The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC) was founded in 2000 at Boston College (BC), under the direction of Dr. Janet E. Helms, to promote the assets and address the societal conflicts associated with race or culture in theory and research, mental health practice, education, business, and society at-large. The Institute offers pragmatic information about teaching, conducting research, and applying interventions intended to promote the benefits of racial and ethnic cultural diversity and resolve related social problems. The Institute is unique in its emphasis on addressing psychological issues related to race and ethnic culture from an interdisciplinary perspective.

14th Annual Diversity Challenge: Racial or Ethnic Discrimination Across the Lifespan

On October 24-25, 2014, ISPRC hosted its fourteenth annual Diversity Challenge. The Challenge is a two-day interactive conference that brings together scholars, educators, mental health practitioners, and other parties interested in promoting social justice across racial and cultural groups. The theme of Diversity Challenge 2014 was “Racial or Ethnic Discrimination Across the Lifespan.”

Over 110 presentations focused on the Challenge theme and more than 325 people participated in the sessions, which included workshops, individual presentations, posters, symposia, structured discussions and panels. Invited speakers included Hector Adames, Donna Bivens, Nayeli Chavez-Duenas, Rick Gibbons, Neha Gill, Nancy Lopez, Ann Moritz, Helen Neville, Nina Sathasivam-Rueckert, and Anmol Satiani.

The conference concluded with a catered reception and entertainment including a musical performance by the duo Mat Maier and Christina Navarro, and B.E.A.T.S. (Black Experience in America Through Song), and a traditional Chinese fan dance performed by Qingyi Yu. The artwork of Kim Ashby was also on display. This year’s conference, Diversity Challenge, “Race, Culture, and Social Justice,” will take place at Boston College on October 23-24, 2015.
A Message from the Director

In this 15th year of the Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC), the staff is pleased to offer an overview of our new and ongoing activities with a racial and ethnic cultural focus in the domains of theory, research, practice, and community activism. Each of these themes is covered in more detail in the ensuing pages.

We are pleased to announce the establishment of the ISPRC Alumni Board, which was formed by former graduate student members of the ISPRC team, who have moved on to professional roles. The Board views its mission as mentoring current students, particularly with respect to research and professional development, and distributing information about race and culture to aid the larger society. In this era of witnessed killing of African American men, the Board has already provided a toolkit for survivors of vicarious violence, which is available on the ISPRC website, “#racialtraumaisreal”.

The Mental Health Counseling Advocacy Model, offered in partnership with the Jeremiah Burke High School, is now in its fifth year and continued to be a major focus of the ISPRC community activism this year. The Model was presented at a standing-room-only endowed chair colloquium as an alternative to reifying the “achievement gap”.

A highlight of the ISPRC year continued to be the annual Diversity Challenge. If you missed it, perhaps our synopsis of events and festivities throughout the newsletter will encourage you to join us October 23-24, 2015, when our theme will be social justice.

Finally, many of the ISPRC team members are moving on to new professional roles at the end of this year. We congratulate and bid temporary farewell to them in this issue. Also, we are pleased to share and congratulate former team members for their accomplishments since leaving ISPRC, some of which they share in this issue.

Alumni Advisory Group Formed

An ISPRC Alumni Advisory Group has been formed to serve the purpose of advising and mentoring current ISPRC members. Members are former ISPRC students and Ph.D.s: Maryam M. Jernigan, Carlton E. Green, Leyla Pérez-Gualdrón, Marcia Liu, Kevin T. Henze, Cynthia Chen, Kisha N. Bazelaïs, Anmol Satiani, Ethan H. Meresh, and Janet E. Helms. Its mission is:

1. To continue to foster the Institute’s legacy of racial identity research and discussion around race and culture as they relate to mental health.
2. To provide a network of support and mentorship between alumni members and current ISPRC graduate students.
3. To promote increased understanding of the meaning of race and culture in today’s society, based on the tenets of social justice and/or counseling psychology.
Burke School Initiative — Year Five

