

Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis

ISSN: 2325-1204. Journal homepage: <https://www.iastatedigitalpress.com/jctp/>

Volume 3, Issue 2, 2014, Article 1, <https://doi.org/10.31274/jctp-180810-32>

Letter from Guest Editor for Special Issue CEP-ASHE

Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, *Bowling Green State University*

Abstract

Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, chair on the Council of Ethnic Participation (CEP) for the Association of the Study of Higher Education, describes the inspiration for the JCTP Special Issue and highlights the critical submissions published in the Special Issue that were first presented the CEP Pre-Conference forum in St. Louis, MO in November 2013.

Recommended Citation

Stewart, D . (2014) "Letter from Guest Editor for Special Issue CEP-ASHE", *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis*. 3(2).

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Letter from the Guest Editor

The Council on Ethnic Participation (CEP) within the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) was founded to monitor and facilitate the participation of scholars from racially minoritized groups in the association with both the work of the association, as well as contributing to the scholarship of the field. The CEP's pre-conference forum, begun in 2011 in Charlotte, North Carolina by Dr. Terrell Strayhorn, former chair of the CEP, extended this commitment to participation and contribution to knowledge in the field of higher education. I am proud that our 2013 pre-conference forum, just the third in its history and the first under my tenure as chair of the CEP, has continued in this tradition.

Each year of these first three years, the CEP pre-conference forum has partnered with a journal who shares our core values and commits to publish a special issue or section of accepted papers. I am proud that we have partnered with the *Journal of Critical Thought and Practice (JCTP)* to disseminate these four exemplars of the strong scholarship that is presented at the CEP pre-conference forum.

Jones reveals the ways that student organization settings challenge homogeneous and linear depictions of racial identity and racial identity development. Such sociological understandings of identity and group membership help higher education scholars both critique and complement the primarily psychological understandings and depictions of identity that have held sway in the field since the 1960s. Mwangi's scholarly essay also provides insight into the heterogeneity of Black racial identity, dismantling a monolithic view of Blackness that is centered in the legacy and present-day effects of the transatlantic slave trade on people of African descent in the US.

Zavala, Pérez, González, and Villela engage readers in discussion of how healthy university and community partnerships can positively encourage migrant students' access to higher education. Colleges and universities cannot isolate themselves from their surrounding communities or the communities from which their students matriculate if they hope to enact a mission of providing greater access to marginalized communities. The experiences of these authors working with such a partnership has far-reaching implications for practice and policy.

Finally, Truong and her colleagues pull readers into their lived experiences as teachers of graduate courses on Critical Race Theory. Their autoethnographic study exposes the multiple roles that faculty perform in the classroom and how inextricable personal values are from the work that we do as teachers and scholars. The skills and emotional labor required to engage students in difficult and personally challenging conversations about race and racism

should be recognized. Teaching such classes, including those that feature challenging discussions about other aspects of systemic oppression is not like teaching any other class. An awareness of this additional burden should be taken into account both by faculty seeking to teach such courses and by those who evaluate those faculty who do.

Together, these articles help to push the discussion forward regarding how we understand the relationship between racial identity development and social contexts (Jones; Mwangi), successful and effective partnerships between universities and communities (Zavala, Pérez, González, & Villela), and the ways in which teaching critical subject matter affect faculty (Truong, Graves, & Keene). These authors also showcase new methodologies, such as autoethnography (Zavala, Pérez, González, & Villela; Truong, Graves, & Keene), and the application of qualitative methods to the study of traditionally quantitative metrics (Jones). They illustrate the vibrancy of the scholarship being produced that focuses on issues of race, ethnicity, and the social contexts and intersectional systems that influence them in higher education. I hope you will agree and find much in them to enhance your teaching, scholarship, and service in our field.

In solidarity,

Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, PhD

Bowling Green State University

dafinas@bgsu.edu