

Research workshop focuses scholars on costs of racial inequity

March 26, 2021



Melanie Richardson, right, co-founder and executive director of childcare education nonprofit TrainingGround, was one of more than 50 scholars and practitioners who developed grant proposals as part of Count the Costs Research Weekend, a workshop aimed at helping researchers quantify the effects of racial inequity in the U.S.

Researchers from Tulane and other universities came together in March for a three-day workshop aimed at helping scholars quantify the effects of racial inequity in the United States.

Hosted by the Albert LePage Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Tulane's A. B. Freeman School of Business, [Count the Costs Research Weekend](#) brought

together scholars from a variety of academic disciplines to develop research proposals that investigate the barriers that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) experience in our society, the economic impact of those barriers and viable approaches to addressing them. Those who participated in the weekend's programming were invited to use their proposals to apply for a research grants to be awarded from a funding pool of \$100,000.

Twenty-eight teams and individual researchers took part in the weekend's activities, which included speakers, a resource panel presentation, meetings with project advisers and individual group work. Eight teams were selected to present their proposals to a panel of evaluators on the workshop's final day.

"Tulane's motto is 'not for oneself, but for one's own,'" said Rob Lalka, executive director of the Lepage Center. "These research questions begin to ask an all-important question: have we defined 'one's own' too exclusively? The work of this research offers us all a chance for a much more thoughtful and comprehensive take on who 'one's own' should be. I'm grateful that the researchers who participated in Count the Costs Research Weekend are up to this difficult but critical task."

Count the Costs Research Weekend began on Friday, March 12, with a presentation from David St. Etienne, president of the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation, who detailed some of the issues he's grappled with during his career in economic development. His talk was followed by a presentation on Anti-Racist Research Scholarship by Dr. Samantha Francois, assistant professor at the School of Social Work, and a resource panel presentation in which partners from across the university and the region discussed various databases and archives available to researchers. Panelists included representatives from the Murphy Institute, the Cowen Institute, the Taylor Center for Social Innovation, the Center for Public Service and the Mary Amelia Center for Women's Health Equity Research at Tulane University as well as from community partners including the Welcome Table, the Whitney Plantation and the New Orleans Data Center.

Friday's program ended with a roundtable discussion between Lalka and impact investor Daryn Dodson, who discussed his research on racial bias among venture fund managers.

"Friday's discussion with Daryn Dodson was a great way to kick off the weekend," said Darrin Miller, graduate student at Tulane's School of Public Health and Tropical

Medicine and participant in the workshop. “Hearing from someone who has applied academic research to his industry to work toward greater racial equity inspired me to get to work.”

Saturday’s programming was dedicated to group work and proposal development. Each team was paired with two advisers, many of whom were resource panelists. The advisers talked through the teams’ proposals and directed them to relevant data sources and community partners.

On Sunday, the Lepage Center selected eight teams to present their proposals to a panel of evaluators.

The presenting projects were:

Public Space + Scrutiny: Examining Urban Monuments through Social Psychology

This project proposes a study of existing public spaces, monuments and memorials through the lens of social psychology, to establish a broader frame of reference for future design. It will investigate community members’ reactions to experiencing public spaces and monuments that memorialize contentious historical figures and events.

Team: Tiffany Lin, associate professor of architecture (School of Architecture); Lisa Molix, associate professor of psychology (School of Science and Engineering); Emilie Taylor Welty, professor of practice, architecture (School of Architecture)

Breaking Through the Stress Barrier: A Technological Intervention to Mitigate the BIPOC Entrepreneurial Stress Differential

This project seeks to better understand how entrepreneurs, particularly BIPOC entrepreneurs, experience and deal with entrepreneurial stress and, by extension, the ways in which stress influences their entrepreneurial decisions.

Team: Scott Kuban, assistant professor of strategic management and entrepreneurship (A. B. Freeman School of Business); Carmelo Turillo, lecturer (A. B. Freeman School of Business); Douglas Franklin, professor, ethical leadership (University of St. Thomas); Nicole Fuller, assistant professor of management (University of New Orleans); Shannon Younger, assistant professor of

entrepreneurship (Texas Christian University)

Behavioral Interventions to Improve Primary Care Access Equity

This research asks three basic questions: (1) How do healthcare providers discriminate against Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Indigenous patients seeking a primary care appointment; (2) what can patients do to mitigate this discrimination; (3) can providers be nudged towards more equitable treatment?