Burke School Advocacy Program
For the past five years, the ISPRL has provided advocacy services to the students at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School, a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse high school in Dorchester, MA. The goal of the relational advocacy program is to provide a voice for students and help them advocate for their needs while connecting them to appropriate resources. Mental Health Counseling graduate students from Boston College volunteer to participate in a Social Justice Lab section during their Principles and Techniques in Counseling course. Throughout the year, the graduate students work as advocates paired with one or two students at the Burke school. The advocates assess for emotional and social barriers to their students’ school engagement while collaborating with their students to create goals and problem-solving strategies. They also work with Burke faculty and staff to identify resources and collaborate with school and community agencies. The advocacy program provides the students with training and feedback on interviewing, rapport building, and the provision of culturally competent services. Assessments inform individualized goals and interventions that address individual and systemic barriers and aim to improve students’ grades, self-esteem, motivation, and navigation of the educational system. Advocates help students gain access to necessary health and mental health, extracurricular, and tutoring services. Finally, Boston College advocates are encouraged to help their students build awareness of how context affects their development, to co-navigate the school system, and to identify opportunities to make systems-level change that supports their students.

In the time I have spent working at the Burke, I learned a lot about working in the public school system and certain social and institutional barriers that prevent students from reaching their full potential. As an advocate, I felt the joy of helping a student feel that they mattered because I had taken the time to sit with them and listen as they shared their struggles and concerns. However, I also felt a lot of frustration, as I had to work with students who had so much out of their control and had very little access to resources. I felt hopeless that I could not relate to them and their past experiences. But more than any of the above feelings, I felt a desire to learn the skills needed to not only be an effective agent of change, but to enable my students to bring about the change they hoped for in their own relationships, families, and communities.

An Advocate’s Experiences
By: Matilda Simon
My experience as an advocate at Jeremiah Burke High School, otherwise known as the Burke, as it is more informally and lovingly called, was both fulfilling and educational. Many Burke students and their families face great challenges and struggles around a lack of basic resources, homelessness, undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues, family disruption, community violence, and trauma—all of which can get in the way of students accessing their education. As an advocate, my primary role was to meet with my assigned students and assist them in allocating resources, both within the school and in their community, in hopes of improving their academic achievement and personal wellbeing.

As an aspiring mental health counselor, working at the Burke gave me a glimpse of what that title entails. Allowing myself to be genuine and flexible for the sake of my students was a skill I had not yet learned, but that I knew would be critical. Not only did I get the chance to learn about my students, but also about myself. We are always told that self-awareness is a fundamental aspect of the therapeutic relationship. Having the opportunity to try to understand my students gave me the space to explore my own identity and privilege and what that meant for my students. It allowed me to grow on a personal and professional level. I particularly loved the sense of teamwork that the Burke fostered. Working alongside my supervisors, the school counselor, social workers, and City Year students gave me a well-rounded perspective of how a system can affect an individual and provided guidance in taking full advantage of their resources.

At times, I struggled to draw the line between advocacy work and counseling. It was a conscious reminder that I had to stay within my limits as an advocate and help give my student a voice. I am incredibly grateful for the supervision I received at the Burke. Morning and afternoon meetings shaped my behavior as an advocate and also helped me strengthen the skills I will use in the future as a counselor.

In the time I have spent working at the Burke, I learned a lot about working in the public school system and certain social and institutional barriers that prevent students from reaching their full potential. As an advocate, I felt the joy of helping a student feel that they mattered because I had taken the time to sit with them and listen as they shared their struggles and concerns. However, I also felt a lot of frustration, as I had to work with students who had so much out of their control and had very little access to resources. I felt hopeless that I could not properly address their questions and concerns and even guilty that I could not relate to them and their past experiences. But more than any of the above feelings, I felt a desire to learn the skills needed to not only be an effective agent of change, but to enable my students to bring about the change they hoped for in their own relationships, families, and communities.

Training Social Justice Advocates in Counseling Skills
A select group of first-year Master’s students with a specific interest in social justice were invited to become members of the Burke Community Advocacy lab. These exceptional students have expanded their study of counseling skills to include a focus on developing advocacy skills that may be useful in assisting clients facing contextual and systemic challenges in their lives. These Burke Advocates attend a weekly lab in which they practice counseling skills and reflect on their personal identities as counselors, providing the unique opportunity to build awareness about social justice issues through the lens of counseling in a small and collaborative group setting. In addition, Burke Advocates engage in bi-weekly supervision and trainings on advocacy. These trainings aim to assist students in developing culturally informed counseling knowledge and skills, differentiating between counseling and advocacy, and identifying when counseling and advocacy should be applied.
Consultation Programs and Community Collaboration

SPSSI Advocacy Day
Kimberly Ashby and Dana Collins attended the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill. Kimberly and Dana participated in a day of advocacy training and met with the staff of a number of state representatives to advocate for the Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act (“Family Act”). This legislation, introduced by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), would provide workers up to 12 weeks of partial income (66% of monthly wages) when an employee takes time off following the birth of a new baby (or adoption of a child), or because of their own or a family member’s serious medical condition. Through this participation, Kimberly and Dana have formed relationships and initiated conversations that may help pass legislation that impacts the working rights of women and families.

