



# Sisters of the Academy Institute

## NEWSLETTER

SOTA Leadership Team 2008-2011

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## Scholarship Through Collaboration

When Sisters of the Academy (SOTA) Institute was formed, we set definite goals that would drive and propel us toward longevity and respect in the academy. One of those goals was to develop and encourage a research focus for Black women in the academy. In every regard, our voices, presence, intellect and scholarship need to be addressed and supported within and by the academy. With that, SOTA's research agenda highlights Black women as graduate students, tenured and non-tenured professors, and professionals through scholarship and collaboration. In keeping with the mission of SOTA, "To produce collaborative scholarship among Black women in higher education", the purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed, interested, and engaged.

## Moving Forward, Fulfilling Our Mission & Purpose

Sisters of the Academy Institute has been very busy over the past several months with planning and putting into practice the goals and mission of the organization. In this issue of the Newsletter, we highlight on-going projects and solicit members to become actively involved in the organization

### Developing New Relationships

Last October, the SOTA Leadership Team (LT) convened in San Diego for our winter meeting, but our meeting had a two-fold purpose: first, to discuss and plan upcoming activities for SOTA, and second to join forces with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and attend the New Connections Coaching Clinic.

RWJF has similar aims as SOTA, and the collaborative efforts of the two organizations will enhance both agendas to support people of color in academe, research, and administration. New Connections started in 2005, under the president's mission, with the intent to support minorities, with a focus on disparities, poverty, and social injustice; initially the foundation only awarded grants, but are now supporting efforts in a broader community. LT members participated in the two-day Coaching Clinic with an evening networking reception and a workshop on writing, and publishing. We were also given access to an on-going professional development electronic networking system.

In April 2010, SOTA in collaboration with Dr. Debra J. Perez of the RWJF are planning the Intensive Grantsmanship Workshop. The purpose of this workshop will be to increase awareness of and access to research funding among African American women in academia. This intensive, 3-day training will include workshops, panel discussions and paired mentoring aimed at assisting participants in acquiring knowledge and skills relevant to securing funding for research. More details as the event approaches will be given. However, if you are interested in working with the planning committee for this event, contact Tonya Perry, chair of the Research Committee.

### 2008 Inaugural Writing Retreat

SOTA held its inaugural Writing Retreat (WR), April 10-13, 2008 at Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, CT. The Writing Retreat is a "process and product driven weekend with a networking twist."

We have four purposes for the Writing Retreat: first, to collaborate among scholars of vast academic disciplines with similar research interests; second, to increase the writing productivity of members within the writing circle groups; third, to provide constructive feedback in the review and revision process of writing; and fourth, to be productive in the writing process, with expected outcomes such as scholarly journal articles or manuscripts, dissertations, book chapters, grants or proposals. Participants worked in small groups under the support of a WR facilitator.

We offer some 2008 Inaugural Writing Retreat Testimonies from a few of our participants:

"Thank you so much for welcoming me into the Sisterhood."— "This is a great idea, wonderfully helpful."  
"This should be an annual affair."— "Despite the limitations, this was one of the most powerful and valued experiences I have had. The ability to meet and hear of other sisters' projects, dynamic."— "Continue encouraging, motivating, and inspiring future doctoral candidates! Awesome job!"

Those interested in working with the planning committee for the next Writing Retreat (2010), contact Anna Green/Felicia Mensah, co-chairs of the PD Committee.

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## SOTA Outstanding Achievement Recognition

SOTA is an amazing organization with talent and expertise representing many academic fields and administrative positions. We are very proud of the work that our members are doing professionally and academically. For this reason, SOTA wants to highlight on a regular basis outstanding achievement. We highlight the accomplishments of J. Celeste Walley-Jean.



**Dr. J. Celeste Walley-Jean**, Ph.D., M.A., University of Southern Mississippi, B.A., Spelman College.

Dr. Walley-Jean is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Clayton State University (Morrow, GA). She has clinical experience working with women, men, and adolescents who have used and experienced violence in their relationships. In addition Dr. Walley-Jean's area of research investigates women's use and experience of violence in their relationships, especially African-American college women's interpersonal aggression. She has had two manuscripts recently accepted concerning African American college women's use of interpersonal aggression and perceptions of African American women's anger. Dr. Walley-Jean was a past participant of the SOTA Boot Camp® and a contributing author of the SOTA Special Volume of Black Women, Gender & Families: A Black Women's Studies Journal.

Dr. Walley-Jean is happily married and in her spare time loves to travel with her husband. When not traveling, she enjoys watching football. To contact Dr. Wally-Jean: [jeanettewalley-jean@clayton.edu](mailto:jeanettewalley-jean@clayton.edu)

## SOTA Sister Success

**Tamara Bertrand Jones**, PhD, received the 2009 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Service Award, Florida State University.