Team: Brigham Walker, research assistant professor (School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine); Janna Wisniewski, assistant professor (School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine)

Exploratory Mixed-Method Study of the Socioemotional and Economic Costs of Legacies of Historical Trauma on BIPOC

This study uses a train-the-trainer model to empower parents to participate and eventually be employed as co-facilitators for Talk, Touch & Listen While Combing Hair Parent Cafes. This model is innovative in that it is culturally centered and focused on interrupting historical legacies of social inequality and preventing the rejection of children based on internalized stereotypes of 'colorism.'

Team: Marva Lewis, associate professor (School of Social Work); Melanie Richardson, co-founder & executive director, Training Grounds; Trevaughn Davis Neal, doctoral student (School of Social Work); Felicia Downs, doctoral student (School of Social Work)

Developing a Psychological Intervention to Promote Perceptions of Racial Privilege Among Successful White Men

This study examines whether White men who self-report or recall experience of disadvantage based on a social category (e.g. physical disability) perceive greater White privilege than those without exposure to such disadvantage. The researchers seek to develop a psychological intervention that fosters an increased ability to understand the experiences of disadvantaged others (e.g. Black, Indigenous and People of Color).

Team: Anyi Ma, assistant professor of management (A. B. Freeman School of Business); Sean Fath, assistant professor of organizational behavior (Cornell's IRL School); Ashleigh Shelby Rosette, senior associate dean (Fuqua School of Business, Duke University)

The Unintended Costs of Blight Remediation: Impacts on BIPOC Homeownership and Community Gentrification

Through a combination of historical background research and quantitative data analysis, this research examines the consequences of the city of New Orleans' current blight remediation program on processes of dispossession and displacement (i.e. gentrification) of households within BIPOC neighborhoods.

Team: Christopher Oliver, professor of practice, sociology (School of Liberal Arts); AJ Golio, doctoral student, sociology (City, Culture, and Community Program); Y. Frank Southall, lead organizer, Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability Initiative; Isaac Hoeschen, junior, economics and urban studies (School of Liberal Arts)

Identifying and Describing Racial Disparities in New Orleans Cultural Funding: Consistent Disparities and COVID-Related Changes

This research investigates racial inequities within cultural funding opportunities in New Orleans. Cultural production theory suggests that there are cultural codes from the dominant culture embedded in arts institutions, and we hypothesize that this may help explain any potential disparities that we discover.

Team: Miriam Taylor, interim director, Newcomb Art Museum, and doctoral student, urban studies (City, Culture, and Community Program); Alex Turvey, doctoral student, sociology track (City, Culture, and Community Program); Chelsey Sprengeler, doctoral student (City, Culture, and Community Program)

Measuring the Cost of Juvenile Incarceration on Families in New Orleans

This project attempts to understand the economic consequences of juvenile incarceration to families, and how these costs have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Racially disproportionate treatment in the system leaves people of

color with significantly more criminal justice debt.

Team: Genesis Calderón, doctoral student, linguistics (School of Liberal Arts); Jess Chanin, doctoral student, sociology (School of Liberal Arts); Florence Fleischer-Djoleto, program manager, Ubuntu Village NOLA; Ernest Johnson, director, Ubuntu Village NOLA

“We were very excited that our proposal was selected to present on Sunday,” said Marva Lewis, research weekend participant and associate professor in the School of Social Work. “Our research looks at parent-child bonding during the no-cost, everyday ritual and routine of combing hair. We received valuable feedback from the panel of evaluators that we are using to revise our final proposal to help us ‘speak the language of economics.’ We believe that culturally valid, community-based early childhood interventions will yield an economic benefit to our country through future generations.”

The panel of evaluators included Anneliese Singh, chief diversity officer at Tulane; Thomas LaVeist, dean of Tulane's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine; Jasmijn Bol, professor of accounting at the Freeman School; Ted Fee, senior associate dean and professor of finance at the Freeman School; Margaret Montgomery-Richard, former board chair of the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce; and Aaron Walker, founder and CEO of Camelback Ventures.

“We believe it’s important to view the history of inequity not only as morally deplorable, but also financially illogical,” said Ira Solomon, Freeman School dean. “Many of our students and faculty members had begun thinking about these issues before we announced this initiative, so I'm hopeful this weekend of communication and collaboration will lead to some valuable and impactful research projects.”

All teams that participated in Count the Costs Research Weekend were invited to submit grant proposals by March 31. Grant recipients will be announced in early May.