

Qualitative Inquiry in this Moment: The Dismantling and Assault of Higher Education

That we are living through “interesting or challenging times” seems to fall short of the dizzying speed, unpredictability, and multiple directions with which the landscape of qualitative research, science, and higher education is under attack in the United States. (and elsewhere). The current administration in Washington DC has been clear in its actions over the past year that programming, curriculum, access to federal research funds, policy and practice will be determined by the executive branch of federal government. Gender and Ethnic studies, social justice, DEI, academic freedom, science, and academics themselves are being targeted. The holding hostage of universities, colleges, and educational institutions has become the centerpiece of the administration’s assault on higher education. However, these ideas and actions did not simply emerge with the current Trump Administration; the groundwork began well before the 2024 election.

Join us on February 24th, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. EST, (12 noon CST, 11:00 a.m. MST, 10:00 a.m. PST, 8:00 p.m. UK) for the first in our series of Qualitative Inquiry in this Moment with Dr. Abby Ferber and Dr. Marc Spooner. They will share their analysis, research and insights of the shifting terrain in higher education and how we might navigate these ongoing machinations of autocratic change. This online webinar will provide an opportunity to hear about the work in this area by two well established scholars from a U.S. perspective and a Canadian perspective. To register please click here <https://bit.ly/IAQIfeb24>

Dr. Abby Ferber is Professor of Sociology, and Chair of the Women’s and Ethnic Studies Department, is also the co-founding Director of the Matrix Center for the Advancement of Social Equity and Inclusion at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Ferber’s research examines issues of privilege from an intersectional perspective. Her books include *White Man Falling: Race, Gender, and White Supremacy*, *Home Grown Hate: Gender and the White Supremacist Movement* and she is currently working on the third edition of her co-authored textbook, *The Matrix of Race: Social Construction, Intersectionality and Inequality*. She has written about the online abuse and harassment of faculty, situating it within its wider social and political context. She co-developed and directs the Matrix Center’s signature program, The Knapsack Institute: Transforming Teaching and Learning, a virtual institute now in its third decade, which provides a supportive learning community for educators committed to equity and inclusion, something we all need right now.



Dr. Marc Spooner is a full professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina, in Saskatchewan, Canada. His research interests include audit culture, academic freedom, and the effects of neoliberalization and corporatization on higher education; as well as social justice, activism, and participatory democracy. He has published in many venues, including peer-reviewed journals, book chapters (two editions of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 5th & 6th), government reports, and a wide variety of popularizations. He is the co-editor of the award-winning book: *Dissident Knowledge in Higher Education* (UofR Press) as well as the forthcoming (February, 2026) *Knowledge Under Siege: Charting a Future for Universities* (UofR Press).

