



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF DIVERSITY OFFICERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Love in the Time of Covid

2021 Fall Summit
AGENDA

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

9:00 - 9:15 AM

Dr. Sherri Benn, Immediate past President of TADOHE
Welcome and Introduction of TADOHE Executive Board

9:15 - 9:45 AM Collaborative Keynote Address
Mitchell Ward and Pamela Wills-Ward

9:45 - 10:00 AM

Dr. Skyller Walkes, TADOHE President
Occasion and Vision

10:00 - 10:55 AM

Dr. Maurice Green, Founder of Black Doctoral Network
Affirming Affinity Support Communities

11:00 - 11:55 AM

Ms. Bianca Rodriguez, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Preparing Healthcare Professionals in Training with a Spirit of Cultural Humility

12:00- 12:30 PM Lunch Break

Informational Presentation of Mental Health Micro-Session Opportunities and Counselor Bios

12:30 - 1:15 PM TADOHE Ambassadors Panel

Impact of Effective Support from Universities, Staff, Faculty, and
Communities and How It's Helped Them Persist

1:15 - 2:00 PM

Mr. Christopher Jones, Davis and Elkins College-Colorado
What's the Borg Got to Do with it: Higher Education and Assimilation Culture

2:00 - 3:00 PM Mr. Gary Bledsoe, Texas NAACP President

*Safeguarding Students' Right to Vote on Your Campus and Addressing Student Loan Frustration from
Students*

3:00 - 3:45 PM

Dr. Andrea R. Roberts/Ms. Jennifer Blanks, Texas A&M University
*Excavating Buried Histories: The Texas Freedom Colonies and How it Contributes
to Diversity in Education*

3:45 - 4:00 PM

Mr. Robert Garcia, Executive Vice President of TADOHE
Closing Remarks

WELCOME



Sherri Humphrey Benn, Ph.D.
Immediate Past President of TADOHE

Dr. Sherri Benn currently serves as the inaugural Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Tarleton State University. She formerly served as Assistant Vice President for Institutional Inclusive Excellence for Student Initiatives for Texas State University and had oversight for student diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, inclusive of all college and pre-college Trio programs. Additionally, she taught Social Justice in Higher Education and Multicultural Practices in the Student Affairs in Higher Education Master's Program.

Benn is a native of Oklahoma and moved to Texas to attend college. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Master of Education from Texas State. She received her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Higher Education Administration with cognate studies in anthropology and sociology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Benn has served as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Director of Student Diversity and Inclusion, two years as Interim Director of Residence Life, Assistant Dean of Students, Texas State University Student Ombudsperson, Coordinator of Student Justice and 504 ADA Coordinator. During her tenure at Texas State she has had supervisory responsibilities for Disability Services, Student Health Services, Attorney for Students, the university mentoring program, and the Round Rock Student Affairs unit. Dr. Benn has lead, coordinated, and participated in many student life and university programs while at Texas State, including advising numerous student groups such as, Student Government, Interruptions Anti-racism Peer Educators, Hip Hop Congress, Student Foundation, Black President's Council, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc, Golden Key National Honor's Society, Bobcat Fanatics and many others.

Benn served as the university's 2020 Elections Task Force Chair and is Co-chair for the Council on Inclusive Excellence. She has served in a variety of national, state, and community leadership roles.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS



Mitchell Ward

Mitchell Ward graduated from Texas State University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in education. He is a lifetime member of the Texas State Alumni Association and a member of the Touchdown Team. Mr. Ward is also on the Texas State's Alumni Board of Directors and is the Dallas chair of the Bobcat Club Leadership Council. He received the Alumni Achievement Award in 2008 and is a "T" Association letter recipient.

Mr. Ward is the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Dallas-based MW Logistics LLC, a company that he founded in July 2001. MW Logistics LLC, which achieved profitability early on, has emerged as one of the leading third-party logistics providers in North America. MW Logistics LLC designs logistics and transportation solutions for businesses such as Proctor and Gamble, General Mills, Clorox and Coke, by working with asset-based partners to secure shipping capacity and services across multiple transportation modes, including over the road, rail and bulk/tanker options. In addition to MW Logistics LLC, in 2000 Mitchell started a new entrepreneurial venture, American Black Rhino, to meet the personal protection needs of schools and businesses.

