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Faculty of Color: On the Track but Out of the Loop

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Abstract

As a follow up to two recent publications in Black Issues in Higher Education and The Chronicle of Higher Education Chronicle Review, this presentation will focus on the experiences of African American tenure-track faculty in predominantly White Institutions. Several themes are delineated and discussed as they relate to the professional and social integration experiences of this group.

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This presentation will focus on five key themes highlighted in two recent publications in both *Black Issues in Higher Education* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education Chronicle Review*. The presenters have engaged in an on-going investigation of the experiences of tenure-track African American faculty in Predominantly White Institutions. After engaging in dialogue with faculty across the various disciplines, they have uncovered a number of salient themes that provide a concise yet vivid portrayal of these faculty members' experiences

The first theme, *I Have Everything to Prove*, speaks to faculty of color's perceived need to prove competence in their chosen fields of endeavor. This process often becomes painfully obvious via their interactions with students and colleagues in the higher education context. The second theme, *It's Only My Stream of Double Consciousness* explores the difficulties associated with faculty of color negotiating identity in the academy. Establishing some sense of agency in an environment that is at best disinterested and at worst hostile can be a daunting experience for these faculty members. The third theme, *Let Me Entertain You* looks at the disparities that exist among faculty of color and White faculty in their role I expectation in the classroom setting. The fourth theme, *I Am Having Difficulties Logging In To the Network* focuses on the importance of establishing professional and social networks, a practice many faculty of color feel ill equipped to facilitate on their own. The fifth and final theme, *Adjust Your Climate Control* advances the extant literature that speaks to what some have referred to as the 'chilly climate' found to exist in many higher education enclaves-especially for faculty of color.

Through critical dialogue, the session participants will engage in discussions centered on the five themes as well as their personal narrative accounts, this will assist in situating the dialogue in a "real-world" context. This presentation is significant in that it directly connects to the conference theme, "People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions: 50 Years Since Brown-Are We There Yet?" by not only identifying critical issues but offering some plausible recommendations on how to improve the professional working conditions for this cohort.

Presenters

Fred A. Bonner, II is an Associate Professor of Higher Education in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at The University of Texas at San Antonio. His research focuses

on the experiences of faculty of color and students in predominantly White higher education contexts. Additionally, Fred focuses on the development of academically gifted African American male students in postsecondary setting-specifically in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Traditionally White Institutions. He has completed a three summer postdoctoral experience at the Yale University PACE Center focusing on issues impacting gifted minority populations.

Aretha Marbley is an Associate Professor of Counselor Education at Texas Tech University. Her research focuses on multicultural and diversity issues in Counselor Education. Specifically, she is concerned with the relationships established among clients of color and their non-minority counselors. Aretha also publishes extensively in the areas of peer mentoring and the experiences of people of color with the American criminal justice system. Aretha is on several editorial boards and serves as the clinical director for the Counselor Education program at her institution.