Diversity Rhetoric and Practice: A Critical Examination Of “Diversity” In Graduate Education

by

Tellisia Williams

Co-Chairs: Professor David Chapin and Professor Michelle Fine

The purpose of this research is to investigate the built environment, educational policy, place making, and personalized lived experiences of doctoral students of color in “diverse” academic spaces. I critically examine the linkages and gaps in institutional policies of diversity and inclusion in relation to the narratives of doctoral students of color enrolled at the Urban Public University. I use qualitative methodology of Environmental Autobiography to capture the narratives. My dissertation demonstrates the importance of Critical Race Theory (CRT) by prioritizing the embodied knowledge making and experiences of people of color. This work challenges dominant ideologies of diversity and inclusion by centralizing race and racism in relation to other systems of oppression and animating the various forms of critical resistance and transformation engaged by doctoral students of color. This dissertation complicates the discourse on inter-group relations by investigating how students of color talk about diversity and places of inclusion and exclusion.