

VOICES

ACPA'S COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATORS NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2013

The Commission for Social Justice Educators' mission is to provide a collaborative home for college student educators working in the areas of diversity and social justice education.

As members of the Commission for Social Justice Educators it is our privilege to welcome six new members to the Directorate for the Commission. They are:

- Venson S. Curington II, Dupre Residence Hall Director, Macalester College
- Yolanda M. Barnes, Program Coordinator, Leadership Development & Second Year Initiatives, Loyola University Chicago
- Denise Boneta, Assistant Residence Director, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Christian A. Bello Escobar, Graduate Assistant for Academic Initiatives, University of West Georgia
- Vu Tran, Area Coordinator, University of the Pacific
- Brian Tu, Graduate Area Coordinator, Coe College

Two members of the Commission whose positions were renewed include:

- Marc A. Lo, Community Director, Brown University
- Kayla Nuss, Academic Support Coordinator, Colorado State University

Directorate members make a three year commitment to serve in ranging from Member Services to Programming to Scholarship. Each year new members are nominated to serve on the Directorate but it can be as easy as nominating yourself! We always hope to have a diverse group of individuals passionate about their role as social justice educators. If you may be interested in joining us next year feel free to email us at csje.acpa@gmail.com or come to one of our open meetings in Las Vegas in March!

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Come to our Open Business Meeting and learn how you could appear in this photo in the future! (photo from ACPA national convention, March 2012, Louisville)

Reflection from an Institute Participant

By Krishna Hans, Assistant Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Bowling Green State University

Mahatma Gandhi once said "Be the change you want to see in the world." The depth of this quote from the social justice lens in the way I personally interpret it is that we as social justice educators cannot strive toward social justice without practicing it. How we choose our practice may vary though. The challenge for trainers and educators is not just to lead, but to lead inclusively and equitably while facilitating others to achieve their best thinking and action. I've been revisiting in my head the differences between a social justice activist and a social justice trainer, and looking at social justice through lenses of both its vision and practice as I believe it will enable me to integrate core social justice values into everyday leadership and facilitation. This process is how I see myself developing over time.

As much as I like to think of myself as having considerable knowledge and experiences that help me to better understand systems of oppression and to be passionate about social justice, I admit that I have probably been doing better as an activist for social justice than a facilitator for social justice. This is partly because being an activist is probably easier for me than being a facilitator or trainer. With all the hate and injustice being consistently waged against oppressed and disadvantaged communities, it has been very hard not to be upset, defensive, and sometimes angry, especially when my personal social identities belong to those groups. For quite a while, I have been one of many people on the left who often are prone to act in ways that are emotionally satisfying but I am not sure how effective it is in the long term in making educational or political progress. Even though I take pride in my action and see it as an important and integral part of the process of the democracy to raise public awareness and promote social change, I must admit that it has, at the same time, been one way to justify my inadequate ability to cope with my anger. When I have lost patience, there is a comforting aspect to say that it is hard to expect myself to have the patience of a saint when my social identities are being ostracized and subsequently limiting my chances to live a fulfilling life in equality and equity. Therefore, being an activist for me is an easier way to release frustration and at the same time fulfill a desire to claim existence and demand equality. That is what I do not like about myself for participating just as an activist and I think this self-realization is crucial for me. Yet, this is by no means to show disrespect to activism. I have and will continue to highly value and participate in activism.

Even though I believe and acknowledge that in the mind of activist and trainer, there are both elements of social justice vision and practice, the approach is very different. If a person confronts me and does not like me as an Asian immigrant with imperfect English, my activist mind would be confronting back directly in a way that says you "should not" hate me for being an Asian immigrant who does not speak perfect English, while the educator mind would say "I understand why you do not like me." Both approaches potentially lead to different paths of dialogues, and also based on specific circumstance, tone and attitude, it can be a make-it-or-break-it result. Growing up appreciating debate, I tend to be direct and confrontational sometimes, almost in the form of a debate. In retrospect I realize the importance of giving deeper attention and thought to forming processing questions. Such action is to me now a reflection of higher responsibility and care for social justice causes. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi's "Be the change you want to see in the world" at this point means more to me than just striving toward social justice by practicing it, but practicing it responsibly to accomplish what I want to see in the world.

