



# Voices

ILLINOIS COMMITTEE ON BLACK CONCERNS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## ICBCHE

[www.icbche.org](http://www.icbche.org)

Summer 2010 Edition



### Message from the ICBCHE Chair: A Call to Action

**Michael Toney, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director  
Urban Health Program  
University of Illinois at Chicago

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If the political winds blowing out of Texas and Arizona are telling us one thing, it is that our work as advocates for students of color is more important than ever. We are at a major crossroads in American political history, and education, specifically education of our students, is right in the middle of that crossroads.

First there was the controversial immigration law that was signed by Arizona's Governor, Jan Brewer, in late April. That law MANDATES that law enforcement officials question anyone who they believe might be an illegal immigrant and ask for proof of citizenship. Clearly this law is targeted at Latinos, but the racial profiling that it not only allows but encourages should not be overlooked by Blacks. We know that some of our Latino brothers and sisters can have skin just as dark as ours, so what would prevent Arizona law enforcement officers, anxious to avoid the lawsuits that the immigration law threatens for those who do not enforce it, to stop and question any ethnic minority?

Brewer followed up her support of the immigration legislation with her signing of a law that restricts ethnic studies curricula in Arizona schools, arguing that such programs promote dislike and distrust of non-minorities despite the recommendations from educators across the country of the benefits such programs have on marginalized student groups and no evidence that any of the questioned curriculum promotes anti-White or anti-American attitudes.

Then we get news from Texas that the State Board of Education there is literally rewriting history, requiring that history textbooks used in Texas schools downplay the significance of the Civil Rights Movement, focus less on the positive, community-based efforts of

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## Message from the ICBCHE Chair

the Black Panther party and focus more on some of its violent encounters, and eliminating references to the separation of Church and State as part of the content or intent of the U.S. Constitution.

Although the actions being taken are a bit less overt, we are not immune to the effects of this conservative push here in Illinois either. What we see in Illinois, and particularly in higher education, is the scaling back or elimination of programs designed to help Black and other minority people in the name of fiscal responsibility and necessary steps to address the budget crisis. Especially on our college campuses, we see the impact that no HECA-supported programs, rising tuition costs, and the scaling back of TRIO, DFI, and MAP programs, is having on students of color. Fewer and fewer can afford to attend, and those students that are admitted into college find less and less support once they get there.

It is more important now than ever that we push back against these conservative forces that clearly do not have our best interests in mind. We have to speak out against the laws in Arizona and Texas, and more importantly against the budget and program cuts here on our Illinois campuses. And we cannot be a few solitary voices screaming against the storm, but rather must find ways to unify our collective outcry. Now is the time to build relationships and partnerships. Now is the time to stand together so as to be most effective.

We cannot afford to work alone on these important issues. We need to reach out to one another, to help each other gather external, community pressure on college and university campuses that are cutting back on programs and services that benefit or provide access to our students. We need to share best practices amongst each other so that we all have good ideas for combating these problems and solid rationale for arguing against the administrators and politicians who continue to cut away at our gains that are the result of more than 50 years of struggle and vigilance. Speaking of politicians, we need to reach out to our elected officials, those from our communities and those from other communities, to let them know that Black and Brown success in higher education is vital to our State economy and infrastructure. We should also be reaching out to our Brown brothers and sisters, as they share many of the same concerns we face, and our voice coupled with theirs holds that much more influence and power.

It has never been easier to network and communicate via technology that provides access to people and information instantaneously, often at the push of a button. Let's make use of that technology to interact with each other, and to expand our networks. Let's share information and best practices via e-mail and list servs. Let's flood our elected officials telephone lines and e-mail mailboxes with cries for their support of programs that promote access, equity, and minority student success. Let's build websites and start blogs that encourage everyone to push back against the conservative forces that are trying to reshape the American education agenda so that they might maintain power at a time when they no longer hold a population majority in many of our states, and soon will not hold a majority in our overall U.S. population.

Most importantly, let's work together on all of this. Let's take advantage of our collective energy and knowledge and experience, and that of our friends and colleagues to whom we reach out, so that our unified efforts are most effective in our push for access and equity in the face of an ever growing and ever desperate push against us.

## Defining the Urban Mission



ICBCHE Chair, Michael Toney attended the 5th Annual Joint Summer Meeting for the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities (USU) and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Commission on Urban Initiatives (CUI). The meeting took place in Washington, D.C. on July 19 – 20. The purpose of the meeting was to highlight the mission and work of public institutions of higher education in relation to addressing concerns associated with access to the educational pipeline, enhancing communities that surround urban universities, and urban health issues. Dr. Toney is pictured with Congressman Chaka Fattah who is also Chair of the Congressional Urban Caucus.

