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You are not Alone ... Networking Strategies for Trailblazers, Squatters, and Other Settlers in Academe

M. Colleen Jones

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“We need to be aware of strategies, behaviors, and resources which will help us survive and thrive in predominantly white institutions.”

As the number of people of color increases in faculty, administrative, and doctoral student populations, we would like to think the environments which accommodate us also welcome us. However, a phenomenon not too unlike what RosaBeth Moss Kanter described when she discussed the "token and only" status of women in corporations exists for people of color. Consequently, we need to be aware of strategies, behaviors, and resources which will help us survive and thrive in predominantly White institutions.

I have characterized our presence in these institutions as resembling three images: the trailblazer, the settler, and the squatter. Each has a particular persona and is perceived differently by the academic community. However, the persistence and success of each persona's claim within academe can be enhanced and maximized by the strength, diversity, responsiveness, resourcefulness, and productivity of the person's support system. This network is the lifeline to which the trailblazer, squatter, or settler is attached and from which she or he can draw psychic, intellectual, spiritual, political, and social counsel, grounding, advice, and connections. This network becomes an invaluable web by which to catch meaning, make sense, and stay linked when there are few—or no—other people of color in the immediate environment or similar situation.

In this session, we will examine how networking works. We will draw upon recent works by George Fraser (*Success Runs in Our Race*); Anne Boe (*Is Your "Net" Working?*); Susan Roane (*The Secrets of Savy Networking*); and others to explore how to develop or enrich one's network to enhance persistence and success in the culture of predominantly White colleges and universities. But beyond the notion of connecting just for communicating or socio-emotional support, we will explore how networking can be used to fulfill the "three-legged" faculty requirements of teaching, research, and service, as well as to bolster the credibility and resource pool for battle-weary or isolated administrators. The processes of exchanging information and creating channels of support which cultivate the core relationships of a network will be discussed and formulated.

This session is organized to be interactive, participatory, and focused on general principles which benefit most people of color out here in predominantly White colleges and universities. Resource guides will be distributed and plans will be developed during the course of the session so that the "pioneers" in attendance can have a map to navigate the "new frontier."

PRESENTER

M. Colleen Jones is Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is an educator and consultant, specializing in organizational behavior and development, and managerial and executive training.

Jones earned a Ph.D. in business administration-organizational behavior from The George Washington University School of Business and Public Management (Department of Management Science). She also holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Iowa in accounting and quantitative analysis; and an M.B.A. in management and finance from the University of Southern California.

From 1991-1996, Jones was a member of the faculty of the Suffolk University, Boston, Mass. Frank Sawyer School of Management as an Assistant Professor of Management. She teaches courses in leadership, organizational behavior and development, and management communications. In addition to her teaching background, Jones also has 10 years of experience in management and higher education administration (which includes being Assistant to the President of Tennessee State University and the Director of Special Support Services and TRIO Coordinator at the University of Iowa); and college-level teaching in business administration and the behavioral sciences at the University of Tennessee and The George Washington University.

Jones is a certified administrator and consultant for the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which she often utilizes in her teaching, research, and consulting activities. Her research interests include: leadership development; access and advancement of women and people of color in executive positions; cognitive style assessment; stress; and organizational communication issues (e.g., networking, conflict resolution).

A native of Kansas City, Mo., Jones lives in Lincoln, Neb. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education and is on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Educational Opportunity*. Jones' professional accomplishments and community service activities are noted in the 3rd Edition of *Who's Who Among Black Americans*, as well as in the 1989-1990 Edition of *Who's Who of Women Executives*.