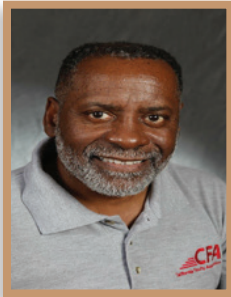


Human and Civil Rights Award Winner



◆ Dr. Cecil Canton ◆

H. Councill Trenholm Memorial Award (Black)



Throughout a career that has spanned five decades, Dr. Cecil Canton has been at the forefront of addressing systemic and structural injustice and racism in higher education. As an educator, Dr. Canton has worked tirelessly as an advocate and activist for racial and social justice in education and has led intentional efforts to advance equity, diversity and inclusion within his union(s); the California Faculty Association (CFA) and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

The California Faculty Association represents 28,000 faculty members on the California State University (CSU) system's 23 campuses; one third of whom identify as people of color. Dr. Canton was the lone voice calling for the creation of an Affirmative Action Committee to address race, ethnic, disability and LGBTQ inequities in CFA. He successfully organized the creation of the Committee and then worked to move the Committee to a Council, putting it on par structurally with the Presidents and Lecturers Councils. Dr. Canton then served as the First Associate Vice President for Affirmative Action, and in this position continued to not only challenge systemic racism within CFA, but has been at the forefront of transforming the union.

"Cecil has pioneered the development of the Council and its caucuses since their inception...He serves in many ways as our moral conscience, pushing us to live up to our rhetoric, to face up to white supremacy in our own policies and practices," said Jennifer Eagan, President of the California Faculty Association and Professor at California State University, East Bay, "He has transformed our union into a powerful engine for racial and social justice."

The Council for Affirmative Action has not only been an instrument of change within the California Faculty Association, but throughout the California State University community. The Council has taken the lead in providing Unconscious Bias Training Workshops on all twenty-three campuses. These have had an impact on hiring committees on campuses, how faculty advise and teach students and how a mostly white faculty evaluate underrepresented faculty in retention, tenure and promotion decisions.

Dr. Canton was also instrumental in creating and institutionalizing the Bi-Annual Equity Conference. This popular conference draws faculty from across California because it is a space where race, ethnicity, and other social justice issues are at the forefront, and faculty have voice to express their concerns in a safe and supportive environment.

In California, Dr. Canton regularly addresses the California State Senate and Assembly and the CSU Board of Trustees on racial and ethnic inequity within the university system, the largest in the country. Whether speaking on student access and equity, ethnic studies, fee reduction for students, or lack of hiring of underrepresented faculty, Dr. Canton is inspirational, aspirational, passionate, and persuasive in advocating for those who are not treated fairly. Dr. Cecil Canton is a shining example of how we may all beat back injustice by advocating for structural changes that institutionalize equity.