# Jonathan Wilson

## Graduating Senior Spotlight



*At the end of spring prior to his graduation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Voices took the opportunity to get Jonathan Wilson's thoughts about his experiences as a college student and what the future holds for him.*

### **Voices: What degree will you earn?**

**Wilson:** I will graduate with a bachelor's degree in accountancy at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

### **Voices: What are your plans upon graduation in terms of graduate studies or a profession?**

**Wilson:** I am currently looking to further my professional career by immediately pursuing the CPA (Certified Public Accountant) designation and starting my career in the world of accounting and finance.

### **Voices: Discuss the activities (i.e. leadership, service, and activism) that you have been involved in while a college student.**

**Wilson:** Before I began my studies at Joliet Junior College, I was exposed to the political scene as I toured the State Capitol with my State Senator (AJ Wilhelmi) as his Honorary Page. From that point on, I donated my time campaigning for Sen. AJ, State Senator Linda Holmes, and Will County Treasurer Pat McGuire. I also campaigned with the aforementioned individuals in the last presidential election for President Barack Obama.

I gained further experience at Joliet Junior College serving as the Educational and Social Chair of Black Student Union and later went on to become its Vice-President. After enjoying my experiences on the campaign trail, I tried my luck and succeeded in becoming the Student Trustee for Joliet Junior College. During my experience, I championed for improvement of retention and graduation rates for community college students, especially disadvantaged populations as well as stressing the need to address the rising costs of textbooks. I also served on the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Student Advisory Committees (SACs), championing similar issues. I also joined

students from across the country to lobby Congress about various student issues from a national perspective. My institution recognized my contributions as I was nominated for the Gigi Campbell Student Trustee Excellence Award for 2008.

After transferring to the University of Illinois, I served as a mentor and a student member on the Tuition Policy Advisory Committee. Currently, I chair the Access & Diversity and Advocacy committees for the IBHE SAC and was appointed by Governor Quinn to serve as the current Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) Student Representative.

### **Voices: What prompted you to mobilize students when the MAP grant was in jeopardy?**

**Wilson:** While at Joliet Junior College, I became very familiar with the looming crisis of students not obtaining some form of higher education in our global economy. If students dropped out of college and never came back, then they would hamper their ability to compete for jobs demanding some form of higher education. This situation would eventually make it hard for students to provide for themselves and their future families. After learning about the devastation cutting MAP would create on a statewide level, I decided that I would do whatever I could to prevent this bad dream from becoming reality. I remain grateful and humbled by those who assisted me and everyone else who had a hand in convincing the legislature to reinstate the \$200 million cut from students. This grant enabled many students across the state to continue to pursue their life goals.

### **Voices: What is your advice to younger students?**

**Wilson:** Everyone is looking to the students as the future of the world and appreciates it when they pursue their interest. Use this power to take advantage of these individual's openness (ethically of course) to learn as much as possible and doors will open. They will give you the golden nuggets to advance to whatever life you dream of living. Most importantly, you have to act on faith that you can actually reach those dreams. Persistence pays off! Don't stop just because things are not going your way!

# Somewhere Over the Rainbow: Multiracial Political Coalitions from Jesse Jackson to Barack Obama By Valerie C. Johnson, Ph.D.



The following is a synopsis of the book, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, which will be published next year by Dr. Valerie C. Johnson, Associate Professor of Political Science at DePaul University. Her areas of interest are African American politics, urban education, and urban politics.

For many, Barack Obama's historic presidential victory signaled America's transformation to a post-racial society. *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* challenges this notion, and argues that although Obama's election represented a significant milestone in American politics, racial disparities persist in health care, education, housing, employment, and the criminal justice system. To be sure, there is a significant difference between a diminution in the individual bigotry, that has heretofore made such a victory impossible, and the eradication of structural biases that adversely impact the life chances of racial minorities. In many respects the 2008 presidential election signals closer movement toward a non-racial society, however, is decidedly different from the anti-racist society that is a prerequisite to a post-racial America.

