

**DIONNE BENSONSMITH**  
850 Columbia Ave, Claremont CA, 91711  
[dionne.bensonsmith@cmc.edu](mailto:dionne.bensonsmith@cmc.edu)

## **Education**

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- 2008 Ph.D., Political Science: The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University (American Government and Public Policy, Race, and Gender Studies).
- 1997 M.A., Political Science: The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University (Race and Public Policy).
- 1993 B.A., Government and International Affairs, University of Notre Dame  
Area of Concentration: Peace Studies.

## **Academic Appointments**

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- 2021- Visiting Assistant Professor, Government and Policy Lab Fellow, Claremont McKenna College. Claremont, California.
- 2014 - Adjunct Assistant Professor, Applied Women's Studies, Claremont Graduate School. Claremont, California.
- 2021 - 2021 Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Pitzer College, Claremont, California
- 2017 - 2019 Visiting Assistant Professor, Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Scripps College. Claremont, California.
- 2010 - 2012 Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Politics, Scripps College. Claremont, California.
- 2005 – 2009 Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Grinnell College. Grinnell, Iowa.

## **Other Work Experience**

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- 2001 – 2002 Academic Counselor and Adviser. College of Arts and Sciences, Student Affairs, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
- 2000 – 2001 Fellow/Acting Assistant Professor, Department of Government, Cornell University. Ithaca, New York.
- Summer 2001 Research Consultant, Center for Community Alternatives. Syracuse, New York.
- Spring 2000 Teaching Fellow, Department of Government, Hamilton College. Clinton, New York.

1998-1999 Graduate Teaching Consultant, The TA Program, Graduate Student Affairs Syracuse University. Syracuse, New York.

1995-1997 Academic Counselor, Exploratory Student Program, College of Arts and Sciences, Student Affairs, Syracuse University. Syracuse, New York.

## **Community Development and Advocacy**

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2020 - *Chair*, Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice, RJ-Community Institutional Review Board.

2017 - *Co-founder, Co-Director*: “Mothers on The Frontline” Nonprofit advocating for Children’s Mental Health Justice.

2017 - *Treasurer, Board of Directors and Co-Founder*: Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Justice a national reproductive justice organization working at the intersections of faith-based and secular communities to promote progressive politics and practices in the areas of reproductive justice and health.

2018 - 2019 *Advisory Board Panel*: Parents for Liberation, a reproductive justice non-profit focusing on black parenting and providing care/ support to black mothers in order to promote the mental health and well-being of black children in Southern California.

2016 - 2017 *Board Member*: El Roble Intermediate School Orchestra. Responsible for securing grants, fundraising, and organizing community volunteers for the El Roble Orchestra – El Roble Intermediate School. Claremont, California.

2013 - 2015 *School Site Council*: Elected Representative responsible for approving changes to the school budgets and policy, as well as overseeing site management in consultation with other council members. Mountain View Elementary, Claremont, California.

2013 - 2013 *Committee Member*: Graduation Requirements Committee, Claremont Unified School District. Parent representative responsible for consulting and advising on new graduation requirements and policy for the Claremont school system.

## **Teaching and Research Interests**

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Research Interests: Reproductive Justice; Black Women’s Reproductive Health; Feminist Research Methods; Research Ethics; Critical Race Theory; Feminist Theory; Public Policy; Mental Health Policy; Public Health.

Courses Taught: Reproductive Justice, Politics and Health; Feminist Methods; Intersectional Feminisms; Transnational and Global Feminist Theory; Gender, Race and Public Policy; Introduction to Feminism, Gender and Sexuality Studies; Women of Color Feminisms; Race, Politics and Public Policy; Race, Gender and Social Welfare Policy, The School to Prison Pipeline.

## **Selected Publications**

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- 2005 “Jezebels, Matriarchs, and Welfare Queens: The Moynihan Report of 1965 and the Social Construction of African American Women in Welfare Policy” in *Deserving and Entitled: Social Constructions and Public Policy*, Anne L. Schneider and Helen Ingram editors. State University of New York Press.
- 2002 “It’s No Longer Just About Race: Social Constructions of American Citizenship in the Moynihan Report” in *Women’s Work Is Never Done: Comparative Studies In Care-Giving, Employment, And Social Policy Reform*, Sylvia Bashevkin editor. Routledge.
- 1999 “Crossing Lines: Mandy Carter and the Tradition of Black Feminist Activism in the Third Wave” With Lynn Eckert in *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women’s Contemporary Activism*, Kimberly Springer editor. New York University Press.

