

Michele D. Simpson
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RESEARCH:

The Renée Crown Wellness Institute
University of Colorado
1135 N. Broadway
Boulder, CO 80302

Principal Investigator

Girls Like Us: Identifying and Understanding Mental Health and Wellness Priorities Among Black Girls.

The overall goal of our research is to design and evaluate a novel program called Girls Like Us that aims to support adolescent girls in combatting narratives of appearance bias, racism, racialized trauma, and colorism through mindfulness, movement, and wellness strategies. The Girls Like Us program also aims to encourage agency and provide tools to deconstruct longstanding and persistent tropes regarding Black girls while centering on the lived experiences of this population.

The objective of the proposed study is to assess factors that facilitate and pose barriers to wellness for Black adolescent girls. We hypothesize that eliciting the perspectives of undergraduate and high school students will provide rich contextual insight to design a wellness intervention that minimizes mental health challenges for Black high school students in Boulder County.

HONORS AND AWARDS:

- Center for African & African American Studies Faculty Award, 2023
- Boulder Faculty Assembly Excellence in Teaching Award Recipient, 2023
- Women Who Make A Difference, 2022
- Ascend Faculty Award 2021
- Marinus Award Nominee 2019
- Farrand Teaching Award 2018
- Farrand Teaching Award 2017
- Farrand Teaching Award 2016
- Farrand Teaching Award 2002
- Delta Gamma Faculty Recognition
- Pan-Hellenic Faculty Recognition
- Chi Omega Faculty Recognition

TEACHING:

University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Current Status:

- Associate Teaching Professor
Residential Academic Programs
- Faculty Affiliate & Research Associate
Renée Crown Wellness Institute
- Faculty Affiliate
Center for African & African American Studies

Courses Taught:

Spring Semester 2024

Renée Crown Wellness Institute

Course: Mindful Campus

Creative Minds (Libby)

Residential Academic Program

Course: Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Environmental and Natural Sciences (Baker)

Residential Academic Program

Fall Semester 2023

Renée Crown Wellness Institute

Course: Mindful Campus

Creative Minds (Libby)

Residential Academic Program

Course: Women, Gender, Literature & the Arts

Honors

Residential Academic Program

Course: Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Fall 2021-Spring 2023

Philosophy, Arts & Culture

Residential Academic Program

(Formerly the Farrand)

Courses: Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts**

Gender, Sexuality & Popular Culture

Honors

Residential Academic Program

Course: Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Student Academic Success Center

Course: Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Renée Crown Wellness Institute

Course: Mindful Campus

Open Option First-Year Academic Program

2020-2021

Courses:

- Ethical Puzzles and Moral Conflicts
- Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture

Honors

Residential Academic Program

Fall 2016-Present

Course:

- Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Farrand Residential Academic Program
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado
2005-2020

Senior Instructor

The Farrand Residential Academic Program (RAP) is designed to link students, faculty, and staff. Seminar-style classes provide exclusive course offerings for students in an intimate intellectual community. Research indicates that RAPs not only support academic success but also help students foster friendships and connections. Co-curricular activities are offered to support student's academic and non-academic interests.

Courses:

- Passport to the Humanities
- Ethical Puzzles and Moral Conflicts
- Women, Literature, and the Arts
- Ethics of Ambition
- Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture
- Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Student Academic Success Center (SASC)

2018-Present

Course:

- Ethics of Ambition

Program for Excellence in Academics and Community (PEAC)

2021-Present (Summers)

PEAC invites highly motivated, outstanding incoming first-year students from traditionally underrepresented groups and/or first-generation college students. PEAC is a rigorous summer academic program focusing on intensive university-level material that allows students to form a strong community that will serve them during their first year and beyond.

Courses:

- Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture
- Sacred Spaces**
- Ethical Puzzles and Moral Conflicts: The COVID-19 Edition**
- Ethical Puzzles & Moral Conflicts

Miramontes Arts and Sciences Program (MASP)

2013-2019

MASP supports traditionally underrepresented and/or first-generation students dedicated to pursuing academic excellence at CU. The program's emphasis is on matriculation, retention, and post-graduate success from the College of Arts & Sciences. Students are provided access to resources, enrichment opportunities, courses, and individualized one-on-one academic support and guidance.

