

Conference Program Proposal Template

EDLD 9435: Transformative Educational Leadership Practice II

(Adapted from the ACPA – College Student Educators International 2023 convention educational sessions template)

1. Presenter Experience

The presenter is a doctoral candidate in educational leadership with a concentration in higher education. His academic preparation includes advanced coursework in qualitative research design, phenomenology, and critical frameworks examining systemic inequities in education. Through sustained scholarly engagement, the presenter has developed expertise in issues related to access, representation, and persistence among historically underrepresented students in STEM disciplines.

The presenter is currently developing a qualitative phenomenological study exploring the lived experiences of Black women pursuing undergraduate degrees in computer science technology at a historically Black university. This research centers on participants' voices to better understand how early educational exposure, mentorship, institutional culture, identity development, and self-efficacy influence academic pathways and persistence. The study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory and informed by scholarship on belonging, culturally responsive support, and equity-centered institutional practices.

In addition to research preparation, the presenter has professional experience working with undergraduate students in higher education, particularly in initiatives focused on student engagement, mentoring, and academic support. This experience has provided practical insight into the barriers and institutional structures that shape student success in STEM fields. By integrating research, theory, and applied practice, the presenter brings both scholarly rigor and practitioner insight to facilitate meaningful dialogue on strengthening recruitment, retention, and belonging for Black women in computer science and across STEM.

2. ACPA Equity and Inclusion Statement

This session aligns with ACPA's Equity and Inclusion Statement by promoting fairness, access, and belonging across intersecting identities, particularly race and gender within STEM education. By centering the lived experiences of Black women in computer science, the session highlights how structural inequities and underrepresentation affect participation, persistence, and professional pathways.

The presentation encourages educators and institutional leaders to examine policies, practices, and support systems that influence equity in recruitment, retention, and student success. Through research-informed dialogue, participants will explore strategies that foster inclusive learning environments, culturally responsive mentorship, and equitable access to resources.

Consistent with ACPA's commitment to recognizing diverse identities and perspectives, this session emphasizes asset-based approaches that value lived experience, representation, and

community cultural wealth. Participants will be challenged to reflect on their professional roles in cultivating environments that promote belonging, collaborative practice, and mutual respect.

By advancing actionable strategies grounded in equity and inclusion, this session supports ACPA's mission to empower educators and professionals to create more just and inclusive educational spaces.

I acknowledge my proposal meets the expectations reflected in the ACPA Equity and Inclusion Statement.

3. Session Title

From Access to Belonging: Black Women in Computer Science

4. Session Abstract

Black women remain significantly underrepresented in computer science despite ongoing diversity initiatives. This session examines factors influencing Black women's decisions to pursue and persist in computing programs. Grounded in qualitative research and Social Cognitive Theory, the presentation highlights early STEM exposure, mentorship, institutional culture, identity, and belonging. Participants will identify barriers and develop practical strategies to strengthen recruitment, retention, and equitable support systems in higher education.

5. Learning Outcomes

a. Learning Outcome 1:

Participants will identify at least three factors influencing Black women's decisions to pursue and persist in computer science programs.

b. Learning Outcome 2:

Participants will examine how early STEM exposure shapes interest and academic pathways in computer science.

c. Learning Outcome 3:

Participants will analyze how mentorship, representation, and institutional culture influence belonging and self-efficacy in computing education.

d. Learning Outcome 4:

Participants will recognize systemic, cultural, and structural barriers contributing to underrepresentation in computer science programs.

e. Learning Outcome 5:

Participants will develop two actionable strategies to strengthen recruitment, retention, and inclusive practices within their educational or professional contexts.

6. Relevance to the Profession

The underrepresentation of Black women in computer science remains a critical concern for higher education and the broader STEM workforce. Despite national efforts to expand participation in computing, Black women continue to experience disproportionately low rates of enrollment, retention, and degree attainment. National data also indicate that Black women have earned approximately 2-3% of bachelor's degrees in computer science (NCSES, 2023).

For campus practitioners, faculty, and educational leaders, this disparity signals the need to move beyond surface-level diversity initiatives toward sustained, equity-centered institutional transformation.

This session centers on the lived experiences of Black women and examines how institutional culture, mentorship, identity development, and early STEM exposure shape academic decision-making and persistence. Guided by Social Cognitive Theory, the session highlights how self-efficacy, role modeling, and environmental supports influence motivation and a sense of belonging. These insights are directly applicable to professionals designing student support services, advising structures, mentoring programs, and inclusive curricula.

Creating equitable computer science pathways requires collaboration across academic affairs, student support services, and institutional leadership. By addressing both barriers and strengths, this session offers a research-informed framework for evaluating current practices and identifying opportunities for systemic change.

The discussion also supports P–12 educators and outreach coordinators seeking to strengthen early STEM exposure and develop sustainable pipelines into computing fields. Ultimately, this session provides actionable strategies to enhance recruitment, retention, and belonging in computer science programs while advancing innovation, equity, and social responsibility within the technology sector.