## **Editorial Essays**

- 2001 “Revenge of the Angry White Male.” Syndicated by Knight-Ridder (selected list of published venues include: *The Champaign News-Gazette; The Corning Leader; The Idaho State Journal; and the McAllen Monitor*). With Grant D. Reeher and Joseph Camarano.

## **Selected Presentations**

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### **Conference Presentations/Participation**

- 2021 “Wisdom Collectives: Practice and Methodology” with Tammy Nyden and Angela Riccio. International Association of Maternal Action and Scholarship (IAMAS). Online Conference, September 27.
- 2021 “A Different Kind of Labor: Black women, Resilience, and Reproductive Justice in Uterine Fibroid Treatment and Care” with Sophie Paek. Critical Conversations on Reproductive Health/Care: Past, Present, and Future. Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Online Conference. February 3-7, 2021.
- 2019 “Talking About Mental Health Justice” Civil Liberties and Public Policy (CLPP) Conference, Hampshire, Massachusetts. April 12- 14.
- 2018 “Storytelling and Stewardship: Mothering at the Intersections of Mental Health and School Policy” Power Forward: Black Women for Wellness Annual Reproductive Justice Conference, Los Angeles, California. August, 20.
- 2017 “What I Wish My Mother Told Me: Uterine Fibroids and African American Women” Power Manifesto: Black Women for Wellness Annual Conference, Los Angeles, California. August.
- 2017 “The Power of Our Stories: Achieving Mental Health and Criminal Justice Transformation Through Women's Advocacy” Panel Participant: Grinnell Prize Week, Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.

- 2017 “Reframing and Recentering: Reproductive Justice Principles and the Environmental Justice Movement” Presented at the Women Health and Empowerment Conference, Scripps College, Claremont, California.
- 2016 “Uterine Fibroids and Reproductive Justice: Addressing Health Disparities Through Community Based Research” with Elizabeth Erbaugh, American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Denver, Colorado.
- 2015 “Racializing the Uterus: Fibroids, Hysterectomy and Reproductive Justice.” With Elizabeth Erbaugh, Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois.
- 2015 “Healthcare Among Women of Color.” With Elizabeth Erbaugh, Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts.

***Public Speaking Engagements: Advocacy and Community Education***

- 2022 “Epistemic Activism: Rethinking the Role of Institutional Review Boards” Public Talk sponsored by the Departments of Philosophy and Gender Studies, Grinnell College. April 6.
- 2022 “Children’s Mental Health Justice: What It Means and Why It Matters” Democratic Club of Claremont. Online Presentation. January 14.
- 2021 “From Movement Space to the Classroom: What I learned” Gender and Sexuality Studies Noontime Talk. Claremont McKenna College. Claremont, CA, November 5.
- 2021 “Reproductive Justice as a Reproductive Right” Women’s March. Claremont, CA. October 3.
- 2021 “A Personal Talk About Children’s Mental Health” Virtual presentation Claremont McKenna College, Psychology 101 course (Dr. Cathy Reed). May.
- 2021 “Punching The Air: The Intersections of Race, Mental Health, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline” Virtual presentation to teachers at the Iowa City School District, April 26.
- 2021 “Beyond Parity: Why Children’s Mental Health is a Justice Issue” Virtual presentation for Intercollegiate Feminist Center, April 2.
- 2020 “Children’s Mental Health Justice 101: Navigating Fractured Systems and Advocating for Justice.” Virtual Presentation with Tammy Nyden and Angela Riccio, National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health Annual Conference. November 12.
- 2020 “Black Birthing Bill of Rights” Virtual presentation at South Los Angeles/South Bay African American Infant and Maternal Mortality (SLA/SB AIIMM) VirtualiTEA, October.
- 2020 “Who Are Your People? Centering Black Women’s Epistemologies in Advocating for Political Change” Invited Lecture, Marist College “Saturday Lecture Series,” September 12.
- 2017 “The Power of Our Stories: Achieving Mental Health and Criminal Justice Transformation Through Women's Advocacy” Panel Participant: Grinnell Prize Week, Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa.