One source of considerable confusion over the meaning of Obama's victory regards the multiracial character of his electoral coalition. Distinction however needs to be made between an electoral coalition that is multiracial, and an electoral coalition that focuses on the interests of racial minorities and the politically marginalized. *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* contends that Barack Obama's multiracial grassroots movement, while historic, significantly differed from previous multiracial coalitions in at least two fundamental ways: 1) previous multiracial coalitions were purposeful, in that they held out as their goal a shift in the conditions impacting racial minorities; and 2) previous multiracial coalitions were progressive in their political orientation in that they a) were based on solidarity and concerted political mobilization and action between traditionally aggrieved groups and socially and politically conscious whites; b) challenged the racial caste system within the United States; c) sought to overturn the system of racial and class power and privilege; and d) included African Americans as central and intentional rather than incidental partners.



# ICBCHE Making Connections By DJ Wells



The video documentary *Storming the Gates: The Struggle for Access to Higher Education in Illinois*, that was produced by ICBCHE in partnership with the Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education (ILACHE), continues to get rave reviews and is being shown to an ever-expanding audience. With several recent screenings and more in the works, the centerpiece project of the Illinois African American and Latino Higher Education Alliance (IALHEA) is reaching a growing, appreciative audience with its message of celebrating the struggles of those who made it possible for minorities to be a part of the higher education community, and also the need to continue those struggle.

A screening of the documentary was a featured segment of the keynote session of the Illinois Association of Educational Opportunities Program Personnel (ILAEOPP), held in Bloomington, Illinois in April. Providing the keynote address during that session was Dr. Arnold Mitchem, President of the Council for Opportunity in Education. Mitchem, who was an important participant during the formation of many of the educational opportunity programs in Illinois and the Midwest that are featured in the documentary, was so impressed with the video that he agreed to be interviewed a month later, when he was next in Illinois, so that his comments could be included when



future (Dr. Arnold Mitchem and Dr. Michael Toney)

*Storming the Gates* programs and curriculum are produced.

*Storming the Gates* also made its Public Television debut in May when it aired on WYCC-TV, the PBS affiliate station of the City Colleges of Chicago. As the documentary is 35 minutes long, WYCC worked with IALHEA to organize and videotape a panel discussion of current Black and Latino faculty and students to fill the remainder of the one-hour program block devoted to *Storming the Gates*. The panel discussed the film's relevance to a younger generation of scholars, and was moderated by ICBCHE and IALHEA steering committee member Dr. Valerie Johnson of DePaul University.

*Storming the Gates* continues to have an on-air presence even after its PBS broadcast, as Governors State University (GSU), who provides the educational access television content for all cable television providers in Chicago's South Suburban region, has worked the documentary into its program rotation. GSU hosted public screenings of the documentary, on July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at the University Park, Illinois campus. Preliminary discussions are also underway to host ICBCHE town hall meetings and documentary screenings at Western Illinois University, Eastern Illinois University, and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Everyone who has seen *Storming the Gates* agrees that it is a powerful, historical, and inspirational film with a message that all students, faculty and staff should be shown. It gives us all an understanding and an appreciation for the struggles that were needed to make higher education accessible in Illinois, and the need to remain ever-vigilant so that the fruits of those battles are not taken away.

If you are interested in arranging a *Storming the Gates* screening and panel discussion on your campus, contact DJ Wells at (312) 996-4990 or via e-mail at [djwells@uic.edu](mailto:djwells@uic.edu).

# With Success Comes Responsibility



**By Marcus Moore**

In May I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Inner City Studies Education at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). I believe that unless Black people continue to work to diversify the field of experts, we will continue to be left out of the conversations and the decision making process when it comes to issues that directly affect us. I have heard and accepted the call to responsibility as it relates to my community, which is why I chose to major in Inner City Studies. Inner City Studies has enabled me to realize that although Black Americans have come a long way in our fight for justice and equality, we still have a long way to go. As a Black man in America, I understand that with success comes responsibility.

Ultimately, I plan to obtain my Ph.D. I look forward to working to ensure that minorities, particularly Black men, have the necessary resources and support to pursue higher education. Additionally, I plan to be an advocate for equality for all people regardless of ethnicity, class or gender. I am passionate about and fully committed to motivating young adults to pursue academic excellence. Part of my life's work will be to encourage other young Black men to obtain Ph.D.'s. I would like to serve as an example that receiving the highest degree in education is possible for anyone who has the drive and determination to complete the goal.

