



Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D. Ed.D.

Estela Mara Bensimon is University Professor Emerita at the University of Southern California. She is the founder of the Center for Urban Education at USC, and now leads Bensimon & Associates, a consulting firm that provides service with a focus on racial equity to colleges, universities and philanthropic organizations.

With a singular focus on increasing racial equity in higher education outcomes for students of color, she developed the Equity Scorecard—a process for using inquiry to drive changes in institutional practice and culture. Over its 20 year history, CUE worked with thousands of college professionals—from presidents to faculty to academic counselors, helping them take steps in their daily work to reverse the impact of the historical and structural disadvantages that prevent many students of color from excelling in higher education. The innovative Equity Scorecard process takes a strengths-based approach starting from the premise that faculty and administrators are committed to doing “the good.” CUE built upon this premise by developing tools and processes to empower these professionals as “researchers” into their own practices, with the ultimate goal of not just marginal changes in policy or practice but shifts on those campuses towards cultures of inclusion and broad ownership over racial equity.

Professor Bensimon’s critical action research agenda has been supported by grants from the Ford Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Teagle Foundation, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and The James Irvine Foundation.

Dr. Bensimon has published extensively about equity, organizational learning, practitioner inquiry and change; and her articles have appeared in journals such as the Review of Higher Education, Journal of Higher Education, Liberal Education, and Harvard Educational Review. Her most recent book is *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education*, co-authored with Tia Brown McNair and Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux. Other notable works include *Critical Approaches to the Study of Higher Education* (co-edited with Ana Martinez-Aleman and Brian Pusser) which was selected as the 2016 Outstanding Publication by the American Education Research Association, Division of Postsecondary Education; *Engaging the Race Question: Accountability and Equity in US Higher Education* (with Alicia C. Dowd), and *Confronting Equity Issues on Campus: Implementing the Equity Scorecard in Theory and Practice* (co-edited with Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux).

Dr. Bensimon has held the highest leadership positions in the Association for the Study of Higher Education (President, 2005-2006) and in the American Education Research Association, Division on Postsecondary Education (Vice-President, 1992-1994). She has served on the boards of the American Association for Higher Education and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. She was the Chair of AERA’s Social Justice and Action Committee. In 2010 the University of Wisconsin system awarded Dr. Bensimon with a 2010 Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award. In 2011, she was

inducted as an AERA Fellow in recognition of excellence in research and received ASHE's Council on Ethnic Participation Founders Service Award. In 2013 she received the Association for the Study of Higher Education Research Achievement Award. She is a recipient of the USC Mellon Mentoring Award for faculty and Distinguished Service Award from the Association for the Study of Higher Education. In 2015 she received the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) Outstanding Latina Faculty Award for Research & Teaching.

In 2022, Bensimon was recognized with the Stan Jones Legacy Award by Complete College America. In 2020, Bensimon received ASHE's Howard Bowen Award and the McGraw Prize. In 2017, she was elected to the National Academy of Education and was presented with the 2017 Social Justice in Education Award by the American Education Research Association.

Dr. Bensimon was associate dean of the USC Rossier School of Education from 1996-2000 and was a Fulbright Scholar to Mexico in 2002. She earned her doctorate in higher education from Teachers College, Columbia University.