Mitchell, an advocate for giving to others, is committed to giving back to communities through philanthropic initiatives and college work programs.

Through MW Cares, the philanthropic arm of his organization, he supports organizations such as Dallas Life, The Family Place and The Paul Quinn College Initiative. Last year, MW Cares brought together several organizations, businesses, and the North Texas area Food Banks to deliver the largest food give-away in the history of North Texas feeding over 60,000 families in November 2020.

Mitchell resides in Dallas, Texas and is married to his Texas State college sweetheart, Pamela Wills-Ward ('87) and has three children MJ, Samantha and Preston.



Pamela Wills-Ward

Pamela Wills-Ward believes that great outcomes can be achieved when you have the right people in the right roles focusing on the right things. As Chief People & Strategy Officer, Pam brings over 20 years of experience as a global HR executive to MW Logistics, American Black Rhino and American Black Rhino Fulfillment. Her broad base of experience includes the development and deployment of talent focused strategies, merger and acquisition integration, leading system implementations and corporate travel program administration. A graduate of Texas State University, Pamela holds both a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in business administration. In addition, she is a graduate of the Stanford Executive Program offered by the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

OCCASSION

Skyller Walkes, Ph.D.

2021 TADOHE Executive Chair/President

Dr. Skyller Walkes is a deeply impassioned diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion leader who champions critical dialogue with the hopes of impacting positive change within shared communities. As a graduate of the Adult, Professional, and Community Education doctoral program at Texas State University, her scholarship focuses on Critical Race Theory, Afro-Latinx identity, art activism, race and intersectionality. Dr. Walkes also holds three Bachelor's degrees in the areas of Communications, English, and Mass Media Journalism from Rutgers University and a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and Administration from Kean University.



In her current role as the inaugural Assistant Dean of Diversity & Inclusion and Assistant Professor of Instruction in the College of Pharmacy at the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Walkes serves as chief College of Pharmacy spokesperson for diversity and inclusion, while bringing leadership, vision, integrity, and an intentionally inclusive team-oriented philosophy to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion efforts. This encompasses areas of recruitment, selection, appointment, and retention of diverse students, faculty and staff, while promoting a culturally responsive approach to pedagogical and andragogical development in the Healthcare Sciences.

Prior to her current role with the University of Texas at Austin, she served as Interim Director in the Office of Disability Services at Texas State University, where she advanced the social justice framework applied to include an intersectionality frame around disability supports, outreach, and services. For roughly 20 years, Dr. Walkes' professional and academic career have taken her to various locales, which include research and community engagement in Chile, Brazil, South Africa, and several countries across Europe. As an educator who works across K-20 trajectories, including adult and community education, both domestically and internationally with various populations, Dr. Walkes aims to engage learners in formal, non-formal, and informal spaces.

Dr. Walkes has successfully developed and implemented a restorative justice and positive identity development curriculum at the Hays County Juvenile Detention Center, serves on the Steering Committee for the Hays Caldwell Women's Center and as president of the Board of Directors for the Calaboose African American History Museum, where she also serves as their Director of Programming. She also volunteers regularly with Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos as an Amiga del Centro and serves as the Chief of Staff and Director of Operations for Where We Thrive. Dr. Walkes' professional associations include, president for the Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education and Director of University Partnerships Advisory Board for the Black Doctoral Network.

