



**Pathways to Success: The Journey of Black Pillars in
Higher Education “Will Not Be Televised.”
It Will Be Photographed!**

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Black History Month
York College African-American Resource Center
Jamaica, NY - February 26, 2013
&
American Association of Blacks in Higher Education Annual Conference
Atlanta, GA - February 28, 2013

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What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

I consider myself an **activist**, because as a union delegate I frequently advocate for colleagues. I am very involved with the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), which is the union that represents instructional and professional staff. I have been an active member of PSC for the past seventeen years and am an elected representative to the Delegate Assembly. I have also served on the PSC Legislative Action Committee, as a HEO grievance counselor, and as a

New York State Union of Teachers and American Federation of Teachers delegate.

I also consider myself an **administrator**, who manages or co-manages several staff, which includes multiple areas of responsibility. I've had much training for this role, with a Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Sciences (Political Science-Public Administration) and a Masters in Public Administration from Baruch College. I consider myself an **educator**, as I have taught several classes in the areas of Student Development and Political Science. I have mentored many students that have graduated from York College and advanced to positions as lawyers, government political appointees, founders of non profit organizations, and currently serve as administrators in private industry. I am a former Faculty Advisor to Student Government and the current Faculty Advisor to the National Society of Leadership and Success. I am a **leader**, who voices his opinion, regardless of the outcome and when not communicating my feelings about matters of inequity, I try to lead by example.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

I learned about leadership as a teenager, when I became the President of a youth council that was affiliated with a local democratic club. The Democratic District Leaders (who were the executive members of the club), were Fred Wilson and Vivian Cook, and both taught me about leading people, working on behalf of their constituents, and bringing resources to the community. After Fred Wilson passed away, the new District Leader Thomas White Jr. began to mentor me after we ran on the same political slate and were both elected. I became a Democratic State Committee member at the age of twenty one (the youngest elected democrat in the history of New York State). Soon afterwards, I was asked to become the chairperson of Governor Mario Cuomo's New York State Youth Task Force and followed that by becoming the first minority to be elected as the President of the New York State Young Democrats Organization (the official youth arm of the New York State Democratic Organization). I was appointed to the executive board of the New York State Democratic Party and also elected as a member of the Democratic National Committee. I am now the Democratic District Leader of the 32nd Assembly District, Part B. All of these roles have helped me learn how to become a leader who works to provide services to others.



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After serving in various capacities in state and city government, in July 1993, President Josephine Davis invited me to return to the college as the Director of External Affairs and Community Relations. Over the years I have served in many other capacities at York, including the following: Director of Alumni Affairs, Admissions Counselor, Admissions Recruiter, Director of Student Activities, Assistant Director of Student Activities, and as an Adjunct Professor in Student Development and Political Science. I have been a member of several college committees and currently serve on the Campus Environment Committee, Division of Student Development, in addition to many other ad-hoc committees. I have oversight of many other divisional projects, such as the Sigma Alpha Pi Chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success (the predominant leadership program on campus with over 1000 members), YCRadio.Org (the campus internet based radio station), Project Change (HIV/AIDS Awareness Program) and the York College Gameroom. When asked how I manage my time with all of these responsibilities, I utter one word..."multi-tasking". Somehow, that seems to be a bit of an understatement.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Keep an open line of communication to the mentee.
- Always remain available to answer questions or give advice.
- A mentee needs to always seek advice from the mentor and communicate his/her needs in an effective manner, so that the mentor can be supportive.
- The mentor/mentee need to schedule time to meet with each other regularly, so that both can benefit from the relationship.

Lindamichelle Baron, B.A., M.A., Ed.D.

Alumna: New York University, '72, Teacher's College, Columbia University, '76, '99
Chair and Assistant Professor, Teacher Education



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

Leader and Visionary—not sliced, diced and pre-set flesh and blood!

I never thought of myself as a leader. It wasn't until members of my Department of Teacher Education asked me to lead the department as chairperson, during one of the most critical times in the life of a department, NCATE, national reaccreditation that I took the lead.

I discovered that a real leader delegates and leads by example, selecting and supporting the right people for each necessary responsibility. I learned how to identify the key administrative, educational visions and research strengths/expertise displayed by faculty. I "freed" them up to deploy their strengths. Leadership means 24/7 availability, snow, rain, weekend, email, phone and person. As a leader, I have to guide, lead and support and pray for it all.

Being a visionary goes with leadership. I envision York College Teacher Education as a national preeminent model for the urban teacher preparation. York's teacher graduate should be one who achieves beyond excellence shown by standardized test scores. Our graduates must teach for: life success, citizenship, social/emotional learning, and to reach into their students' cultural capital.

