



FALL 2016 RAINES COLLOQUIUM

Dr. Lori Patton Davis

Professor, Indiana University School of Education

Why Bother with Theory? A Critique on Promises and Challenges of Student Development Theory in Student Affairs Practice

Thursday, October 6, 2016
1:30pm, 252 Erickson Hall

In 1978, Knepfelkamp, Widick, and Parker edited a *New Directions for Student Services* monograph entitled, *Applying New Developmental Findings*. The editors attempted to engage in sense-making of the diverse array of existing theories. Their efforts were vital given the rapid growth of student development theories and the strongly held “theory to practice” philosophy held among student affairs professionals. In the monograph, the authors briefly ponder the question: Why bother with theory? In this presentation, Patton Davis responds to their question regarding the need to “bother” with student development theory in student affairs practice. She highlights recent updates and trends in student development scholarship, particularly the need for more critical approaches to theory, that not only disrupt inequities embedded in student affairs graduate preparation, but also subsequent practices as they relate to research, teaching and practice.



Dr. Lori Patton Davis is a Professor in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program at the Indiana University School of Education. Her scholarship broadly examines race and racism in college environments through a critical race lens, African Americans in higher education, and college access and success for racially minoritized populations. Dr. Patton Davis is perhaps the most well-known researcher and scholar in the area of campus cultural centers and is editor of the book, *Campus Culture Centers in Higher Education*, which highlights various types of racial/ethnic specific culture centers in higher education, their continued relevance, and implications for their existence in relation to student retention and success. She often serves as an external reviewer and consultant for various institutions across the country.

Light refreshments provided