AFFIRMING AFFINITY SUPPORT COMMUNITIES



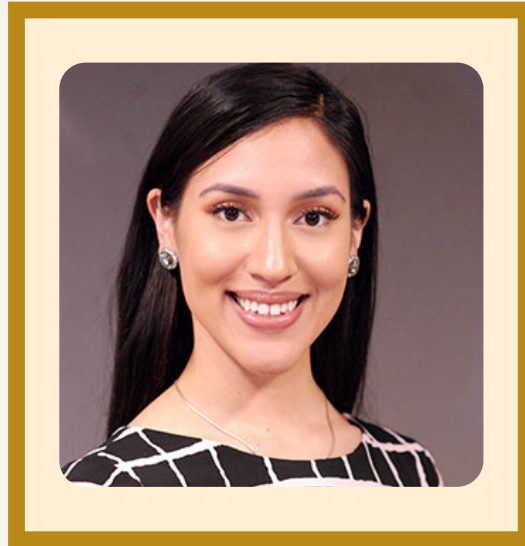
Maurice Greene, Ph.D.
Founder of Black Doctoral Network

Over the last 15 years, Dr. Green has successfully utilized his relevant skill sets, initiative, problem-solving abilities and positive attitude to achieve remarkable results. During these years, he has served in various organizational capacities; thriving in his ability to be versatile in function, yet creative in action.

In 2011, he founded the Black Doctoral Network (BDN), an organization that strives to lead the next generation of Black and Latino scholars to reach new heights. Black Doctoral Network is a bridge-leader, creating paths between scholars, disciplines, and academic universities while serving as an invaluable connection between higher education and the community at large. It avails an opportunity for Black and Latino scholars to collaboratively address and engage issues that are faced by persons in the university and K-12 educational systems.

Dr. Green obtained both a Bachelors and Masters of Arts degree in Sociology from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He also holds a Masters of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College and a Masters of Philosophy degree from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He also obtained his doctorate in Criminal Justice at the same institution.

PREPARING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN TRAINING WITH A SPIRIT OF CULTURAL HUMILITY



Bianca Rodriguez

Graduate Medical Education Coordinator UT Rio Grande Valley

Bianca currently assists with the coordination of two medical residency programs at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Prior to her current role, she was in the corporate healthcare field in Chicago, Illinois where she assisted in bridging the gap between pharmaceutical companies and the community. Bianca also has experience in the non-profit sector where she managed a nursing assistant training program in Madison, Wisconsin. The nursing assistant training program assisted with increasing the number of nursing assistants of color in Dane County. While in her role, she developed a mentorship component to help support and guide non-traditional students of color in continuing their education in the medical field. Bianca continues to work towards reducing health disparities, diversifying the healthcare workforce, and promoting health and wellness for communities of color.

LUNCH BREAK AND INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH MICRO-SESSION OPPORTUNITIES AND COUNSELOR BIOS



Counselor: Blanca Sanchez-Navarro

From 1989 to 2016, Blanca Sanchez-Navarro, LPC-S, LCDC worked as a therapist at Texas State University Counseling Center, seeing clients individually, in group therapy and serving as the Assistant Director of Educational Outreach. Blanca has presented hundreds of workshops to students, faculty and staff and at state and national conferences on a wide range of topics including depression, suicide, substance use disorders, diversity and student leadership. Her work has enhanced her knowledge and interest in issues for emerging adults, the impact of substance related disorders in communities, serving veterans, social justice and equality issues. In December of 2016, she retired as an Assistant Director and opened a private practice in mental health speaking and counseling in Spring 2017.



Counselor: Quanesha Johnson

Quanesha Johnson is a Licensed Professional Counselor, National Certified Counselor and Educator. She is the owner of a private counseling and educational services practice, BTG Counseling and Educational Services, LLC. BTG stands for “bridging the gap” as the goal and focus of her practice is to provide the education, tools, strategies and support for individuals and families to live their best lives. Quanesha has a Masters Degree in Counseling from New York University as well as a Certificate of Advanced Study in Counseling from Chestnut Hill College. She received her undergraduate degree in Political Science. Her initial goal was to become a lawyer, but life led her in a different direction and she is most thankful for that. QSJ Instead of law school after college graduation, Quanesha did an accelerated program in education and became an elementary teacher. School Counseling followed as her next step in the journey. Quanesha has diverse experiences and knowledge in the fields of Counseling and Education. She has worked as a Mobile Therapist, Behavior Specialist Consultant, Clinical Therapist, and Career Counselor. Quanesha strongly believes in the power of education and loves coupling knowledge of therapeutic practices with her teaching background. Her workshops and trainings range from Stress Management, Goal Setting, Time Management to Resume/Cover Letter writing, Work Life Integration and Behavior Based Interview Strategies. She very importantly tells all of her clients that the support she provides to them is “tailor made” and not a “one size fits all” approach. This is applicable to the counseling office, the workplace, school and any environment that she works in. Quanesha lives in Bethlehem, PA with her husband and 3 children. In her spare time she loves running and working out. She serves as a board member of the Allentown Public Theatre and a member of Grace Deliverance Baptist Church, where she serves as Director of Vacation Bible School.

