CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The 16th Annual Diversity Challenge

Race, Culture, and Educating Our Youths: Developing People Not Widgets

Sponsored by the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture
Boston College

OCTOBER 28-29, 2016

Proposal Submission EXTENDED Deadline: May 1, 2016

The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture at Boston College invites you to join us for the Institute's 16th annual national conference in the suburbs of Boston, a city known for its struggles and efforts to address issues of racial and ethnic cultural diversity in U.S. society. The Institute was founded in 2000 at Boston College, under the direction of Dr. Janet E. Helms, to promote the assets and address the societal conflicts associated with race and culture in theory and research, mental health practice, education, business, and society at large. The Institute solicits, designs, and distributes effective interventions with a proactive, practical focus. Each year the Institute addresses a racial or cultural issue that could benefit from a pragmatic, scholarly, or grassroots focus through its Diversity Challenge conference.

The theme of Diversity Challenge 2016 is Race, Culture, and Educating Our Youths: Developing People Not Widgets

Areas of Emphasis:

- Mental Health
- Prevention
- Education
- Racism
- Trauma
- Public Policy
- Development
- Discrimination
- Psychosocial
Conference Focus

Race, Culture, and Educating Our Youths: Developing People Not Widgets

Nationally and internationally, disparities in the educational achievement of children and adolescents of Color or minority status cultures relative to their White majority culture cohorts have fueled many calls for educational reforms. In the United States, racial-cultural disparities have been reflected in adverse outcomes, such as lower standardized test scores, lower grades, higher dropout and suspension rates, and lower graduation rates of people of Color and marginalized cultural communities. Analogous patterns have been observed internationally.

Educators have responded to observed “achievement gaps” by attempting to shape every student to conform to government sponsored standards of achievement through social policies such as “No Child Left Behind”, “Race to the Top”, and “Common Core”. Such policies ignore the unique skills and talents of the students who enter the educational systems, as well as the life circumstances that make a one shape-fits-all model detrimental to their educational attainment, mental health, and aspirations. If students survive their educations, they potentially become widgets—imaginative, obedient, conforming replicas of each other. Students who do not survive their widget-making education risk higher levels of lifetime poverty and incarceration, as well as poorer physical and mental health outcomes than students exposed to more student centered educational interventions.

Racially and culturally responsive student-centered educational systems ought to promote development of whole persons who value themselves and, therefore, contribute to society in positive and meaningful ways. Whole person interventions would incorporate skills and talents that students bring with them from their cultural home environments including language diversity, leadership skills, panache, and social media expertise. They would also address and teach students to recognize and resist institutional and interpersonal racism and ethnoviolence as they are manifested in schools and the environments in which students and their families function.

Overcoming the “Widget Effect” and developing whole persons also requires a focus on how the adults in the lives of students of Color and marginalized communities are forced toward uniformity. Teachers and principals, as first responders, often must deal with students’ life traumas without having had any formal mental health training for doing so. Moreover, teachers are asked to raise the test scores of students whose life experiences on test day might include chronic hunger; undiagnosed learning disabilities; familial, community, and societal violence; homelessness; and loss or death of loved ones. Some of these life circumstances are not unique to students of Color and ethnic cultures, but are aggravated by a society that devalues the students as well as their teachers and families. Parents are vilified for their inability to leave work in the middle of the day, answer phone calls while at work, or help with homework. Rarely is consideration given to the burdens of racial and cultural stressors in the lives of parents and families.

To broaden the focus on the achievement gap to include students' talents and life circumstances throughout the lifespan—from childhood through higher education—we are seeking proposals that use theory, research, and practice to develop whole persons. Proposals may address innovative and collaborative parent-teacher or student-teacher interventions, systemic changes and educational policy initiatives, and wrap around programming that includes health and mental health support for students and their families.