Visionary—I envision York College's Department of Teacher Education becoming the preeminent institution for preparing educators with the expertise to reach and teach the urban child. I work with a team of educators who have the same vision, the same passion, and the same commitment. Together we demonstrated our capacity by satisfying the rigorous examination of our program by NCATE. I had the honor of leading this team to reaccreditation. They believed in me and I had to step up to that trust. And with their full support, I did. This drive was not for us, the professors, but as the foundation upon which we are building teachers who are prepared to empower the future generations toward reaching their maximal potential.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

I was founder and president of my own publishing and teaching/learning company. This fused my leadership, ownership and commitment to the values of poetry as pedagogy; critical literacy; and a social and emotional connector that draws on student and educator's cultural capital. In addition to my York Leadership role, I have created and run a company where I embed my values into every aspect of distribution of my creative, scholarly and educational writings for the good of the education system.

My administrative, educational, entrepreneurial and publishing self “identified” and nurtured in Springfield Gardens (Queens, NY), junior high by an outstanding English teacher, and poet, Mr. Jim Clifton Morris. He helped lead me into my believing in myself as a poet and as a creative talent. Mr. Morris modeled this for me with real world immediate. I was a member of his “Choral Speaking Club.” I also co-edited the school magazine. Mr. Morris modeled the life of a giving, responsive, creative, caring and knowledgeable educator. He modeled a range of pathways, each of which could lead me beyond my limited vision as the student, Linda



TiffanyCudjoePhotography

Michelle Baron, into the world of Lindamichelle Baron—poet, creator, curriculum developer, motivational speaker to become the multifaceted me. Dr. Baron, inspirer of new teachers, leader of a department and an unabashed believer that there “ain’t no stopping us now.”

I had other mentors toward that trajectory. My high school guidance counselor, Mrs. Myrtle Duncan, ultimately had a hand in leading me toward being awarded a Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship to New York University. Under her mentorship I grew from a new student, entering a brand new high school, designed to integrate black adolescents into the high school setting... into a leader. I became the first Senior Class President of Springfield Gardens High School. It was that backdrop that helped the scholarship committee select me as one of the scholars who would receive a full four year scholarship. Role models fed us a powerful belief in our capacity, worth and dignity. Mrs. Duncan modeled mentorship with vision and excellence. For whom much is given much is required. Mentoring is part of the requirement of paying back.

My job is to mentor future educators...as I have been mentored...leading by example. That example must exude teacher efficacy, taking the responsibility to do everything necessary to reach and teach our children. I must exude the positive attributes of adult role models who offer something beyond street values. We model our value laden history. I hope to remind those who are becoming educators to bring all of who they are and what they have to the students they will teach. The students deserve it. And by giving them what they need and deserve we receive so much more.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Believe in your mentee’s capacity...often beyond what they initially show you.
- Let the mentee speak, reflect and listen attentively. Recognizing that what they hear is not always what you think you said.
- Allow the mentee to talk through to several solutions for the issue or concern that faces her/him.
- Share stories of your own successes and failures and how you learn and grow from both.
- Model your own dilemmas and interventions to showcase how teaching and leading are inherently full of both challenges and awards to those who persist and flourish.

Parthenia Brown, B.S., M.S.W., LMSW

Alumna: York College '85, Adelphi University '88

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Social Work and York Early College Academy (Y.E.C.A.)



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

One adjective that best portrays how I view my role as a pillar in higher education is definitely grounded in my passion to collect, use and share “**motivational quotables**” with my students. I am an avid collector of affirmations, quotes, inspirational and motivational sayings that add to various teaching endeavors. My motivational skills have enhanced my teaching style as well as being a mentor for my students. The helping profession allows me to mentor students to examine their full potential to become a helper and

helps them to become aware of how work influences the quality of interaction with others. I’d like to also identify the adjective “**educator**” to view my role as a pillar in higher education. During my work as a school social worker with the N.Y.C. Department of Education, I worked with teen mothers and their families. This school based program provided daycare for young mothers to continue their educational endeavors at a nearby high school. I provided counseling, life skills, and a host of resources. Young mothers face many challenges, but with consistent and persistent encouragement, they persevere—most graduate and pursue higher educational goals.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership is centered around continuous efforts to challenge my students throughout this endeavor. It is also about approach, attitude and “use of self”. My leadership style is also centered around helping students to learn about themselves—to be non-judgmental and practice self-awareness. I encourage them to seek counseling, advice, and tutoring from the professional services provided at York College. As students progress, they will learn that the art of helping others can be a challenge with many obstacles.