Microaggressions Project
Kimberly Ashby is an editor for the Microaggressions Project, a blog that seeks to provide a visual representation of people’s everyday experiences of “microaggressions.” This project is about showing how microaggressions create and enforce uncomfortable, violent, and unsafe realities in people’s workplaces, homes, schools, and public transportation/space environments. The Microaggressions Project has been featured in Bitch Magazine, Racialicious, and Ms. Magazine. Kimberly and several other editors frequently facilitate workshops on microaggressions and have recently done so at the 2012 New York City Asian American Student Conference at NYU, the 2013 East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference at Columbia University, and the 2013 Students Working For Asian and Asian American Growth Conference at Cornell University. The blog can be found at www.microaggressions.com

A Support Group for Young Women of Color
At her practicum site at Brookline High School, Dericka Canada implemented an ongoing bi-weekly support group for young women of Color. Using a participant-focused approach, this group was centered on providing young women of Color with a space to discuss and explore self-identified topics and issues that they perceive and name to be relevant to their life and social experiences. Most of the students in this support group participate in the Boston METCO program. Therefore, the group was used to aid participants in navigating this program as students of Color in a predominantly White high school and within a community that is racially and culturally different than the communities they reside in. Other topics included exploring peer and school interactions, family and community relationships, self-image, racial, ethnic and gender identity, colorism and academic/professional goals and development.

Beyond Skin Deep: A Workshop on Navigating Colorism
Dericka Canada was an invited workshop facilitator for the Brookline Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) and African American Latino Scholars Program (AALSP) 7th Annual Young Women of Color Conference held in Boston, MA. This conference consisted of over 100 high school young women of Color from various schools in the Greater Boston area. The workshop allowed young women to explore colorism and skin color stereotypes they are familiar with and have confronted in the media and among family, peers and their school settings. Participants were also provided with a language for understanding the definition and concept of colorism. This included exploring the history of colorism in the United States and how this history shapes their current experiences, as well as their own skin color attitudes and perceptions. Toward the end of the conference, participants worked in groups to think of ways they could be agents for change in addressing the perpetuation of colorism among their social networks and in promoting positive messages regarding skin color variation.

Culture, Identity and Well-Being: Implications for Social Policy
Dericka Canada and Kimberly Ashby were invited speakers for the Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center Community Research Program (CRP). CRP is a two-semester academic program that offers Boston College undergraduate students experience in leadership, research, and public policy training on issues concerning communities of Color in Massachusetts. Dericka and Kim provided a presentation to students in this program on culture, identity and wellbeing—highlighting relevant intersections with social policy.

Community Outreach
Eva Wilson participated in a panel on applying to and financing graduate school, hosted by the Learning to Learn program at Boston College. The Learning to Learn program works with underrepresented, first generation, low-income students and students with disabilities with the goal of providing these students with the skills and resources to reach their educational potential. The panel focused on graduate students’ educational journeys and goals. Learning to Learn students had the opportunity to ask a panel of graduate students about their experiences, mistakes, and decision-making processes.
**Community Collaboration (cont.)**

**RIDE 2.0: The Second Year of the Racial Identity Development Experience (RIDE) for Undergraduate Students at Boston College**

The RIDE was implemented in collaboration with the Thea Bowman AHANA Intercultural Center. It was developed to create a safe space for undergraduate students from various racial backgrounds at Boston College to gather, reflect, and engage in honest, rich conversations surrounding race and racial identity. Dericka Canada coordinated the curriculum and aided in the facilitation of the RIDE beginning in 2013 and has since then continued engaging with this initiative.

This academic year (2014-15) Dericka updated her initial retreat curriculum utilizing participant evaluations from the previous year alongside her evolving knowledge in tailoring Helms’ racial identity development theory for practical and creative application with college students. The current RIDE was extended to include two nights, with 17 undergraduate students who participated in this year’s program. The RIDE guides students through a variety of activities and conversations aimed at increasing students’ ability to critically reflect upon relationships between race and their own racial identity, while attending to their related personal and social experiences. Students are also prompted to develop an action plan for further identity development and public engagement in necessary dialogues around race, racism and racial identity on campus and within their communities. Dericka is currently collaborating with the Thea Bowman AHANA Intercultural Center to plan a retreat follow-up event to engage former RIDE students as well as the broader campus on conversations around race and racial identity. The RIDE curriculum/retreat was nominated and selected as a finalist for the 2014 Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) Conference Diversity and Equity Distinguished Program Award.

