

## **Announcing the Final Examination of Camille A. Coffie for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Physics**

**Date:** June 26, 2024

**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**Room:** Zoom Meeting

<https://ucf.zoom.us/j/9204444220>

**Dissertation title:** Examining how pejorative stereotypes about Black women shape their experiences in physics PhD programs

### **Abstract:**

This qualitative research study examines the experiences of Black women in physics graduate programs to identify priorities for departmental change initiatives to remove structures that keep out and/or push out Black women. Black women represent the lowest percentage of students in physics graduate programs and often contend with stressors like microaggressions, bias, and stereotype threats that impede their success and well-being.

Employing the Photovoice research method, we collected photos from 12 participants that are either currently in or recently attended graduate physics programs at U.S. institutions. The photos represent their journey in their physics PhD programs. Additionally, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with each participant and focus group interview sessions to allow for elaboration and consolidation of common themes. Through this process, participants provided strategies and recommendations they deem most effective in supporting Black women in physics programs from their own personal experiences and voices. This dissertation specifically examines the impact of stereotypes of Black women and differences in support between historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and primarily white institutions (PWIs). This research reinforces the ongoing necessity to raise awareness about the impact of stereotypes on how Black women are perceived by other members of the physics community and how stereotypes affect Black women's matriculation in physics graduate programs, with implications for how physics graduate programs support students.

### **Outline of Studies:**

Major: Physics

### **Educational Career:**

M.S. Physics, University of Central Florida

M.S. Physics w/ Teaching Emphasis, Texas A&M Commerce

M.S. Higher Education, Capella University

B. S. Physics, Spelman College

### **Committee in Charge:**

Dr. Jacquelyn J. Chini (Chair)

Dr. Adrienne Dove

Dr. Talat S. Rahman

Dr. L. Trenton Marsh (External Committee Member)

Approved for distribution by Dr. Jacquelyn J. Chini, Committee Chair, on June 04, 2024.

The public is welcome to attend.