

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

## DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Building Diversity in the University and the  
Community---Fifth Annual National Conference  
(2000)

People of Color in Predominantly White  
Institutions

---

October 2000

### "CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY SERVICE, EDUCATION, AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS: CREATING TIES THAT BIND AND CONTINUE TO EXIST BEYOND OUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT"

Trudy Cobb Dennard MFA  
*Associate Professor of Dance, Western Michigan University*

Dolores Walcott Psy.D.  
*Assistant Professor of Student Affairs, Western Michigan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi5>



Part of the [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#)

---

Dennard, Trudy Cobb MFA and Walcott, Dolores Psy.D., ""CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY SERVICE, EDUCATION, AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS: CREATING TIES THAT BIND AND CONTINUE TO EXIST BEYOND OUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT"" (2000). *Building Diversity in the University and the Community---Fifth Annual National Conference (2000)*. 16.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/pocpwi5/16>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Building Diversity in the University and the Community---Fifth Annual National Conference (2000) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

## **"CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY SERVICE, EDUCATION, AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS: CREATING TIES THAT BIND AND CONTINUE TO EXIST BEYOND OUR PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT"**

**Trudy Cobb Dennard, MFA**  
Associate Professor of Dance  
Western Michigan University

**Delores Walcott, Psy.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Student Affairs  
Western Michigan University

**"Active citizenry by university faculty leads to the enhancement of community services and opportunities. Everyone, including students benefit from community partnerships."**

The academic knowledge, organizational skills and personal interests of a university's faculty can serve not only her/his department but also the community-at-large. Most intellectuals have interests in numerous areas in addition to their field of study. These interests spill over into a myriad of activities that impact the community and can serve to enhance town and gown relations. Efficient and long-lasting models for organizations, services and activities can be structured by the collaborative efforts of university faculty and staff and other local citizens.

Faculty and staff involvement in the community builds bridges. The partnerships can be short-term, long-term, or occur on an ad hoc basis. Active citizenry by university faculty leads to the enhancement of community services and opportunities. Everyone, including students benefit from community partnerships.

People think that the responsibility of working in the community should fall on the shoulders of the university's senior administration. Partly true but, the work of the senior administration only paints a portion of the partnership with community picture. Several faculty work in their communities as paid consultants. Although sometimes quite lucrative, this is not the only way in which a member of the university community can impact the local community. It is not just the responsibility of the paid consultant or the upper administration to work in the local public sector. Members of the faculty and staff live in a community and work at a university, therefore participation in the development of the community is important to one's quality of life.

**Service versus commitment to the community and working towards common goals:** Faculty are expected to perform service to their field, the university and the community. Does this mean that active involvement in the community by a faculty member should only be done to complete their service requirement for the tenure and promotion process? Is service conducted in the community valued by the university? How does a junior faculty member determine the best projects in which to invest their time? Is there a

particular rank at which a faculty member should begin working in the community? How does someone new to a particular community get involved? And what behooves a staff member to develop a partnership with the community? One important tip: the work should truly interest the faculty or staff member and they should share a common goal with others involved in the project.

**The service activities of two faculty members in different fields:**

Two faculty members from different colleges in a large university (enrollment 27,000 students) will share information on their work in the community. Issues addressed will include: how they got started, how they balance the work in the community with their university responsibilities, how and if they tie the community-based work to their work at the university, and how the community involvement has enriched their lives.

The interests of arts faculty will certainly include their art form, but could also include education, culture, history, youth, technology and other art forms. Over a period of nine years in one community, a faculty member has worked with at least six community organizations. The work has included serving on the board of directors, chairing committees and serving in a variety of other capacities. The organizations and projects include the public schools, the Civic Black Theatre, Education for the Arts, the Department of Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Studies, the Black Arts and Cultural Center and the area arts council.

Over the past five years another tenured track faculty member who has worked with a number of community service organizations on a local and national level. However, her most rewarding work has been her stewardship with the American Red Cross where she has taken on several roles. As an American Red Cross Disaster Mental Health Technician, this faculty member has been out on three disaster assignments, North Dakota Floods, Maine Ice Storms and Corpus Christi Hurricane. As an American Red Cross Disaster Aviation Team Member this faculty member has played a key role in developing the Disaster Response Plan for a local Red Cross Chapter. In addition to membership on the Red Cross Diversity Committee this faculty member is actively involved in the recruitment of other volunteers. It can be said that Blacks (African-American) have always shared in the humanitarian work of the American Red Cross from the early days of Clara Barton to the Persian War and beyond. One faculty member tells why the American Red Cross was chosen to perform

**Presenters:**

**Trudy Cobb Dennard** is an Associate Professor of Dance at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She earned her Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from the University of Michigan. She has studied many styles and techniques of dance including Dunham Technique with Clifford Fears, jazz with Pepsi Bethel and Bucket Technique with Garth Fagan. She also toured and performed with The Bucket Dance Theatre. Prior to joining the dance faculty at WMU, Trudy Cobb was associate dean for academic affairs in the School of Arts and Sciences and head of dance at SUNY Binghamton. She has been a guest artist and faculty member at Memphis State University, an adjunct professor at SUNY Brockport, and through the National Faculty Exchange Program, she was a visiting Professor at Arizona State University. Ms. Cobb

has collaborated with several other artists, directed "Ain't Misbehavin'" for the Cider Mill Playhouse (NY), choreographed "Purlie" for the Phoenix Black Theater Troupe and "Once On This Island" for the Kalamazoo Civic Black Theatre. She choreographs, performs and teaches throughout Michigan. She has served as vice President of the National Dance Education Association, has served on numerous boards and is frequently invited to present on the arts, dance and education at conferences and dance festivals across the country.

**Delores D. Walcott, Psy.D** is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist/Assistant Professor at Western Michigan University. Her current appointment is with the University's Counseling and Testing Center. Although teaching is not apart of her assigned workload, she has accepted teaching assignments in the Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology Department and on an international level at the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology. Dr. Walcott also serves as an outreach worker providing services to the Division of Minority Affairs Office. In addition to her other duties at Western Michigan University she provides staff training in the area of cultural diversity. Dr. Walcott recently traveled to South Africa as a People to People Delegate. During this forum she and other delegates explored common ground and differences as both nations attempt to ensure safety for children. Dr. Walcott's community service activities have included membership in the American Red Cross-Disaster Unit in which, she was recognized for her volunteer work in the North Dakota Floods, Corpus Christi Hurricane and the Maine Ice Storms. Along with her academic training, Dr. Walcott has worked in the human service field for over eighteen years. Her subsequent work experience with community mental health centers, child welfare agencies, a half way house, volunteer work with a youth oriented substance abuse prevention programs, and current employment at Western Michigan University has given her a broad background in providing service to a diverse population.