

THE CROSSING BRIDGES SUMMIT OCTOBER 14, 2021

Voices of Activists and Scholars

**Examining Police Reform: Conversations about the
'Pittsburgh Community Taskforce for Police Reform'
and its implications for the Mon Valley**



PennState
Greater Allegheny

Message from Jacqueline Edmondson Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer

We are starting our fifth year of the Crossing Bridges Summit. The purpose has always been for our campus to be a catalyst for change as we work to bridge racial divides in the Mon Valley.

Our event this year, Examining Police Reform: Conversations about the 'Pittsburgh Community Taskforce for Police Reform' and its implications for the Mon Valley, engages us in timely and critical conversations. Heightened awareness in our communities about racism and inequity provides an important context and urgency to our work.

We look forward to engaging our campus and community partners in conversation as we determine actions that will bring positive changes to the region.



Crossing Bridges Pillars

Speaker Series: The Speaker Series brings prominent figures to campus, to offer different perspectives on questions of race and racism in the United States and the Mon Valley.

Summit Talks: Summit Talks occur after each speaker. Faculty, staff, students and community members join discussion leaders to consider each speaker's major points. Participants identify actionable items Greater Allegheny will pursue as it works to be an agent for positive change.

Unity Talks: These student-led campus-based discussions focus on topics that emerge from student dialogue about race and racism. Unity Talks engage students, faculty, and staff in honest dialogue about issues that concern students.

Visiting Scholar: The Visiting Scholar Series brings intellectuals, artists, activists and others to campus for a yearlong engagement to include teaching, community outreach, research, and/or creative performance. Dr. Tom Poole, a civil rights scholar with extensive work in educational equity is the current Visiting Scholar.

Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice: Our Task Force on Racial Equity and Justice is responsible for examining curriculum and programming and making recommendations to ensure that all members of the campus community develop an understanding of racial justice, racism, and its impact on society.

Event Agenda

Welcome

Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson, Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer

Moderator

Dr. Kate McLean, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Panel Discussion

Mr. T. Rashad Byrdson, Ms. Brandi S. Fisher, Mr. Richard Garland, MSW, and
Dr. Hasan Jeffries

Live Question & Answer Session

Submit your answers via watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges

Featuring



T. Rashad Byrdsong - Panelist

Founder and Chief Executive Office, Community Empowerment Association

T. Rashad Byrdsong is the Founder and CEO of a unique community based organization, Community Empowerment Association (CEA). He has become a strong force for human rights, spearheading such efforts as the Live Longer: Empowering and Engaging Pittsburgh Communities, a community based participatory research and problem-solving initiative in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Health Equity. Mr. Byrdsong created a comprehensive Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, presenting it throughout Allegheny County and calling for a paradigm shift that views violence as a preventable social disease. His work heightens the community's understanding of health equity and its importance in achieving a dignified life, and he aggressively pursues a movement to curb the gun violence that has become a pandemic in our communities.



Brandi S. Fisher - Panelist

President and CEO, Alliance for Police Accountability

Brandi Fisher is the founder and president of the Alliance for Police Accountability (APA), founded March 2010. The APA is an organization dedicated to criminal justice reconstruction while specializing in bettering community/police relations and has been a catalyst for change in policing in Allegheny County. She has successfully brought many stakeholders together to collaborate on social justice issues in Allegheny County and surrounding areas and has organized and led several protests and campaigns seeking systemic change within the criminal legal system and justice for individual victims and survivors of brutality at the hands of law enforcement officers.



Richard Garland - Panelist

Assistant Professor of Public Health Practice, The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health

Richard Garland is an assistant professor of public health practice at The University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and is a member of the Community Task Force on Police Reform, contributing to the report that inspired our Crossing Bridges Summit work for this academic year. Richard is the Director of the BCHS Center for Health Equity's Violence Prevention Project where he oversees training, data collection and outreach efforts aimed at reducing crime and violence. The Center is conducting a hospital-based intervention project where gunshot wound victims receiving treatment in four major trauma units will be counseled in an effort to reduce emergency department recidivism. The Center provides case management services to attempt to alter the lifestyle of the victims with the goal of preventing further involvement with crime and violence.



Hasan Kwame Jeffries - Panelist

Associate Professor, Department of History, The Ohio State University

Hasan Kwame Jeffries is an associate professor of history in the Department of History at The Ohio State University, and is committed to teaching "Hard History", which led him to edit *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement*, a collection of essays by leading civil rights scholars and teachers that explores how to teach civil rights history accurately and effectively. Hasan has collaborated on several public history projects, including serving as the lead scholar and primary scriptwriter for the \$27 million renovation of the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee, the site of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He has also contributed to several documentary film projects as a featured on-camera scholar, including the Emmy nominated, four-hour, PBS documentary *Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise*.

Moderator



Kate McLean, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, Penn State Greater Allegheny

Dr. McLean is an associate professor of criminal justice at Penn State Greater Allegheny. She is a sociologist and ethnographer whose research explores the intersection between criminal justice and public health. Her past and present projects specifically consider how the simultaneous criminalization and medicalization of illicit drug use impact individual identity, community health, and other social institutions. Dr. McLean is particularly interested in "harm reduction" strategies like syringe exchange, and how such programs exist within and adapt to the "war on drugs." Her current research project considers the risk environment for opioid overdose in southwest Pennsylvania, and the ways in which fear of police constrains access to substance use services. In 2021, Penn State University recognized Dr. McLean with the emerging faculty award for engaged scholarship. This is a University-wide honor that recognizes early-career faculty members whose work has significant potential to advance engaged scholarship through teaching, research and/or service. Dr. McLean's engaged scholarship work was deemed to have significant potential to influence societal issues on local, regional or national levels.

Upcoming Events

Summit Talks

Thursday, October 14, 2021 | 4:30 p.m.

Register here: greaterallegheny.psu.edu/register-summit-talks

Join us as we consider our panelists' points and identify actionable items to bring about change. Our Summit Talk facilitators are Shelly Brown, Penn State Greater Allegheny; Nathaniel Carter Jr., This Generation Connect; and Fawn Walker-Montgomery, Take Action Mon Valley.

Speaker Series

Watch Live: watch.psu.edu/crossingbridges

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 | Broadcast live on WPSU

Voices of Citizens and Victims

Panelists will share their personal experiences with policing and the reforms they hope to see.

Thursday, February 3, 2022 | Broadcast live on WPSU

Voices from the Judicial System and Police

Panelists representing defenders, prosecutors, and judges, will join with public safety experts to discuss justice efforts. .

Thursday, April 7, 2022 | In person at Penn State Greater Allegheny

The Year in Review: What We Learned and Where We Go From Here

An in-person discussion featuring one speaker from each of our previous panels.

Broadcast Partner