Since beginning my undergraduate education, I have had the opportunity to work with organizations such as the Colorado Technical University Online, Columbia College Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Upward Bound College Prep Academy. Additionally, I have served as a Student Organization Council Representative as well as the Community Service Committee Chairman for the Black Student Union. One of the many lessons that my experiences have taught me is that it is important to stay involved in my community. I attempt to do this by working with the Black Star Project and Passages Alternative Program, Inc., where I serve as a mentor for inner city youth with incarcerated parents.

Being a student at the most diverse university in the Midwest has been extremely beneficial to my overall academic development. In the Fall of 2009, I received the

honor of being inducted into the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society. While I recognize Alpha Chi is a great honor, I am even prouder to say that I am also a member of the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. While with the McNair Scholars Program, I designed a study and conducted an original research project under the supervision of Dr. Chandra Gill, an Inner City Studies faculty member. Through my research, I examined the societal factors that contribute to the success of Black men. In addition to the many other opportunities afforded to me through my participation in the McNair Scholars Program, I was able to attend and present my research findings at two professional conferences, the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas McNair Research Conference at the University of North Texas, and the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium at NEIU.

What would I say to younger students? Refuse to give up and get involved. For me, being a first generation college student was difficult and it took me quite some time to even really get serious about college. While I talked about having a college degree, I was not really doing the work that was reflective of my goal. After being forced to sit out of school for a while due to financial reasons, reality hit me. When I was given another chance to complete my degree I was much more determined to accomplish my goal. I had seen a short glimpse of what my life would be like without a higher education and I did not like what I saw. I began to take advantage of opportunities to get involved with various programs through student support services like the Conaway Achievement Project and the McNair Scholars Programs. I joined student organizations and I got involved on campus. With time I was able to navigate a course that has allowed me to not only complete my bachelors degree, but to graduate Magna Cum Laude. Booker T. Washington is quoted as saying, "There was never a time in my youth, no matter how dark and discouraging the days might be, when one resolve did not continually remain with me, and that was a determination to secure an education at any cost." Refuse to give up!

# Announcements and News

## New Appointments

**Murrell J. H. Duster** of Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) has been appointed as the Associate Vice President and Dean for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs. In this capacity she will also serve as the founding head of the Angelina Pedroso Center for Diversity and Intercultural Affairs. Before this appointment she served as Dean of Academic Development and as a faculty member in the College of Education at NEIU. She also has served in various capacities with ICBCHE.



**Dr. Arthur Sutton** has been appointed as the Deputy Director for Diversity and Outreach at the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). Dr. Sutton previously served as Associate Director of Academic Affairs. He has also held positions at Harrisburg Area Community College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Heartland Community College in Bloomington, Illinois.

**Dr. Durene I. Wheeler** has been named Coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at Northeastern Illinois University. Dr. Wheeler is also an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and serves as a core faculty member in the African/African American Studies and Women's Studies Programs. Her area of research interest includes the history of Black women in education. Dr. Wheeler is the inaugural recipient of the Dr. Melvin Cleveland Terrell Award in Research and Literature.



**Maureen "Mo" T. Amos** is the newly appointed Director of Financial Aid at Northeastern Illinois University. Past positions include being the Associate Director of Financial Aid at Northeastern, Assistant Director and Interim Associate Director of Financial Aid at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Financial Aid Administrator at Tri-



ton College. She also serves as an adjunct instructor at Triton. Mo is active in professional organizations, such as the Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The national search for the Director of Financial Aid followed the retirement of **J. Marshall Jennings**, the former Director who retired earlier this year. His affiliation with Northeastern Illinois University began in 1989. He is a past recipient of the Administrator Award of Excellence presented by the Black History Month Committee at Northeastern and the Murrell J. H. Duster Legacy Award.

## Association News

The National Association of Student Affairs Professionals (NASAP) Foundation Board has named Dr. Melvin Cleveland Terrell as its first president. The main focus of the foundation will be the development and funding of college scholarships. Terrell is a past president and journal editor of NASAP.

## New Degrees

ICBCHE is proud to announce that **Mona Y. Davenport** graduated this past May with a Ph.D. from Illinois State University in Educational Administration and Foundations: Higher Education. Her dissertation topic was "Examining Involvement as a Critical Factor: Perceptions from First Generation and Non-First Generation College Students." Dr. Davenport is The Director of Minority Affairs at Eastern Illinois University.



**Sheena L. Warren** the Director of Adult and Women Student Programs at Northeastern Illinois University, successfully defended her dissertation this past May. Her topic was, "A Mixed Methods Analysis of the Perceptions of Leadership Attainment Juxtaposed with Racial Identity of African American Female Administrators in Higher Education." Dr. Warren completed the Doctor of Education Program in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education from Argosy University, Chicago.