We envision an interdisciplinary forum in which a variety of perspectives are explored and educators, social and behavioral scientists, practitioners, and social activists can interact with each other in order to address mutual concerns related to holistic education. Finally, we welcome critical perspectives and creative ideas that not only concern the role of race and culture in fostering resilience and resistance in the lives of students who may encounter racial or ethnic discrimination, but also the adults who are charged with nurturing them. Strongest consideration will be given to proposals that focus directly on the 2016 Diversity Challenge theme Race, Culture, and Educating Our Youths: Developing People Not Widgets.
Suggestions for Proposals

Although many topics are germane to the Diversity Challenge theme, some examples that merit an explicit racial or ethnic cultural focus are:

- School-based interventions to address out of school factors that affect educational outcomes
- Effects of racism and ethnoviolence on mental health
- Critical perspectives on measuring achievement and standardized testing
- Intervention and prevention targeting school-to-prison pipeline
- Teacher biases, expectations, and cultural responsiveness training
- After or out-of-school programs addressing issues in education equality
- Assessments of programs aimed at increasing student of Color representation in higher education
- Studies of school discipline as it pertains to students of Color and intersecting identities such as Black girls
- Use of aspects of racial or ethnic theories, such as critical race and racial identity, to develop social justice interventions
- Implications of racial and/or ethnic segregation patterns on academic achievement
- Investigations on families’ racial/cultural socialization of their children and the impact on academic outcomes
- Cultural-responsiveness evaluation of school systems, teachers, and administrators with particular focus on students of Color and students from non-dominant ethnic cultures
- Examinations of critical or anti-racist curricula and their outcomes
- Teacher burnout
- Intergroup racial dynamics in schools

Conference Program Formats

**Workshop** (90 minutes) - An intensive presentation intended to share specific research, educational practices, social policy, or mental health experiences and/or skills, or empirically based knowledge about racial and cultural factors in treatment, research, and policy with an interactive and experiential focus.

**Symposium Panel** (90 minutes) - Three to five participants present individual papers with a shared racial and cultural theme from different perspectives. Symposium proposals typically have a chair and discussant.

**Individual Presentation** (15 to 30 minutes) - Formal presentation of theoretical, practical, policy issues, or research related to program development, mental health issues, community and school initiatives, and overcoming systemic barriers as experienced by individuals of all ages. Papers may be grouped together around similar themes by the conference organizers. Typically, 3-4 presentations will share a 90 minute block.

**Structured Discussion** (45 minutes) - Conveners present a theme relating to some aspect of racial or cultural factors and facilitate group discussions intended to generate new ideas and solve related problems. Structured Discussions (SD) may be paired with another SD with a similar theme and share the 90 minute block.

**Poster** - Presenters display information with a racial or ethnic cultural focus intended to share information, interventions or research skills, or other experiences relevant to racial or cultural dynamics.

- For queries, including submission questions, registration and other administrative issues, please email isprc@bc.edu
- For up-to-date information about the Challenge, visit our website www.bc.edu/isprc
- Follow us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Institute-for-the-Study-and-Promotion-of-Race-and-Culture/109955092653
General Submission Requirements
You may submit up to two proposals as the first author. In order to ensure anonymity during the review process, please identify presenters and institutions only on the proposal cover sheet.

1. Proposal Cover Sheet - See presentation format specific guidelines for cover sheet. Please include the name and address for EACH presenter who will be attending the conference. Names should not be included on the proposal document or abstracts in order to ensure an anonymous review.

2. Proposal – A 500-word overview or summary that includes:
   - Title
   - Program format
   - Purpose, goals, and objectives
   - Methodology, conclusions, and/or questions raised
   - Structure of presentation

3. Program Abstract - A 50-word synopsis to appear in the program

Note: Proposals will only be considered once all materials are received.

Submission Options

Option 1. (Most common method) - Use the online proposal submission form found on our website. www.bc.edu/isprc. Please Note: You will be asked to attach your proposal document and abstracts to the submission form. Only the Primary Presenter will be notified via email upon receipt and after proposal review.

Option 2. Download the proposal submission form from our website: www.bc.edu/isprc. Email completed form with proposal document and abstracts to our email address: isprc@bc.edu.

Proposals should be submitted by May 1, 2016

Proposal Review and Selection Process
An anonymous review of conference proposals will be conducted by a minimum of two reviewers. Notification of acceptance or non-acceptance will be sent in late June, 2016 via email to the Primary Presenter. You must submit your email address with your proposal. Proposals will be reviewed on the basis of quality and contribution to the study of race and culture with particular consideration given to proposals focusing on this year’s theme: Educating Our Youths.