**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

A faculty member in the Department of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Louisville (UofL) since January 2014, Dr. Aaron C. Rollins, Jr. focuses his research on issues pertaining to cultural competency, performance management, urban policy, social equity, organizational effectiveness, education policy, and the politics of race. His teaching and scholarship are blazing new trails in the areas of urban and public policy, and he is viewed as a valued colleague in his department and his profession.

Dr. Rollins is a staunch advocate for students and a supportive colleague throughout the university. He has a strong voice that is complemented by his exceptional research and critical thinking skills, which enables him to effectively challenge the status quo and encourage others to analyze their established perspectives on social equity and justice. Dr. Rollins also serves as a role model and mentor to undergraduate and graduate students desiring to impact positive changes for policies effecting underserved populations. Additionally, his unique ability to connect with both students and parents proves quite valuable to the UofL Office of Admissions, which often calls on him for assistance with identifying and recruiting talented minority high school students.

Dr. Rollins began teaching at Mississippi State University (MSU) where he was an instructor and graduate teaching and research assistant while obtaining his doctorate in Public Policy and Public Administration. He received masters and bachelors degrees from the University of Mississippi in 2009 and 2007, respectively, and worked there as the Regional Admissions Counselor for the Ole Miss Graduate School.

Dr. Rollins has a dedicated history of active community and committee service including: Muhammad Ali Institute’s Cultural Competency Committee, the UofL College of Arts and Science Faculty Diversity Training Committee, the Dept. of Urban and Public Affairs Diversity Committee, Additionally, he has served on the MSU President’s Committee on Strategic Planning, and the Committee to Revise the MSU Honor Code. Dr. Rollins has received a host of awards and recognitions including: ‘Who’s Who of Louisville (2015), Minority Access Inc. ‘National Faculty Role Model Award’ (2015), and American Society of Public Administration ‘Founders Fellowship Award’ (2014).

**TEACHING WITH A PURPOSE**

Before arriving at the University of Louisville, Dr. Rollins taught at Mississippi State University. He primarily taught in the Department of African American Studies, and served as a valuable member of their teaching cohort. He introduced and coordinated an annual Civil Rights Trip for the department in which he took a group of students, faculty, and staff on a tour of Philadelphia, MS. While there, they received first-hand experience of the actual events that led to the murders of the three infamous civil rights workers: Goodman, Chaney, and Shrewner. The trip also included a one-on-one meeting with the mayor and other members of the Philadelphia Coalition, the group responsible for bringing Edgar Ray Killen to trial and eventually obtaining a guilty verdict on three counts of manslaughter.

Dr. Rollins began his tenure at the University of Louisville in January of 2014. He teaches the required Foundations of Public Administration Theory course for the Department of Urban and Public Affairs as well as Organizational Behavior and Strategic Management and Leadership. He is most proud of his Social Equity in the Public Sector and Cultural Competency in Action courses, which allow him to infuse his interdisciplinary background into meaningful academic, social, and political discourse. In particular, these courses provide a framework for examining factors related to discrimination as well as classism, racism, and sexism in terms of political history, power, stereotyped perceptions and practices across society, and amongst groups and individuals.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ACTION**

Dr. Rollins has presented his research at numerous regional and national conferences that include: American Society of Public Administration: Social Equity Leadership Conference (Nashville, 2015) “A Comparison of Cultural Competency Attributes to Recognition Theory Self-Formation Axes: Evidence for Enhancing Public Administration Scholarship and Practice,” the Urban Affairs Association (Miami, 2015) on “Gauging the Support for Traditional Public Schools: Is the 'School Choice Model' the Solution for Urban Education,” and The National Conference of Black Political Scientists (Las Vegas, 2012) “Expanding the Myth of the American Republic: The Campaign Rhetoric of Barack Obama.”

Recently, Dr. Rollins teamed with his graduate assistant Wes Grooms on an article that is currently under review entitled, ‘Philosophy in Public Administration: Recognition Theory's Role in Developing Cultural Competency.’ This research provides scholars, students, and practitioners in the public sector with evidence of the critical need to understand, value, and commit to the core tenants of cultural competency. The research analyzes the ‘self-formation axis’ in recognition theory as both analogous and reciprocal to the ‘belief and behavior’ attributes necessary to achieve and exhibit cultural competence in public administrators. The research contends that recognition theory explains the role that one's culture plays in the development of their outlook and behavior towards others and provides explanation for the importance acceptance and respect for others' culturally formed outlooks and behaviors in a modern democratic society. Please see the abstract below:

*Cultural Competency is an emerging theory that seeks to promote more constructive and equitable interactions amongst an increasingly diverse public sector workforce and its constituency. However, previous efforts to promote cultural competency within the public sector have failed to achieve desired results. Central to the cause of these odious results is an underlying dearth of commitment to the promotion of social equity in the academy as well as the public sector. This research intersects the fields of Public Administration and Philosophy by comparing Mitchell Rice and Audrey Matthews’ proposed ‘cultural competency’ attributes to postulated characteristics of self-formation axes within Axel Honneth’s ‘recognition theory.’ The results explicate the analogous nature of these theories and illuminate the benefits of pursuing an interdisciplinary approach to promote the comprehension of, and commitment to, cultural competency amongst public administration practitioners, scholars, and students.*