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Effect Of Simulation On Technical College Auto-mechanics Trade Students Academic Achievement In Lagos State Nigeria.

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A flood of emails from various list serves filled our in-boxes with the shocking news: One of the world's most prominent African American scholars, Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. of Harvard University, had been accused of breaking into his own home. After America's psychological honeymoon prompted by election of the first President of African descent, some were forced to grapple with questions of whether racism still exists. The aforementioned incident answers these inquiries with a resounding, "Yes." Examples of accounts of continued racial prejudice and discrimination suggest the need for support systems and advocacy groups such as minority academic and professional organizations to level the social playing field.

In fact, an inherent need exists for both race and gender based organizations as current political, educational, and work force climates continue to maintain oppressive attitudes and actions toward people regarding race and gender. President Barack Obama's victory may imply to some that oppressive structures and systems negatively influencing racial and gender minorities have dismantled, suggesting neither race nor gender as problematic within contemporary America. On the contrary, both race and gender persist as sensitive topics or "difficult dialogue" (Maher & Tetreault, 1993) for many individuals and groups. The election of President Obama could not change policies nor personal philosophies that separate individuals based upon race and gender. Understanding the prevalence of both racism and sexism proves particularly important for educational leaders K-20, who often possess the influence to educate students and their communities on how to address these social ills or possess financial means to support organizations charged with this goal.

Cornell West and other scholars contend that racism is an intractable issue, far from being defeated. This assertion undergirds critical race theory (Delgado, 1995; Taylor et al, 2009) and other frameworks used to understand the experiences of marginalized populations. We believe that this standpoint on racism equally relates to sexism and argue in this article that there are two primary reasons for the continued need and support for organizations based on race and gender during the current Obama era.

First, the importance of both race and gender based organizations centers upon the United States of America's continued patriarchal structure. Individuals continue to be marginalized because of race or gender due to systematic and institutionalized racism and sexism (Smith, 2004; Kivel, 2002; Shaw & Lee, 2009). American society continues to promote racial attitudes and sexist positions as evidenced by a number of contemporary issues, including the Ledbetter versus Goodyear case where a female executive was grossly underpaid as compared to her male peers, the New York Post publishing a racist cartoon in reference to President Obama, Don Imus's sexist remarks towards the Rutgers University women's basketball team, and the disputed arrest of African American teenage boys in the Jena Six case. Illustration of these examples demonstrates that the election of President Obama could not eradicate years of embedded racist and sexist beliefs. His election only solidifies the need to continue investing in and creating organizations that support marginalized individuals, particularly in

academic and work settings, as well as developing a social system more strongly rooted in social justice and equity.

Understanding the need for minority or diverse academic and professional organizations leads to the further complexity of intersectionality, where race, class and gender merge. The experiences of women of color serve as examples as they continue to combat issues related to both race and gender. Research suggests that the concerns for African American women may differ from their non-Black counterparts (Collins, 1998; Davis, 2009; Holmes el al 2007). Discrimination towards women based upon race and gender are illuminated within the workforce as evidenced by disparity in compensation (Dey & Hill, 2007) and underrepresentation in leadership positions. These inequities exist not only between women in general and male colleagues, but between Black women and their White sisters as well. Some groups continue to have power and privilege in society based on their social location in regards to race, gender, or class. The need for continuing and expanding organizations geared toward addressing race and gender concerns, thereby, influencing social trends and changing policies to mirror our ideal democracy, holds true even amidst an Obama presidency.

Secondly, in this post-civil rights era, it is quintessential to understand the confines and constructs by which President Barack Obama was elected. In the article, "Black Politics, the 2008 Election, and the (Im)Possibility of Race Transcendence," Valeria Sinclair-Chapman and Melanye Price argue that "beyond the race of the candidate, the Obama campaign [was] remarkably mainstream" (2008, p. 739). They maintain that he "deftly crafted a public persona as the embodiment of the American dream" (p. 739). As a Black man, he epitomizes the "American Dream" based upon the assumption that a strong work ethic, personal achievement, moral wholeness, fiscal conservatism, and obtaining an education will lead to substantial rewards. Some would even argue that President Obama's candidacy and presidency places him in the position to transcend the Black community into mainstream America. If this is the outcome of his presidency, it may leave some to question the contemporary relevance of racism and sexism in the U.S.

In the early stages of Barack Obama's campaign to become the 44th president of the United States of America, the media suggested that we were not only in a post-civil rights era, but a post-racial one. This perspective can be seen as either progressive or detrimental to the current status of Blacks in America. The latter view calls us to critique surface progress. When women earned the right to vote, it did not end sexism nor result in equal occupational compensation for women. Although the Civil Rights era generally refers to the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, civil rights violations continue to occur on a daily basis. Brown v. the Board of Education has not eliminated de facto segregation from public schools (Orfield, 2001), nor has the nullification of "Jim Crow" eliminated racism as evidenced in contemporary "sundown towns" (Loewen, 2005).

In today's challenging economic climate, university leaders have struggled with making decisions on which programs to maintain and dismantle. Some of these programs are instrumental in maintaining the diversity of predominantly White student campuses. Academic diversity and minority programs play a key role in the successful retention and graduation of students, most notably, underrepresented students whether they are racial minorities or women. The commitment to diversify campuses and garner the subsequent intellectual richness yielded (Gurin et al, 2002; Milem & Hakuta, 2000) should not go unrecognized.

Supporting race and gender based academic organizations also play a role in the retention and promotion of faculty (Davis, 2008). Black and Latino faculty continue to be underrepresented on college campuses (Holmes el al 2007). Those that exist face marginalization and experience racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). Race and gender based organizations may serve as support mechanisms for these members of academe, aiding in their subsequent interest in continuing with and contributing to the professoriate.

Universities can form partnerships with minority academic organizations by pooling their resources to materialize common goals. These goals may meet the needs of both the academic institution, the community it serves, and broader society. University partnerships with minority organizations fall in line with the idea of universities as a public good. Such an approach to leadership promises to contribute to making our nation meet democratic ideals, while chipping away prevailing racist and sexist attitudes, policies, and structures.

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