

2018 KEYNOTE PANEL

DIFFICULT DIALOGUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

RACE, RACIAL JUSTICE, CIVIL DISCOURSE, AND FREE SPEECH

Race, racial justice, civil discourse, and free speech have become controversial topics across higher education. These four major facets of life in the U.S. should not be incompatible or opposing constructs, yet the nature of the current political climate seems to artificially place them in contradiction. College and university campuses have become battlegrounds for the culture wars in ways that confound the fundamental mission of higher education. This highly interactive panel and audience discussion asks whether we are traveling inevitably toward greater polarization across race, class, religion, and political orientation or whether there is a path toward reunification.

Panelists

MICHELE NORRIS

Michele Norris is a Peabody Award-winning journalist, founder of The Race Card Project and Executive Director of The Bridge, The Aspen Institute's new program on race, identity, connectivity and inclusion. For more than a decade Norris served as a host of NPR's "All Things Considered" where she interviewed world leaders, American presidents, Nobel laureates, leading thinkers and groundbreaking artists. She has also produced in-depth profiles, interviews and series for NPR News programs as well as special reports for National Geographic, Time Magazine ABC News and Lifetime Television. Norris created The Race Card Project, an initiative to foster a wider conversation about race in America, after the publication of her family memoir, *The Grace of Silence*.

JELANI COBB

Journalist, educator, and diversity speaker Jelani Cobb writes about the enormous complexity of race in America. As recipient of the Sidney Hillman Prize for Opinion & Analysis Journalism for his *New Yorker* columns, Cobb was praised for combining “the strengths of an on-the-scene reporter, a public intellectual, a teacher, a vivid writer, a subtle moralist, and an accomplished professional historian”—qualities he brings to his gripping talks. A long-time staff writer at *The New Yorker*, Cobb has written a remarkable series of articles about race, the police, and injustice. Cobb also teaches in the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He is the author of *Substance of Hope: Barack Obama and the Paradox of Progress*; *To the Break of Dawn: A freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic*; and *The Devil & Dave Chappelle and Other Essays*.

CAROLYN LUKENSMEYER

Dr. Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer is the Executive Director of the National Institute for Civil Discourse, an organization that works to reduce political dysfunction and incivility in our political system. As a leader in the field of deliberative democracy, she works to restore our democracy to reflect the intended vision of our founding fathers. Dr. Lukensmeyer previously served as Founder and President of *AmericaSpeaks*, an award-winning nonprofit organization that promoted nonpartisan initiatives to engage citizens and leaders through the development of innovative public policy tools and strategies. Dr. Lukensmeyer formerly served as Consultant to the White House Chief of Staff from 1993-94 and on the National Performance Review where she steered internal management and oversaw government-wide reforms. She earned her PhD in Organizational Behavior from Case Western Reserve University and has completed postgraduate training at the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland.

SUZANNE NOSSEL

Suzanne Nossel currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of PEN America, the leading human rights and free expression organization. She is a leading voice on free expression issues in the US and globally, writing and being interviewed frequently for national and international media outlets. Her prior career spanned government service and leadership roles in the corporate and non-profit sectors. She has served as the Chief Operating Officer of Human Rights Watch and as Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. During the first term of the Obama Administration, Nossel served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations, where she led US engagement in the United Nations and multilateral institutions, on human rights and humanitarian issues. During the Clinton Administration, Nossel was Deputy to the US Ambassador for UN Management and Reform at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, where she was the lead negotiator in settling US arrears to the world body. Nossel is a magna cum laude graduate of both Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

MODERATOR

ROGER L. WORTHINGTON

Roger L. Worthington is a professor in the Department of Counseling, Higher Education, and Special Education. He is the founder and executive director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education at the University of Maryland, and the outgoing editor of the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. He was the recipient of three prestigious grants from the Ford Foundation Difficult Dialogues Initiative (2006-2011) and he was the founding chair of the board of directors for the Difficult Dialogues National Resource Center (2012-2015). Dr. Worthington also was a founding member of the board of directors for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE; 2006-2011), and he co-authored the NADOHE Standards of Professional Practice for CDOs. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association with scholarship focused on diversity in higher education, multicultural counseling competencies, sexual identity development, and difficult dialogues teaching and learning. He received his doctorate in counseling psychology in 1995 from the University of California at Santa Barbara.