Also, I would like to say that as a new professional in the field, I cannot help appreciating enough the experience at the Institute on Social Justice. I left the institute feeling so blessed, emotional, and at the same time acknowledging what a privilege I have to access such opportunity. Putting all the skills, information, and other work related things aside, I also receive every hand I shake and every smile I get, with simplicity, humility and true friendship. Through my new friends' eyes, what I saw was warm, clear and true and I realize a genuine friendship and professional connection beyond superficial level is so important as after all, open and honest communication is key in the work of social justice education.

Photos on pages 2-3 from the Institute for Social Justice courtesy of Hannah Lozon



From a Philosophy of Nonviolence to the Institute for Social Justice: Reflections on the Journey

By Hannah Lozon,
Coordinator of Social Justice
Education, University of
Arizona



In my current hometown of Tucson, AZ, I recently had the opportunity to attend a 2-day Core Introduction Training to Kingian Nonviolence. To say I was out of my element would be an understatement - I was the only person from a university or community college, I was an atheist in a church, participants ranged in age from 7 to 80, and the training was facilitated by a team of teenagers. The fee for adults was an optional \$20, or whatever you could afford. Like many higher education professionals, I am used to traveling across the country, learning from "experts," and paying outrageously high registration fees for a specialized training or institute. And while many of my professional development opportunities have been worthwhile and educational both personally and professionally, few have compared to the knowledge, spiritual stirring, and profound impact I gained from this Kingian nonviolence training.

The philosophy and practice of nonviolence is different from non-violence, which is simply the absence of violence. Nonviolence is a way of being, holding agape love at the center of your thoughts, spirit, and being. Dr. King developed his philosophy of nonviolence after years of studying other philosophers, thinkers, and activists - Thoreau, Rauschenbusch, Plato, Marx, Hegel and more. But it was not until Dr. King studied Mahatma Gandhi's concept of "Satyagraha" or "love-force," did he come to understand that love could be used as a powerful instrument for social change. In King's "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence" (1958), he writes:

The nonviolent resister would contend that in the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate campaigns. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives. (unknown page)

I was enamored with King's philosophy - of course reacting with bitterness, anger, and hostility only begets more bitterness, anger,

and hostility into the world! Why put more negative energy out into the universe?

At several points in the training I was moved to tears, both by the hatred the Freedom Fighters endured, but also by confusion - how had I never, in all my years of social justice education, formally studied the works of Dr. King or Gandhi? How come I had never done any deep reflection or engaged in dialogue around love as the heart of social justice? I had intellectually known these ideas for some time, but it wasn't until reading the words of Dr. King and being in community with folks so different than myself, that I really saw the principle in action.

I left this training feeling more passionate, excited, and spiritually full than I had in many years. Nonviolence has influenced my practice as a social justice educator, and as a human being on this earth, in a profound way. After a rough start to the semester and some difficulties in my personal life, I felt energy for the work again, passion, excitement, and hope.

I tell you this story because my experience at the nonviolence training opened my heart for another opportunity I would like to tell you about: the ACPA Institute on Social Justice (ISJ). I attended ISJ approximately two and a half months following the nonviolence training, after what had been a particularly hectic semester. My campus had made national news when the student paper published a homophobic cartoon, and I was working my colleagues to start a number of new initiatives for our department and students. Like many of you, I was busy! I came to ISJ still buoyed by the nonviolence training, but tired.

From a Philosophy of Nonviolence to the Institute for Social Justice: Reflections on the Journey

By Hannah Lozon, Coordinator of Social Justice Education, University of Arizona

If only I had known what I was in for at ISJ – rarely does one get so lucky to attend two of the best trainings of their lives in the same semester! The theme of the institute was “Self-Reflection, Intersection, and Activism: Deconstructing the Myth of Single Issue Struggles,” and was hosted by the ACPA Commission for Social Justice Educators. The format for the institute was varied with four keynote speakers, prepared TED-like talks from participants, concurrent sessions, but above all dialogue. For at least seven hours we were with our assigned dialogue groups of 10-12 participants, reflecting on the sessions and questions posed. The dialogue groups allowed us to form close connections with a small cohort of participants, while simultaneously reflecting on, wrestling with, and holding the information shared in previous sessions.

