the answers that we’ve already formulated are not doing what we want them to do. We want our answers to go a little bit further.” So the questions reemerge. And so, whether that is through each and every one of our students or each year, each decade—certainly in the past year so many new questions emerge like, “How are we going to do the thing

that we do in this world under COVID?” But certainly, each decade brings its own new set of questions, things I haven’t thought about before. I’m not the same teacher that was in 2009 that I am now.

When I think about the ways that we’re constantly finding new areas of inquiry both as boundary as well as gateway, I think about my mom who’s here tonight. Hey mom! Sorry I’m going to shout you out, I’m actually going to cite you, who taught in public schools in Mississippi for about 40 years. (Mom, you can correct me if I’m wrong or after this Zoom ends.) Whether she was in her 20th year or 35th year, there could always be a student who would emerge and all the ways and tools that she had developed over time like, “Oh, I know how to handle my classroom”—because my mom is an excellent teacher—a new student will emerge and like, “I have to figure out what I’m going to do with you because what I have the tools I have. . . . I need to figure out new tools in order to make this thing work so we as a second grade classroom can do the stuff that we have to do to be successful as a group, as a community, as a community of learners over this year.” So I think she was also my teacher and kind of loading downloading that into me on a subconscious level, that there always may potentially be boundaries in terms of the tools that we think we have, and those are also gateways in terms of like, “I have to figure out how to use these possibilities, these resources, and/or build on the resources that I have to expand what’s possible for this ever-evolving group of learners that I’m encountering.”

JW: Thank you. So I know in looking at our time, I’m going to do a few announcements and [share] further information to wrap this up. So we will be letting you get [going] in a few minutes. This has flown by way too quickly. There’s certainly a whole lot we could continue to delve into in the material from this issue, but that’s the wonderful thing about having a journal. I hope that this will inspire not just individual reading but collaborative reading and sharing throughout our schools and throughout the early college education communities.

I did want to acknowledge some of the people who are here today who are in this issue in addition to our panelists. We do have other articles in it that are not connected to the Betty Hall response. One of those is by John Myers from here at Simon’s Rock, and which looks at music education, and again in continuous reinvention, how the addition of Bard Academy at Simon’s Rock—so when ninth and tenth grade came, after it came to the BHSECs. . . so there’s a complicated history of that statement—and the ways that John really innovated to work with that new group, and also really connect to differentiation. That’s an exciting piece.

Further on that topic of differentiation, one of the things we have in this are also lesson plans and teacher training modules that have been

developed. And we have Lori Ween's module on "Personalized Challenge," which is our work on differentiation. I think that *differentiation* and *scaffolding* and things that connected both through different student experience levels prior to coming to us as well as the introduction of special education more fully into our early college model, which is something I'm really proud of. For us as a community to be working on that, certainly it's something we're working on here at Simon's Rock as well, that's really exciting. So I encourage you to look at Lori's training plan and all the different training plans that have come with our work on kind of articulating what early college pedagogy is.

In this journal issue and in our approach for *Early College Folio*, we have "peer review" but not so much the way the word is used in a lot of journals where it's about keeping people *out*. It's really "peer review" more the way if you've done peer review with your students, like paper drafts. It's that kind of peer review where the point of the peer is to help the writer write a better paper, not to help the writer not ever get to write the paper. And so we've got some really exciting relationships with that, and I wanted to thank those who've been involved in that process, both for items in this issue and in ones that may appear in future issues, which includes Lori Ween, David Allen, and Amanda Landi. I think I've got everyone—we're back to one screen on Zoom. So that's been really, really great. I thank you for those contributions.

Again, if you're interested in doing an article, sharing lesson plan work, if you're interested in doing peer reviewing, we always need peer reviewers. It's a great way to read some new material and to get to know someone or know someone better through sharing their work, much as we often do with students. I do want to also thank our Marketing and Communications team, [especially] Jenn Frederick, for helping with the design. I think both the ideas and the look of this are beautiful. When we were going to the digital journal phase, I think I did have a bit of a fear that we wouldn't have something beautiful to look at. I really don't read well on the screen so I have to print all the pieces out. And I'd say they look gorgeous as well as they're gorgeous as you read the thoughts and ideas, so really grateful for that collaboration. And again, I'm going to do my last thanks and send it over to Brian and Erin, thank them for all their work leading the Early College Research Institute and this journal issue. I know that they have some things they're going to tell us about ECRI, and that is going to wrap us up. So let me send it to Brian and Erin to finish us off.