**Devona L. Foster**, EdD, completed her dissertation and will graduate in May from Auburn University, with a degree in Administration of Higher Education, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership & Technology. Her dissertation title is "A Comparison of Faculty Perceptions of Campus Climate at a Predominately White Institution." Foster was a past participant of the SOTA Boot Camp®.

**Anna Green**, PhD, accepted a new position at Atlanta Metropolitan College as Director, Engineering Early College.

**Melanie L. Hayden**, PhD, completed her dissertation and graduated December 2008 from Virginia Tech, with a degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies with a concentration in Higher Education. Hayden is currently Associate Director of Multicultural Recruitment, Undergraduate Admissions, Ohio University.

**Kimberly L. King-Jupiter**, PhD, took a new administrative position as the Associate Dean in the College of Education, Lewis University.

**LeKerri Mack**, Doctoral Student, Auburn University, spoke on panel for civil rights. Read more: [http://www.nbc13.com/vtm/news/local/article/panel\\_discusses\\_dr\\_king\\_barack\\_obama/55102](http://www.nbc13.com/vtm/news/local/article/panel_discusses_dr_king_barack_obama/55102); [http://www.oanow.com/oan/news/local/article/speaker\\_historic\\_day\\_is\\_just\\_the\\_beginning/55457/](http://www.oanow.com/oan/news/local/article/speaker_historic_day_is_just_the_beginning/55457/); and <http://auburn-magazine.blogspot.com>. Scroll down to the Civil Rights Town Hall.

**Felicia Moore Mensah**, PhD, served on the Selection Committee for the NASA Endeavor Science Teaching Certificate Project, which will award more than 200 fellowships to educators during a five year period. Educators accepted into the project will be exposed to current NASA science and engineering and supported in translating the information for use in classrooms.

**Erica L. Payne**, Doctoral Student, program in Special Education Administration, Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C., completed the third part of her comprehensive finals and has earned ABD status.

**Rema Reynolds**, Doctoral Student, University of California-Los Angeles, received two awards: 2008-09 UC All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity (ACCORD) Fellow; she completed the ACCORD application at the SOTA Writing Retreat; and the 2008-09 UCLA Dissertation Year Funding Fellowship Recipient. Also, Reynolds has two articles published in the local paper. Read more: [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=c93db9aa65a9741b7ce8a8d6512c51](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=c93db9aa65a9741b7ce8a8d6512c51) and [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=db1d35dacd7af8e6da41326e9a05ec15](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=db1d35dacd7af8e6da41326e9a05ec15)

**Virginia C. Tickle**, PhD, College of Engineering, Technology and Computer Science, Tennessee State University, was selected into the NASA Administrators Fellowship Program. Tickle is a visiting professor at TSU and teaches about the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers. She is teaching Life Cycle Analysis and Cost Estimation Analysis, collaborating research efforts with USDA Natural Conservation Research Services in Jackson, Mississippi, and managing several minority STEM programs. Virginia was featured on the front cover of the Black PhD, EdD Magazine, 2008 Special Edition.

**Breea Willingham**, MA, has a chapter, "Teaching Diversity One Journalism Class at a Time," in The Well-Crafted Argument, F. White & S. Billings, editors, 2008; she is also presenting a paper, "Prison Writing as Resistance" at the at the National Association of African American Studies conference in Baton Rouge, February 12 ; and another paper, We Don't See Color: The Challenges of Teaching Racism and other Diversity Issues to Students Who Don't Believe Racism Exists", at the Southern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, April 3.



## Reminders, Updates and Upcoming Events

April 2 - 5, 2009 / SOTA Leadership Team Spring Meeting

April 13-17, 2009 / AERA Conference

August 2-9, 2009 / 2009 Research Boot Camp® —Accepting applications now!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**2010**

**WRITING RETREAT &  
GRANTSMANSHIP WORKSHOP**

**DETAILS FORTHCOMING!**

## Professional Development Committee



The 2008-2010 Professional Development (PD) Committee is functioning under the **Knowledge, Skills and Values (KSV) Model** as a means to address the organization and membership needs (graduate, junior faculty, senior faculty and administrators), and to replicate these needs throughout all signature events of SOTA. Thus, each tenet of the model will be explained relative to the purpose and mission of each of the signature events. The focus of the model will be on meeting the needs of the membership and the organization; evaluating the successful utility of the model according to those needs; and establishing a basis for continual growth and development (in terms of professional, personal, and social) within the organization and across various career fields within the academy. We hope that participants of SOTA events may leave knowing how their particular PD needs were addressed.

Below is a brief focus of the KSV Model-

**Knowledge-What information have you acquired?**

(conducting research, writing for comprehensive examinations, preparing conference presentations, etc.)

