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TSU Hosts Diversity Education Conference

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction recently hosted its Second Diversity Education Conference in the College of Education Auditorium on the campus. This year's theme was "Enhancing Cultural Responsiveness."

Dr. Jay Cummings, Dean, College of Education, who gave opening comments, stated: "Strategy is better than strength. Your conference experiences will include opportunities to internalize and strategize to create optimal teaching and learning classrooms and schools that feature caring, committed, competent and culturally responsive environments."

Graduate students benefit through their service in support of the annual conference. Students enrolled in EDCI 551—Multicultural Education and doctoral students in EDCI 998—Practicum in Curriculum and Instruction managed the conference logistics. Three other doctoral students (Dianna Jackson, Olivia Obiefule and Deirdre Sharkey) along with Dr. Cherry Ross Gooden conducted the conference workshops. The closing general session featured a panel of educators (Demetrius Scott, Pasadena ISD, Chassidy Jeanminette, Fort Bend ISD and Deirdre Sharkey, Houston ISD) who discussed ways to be culturally responsive as counselors, teachers, and deans of students, respectively. Dr. Claudette Merrell Ligons served as conference organizer.

The diversity conference also created opportunities for pre-service educators to examine strategies to effectively teach African American boys, learn new ways to differentiate instruction for all learners, and challenge their commitment to educate for social justice. A secondary intent was to give undergraduates a chance to interact with graduate students to encourage them to consider the next phase of their educational studies.

Primarily, the conference was designed as a professional development experience for undergraduate students in the University's Educator Preparation Program. These conference participants included students who were just beginning their early field experiences and those who are in the final weeks of the clinical field experience, formerly called student teaching.