Brian Mikesell: Thanks, John. I just wanted to—Erin is going to talk a little bit about where ECRI is headed and how you can get involved. I just wanted to say a couple of words about where ECRI I came from. So, I was reading some information about the Center for Early College, the Bard Center

for Early College. One of the sentences I came across was about how one of the things that was going to do was preserve the idea and the materials around early college. And I thought, “I don’t see that happening yet and we have the Simon’s Rock Archives here. We could make this into something where the Simon’s Rock Archives become something bigger. And so ECRI was the outcome of that.

And what you’re seeing here tonight is *Early College Folio*, which is one of the sort of outward manifestations of the ECRI. What we’re hoping to create is all the stuff that sort of behind the scenes, which is an archive of materials from the Bard Early Colleges and the Bard Early College network but also reaching out to other early college programs around the United States and around the world. The Early College Research Institute will be, ultimately, sort of the main repository for this kind of information, and researchers can actually come to us to do the kind of work that you’re all doing and publishing in *Early College Folio* starting today. So, anyway, I just wanted to sort of put an invite out there if you’re interested in Early College Research Institute or you have a box of stuff that you think might be a good addition, Erin’s going to tell you a little bit more about how you might be able to contribute that. So thank you everyone for being here, and I think that’s really exciting that we’ve got this first issue of *Early College Folio* out in the world. I’m going to turn it over to Erin to give us some more information.

Erin Donahue: Thank you, Brian. So on the state of the Early College Research Institute’s collection, the archival collections today: thanks to donations from folks like Ba Win, Pat Sharpe, and John Weinstein, we have a great collection of materials related to the birth of BHSEC. It’s off to a good start but we need a lot more. So there has been, obviously as we’ve been talking about this evening, impressive growth over the last 20 years in Bard Early Colleges, and in statewide and national early college programs and we want to capture that too. So if you are interested in donating materials to the archives, or if you know someone who might have some goodies hiding somewhere, please connect with me. I would be happy to talk about what we’re taking, what we’re not taking. We’re taking physical items and digital items. We can discuss what we don’t want later; I’m so interested in what you *have* and what kind of conversations we can start. Examples of the sorts of things that we’re looking for include: founding documents, official correspondence, event invitations, marketing materials, photographs, audio, video stuff, internal publications, course guides, committee and board meeting minutes— all kinds of stuff. And we’re open to

more so just connect with me and we'll figure out a way to get it to the archives.

And then we are also excited to announce that we are seeking submissions for the *Folio's* second issue. Though we are planning a theme around COVID-19 and early college, we are also interested in articles, essays, research, interviews, and other creative or collaborative work that is more broadly rooted in applications of early college. So get in touch with us. If you're interested in collaborating on issue two.

And then finally, if you are interested in keeping up to date with whatever is going on with ECRI, including *Early College Folio* and other stuff we might have going on, I have an email list. You can sign up here at that link that I've shared in the chat [<https://forms.gle/NBE68ftysHg3u8Ym8>]. If you're interested in joining that email list and keeping in touch with us as we continue forward. So that's all I have to share. If you don't have anything else, John, I guess we can sign off for the evening.

JW: Right, well thanks so much and thank you again everyone. Thank you to all of our panelists today, all the contributors, and for everyone for joining today and celebrating and sharing in this collaborative experience tonight. I'll say that we can close out and we're close off the recording. I'm going to leave this open for a few minutes after that because we have the Google Form in there as well as the link to the issue so in case you want to grab that we'll give you a little more time here in our space. But again thank you everyone for joining. Enjoy this issue. There is so much in it, to learn and read, and explore, and know, and I'm really excited to read these pieces, again, and again. There's so much in it and what a great start for this next phase of thought around early college. Thanks everybody.

[END TRANSCRIPTION]