

Workshop Liaison:

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Workshop Leaders & Hosts at Vassar College:

Kelli Duncan, Assistant Professor of Biology
Candice Lowe-Swift, Associate Professor & Chair of Anthropology
Quincy Mills, Associate Professor History & Chair of Africana Studies

Co-organizers

John Drabinski, Chair and Professor of Black Studies, Amherst
Daphne Lamothe, Associate Professor of Africana Studies, Smith College
Erick Leggins, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Grinnell College
Marion Martin, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Furman University
Kevin Quashi, Professor & Chair of Africana Studies, Smith College

Workshop Facilitators and Participants* at AALAC institutions

Martha Elizabeth Baylor, Associate Professor of Physics, Carleton College
Meredith Gadsby, Associate Professor of Africana Studies & President, Association of Caribbean Women Writers and Scholars, Oberlin College
Ayana Hinton, Assistant Professor of Biology, Denison
James Manigault-Bryant, Assoc. Prof. & Chair of Africana Studies, Williams College
Damian Turner, Assistant Professor of Biology, Williams College

*If this proposal is accepted, we will seek additional participants. We included a few participants in the list above because the number of faculty who accepted to co-lead this workshop was greater than we anticipated.

Potential Keynote Speaker

At this time, we hope to invite geochemist and chemical oceanographer, Ashanti Johnson. She is the Executive Director of the [Institute for Broadening Participation](#) and the Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Recruitment for the [University of Texas at Arlington](#)'s Division of Faculty Affairs. We selected her for her demonstrated commitment to increasing the diversity of students and professionals in STEM.

All faculty are welcome to attend this workshop.

Realizing Potential: Developing Strategies to Enhance Intellectual Engagement for URMs in Liberal Arts Colleges

In the late 1960s and 1970s, black students, at a range of institutions across the country, pressed their colleges and universities to admit more black students, hire more black faculty, institute Black Studies programs, incorporate courses where students could see themselves reflected in the curricula, and overall, to restructure their institutions. The emergence of Black Studies, or Africana Studies, programs provided an intellectual space and platform for students--from the humanities to the sciences--to transition into predominately white colleges and universities. Almost fifty years later, black students are raising similar concerns, demanding that inclusion go beyond numbers to consider institutional restructuring for a more just scholarly and intellectual existence.

Over the past decade, selective liberal arts institutions led the vanguard in establishing policies and practices that provided even greater access and inclusion for underrepresented minorities (URMs) in higher education. As a result of these practices, and a post-recession economy, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, children of documented and undocumented immigrants, first-generation college students, and veterans of war, are matriculating in unprecedented numbers. While the changing demographic has raised standards of excellence, The List of Demands generated by black students in 86 colleges and universities, and the declining rate¹ of African-Americans in STEM, particularly women,² suggest that the experiences of black students, as well as other URMs, may be culturally, socially, and politically particular. Therefore, we propose a targeted approach.

In this proposed workshop, we compare and assess inclusive modes of intellectual engagement (curricula, research, mentorship) with an eye towards developing scholarly opportunities that respond to the needs of URM students. Our aim is to rethink the roles of faculty, in helping students to achieve academic excellence at liberal arts institutions. Furthermore, we want to determine what faculty, in particular, can do to curb the extremely low participation of black students in STEM. While we begin this work by focusing on Africana Studies and STEM fields, we will draft a proposal for the Ford Foundation that extends our work,

¹ According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 2008-2013, African-Americans receive just 7.5 percent of all STEM bachelor's degrees and 4.5 percent of doctorates awarded in STEM. See https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d14/tables/dt14_318.45.asp

² Interestingly, the trend of declining participation of African-Americans in STEM has been reversed at HCBUs. See <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-spurring-african-american-stem-degree-completion#fn03>

bringing together faculty and students, from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, to address the obstacles to excellence faced by a variety of URMs.

A primary question that animates the proposed work is: What can faculty in Africana Studies and STEM contribute to campus dialogues, pedagogical practices, and institutional initiatives that attempt to develop a more inclusive learning environment for an increasingly diverse student body?

This workshop will be held for two and a half days in on the campus of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY, with the following tentative schedule:

Day 1:

5:00-7:00pm Evening arrival & welcome reception

Day 2:

8:00 - 8:50 am Breakfast and Introductions

8:50 - 9:00 am Opening Remarks (Dean of Faculty)

9:00 - 10:30 am Roundtable discussions and short presentations on inclusion strategies and programs that we practice in our capacities as professors, advisors, administrators, and mentors. These discussions will be guided by co-facilitators.

10:30 - 10:45am Break

10:45 - 12:30 pm Breakout session into two separate groups expanding these discussions into discipline- specific observations and conversations/areas of concern.

(STEM vs Social Sciences and Humanities)

12:45 - 1:45 pm Lunch

1:45 - 2:45 pm Share observations about URMs in Africana and STEM so that we can think about patterns, similarities, and differences between fields.

3:00 - 4:00 pm Keynote Speaker: the challenges faced by URMs in STEM

4:00 - 4:30 pm Q & A with Speaker

4:30 - 5:30 pm Mechanisms of support: What can we do to support each other and our students? (Speaker participation in conversations)

5:30 - 6:30 pm Break & cocktail hour

6:30 - 8:00 pm Dinner

Day 3:

8:00 - 8:50 am Breakfast and Reflections on Day 2

9:00 - 10:00 am What can liberal arts colleges do to further support URMs?
What has worked and what needs revision?

10:00 - 10:45 am Layout Ford Foundation proposal guidelines, open discussion of any other grant proposal ideas (NIH, NSF, Howard Hughes)

10:45 -12:30 pm Small group discussions to Brainstorm aims for the grant proposal

12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 3:00 pm	Discuss the development/submission of a proposal, outline, allocate the work, agree on timeline
3:00 - 3:05 pm	Stretch and switch gears
3:05 - 4:30 pm	Small group discussion to develop language for pedagogical strategies that can be used by all. These will be based on the previous two days of discussions on practices the support inclusion and retention among URM's. Discuss the possible contents of the website.
4:30 - 5:30 pm	Final Group discussion and reflections. What are our next steps?
5:30 - 7:00 pm	Farewell Dinner

Follow-up activities and potential outcomes

- ❖ A proposal to support knowledge building among a more diverse set of URM's
- ❖ Establish a (semi-) public website to share pedagogical strategies