Leadership in itself is about structure. One of my favorite teaching resources is Corey, G., & Corey, M. (2001). *Becoming a Helper* (6th ed.) Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning. The authors ask students to examine eight (8) typical needs and motivations of helpers. This learning endeavor creates an opportunity for students to become critical thinkers and aware of how their interactions with others influences “helping”. These are guiding principles that are useful for helpers to remain invested in the client’s “process” towards reestablishing well-being. I feel that I provide ongoing leadership to our students as they continue to work on accomplishing their degree in social work and emerge as leaders in the profession.



What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Maintain consistent connections, yet allowing mentees to find new ways to make new connections.
- Encourage mentees to stick to their goals and create their own models/ideas.
- No judging. Salute the mentee's progress and allow for mistakes.
- Share your experiences.
- Model by example.
- Give honest feedback.
- This last comment relates to a statement from my colleague..."what initially begins as a casual conversation can be transformed into a rewarding opportunity to exercise a mentor/mentee relationship."

Some of my favorite quotes are:

Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations.
~Dr. Mae C. Jamison, American Physician and Astronaut

Every experience in my life is an opportunity for growth.
~Anonymous

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.
~Mother Teresa

ENJOY THE RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE....

Charles Coleman, B.A., M.A., E.D.D.

Alumnus: Teacher's College, Columbia University, '69, '73, '99
Associate Professor, English



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

Teacher/learner and student advocate come to mind when I think of my career as an educator. My identity as a teacher has been shaped over a more than 40-year career. Teachers are students who fell in love with learning and who choose a career of being lifelong learners. The title teacher means that we share this love of learning with others.

Over the years, I have stood strong for students' rights, standing up to administrators who threaten academic freedom and participating in demonstrations and writing to legislators about maintaining fiscal equity and fair class sizes. At York I am currently standing with faculty and students protesting the limitations of Pathways which imposes a 3 credit 3 hour across the board, one size fits all course design. This course design ignores the needs of freshman writers (particularly relevant in our multi-cultural setting) and students who need foreign language and science labs.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My interests and education in language studies and linguistics led me to graduate degrees in Applied Linguistics and to a more than 40-year teaching career. I have taught junior high school, high school, college and graduate school. For the past 26 years at York College, I have been teaching freshman composition, introduction to writing, introduction to cultural diversity and linguistics courses. I have published and presented at national and international conferences in the area of Language Pragmatics and on the language and literacy practices of speakers of African American Vernacular Language. My service includes the following college standing committees: Curriculum and Senate. And with Dr. Jean Phelps, I co-chair York College's African American Heritage month activities.

My working-class family background and activist participation in civil and human rights activities of the 1960s led me to an inclusive and participatory philosophy of teaching. I invite students to become active members of learning communities that engage in analytical and critical analysis.



What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Mutual selection is very important. A student should have as much input in choosing to work with a mentor as does the mentor.
- Self-selection on both parts is ideal. Mentoring relationships have developed between students and me as a result of their connecting with something about me as a teacher and me connecting with something about them as learners and as people from whom I can learn.

Michele Gregory, B.B.A., M.S., Ph.D.

Alumna: Northeast Louisiana University '83, London School of Economics and Political Science '84, University of London, Institute of Education '03

Associate Professor and Coordinator, Sociology and Black Studies



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

I view my role at York as a combination of **scholar, educator, activist** and **diplomat**. Being a scholar means having a love of learning and engaging in the practices of learning, i.e., reading, writing and speaking. I believe that critical analysis, and the struggle that is part of it, is the lynchpin of being a scholar. Providing students with the opportunity to engage in productive critical analysis prepares them for life. Being an educator means not just dispensing information, but engaging in discourses with students and acknowledging the voice, passion and wisdom that students bring to educational institutions. Activism is what produces change. I find that students sometimes feel powerless in higher education, and I actively encourage students to speak up for themselves – “truth to power.” When you learn to speak up for yourself, you will do so for others. Diplomacy means listening to all positions.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My journey to leadership began at home; watching my mother raise ten children with humor, love, selflessness, generosity, hard work and discipline. This was an ideal model for a leader. My next experience came during my years as a high school athlete. During those years I realized that hard work was just as important as talent. I was captain of various team sports during those years, not just because I was a talented athlete, but because I worked extremely hard to be the best athlete I could be. Hard work inspires others, because regardless of how much talent you have (and I believe that talent is often a factor of hard work) anyone can be diligent. I learned during those years that inspiration is a vital component of leadership.



My next important experience came in the corporate world, where I soon realized that one did not have to technically be in a leadership position to be a leader. I also realized that being a great leader meant one was diligent, assertive, respectful, gracious, compassionate, generous, a visionary, and fearless but did not take undue risks. Leaders, like everyone else make mistakes, and I learned that those who really stand out do not blame others for their mistakes. I said “sorry” many times (and still do). Also, those of us who are lucky, learn from our mistakes. I also learned that standing up for your colleagues as well as being forthright with your colleagues creates dedication and respect.

