

Prompts for Breakout Rooms

1) Introduce yourself and why you decided to attend today (~1 min per person)

2) Below are portions of Paragraphs 8-9 in the New York Times article

Black Americans receive about 7 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded each year across all disciplines, but they have received just 1 percent of those granted over the last decade in mathematics. Like many who see in that disparity a large pool of untapped talent, Dr. Goins has long been preoccupied with fixing what is known as the “leaky pipeline.”

Redress the racial disparities that exist at every level of math education, the logic goes, and racial diversity among those who grapple with math’s biggest problems will follow.

Is this something you believe (in math and/or your own field)? (~10 minutes)

3) In his personal essay Dr. Goins writes that

“Unfortunately mathematics, like much of higher education, encourages isolation... I am an African American male. I have been the only one in most of the universities (I’ve) been to — the only student or faculty in the mathematics department”

“I have been willing to work with my university on bringing more underrepresented minority faculty to visit campus to give talks... and bringing more underrepresented minority students to conduct research... But it gets very tiring. Very Tiring. Especially when you’re still trying to work with your own postdocs, graduate students, and research projects”

“To say that I feel isolated, is an understatement.”

These issues are often referred to more broadly as the ‘minority tax’. Furthermore, Dr. Goins and other faculty interviewed for the article describe unwelcome and hostile work climates for faculty of color in universities across the county.

What are ways to ‘improve the climate’ within a department?

Whose responsibility is it to put in the work? (~10 minutes)

4) UCI’s Black Thriving Initiative is described as a “A Whole University Approach to Creating a University Culture Where Black People Thrive”. However, there are currently few (or none) Black faculty/postdocs/grad students in the math department. Similarly, there are low numbers of Black faculty/postdocs/grad students/undergrad students in other departments in the School of Physical Sciences.

How can the School of Physical Sciences become a place where Black people/researchers/teachers/mentors/students thrive?

What is your role or the role of someone like you in your department/School of Physical Sciences/in the whole University approach? (~10 minutes)

5) Are there any issues brought up by Dr. Goins or in the New York Times article that are surprising, confusing, or relevant? (~10 minutes)