October 28 in DC
Stanford University Scholar Kenji Hakuta to Address Education of Language Minority Students at AERA’s Brown Lecture in Education Research

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 30, 2010—Kenji Hakuta, a Stanford University scholar who strives to improve education opportunities for language minority students, will deliver the Seventh Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research here next month. Hosted by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), this lecture commemorates the historic Brown v. Board of Education decision of the U.S. Supreme Court and features significant scholarship that advances equality and equity in education.

The 2010 Brown Lecture, “Educating Language Minority Students and Affirming Their Equal Rights: Research and Practical Perspectives,” will be presented on Thursday, October 28, at 6:00 p.m. in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. A reception will follow.

Hakuta’s remarks will focus on the 1974 U.S. Supreme Court decision, Lau v. Nichols, which involved equal educational opportunities for nearly 1,800 Chinese students in the San Francisco Unified School District. Ever since that decision, the nation’s education system has struggled with how to address the question of equal educational opportunity for English language learners. Debates in Congress, states, and local districts, as well as in the courts, have been juxtaposed with various reform efforts focused on teachers, standards, instruction, assessment, accountability, and values.

As a senior researcher, Hakuta will also share his perspectives on the role played by academic knowledge in the debates over policy and practice during the time span, from Lau v. Nichols to the present, including such issues as ESEA Reauthorization and the Common Core Standards.

Hakuta, the Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education in Stanford’s School of Education, has concentrated his research and teaching on bilingualism and second language acquisition, education policy and practice, and statistics. A prolific scholar and scientific leader, he chaired the National Research Council committee that issued the report “Improving Schooling for Language-Minority Children: A Research Agenda.” He also served as co-chair and principal investigator of a panel initiated by AERA and the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity at Stanford University examining research at the intersection of race and higher education. That initiative yielded the book Compelling Interest: Examining the Evidence on Racial Dynamics in Colleges and Universities, which was cited in the U.S. Supreme Court decision on the University of Michigan Law School case on the use of a race-conscious admissions policy.
Hakuta, who holds a Ph.D. degree in experimental psychology from Harvard University, has served on the Stanford faculty since 1989, with a stint from 2003 to 2006 as the founding dean of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts at the University of California, Merced. He is an elected Member of the National Academy of Education, and is a Fellow of the American Educational Research Association and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Linguistics and Language Sciences).

Hakuta was selected this spring by the 2010 Brown Lecture Selection Committee, chaired by William H. Watkins, who also chairs AERA’s Social Justice Action Committee (SJAC). Other Selection Committee members were Angela E. Arzubiaga, a Member of the AERA Committee on Scholars and Advocates for Gender Equity in Education; David J. Connor, SJAC Committee Member; Carol D. Lee, then AERA President; Kris D. Gutiérrez, now AERA President; Felice J. Levine, AERA Executive Director; and George L. Wimberly, AERA Director of Social Justice and Professional Development.

The Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research illuminates the important role of research in advancing the understanding of equality and equity in education. The Lectureship was inaugurated in 2004 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, in which the U.S. Supreme Court took scientific research into account in issuing its landmark ruling. Each year a distinguished scholar notable for producing significant research related to equality in education is invited to give this public lecture in Washington, D.C.

Edmund W. Gordon, Director of the Institute of Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, delivered the inaugural Brown Lecture. Other Lecturers include Claude M. Steele, Columbia University; Linda Darling-Hammond, Stanford University; Margaret Beale Spencer, University of Chicago; Stephen W. Raudenbush, University of Chicago; and Luis C. Moll, The University of Arizona.

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The American Educational Research Association (AERA) is the national interdisciplinary research association for approximately 24,000 scholars who undertake research in education. Founded in 1916, AERA aims to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.