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Illinois Wesleyan to Host Summit on Colorblind Racism

May 4, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University will host a summit May 12-14 to bring together scholars, the campus community, and the public to discuss new directions for research on contemporary racism.

The “Summit: New Frontiers in the Study of Colorblind Racism” is made possible by a grant received by Associate Professor of Sociology Meghan Burke from an Advancement of the Discipline grant from the American Sociological Association. The summit includes presentations by scholars from more than a dozen universities across the United States, as well as workshop sessions meant to stimulate new methodologies, approaches, insights and strategies for better understanding and challenging contemporary racism, and will also feature a May 12 keynote address by Illinois Wesleyan alumna [Charlene Carruthers](#), a nationally recognized voice in racial justice, social justice and activism.

A 2007 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan with majors in history and International Studies, Carruthers has been named one of the “New Leaders of Social Justice” and recognized as one of America’s 10 Most Daring Young Black Activists. Carruthers is currently national director of the Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), an activist member-led organization of Black 18-35 year olds dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people. First politicized as an 18 year old on a May Term course in South Africa, her passion for developing young leaders to build capacity within marginalized communities has led her to work on immigrant rights, economic justice and civil rights campaigns nationwide. She has led grassroots and digital strategy campaigns for national organizations including the Center for Community Change, the Women’s MediaCenter, ColorOfChange.org and National People’s Action, as well as being a member of a historic delegation of young activists in Palestine in 2015 to build solidarity between Black and Palestinian liberation movements. Carruthers is also the recipient of the “New Organizing Institute 2015 Organizer of the Year Award.”

A native of Chicago’s South Side, where she continues to live and partake in social justice movements, Carruthers earned a master’s degree in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. Her keynote address at 4:30 p.m. May 12 will be held in the Hansen Student Center and is free and open to the public. She will also participate in a panel discussion with local community advocates, including representatives from YWCA, PATH, Advocate BroMenn, Illinois State’s School of Social Work, the Illinois Wesleyan Action Research Center, and others, on May 13 at 9 a.m. in State Farm Hall room 202.

Other sessions led by scholars that are open to the public begin May 12 at 1:30 p.m. and continue all day May 13, all in State Farm Hall. The summit concludes with a scholars-only day on May 14, where sociologists hope to craft next steps and share in publication strategies.



IWU alumna Charlene Carruthers '07, a nationally recognized voice in racial justice, will be the keynote speaker.

