Preface
Tennessee State University Special Edition

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It is with gratitude and humility that we present this special issue of the Journal of Urban Education and Research Annuals (UERPA). The audience for this esteemed, graduate student publication is primarily educators, at the secondary and postsecondary levels, who play a vital role in the growth and development of the whole student. What is unique about this journal is that its editors, authors, and staff understand the basic factors that influence learning and achievement and the importance of meeting the complex needs of students with varied learning abilities, social, and emotional needs who reside and attend school in urban settings.

This special edition issue of the UERPA is comprised of empirical and conceptual articles submitted by graduate student scholars at Tennessee State University, a Historically Black University in Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville is an urban, metropolitan area that is home to four Historically Black Universities and its school district serves 82,000 students – the majority of whom represents minoritized populations. In this issue, the authors discuss a myriad of issues related to urban education and society. The aim of this special issue is to highlight the importance of educational considerations and issues in urban communities by providing unique perspectives of graduate students who reside and study in these areas.

The beneficiaries of the research in this special edition journal issue are educators at all levels, administrators, parents, and society as a whole. It is the desire of each author that urban education discourse not be an option, but a priority amongst researchers and educators with complete predictability of its overall impact and fate for education in urban settings. The authors understand that although racial disparities continue to persist in education across settings, the idiosyncrasies of urban settings call for more focused attention. They have decided to answer that call.

This issue is comprised of seven chapters, with the lead authors being graduate students representing various departments and colleges at Tennessee State University. Sarah Iriogbe's article, *Promoting Self-Regulation in Early Childhood Education*, introduces the early childhood teacher's knowledge of self-regulation in urban settings and how this knowledge subsequently influences their classroom attitude and personal belief. The author argues that urban early childhood educators who have content knowledge about self-regulation, as well as those who adaptively practice self-regulation in the classroom, thereby promote self-regulation skills in young children. As such, this practice consequently increases social and academic outcomes as well as lowers the likelihood of behavioral problems in children in urban school settings. In *School Counselors and African American Students Counseling within the Psychology of the Black Experience*, Darreon Greer and Thurman Webb shows the critical need for an overall understanding of Adolescent Black Males in Urban Schools. This chapter highlights the impact of school counselors on the urban, Black male experience in educational settings through the phenomenological construction of mattering. The chapter highlights the idiosyncratic, and often oppressive, experiences of Black adolescent males in school systems across America, including high rates of suspensions, expulsions, and often placed in special education programs. Rheanna Kaley introduces the topic of inclusive sex education in urban settings and engages on a conceptual discussion on the need for inclusive and responsive sex education in urban settings across the United States, particularly focusing on centering the unique experiences of various

identity intersections (i.e., race, sexual orientation, gender identity, class, ability status, religious identity, etc.). In an article, entitled *Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Comprehensive Sex Education in the United States,* the author explores current sex education programs for urban youth and minorities, federal, state, and local sex education policies, and various policy-related advocacy efforts that aim to address the current educational disparities for urban youth, including racial and sexual minorities, and their families. In her article, *Promoting Student Success in Historically Black Colleges & Universities,* StacyAnn Baker introduces readers to urban education at the postsecondary level. This chapter examines the impact of intervention programs, such as tutoring programs, on student retention and overall academic performance at a Historical Black University in an urban setting. The author highlights the experiences and needs of students as well as emphasizing how impactful institutional support can be for student success. Walid Mohamed and Kisha Bryan view urban education from an international lens by highlighting the impact of contextual factors and perception of belonging among international students in a Historically Black University situated in an urban setting. In their article, *Saudi Arabian Students' Sense of Belonging at an HBCU*, the authors explore how the dynamics of campus climate, institutional systems and structures, and student's previous experiences influences their sense of belonging. The authors further expand on additional findings related to the impact of internal factors (e.g., language proficiency, and cultural, political, and religious ideologies) as well. Lastly, Tonya McKoy, Carlos Beane, Michael Oyeteju, Marie Hammond, and S. Keith Hargrove conclude the special edition journal by examine African American female undergraduate students' persistence in engineering-related programs at a Historical Black University positioned in an urban setting. In their article entitled *Persistence of African American Females in Engineering: The Mathematics Identity Factor*, the authors sought to gain more understanding of how African American female's professional, social, and racial identities effect their intent to persist.

While the topics vary in nature, it is expected that scholars, novice and senior, and professionals in academia, government agencies, and educational advocacy will gain insight and perspective from the various articles. We do not expect everyone in the educational community to agree with the ideologies of the authors and we do know that analyses are not definite. However, we hope that the information and knowledge presented will become a wake-up call for the general public, regulatory agencies, legislators, business leaders, and administrators, so that they might come to the realization that the current state of urban education affairs is not satisfactory, and that there is both a need and room for improvement.

In closing, we would like to thank the student authors for having the courage to submit their work for publication. For most of them, this is their first published manuscript. We are grateful for the faculty members and/or supporters who assisted each student researcher gather data, write, and revise their manuscripts. This work would not have reached its present form without their invaluable help. We also thank the administrators at Tennessee State University for providing the support and resources necessary for this special issue to become a reality. Finally, we would like to provide a sincere and special acknowledgement to the *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals* (UERPA) Editor–in–Chief and the entire educational community for believing in the graduate students at Tennessee State University and for allowing us to have this opportunity to disseminate this very important work.