

Introduction: Start of a New Era

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When The Center for African American Research and Policy was created in 2005, our goal was to engage in scholarly research in order to advance critical discourse and promote informed decisions as it pertains to policy issues confronting African Americans in both the academy and the society at-large. The Center staff felt that that one way to advance this critical discourse, was to provide a outlet for African American graduate students to showcase their research. We wanted to create a publication where these emerging African American scholars could not only feel comfortable submitting their work, but a publication that stimulate dialogue among all scholars of color. Soon *Annals of the Next Generation* was born with the charge to start a new era by showcasing research produced by African American graduate students.

The three articles that were selected for the inaugural issue of the *Annals of the Next Generation* exemplify the intended purpose of this journal - to showcase innovative scholarship and questions pertaining to African Americans through a critical lens. The first article by Aaron A. Baker and Sheneka M. Williams of the Peabody College at Vanderbilt University use qualitative data to explore middle school students' perceptions of community in a racially and socially diverse magnet school. Next, Bruce B. Douglas of Colorado State University used data to examine the influence of the teacher and parent on the academic achievement of African American students. Lastly, Baranda J. Fermin from Michigan State University used data to examine how gender, racial-ethnic identification, and privilege continuously contribute to the gap in postsecondary participation.

Overall, the studies in this inaugural issue personify the name of this journal: *The Next Generation*. The authors in this issue and future issues are the next generation of African American researchers and scholars; these are the individuals that will be teaching and molding the next group of African American scholars. Let the new era begin!

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