The speakers and sessions pushed me to my learning edges time and again: Dr. Shakti Butler asking us to look into the eyes of another participants for a full sixty seconds and to notice our discomfort; Dr. Peggy McIntosh urging white people to get past their “blame, shame, and guilt as quickly as possible” in the powerful documentary *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity*; Michael Benitez reminding us that we must have compassion and patience for privileged groups as they struggle to unlearn, and that “when you honor where people are at, it allows them to at least connect to the emotion, if they cant connect to your lived experience;” student activists at UC Berkeley explaining their massive nonviolent response to an affirmative action bake sale held on campus; Dr. Lori Patton speaking truth to power as she outlined all the ways our traditional student affairs programs perpetuate a white paradigm and racial oppression; participant Dr. Craig Elliot giving a TED talk about “being” an advocate for social justice, rather than trying to just do all the right things; ISJ co-coordinator robbie routenberg explaining hir framework for allyhood, and that at it’s center is a spirit of love. So much knowledge was dropped at ISJ, and if you followed our Twitter feed at all (#ISJ2012), you know what I am talking about!

I learned so much at ISJ, but the experience would not have been as rich as it was were it not for the community there. Rarely have I been in a space

where authentic connections formed as quickly, and naturally as they did at ISJ. Each evening many of us would stay up late into the night talking about the institute, but also laughing, swapping stories, and learning more about one another. I not only gained dozens of new professional contacts across the country, but left with many new friends, and a community of support I can turn to. While the nonviolence training taught me so much logically and fueled my spirit, I think the connections at ISJ renewed my spirit. For many of us doing diversity and social justice work on our campuses or places of employment, it can be an isolating, challenging space. ISJ reminded me that I am lucky to have support on my own campus, but that I also have it in people across the country.

The thing that perhaps amazed me most about ISJ though, was the commitment to myself, my health, and my relationships that I left with. I was so motivated leaving ISJ (which only compounded my learning of nonviolence) that I finally got through my head that if I don’t take of my body, mind, and soul, I literally will not have the strength to do this work. We all talk about it with our students and occasionally our colleagues – “put your oxygen mask on before helping others.” But how many of us actually do it? How many of us have mastered the art of saying “no,” using all our vacation time, not checking email after hours (let alone responding to it), or allowing ourselves to occasionally not finish something by deadline? Now don’t get me wrong, I know that’s not always reality, depending on the time of year, the situation, or your supervisor. But for me, that’s what I really took away from ISJ. If I am going to practice Dr. King’s philosophy of nonviolence, but I have to direct that philosophy to all that I do, including principle #5 “avoid internal violence (holding on to anger, negative self-talk, holding unrealistic expectations of self) as much as you do external violence.”

Without my attendance at ISJ and the nonviolence training, I think my reflection on this past semester would be very different. I feel whole, I feel renewed. I know these feelings will wane at times, but I owe it to myself and to my commitment as a social justice advocate to do the work – and by that, I mean hold love at the center of all that I do.

Reference:

King, Jr. Martin Luther. (1958). *Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*. In *Stride Toward Freedom* (chapter 4). New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Thoughts on the Institute for Social Justice: Looking back to move forward

Reggie Blockett, Ph.D. student, Higher Education, Indiana University

The ACPA Commission for Social Justice Educators along with the host campus at the University of California-Berkeley, had the pleasure of planning the 2012 Institute on Social Justice. As one of the event coordinators, Tanya Williams and robbie routenberg being the other two, I had the opportunity to work on designing the institute over the past two years. After attending the 2010 Institute at Loyola University Chicago, I was thrilled to serve the association in this capacity and have a chance to plan what I was hoping would be a good experience for those who would attend. During the two years the planning team and I spent working on the ins and outs of the institute, I cannot think of one time where we thought to ourselves, 'this will be one of the most phenomenal professional development experiences ever'. However, I can honestly say that I heard those exact words from multiple participants at the 2012 ISJ! While I was somewhat removed from the institute, the feedback that I received from several institute participants was very positive. In this reflection, I have chosen to provide a perspective of the institute through the lens of a coordinator. As I spent time thinking about my days in Berkeley both prior to and immediately following the institute, several themes emerged and my hope is to provide synthesis of phenomena that participants mentioned.

Transformational Dialogue

One of the most impactful aspects of the institute was probably the dialogue groups. Lead by trained and experienced dialogue group facilitators (DGFs), the 6+ hours that participants spent with their small groups reflecting on specific parts of the institute was surely emotionally and spiritually powerful. The DGFs arrived a day before the start of the institute in order to situate themselves in what was preparing to be a very moving experience. The group consisted on folks who are current and past social justice educators, consultants, and experts, and all of which have lead small group facilitations in the past. The DGFs lead their groups through the difficult dialogues that occurred, supporting individuals as they

articulated their thoughts, and helping participants make meaning of the institute from day-to-day. One participant recounted their experience in the dialogue group and explained how they 'reimagined intersectionality' after listening to one of the speakers (Elizabeth Thompson) do a talk about the politics of disability, sexuality, and class.

