

Herman Shelton

Professional Experience

Executive Director, Access Center — Colorado State University — (Jan 2016 - Jun 2023)

- Served as the lead administrator for a unit within the Division of Enrollment and Access focused on eliminating inequitable opportunity and outcome gaps for minoritized populations historically excluded from higher education.
- Provided oversight, support, and advocacy for 11 distinct programs under the Access Center umbrella including: 5 federally funded TRIO grants, and 6 institutionally funded programs working in concert to extend educational access and opportunity across the state of Colorado.
- Provided leadership, development, and evaluation for a total staff of 31 employees.
- Planned, developed, and managed the Access Center budgets totaling 3 million dollars annually.
- Ensured compliance with university fiscal rules and procedures, as well as regulations for federal, state, and private foundation grants.
- Worked closely with university offices and served on executive leadership committees to advocate for the development of university policies and procedures that improved campus climate and student outcomes for Access Center students attending CSU.

Director, Upward Bound Projects — Roosevelt University — (Sep 2007 - Jan 2016)

- Senior project director for two federally funded grants totaling 2.5 million dollars to establish inaugural college preparatory programs for 110 first generation, limited income students attending Chicago Public Schools.
- Developed a comprehensive program of highly effective support engaging 9th-12th graders in rigorous, innovative academic instruction; culturally relevant and trauma-informed educational admission; and college and career exploration activities.
- Managed \$500,000 in annual budgets ensuring full program compliance with federal and university fiscal policies and regulations.
- Hired, trained, supervised, and evaluated professional staff to implement all facets of grant requirements including: 4 full-time employees, 15 part-time employees including instructors, tutors, mentors, and residential hall supervisors.
- Oversaw submission process of all Annual Performance Reports to the U.S. Department of Education, documenting successfully meeting and/or exceeding project outcomes, and prepared and submitted funding applications that were successfully reviewed and funded.

Assistant Principal — Holyoke Community Charter School — (Sep 2005 - Aug 2007)

- Functioned as the lead administrator responsible for implementing a student accountability structure and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment at a Kindergarten - 8th grade public charter school located in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

- Supervised and led a team of 2 full-time employees working directly with a population of 700+ students, their parents/guardians/advocates, and the school director to provide a safe and secure learning environment capable of positively supporting a diverse student body while upholding school policies.
- Monitored the academic progress of all students in grades 3-8 based on weekly assessments, identified, and coordinated tutoring recommendations daily, and communicated with a staff of 30+ teachers all opportunities for extra support through tutoring, mentoring, and test retakes.
- Developed and trained a Crisis Management Team responsible for responding to all emergency situations on-site, as well as the development of the Emergency Management plan Handbook included in our Accountability Plan submitted to the Department of Education.
- Coordinated the development of programs and curriculum to cultivate leadership, critical thinking, and cultural empowerment through an Advisory class required weekly for all 4th-8th graders.

Education

University of Massachusetts/Amherst | Master of Education (M.Ed.) | 2003 - 2005

This innovative degree program at UMass/Amherst combines traditional elements of the Student Pupil Personnel Development program in Education, with the contemporary frameworks of a Social Justice in Education concentration applied to both secondary, postsecondary, and non-traditional educational contexts.

Elmhurst College| Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) | 1998 - 2003

Double major in Psychology and Intercultural Studies, a degree pathway I designed and had approved through the Interdepartmental Major Program to create an interdisciplinary approach to analyzing issues of societal inequity through the lens of power, privilege, and oppression. Minor in Social Work.

Teaching and Curriculum Design

Key 192-b | Colorado State University | Fall 2018 - Fall 2021

Designed and facilitated a 2-credit course titled 'The Politics of Equity' for first-year students participating in the Key Learning Communities. Key Communities, a living-learning program, significantly reduces retention and persistence gaps for historically excluded demographic populations. The course explores the intersections of identities and inequities situated within a context of questioning if 'service' can be a viable mechanism through which to cultivate individual participation in working towards equity.

