

## UT Austin Establishes Center to Study Race and Democracy at the LBJ School of Public Affairs

UT AUSTIN, Texas — The University of Texas at Austin has established The Center for the Study of Race and Democracy (CSRD) at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, which will host its inaugural national conference Feb. 8-9.

The "Race, Democracy and Public Policy in America" conference will bring together nationally recognized scholars, activists and students to analyze race, democracy and public policy from LBJ's Great Society to the Age of Barack Obama and Black Lives Matter.

Peniel Joseph, a scholar and a leading voice on race issues, will serve as the CSRD director. He holds joint professorships with the university's LBJ School of Public Affairs and the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts.

"CSRD will seek to lead a public conversation about the very meaning of racial, social and political justice and be a source for expert scholarly and research opinion on race and democracy". The CSRD and the upcoming conference are aligned with UT Austin's increasing focus on cultivating an inclusive academic environment for the university's diverse student body.

"Through its interdisciplinary research and scholarship, the center will foster an important and robust dialogue on race relations, civil rights and democracy," said UT Austin President Gregory L. Fenves. "The center will complement the research and study at the LBJ School and other departments in the university. I believe that this work by our faculty and students will make UT an intellectual beacon on issues of racial justice and diversity."

The CSRD will focus on areas of research such as race, policy and the American presidency; race, democracy and mass incarceration; the civil rights movement and public policy; voting rights and American democracy and race relations since the Great Society. LBJ School Dean Angela Evans said: "It is in the LBJ School's DNA to engage in contemporary policy debates, scholarship, and social and political dialogue on the most pressing challenges of our time. Issues of poverty, civil rights and social inequality serve as reminders

of the persistence of these problems. CSRD will contribute to the study of these problems through the lens of history and policy, and I look forward to continued collaboration with College of Liberal Arts Dean Randy Diehl and COLA as well as other UT departments in the work of the center."

The conference Feb. 8-9 exemplifies the scholarly activities that will for the core of the center's mission. "Race and democracy stand at the core of America's national identity, ongoing political evolution and democratic experiment," said Joseph. "The inaugural conference will endeavor to draw on contributions of policy experts, scholars, activists, thought leaders and intellectuals to inform and stimulate the public conversation on the intersection between race and democracy in public politics, culture, economics and society. The conference will feature keynote addresses by Charlayne Hunter-Gault, award-winning journalist and civil rights activist; and Yohuru Williams, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Fairfield University

and author of 'Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights Black Power and Black Panthers in New Haven.' Scholars from across the country, including a number of UT Austin faculty members, will participate in the two-day conference. Panel topics will include: From Selma to Ferguson: Grassroots Activism from the Meredith March to Black Lives Matter; The Great Society Then and Now: Reimagining the Racial Justice and Public Policy Legacies of the 1960s; The Civil Rights Movement and Public Policy in the 21st Century; The Color of Change: Racial Justice, Public Policy, and Grassroots Activism in Obama's America; Reimagining American Democracy and Racial Justice: Civil Rights in the Age of Mass Incarceration, Ferguson and Black Lives Matter; and Bridging America's Racial and Policy Divide. For the conference details and complete schedule go to: [csrdconference.eventbrite.com](http://csrdconference.eventbrite.com) For more information, contact: Susan Binford, LBJ School of Public Affairs, 512-415-4820.



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