R.A.C.E. MENTORING
An Online Mentoring Group

CO-Founders:

Donna Y. Ford, PhD
Professor
Vanderbilt University
donna.ford@vanderbilt.edu

Michelle Trotman Scott, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
University of West Georgia
fraztrot@westga.edu

Malik S. Henfield, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Program Coordinator,
University of San Francisco
mshenfield@usfca.edu

OVERVIEW

The Ivory Tower is and can often be a lonely place for faculty of color. Social injustices run deep and are entrenched within academia. Faculty of color (FOC), more specifically Black and Hispanic, often lament about the ‘Black/Brown’ tax that frequently takes its toll both personally and professionally, and pushes them out of the academy. Similar to trends in P-12 settings, educators of color in postsecondary contexts represent less than 10% of the profession.
In essence, we are an anomaly and the implications of this are clear and dire, as evidenced by persistent achievement, access, and expectation gaps within the academy.

Scholars of color (SOC), at all stages, but particularly during doctoral training, frequently struggle to not just survive, but to thrive, in the academy. Too many fail to earn their doctoral degree, with many wearing the All But Dissertation (ABD) as a badge of honor. Although ABD is not a degree, many scholars of color receive inadequate mentoring, often substandard in comparison to the hand-holding White students receive, which leaves far too many doctoral students of color lost, bewildered, angry, indignant, and defeated. This righteous indignation is justified, but excused away using the myth of meritocracy and colorblind notions of success; followed by a myriad of problems steeped with victim blaming, as noted in the classic Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia (Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012). The aforementioned work was not the first treatise on higher education and how the non-status quo, along with those grappling with oppression and double standards, experience the profession called higher education. Moreover, The Chilly Climate (Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1996) report, which focused on females, was also telling, but not enough was addressed and disclosed about females of color, until version two. But these issues do not stop with females of color, but instead, extend to all faculty of color.

R.A.C.E. Mentoring, a social media Facebook group, with several subgroups (see Figures 1 and 2) was created by Donna Y. Ford, Michelle Trotman Scott, and Malik S. Henfield in 2013, to tackle the numerous thorny and contentious issues and challenges in higher education. We began by intentionally attending to the needs of students enrolled at mostly White universities, as well as those who attended historically Black colleges and universities, while keeping the unique nuances and challenges of each setting in mind. We wanted scholars of color to thrive in both.
Fondly and affectionately called RM, our charge and challenge is to affirm the dignity and worth of scholars of color. Additionally, we recognize that there are scholars outside of academe, and their contributions as well to impact and affect change for Black and Brown people inside and outside of academe need to be acknowledged. These scholars are community organizers, activists, P-12 teachers, and families. It truly takes a village…

Figure 1. R.A.C.E. Mentoring Subgroups

Figure 2. R.A.C.E. Mentoring Subgroup Mission, Goals, and Objectives.

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| RM Main Page | R.A.C.E. Mentoring (RM) was designed by three professors eager to share their successes...We are moving over to make room at the higher education table!

Drs. Donna Y. Ford, Malik Henfield, and Michelle Trotman Scott have come together to support, nurture, and advocate for Black and Hispanic doctoral students, junior/untenured faculty, and tenured faculty -- too many of whom are under-represented in higher education. Our goal is to share our experiences regarding surviving and thriving in higher education! |
| RM Scholarship (higher education) | R.A.C.E. Mentoring Scholarship (RMS) is a subgroup of R.A.C.E. Mentoring that focuses exclusively on research, grants, publishing!

RMS has been created to support, nurture, and advocate for Black and Hispanic doctoral students, junior/untenured faculty, and tenured faculty -- too many of whom are under-represented in higher education. The goal - surviving and thriving in higher education. |
| RM Neo Writing Bootcamp (higher education) | As a subgroup of R.A.C.E. Mentoring, the new Neo Writing Boot Camp Group is here to support and encourage its members to write, write, write and publish, publish, publish. the group is composed of student, faculty, and community members working collaboratively through the use of 360 degree reviews to develop new, revived, or modified scholarship to be published.

The group as a whole is here to support and encourage each other to tell our stories about surviving and thriving in academia based upon our own unique areas of interest. Group members are encouraged to post writing tools and techniques that they use to write, help each other through writer’s block, or perhaps establish timed writing exercises to ensure that each of us are writing every day. |
| RM Undergraduate and Graduate Scholars (higher education) | RM Undergraduate/Graduate Scholars (RM - UGS) is a sub-group of R.A.C.E. Mentoring for undergraduate students and early career graduate students (not doctoral students) that focuses on professional development and preparation for a career in higher education. RM - UGS supports and nurtures undergraduate and early career graduate students who have a specific interest in higher education.