EDUC 496 | Colorado State University | Fall 2020

Co-designed and co-facilitated a 1-credit special topic seminar for upper division Education majors titled, 'Racism, Antiracism and Equity in Education'. The course leverages focused study, Intergroup Dialogue, and Experiential Education to develop students' individual and collective understanding of racism, antiracism, and equity in U.S. schools.

EDUC 651 | Colorado State University Online | Fall 2020

Designed a 3-credit graduate course titled 'Pre-College Program Models', for the Postsecondary Access and Success Programs' Graduate Certificate developed by the School of Education. The course explores relevant trends in educational policy, programmatic elements and service delivery models, funding sources, organizational placement and staffing models for pre-college programs, as well as considerations for program evaluation, reporting, and data.

LB 180 | Colorado State University | Summer 2016

Designed and facilitated a 2-credit, dual-enrollment summer course titled 'Foundations in Leadership,' for participants of Colorado Department of Educations' Summer Migrant Youth Leadership Institute.

FYS 100 | Roosevelt University | Fall 2008 - Fall 2010

Designed and facilitated a 3-credit, first-year seminar required for all incoming undergraduate students. The course emphasized informing and supporting new students around accessing campus resources, navigating university life, and leveraging the resources of the city of Chicago to enhance their undergraduate experience.

EDUC 392R | University of Massachusetts/Amherst | Spring 2006

Co-taught a 1-credit, undergraduate course focused specifically on conceptions of socioeconomic status in American society including: class-based privilege and oppression, distribution of wealth, and intersections of capitalism and oppression.

EDUC 395Z | University of Massachusetts/Amherst | Spring 2005

Co-facilitated 'Exploring Differences and Common Ground', a 3-credit Intergroup Dialogue Practicum course focused on race and ethnicity. This course utilized experiential learning techniques to facilitate deepened understanding of racial and ethno-religious oppression, along with the process of Intergroup Dialogue to create classroom conversations designed to help students learn how to communicate across difference.

EDUC 392Q | University of Massachusetts/Amherst | Fall 2004

Co-taught a 1-credit, undergraduate course focused specifically on Ableism and Disability Oppression in the context of U.S. society including: historical conceptions of disability, formation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and contemporary manifestations of ability-based oppression.

Public Engagement

"Challenges and Responses to Inequities in Higher Education', Denver Public Schools: College & Career Readiness Department Meeting, Mar 2021.

"Social Justice as Self-Care: The Healing Power of Hip-Hop for Racial Battle Fatigue", Hinkley High School: Mental Health Monday Series, Mar 2021.

“Enrollment Planning: Impacts of the Pandemic”, Colorado State University: Professional Development Institute, Jan 2021.

“Incorporating an Equity Lens”, Water Education Colorado: Board of Trustees Winter Meeting, Jan 2020.

“The Politics of Educational Equity”, Engagement Scholarship Consortium: Annual Conference, Oct 2019.

“Across the Divide: Difference as Asset”, National Network for Educational Renewal: Annual Conference, Oct 2019.

“Critical Partnering: A Framework for Collaboration Rooted in Equity and Interdependence”, Council for Opportunity in Education: Annual Conference, Sep 2019.

“Leveraging College Partnerships to Increase Persistence”, KIPP: School Summit, July 2019.

“Moving Men from Resistance to Accountability: A Framework Toward Constructive Responses when Being Called out on Harmful Behaviors”, Colorado State University: Professional Development Institute, Jan 2019.

“How Men Engage in Culture Change: Advancing Gender Equity with Critical Reflection and Action”, Colorado State University: Diversity Symposium, Sep 2018.

“Pushing Up: A Bottom-Up Approach to Creating Institutional Support for Postsecondary Access”, Council for Opportunity in Education: Annual Conference, Sep 2018.

“Born out of Struggle, and the Struggle Continues: Using our Program’s Past to Inform our Program Futures”, ASPIRE: Annual Conference, Sep 2018.

“What are we Fighting For: A Critical Analysis of Provocation and Autonomy”, INSPIRE: Change Agent Institute, Jul 2016.