## **Selected Workshop Facilitation and Participation**

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- 2019 Organizer/Co-Facilitator: “Children’s Mental Health and School Struggles” StoryCenter™ Facilitator Training: Facilitating Storytelling Workshops. Co-sponsored by Mothers on the Frontline and University of Iowa Division of Child and Community Health. University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. May 6-7.
- 2018 Organizer/Co-Facilitator: “Digital Stories for Social Justice – The School to Prison Pipeline” Workshop. Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. October 26 – 27.
- 2018 Organizer/Presenter: Fibroids Discussion Series. Facilitated a two-part workshop focusing on personal advocacy and reproductive health as it pertains to seeking treatment for fibroids. Black Women for Wellness. Los Angeles, California. February 19 and March 19.
- 2017 Organizer/Presenter: Storytelling for Advocacy Workshop. Facilitated discussion of the uses of storytelling for personal advocacy for approximately 20 attendees as part of the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health Conference. Orlando, Florida. November 10.
- 2013 Facilitator: New Leadership™ Southern California, a program that is part of the NEW Leadership Development Network (NLDN), led by the Center for American Women in Politics (CAWP) at the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University. Successfully conducted a goal-setting workshop for female undergraduates participating in the New Leadership Institute. Scripps College, June 20.
- 2010 Workshop Presenter: Scripps College Academy (SCA) Fall Workshop. Taught two fall seminars for the SCA, a college-readiness program for high-achieving young women in the greater Los Angeles area who may lack the resources necessary to prepare them for success at the nation’s top colleges/universities. Scripps College.
- 2009 Organizer/Facilitator (with Karla Erickson, Sociology): “Teaching Race, Ethnicity, Class and Gender” Secured a 3,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to conduct week-long workshops on curriculum diversity. Grinnell College, May 20-23.
- 2008 Organizer/Presenter: APSA Public Policy Short-Course “Incorporating Race and Gender into the Public Policy Curriculum.” August 26, 2008. Sponsored by the Public Policy/Policy Studies Section of the American Political Science Association. Boston, Massachusetts. August 26.
- 2008 Organizer/Presenter: APSA Public Policy Short-Course “Teaching Introduction to Public Policy.” Sponsored by the Public Policy/Policy Studies Section of the American Political Science Association. Boston, Massachusetts. August 26.
- 1999 Facilitator: Diversity Issues in Teaching Seminar, The TA Program of the Graduate School, Syracuse University.

## **Professional Service**

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- 2007 - 2008 *Board Member:* The Ford Foundation “Black & Latina/o Sexuality Project.” Participated in year-long commitment with the Ford Foundation to identify and select new research areas focusing on Black and Latina/o health and sexuality for the Ford Foundation. Principal Investigator: Juan Battle, The New School.

- 2006 - 2008 *Policy Studies Concentration Committee*: Participant in Expanding Knowledge Initiative (EKI) for the Policy Studies Concentration, successfully designed a new policy studies concentration, assisted with proposal writing and recruitment of faculty, served as a member of the curriculum development and hiring sub-committees, Grinnell College.
- 2006 - 2008 *Faculty Mentor*: Participated as a faculty mentor to undergraduates involved with the Office of Multicultural Affairs faculty-mentoring program. Grinnell College.
- 1998 - 2000 *Literacy Tutor*: The Learning Place, Syracuse New York.

### ***Dissertation Committee Service***

- 2020 Jessica Chapman Lape “Miss-treated: A Womanist Clinical Pastoral Theology On African American Women’s Mistreatment In U.S. Healthcare” Claremont School of Theology at Willamette University. Salem, Oregon.
- 2019 Casey Crosbie “Towards Political Pluralism: Appreciative Inquiry, Interfaith Relations and Politics Today” Claremont School of Theology. Claremont, California.
- 2019 Jasmine Brewer “It Takes a Village: The Role of Parent, Family and Community Involvement in the Academic Achievement of Black Boys and Girls” Claremont Graduate University. Claremont, California.
- 2018 Marquisha Spencer “Dedicated: Diapers and Degrees Student Mothers & Higher Education Support and Success,” Claremont Graduate University. Claremont, California.

### **Grants and Honors**

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- 2020 Semi-finalist: Echoing Green Fellowship, Echoing Green Foundation.
- 2010 Postdoctoral Fellowship: Consortium for Faculty Diversity, Scripps College.
- 2009 Exemplary Diversity Scholar: “National Center for Institutional Diversity” University of Michigan.
- 2008 Curricular and Faculty Development Grant: “The Mellon Foundation,” with William Ferguson, Professor of Economics, Grinnell College. \$3,000.
- 2008 Faculty Development Grant: “The Mellon Foundation,” with Karla Erickson, Associate Professor of Sociology, Grinnell College. \$1,000.
- 2008 Mentored Advance Project (MAP): Grinnell College. \$1,500.
- 2000 Diversity Predoctoral Fellowship: Government Department, Cornell University.
- 2000 Predoctoral Fellowship: Preparing Future Faculty Program, Government Department, Hamilton College.
- 1999 Teaching Fellow and Consultant: The TA Program of the Graduate School, Syracuse University.
- 1997 Teaching Associate: Department of Political Science, Syracuse University.