# **The Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education**

in cooperation with

**The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus Foundation**

Presents

## ***Bridging the Academy with the State Legislature***

Join us for ICBCHE's Annual Conference, where, this year, we will explore the important issues facing the Illinois General Assembly that impact Blacks in our state, and the role that those of us working in Higher Education can play in supporting our Black elected officials in advancing a progressive, Black agenda. We will look specifically at those issues that pertain to Blacks in Higher Education, including access and inclusion, affordability, K-12 education and the pipeline to higher education, and many others. Members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus are expected to join us for what is sure to be an important coming together of educational and legislative leaders from our community. There will also be workshops for students.



### ***"Meet and Greet Your Legislators" Reception***

**Thursday, September 23, 2010**

**5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

### ***Full Day Conference***

**Friday, September 24, 2010**

**8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**University of Illinois at Chicago**

**Student Center West - Chicago Room**

**828 S. Wolcott, Chicago IL 60612**

**Conference Registration Fee: \$150 (includes one-year ICBCHE membership)**

**Student Registration Fee: \$65 (restrictions apply - see Website for details)**

**Visit the ICBCHE website at [www.icbche.org](http://www.icbche.org) for more information**



# Conferences

## **October 13-15, 2010**

The Association of Black Women in Higher Education, Inc. (ABWHE) will hold its National Conference in Culver City, CA. This year's conference theme is "Mission Possible: Reaching New Heights in Academia." The keynote speakers are Dr. Toni Yancey who is a board member of the Partnership for a Healthier America, which is the organization behind First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign and Sarah Culberson of the Kposowa Foundation, an organization whose mission is to provide access to education in West Africa. Visit [www.abwhe.org](http://www.abwhe.org) for registration and submission of proposals information.

## **October 17 –20, 2010**

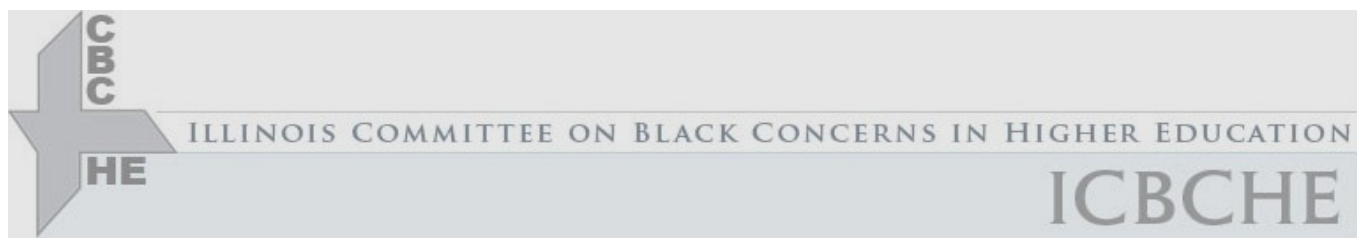
The Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrator's (MASFAA) conference is taking place at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Visit <http://www.masfaa.org> for further information.

## **February 4, 2011**

The Pan African Connection Summit will be held at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois. The focus of the summit is to cultivate leadership development, advocacy, and a sense of community amongst professionals of the African Diaspora. More details are to come so save the date.

## **March 30—April 2, 2011**

The American Association of Blacks in Higher Education will host its national conference in Atlanta, Georgia. "Expect the Unexpected: Reinventing Ourselves During Challenging Times," is the theme of the national conference. Proposals will be accepted from August 9—September 30, 2010. For further information, visit <http://blacksinhighered.org>



## **Submission Guidelines to *Voices* Newsletter**

The *ICBCHE Voices Newsletter* is published twice a year, and provides information regarding ICBCHE sponsored events, ICBCHE business, accomplishments of our members and colleagues, and diversity issues in higher education. We are currently accepting articles on these topics and/or issues and initiatives related to African American faculty, staff, and student experiences in higher education. Articles should be approximately 500 words or less and may be edited for clarity and length. Articles should be submitted as e-mail attachments in MS Word format to *ICBCHE Newsletter* Editor Dr. Melvin C. Terrell ([melvinterrell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:melvinterrell@sbcglobal.net)) or Co-Editor Michelle Morrow ([michelle\\_morrow@mindspring.com](mailto:michelle_morrow@mindspring.com)). The submission deadline for the fall issue is **October 15, 2010**.

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