**ISPRC Staff Update**

**Moving On...**

**Dericka Canada** will begin her journey as a pre-doctoral intern in professional psychology with the University of Pennsylvania Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) team in Philadelphia, PA. She will provide mental health counseling, consultation, supervision and outreach services to undergraduate and graduate students and the University of Pennsylvania community.

**Dana Collins** will begin her pre-doctoral internship at the University of San Francisco’s Counseling and Psychological Services Center. As an intern, she will be responsible for conducting individual and group therapy, assessments, crisis intervention, and campus outreach and consultation within an ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse campus community. She looks forward to returning to her home state of California, where she will be able to retire her winter coat and snow boots and enjoy many days of warmth and sunshine.

**Alesha Harris** will be moving on to sunny California to complete her pre-doctoral internship at the University of California, Santa Cruz College Counseling Center. She will focus on providing mental health services to the undergraduate and graduate student population.

**Natasha Torkelson** will begin her pre-doctoral internship in psychology at Suffolk University’s Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center. She will be providing mental health counseling, outreach, and consultation services to students and the Suffolk University community, along with providing supervision to a Master’s level practicum student.

**Qingyi Yu** has completed her Ph.D. in Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology. She hopes to continue her research focusing on international students.

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**Kim Ashby** is a 2015 Ford Fellowship Honorable Mention. **Dericka Canada** was appointed to serve a three-year term as a council member for the American Psychological Association (APA) Student and Early Career Advisory Council on Publishing (SECAP). SECAP is the advisory group to the Office of Publications and Databases, comprised of graduate students and early career psychologists with a focus on psychological practice. It is facilitated by the APA Journals department with a mission of advancing psychological science and practice by providing vital input on the scholarly publication needs of psychology graduate students and early career psychologists.

**Natasha Torkelson** is a recipient of the 2014-2015 Donald J. White Teaching Excellence Award, which recognizes graduate teaching fellows who have distinguished themselves in classroom instruction. Natasha has also been nominated for a Teaching with Technology Award.
Current Projects: Research Initiatives

Seeking Self: Intersecting Influences on Multiracial Identity
Given the limited research on multiracial women in the literature, the goal of this study was to better understand the racial identity development of multiracial women of Asian/White and Black/White ancestry, as well as to determine the similarities and differences between the two groups. Interviews of 10 Black/White and Asian/White female participants ranging from 22 to 35 years of age were conducted using a semi-structured interview format. Interviews were then transcribed and coded using directed content analysis. Results of this study uncovered similar challenges and experiences for both groups, while identifying some unique issues for each respective group. In addition, results suggested some implications for the well-being of multiracial women as well as for practitioners working with this population. The study was presented at the Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference at DePaul University in November 2014.

A Contextual Model of Multiracial Identity and Well-Being
Multiracial people often experience challenges to developing positive racial identities and psychological well being in our racially stratified society. Research suggests that contextual variables, such as family support, racial group acceptance, validation of one’s personal racial group identification, and the existence of a multiracial reference group, are important for the facilitation of positive adjustment for multiracial individuals. There is currently a need for more research on this topic using quantitative methods and more diverse, larger samples with the goal of better understanding the variety of ways that multiracial individuals’ social contexts affect their racial identity development and well-being. Furthermore, there has not yet been a comprehensive examination of the ways that these contextual factors interact with each other to influence the racial identity and well being of multiracial people. The proposed model in this study addresses these gaps in the literature by incorporating each of these three factors (i.e., social context, racial identity, and well being) into one framework. 200 Black/White and Asian/White individuals will be recruited to complete an online survey examining each of these three variables. Results aim to increase our understanding of how multiracial people develop racially and psychologically in a racially stratified society. This study will be presented as a poster presentation at the American Psychological Association Convention in Toronto, Canada in August, 2015.