My pathway to leadership includes a journey to York College eight years ago. Today, I am an Associate Professor and the Coordinator of the Sociology Program. As well as the Interim Coordinator of the Black Studies Program. My areas of research interests include sports, the body, masculinities, management, work, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, global economic inequality, corporate malfeasance and health disparities. My current projects involve the study of competitive sports, “ideal bodies,” gender, immigration status and race and how they are used to construct workplace opportunities in the US

and the UK. In addition, I am in the early stages of a project examining the intersection between social policies and the global sub-prime housing crisis. My work is published in a number of journals and anthologies in the US and the UK.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

For me the ideal components of a successful mentee/mentor relationship are respect, generosity, the expectation of excellence and humor.

- Practicing respect means acknowledging boundaries that are not to be crossed (e.g., not abusing the privilege of being a mentor).
- Generosity means making the time and commitment to mentor, as relationships take a lot of hard work.
- Having high expectations is a function of respect and generosity, and the recognition that the best way to support students is to always push them beyond what they once thought was possible.
- Humor produces laughter and joy and makes any relationship superb.

Dawn A. Hewitt, B.A., M.P.A.

Alumna: St. John's University '82, American University '91
Director, Office of Research & Sponsored Programs



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

I chose **administrator** because first and foremost that is my primary role here at the college, and as such I work closely with not only faculty but with the administration in furthering the research endeavors of the college. Currently I am the Director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at York College of the City University of New York. I hold a strong background in research administration and have worked in the federal, public and private sectors with organizations such as the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, Florida A & M University, and the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. I also hold a Certificate in Organizational Development from the American University in Washington DC.

I chose **mentor** as I often find myself in discussions with the student population of the college in which I offer them advice on issues dealing with their education but also on the world outside of York. I try to offer a different perspective on issues they encounter, but most importantly I offer them an ear, an ear that listens to them without judgment.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

As with anything thing in my life the pathway is respect, so my pathway to leadership is one of respect. Respect of any and every individual regardless of their station in life. The other is that of hard work, dedication and self-discipline in spite of others. One must be committed to whatever task they undertake and follow it through until the end. An effective leader is part of the team, not just in charge of the team. The pathway to leadership brings with it support and encourages the team all the way. It entails tenacity and courage, courage to stand up for, and in front of your team no matter what the outcome. My pathway to leadership is continuous with a desire to continue to grow and learn, as my Mantra has always been "education is the key to life. Humor is also with me on my pathway to leadership. Currently I am pursuing an M.A. in Theology from St. John's University (expected graduation 2013).



What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Communication and respect are best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship.
- One must be able to actively listen regardless of the role whether it is that of mentor or mentee.
- One must be open to difference of opinions.
- One must not yearn to make a living, but yearn to make a life.
- One must never be afraid to laugh at oneself.

Michel Hodge, B.S., M.S.

Alumnus: Florida Institute of Technology, '95, Purdue University, '04
Executive Director of Enrollment Management
Adjunct Lecturer, Business and Economics

What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

Mentoring is one of the most gratifying parts of being an **educator**. Everyone needs someone they can go to that can engage them in a conversation that helps them discern their path in life. My mentors have helped me tremendously in life. I make myself available to the students of York in the hope that I can help them as my mentors helped me. A big part of mentoring is connecting the mentees with resources that the mentor cannot provide. I make sure to provide my mentees with contacts that can help them pursue their goals. I also invite them to professional and social functions where they can grow their network. It is so important for students to establish their networks because it is the network they build today that will bring opportunities tomorrow.



What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership started with a dream to be an airline executive. As a child my Dad took the family to St. Martin in the summers and those airplane trips inspired me to be a leader in the airline industry. The trips did not only inspire a dream they provided a forum for my Dad to demonstrate skills I would use to realize my dream. He would go from construction foreman, to cement mixer, to errand runner for his mom, to tour guide for the family. He often did two or more of these things simultaneously as he built a house two weeks at a time, for several years.

My Dad demonstrated to me that you have to be versatile and not be afraid of hard work. He showed concern for me by making sure at the end of each day, no matter how tired he was, he took me for an ocean swim. He showed me that planning was important he could not have accomplished so much in two weeks without a plan.

Versatility, not being afraid of hard work, concern for others, and advance planning – I use them all everyday. These skills and attitudes helped me realize my dream of being an airline executive. By age 25 I was a vice president at one of the largest regional airlines in the world. I continue to use these skills today as I provide leadership through my roles at York. Additionally, my public-sector career includes directing the CUNY Aviation Institute, the York Project Management Office, and the York Enrollment Management sub-division. In the private sector I have served as Vice-President of Station Operations, Manager of Dispatch and Regional Customer Service Manager for Mesa Airlines. Currently, I am the Executive Director of Enrollment Management at York. In this role, I am responsible for the Admissions, Student Financial Aid Services and Scholarship departments.



