



4TH ANNUAL
**BLACK
EXPERIENCE
SUMMIT**

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021



Kellie Dixon, Ed.D.
North Carolina
A & T State University



Keynote Speaker

**Gretchen Givens
Generett, Ph.D.**
Duquesne University



Brent Lewis, Ph.D.
James Madison University



Chazz Robinson, M.Ed.
University of Buffalo



**Antoinette Bonnie
Candia-Bailey, Ph.D.**
Elms College



**Sr. Melinda Adrienne
Pellerin, SSJ**
Diocese of Springfield



Keshawn Dodds, M.Ed.
The Boys & Girls Club
Family Center

Underscoring Resilience: A Call to Action

This summit brings people from various disciplines and backgrounds together to learn from each other and strengthen our community.

The Black Experience Summit is hosted by the Elms College President's Office and the Office of Diversity and Engagement.

EVENT SCHEDULE

12:30 p.m. **Welcome,**
Antoinette Bonnie Candia-Bailey, Ph.D.
Vice President of Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer,
Elms College

12:40 p.m. **Opening Remarks**
Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA
President, Elms College

1:05 - 1:35 p.m. **Keynote Speaker**
Gretchen Givens Generett, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, School of Education at Duquesne University
Noble J. Dick Endowed Chair in Community Outreach
***"Stories of Equity and Excellence: Deconstructing
Complex Educational Narratives for Justice"***

1:35 - 1:50 p.m. **Q & A**

1:50 - 2 p.m. **Break**

2 - 3 p.m. **Presentation/Panel Discussion**
***"Who's Coming to Dinner, Discussion on Intersectionality
of Blackness in Higher Education"***
Kellie Dixon, Ed.D., Brent Lewis, Ph.D., and
Chazz Robinson, M.Ed.

3 - 3:15 p.m. **Panel Discussion Q & A**

3:15 - 3:20 p.m. **Break**

3:20 - 3:45 p.m. **Call to Action: Introduction/Panelist**
Walter Breau, Ph.D.
Vice President, Academic Affairs,
Elms College

"Bridging Leadership in the Black Community"
Keshawn Dodds, M.Ed.

"Deep River: A Spiritual Call to Persevere and Challenge"
Sr. Melinda Adrienne Pellerin, SSJ

"The Black Woman Walks; Sistah Show-Up and Show-Out"
Antoinette Bonnie Candia-Bailey, Ph.D.

3:45 - 4 p.m. **Call to Action Affirmations**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF ELMS COLLEGE



Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA
President, Elms College

February 26, 2021, is the fourth time that the very important annual Black Experience Summit will be held at Elms College in Chicopee, MA. In introducing this Summit to the Elms community and the Greater Pioneer Valley Region in February 2018, I rhetorically asked “Why a Black Issues Summit at Elms College?” To that question, I provided three simple answers: it fits with our Mission, it is needed today more than ever, and it offers us a rich academic field to explore.

The African-American experience is a critical element of the unfolding American story from any angle that one could imagine. The Pioneer Valley deserves to have a forum in which experts and the public are convened regularly to revisit this topic with the seriousness that it merits.

Last year, the theme of the Summit “Housing, Health, Education: Basic Human Rights” focused on structural inequities for African Americans in Housing, Healthcare, and Education. Little did we know then that, in subsequent months, the COVID-19 pandemic would place a magnifying glass on these inequalities, or that the brutal murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, would shine a spotlight on the issue of race relations in the United States. We could not have predicted either the degree to which race would play an even more prominent role in the 2020 U.S. presidential election and its aftermath.

All of these recent events have further justified the importance of the 2021 Black Experience Summit at Elms College.

This year’s theme, “Underscoring Resiliency,” should appeal to everyone interested in furthering their understanding of the trials, triumphs, and ongoing challenges of African-Americans as part of the evolving American History. Far from just an academic exercise, the Summit also includes a Call to Action, through which participants will engage actively in discussing how we can all contribute to a better tomorrow.

As in previous years, Elms College is pleased to welcome everyone to this critical conversation, especially our fellow scholars and learners in the Pioneer Valley. In the tradition of our Founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph, you are all our dear neighbors. So, please stop in.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BLACK EXPERIENCE SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Greetings Summit Participants,

The Elms College Office of the President and the Office of Diversity and Engagement are pleased to host our fourth annual Summit to explore the Black Experience in the United States. A diverse group of staff, faculty, and students collaborated to bring an esteemed group of speakers together to examine resilience, strength, and the lived experience of Black people. African-Americans have lived through and survived slavery, and the Jim Crow era. They have, led the fight for Civil Rights, and are now advancing the Black Lives Matter Movement. Their determination to succeed and overcome obstacles has been demonstrated repeatedly.

The Summit will examine the educational, cultural, economic, spiritual, and social justice aspects of the Black experience. This year's theme is **Underscoring Resilience: A Call to Action**. Through discussions and a Call to Action session, the organizers' goal is to bring people from various disciplines and backgrounds to learn from each other, strengthen our community, and better understand the Black experience. Elms College stands with our faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community against racism, oppression, and unequivocally condemns acts of bigotry, bias, and violence against Black people.

Thank you for supporting and attending the Summit.