MASP Courses:

- Ethics of Ambition
- Women, Literature, and the Arts
- Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture
- Gender, Race, and Crime**

Appointed Senior Instructor 2016-2017

Instructor

Non-Farrand Courses:

- Women of Color and Activism (Women and Gender Studies (WGST))
- The Women's Line** (WGST)
- Historical and Contemporary Issues of Black Women** (WGST)
- Critical Thinking in Feminist Theory (WGST)
- Black Women's Narratives** (WGST)

**Courses developed by Michele D. Simpson

Speaker Series

The Renée Crown Wellness Institute hosts programs, speakers, and related events throughout the academic calendar. Michele D. Simpson has played a role in inviting, hosting, developing, supporting, introducing, and moderating the following programs, speakers, and events.

- Linda Villarosa, author of Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives, The Renée Crown Wellness Institute co-hosted Linda Villarosa with the College of Media, Community, and Information, 12 September 2022.
- Dr. Inger Burnett-Zeigler, author of Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen: The Emotional Lives of Black Women Dr. Burnett-Zeigler was a guest of the Renée Crown Wellness Institute's Girls Like Us Program that centers the mental health and wellness of Black girls and women, 15 March 2022.

- Kristie Peoples is an outdoor enthusiast and guide, runner, writer, and mindfulness meditation teacher. She is the Executive Director of Women’s Wilderness, a nonprofit organization with a mission to support women and girls in accessing their power through fostering deeper connections to the outdoors and community. Kristie Peoples’ talk and workshop were titled, *Reclaiming Our Nature*, 05 April 2023
- Reggie Hubbard, internationally recognized yoga and meditation teacher and founder and chief serving officer of Active Peace Yoga presented a talk and workshop titled, *Good Grief – A Sangha for Healing and Transformation*, 20 September 2023.
- Solwazi Johnson, veteran Community Dharma Leader, health educator, and trainer. He leads mindfulness meditation classes and retreats in the Denver metropolitan area and is the guiding teacher for a Prison Buddhist Ministry Program. Mr. Johnson offered a talk and workshop titled, *Ancient and Contemporary Healing Modalities*, 15 November 2023.

2023 Presentations & Co-Moderated Panels

As part of the Renée Crown Wellness Institute’s, CU Libraries, and Center of Contemplative Resources CU ONE READ: The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World, authored by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Carlton Abrams, there were and continue to be book discussions, programming, and more planned for the 2023-2024 academic year.

- On 18 October, Michele D. Simpson presented the pillar about *Humility*. In The Book of Joy, his Holiness the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, identify and elaborate on eight

pillars, i.e., core values, that offer a pathway to a joyful life.

- On 09 October, Michele D. Simpson co-moderated The Book of Joy, a 2-hour, sold out, film screening and panel discussion that offered an exploration of the science of compassion and resilience and the practicalities of how compassion and joy can make us more resilient to tackle the important social and environmental challenges that face us in a changing world. The panelists were: Sona Dimidjian, Ph.D, Thupten Jinpa, Ph.D, and Reiland Rabaka, Ph.D.
- The Naropa University hosted brothers Ali and Atman Smith, and Andres Gonzalez, the founders of the Holistic Life Foundation (HLF), a nonprofit based in Baltimore, Maryland. HLF helps students and adults in Baltimore's most underserved communities develop mindfulness and coping strategies through yoga, meditation, and other self-care techniques. The founders came to Naropa to discuss their work and their book, Let Your Light Shine. Sona Dimidjian, the Director of the Renée Crown Wellness Institute, and Michele D. Simpson were invited to co-moderate conversation with the members of the HLF.