Over the past 20 years, I have managed diverse student summer programs including: English as a Second Language immersion programs, at-risk youth programs, basketball camps and Graduate Studies exploration programs. Additionally, I am a lead facilitator for the LeaderShape Institute; an international organization dedicated to engaging college students to create a just, caring, and thriving world. I have been married for 14 years to my wife Stacey Hodge, the Director of Freight Mobility for the NYC Department of Transportation.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- The most important skill for a mentor and mentee is the same...LISTENING! A mentee needs to be able to listen and be open to their mentor's point of view.
- A good mentor will likewise listen to the aspirations of their mentee and provide feedback. The feedback is not always going to be the answer, in fact I like to pose more questions to my mentees to help them figure things out themselves and to expose points of view they may not have considered.
- I encourage students to cultivate these skills, as they become the leaders of tomorrow and reach for their dreams.
- I encourage students to cultivate the skills of versatility, hard work, concern, and planning, as they become the leaders of tomorrow and reach for their dreams.

Andrew P. Jackson (Sekou Molefi Baako) B.A., M.L.S.

Alumnus: York College '90, Queens College '96

Adjunct Lecturer, Black Studies and Cultural Diversity, York College

Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

I am first and foremost an activist whose profession is that of a librarian—I am an **Activist Librarian!** Since 1980 when I began my journey as executive director at Queens Library's Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center, I have grown and developed into an **author, essayist, lecturer and educator.** As a result of my introduction to Black History while an undergraduate at York College of The City University of New

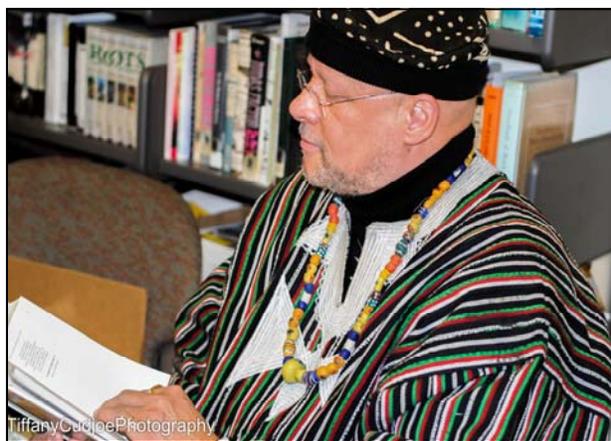
York and research using the Black Heritage Reference Center of Queens County at Langston Hughes Library, my interest and passion for Black history has resulted in extensive lecturing and serving as an adjunct in York College's Cultural Diversity Program in 2001 and in the Black Studies Program since 2012.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership has been varied. My parents always encouraged my siblings and I to have confidence. Additionally, through active participation at Corona Congregational Church, Rev. Dr. Robert D. Sherard and youth advisors encouraged us to learn from mistakes, grow and develop. My Adult pathway began with my four year tour in the U. S. Air Force where I learned to challenge many situations, even those I could not overcome, nor had the discipline to do so. I persevered and accomplished more than expected and achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-5) and the Bronze Star Medal.

The characteristics, challenges and discipline gave me confidence to enter Baruch College (CUNY) to work on a BS in Business Administration. This was the ultimate test as I graduated high school with a General Diploma and lacked confidence from constantly being told by my teachers and counselors I "was not college material" or "smart enough for college" Due to poor fundamentals, I failed Algebra three times and didn't take the same coursework as my triplet brother and sister or any regents exams, although I did graduate on time. Math was my albatross and college math courses would be hard. I worked full time for the City of New York attending evening classes, taking nine credits each semester. I earned 66 credits before leaving New York. I earned my first A grade ever in a Personnel Management class while at Baruch. The new challenge was to earn more.

I returned to NYC, from a 3 year stay in California and, after job searching for eighteen months, began working for the Langston Hughes Community Library in 1980 and renewed my goal to complete my undergraduate degree in York College's evening program in 1983. My greatest challenge lay ahead when I took two non-credit math classes to satisfy requirements for the Math Proficiency Exam. My success is due to our instructor, Ms. Calhoun, who promised results if we applied ourselves. True to her word I received a B+ and equally good grades in my other math classes.



As a student activist, I helped organize York College's first homecoming for the Nomads basketball team in 1985, challenged the Basin Administration to recognize evening students with better academic services, more convenient library hours and better course selection. I was not unknown on campus by any means and graduated in 1990.