**Skills-How do you apply or illustrate knowledge?**

(completion of thesis/proposal/dissertation; submission of grant journal, article; expansion of professional networks, improvement in teaching, management)

**Values- Why is this knowledge important to you?**

(social, personal, professional enhancement; setting goals; employment satisfaction)

The PD Committee Members are: Anna Green, Felicia Moore Mensah, Monika Hudson, Sharon Parker, Latoya Brooks, Melanie Hayden (former PD chair), and Jeanette Walley-Jean. If you are interested in working on this committee, contact Anna and/or Felicia.

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## Service: Opportunities for Active Membership

### 2009 Research Boot Camp®

Start spreading the news! Our signature event is fast approaching, and we are moving forward at warp speed for your preparation. However, a successful event is only as successful as its preparation; therefore, we need your assistance. The next Research Boot Camp® is scheduled for August 2-9, 2009 at Auburn University. We have many opportunities open for you to participate as active members of SOTA. Below are brief descriptions of the committees. There is much work to do, so contact the chair of the committee that you are interested in working with to receive details about how we can offer your time and talents. Also, see the SOTA website ([www.sisiterstheacademy.org](http://www.sisiterstheacademy.org)) for the BC® application and other important information.

Accommodations/Logistics	Coordinate hotel and facilities at host site; transportation to/from airport for guest speakers and attendees (Devona, <a href="mailto:fostedl@auburn.edu">fostedl@auburn.edu</a> )
Administration/Curriculum	Use survey and feedback forms to gather data from current participants and their insights of the program components (Sandra, <a href="mailto:smharris@troy.edu">smharris@troy.edu</a> ; Denise, <a href="mailto:david4@auburn.edu">david4@auburn.edu</a> )
Administration/Registration	Collect applications from doctoral students and junior faculty for attending Boot Camp; set up registration table for conference and registration packets (Anna, <a href="mailto:drgreen29@hotmail.com">drgreen29@hotmail.com</a> )
Evaluation	Develop and coordinate evaluation of each session, participant progress, and overall Boot Camp (Tamara, <a href="mailto:tbertrand@admin.fsu.edu">tbertrand@admin.fsu.edu</a> )
Food & Beverage	Coordinate meals and snacks set-up and clean-up; need number attending (Cheryl, <a href="mailto:sealscd@auburn.edu">sealscd@auburn.edu</a> )
Health/Activities	Responsible for fitness and exercise activities for Boot Camp participants (Dannielle, <a href="mailto:djdavis@uta.edu">djdavis@uta.edu</a> )
Hospitality	Assemble packets and materials; responsible for greeting and caring for guests and purchasing gifts (Kaye, <a href="mailto:Krogers2357@embarqmail.com">Krogers2357@embarqmail.com</a> )
Marketing/Recruitment	Send out invitations, call for participation; create/send brochures to target doctoral students and junior faculty; create advertising examples or prototypes for membership to advertise event; contact Provosts of universities to sponsor or nominate a student or faculty member to attend; writing information for website (Anna, <a href="mailto:drgreen29@hotmail.com">drgreen29@hotmail.com</a> ; Felicia, <a href="mailto:moorefe@tc.columbia.edu">moorefe@tc.columbia.edu</a> )
Technology/Facilities	Place information on website; assist in technology needs and accommodations; set up technology for events, including library support (Cheryl, <a href="mailto:sealscd@auburn.edu">sealscd@auburn.edu</a> ; Akasha, <a href="mailto:akesha@gmail.com">akesha@gmail.com</a> )

SOTA MISSION STATEMENT & PURPOSE

To facilitate the success of Black women in the Academy

To create an educational network of Black women in higher education in order to foster success in the areas of teaching, scholarly inquiry and service to the community

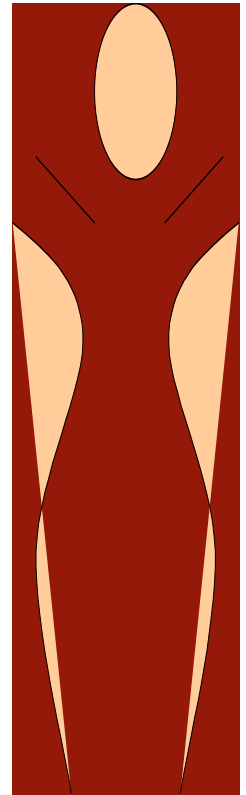
To facilitate collaborative scholarship among Black women in higher education

To facilitate the development of relations to enhance members' professional development

*Don't wait for us to call you—Call us!*  
*We WELCOME your input and service to SOTA!*

Contact Kaye Thompson-Rogers, for Membership Information,  
[krogers2357@embarqmail.com](mailto:krogers2357@embarqmail.com)

**Newsletter Editor Comments**— Print copies of the SOTA Newsletter to share with colleagues, professionals, students, and friends. If you have suggestions, stories, or information for the SOTA NEWSLETTER, contact Dr. Felicia Moore Mensah at [moorefe@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:moorefe@tc.columbia.edu).



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