- A Grounded Knowledge Panel (trademarked) is a public conversation by a small group of people who have practical, authentic, personal experience, and understanding of a particular topic or question. While Grounded Knowledge Panelists converse among themselves, the audience members (“witnesses” in the GKP model) observe the discussion, thus both groups – panelists and witnesses – bring a distinctive power and depth to the experience of speaking and meaningful listening.
- On 10 July 2023, at Boulder’s Dairy Cultural Arts Center, Michele D. Simpson participated as one of three panelists in the Grounded Knowledge Panel titled: *Code Switching: Negotiating the Field of Black Survival, Assimilation, Cultural Memory, and the Liberation of Being Real.*

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Spring 2024

- Mindfulness Workshop for Student Academic Success Center’s Program Student Leaders

Fall & Spring 2022-2023

- Creative Minds, Film organizer, emcee, and discussion facilitator
- Evans Scholars, Mindfulness Workshop Developer & Presenter
- HEALing the Brain Program, Workshop Developer & Presenter
- First Generation Student Wellness Sessions, Workshop Developer & Presenter
- Mindful Movement, Contemplative Practices Facilitator, PEAC

- *Ways of Knowing* Renée Crown Wellness Institute class organizer, tour conductor, and discussion lead
- *Black Talk*, radio show host: KGNU

Fall & Spring 2021-2022

PAC RAP Student Welcome/Course Registration

HRAP Yoga

PAC RAP Yoga

The CAAAS Symposium/NAACP Membership Representative

Summer Ready Program Mindfulness Session Facilitator

Black Talk, radio show host: KGNU

Fall & Spring 2020 -2021

- Grounded Knowledge Panel Member
- “Let’s Get Mindful,” Facilitator, Renée Crown Wellness Institute Pilot
- Yoga Sessions, Stearns Hall West
- CU Wellness Week, Movement and Meditation Session
- Racism in the USA: 2022 Conference on World Affairs Planning Committee
- *Black Talk*, radio show host: KGNU
- Moderator: Boulder City Council Candidates’ Forum
- Graduate School Letters of Recommendation

Fall & Spring 2019-2020

- CU Welcome Day, Farrand Faculty Representative
- Weekly Farrand Yoga Series
- Farrand Tea Time: *So, You Want To Go To Law School?*
- CU Honor Society: Keynote
- National Society of Black Engineers: Wellness Instruction
- Boulder Police Oversight Implementation Team, CU Representative

- Diversity and Inclusion Summit: *Listening to Community Voices: The City of Boulder's Approach to Creating Community Police Oversight*
- The Center for Inclusion and Social Change: Ignite Social Justice and Leadership Conference
- Crown Institute: Mindful Campus Certification and Curriculum Co-Creation Team
- Center for Teaching and Learning: "What I learned from the Toughest Conversation I've Had: A Grounded Knowledge Panel
- *Black Talk*, radio show host: KGNU

Fall & Spring 2018-2019

- Boulder Police Oversight Task Force Member, CU Representative
- Conference on World Affairs Moderator: *"Sex and the Cinema: Representations of Women and Sexuality in the Arts*
- Farrand Movie Night: *Embrace*
- CU-Boulder Alliance of Black Women Students & Faculty
- Weekly Farrand Yoga Series
- CU Welcome Day, Farrand Faculty Representative
- Farrand Merit Salary Committee
- Farrand Has Talent Show Judge
- Farrand Dance, Dance, Dance Event
- 12th Annual Transforming Gender Conference
- Admissions Program: Prospective High School Workshop Facilitator
- Farrand Tea Time: *So, You Want To Go To Law School?*

Fall & Spring 2017-2018

- Trio Program: *Get To Know CU Faculty* Panelist
- Farrand Six-Week Yoga Series
- Libby Yoga Series
- Inclusive Sports Summit Session Facilitator
- Undergraduate Honors Thesis Committee Member
- Farrand Representative: CU Admitted Students Day
- MASP/Farrand Representative: Black & Gold Student Evening
- PEAC Corps Faculty Advisor
- Farrand Merit Salary Committee
- Trio Student Futures Panelist
- PEAC Summer Welcome and Move-In Day
- Farrand Representative: CU D.I.V.E.
- Farrand: Getting Ready for the Challenges of the First-Year Workshop
- Admissions Program: CU Faculty Representative