York College gave me an excellent education, opened doors for success and later invited me to join the faculty. I have been recognized by both York College (2006) and York College Alumni, Inc. (1996) as a Distinguished Graduate and been a member of the President's Advisory Council since 1995. I'm very proud of both of this.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Commit to the betterment of the mentee by modeling examples of confidence and hard work.
- Be there when the mentee needs to talk or receive advice. This includes good listening skills.
- Devote time exclusively to the student.
- Share encouraging words.

The below poem, "Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes is a reminder to me that no matter how hard we find life and it's obstacles, we survive and excel.

"Mother to Son" by Langston Hughes

"Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time I
I's been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So, boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you find it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair."

Charlene Lane, B.A., M.S.W., Ph.D., LCSW-R

Alumna: York College '90, New York University '94, Adelphi University '12
Assistant Professor, Health and Physical Education



What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

As an **educator** I can best describe myself as a **role model**, **mentor** and **clinician** who has developed the skill of synergizing clinical skills into my pedagogical style, without compromising the content of the material taught or changing the class room into a therapeutic arena. I believe, the recipe for being a successful mentor lies in understanding the uniqueness of each student as opposed to trying to have students fit into the proverbial stereotypical mold. Students bring a plethora of experiences to the class room and the key is empowering students, helping them to realize that their input in the learning process is valuable. Each student, like each educator/mentor has a role to play in the universe and I believe there are no chance encounters. Students who have crossed my path were sent my way for a reason, for them to have learned something from the encounter and also for me to have learned something from them which possibly I can pass on to another student.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership can be traced back to the small beautiful island of Trinidad where I was born. As a child I distinctly remembered my Granddad always encouraging my sibling and I to “be a leader, not a follower.” This Strong patriarch modeled leadership by being a visionary in his own right. My granddad obtained his degree in Diesel Engineering via correspondence. Meaning there was no online learning in his time but, distant learning did exist, he communicated via postal mail (not e-mail) with a University in England and obtained his degree after many years of being enrolled in the “Correspondence Program.”



My dear parents were also not relenting and instilled in me a fierce sense of independence and fortitude. I can safely say that my pathway to leadership was formulated at home and has now transcended to my personal and professional life.

My pathway to leadership has resulted in my obtaining a license as a Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-R). I have many years of clinical as well as administrative experiences in various Social Work, Nursing home and Home care settings. Although I have many passions, my field of expertise is Geriatric Mental Health with specific emphasis on older adults ageing well in Naturally

Occurring Retirement Communities. My dissertation research focused on Older Adults' Perceptions of Aging and the Primary Care Experience. I continue to maintain positive affiliations with senior centers on Long Island and Jamaica Queens.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

I firmly believe, supportive, honest, no-judgmental mentorship is the key to fostering success in students. I am most proud of my star mentee Trudy Rowe, who was the valedictorian of the graduating class of 2011. Ms. Rowe has gone on to my Alma Marta New York University where she is completing her Masters in Social Work. Mentoring transcends the physical class room. There have been other students, like Ms. Rowe who have stay in touch with me even after graduation from York. I firmly believe the key is nurturing the next generation. It is my prayer that students like my mentee Trudy Rowe and others look back and assist others on their life's journal.

It is imperative to always have a supportive, honest, and no-judgmental approach to mentorship. I believe the recipe for being a successful mentor lies in understanding the uniqueness of each student as opposed to trying to have students fit into the proverbial stereotypical mold. Students bring a plethora of experiences to the class room. The key is empowering students, helping them to realize that their input in the learning process is valuable. Each student, like each educator/mentor has role to play in the universe and I believe there are no chance encounters. Students who have crossed my path were sent my way for a reason and for them to have learned something from the encounter and also for me to have learned something from them which possibly I can pass on to another student.

It is imperative for mentors to share personal and professional experiences of successes and failures with mentees. However, a mentor's self-disclosure must be purpose driven. In other words, highlight oneself to extrapolate life lessons with the intention to guide and help inform the mentee's decision-making skills.

Jonathan Quash, B.A.

Alumnus: York College '04

Director, York College Gospel Chorus, Women's Center and York College Male Initiative Program (part of the City University of New York's Black Male Initiative Program)

Instructor, Department of Performing and Fine Arts and Department of Adult and Continuing Education

