

2021 MLK keynote focuses on racial disparity in America

By **Autumn Lucas** - January 20, 2021

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Panelists discuss issues in the African American community during the 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Day keynote on Jan. 19. (Screenshot)

Every year, Salt Lake Community College holds a keynote to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to discuss experiences within the African American community.

This year, the keynote included a virtual panel moderated by Professor AC Cox on Jan. 19. The panel consisted of four distinguished African American artists and scholars who shared their unique experiences and expertise.

Andre Perry

Perry wants to teach people about race, structural inequality, problems in the United States education system, and inclusion in America. He works as a fellow in the Metropolitan Policy Program, scholar-in-resident at American University, and a columnist for the Hechinger Report.

Perry also wrote "Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America's Black Cities." In his book, he talks about the racial wealth differential and its effect on the American community.

"The average Black household in this country has a net worth \$850,000 lower than the average net worth of a white household. ... We focus on the racial wealth gap as the target for reparations program for Black-American descendants of U.S. chattel slavery constitute about 13% of the Nation's population, but only possess less than 3% of the Nation's

wealth,” Perry said. This information is part of the Brookings Institution report “[Devolution of Assets in Black Neighborhoods](#)”, co-authored by Perry.

Kirsten Mullen

Mullen is the founder of Artefactual, an arts-consulting practice, and Carolina Writers, a literary consortium working to bring expressive writers of color to the Carolinas. She has worked with the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, the North Carolina Arts Council, and Community Folklife Documentation Institute.

Mullen co-authored the book “From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-first Century” with fellow panelist, William Darity Jr.

Mullen has researched and recorded African American contributions to the arts and politics of funding Black cultural institutions, as well as educating others.

“There certainly are ways that we can make sure that the material that students at every level are reading is accurate,” Mullen said during the event. “It’s not a mystery how we got here, but it does take some legwork.”

William Darity Jr.

Darity teaches public policy, African and African American studies, and economics at Duke University. He also serves as director of the Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity.

Darity has conducted research on several issues facing the African American community, such as inequality by race, class, and ethnicity; school and racial achievement gap; and the economics of reparations. This research ties well into his and Mullen’s book, which uses innovative methods to link monetary values to historical wrongs to assess the literal and figurative cost of the justice that has been denied to the African American community throughout American history.

During the panel, Darity talked about the concepts in the book, saying, “We defined reparations as a program of acknowledgment, redress, and closure. ... When we’re talking about reparations, we’re not just talking about slavery, we’re looking at the whole sweep of American history.”

KRS-One

KRS-One, whose name is an acronym for “knowledge reigning supreme,” is a rapper and lecturer who has published 20 albums throughout his career and is credited with having the most rhymes in hip-hop. He has been called the loudest voice for the actual preservation and expansion of original hip-hop worldwide.

“My experience is not the average African American experience, and granted, I’m here to learn as well, but my experience in hip-hop will not be denied,” he said during the event.

KRS-One openly rejects the cultural exploitation and materialism which made hip-hop more and more commercialized; he prefers grounding hip hop in its original principles of peace, love, unity, and safely having fun. He has lectured at over 500 universities in the United States and written three books.

He was the first to argue "rap is what we do; hip-hop is a way we live." This led to the introduction of the "I am hip-hop" philosophy.

KRS-One also teaches at his pop-up schools, known as the Temple of Hip Hop, located in major cities across America.

Panel Highlights

The panel touched on many areas of interest, with focus on three main subjects: reparations and their cost, white supremacy in America, and Black history and "dismemory."

For centuries, people have argued that the United States of America cannot afford and should not work towards reparations for African Americans and Black people, but Darity and Mullen argued Tuesday night that America cannot afford not to provide reparations.

KRS-One stated during the panel, "White supremacy begins with the US Constitution." Mullen expanded on this by talking about how White supremacy has been present in our political systems throughout history, both in public and in private.

Part of the reason as to why many don't know a lot of Black history is because of "dismemory," a term coined by Mullen. She described it as "organized, systematic efforts, conscious efforts on behalf of groups like the United Daughters of the Confederacy of the Revolution to rewrite our history."

The panelists had an impassioned conversation that broke down many of the injustices faced in the African American community, the effects we see from them today, and what can be done to solve the problems in our country.

The panel also included involvement from the Black Student Union and the Multicultural Student Council, in the form of videos directed by Eddy De La Fuente Galindo of the Multicultural Student Council. This allowed Bruins to interact with the event.

What to do if you fail a class

By **Luke Nichols** - January 20, 2021

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SLCC students who may be failing a class may contact an advisor to see what options are available to them. (jcomp, freepik.com)

The coronavirus pandemic exacerbated academic and financial hardships for students of all ages.

College and grade school students [failed more classes](#) in the first semester of 2020 than any other year prior. At Salt Lake Community College, options exist to help students who may have received their first failing grade.

"Before the semester ends, [students] can contact the instructor for assistance. Also, if students are eligible, they can work with their instructor and create a plan for an 'Incomplete Grade' agreement," said MaryEtta Chase from the Office of the Registrar and Academic Records.

Chase also mentioned that students have the option to retake the class for a better grade.

"Under the repeated class policy, a student that is repeating classes taken after 2002 can repeat a class and have the higher grade calculated into their cumulative GPA instead of the failed course without any further action," said Ashley Sokia, director of Academic Advising at SLCC.

Sokia said there are some limitations to the [repeated class policy](#).

"Some classes have a limit on how many times a student can repeat the class under the repeated class policy. If a student is repeating a class they took before 2002, they will need to submit the 'Repeated Class Notification' form on the Office of the Registrar's website," Sokia said.

Sokia said it is normal for an "E" to remain on a student's transcript after repeating a class, but "it will not be calculated into the cumulative GPA which is used for graduation and financial aid."

For students who are depending on financial aid, Sokia warned, "your financial aid can be affected if you retake courses. Financial aid advisors can counsel you through your options to remain eligible for funding."

Sokia said students with extenuating circumstances have the option of filing a registration appeal.

"Registration appeals are very specific for students who had an extenuating circumstance that left them unable to successfully complete a semester such as job loss, divorce, family death, etc. The appeal is not necessarily applicable to most failed classes," Sokia said.

Sokia recommended that a student speak with an academic advisor about their circumstance. An academic advisor may review the requirements, "but you [the student] will be responsible for providing supporting documentation and a written statement detailing your reasons for the appeal."

Despite the retake process, the simplest answer, if possible, seems to be early intervention. Sokia encouraged students to contact their instructors first if there's any worry over failing a class.

"SLCC professors would also like to see you succeed and they would like to know how they can best help," Sokia said.
