MSS-Minority Scholars Committee Report
Spring, 2015 –Kansas City, Missouri

Committee Members present at the 2015 Minority Scholars Committee (MSC) Meeting: **Regina Dixon-Reeves** (In-Coming MSC Chair), **Gail Wallace** (Out-Going MSC-Chair), Erika Busse-Cardenas , Miguel Ceballos, Tanya Gladney, Angela Nelson, Veronica Newton, Chavella Pitman, and Ted Thornhill. Midwest Sociological Society (MSS) committee guests included: Derrick Brooms (Committee on Teaching and Learning) and Deb White (2016 Program Chair). The MSC enthusiastically welcomes new committee members and actively seeks additional members to continue the excellent work of this committee. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Minority Scholars Committee, please contact Regina Dixon Reeves, regina.dixonreeves@sbcglobal.net or request nomination to the MSC committee through the MSS Executive Office at mwsocsoc@centurylink.net. If you request nomination by August 1, 2015, the board will review your request at the 2015 MSS Fall Board Meeting and you will receive notification by the end of this calendar year.

During our committee meeting, Friday, March 27, 2015, the MSC committee debriefed the 2015 annual meetings and discussed the best ways to support the long-range goals of the Midwest Sociological Society. Our overall impressions of the annual meeting were very positive. We were impressed with the variety of workshops, panels, plenaries, and paper sessions. It was voiced that Tour 1: Creating the Racial Landscape conflicted with the Minority Scholars Committee meeting – causing a potential conflict for members who might feel compelled to choose between the tour and the meeting. The incoming chair, Regina Dixon-Reeves, will work with the MSS Executive Officer and Conference Planning Committee when the 2016 program is drafted to try to rectify similar conflicts in the future.

Four goals were identified for the Minority Scholars Committee over the next two years:
1. Propose a robust schedule of professional development and race and ethnicity sessions for the 2016 and 2017 annual meetings
2. Actively recruit ethnically diverse faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students to join MSS and attend the annual meeting
3. Increase the scholarship around issues of race and ethnicity by inviting papers for several of the sponsored sessions
4. Offer a networking reception for ethnically diverse faculty, students, and allies at an off-site venue at the annual meeting.

In order to achieve these goals, MSC will make a formal request to add and manage a ***Faculty Certificate of Professional Development in Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality***. We believe that next year's conference theme, Inequality, Injustice, and Intersectionality, offers the opportunity to gather a robust set of paper presentations, workshops, and plenary sessions that can easily be combined for a certificate of professional development certificate. Offering a certificate of Professional Development in Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality will help to increase the visibility of these sessions and encourage MSS participants to complete a cluster of sessions that deal with issues concerning race, ethnicity, and inequality.

As in previous years, the Minority Scholars Committee sponsored 3 sessions during the 2015 meetings – ***Oppression in the Academy, Retaining Ethnic Minority Graduate Students and Faculty, and Mentoring Graduate Students from Non-Traditional & Underrepresented Backgrounds***. While some of the sessions were well attended, others had few participants. In the coming year, the MSC committee will ***revise the titles and descriptions of our 3 signature sessions to better describe the session's content and attract additional participants to the sessions***. ***We will also change the format of some of the sessions to solicit papers so we can begin to accumulate scholarship in the area of race and ethnicity and higher education***.

MSC members were asked to submit proposed session topics for the 2016 joint meeting with the North Central Sociological Association before the April 15th deadline. ***Session topics brainstormed by the group during the meeting include Teaching While ____: Teaching in Predominately White Institutions, Feminism, and Graduate Student Experiences.*** MSC members were asked to consider adding MSC as a co-sponsor to any sessions that they might propose that deal with race and ethnicity. Several members are already in the process of planning sessions for next year's conference.

All current MSC members have committed to encouraging their departmental colleagues to join MSS, encouraging their undergraduate and graduate students to enter the MSS paper contests, and making a formal request to bring groups of students to the 2016 and 2017 annual meetings. We will also work with the Executive Officer to craft a letter of invitation to all the schools in the Chicago area inviting them to circulate membership and conference information to their faculty and students. MSC members who are in the Chicago area have also committed to visiting the department chairs of several of the larger schools in Chicago to encourage their schools' participation.

During the 2016 annual conference, ***MSC will co-sponsor two sessions with the Publications committee - How to Write a Journal Article and How to Write a Book Review (confirmed with MaryBeth Stalp)***. These professional development topics were selected because writing for publication continues to be one of the biggest challenges for students and junior faculty. These joint sessions should be of interest to a large cross-section of MSS participants and the co-sponsorship of the sessions will increase the visibility of both the MSC and Publications committees.

*** **MSC will also sponsor a Speed CV Review Session** for graduate students and junior faculty within the first 3 years of their academic appointments. Each participant will get 10 minutes with the reviewers who will make suggestions on strategy for making them more competitive, rather than stylist comments). The session should be listed as a closed session and we will send a message out on the MSS Listserv asking for volunteers of current and former department chairs to review the CVs during the conference.

We are planning an ***off-site reception for all ethnic minority faculty, students, and allies at the 2016 meeting in Chicago***. We are committed to creating a space for networking and support for underrepresented members of the MSS during the annual meetings. We will make a *formal request for $150* in support of appetizers and 1 soda per attendee at a local venue near the conference hotel. A cash bar will be available for participants who would like to purchase alcoholic beverages. We will have the venue identified early enough that an announcement of the reception (along with date, time and location) can be published in the online conference program and on the MSS website so potential participants may plan to attend. The purpose of the reception is to encourage networking among the members, but also for the existing MSC membership to get to know other ethnically diverse faculty and students in the region. This reception is one of the best ways for us to recruit future members to the MSC committee.

We continue our work on developing a ***MSS Faculty of Color Directory***. We are committed to the MSS Long Range Planning objectives of supporting a diverse membership and developing scholarship that promotes the professional development of faculty and students who attend MSS. Both Regina Dixon-Reeves and Gail Wallace were in attendance at the Long Range Planning Committee with Committee Chairs Luncheon 2015.

The Minority Scholars Committee invites you to come to our sponsored events at the 2016 MSS Annual Meeting. We are working hard to become more visible and active within the MSS. Our goal is to continue to integrate ethnic minority faculty and students into the profession and the leadership ranks of the MSS. Increasing the diversity of MSS is consistent with both MSC's and MSS' commitment to social justice and equality. A special thanks to the other MSS committee members who attended this year's meeting - Derrick Broom and Deb White – and MSC committee members who have volunteered their time, energy, and helpful ideas to make this year's MSC committee meeting a success!

-**Gail Wallace** (Past) MSS Minority Scholars Committee Chair
-**Regina Dixon-Reeves** (Present) MSS Minority Scholars Committee Chair