LUNCH BREAK AND INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH MICRO-SESSION OPPORTUNITIES AND COUNSELOR BIOS



Counselor: Shaywana L Harris-Pierre, PhD

As we navigate life, we have experiences that shape how we view ourselves and others. Sometimes these experiences and our circumstances become overwhelming and we need help straightening things out to see things clearly. As a Cognitive Behavioral Therapist, I support and empower my individual, couple, and family clients by embarking with them on a journey of discovery to explore how small changes in patterns of thought and behaviors may be helpful in alleviating them from their feelings of being “stuck.” I provide trauma focused therapy to individuals, couples, and families experiencing chronic stress. Because stress and trauma have physiological as well as psychological impacts, I integrate principles of neuroscience and biology into therapy to explain physiological aspects of behaviors as they relate to trauma and interpersonal relationships. Trauma can exist as the response to many different types of experiences. It is especially important for me to validate and honor my clients’ experiences with race-based trauma as well. I approach my work with each of my clients understanding and acknowledging the differences that exist between us, knowing my client is the expert on their life and experiences. Unforeseen circumstances have put us all in a state of chaos. An effective therapeutic relationship can help you to work to regain control of the things you can, while extending yourself grace for the things you can’t.

EDUCATION

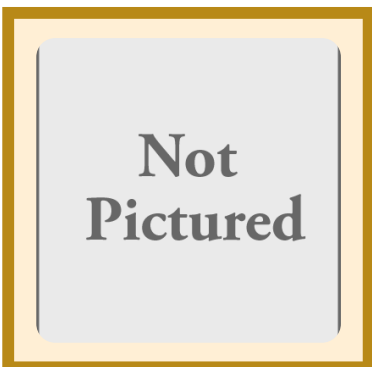
I received my Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Hampton University, my Master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from the University of Akron, and my Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) from the University of Central Florida in Counselor Education. I also work as a professor of Professional Counseling at Texas State University, where I teach Master’s level student’s how to be counselors!

Specialties:

Adult Individuals, Couples/Relationships, Trauma and Race Based Traumatic Stress

Areas of Expertise:

Communication issues, Traumatic and/or life changing events



Counselor: Binta Brown, PhD

Dr. Binta Brown is Director of Diversity and Talent Management for the Financial and Administrative Services portfolio at the University of Texas at Austin. Her work centers on building sustainable, inclusive work environments for all. She has a strong bias for focusing on equitable organizational policy and practices that inform inclusive behavior expectations in the workplace. Prior to this, she held a joint appointment with HR and the Provost Office, where she advised campus search committees for executive and hard-to-fill positions in all phases of the hiring process and designed and facilitated equity, diversity, and inclusion related workshops. She also provided a suite of career coaching services to the partners of high-profile faculty new to the City of Austin. Before going to UT, she served as Director of Career Services at a mid-sized university. Dr. Brown is a nationally certified counselor, certified online instructor, and licensed professional counselor-supervisor and has close to twenty years of experience teaching, counseling, and coaching others.

