

Introduction

WILLIAM A. SMITH AND KOFI LOMOTÉY

In 1991, Philip G. Altbach and Kofi Lomotey published the first volume of *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education (Racial Crisis I)*. That volume was motivated by the growth and experiences of students, faculty, and administrators of color in predominantly white postsecondary institutions. Between the late 1970s and the publication of *Racial Crisis I*, there was tremendous growth in racial/ethnic enrollment in predominantly white institutions by African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Latinx undergraduate students (i.e., Students of Color). African American student enrollment more than doubled from 1976 (943,355) to 1991 (approximately 1.2 million). All other racial/ethnic groups saw similar increases, with American Indian/Alaska Native student enrollment rising from roughly 70,000 to 96,000, or an increase of 37% between 1976 and 1991. Asian American and Pacific Islander student enrollment grew from 169,291 to 501,000, or almost three times their representation in that period. Latinx student enrollment grew from 352,893 in 1976 to 724,561 in 1991, or over 100% (National Center for Education Statistics, Fall 2000).

The racial/ethnic growth that was realized on these historically white college and university campuses could be partially attributed to the tremendous efforts and wins by the civil rights movement of the 1960s. However, what truly sparked the need to publish the *Racial Crisis I* were the ineffective responses by white students, faculty, staff, and administrators to this unprecedented racial/ethnic growth. Students of Color and the small numbers of

racially underrepresented faculty, staff, and administrators were experiencing, at best, *Plessy*-like conditions on post-*Brown* campuses. In *Racial Crisis I*, Altbach (1991) stated that “race is one of the most volatile, and divisive, issues in American higher education” (p. 3). Unfortunately, little changed between the publication of *Racial Crisis I* and the inking of *Racial Crisis II* (2002), 11 years later, edited by William A. Smith, Altbach, and Lomotey.

In the spring of 2002, a white male Harvard Law student used the term *nigs* on the law school website, referring to African Americans. His position was that he was simply outlining the facts of a property case that used racially restrictive covenants, and he paid little to no attention to the racistly charged word (Moore & Bell, 2017). This racist act led to a campus-wide silent protest led by the Black Law Students Association at Harvard Law School. However, the campus protest did not stop further racist agitation. Another white male student sent an email to a first-year African American woman law student that said, in part, “We at the Harvard Law School, [are] a free, private community, where any member wishing to use the word ‘nigger’ in any form should not be prevented from doing so” (Moore & Bell, 2017, p. 100). Racist incidents were not confined to Harvard University. In fact, race and racism remained a *volatile and divisive* issue in US higher education during the tumultuous 1990s (Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002).

John P. Downey and Frances K. Stage (1999) examined college and university campus hate crimes during the 1990s. They indicated that the increased campus hate crimes of the 1990s were the biggest threat to safety and to building an overall sense of community. These researchers identified three common perpetrators of campus hate crimes, typically white males: the *thrill seeker*, the *reactive*, and the organized hate group perpetrator. The thrill seeker is a person who is out for a racistly good time and for peer validation for their bigotry and hatred toward People of Color. A reactive person sees themselves as a victim of the breaking down of the racial order. This person, for instance, might be provoked to commit racist acts based upon interracial dating or on the belief that too many Students of Color have been admitted on campus. Downey and Stage thought that the perpetrator, the organized hate group, was the least likely offender on campus. The skinheads and Ku Klux Klan would be examples of this group.

Since the publication of *Racial Crisis II*, we have been underwhelmed by the responses of university and college administrators to our highlighting of the racial dilemmas. Both overt and covert white supremacist activities have become more commonplace on campuses. In the 2018 academic year,

the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism confirmed 320 incidents of white nationalist propaganda perpetrated on more than 200 college and university campuses. By 2019, campus hate crimes grew to 630 of the total of 2,713 crimes. There were an additional 2,083 hate crimes committed off-campus. This increase more than doubled the total number from the previous year (1,214). According to the Anti-Defamation League's report, the fall 2019 semester saw a 159% increase in hate crimes from the spring 2019 semester (ADL, 2020). Sadly, hate crimes represent only one aspect of the campus racial crisis. In this volume, Lomotey lays out how institutionalized white racism on campuses is interconnected with power, white supremacy, and white privilege, and how each of these is symbiotically related to the 2020 US and global protests for social and racial justice.

At the time of publication, we are dealing with at least two pandemics: COVID-19 and racism. Throughout the country the streets have been filled with protestors demanding an end to institutionalized white supremacy and police violence, especially against innocent and unarmed Black people. Many empty campuses were spared these demonstrations as a result of the COVID-19 shutdowns of regular daily operations. However, we are confident that without the pandemic students, and perhaps faculty and staff, would have been protesting on campuses across the country for precisely the issues raised in this third edition of the *Racial Crisis*.

Racism has been solidified as the most pivotal issue in higher education. In his chapter, Smith defines it as "an act of violence." These racist acts are not just the behavior of white supremacists or overt hate crimes. The racial crisis is embedded in how higher education operates. While the number of Students and Faculty of Color has increased, specific subgroups are silently disappearing without much attention being given to their loss. Overall, persistence to graduation for Students of Color is still an issue. The path toward tenure, promotion, and full professorship remains a dubious process for many Faculty of Color. Administrators of Color are scarce, and they continue to hold the most unprotected yet visible positions on campus. Each of these groups has inherited the racial crises covered in the first two editions of *The Racial Crisis* while taking on new twenty-first-century forms of crises not yet covered.

This volume offers an overview of some of the most pressing racial issues on campuses across the country. We believe that the current volume is a companion edition to the first two. The concerns in *Racial Crisis I* and *II* are still relevant to today's crises. Yet the present volume offers a deeper dive into current critical matters that need further thought and action. We

need to make immediate sound decisions about postsecondary education becoming a racially inclusive environment that does not uphold institutionalized white supremacy. Otherwise, the writing of the *Racial Crisis IV* may be the racial nadir of higher education.