I also found the talk to be very captivating, but I was beyond ecstatic that participants continued the dialogue into their groups and looked in-depth at what intersectionality truly looks like. This point shows directly how the institute theme, Self-Reflection, Intersectionality, & Activism: Deconstructing the Myth of Single Issue Struggles, transformed the dialogue groups. The theme was a crucial component woven into the entire curriculum, but I am confident that because participants connected so well with this theme, the dialogue groups became spaces of transformation, as well as reflection.

Critical Thought

I would not have been personally satisfied if there was not a significant level of consciousness raising and increased critical thought. The institute curriculum featured three keynote speakers, six TED-like Talk speakers, and multiple presenters, in addition the DGFs that I mentioned above, all with the common goal of thinking about social justice in a different light. The powerful film that Dr. Shakti Butler showed, "Cracking the Code", was the kickoff to understanding the interlocking systems that allow social inequity possible. As she interpreted the film during her talk, Dr. Butler brought to our attention the realities of race by critically 'decoding' the social and historical underpinnings that have allowed racism to exist. Our second keynote, Mike Benitez Jr., gave an energetic talk that moved us "Towards a Critical Interculturalism of Intersectionality". Again, making us look beyond the multiple lenses of identity that are often conceptualized in relation to intersectionality, and towards a critical perspective that questions the very junctures of identity that both privilege and oppress individuals. Mike's talk left everyone hanging on for the next dose of critical thought as we consumed his words. The final speaker for the institute was Dr. Lori Patton Davis, who delivered a stimulating talk on activism titled "Acting Up and Acting Out for Social Justice".

Dr. Patton Davis began by reading the demand letters of African American students at predominantly White institutions from the 1960s to present. The reading of these letters told stories of the struggles that have both historically and contemporarily marginalized students on college campuses.

The three keynotes, as well as multiple other speakers during the institute, all played a majored role in raising consciousness; moving us beyond the basics of 'awareness building' and to a space where critical thought flourished.

Collaborative Learning

The last theme that came to mind as I reflected on the institute was that of collaborative learning. The institute almost seamlessly lends itself to being a place of shared idea. By working closely in small groups, having time to 'buzz' after speakers, and while on breaks and during meals, participants share thoughts and maintain the necessary dialogue on social justice. These interactions and opportunities to connect with one another is where the collaborative learning happens. This is how the institute differs from that of a conference; rather than simply being at the same place at the same time, this institute purposefully brought communities together. The synergy that was present at the institute was one that I have never witnessed before. Seeing participants not only carry-on dialogue after sessions/speakers, but also attempting to make sense of what they were experiencing with others showed me that the collaborative learning environment was a success.

Overall, the Institute on Social Justice was a complete success! My intent here was not to 'toot our own horn', as most of my reflection is a synthesis of the thoughts and reactions that I observed from others. Nevertheless, as someone who played a significant role in the planning of this institute, I am happy that the 100+ participants enjoyed this transformational, critical, and collaborative experience.

If you've enjoyed reading these reflections from ACPA's Institute for Social Justice, consider attending the next Institute in 2014. As the next Institute approaches, More information will be available on ACPA's website: <http://www2.myacpa.org/professional-development/professional-development-opportunities>

Being Progressive on a “Progressive” Campus

Brian Reece, Assistant of Residence Life, University of Oregon

Institutions of higher education are traditionally considered to be stalwarts of progress in society—they quite often set the bar and are ahead of their time, particularly in terms of social progress. Even so, there are colleges and universities which are considered to be on the cutting edge. At these institutions, we are often proud of our progressive attitudes and of our inclusive policies, procedures, and practices—we are “socially just.” In my experience, social justice advocacy tends to favor the misfortunate, with good reason. Despite this tendency, I would like to argue that we hinder our own progress by seeing progressivism as an end goal rather than a state of being.