11:00 AM

LUNCH BREAK AND INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION OF MENTAL HEALTH MICRO-SESSION OPPORTUNITIES AND COUNSELOR BIOS



Counselor: Catherine Bitney, PhD

I have a passion for helping clients reduce anxiety, stress, confusion, sadness, and pain - so that they can live more fulfilling/happy lives. Many of my clients have stated that coming to therapy has helped to catapult them out of their stagnation - enabling them to reach their full potential. I enjoy helping clients explore their intersecting identities and my own identity as a multiracial, queer, gender nonconforming therapist enables me to understand clients who feel like outsiders.

TADOHE AMBASSADORS PANEL

IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FROM UNIVERSITIES, STAFF, FACULTY, AND COMMUNITIES AND HOW IT'S HELPED THEM PERSIST



Cassie Cathcart is from Durango Colorado. She graduated with her B.S. in Wildlife Conservation Biology from Humboldt State University in 2015, and her M.S. in College Student Affairs from Nova Southeastern University (NSU) in 2017. Cassie has served as a Residence Director for Texas State University since graduating from NSU and loves engaging with the vibrant, enthusiastic, activist students who call themselves Bobcats!



Dionte McClendon serves as cofounder for RE[ME]DY Retreats LLC which centers and supports Black mental health/wellness. In his role Dionte oversees content development, logistics and provides strategic direction. Beyond this role, Dionte passionately works with youth interested in amplifying their voice through advocacy, civic engagement and community service.

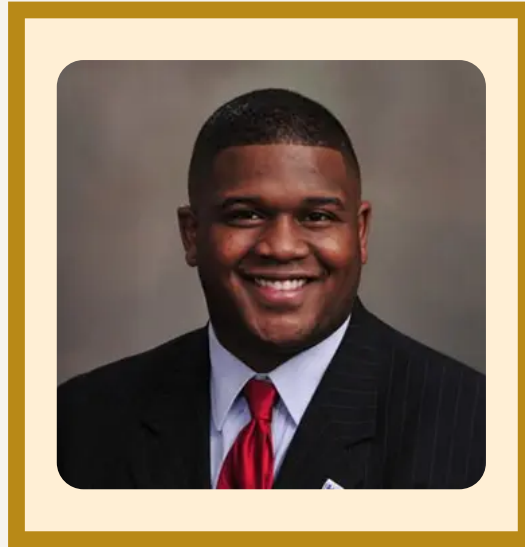


Grace Akinyemi is a perseverant student pharmacist at the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy. Once she graduates, she aspires to be a Pediatric Ambulatory Care Clinical Pharmacist, a Clinical Professor, and continue to serve in her church. She spends her spare time reading, dancing, singing, and tutoring. She is also passionate about making an impact in the community and inspiring youth in any way that she can. Her current interests include primary care, people experiencing homelessness, academia, and women's health. In addition, she seeks to make an impact in the lives of underserved populations across the nation.



Emi Ruiz is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi. She loves having the opportunity to work with students of different backgrounds. She believes it's important to remember that everyone is different, and that understanding those differences will ultimately bring us closer together.

WHAT'S THE BORG GOT TO DO WITH IT: HIGHER EDUCATION AND ASSIMILATION CULTURE



Christopher Jones

Career Services Director at Davis and Elkins College

Christopher Jones, a Seminole, Texas native, is the Director of Career Services at Davis & Elkins College. As the leader of the career services team, Chris provides career counseling to current students as well as recent alumni while facilitating the student internship program as he helps engage individuals in experiences that will allow them to explore their interests as they determine their careers. Chris has a vast amount of professional experience in connecting career counseling and economic development to Diversity and Inclusion work. When Chris was a senior in college, he was elected to and served two terms in the San Marcos City Council, one as deputy mayor. Jones holds a Master of Science degree in information technology/networks from Colorado Technical University, a Master's in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration, both from Texas State University. He also is a 2011 graduate of the National Association of Colleges and Employers Leadership Institute, holds a National Career Development Association FCDA Certificate and is certified by the Global Career Development Facilitator Center for Credentialing & Education.

2:00 PM

SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS' RIGHT TO VOTE ON YOUR CAMPUS AND ADDRESSING STUDENT LOAN FRUSTRATION FROM STUDENTS

Gary Bledsoe J.D.