Dialogues On Race (DOR) Assessment
In partnership with the Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center, Kimberly Ashby and Dana Collins conducted an assessment of Dialogues On Race (DOR), a peer facilitation group at Boston College for upper classmen, focused on conversations about race and racism. The assessment seeks to measure the degree to which DOR meets its objectives, including, 1. Increase participants’ comfort talking about race, 2. Strengthen participants’ understanding of institutional racism, and 3. Create group cohesion among participants. Results from this assessment may help OASP (Office of AHANA Student Programs) better understand how well DOR is meeting its objectives and may point towards ways to improve DOR’s efficacy. This research may contribute to building a more critically conscious campus community and environment that supports and encourages dialogue about race, power, and privilege.

Dialogues On Race (DOR) Facilitator Training
Kimberly Ashby and Dana Collins were invited by the Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center to develop and implement a training for Dialogues On Race (DOR) facilitators, focused on helping student facilitators cultivate an understanding of race and racism and to develop dialogue facilitation skills. Kimberly and Dana have conducted an assessment of this training and its effectiveness at meeting its goals. They are currently using this data to improve future training curricula. Through this work, researchers and professionals may learn how to improve interracial dialogue programs in their own communities.

Black Women and Colorism
Black women are challenged to maintain healthy self concepts in a society that historically has labeled them as deviant from the ideal, primarily based on presumed skin color shade. Skin color appears to play a significant, but unacknowledged role in the lives of Black women. Yet, this topic remains an understudied issue with little empirical support for how these complex constructs can be measured. Many researchers point to the difficulty of examining these constructs due to the multi-dimensionality of skin color and many relevant psycho-social factors, such as racial identity and gender socialization. Such empirical imprecision underscores the need for additional exploratory research to focus attention on more deeply understanding the nuances of colorism messages and skin color attitudes among Black women to promote appropriate interventions that foster resilience. This study and manuscript explores this concept by providing a qualitative account of these experiences through focus groups with students who identify as Black women at BC.
Research Initiatives Continued

Dynamics in Multicultural Counseling Skill Development: Social Interaction Model

Research on the pedagogy of race and multicultural psychology indicates that educators are faced with a variety of difficulties to support the development of their students. It is important for educators to tailor pedagogical techniques to the specific needs of students by taking into account the role of their racial and cultural social identities in their development of multicultural competence. Two common modalities in which racial and cultural competency training occurs for therapists are classrooms and dyadic supervision. This study explores the dynamics of social identities in counseling skills labs through the lens of Social Interaction Model (SIM). According to SIM, within a group setting, racial identity is revealed in cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses of participants, which are expressed through development of parallel, regressive and progressive dyads or coalitions. Coalitions are governed by similar or dissimilar racial identity schemas. Specifically, the current study examined instructors’ experiences of teaching about multicultural counseling competency, as well as how they addressed or did not address issues of race and culture in lab discussions. Furthermore, intersectionality of other social identities (e.g., gender, class, and sexual orientation) will be integrated in the analyses of group dynamics. Findings from this study will increase knowledge about how social identities should be addressed to foster multicultural competence of counselors in training. The proposal for this project was accepted for Student Affiliates of Seventeen Symposium titled, Social Identities and Intersectionality: Social Justice Perspectives, at the 2015 APA Convention in Toronto, Canada.

News from Our Affiliates/Associates

Kisha Bazelaïs, Ph.D. has recently joined the University of Miami Counseling Center as a Staff Psychologist.

Hammad Smith N’cho is a newly minted Ph.D., a Lieutenant, United States Navy Medical Service Corps and an Assistant Division Officer, Traumatic & Operational Stress Services Clinic, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

Denia-Marie Ollerton is now teaching psychology courses at Utah Valley University in Utah. After a brief stint in the corporate world, she is excited to return to counseling and merge her experience from the two fields.

Join, Follow, Friend!

The ISPRC has joined the digital age and is now on social media. Social media plays an important role in how individuals discover, research, and share information they care about. With a focus on increasing our brand recognition and cultivating an online community, the ISPRC can vastly increase its reach and influence. Please join, follow and/or friend us on Twitter, Vine, Instagram and Facebook.

Twitter: ISPRC
Vine: ISPRC
Instagram: ISPRC_BC
Facebook: The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture

Scenes from Diversity Challenge 2014
ISPRC Staff Publications and Presentations


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Helms, J.E. (2014, June) Invited Talk, Identity and Racial Trauma, Merle Jordan Conference, Danielsen Institute, Boston University, Boston, MA.


Canada, D. D. (2014). Intersections of Racial Identity and College Student Development. Training for Counseling Services staff at Salem State University, Salem, MA.