Fall & Spring 2016-2017

- Farrand Six-Week Yoga Series
- PEAC Summer Welcome and Move-In Day
- PEAC Corps Faculty Advisor
- Undergraduate Honors Thesis Advisor
- MASP/Farrand Representative: Black & Gold Student Evening
- Farrand Representative: CU Admitted Students Day
- CU Dialogues Program Guest Panelist
- Organized Denver Bryan Stevenson Trip
- Farrand Mentor
- Farrand Mentoring Program Gathering
- Organized Curious Theatre Trip
- Inclusive Excellence Summit Participant
- Tri-Delt Student-Faculty Gathering

- CU Faculty Representative High School Visit:
 - Overland High School, Denver, CO
 - Rangeview High School, Aurora, CO
 - East High School, Denver, CO

Fall & Spring 2015-2016 continued

- PEAC Summer Yoga Series Facilitator
- Farrand Welcome Student Panelist
- Farrand Representative: CU Admitted Students Day
- Farrand Representative: Esteemed Scholars Day
- MASP/Farrand Representative: Black & Gold Student Evening
- Farrand Mentoring Program Gathering
- Farrand Mentor
- Farrand Merit Salary Committee
- Farrand Representative: CU Diversity Sampler
- Inclusive Excellence Summit Participant
- !0th Annual Transforming Gender Conference Host

Fall & Spring 2015-2016

- MASP Graduation Keynote
- The University of Colorado Boulder Chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars Keynote
- Development of the PEAC Corps
- Alcoholics Anonymous: MASP Community Night
- Organized visit to the Boulder Islamic Center
- Organized visit by Arturo Gonzales Hernandez: MASP Community Night
- Organized visit by members of the Boulder Islamic Center: MASP Community Night
- PEAC Summer Welcome and Move-In Day

Fall & Spring 2014-2015

- Peer Observation: Political Systems
- Interactive Dialogue on *Race, Policing, and Justice*: Facilitator
- Communications RAP 2014-2015 Civil Rights Yearlong Project: Panelist/Presenter
- Minority Pre-Health Society: Presenter
- Minority Pre-Health Society: Yoga Night Facilitator
- PEAC Summer Yoga Series Facilitator
- Farrand Welcome Student Panelist
- Farrand RAP Mentor
- McNeil Scholars Evening with CU Faculty Panelist
- PEAC Summer Welcome and Move-In Day
- CU Dialogues Program Diversity Summit Panelist

Fall & Spring 2013-2014:

- Peer Class Evaluation: Calculus
- Farrand Representative: Diversity Sampler
- Farrand Representative: CU Admitted Students Day
- Farrand Representative: Black & Gold Student Event
- Farrand Yoga Series
- Willard Hall Yoga Series
- Farrand Passport to Humanities Course Development Team
- Minority Pre-Health Society: Presenter

Fall & Spring 2012-2013:

- Phi Alpha Delta (Co-Ed Prospective Law School Group) Talk
- 3 Women and Gender Studies Advising Sessions
- 5 School/College Recommendation Letters
- 3 Study Abroad Recommendation Letters
- International Women's Month Film/Facilitated Discussion: Saving Face
- RAP Faculty Forums:

- **Service Learning**
- **First-Year Brain**
- Kappa Alpha Theta Faculty Appreciation Tea
- Honors Thesis Committee Member
- Yoga/Relaxation Mid-Term Session
- Peer Class Evaluation: Introduction to Philosophy

Fall & Spring 2011-2012:

- *How to Feng Shui Your Dorm Room* Workshop
- Vagina Monologues Fundraising Recommendation Team
- Farrand Representative: Diversity Sampler
- 8 Study Abroad Recommendation Letters
- 5 Scholarship Recommendation Letters
- 2 Women and Gender Studies Advising Sessions
- 2 Philosophy Major Advising Sessions
- Body Image Panel (Student facilitated)
- Yoga/Relaxation Mid-Term Session

Fall & Spring 2010-2011:

- 7 Study Abroad Recommendation Letters
- 3 Employer Recommendation Letters
- 6 CU School/College Recommendation Letters
- Diversity Sampler
- *How To Feng Shui Your Dorm Room* Workshop
- Farrand Book Club: Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*
- Vinyasa Yoga Series (4-Parts)
- Guided Meditation/Relaxation Series
- Farrand Scholarship Evaluation Team
- Food For Thought Discussion/Dinner Series:
 - **Rocky Mountain Torture Center**
 - **Kevin Wagner Diversity Discussion/Film Viewing**
- Rocky Mountain Torture Center Farrand Shoe Drive
- *So, You Want to Be an STD Expert* Game Show Host