While the topics in this volume are similar to those in the two previous volumes, the organization is somewhat different. We begin by contextualizing the crisis, explaining aspects of the crisis. From there, we offer a historical perspective. Next, we look at what happens on campus, focusing on psychosocial issues, Black faculty, and Asian American faculty as illustrations. Finally, we offer insights on the significance of leadership, addressing issues of race and racism in higher education.

Kofi Lomotey sets the tone by opening part 1 with a sophisticated analysis of institutionalized white supremacy on campus and the social relationship to off-campus racial issues. Next, Kēhaulani Vaughn takes a critical look at the Campaign for College Opportunity publication *How Exclusion in California's Colleges and Universities Hurt Our Values, Our Students, and Our Economy* and critiques the publication's aggregation of Pacific Islanders with Asian Americans, highlighting the negative implications of such an analysis for the status of Pacific Islanders in the US higher education pipeline. Furthermore, through a three-city analysis, Shiver, Maria Ashkin, Jimmy Kendall, and Evelyn Ezikwelu explore the grim status of Black males in academia. Using a combination of three frameworks—social dominance theory, racial battle fatigue, and the analysis framework of the UN Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide—the authors offer a compelling analysis of the lifelong experiences of Black males, wherein they conclude that there is an externally imposed genocidal tendency toward Black males in US society.

In part 2, Eddie R. Cole sets the historical tone by investigating presidential responses to the racial crisis on postsecondary campuses. Then María C. Ledesma, Uma Mazyck Jayakumar, and Kenyon L. Whitman nicely extend this conversation by addressing the successes and failures of implementing affirmative action in postsecondary institutions.

William A. Smith's chapter nicely introduces part 3 with a conversation about the psychosocial antecedents of racial battle fatigue and how understanding the interlocking identities of racially minoritized groups better explains the racial pandemic impact. Channel C. McLewis, Chantal Jones, Gadise Regassa, and Walter R. Allen add to this utilizing critical race theory to explore the impact of anti-Blackness on the recruiting, hiring, promoting, and tenuring of Black faculty. They call for a serious rethinking of

academia, including a reconsideration of the status of Black faculty. Na Lor and Jerlando F. L. Jackson examine the challenges associated with African American faculty and administrators' employment across the intersections of gender, institution type, sector, size, and degree credentials. Robert T. Teranishi, Rose Ann Rico Eborde Gutierrez, and Annie Le conclude this part by providing a provocative look at Asian American faculty. While this group is not numerically underrepresented, campuses have continued to fail to create an inclusive and productive environment for them. These authors discuss the unique needs, challenges, and contributions of Asian American faculty.

While many campuses have struggled to provide a sense of belonging for Black students, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have and continue to produce some of the country's greatest leaders. In the final part, Ivory A. Toldson, Bianca M. Mack, and Temple R. Price consider in granular detail how HBCUs play a deep-rooted role in forming Black people's intellectual, cultural, and spiritual development. Then Cheryl Ching explains how faculty at Hispanic-serving institutions perceive Latinx students, their role in advancing students' learning and development, and the support efforts they undertake. Next, in a powerful autoethnography M. Billye Sankofa Waters, Mounira Morris, and Cherese Childers-McKee each look at their academic and political lives, exploring issues of their work in the academy and the curriculum they develop and teach. Finally, Phillip J. Bowman, Jamillah B. Williams, Angela Ebreo, and Nia D. Holland provide an in-depth and instructive examination of diversity leadership development at the University of Michigan through the administrations of seven campus leaders from 1951 to the present. Through document analysis and personal experiences, the authors provide a chronological picture of the institution's advancement.

On one level, the conceiving—and compiling—of this volume has been inspiring; there are so many outstanding scholars included herein who describe race in US higher education from historical and contemporary perspectives. They also offer aspects of the solutions that can aid us in bringing about a more socially just environment in US higher education institutions.

However, as we indicated above, we are dealing with many of the same issues in 2021 that we dealt with in 1991—30 years ago: the status of Black, Latinx, Asian American, and Indigenous Peoples as students in US higher education, and as faculty in these institutions. In addition, the curriculum continues to be a challenge in terms of the limited discussion of the experiences of these groups.

In the spirit of the late Congressman John Robert Lewis, we posit that this book is dedicated to the millions of Students and Faculty of Color who have been, are, or will be in US institutions of higher education. We each have a responsibility to do our part to make the circumstances better for these groups. Social justice is a collective and collaborative responsibility.

References

- ADL (2020). Year-over-Year: White supremacists double down on propaganda in 2019: A report from the center on extremism (Rep.). Anti-Defamation League.
- Altbach, P. G. (1991). The racial dilemma in American higher education. In P. G. Altbach & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *The racial crisis in American higher education* (pp. 3–17). State University of New York Press.
- Altbach, P. G., & Lomotey, K. (Eds.) (1991). *The racial crisis in American higher education*. State University of New York Press.
- Downey, J. P., & Stage, F. K. (1999). Hate crimes and violence on college and university campuses. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40, 3–9.
- Moore, W. L., & Bell, J. M. (2017). The right to be racist in college: Racist speech, white institutional space, and the First Amendment. *Law & Policy* 39, 99–120. doi:10.1111/lapo.12076
- National Center for Education Statistics. (Fall 2000). *Integrated postsecondary education database system, fall enrollment and degree completion by race/ethnicity and gender*. US Department of Education.
- Smith, W. A., Altbach, P. G., & Lomotey, K. (Eds.) (2002). *The racial crisis in American higher education: Continuing the challenges for the twenty-first century* (Rev. ed.). State University of New York Press.