Skills & Abilities

Equity-centered educator and administrator with over fifteen years of professional experience with:

- Postsecondary access and success for historically excluded populations
- Grant preparation
- Administration and evaluation
- Curriculum and Instructional Design
- Program Management
- Staff Supervision and Development

December 5, 2023

Dear members of the hiring committee,

I write to apply for the Executive Director for Access and Postsecondary Success position posted by the University of Connecticut. This is an exciting opportunity to contribute my wealth of experience and passion towards furthering educational access and opportunity. Having previously lived in New England, first as a graduate student then as a k-12 educational professional; the opportunity to again serve alongside a network of support embedded within a New England community is highly ideal. I think the Executive Director position as outlined in the job description is a strong match for my skills, experiences, and lifelong dedication to education as a process of liberation and hope to be able to meet with the committee to further discuss the possibilities for this position.

Throughout the last 19 years, the primary goal of my career has been to eliminate equity gaps within institutions of higher education. I have worked towards this goal not solely by creating educational pathways for historically excluded populations but also by creating inclusive policies and practices at the educational organizations I have worked at and partnered with over the years. I have also found it crucial to reframe the way institutional conversations occur, asset framing discussions around access so that it is not considered without acknowledging the goal as success rather than just matriculation.

In reading the Executive Director position description and learning about the existing efforts of the UCONN campus, I've come to believe that its mission is one I feel enthusiastic about and could effectively support given my previous experience. In the various professional roles I have held in educational administration, I have consistently modeled practices of shared leadership, multicultural organizational development, community-based participatory action research and evaluation, equity frameworks for salary and job classification, and customized success measures based on intersectional equity. I have spent my career thus far in a series of long-term, dedicated roles leading up to an opportunity like this one; yet, in some ways my preparation for this role came even earlier.

As a biracial Black American, my experience has been marked by a constant striving to build connections between two seemingly dichotomous experiences: that of being either Black or white in a country that remains so racially divided. It wasn't until my own undergraduate experience that I was given the language and theoretical knowledge to clearly articulate to myself and others how my own personal experiences could be viewed through research-based developmental models and frameworks mobilized to effect positive change and productive dialogues between different communities. My first year as a first-generation college student, I was fortunate to land a federal work study job in the office of Diversity Affairs. It was there I met my first real mentor, the director, Mr. Richard Hazley. That office became my home, and Mr. Hazley became a vital part of a campus-

based support structure that was and is essential for students like me at predominantly white institutions—providing a model I would carry with me to this day.

By my senior year, we had reorganized and rebranded as the Office of Diversity Education, and I found myself running the office during Mr. Hazley’s battle with kidney failure. Diversity Education became my social and intellectual passion. I applied and was accepted to the Social Justice Education program at the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, an educational experience that had a profound impact on my worldview and orientation as an educator. Now recognized as a pioneering program for its time and a standard-bearer in the field, SJE now has a rich history of having produced leaders in the fields of education, college access, and diversity-related work.

After graduate school, I wanted to bring my knowledge of DEI work within the context of higher ed to early childhood educational settings in the area. As Assistant Principal of the tuition-free Holyoke Community Charter School in Holyoke, MA, I was tasked with leading a disciplinary program for a community of students (95% Latinx and 98% free and reduced lunch) coming from first-generation and non-English-speaking households. I created a program rooted in newly emergent strategies of transformative justice: a trauma-informed and culturally responsive approach instead of a traditionally punitive orientation to student conduct and accountability with the aim of creating a community where students were treated with agency and respect, supporting them so they might thrive. Within two years of opening our doors to over 750 students and their families, we were able to outperform every other school in the district on student Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores.

Seeing my students achieve academic success at the primary level and yet continue to struggle to find effective paths for access to higher educational opportunities upon graduating from high school, I decided to accept a position as Associate Director of Upward Bound at Roosevelt University. Roosevelt is one of the nation’s first fully inclusive institutions of higher education and Upward Bound is a federally funded TRIO program that focuses on eliminating equity and opportunity gaps for historically excluded populations to access higher education. This unique intersection of values created a fertile ground for building my understanding of how critical partnerships and community-based relationships are requisite to advancing equity work at cultural and systemic levels.