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:

2022-2023:

- Black Talk Radio host: KGNU
- NAACP Leadership Development Task Force
- NAACP Religious Affairs Committee: The Sum of Us Panel Moderator
- Boulder Black Artists Futures Conversation Moderator
- Black Mental Health Moderator

2021-2022:

- Co-Facilitated NAACP Boulder County's Black High School Graduate Recognition Event
- James A. Hill Scholarship Fund Committee
- Black Talk radio program host: KGNU
- BVSD Community Partner
- *A Public Affair* radio special interviewer: KGNU
- Boulder Valley School District Community Partner Meeting Participant

2020-2021:

- Boulder Police Oversight Task Force: Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3
- *Black Talk* radio program host: KGNU
- Crown Institute Wellness: *Mind, Body, Voice*
- Black in Boulder Webinar Planning Committee
- Boulder County MLK, Jr. Planning Committee
- Black Excellence Interviews
- Longmont Juneteenth Planning Committee

Past:

- Boulder District Attorney's Hate Crimes Panelist
- Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT)
- A+Angels East High School Mentoring Program

- Colorado Adaptive Yoga Foundation Board of Directors
- Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
- Boulder County Safehouse Board of Directors
- Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom Steering Committee
- Jane Addams Peace Association’s Doris Jones Children’s Peace Education Fund
- Founding member of the Boulder Areas Community Foundation
- Boulder County Victim Compensation Board
- Community Resources, Inc. Middle School Mentor
- University of Phoenix Scholarship Committee
- Jack & Jill Special Projects Selection Committee

Previous Employment:

First Data Corporation

Greenwood Village, Colorado
1995-2001

Vice President, New Product Development

2000-2001

Executive management of new product development for enterprise-wide curriculum for First Data University.

- Developed enterprise-wide curriculum that directly supported business growth strategy, drove a one-company mindset and realized economies of scale.
- Identified and assessed First Data’s global development needs.
- Recommended solutions that encompassed innovative design, development, delivery, and evaluation strategies.

- Collaborated with internal partners to ensure recommended solutions were feasible in terms of timeliness, cost, and quality parameters.
- Researched internal and external resources to maintain an active vendor database for First Data employee development
- Created a leaders-as-teachers educational development vision for the overall organization.
- Coached and consulted with all levels of management on employee relations, communications, and leadership development.

Vice President, Organizational Development

1999-2001

Designed and implemented enterprise-wide leadership and management development initiatives, processes, and tools for First Data domestically and globally; curriculum architect, consultant, coach, and project leader.

- Designed, developed, and implemented First Data's *first* enterprise-wide management development program titled: First Leaders. Over 1900 participants during year 1 of the initiative.
- Facilitated, coordinated, customized, and led the organization's 360-degree feedback effort for individual contributors, managers, directors, vice presidents, and senior leaders across the company.
- Streamlined and developed core leadership competencies for supervisors, managers, and executives.
- Selected to participate in a Leadership Development Coalition made up of senior executives charged with developing work, family, and community-centered policies and programs.

- Coordinated all aspects of a summer internship program, including recruitment, development, and placement of talent.
- Developed an open enrollment, online professional development process, and curriculum.
- Contracted and managed vendor delivery of various programs and initiatives, including coaching and consultation services.
- Created alliances with in-state and out-of-state colleges and universities to leverage resources and develop a credit-granting professional development process.
- Drove and coordinated company-wide employee attitude survey: paper and online-based.

EDUCATION:

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Doctor of Jurisprudence, J.D., May 1978

Virginia State University, Petersburg, VA
Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, May 1975

PUBLICATIONS:

- *Dialogue on Diversity in the Classroom*, 1992
- *How Much Diversity Can Your Organization Stand?* 1991
- Short stories and poetry have appeared in the 1984 and 1983 editions of The Wayward Wind

