

Why Black Studies Graduate Students Should Publish: The Four Imperatives

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I am very pleased and very proud that our graduate students, under the able leadership of Editor-in-chief Chenelle Idehen and her board, are successfully publishing a new edition of their journal, *Imhotep*. Indeed, it is imperative for graduate students engaged in Africology/African American Studies in particular to develop an early, solid, and consistent publication agenda, for at least the four following reasons: Intellectual; Disciplinary; Moral; and Economic.

The Intellectual Imperative

Individuals who study for and are eventually awarded a doctorate are regarded as having expert knowledge and skills in their respective field of study. Those doctors who choose to pursue a career as university professors are expected to engage in scholarly activity demonstrating their expertise. Scholarly activity, in its most conservative sense, is usually equated with doing research and publishing one's research findings, that is, with uncovering new knowledge, integrating it in already extant knowledge and making their work available to their scholarly community in the form of peer-reviewed publications. Thus, to be a successful scholar, one has to engage in research and publication.

The Disciplinary Imperative

The strengthening, both intellectually and institutionally, of Black Studies requires the continuous production of sound knowledge, itself the outcome of sustained and rigorous research. Moreover, producing scholarship that is engaged toward the well-being of the African community stands as a disciplinary imperative, consistent with the original mission of the discipline.

The Moral Imperative

In addition to the two imperatives mentioned above, that is, the intellectual and disciplinary imperatives, it should go without saying that Black Studies scholars are also faced with the moral obligation to produce scholarship that should lead to the betterment of the conditions of our people. Indeed, in the face of the multitude of challenges that we face in the United States and around the world, confronted as we are with severe and continuous oppression and dislocation, it would be

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morally reprehensible to remain indifferent and disengaged through the display of intellectual inertia, or the wasting of our intellectual skills on largely useless and irrelevant research topics.

The Work/Financial Imperative

Seeking an appointment as a professor at a research institution is certainly not the only avenue open to doctorate holders, and given the increased scarcity of such appointments, it might indeed be wise to explore alternative options. However, for those who feel a strong call for research and teaching at the college level, engaging in research and publishing are extremely important to ensure their success. In truth, it cannot be emphasized enough that demonstrating that one has established a successful research and publication record early plays a significant role in being able to secure a tenure-track position, and then, eventually tenure and promotion when the time comes.

I thus once again command all the contributors to this powerful issue, as well as the reviewers for their intellectual vigilance and labor. All of you hold much promise for our people, for Africa, at home and abroad. I wish you to continue on this successful intellectual path, never to waiver, but to remain focused on the prize: African liberation!