

ELENA A. SIMPKINS, PhD

EDUCATION

PhD, Sport Management

Kinesiology | University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI | conferred 08/2019

M.A. in Sports Administration

College of Education | Wayne State University | Detroit MI | conferred 08/2015

B.A. in Sociology

Literature, Science and the Arts | University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI | conferred 05/2010

CERTIFICATIONS

Women Studies Certificate

Women Studies Department | University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI | completed 2019

Rackham Professional Development DEI Certificate

Rackham Graduate School | University of Michigan | Ann Arbor, MI | completed 2019

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I am a justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) scholar. My research journey began with examining the dearth of Black women in sport leadership. My dissertation focused on this disparity in intercollegiate athletics from an organizational critique. Much of the gender and sport leadership and race and sport leadership research are siloed and utilize a deficit approach. My dissertation aimed to explore how organizational cultures of intercollegiate athletic departments impact Black women's leadership opportunities and experiences. Birthed from this work was the Sport Intersectional Model of Power (SIMP). The SIMP is: 1) offered as a way to address the structural elements created by organizational culture, (2) created as a framework to critique the macro and meso-level constraints that contribute to micro-level factors that Black women encounter in intercollegiate athletics, and (3) presented as a model to improve our understanding of the factors that contribute to Black women's qualitatively different aspirations, opportunities, and experiences in intercollegiate athletic leadership. While the SIMP was created to address (and potentially improve) Black women's experiences in sport organizations; the SIMP (and my research) can be used to address structural elements in other types of organizations as well.

RELATED EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Associate Director Student Athlete Support Services, Learning Specialist – Eastern Michigan University Athletics

Eastern Michigan University | 01/2020 – Present

Offer strategic support to a caseload of 15 at-risk student-athletes by developing individualized learning plans and instructional intervention based on specific needs gathered from initial learning assessments. Help to facilitate workshops on cover letter and resume writing, research foundations, and leadership development for 25-30 student-athletes. Develop diversity, equity, and inclusion programming by utilizing cross-campus partnerships to promote conversation about toxic masculinity, LGTBQIA+ issues in sport, and inclusive hiring practices.

Independent Contractor – Ross Initiative in Sports for Social Equality (RISE)

RISE | 08/2020 - Present

I run various analytics on data and prepare results in narrative and graphical forms that are used in both internal and external reports. In line with this I also prepare literature reviews relevant to research topics and assist with editing and preparation of manuscripts. Additionally, I am helping to revise and update digital learning curriculum that will be transitioned to a digital modular format.

Graduate Student Staff Assistant (GSSA) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; School of Kinesiology

University of Michigan | 09/2016 – 04/2019

Worked directly with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lead for the School of Kinesiology. Assisted with the development and implementation of the school's Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Alliance visit for interested graduate students. Developed and implemented the school's inaugural graduate student Bridge program, which to date, has provided programming for over 30 underrepresented graduate students.

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RELATED EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE CONT'D

Summer Enrichment Program Director - Volunteers, Administrators, & Coaches (VAC) Training Program
Wayne State University | 06/2013 - 08/2018

Managed camp operations including the registration of 60+ campers, daily sign-in, setup, and breakdown. Instructed a team of 14 during drills for basketball, football, track, golf, and baseball. Maintained a photo database which is utilized for publications, marketing, and grant applications. Created a safe space through enforcement of safety rules and developing a positive and affirming environment.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

Simpkins, E. (2021). *Black Women in Sport Leadership: Research Imperatives*

Description: This paper offered a critique of the unique experiences of Black women in sport leadership and discussed the imperatives for research (methods, epistemologies, theoretical underpinnings, etc.) seeking to appropriately explore them and improve their leadership opportunities and experiences.

Simpkins, E. (2021). *Black Women in Sport Leadership: Challenges, Aspirations, Inspirations, and Access*

Description: Expounding on past research, this paper offers a critique that further supports the qualitatively different experiences and opportunities that Black women encounter in intercollegiate athletics. It offers a discussion of Black women's access to opportunities in sport leadership, the impact of organizational cultures on Black women's experiences, and intersecting impact of age, race, and gender on their success.

Simpkins, E. (2021). *Sport Intersectional Model of Power (SIMP): Implications for Black Women in Sport Leadership*

Description: This paper offers an exploration of implications of the Sport Intersectional Model of Power (SIMP) for Black women in sport leadership. The SIMP is comprised of elements that create organizational cultures and shape the power dynamics. This paper was based on data obtained from interviews with Black women who were employed in sport leadership positions in NCAA Division 1, II, and III institutions.

Simpkins, E. (2021). *'Uncaged' - Black Women in Sport Leadership: An Organizational Critique*

Description: This paper offers a critical organizational critique of factors influencing Black women's sport leadership opportunities and experiences. This paper highlights the contributions of organizational theory in: (a) expanding our conceptual understanding and framing of the dynamics present in sport organizations that adversely impact the opportunities and experiences of Black women, and (b) improving our efforts to 'uncage' and empower Black women for sport leadership.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Armstrong, K., **Simpkins, E. (November, 2015).** Bounded... 'When and Where I Enter': Black Feminist Thought and Sport Leadership. Presentation at North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) conference, Santa Fe, NM.

Simpkins, E. (January, 2016). Intellectual Activism. Presentation at MLK Symposium, Ann Arbor, MI.

Armstrong, K., **Simpkins, E. (November, 2016),** Black Women in Sport Leadership: 'Uncaged' (An Organizational Critique). Paper presented at NASSS conference, Tampa, FL.

Armstrong, K., **Simpkins, E. (November, 2017),** Illuminations of an 'Endarkened' Feminist Epistemology: Highlighted Contributions to Sport Research. Presentation at NASSS conference, Windsor-Ontario, Canada

Armstrong, K. **Simpkins, E. (April, 2018),** Black Women in Sport Leadership: Exploration of the Sport Intersectional Model of Power. Poster presented at Graduate Student Showcase, Ann Arbor, MI.

Simpkins, E. (October, 2020). Black Women in Sport Leadership: Research Imperatives.

Keynote Presentation at 14th Global Educational Forum on Sport, Development, and Community in Worldwide Societies, Athens, GA.

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UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

Leo Lecturer-I, University of Michigan, School of Kinesiology, 08/2020-Present
School of Kinesiology, Sport Management 100, Freshman Seminar

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

Member, Women Leaders in College Sports | 2015-2018

Member, North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) | 2015-2018

Advisory Board Member, University of Michigan Counseling and Psychological Services | 2016-2018

Advisory Board Member, University of Michigan Graduate Student Diversity Equity & Inclusion | 2016-2018