2020 African American Excellence in Education Awards

The African-American Excellence in Education Awards pays tribute to those educators who go the extra mile each day to serve their students and their communities and inspire others to do the same.

School of Education Awardees include:

FACULTY

Chalmer Thompson
Associate Professor
Department: Urban Education Counseling, Leadership and Policy Studies
Program: Counseling and Counselor Education, Urban Education Studies

Biography: In general, I study and develop theory about the psychological impacts of racism on people. More specifically, I study and try to help promote the ability of people to create the kind of change that is necessary in developing genuine, positive mental health and a more just society. Much of this change can occur when people who are in positions of influence, like counselors/therapists, teachers, and community leaders, are equipped with good theory and respectful and informed guidance.
I focus a good deal of my attention on discourse, or how people interact with one another verbally and non-verbally, and on creative ways to reach children in resisting the negative manifestations of racism while simultaneously, advancing strategies that build their identities as sociopolitical beings.

Crystal Morton
Associate Professor
Department: Urban Teacher Education
Program: Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Urban Education Studies

Biography: Crystal H. Morton is currently an Associate Professor of mathematics education at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) and a member of the Enhancing the Effectiveness of Socially Transformative STEM Education (ES)2 Research Program. Dr. Morton teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Elementary and Secondary Mathematics Methods, General Secondary Methods, and Assessment in Schools. Her research is driven by a passion to understand why African American students, particularly females, are disproportionately underachieving in mathematics.

Dr. Morton seeks to uncover the barriers that hinder many African American female students from being successful in their mathematics-education courses and from pursuing advanced study in the subject. Her collaborative research agenda centers around three broad areas:

- Developing an in-depth understanding of the development of African American females as mathematical learners;
• Developing an understanding and critique of factors outside of the learner (both African American males and females) that adversely affect their teaching and learning;
• Developing interventions aimed at improving the mathematics teaching and learning of African American male and female students.

Focusing on mathematics and science development of African American students, Dr. Morton has co-designed and implemented several summer programs engaging girls and young women in mathematics in order to increase their confidence and interest in STEM-related careers. She has served as a mentor for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, mentored students in the IUPUI Diversity Scholars Research Program (DSRP) and the IUPUI UCASE research experience, because she values the importance of engaging undergraduate students in rich research experiences. In addition to her current faculty appointment, Dr. Morton serves as Coordinator for Secondary Programs. Dr. Morton has also spent time in Kenya on several occasions working with Moi University School of Education faculty to lay the groundwork for a student and faculty exchange program.

The former high school mathematics teacher has received awards for her service, research, and teaching. In 2010 she was selected as a Service Teaching and Research (STAR) in Mathematics Education Fellow. In 2014, she was awarded Guidance Life-skills and Mentoring Icon Award and in 2015 she was awarded the INSIGHT Into Diversity Inspiring Women in Stem Award.

Natasha Flowers
Clinical Associate Professor
Department: Urban Teacher Education
Program: Elementary Education, Urban Education Studies

Biography: Natasha Flowers primarily teaches in the Elementary Education program. She has led university-school partnerships in Wayne Township and Indianapolis Public Schools.

Dr. Flowers teaches courses in multicultural education and teaches introductory course on curriculum theory for the Urban Principalship Program. Dr. Flowers has supervised student teachers in urban schools. She has worked with local community-based education-focused organizations such as the National Council on Educating Black Children and Freetown Village. For three years, she has coordinated the pre-block courses for the teacher education programs. In this role, she supports School of Education's recruitment efforts, committed to college student access to faculty diversity, and coordinates the schedule of courses. In this role, she collaborates with local schools and organizations to strengthen the required service learning component in the preblock courses.

She has worked in afterschool programs, first year writing programs in four year and community college programs, college faculty development, and advocacy programs for faculty, staff, and students from groups commonly and grossly excluded. Her presentations and writing typically focuses on multicultural education, anti-racist scholarship, critical race theory, and the Black community.
Tiffany Kyser
Associate Director of Engagement & Partnerships
Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center

Biography: Dr. Kyser is the Associate Director for Engagement and Partnerships at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center (MAP Center) within the Great Lakes Equity Center. In this role, Dr. Kyser leads the coordination of technical assistance support and collaboration with the MAP Center’s service provision team to plan, direct, and manage supports and professional learning experiences offered to state and local education agencies throughout the MAP Center’s thirteen-state region. Dr. Kyser has over fifteen years of experience in outreach education, K-12 teaching and administration, higher education administration, authorizing, and education policy. Her research and work are rooted in collaboration, design thinking, and change management. Dr. Kyser has received executive training at Harvard, Stanford, and Indiana Universities. She is a graduate of Culver Girls Academy of the Culver Academies. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education, a Master of Arts in English, and a Ph.D. of Philosophy in Urban Education Studies from Indiana University.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Kiara Eskew
Clinton M. Gardner
Gary D. Peters