What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

The first word I would use to describe myself as a pillar in higher education is

leader. I think that in a system as complex as the City University of New York, with its many layers, leadership is crucial regardless of what level you are at. A

good leader can produce good followers, which in turn can become good, or even great leaders themselves. So many students

are looking for guidance and reliability and I try each day to provide that. The second word that I would use to describe myself is **mentor**. I feel that a good leader is automatically a good mentor in that they must take the time out to nurture and guide those that are depending on that person. Mentoring is not something that can or should be an assignment but an organic process of wanting to see growth and development in the lives we touch each day.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership is one that has grown out of the learning experience. I get excited to learn and absorb information that I had not been exposed to previously, and to use that information to better my existence. Equally as exciting to me is to be a part of the learning experience of others. I believe that each person has a purpose, and when you find that purpose, it is like having a thirst quenched. I think also in some ways I try to be a better example to others than the ones that I have seen. I am a product of the New York City Public School System. I was a student in some of the worst performing schools in not only the borough, but the entire city. I witnessed teachers that showed no passion and no care for their students or their responsibilities. However, there were a few examples of what happens when a person finds their purpose and those individuals helped me to challenge myself and succeed. There were those however, who were not so lucky but ended up on paths of desolation and destruction. If I can perhaps inspire or encourage someone to take a different path, then my pathway to leadership is not in vain. As the song says, "If I can help somebody as I pass along; If I can cheer somebody with a word or song; If I can show somebody he is traveling wrong, than my living shall not be in vain."



TiffanyCudjoePhotography



TiffanyCudjoePhotography

My pathway to leadership has also included developing and implementing several academic and non-academic programs designed to increase both the enrollment and retention rates of under-represented populations at the college. The cornerstone of these programs is mentoring, where he believes that each one must reach one. I have guided the program's growth with the implementation of several mentoring and tutoring programs. Some of which include: Pi Eta Kappa - Beta Chapter, Teachers as Leaders Program, Back-On-Track SAT Program, Route to Success Re-entry Program, the Barbershop, the Women of Excellence Leadership Program, Girl Talk, and others.

What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- In my opinion, the mentor/mentee relationship is most successful when centered around a common goal/focus. This means that there should be some shared experience or area of interest that both can use as a means of discussion.
- As stated earlier, I do not believe mentoring is or should be an assignment but rather an organic or natural process that evolves out of mutual interests. Some of the mentors that have had the greatest impact on me are those that have been involved in areas that I too am involved, such as music. Their experiences and life lessons are still things that I reflect upon to this day.

George White, J.D., Ph.D.

Alumnus: Harvard Law School, '87, Temple University, '01
Associate Professor, History

What are two adjectives that best portray how you view your role in higher education?

The most importance adjective that describes my role in higher education is **Educator**. A second one is **Motivational Speaker**.



As a member of the academy, I feel duty-bound, at the least, to be a good teacher. It is crucially important that students develop their critical thinking and analytical skills, along with a foundation of knowledge about their communities and the nation in which they live. As an Educator, I must help them hone their skills, provide them with information to fill the gaps in their knowledge, and encourage them to become engaged citizens. Because I also think that we can be serious without being somber, I also aspire to motivate students to see themselves as historical actors rather than tiny beings who get pushed around by large, seemingly incomprehensible forces.

What would you describe as your pathway to leadership?

My pathway to leadership began in my family. My parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, were my first teachers. They motivated me to learn and helped me to see that my education was not simply an individual achievement but a communal accomplishment that came with certain responsibilities. If I am a leader, it is because of this worldview which is very common in Black communities in Africa and throughout the African Diaspora. As common as it may be, not everyone is willing or eager to “lift as they climb.” Thus, another aspect of my pathway to leadership is voluntary.

I choose to teach beyond the literal content of my courses. I choose to open my doors to all students, regardless of race, gender, or sexual preference, so that they can reach their potential and, hopefully, lead others. I choose to encourage them to vote, petition, protest, and hold people accountable for their actions, great and small. I choose to believe that my students are competent and capable, until proven otherwise. I choose to care about their education, perhaps more than many of them do; accordingly, I accept the risk of disappointment when they don't care, don't try, or fail to reach their goals. By reminding them of my fallibility and shortcomings, I also choose to bear their criticism and judgment for the mistakes that I make. If I am a leader, it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants. If I am a leader, it is because of my willingness to follow and listen, as well as to speak and point the way.



What would you describe as best practices for a successful mentor/mentee relationship?

- Best practices for a mentor/mentee relationship begin with creating a common goal or interest that is clearly understood by both parties.
- The mentor should make clear to the mentee the measure (and limit) of his/her skills.
- The mentee should be as clear as possible regarding his/her objectives and the mentor should respect the mentee's goals.
- The mentor should maintain this respect even while giving guidance or trying to steer the mentee around potential obstacles.

