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NOTE: The keynote speaker for the conference spells his name without capital letters. Per his wishes, references to him are all lower case, except when his last name is used at the beginning of a sentence.

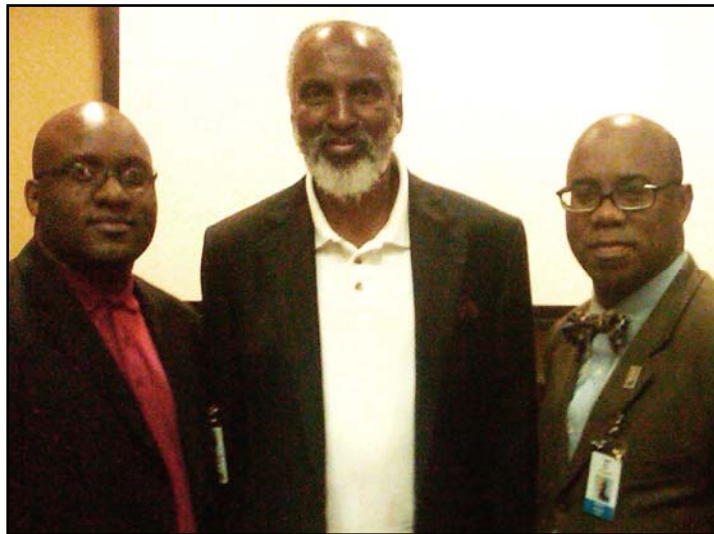
MSCC Employees Attend Marginal Male Strategy Session

Mid-South Community College's Title III PBI Academic Counselor Robert Oselen Jr. and Student Activities Coordinator Tony Wilson recently attended a presentation they hope will strengthen the institution's male mentoring efforts.

The MSCC employees participated in "Promoting Opportunity for Marginal Male Workforce Education Consortium: A Strategy Session with john a. powell," in Little Rock. Powell is an internationally-recognized authority in the areas of civil rights and civil liberties and a wide range of issues including race, structural racism, ethnicity, housing, poverty and democracy.

"I felt privileged and honored to represent MSCC and Eastern Arkansas as a participant in this conference," Wilson said. "Professor powell imparted a great amount of truth, wisdom and knowledge regarding diversity, race, and poverty consciousness."

"For me, his presentation reinforced the global, regional and local opportunities for our MSCC students, specifically our Male Mentoring group, to utilize their academic, social, and cultural experiences at the college to help bridge the gap of large disparities which exist regarding diversity, poverty and race."



From left, Tony Wilson, john a. powell, and Robert Oselen

Oselen expressed similar sentiments.

“We are definitely on the right track having established and continuing to expand our group of engaged mentees on campus,” he said. “Additionally, we understand that providing them with personal development training and exposure to positive images within our community is a primary means of expanding their horizons, thus helping them to see themselves as positive contributors to our community and society as a whole.”

Powell, Executive Director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University, discussed how social programs designed to improve life for racially and socioeconomically disenfranchised people sometimes perpetuate racialization instead.

The assumption then becomes that marginalized people are unwilling or unable to do better for themselves and are looking for an easy way out of their circumstance rather than utilizing hard work to accomplish their goals.

During the question-and-answer segment, Oselen asked “How do we prepare black men to negotiate these racial structures?”

Powell responded that “we need to create peer groups and support systems to assist each other with positive images and a plan to navigate racialized structures and systems.”

At MSCC, the PBI, Student Activities, and Student Support Services areas are working together to refine their efforts to help African-American, Latino, and low-income white males succeed in higher education and in life.

Dr. Dwayne Scott, Vice President for Student Affairs, said such efforts are vital to the future of the region and nation.

“We believe mentoring can play a significant role in the retention and success of these students, and our ultimate goal is to produce men who are globally competent, globally cooperative, and globally compassionate,” Scott said.

“Much of our population in Crittenden and surrounding counties is marginalized in one way or another, but we think our program of empowerment, support, and guidance will help us provide these men with everything they need to succeed.”

In addition to the mentoring program, the college also features a Men Aspiring to Lead and Excel (MALE) Club which is a student organization dedicated to improving the

retention and goal achievement of males through mentoring, inspiration and encouragement.

Members meet regularly to engage in mentoring sessions, community service projects, and cultural enrichment field trips designed to provide academic, personal and social support for the male participants.

For additional information about male mentoring at the college, visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis (Student Support offices are located in the Donald W. Reynolds Center), call 870-733-6728, or email admissions@midsouthcc.edu. The PBI office is located in the Sandra C. Goldsby Library, and the Student Activities office is located in the Learning Success Center.