The social justice advocate in me sees all of the possibilities and thinks, “Why don’t we just do it?” And then the voices of dissent fill in the questioning void with doubt, insecurity, and, quite honestly, a sort of political quicksand. One way we justify the stopping or slowing of progress is by simply claiming that we are allowing others to catch up. But is this truly an excuse for not being as truly inclusive and equitable as we know how to be? Another way we do it is by comparing our situation to those who have it so much worse. In this way, we are both invalidating the experiences of those encountering microaggressions and systemic (though perhaps not personalized or targeted) discrimination. We are telling people, “Your experience could be better, but others have it much worse. You really have no room to complain.”

I think that we could all do a better of supporting all students, regardless of how progressive or safe we think their environments are. As an example, I would like to talk about working with queer students in what would likely be considered some of the most supportive educational environments around, since that is where much of my direct experience lies. One of my struggles over the last couple of years has been in recognizing that there are many places throughout the United States where “queer-friendly” is an oxymoron while also attempting to support the growth and development of students in places where queer-friendly is

(seemingly) the norm. Students in the former situation have often gone their entire lives thinking they are the only queer-identified individual around, never having the chance to realize that there are many others like them walking around with the same thoughts. In the latter, they are still wont to believe, despite how wonderful, comparatively, their situation is, that they deserve something better. And are they wrong? Is it wrong to want to be free from oppression?

I believe that they are right—and that we often do a poor job of helping them get closer to where they could and should be. So how can be truly “progressive”? One way is to start thinking about the process of progress rather than the result of process. It’s excellent to have milestones to mark our movement. It’s even great to have goals that we want to achieve. But when we stop the process because the goal has been met without thinking about how to redefine our mission, the mission becomes vacant and meaningless. We can also better remember equity and inclusion as principles of this progress. Sometimes this is difficult. What about views that inherently seem anti-inclusive? They are worth listening to if not simply because of our principles, then because those views belong to a real person and are associated with a lived experience. Just as I do not want my experiences and feelings to be invalidated by oppression, I would not want my oppressed nature to lead to invalidating others. Last, we can remember that to be progressive, we must be progressing. We must be making progress. If we cannot define that progress, then we likely aren’t making it. And if we aren’t making progress, we’re likely not advancing toward a more socially just society.

An Open Letter to Us White People On Engaging in Race Work (or How to Work With Us White People) *(reprinted from CSJE blog with permission from the author)*

By Craig M Elliott II PhD, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment and Student Services, Samuel Merritt University

Recently, I was participating in a professional development session on microaggressions on our campus. As the conversation moved from theory to the lived experience of those in attendance, powerful and painful stories flowed from many of the participants regarding their experiences on campus and in the broader community, as did stories of intervention and hope from those who have been able to interrupt instances of microaggressions. Towards the end of the session, a white woman colleague expressed her fear of mistaking a mistake (good) but then added: "I might as well just not say anything to anyone any more!" (not good). We had previously engaged in good conversations on privilege, systems of oppression, our campus climate, and what we could do to make a difference. She could have been sharing her frustrations at how to be an ally in the struggle and how to use her privilege to interrupt the cycle of oppression on our campus. But she wasn't. She was voicing the fear common to White people when we talk about race. And she was running away.

This is an all-too-common experience when working with White people (or others in their dominant identities) in social justice. I am sure many of you have had similar experiences. I was surprised, however, by my reaction to her at that moment: I felt disgust; I felt embarrassment; I felt anger and wanted to verbally pounce on her for her ignorance and cowardly approach to a difficult and important topic; I wanted to look away from the train-wreck that was about to

happen; I wanted to get up and leave; I wanted to roll my eyes—I wanted to do anything to not be associated with her. All of this happened in my mind, heart and soul in a manner of microseconds. All these feelings were in contrast to my years in reflecting on my privileges, dialoguing on my role in systems of oppression, finding my place in the work, leading conversations on my campus, presenting at trainings and conferences, consulting, and publishing. In effect, in that moment, I was running away too.

My brain quickly caught up with what was happening and initiated the override sequence. This ability to override has taken me a few years to develop: we White people have been trained to avoid the topic of race, shushed or punished as kids when we acknowledged any kind of difference, and not been taught effective strategies to deal with race and racism in our lives and the world around us. We grew up believing that our version of the world was real and that we were either entitled to anything we wanted or did not have to do anything we did not want to do. Because all of this was training and learning, we can un-train ourselves and learn new models of engaging in race work. The first step to developing an override mechanism is acknowledging that this has not been good for us, that we have real pain behind behaving the way we do, and that continuing to do so is no longer acceptable. Following this path has given me the courage to stay in the difficult conversations and lean into my fear and discomfort rather than running away. Plus, initiating a public, verbal, beat-down of a colleague is never a long-term strategy for coalition building or system change.