PhotoVoice Participants' List of Must Read Books

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- Jones, L.B. (1996). *Jesus, CEO: Using Ancient Wisdom for Visionary Leadership*. Edition 1. New York: Hyperion.
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- Patti, J. & Tobin, J. (2006). *Smart School Leaders: Leading with Emotional Intelligence*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
- Pink, D. H. (2006). *A Whole New Mind*. New York: Riverhead Trade.
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PhotoVoice Participants' List of Scholarly Works

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About 'Beyond February PhotoVoice Project'

Beyond February PhotoVoice Project emerged as a casual conversation between Tiffany Cudjoe (York Alumna, mentee, research assistant, photographer) and Dr. Rodgers (Assistant Professor of Social Work, mentor, researcher) and has transformed into formulating an edifying PhotoVoice project. Their proposal titled, *Pathways to Success: The Journey of Black Pillars in Higher Education "Will Not Be Televised. It Will Be Photographed!"* has been accepted for the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE) 2013 National Conference, "Pathways to Success within Higher Education" in Atlanta, GA. Their presentation is scheduled for the last day of Black History Month, February 28, 2013. <http://www.blacksinhighered.org/> The project aims to merge pathways to leadership and the cultural arts using *PhotoVoice*—visual images and accompanying narratives—to document successful examples of leadership ideology of Black Pillars in Higher Education at York College of The City University of New York. The presenters will also underscore emerging themes shared by PhotoVoice participants with regard to their mentoring practices. The workshop concludes with recommendations targeted for individuals seeking successful careers in higher education.

As part of Black History Month, Black Studies Coordinator and PhotoVoice participant, Dr. Gregory has invited Tiffany to lead a panel discussion about the 'Beyond February PhotoVoice Project' in the York College African American Resource Center. Consistent with the model of AABHE's Leadership and Mentoring Institute, the panel discussion aims to provide students with the "requisite information" to prepare them for leadership roles.

Dr. Rodgers and Ms. Cudjoe agree that 28 pages and 28 days is not enough space or time to showcase the true mentoring and leadership at York and elsewhere. Therefore they plan to expand the project to include additional PhotoVoice participants as they celebrate profoundly inspiring and illuminating experiences Beyond February.

Rodgers and Cudjoe are currently preparing their manuscript about the 'Beyond February PhotoVoice Project' for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. Additionally, Dr. Rodgers has applied for a research grant to explore photovoice as a promising participatory action technique to investigate cultural and posttraumatic growth (PTG) perspectives in social work students globally.

About Creators of 'Beyond February PhotoVoice Project'



Mentor

Selena T. Rodgers is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at York College of The City University of New York, Department of Social Sciences, School of Health and Behavioral Sciences. Dr. Rodgers' research on posttraumatic growth in diverse populations has taken her to Brazil, Cuba and South Korea. Her recent peer-reviewed publications on posttraumatic growth have appeared in *The Global Studies Journal* and *The National Journal of Urban Education & Practice*. She has also co-authored several peer-reviewed book chapters with her mentor, Dr. Tricia Bent-Goodley (Chair and Professor, Howard University): *Domestic Violence: Intersectionality and Culturally Competent Practice* (edited by L. Lockhart & F. Danis) and *Sexual Violence and Abuse: An Encyclopedia of Prevention, Impacts, and Recovery* (edited by J.L. Postmus).

Professor Rodgers is the recipient of numerous professional and service awards, including the York College 2013 Distinguished Faculty Award and is a member of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education (AABHE) and York College African-American Center Interdisciplinary Advisory Board. Dr. Rodgers is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-R). She has over 17 years post-master's social work experience in a variety of direct practice, administrative and academic settings. Professor Rodgers earned her Ph.D. from Adelphi University and an MSW from Syracuse University. Dr. Rodgers has remained committed to cultivating rich mentoring relationships. She inspires students to consider the great magnitude of their creativity, service, research and activism.



Mentee

Tiffay Cudjoe is a 2012 Sociology graduate of York College/CUNY. She is a mentee and research assistant to Dr. Rodgers. Ms. Cudjoe has co-authored a manuscript (under peer review), "Each One, Teach One: A Blueprint for Postsecondary Student Scholars' Search of Education, Elevation and Knowledge" about her academic and research experiences. As a student, Ms. Cudjoe was a member of the colleges' Curriculum Committee, College Pathway Initiatives Committee and Committee of Academic Standards. She served as a Cardinal Crew member and York College Ambassador, helping to create a student-friendly environment for incoming freshmen. As a Change Agent Intern with CUNY Creative Arts/Project Change, she has been able to educate, inform, and empower high school and college students about health issues related to HIV/AIDS and obesity through facilitation, drama, mentorship, and advocacy.

Tiffany is also a freelance event and documentary photographer. She has photographed events such as the Wall Street Project Kick-off Reunion Party honoring Rev. Jessie Jackson, Gil Scott Heron tribute, 2012 US open, 28th annual Langston Hughes Kwanzaa celebration, John Legend and Taio Cruz Microsoft store launch concert and Nerv Eight application launch event. She also enjoys taking landscape style photographs.

What you do for yourself depends on what you think of yourself...and what you think of yourself depends on what you know of yourself...and what you know of yourself depends on what you have been told!

~African Proverb