

SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY IN THE AIRPORT INDUSTRY:

EXPLORING THE RACIAL DIVIDE

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD



Event Location: Keck Center, Washington D.C.

Event Dates: April 12-13, 2022

ACRP INSIGHT EVENT: Systemic Inequality in the Airport Industry – Exploring the Racial Divide

Many systems in the U.S., particularly transportation, operate within a framework which encompasses a broad and persisting set of racial stereotypes, prejudices, ideologies, images, interpretations and narratives, emotions, and reactions to language accents. For many years, transportation institutions have continued to operate within this framework resulting in systemic inequality and even overt racism. By establishing a shared definition of systemic inequality, and exploring the economic, social, moral and risk impacts of racism, we collectively improve the airport industry.

The ACRP Insight Event: Systemic Inequality in the Airport Industry is an in-depth, face-to-face gathering designed to promote communication and collaboration, foster progress, and help identify areas of future interest and research. This event will bring together experts from across the industry for two days of thought-provoking dialogue to consider this important challenge and how we can collectively transform into a more equal and inclusive industry. The agenda incorporates both panel discussions and audience breakout sessions to maximize engagement.

DAY 1 MORNING THEME: WHY ARE WE ALL HERE?

8:45 – 9:00 AM

Overall Event Introduction / Welcome

The Event Panel Chair will offer welcoming remarks and set the stage for the event and discussion, provide preview of the three main questions of the event – Why are we here? Why should we care? and What are we going to do about it?

- Neil Pedersen, Executive Director, Transportation Research Board
- Tina Frias, Chief Administrative Officer, Harry Reid International Airport, and Insight Event Panel Chair

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9:00 – 9:45 AM

What Are We Talking About?

There has been a lot of discussion and debate in the media, within our organizations and among industry groups about equality, equity, racism, diversity, and inclusion over the past several years. Some examples of inequality and racism in our society are overt or obvious, while others are not. In this session the panel will discuss these concepts and more to develop a shared understanding of the problem, related ideas, and definitions to form a baseline for the event dialogue.

Moderator: Dr. Shannon McLoughlin-Morrison, Assistant Director, Center for Aviation Studies, Ohio State University

Speakers:

- Olga Custodio, Lt. Colonel USAF (Ret) / American Airlines Captain (Ret)
- Tania Herrera, Senior Project Manager, American Airlines
- Chris Musei-Sequeira, Founder and Principal, CJSC, LLC
- Jorge Roberts, Chief Executive Officer, Avports
- Dr. Amber Woodburn-McNair, Assistant Professor, City and Regional Planning, The Ohio State University

9:45 – 10:45 AM

Perspectives on Inequality

This panel will provide perspectives and personal experiences with systemic inequality in our industry and how it has shaped their outlook, career, and drive to seek improvements. This session will provide event participants with real life examples of how systemic inequality manifests and how we can all benefit from taking steps to address it.

Moderator: Eboni Wimbush, President & CEO, Airport Minority Advisory Council

Speakers:

- Api Appulingam, Deputy Director of Aviation Capital Development, City of Philadelphia Division of Aviation
- Dolores Rodgers, Director of Human Capital (Ret.), Houston Airport System
- Yvette Rose, Senior Vice President for the Cargo Airline Association
- Ricky Smith, Executive Director, Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport

10:45 - 11:00 AM

COFFEE BREAK

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11:00 – 11:30 AM

Keynote – A Conversation with FAA Deputy Administrator Bradley Mims

Brad Mims has served as a transportation professional in government and the private sector for over 40 years. As a government relations specialist with a multi-modal transportation background, Mims holds a special affinity for the aviation industry. In addition to working for several firms and organizations related to transportation/aviation, Mims served as the head of government relations for the FAA during the Clinton Administration. He served as a transportation staffer for members of Congress in his early career.

Mims has also served as a congressional liaison for the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Between 2001-2005, Mims served as a transportation specialist at Booz Allen Hamilton. In 2005, Mims joined Parsons Brinckerhoff, Inc., serving as the Aviation Markets Vice President until 2010.

Moderator: Eboni Wimbush, Airport Minority Advisory Council

Speaker: Brad Mims, Deputy Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration

11:30 AM – 12:15 PM

Risk Management

Many organizations have developed programs and policies to combat systemic inequality in recent years, which can include efforts to promote equity, increase diversity and ensure inclusion. However, the motivations for doing so and results vary. This discussion will explore the corporate and organizational risks resulting from systemic inequality. Case studies and examples from within the airport industry and other industries will be included.

Moderator: Monica Williams, Executive Producer, The Equity Project

Speakers:

- Anita Cobb, Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager, Mead & Hunt
- Yen Ling Shek, DEI Advisory Consultant, Russell Reynolds, LLC

12:15-1:30 PM

LUNCH

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DAY 1 AFTERNOON THEME: WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

1:30-2:30 PM

Economic Impacts of Systemic Inequality

This panel will explore the economic and financial impacts of systemic inequality on airports and other organizations, including workforce, passenger revenue, development, etc. and the benefits of addressing these challenges through enterprise-wide DEI programs and other approaches.

