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# Pimps, Thugs and College Students; A Glimpse Into Hip Hop and Higher Education

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## Pimps, Thugs and College Students; A Glimpse Into Hip Hop and Higher Education

### Abstract

*The globalization of hip-hop culture has created opportunities and challenges for students of color attending predominately White institutions. Overexposure to urban culture through music, fashion, movies, etc. combined with limited interaction with urban youth has created volatile and in some cases hostile environments on predominately White campuses. This workshop examines what happens when myth and reality meet in the halls of academia.*

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Pop culture has elevated the formerly despicable role of "pimp", "thug" or "gangster" to that of role model to a generation of students who are looking for ways to rebel against societal norms. The popularity of hip-hop culture has presented the average white student and administrator with a limited lens in which to view these new cultural icons. Unfortunately, these new cultural icons have only helped to cloud the issue of racial sensitivity on our campuses.

The notorious "n-word" is now so common on some campuses it is hard to argue it as racially offensive. More and more White students have embraced the term and its use as a part of hip-hop jargon while fewer and fewer students of color are taking offense to Whites use of it. In the meantime our judicial policies struggle to maintain a balance between racial slurs and free speech. White students under the guise of embracing Black culture (through hip-hop) continue to sponsor theme events like "ghetto Greek Olympics", "pimp and whore parties", and "booty jams" where attendees frequently dress in blackface and other stereotypical outfits as a means of entertainment.

This workshop will allow participants to gain a historical perspective on the mainstreaming of hip-hop, while examining the issues that crossing over has brought to the doorstep of academia. Using multimedia the presenters will facilitate a full room panel discussion using real incidents from colleges and universities across the country. The discussion will focus on proactive versus reactive policy formation, individual rights versus group rights and responsibilities, freedom of speech and reasonable attempts to promote a safe and diverse climate on campus.

This presentation will also examine the issues from several disciplines. The following topics will also be addressed: media representations; stereotyping; popular culture; male and female interactions; establishing, respecting and crossing boundaries; co-curricular

experiences; advising strategies; conflict resolution; and institutional commitment to diversity. The workshop will also examine legal implications based on actual incidents of insensitivity.

At the conclusion of the workshop a practical goal-based model for identifying, labeling, monitoring, adjudicating, and reducing cross-cultural conflict and misunderstandings will be presented to the participants. This workshop is designed to be dynamic and interactive as well as challenging for new and seasoned administrators, advisors, and students.

### **Presenters**

**Bryant K. Smith** currently serves as the Director Of Multicultural Affairs and International Student Services for Millikin University in Decatur, IL. Bryant began his career in Higher Education more than a dozen years ago as an Admissions Counselor for his alma mater. His passion and interest in student success led him to pursue his Masters in Organizational Communication and seek a position in Student Activities. Bryant has dedicated his entire professional career to teaching, training, and empowering people from diverse backgrounds and experiences on how to establish and maintain win/win environments. In addition to his academic responsibilities Mr. Smith also provides weekly editorial commentary on WDZ AM radio 1050 in Decatur, IL.

**Dr. Ricardo D. (Ric) Hall** is currently an Associate Dean/Judicial Officer at Wake Forest University. In addition to traditional judicial-related responsibilities, Ric enjoys interacting on campus in a number of capacities, including academic and fraternity advising, and speaking/facilitating workshops on diversity and prejudice reduction. He has prior university student affairs experience from Clemson University, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and University of Wisconsin-White water. Ric has presented locally, regionally, and nationally on topics ranging from mentoring to judicial affairs to diversity to leadership skills development. He earned his doctorate (Educational Leadership) from Clemson University and his master's (Higher Education Administration) and bachelor's (Business Management) degrees from Ohio University.