Texas NAACP President



Regent Gary Bledsoe is President of the Texas NAACP and has held that position since being elected in 1991. The Austin lawyer, who specializes in public interest law, employment and civil rights law, has a longstanding relationship with the NAACP as a member of its National Board since 2003, and is currently the Chair of the National Criminal Justice Committee of the NAACP.

Bledsoe's ties with the NAACP enabled him to make substantial civil rights changes, which include his handling of racial discrimination complaints against the Austin Department of Public Safety that dismantled racial barriers that prevented minorities and women from becoming Texas Rangers.

His involvement in the Cedar Avenue case resulted in heightened public awareness of the Austin Police Department's mishandling of minority youth and led to widespread changes in how police abuse cases are handled. The landmark settlement resulted in the creation of a scholarship program for college-bound minority youth. Bledsoe also negotiated an African-American student scholarship program with HEB which provides \$25,000 in scholarships for students attending Texas Southern University, Prairie View A&M University, and Huston-Tillotson University. Bledsoe's legal acumen has earned him an AV rating according to the prestigious legal publication Martindale-Hubbell, the second-highest rating available for lawyers.

Bledsoe has received several lawyers of the year awards from the Texas Attorney General and the Travis County Bar Association, the Austin and national NAACP, and the Austin Area Urban League, among others. He has also received the Kelly Alexander State President of the Year Award, the Juanita Jackson Mitchell Award for Legal Advocacy and the Benjamin Hooks Keeper of the Flame Award and is on the Houston Hall of Fame at Riverside General Hospital. All have recognized him for his legal acumen and civil rights efforts. He earned a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University Of Texas School Of Law, where he is the permanent class president of the Class of 1976.

3:00 PM

EXCAVATING BURIED HISTORIES: THE TEXAS FREEDOM COLONIES AND HOW IT CONTRIBUTES TO DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION

Dr. Andrea Roberts is Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at Texas A&M University. Her peer-reviewed scholarship frames grassroots planning & historic preservation practices as avenues to social justice. Her commentaries have appeared in Newsweek and The Conversation. As Founder & Director of The Texas Freedom Colonies Project,™ she manages a statewide, participatory action research project which maps endangered vernacular landscapes and documents community histories, conditions, heritage materials, and vulnerabilities for 500+ historic African American settlements. Dr. Roberts is also the Owner of Freedom Colonies Project, LLC, a preservation consultancy. The Vernacular Architecture Forum, the Urban Affairs Association, and the Whiting Foundation have recognized her engaged scholarship. She is currently writing a book about Black placemaking and historic preservation practice for The University of Texas Press.



Dr. Andrea R. Roberts
Texas A&M University

Jennifer Blanks is pursuing a doctoral degree in Urban and Regional Science at Texas A&M University. Jennifer is a member of the Texas Freedom Colonies Project under the mentorship of Dr. Andrea Roberts. Jennifer is also the founder of the social media platform, The Cemetery Sista - an initiative to raise awareness of preserving Black American cemeteries. Through this platform, Jennifer engages in the storytelling of featured cemeteries and well-known historical figures in addition to Black Americans who made an impact in their communities. Jennifer also visits cemeteries and explains various hazards that threaten them. Lastly, Jennifer acknowledges preservation organizations across the United States who share the same efforts as her: preserving Black American cemeteries. Today, the goal of The Cemetery Sista is to fill in the gaps of Black history through cemeteries.



Jennifer Blanks
Texas A&M University

CLOSING REMARKS



Robert Garcia

Executive Vice President TADOHE

Robert Garcia graduated from Howard Payne University with a bachelors in Communication Studies and from Angelo State University with a Masters in Student Development and Leadership in Higher Education. His professional experience primarily focuses on the LGBTQiA+ community as well as first generation and Latinx/o/a/e student populations also. He currently serves as an assistant director for Institutional Inclusive Excellence at Texas State University and oversees LGBTQiA+ student initiatives and as the Executive Vice President for TADOHE.