“Universities are the way they are”
Andrew Inglis, Physics Education Meeting

Questions for discussion:
• How does higher education interact with primary school education systems in the United States?
• Why do they interact in the way that they do?
• What forces change this interaction?

Universities/Colleges
Public/Private

Primary Schools (K-12)
“On Point” (with Tom Ashbrook):

But the fact that there’s a bunch of rich kids competing with each other to go to the very most prestigious schools is not a problem for the rest of us. They are not the victims of this system of higher education in America. The victims of the system are the kids who never within a stone’s throw of places like Harvard or Yale. And those are the kids that right from day one victims in fact
NPR last week...

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Question:

In terms of college admission, should we sideline racial diversity as a top goal, and push for class diversity instead?
University interaction with primary schools:

- admission (scholarships / affirmative action initiatives, etc.)
  - teacher training (Prof Duffy's work with teachers)
- summer programs for students (BU Bridge program)
  - train educators (schools of education)
- decision making control of school districts (BU and Chelsea)
  - after school programs
  - volunteering (mentoring)
- science / writing lab demos (physics demo group)
- teacher / graduate / under-grad training programs (ie: GK12)
  - educational history and theory (sociology dept)
- policy change (political theory, ethics, philosophy...)
  - other
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working hypothesis: universities have a much larger potential to influence/elevate the quality of primary education
Reasons for university/primary school interactions:

- historical reasons
  - primary school is an active area of our communities. i.e: by definition.
    - it is the social policy of the United States to do so.
      - it is economically smart to do so.
        - it is in the best interests of the universities growth to do so.
          - it makes for good press.
    - it is the innate responsibility of universities to help surrounding communities prosper.
      - other.
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Reasons for level of university/primary school interactions:

- time constraints
- money constraints
- don't know what more to do
  - cultural constraints
    - other
New working hypothesis:

- Universities don't do enough to help the education in their surrounding communities.
- They have a huge potential to do so.
- All levels of the university community help decide whether more is done.
- There are money, time, and social custom issues that stop universities from doing more.
- Only a small shifting of resources would be needed to have a much larger impact.
Idea for Discussion: Mentoring program

Motivation: There is a 2:1 ratio of the number of kids in 5-12th grade to the number of students in college (US Census). Major resource of universities is in the number of people that are currently attending.

Participants in mentoring programs are less likely to start using drugs and alcohol or hit someone. Have higher rates of school attendance and performance, and better attitudes toward completing schoolwork. They also have improved peer and family relationships.

Research shows that the single most important predictor of future success is the presence of at least one positive, charismatic non-parent adult in a child's life.

Positive mentoring can happen with only 1.5 hours of interaction time per week.
Idea for Discussion: Mentoring program

- Hire all undergraduates and graduates as mentors to go to surrounding school districts. Time spent: half a day per week (morning or afternoon). Use ZipCars for travel.
- Have mentors do their college work in the back of student classrooms while class is in session, but not leading the lesson. Can interact with the classroom as it naturally happens.
- For 2 of the 4 hours they are there, break out with 2 students that they are mentoring.
- Give mentors credit towards degrees or compensate similarly to payment for grading papers.
- Initiate program at single university with the backing of the university president and student body. Show results in test score / life skills after 2 years of program.