These are my expectations of myself in engaging in social justice work. I offer them in this Open Letter to White People as a path for developing and deepening our authentic and systematic engagement toward social change. The path is complex, and often

messy, especially as we begin unraveling privilege from our lives.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

1. Don't Run Away—this is what we do. This is what we are trained to do. We must stop this behavior. For those of you whose inner voice is now saying, "I don't run away," that is exactly what I am talking about. The moment we create distance between our self and another, or distance from an issue, we are running away.
2. Untrain Yourself—We must read, talk, critically reflect on issues, stories, and examples of how injustice and privilege show up in our lives. We must check in with others on our assumptions until we can learn to trust our perspectives again. And then we must act to make changes, which starts the learning cycle again. We need to do our homework.
3. Lead by Example—We need to stop waiting for someone else to do it. Start down the path of freedom by modeling effective resistance strategies in the moment.
4. Self As Instrument—We need to share our stories of struggle, success, mistakes, and reconciliation (I hope I have done some of that here). Doing so most importantly illuminates the path for others to follow. In addition, when people see us doing our own work, it creates opportunities for collaboration, which is ultimately what needs to happen to shift the system of oppression.
5. Support and Encourage—We need to acknowledge the fear and isolation that comes from refusing privilege and shifting an oppressive system. Our support and encouragement is the salve for the hurt that comes from a system trying to keep us in line. It also provides motivation to stay in the work, keep acting for change, and keep trying.
6. Celebrate the Discomfort—Learning and growing is inherently an uncomfortable process, whether it is muscles growing, learning organic chemistry, or growing in our social justice consciousness. We are learning to swim up stream, and we need our new muscles developed.
7. Connect to a community—We can't do this work alone, and people at all stages of development need collaborators and supporters. In addition, we need to create our communities of folk who are willing to engage in the work with us. We need to stop worrying that we will be perceived as white supremacists by having a whiteness dialogue group. Invite people in.
8. Accountability—We need to express what the expectations are of socially just White people in the organization, why being so is in our holistic interests, and hold our colleagues and ourselves accountable for acting as such.
9. Take Risks—Actions that interrupt oppression and injustice are often messy and rarely neatly resolved. We need to take the risk to interrupt the cycle even when we are indelicate, inarticulate, or messy ourselves. Find the courage to do what is needed when it is needed.

On reflection, if I did run away from the situation, I felt like I would be throwing all my contributions and consciousness out the window, that I would be betraying my friends and colleagues with whom I have worked, and choosing my privilege over people. While I know that I have worked hard to override these instincts, I am troubled at how strong they still are. It is a reminder for me to not become complacent in my consciousness and actions. It is a reminder too that my contribution to helping to create a socially just world is to stay in, lean into my discomfort, and be okay with the messiness that can come from our efforts to make real change in a system that has hurt, and still hurts, us all. Perhaps in my efforts, I can be a model for other White folks and people in dominant identities in a way that encourages them to take risks to stay in and engage as well.

A Peek at Convention - March 2013, Las Vegas, Nevada

Who is Melissa Harris-Perry?

Elizabeth Thompson, Area Coordinator for Residential Life, Mount Holyoke College

Earlier this fall, the keynote speaker for ACPA's upcoming national convention in Las Vegas was announced: Melissa Harris-Perry, Political Science professor at Tulane University in New Orleans and host of "Melissa Harris-Perry" on MSNBC. Harris-Perry consistently uses her platforms as an educator and journalist to shed light on issues that are often overlooked by mainstream media outlets. During the election season, Harris-Perry featured a segment called "This Week in Voter Suppression" to highlight the measures that various states took to limit residents' access to voting. Following the re-election of President Barack Obama a segment called "Below the Line" was added, illustrating stories of people in the United States affected by poverty. As a college professor, Harris-Perry is mindful of issues of access and equity in higher education. In November, she was named number one on The Root 100, a list of "black achievers and influencers between the ages of 25 and 45 represent the ideals of The Root," a daily online magazine that features political and social commentary from important Black thought leaders.

Worthwhile clips from MHP:

"What is riskier than being poor in America?" <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/48870824#48870824>