The 2021 Black Experience Summit Planning Committee



Panelists

Kellie Dixon, Ed.D. serves as the Director of Student Affairs Assessment and Staff Development at North Carolina A&T State University. Dr. Dixon has over 8 years of experience within student affairs (i.e. housing and residence life, judicial affairs, student organization advising, multicultural affairs, assessment). Dr. Dixon is committed to making data-driven decisions as they relate to overall student success.



Gretchen Givens Generett, Ph.D. is Interim Dean and Professor in the School of Education at Duquesne University. She is also the Noble J. Dick Endowed Chair in Community Outreach. Dr. Generett is a qualitative researcher whose research centers on educational stories that have been rendered invisible. Her scholarship intermingles traditional sociology of education, African American studies, and feminist studies with more progressive concepts of justice that examine agency, empowerment, and action. In teaching, Gretchen offers stories as a place for students to recast their individual stories to form a collective narrative that can be used as a catalyst for transformation. Her research and teaching suggest that reflective and interactive storytelling serve a function in uncovering and recovering our individual and collective stories so that we can be intentional in our efforts to dismantle systemic inequities.



Brent Lewis, Ph.D. currently serves as the Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at James Madison University. Dr. Lewis has 9 years of experience working in student affairs (housing and residence life, student conduct, student activities, LGBTQ+ services, commuter student services, & multicultural services). Dr. Lewis is committed to ensuring all students have a positive campus life experience, with a focus on the lived experiences of minority and underrepresented students.



Chazz Robinson, M.Ed. is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Buffalo pursuing his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration. Chazz has 3 years of experience within student affairs (i.e. housing and residence life, advising, admissions, transitional/access programs). Additionally, Chazz has had the opportunity to intern for ACUHO-I, NODA, and NY GearUp respectively. Currently, he is a research fellow and holds a leadership position within ACPA-GNSP and volunteers as an ACPA Pan Scholar. Chazz is interested in contributing great research to the higher education knowledge base that can be used to make campuses more equal and equitable for those holding marginalized identities.



Call to Action Speakers

Keshawn Dodds, M.Ed. became well-known as a high school football player in Springfield and was awarded a football scholarship to American International College in 1997. After graduating with a B.S. in Education, Keshawn became an elementary school teacher within the Springfield Public Schools. He later worked as a Mayoral Aide for Springfield Mayor Charles V. Ryan. He earned his Master of Education degree in 2009 and spent 10 years at AIC in student affairs and as director of Diversity & Community Engagement. He is now executive director of the Boys & Girls Club Family Center. Keshawn is also the author of an eight-volume juvenile fiction series, *Menzuo-Solar Warrior*. He resides in Springfield with his wife, Tamara, and daughter, Sydney.



Sr. Melinda Adrienne Pellerin, SSJ, received her BA in History/Social Sciences /Secondary Education. Sr. Melinda also holds a Masters in Educational Technology from Lesley University. Her achievements and work as an inner-city educator were highlighted in a speech by the late Senator Kennedy on the Senate floor when Miss Pellerin was named 2006 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year. Sr. Melinda is also pastoral minister at Holy Name Parish in Springfield, Massachusetts, where she works with women and men in addiction, and chaplain at the Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Center. Sr. Melinda is a member of the diaconate board for the diocese of Springfield.



"My deep truth:

I meet Jesus at the Well each time I meet the Dear Neighbor.
I bring my gifts, my blackness, my spirituality to my ministries."

Antoinette Bonnie Candia-Bailey, Ph.D. is the Vice President of Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer at Elms College. Bonnie is a native of Chicago, Illinois. Bonnie received a Bachelor of Science, Sociology from Lincoln University in Missouri, a Master of Arts, Rehabilitation Counseling from Michigan State University, and a Ph.D., Leadership Studies from North Carolina A&T State University. Bonnie is very passionate about Higher Education and the future of students. She is a student-centered leader with nearly 20 years of progressive higher education experience in the areas of housing and residence life, diversity and inclusion, student engagement/leadership, campus ministry, athletics, health center, counseling center, fraternity and sorority life, first-year experience, disability resources, gender and sexuality, and academic initiatives. Bonnie's research interests include the Sociocultural Factors African-American Women experience in Higher Education, Identity Development, and Self-Esteem Assurance (particularly in Black Women). Bonnie's mottos are, "All of my good days outweigh my bad days, so I won't complain" and "One Day at a Time."



Black Issues Summit Planning Committee

Antoinette Bonnie Candia-Bailey, Ph.D.

Vice President of Student Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer

Amy Doyle, M.S.

Marketing Specialist

Janice Fedor, Ed.D.

Associate Professor and Chair, Division of Business

Nadia French-Graham '23

Student, Office of Diversity and Engagement

Tyra Good, Ed.D.

Founding Faculty Director, Center for Equity in Urban Education (CEUE);
Associate Professor of Education

Joyce Hampton, Ed.D.

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Strategic and Global Initiatives

Charlene Holmes

Director of Diversity and Engagement, Student Affairs

Dave Legitime, MBA '20

Program Coordinator, Center for Equity in Urban Education (CEUE)

Damien Murray, Ph.D.

Professor of History and Director of Faculty Development, Diversity and Inclusion

Elizabeth Newland

Administrative Assistant, Student Affairs

Melinda Rose, MBA '20

Director of Communications

Student Hosts-Multicultural Scholars Collective (MSC)

Gabriella DeJesus Brown '23

President, MSC

Nadia French-Graham '23

Vice-President, MSC



CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

ELMS COLLEGE • 291 SPRINGFIELD STREET • CHICOPEE, MA 01013