

Introduction to the Foreword Author, Dr. Diana Slaughter Kotzin

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I worked on this book for over a decade, and so I am delighted to finally complete this project which was initiated soon after my first book in 2009. I met Dr. Diana Slaughter Kotzin at the University of Pennsylvania when I was on a one-year visiting assistant professor and deciding what to do as I worked on turning my dissertation into a book focused on *Race, Gender, and Identity among Black Women in College*. Then Dr. Diana Slaughter-Defoe, and the inaugural Constance E. Clayton Professor in Urban Education, Diana invited me for breakfast at the faculty club in the Inn at Penn. We talked about her college experiences at the University of Chicago, about her return there for a 40-year alumni event where she alone became ill (sort of like a food poisoning). Speaking candidly, she said at the time she wondered if she had become ill from prior experiences such that being enmeshed in that sociocultural environment perhaps brought back negative memories. Thus, Diana encouraged my research in this project beginning way back in 2006, suggesting that I interview college alumni.

I lost contact with Diana for a long time while I conducted, analyzed, and interpreted the obtained interviews. But it seemed very important to reconnect with her as the book came to fruition because the entire project would have never happened had it not been for her conversation with me that first year after my PhD program. I invited her to write the Foreword to my book because, in the end, her early advice, empathy and

wisdom helped me to initiate, focus, and sustain this entire project over many years when others were unsupportive, and even unkind. And I am deeply grateful to Diana for modeling to me what it means to be scholar who elevates and creates pathways for others.