7. Outline of Session Presentation Component Descriptions and Time Allotments

- **Welcome, Introductions, and Session Overview (5 minutes)**
Brief introduction to the session purpose, learning outcomes, and relevance to higher education and student affairs practice.
- **Defining the Scope of the Problem (10 minutes)**
Overview of national trends in computer science participation and the underrepresentation of Black women. Introduction to key concepts, including representation, belonging, and Social Cognitive Theory.
- **Research Purpose and Theoretical Framework (10 minutes)**
Overview of the proposed qualitative phenomenological study, research questions, and conceptual grounding in Social Cognitive Theory.
- **Key Themes from Literature (10 minutes)**
Discussion of early STEM exposure, mentorship, institutional culture, identity development, systemic barriers, and support systems influencing persistence.
- **Interactive Small Group Discussion (15 minutes)**
Participants reflect on their institutional contexts and identify barriers and strengths related to representation and belonging in STEM programs.
- **Large Group Debrief and Strategy Sharing (5 minutes)**
Groups share key insights and emerging practices.
- **Action Planning and Closing Reflection (5 minutes)**
Participants identify at least one actionable strategy to implement within their professional roles. Final reflection and questions.

8. Participation Component

Participants will engage in structured small-group discussions to reflect on how representation, mentorship, and institutional practices influence belonging in computer science and other STEM fields. Guided reflection prompts will encourage attendees to connect session content to their professional contexts. Opportunities for large-group dialogue and voluntary sharing will foster collaborative learning and the exchange of strategies.

Universal Design principles by providing verbal explanations, high-contrast slides, and written reflection prompts. Participants will engage through discussion, individual reflection, and collaborative strategy development to ensure accessibility and inclusive participation. Learning will be assessed through action-planning worksheets and voluntary sharing of identified institutional strategies.

9. Synthesis and Application of Knowledge

This session integrates research, theory, and practitioner insight to support meaningful application in professional contexts. Participants will connect literature and theoretical frameworks to institutional practice while synthesizing concepts related to mentorship, belonging, identity, and systemic barriers. The session concludes with an action-planning component that enables attendees to identify practical strategies to strengthen recruitment, retention, and inclusive learning environments. These applications encourage sustained equity-focused practice beyond the session.

10. Target Audience for your Session

This session is designed for higher education professionals committed to advancing equity and inclusion in STEM fields. Ideal participants include campus practitioners, academic advisors, faculty in computer science and related disciplines, diversity and inclusion officers, program coordinators, and institutional leaders focused on recruitment and retention initiatives.

The session is also relevant for graduate students, new professionals, and mid-career educators seeking research-informed strategies to strengthen belonging and representation in their institutional contexts. Additionally, P-12 educators and outreach coordinators interested in expanding early STEM pathways for underrepresented students may benefit from the discussion.

11. Connection to ACPA's Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice & Decolonization

This session advances ACPA's Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization by centering the lived experiences of Black women in computer science, whose voices have historically been marginalized in STEM education and institutional decision-making. By foregrounding these narratives, the session challenges deficit-based perspectives and highlights resilience, agency, and the structural conditions that shape participation and persistence.

Participants will critically examine how systemic racism, gendered stereotypes, and inequitable access to resources influence recruitment, retention, and belonging in computing fields. The session encourages interrogation of institutional policies and practices that

reproduce inequities while promoting culturally responsive mentorship and inclusive pedagogy.

Through research-informed dialogue and action planning, attendees will consider strategies that redistribute opportunity, expand representation, and cultivate authentic belonging. By connecting lived experience to institutional transformation, this session contributes to advancing racial justice and decolonizing higher education practices.

12. Citations

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13. Inclusive Language Check

I agree that this session utilizes inclusive language and have reviewed this proposal for, and removed, any marginalizing language (e.g., ableist, gendered, racist).

This proposal has been carefully reviewed to ensure the use of affirming, respectful, and culturally responsive language. The session intentionally centers on asset-based perspectives, avoids deficit framing, and recognizes participants' diverse identities and lived experiences. Terminology has been selected to reflect dignity, equity, and inclusion across intersections of race, gender, identity, and educational contexts.

14. Universal Design Principles

This session will be intentionally designed to ensure accessibility and engagement for all participants. Presentation materials will use clear language, readable sans serif fonts, and high-contrast formatting to enhance visibility. The presenter will use a microphone and provide verbal descriptions of key visuals to support varied access needs.

Participants will engage with content through multiple modalities, including visual presentation, guided discussion, reflective prompts, and collaborative activities. Opportunities for participation will be structured yet flexible, allowing attendees to contribute in ways that align with their comfort levels and learning preferences.

I agree, should this session be accepted, I will use Universal Design Principles in designing and implementing this session.

15. Confirm Spell Checking

I have proofread all content for correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and problematic language.

All sections of this proposal have been carefully reviewed to ensure clarity, accuracy, and alignment with professional and inclusive standards.