This RM sub-group is designed to:
- Offer support to underrepresented students in higher education
- Provide a safe space for undergraduate and early career graduate students from underserved communities to discuss their experiences and concerns
- Increase the numbers of undergraduate students who eventually pursue |
| RM Teaching and Advising (higher education) | R.A.C.E. Mentoring TEACHING (RMT) is a subgroup that focuses exclusively on classrooms -- teaching and advising! RMT has been created to support, nurture, and advocate for Black and Hispanic doctoral students, junior/untenured faculty, and tenured faculty -- too many of whom are under-represented in higher education. Surviving and thriving in higher education is our goal. We post information, but also seek questions, readings, resources, and strategies from members. |
| RM Leadership (P – 12) | As a subgroup of R.A.C.E. Mentoring, RM LEADERSHIP (Administrators, Principals, Supervisors) is focused on leadership. It is a place for past, present, and aspiring PreK-12 leaders who believe that our children are worth saving and educating. We believe that leaders must be culturally responsive, student centered and driven by high expectations for students historically marginalized in PreK-12 public schools. This is a space where our concerns, questions, and thoughts can be addressed in a safe environment, while we collectively strive to support mentor, encourage and celebrate each other as we embark upon this quest together! This is also a place where we can share strategies, articles, publications and research that will allow us to remain current and abreast of the fast paced environment of PreK-12 Public Education. |
| RM Families and Communities (P – 12) | RM FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES was created for those who are not in higher education but seek to advocate for equitable changes in formal educational settings. Racially and linguistically different populations (i.e., Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaska Natives) are almost half of U.S. schools, with projections that they will be the numerical majority in a few years, as they already are in many districts, cities, and states. However, this school diversity is not reflected in gifted education nationally, specifically among Black and Hispanic/Latino students. For these two major groups and other subgroups, under-representation and underachievement are pervasive. Lack of success in recruiting and retaining racially, culturally, and linguistically different students is a function of teacher under-referrals, parent under-referrals, test and instrument selection, as well as screening, identification, and placement policies and procedures (e.g., cutoff scores and criteria). |
| RM Health and Spirituality | This Mind-Body-Spirit group is formed with the idea of supporting, promoting and sharing knowledge, resources and experiences that help maintain a healthy lifestyle. Members are able to: Post and share exercise, cooking, yoga, meditation and other videos; participate in numerous discussions on almost any topic; share healthy recipes and |
recommend cookbooks; arrange personalized across the miles walks; offer feedback and develop buddy systems -- someone to hold you accountable or help monitor personal goals. A healthy body goes hand in hand with a healthy mind.

Thus, if it means maintaining a healthy state of mind, RM-H&S is also a place to vent about racial, gender and other day-to-day indignities that affect health and wellness; or just a place to seek feedback on our original ideas that may seem out of whack or atypical. Although RM-H&S was not created to promote religious ideologies or products; members are able to share these views and recommend products and services.

R.A.C.E. proudly and unapologetically stands for Research, Advocacy, Collaboration, and Accountability. The secret group, some 300 strong, provides a space for, scholars, activists, community organizers, P-12 teachers, parents and concerned citizens to collaborate and support one another. Membership within this group is unique in that it is monitored based on contributions and trust. The collective group of RM members is not seeking popularity, but rather impact. Our goal is to ensure that education (i.e., P-21) and the promotion and tenure pipeline is primed and brimming with people of color.

**R.A.C.E. Mentoring: Hearing from a Few Members**

RM members are publishing, presenting, consulting, teaching, organizing, leading, challenging, affirming, collaborating, and more. In *R.A.C.E. Mentoring Through Social Media: Black and Hispanic Scholars Share Their Journey in the Academy*, co-editors Ford, Trotman Scott, Goings, Wingfield and Henfield. Each contributor shares challenges along with triumphs that were achieved as a result of their membership in RM. The book is divided into sections that represent the membership of R.A.C.E. Mentoring, that is, doctoral students, assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, higher education administrators, and P – 12 teachers and administrators; some of whom rose in rank since becoming a member of RM. We, the creators of
this space and co-editors of this book, by no means take (or want to take) full or exclusive credit for the successes shared. But, we do humbly accept the credit that is given in each chapter.

Each chapter is a positive affirmation of RM’s original and continued goal, vision, and purpose: to empower scholars of color in order to be competitive – highly competitive – in a space (Ivory Tower) that too often deems us as unnecessary, incompetent and expendable. We each operate in a space that discounts, ignores, and/or trivializes racism, sexism and classism, that oozes with myths of meritocracy and more. This said, we share the lived professional and personal experiences of those who have managed to overcome… or are in the process of overcoming these obstacles, and want their voices heard – loud and clear – in an effort to spark changes that are more than reasonable. The chapters are organized according to the status of contributors at the time of joining R.A.C.E. Mentoring (RM), not their current status. This is intentional to show RM’s impact and contribution.

References


improve the education of women: Executive summary. Washington, DC: National Association for Women in Education.