



UGA faculty members (L-R) Ron Cervero, Diane Morrow, Kecia Thomas, and Juanita Johnson-Bailey discuss faculty mentoring.

and addressing participants' questions and concerns. Among the issues discussed were low enrollment of black students at land-grant institutions, under-representation of black faculty and retention of black faculty.

"I was moved by the passion of the speakers and their willingness to be transparent in sharing personal experiences," said David Ruggless, a graduate student in lifelong education, administration, and policy.

"I felt a sense of uplifting of spirit and reaffirmation of my work with students and colleagues throughout the conference," said Sally Zepeda, associate professor and graduate program coordinator of educational administration and policy. "We owe it to our profession to continue this critically important dialogue about black issues in higher education."

Bettye Smith, an associate professor in the department of workforce education, leadership, and social foundations and co-planner

of the conference, said she hoped the critical mass of black faculty at the conference will spawn conversations about African-Americans' uniqueness and circumstances on UGA's campus and in academia.

"We want to be deliberate in our intention to build a community of mentors for our junior faculty and graduate students," said Smith. "Our panels and guest speakers addressed issues such as, 'How do you build a research agenda? How do you get published?' and 'How do you find a mentor?'"

Several participants said their favorite panels were ones that addressed personal issues of concern.

"The panel that addressed the importance of having a mentor or mentoring others to help them through this maze of higher education was very helpful," said Sasha Johnson, a graduate student in linguistics.

Christina Davis, a graduate student in history, agreed. "The importance of finding a mentor and forming a network to know that you are not alone is advice that I will take to heart," she said.

Ruggless said the panel discussion on publishing and surviving was most helpful to his aspirations of becoming faculty at a Research I university.

Norvella Carter, the endowed chair of urban education at Texas A&M University, delivers a keynote speech at the conference.



Emory University's Vanessa Siddle Walker delivers a keynote speech at the conference.

Throughout the conference, participants commented on the impact they hoped it would have at UGA and beyond.

In his closing comments, Guy noted how the conference touched on the uniqueness of being a part of one community called higher education scholars, but also encompassed being a part of another community, of African Americans.

"This was really a wonderful event, both professionally and personally. Given that so many black faculty and graduate students are isolated within their departments and colleges from other minority peers, it was great to connect and reconnect with others on campus," said Kecia Thomas, a panelist and professor of psychology.



2007 Black Issues in Higher Ed Conference

Keynote speaker: Gloria Ladson-Billings, AERA President and multicultural scholar

Friday, Feb. 2, 2007

University of Georgia
Athens, GA.

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