

## **Cambridge College's Dr. Dan W. Butin Expects Busy Spring**

*By Kimberly Dunbar  
Communications Specialist  
Cambridge College*

Dr. Dan W. Butin, Assistant Professor in the Doctoral Program in Education Leadership, has a busy spring ahead of him.

Dr. Butin has plans to give lectures and presentations at various conferences as well as serve as a guest editor for the journal *Equity & Excellence in Education* in the upcoming months.

Dr. Butin's background is in social foundations of education, which helps students and educators understand the contexts and roots of contemporary education. According to Dr. Butin, the social foundations field is in a crisis, and he and his colleagues are trying to bring the issue to the forefront. Dr. Butin will present his paper, "Dark Times Indeed: The Marginalization and Future of the Social Foundations Field," at the American Educational Research Association Conference in Chicago, IL in April, which is the largest gathering of educational researchers in the world. Dr. Butin's paper explores the current problems and articulates several policy solutions to support social foundations with educator preparation.

"Education professors are good at talking amongst themselves, but not necessarily to others, such as educational policymakers," says Dr. Butin. "With this paper I'm trying to create a roadmap of how to talk to others outside our own specialty. We have to be able to clearly present a reason for why social foundations matters to future teachers, principals, and district leaders."

Dr. Butin will also serve as the keynote speaker at two conferences this spring; the first at the Michigan Campus Contact Institute on "Service-Learning and Civic Engagement" February 8-9, and the second at Lasell College on April 7. Both speeches are focused on the issue of service-learning, which is the linkage of community engagement and academic coursework. According to Dr. Butin, service-learning is an extremely important practice that helps students link theory to practice and the classroom with the community.

In Michigan, Dr. Butin will be speaking to scholars and practitioners who are strongly involved in service-learning; he will provide a critical voice to prompt deeper thinking and reflection. "It is very difficult to do service-learning in a genuine and meaningful way in just a 14-week semester," he says. "I'll be there to help them rethink their assumptions and expectations of what can and should be done in their courses and institutions."

At Lasell, Dr. Butin will be speaking at a student-run conference called "Readers as Leaders," designed for undergraduates involved in the national America Reads program

that helps young children become better readers. Dr. Butin will show the students how to strengthen their tutoring relationships as well as to think carefully and critically about their service-learning experience.

“Service-learning is meant to be a partnership,” says Dr. Butin. “After 14 weeks, the young kids who were being helped are all too often left behind, leaving them with the feeling that they were being used in a sense. Service-learning isn’t just for the short term benefit, it’s meant to be reciprocal and sustained.”

Dr. Butin will also serve as the guest editor for the theme issue “Service-Learning and Social Justice Education” for the journal *Equity & Excellence in Education* this spring. He is also contributing an article to the issue, “Anti-Anti-Social Justice: Service-Learning as Justice-Oriented Education.”

“One of the primary goals of social justice is to make education equitable, but many people feel that there is too much indoctrination in the college classroom and that social justice is too much ‘in your face,’ not allowing different opinions to be considered,” says Dr. Butin. He adds that this article is about how one can advocate for social justice by providing students the experiential opportunities to come to their own understanding surrounding complex and contested social and educational issues.

“Being a guest editor is a lot of work but it is great to be able to bring together ideas that would never have been joined together before,” said Dr. Butin, who has been a guest editor twice before. “All too often educators work in their own academic fields, but this brings the different sides together, allowing exposure to other ideas.”

To keep up with the rest of Dr. Butin’s activities, visit [www.danbutin.org](http://www.danbutin.org).

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