Moderator: Cathryn Stephens, A.A.E., Airport Director, Eugene Airport

Speakers:

- Heather Barry, Vice President, Strategic Partnerships, SSP America
- Breann Preston, Equitable Development Research and Policy Analyst
Port of Portland
- Ani Turner, Senior Economist, Altarum

2:30 – 3:30 PM

Social and Moral Impacts of Systemic Inequality

This panel will explore the social and moral impacts of historic systemic inequality within the airport industry. The panel will consider how airport development has impacted surrounding communities, which are often economically and socially disadvantaged, and how airports are addressing equity and engaging stakeholders in a more meaningful manner to achieve planning goals in the planning process.

Speakers:

- Tamera Holmes, Founder and CEO, Aerostar Avion Institute
- Erin Locklear, General Counsel, Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority
- Rocio Saenz, Executive Vice President, SEIU

3:30 -3:45 PM

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3:45 - 4:45 PM

Break Out Discussion

Facilitated break-out discussions on the content from throughout the day. Each table or room will have a topic, led by a facilitator.

Facilitators:

- Anita Cobb, Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, Mead & Hunt
- Kelly Crawford, Associate Director, Air Quality Division, DC Department of Energy and Environment
- Ebony Gaynor, Co-Founder and CEO, E&S Consulting and Management
- Chris Musei-Sequeira, Founder and Principal, CJSC, LLC
- Julia Nagy, Senior Consultant, HMMH
- John Panarello, Vice President, Airport Operations and Technology, Avports

4:45-5:00 PM

End of Day 1 Wrap-up

Reflections on Day 1 from the conference Rapporteur, including a summary of discussion topics from each breakout group.

Speaker: Dr. Amber Woodburn-McNair, Assistant Professor, City and Regional Planning, The Ohio State University

5:00 – 6:00 PM

ATRIUM RECEPTION

Sponsors:

- Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC)
- Avports
- Harris Miller Miller & Hanson Inc. (HMMH)
- Mead & Hunt

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DAY 2 THEME: WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?

9:00- 9:15 AM

Welcome to Day 2

Opening remarks, synthesis of discussions from Day 1 and an introduction of topics for Day 2.

Tina Frias, Chief Administrative Officer, Harry Reid International Airport, & Insight Event Panel Chair

9:15 - 10:15 AM

Systemic Inequality within the Context of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Panel discussion on efforts to implement DEI initiatives, challenges, risks, and lessons learned. Why are companies making the investment? What are some basic principles of a successful DEI effort?

Moderator: Denise Bailey, Principal, Milligan & Company

Speakers:

- Bookda Gheisar, Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Port of Seattle
- Kelli Kelly, Business Development and Strategy Director, Kiewit
- Tanisha Lewis, Vice President, Diversity, Inclusion and Social Impact, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority
- Steve Pelham, Vice President, Jacob

10:15- 10:30 AM

BREAK

10:30 AM -
11:45 PM

Build a Toolkit

Panel / session discussion on specific strategies, actions, initiatives to help airports successfully address systemic racism through an effective DEI program.

Moderator: Denise Bailey, Principal, Milligan & Company

Speakers:

- Thiane Carter, Small Business Program Officer, Raleigh Durham International Airport
- Toyin Ogunfolaju, Infrastructure and Social-Economic Inclusion Leader, Jacobs
- Jonathan Todd, Director of Workforce Development, City of Philadelphia Division of Aviation

11:45-12:45 PM

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12:45-1:45 PM

Open discussion / Audience Roundtable

This session is an opportunity for discussion and Q&A on topics provided by participants through a live poll or issues raised during the breakout discussion groups. The moderator will also prompt the audience for future research ideas.

Moderator: Mary Ellen Eagan, President, and CEO, HMMH

1:45 – 2:45 PM

Addressing Inequality and Equity at the Federal Level

The Biden Administration has made a commitment to improving the diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of the Federal workforce, outlined in Executive Order 13985, and ensuring that a greater share of the benefits of Federally funded projects accrue to communities most affected by poverty and pollution through the Justice 40 Initiative. In this session, we will hear from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the FAA on how those organizations are implementing these commitments.

Moderator: Valerie Churchwell, Senior Policy Advisory, Office of the Mayor, City of Phoenix

Speakers:

- Portia Allen-Kyle, Senior Advisor, Department of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary
- Mary Ellen Eagan, President, and CEO, HMMH
- Shannetta Griffin, Associate Administrator, Office of Airports, FAA

2:45 -3:15 PM

Closing Discussion

Panel or keynote recapping event, discussions, and how participants can take what they have learned and apply at their own organizations.

Speakers:

- Tina Frias, Chief Administrative Officer, Harry Reid International Airport, & Insight Event Panel Chair
- Dr. Amber Woodburn-McNair, Assistant Professor, City and Regional Planning, Ohio State University

3:15 PM

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