Working closely with Chicago-area secondary education institutions, I came to focus my attention on Social Justice High School, a newly opened community high school on Chicago’s southwest side. By bringing together key representatives from community organizations and aligning our strategic priorities and resources, we created the Social Justice Through Action program, which became a touchstone initiative within the fields of Education and Social Justice that was used as a featured case study in UIC Professor David Stovall’s widely cited 2017 work *Born Out of Struggle: Critical Race Theory, School Creation, and the Politics of Interruption*.

Currently, the 2 federally funded Upward Bound programs that I founded at Social Justice High School are wholly led and predominantly staffed by graduates of Social Justice High School and the Roosevelt University Upward Bound programs. Far beyond the idealized

narrative of an educational journey that takes a first-generation student out of their impoverished environment, embeds within them the knowledge and skills they are lacking, then sends them back in hopes that they will give back to their community; we leveraged the opportunities of our respective communities to create direct and lasting pathways for the community to remain an empowered part of its own educational leadership.

In January of 2016, I accepted the role of Executive Director of the Access Center at Colorado State University. On paper, the position represented a continuation of efforts already established at CSU to further the work of educational access for historically excluded populations on a significantly larger scale than my previous efforts in Chicago. Yet when looking deeply at the institutional history, practices, and outcomes for supporting the populations I had dedicated my career to best serving; I saw a vision for growing the model of critical partnerships to advance CSU's efforts of equitable access and outcomes for underserved and underrepresented demographic groups. After a year of my leadership, the Access Center was responsible for leading the Community for Excellence (C4E) Partnership Engagement and Development initiative, established to cultivate deep and lasting relationships with similarly aligned organizations across the state of Colorado and facilitate a collaborative approach to identifying and removing obstacles and barriers for access to a CSU postsecondary credential.

Over the course of six years, our efforts grew our network from 45 to 91 programs of postsecondary preparation and support including organizations like: Denver Scholars Foundation, KIPP Colorado, Colorado Mountain College, Boys and Girls Club of Denver, and College Track. We significantly grew the number of students from our Partner Organizations that enrolled at CSU. But perhaps most importantly, our structural and relational efforts led to persistence and retention rates 8.9% higher than those of students from similar demographic attribute groups not in our Community for Excellence.

Though I have always directly tied my core efforts at inclusion to postsecondary access, my desire to effectively contribute to growing institutions of higher education around equity have led me to seek every opportunity to support these efforts through intentional service, critical committee work, and an admitted inability to keep myself out of the classroom. (Designing high-impact curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students was one of the more rewarding aspects of my work at CSU and is work I would hope to continue at the University of Connecticut.)

Now, having spent almost two decades devoted to expanding college access for historically excluded populations, I have reached a point in my career when I feel ready to transition toward working with the right institution who is ready to embed this work into the very fabric of inclusive policies and practices campus wide. The opportunity to do this in the New England region would allow me to leverage a network of statewide partners rooted in value alignment rather than interest convergence, and to understand the unique challenges specific to the enrollment and retention of resident and non-resident student populations served by the University of Connecticut.

I hope to be given the opportunity to work directly with fellow administrators, faculty, and staff to develop the supports, resources, and professional development necessary to increasing principles of Inclusive Excellence and transformative academic experiences for University of Connecticut's unique communities of intersectionally-diverse learners.

The University of Connecticut will continue to feel the impacts of the changing demographics and needs of the new generations of learners we will enroll for the foreseeable future. To do this well, it must create and deepen an environmental ethic of community firmly tethered to shared values and vision for the next steps forward. If given the opportunity to pursue this role, I would work to catalyze the amazing experiences UCONN faculty and staff co-create with their students day in and day out by supporting a campus culture conducive to the recruitment, retention, and commitment to faculty and staff that aligns with our expectations for their commitment to our students. I can think of no better way to honor the legacy of mentorship I have benefited so much from than by embracing my desire and commitment to further the work of postsecondary access and success on a college campus that has proven itself ready to authentically engage with the complex work of creating and maintaining anti-racist and anti-oppressive working and learning spaces.

The accompanying Curriculum Vitae is intended to highlight the alignment of my skills, experience, and education with the elements identified in the position description. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Herman Shelton