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The Importance of Affirmative Action in the 21st Century: Building Transformational Alliances with Constituencies Across the Power Structure for Scholars, Students and Staff of Color at Predominantly European American Institutions.

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Abstract

The purpose of this session is to reject the notion that proactive Affirmative Action strategic plans are no longer needed at predominantly European American Institutions. Data reveal an inverse relationship between creating successful strategic plans for inclusion and negative reactions from the power structure.

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Tapping Into The Campus Power Structure or Issues of Recruitment and Retention

Affirmative Action programs were created from a legacy of enslavement to a civil rights movement that attempted to bring equity to historically targeted groups that experienced discrimination. While vast improvements have been made since the 19th Century, the 21st Century continues to create disparities among the power structure at institutions of higher learning. This session will offer an accurate description of the evolution of Affirmation Action and how it has made a significant impact, but not nearly enough to bring a balance with the power structure at predominantly European Institutions. Further, a backlash effect reveals how a successful strategic plan to increase cultural diversity among the many segments of the institution will cause the power structure to react in negative ways. Recommendations of how to implement a successful plan to build transformational alliances with university constituencies to maximize the institution's capability of recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff of color.

Presenters

E. Kelly Sanford is the Chairperson of the Department of Sociology at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tenn. He presently teaches a range of courses from Race, Ethnicity, Gender Relations; Sociological Statistics and Methods; and Intergenerational Family Studies. He has been considered at APSU as a pioneer in developing a successful Web-Based course of instruction for Introduction to Sociology. Dr. Sanford received a NIMH Post Doctoral Fellowship at The Pennsylvania State University after receiving the doctoral degree from Howard University. His most recent article is related to hate crime victimization that was selected from a national call for papers and will be published in a special edition of the ASBS Journal, 2001. Sanford has presented scholarly papers at the American Association of Higher Education conferences as well as worked extensively at two universities on the President's Diversity Task Force.

La Verne Turner Walker, a native of South Carolina is the Director of Affirmative Action at Austin Peay State University. She is a graduate of The Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn. and has vast experiences in EEO/ Affirmative Action. Walker brings to bear industrial, managerial and higher education experience from her earlier career as an EEO/Affirmative Action Director. Her experience extends from being the Office Manager at USC's Institute and Systems Management, to recruitment with the Douglas Aircraft Company, Lakewood Calif., to over thirteen years as EEO/Affirmative Action Director of Northrop Grumman. She has also worked with diversity in higher education as well as in industry.