

Oral Defense Announcement

University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the co-authored dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Education in Educational Practice

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Who Cares?! Fostering Inclusive and Empowering Environments for Black Students in Predominately White Institutions: Strategies for Retention and Cultural Engagement

Date: April 11, 2024

Time: 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Location: Remote

Abstract

This research focuses on the critical components of caring relationships and how they relate to first-generation Black students' achievement in higher education. It will reveal how staff-led collegiate programming could benefit first-generation Black college students by allowing them to establish caring relationships and mentorships that allow them to construct a solid support system that is easily accessible to them from the moment they begin college until graduation.

Using data collected from interviews with current college students enrolled in a retention program at a PWI (Predominately White Institution) and in connection with a conceptual framework informed by theorists Nel Noddings, Vincent Tinto, Terrell Strayhorn, and Albert Bandura, we will define what caring relationships looks like, how to build these relationships in programming, and how to make the experience authentic and tailored to each student's needs. By understanding the true significance of caring relationships, their essential elements, and how they relate to the achievement of first-generation Black students in higher education, organizations are forced to put their care where their money is by implementing a core of caring relationships.

To protect the identities of all parties involved, pseudonyms were used for the university name, retention program, and participant names.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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