

---

# DARLENE JACKSON

Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Learning Consultant

312-890-9050

darlene@msdarlenejackson.com

www.msdarlenejackson.com

---

## ABOUT ME

Learning consultant, public speaker, mentor, and presenter for inclusion training, transforming audiences of all sizes. Highly effective organizational leader, instructor, and community outreach strategist, innovating curricula with 15+ years of professional experience. Spearheads empathetic, knowledgeable, and diplomatic communication and devises original campaigns for major cultural institutions that increase organic connections to target populations of diverse ethnic and multicultural audiences through interactive media engagement. Applies mastery of communication to liberate, empower, and inspire in the roles of Director, Consultant, and Strategist of Cultural and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Programs.

---

## CORE SKILLS

Attention to Detail	Self-Motivated	Adobe Creative Suite
Critical Thinking Skills	Emotional Intelligence	Wix/Squarespace Design
Project Management Skills	Active Listener	Social Media Fluency/SEO
Verbal and Written Communication	Leader/Mentor	Microsoft Office Suite
Copywriting/Proofreading	Accountability/Integrity	Mailchimp
	Event Planning	Multi-Tasking

---

## EXPERIENCE

### Creative Industry Liaison, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL

September 2014 - May 2015; January 2018 - Present

Collaborates with organizations, businesses, and industry professionals to create job, internship, and mentorship opportunities for students. Designs experiential, supportive programming to educate and open networking channels for relationship-building, and works with faculty to supplement curricula via teaching/classroom presentations and workshops setting benchmarks and best practices. This work impacts Columbia College Chicago's Career Center, classrooms, and beyond.

- Led the transformation of the Career Center to activate a strategic vision, bringing awareness to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (EDI) programming, implementing a culture, and programming through a DEI lens
- Increased engagement with the Career Center by Black students and students of color by 50%, drastically scaling the landscape and demographic of Center users
- Forged new relationships with student affinity groups and Columbia College departments that work with marginalized students, ie. Trio Department for first generation students, Department of Social Services and Disabilities, and Student Persistence
- Communicated effectively with academic departments and the private sector to report diversity initiatives, institutional strategic priorities, and to increase awareness of Columbia College's Career Center services
- Initiated partnerships with external vendors such as Instructure and Wix to supplement career education
- First to integrate ASL and Deaf Culture into department programming and to hire ASL interpreters for events
- Pioneered "Careering While Queering", award-winning programming that centers LGBTQIA+ students' career education, training, and experience while emphasizing community, visibility, and identity
- Crafted groundbreaking program, Cultural Opportunities and Diversity Expo (CODE) emphasizing BIPOC/ALANA representation with objectives, measures, stakeholder engagement plan, and post-program ROI measurement
- Provided training and tools for staff and professional leadership on DEI, inspiring enhanced future programs
- Mentored the student coalition, Soul Sisters, a business and entrepreneurship group, for current and future Black women entrepreneurs with over 50 students, engaging in workshops, and teaching the executive board
- Advised undergraduate and graduate students on career advancement techniques with professional resume and cover letter writing, and interview preparation coaching
- DEI committee member of the prestigious Weisman Award, ensuring DEI was implemented during each step of the application, judgement, awarding, and mentoring process to ensure standards for equitable distribution of awards are adhered to and award distribution is fair for all
- Worked in an entirely remote environment in 2020 and have maintained a hybrid approach since March 2021
- Managed event planning and logistics for over 20 full scale events, 45 classroom presentations, hosted live streams and webinars and used the recordings to create archival libraries of the events for future reference tools

---

## EDUCATION

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate

University of South Florida  
2022 (in progress)

### Master of Science, Health Communication

Northwestern University  
2016

### Bachelor of Science, Biology

Millikin University  
1990

---

## ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

Teaching Online: Best Practices for the Virtual Classroom  
Columbia College Chicago 2021

Experience-Based Learning Institute (Experiential Learning)  
Robert Morris University 2019

Undoing Racism®/Community Organizing  
The People's Institute 2018

---

**Marketing Copywriter/Web Content Writer, ISI Solutions, Inc., Schaumburg, IL**

March 2015 – February 2017

- Developed brand-consistent language to expertly craft with clarity all web copy (isi-info.com), digital and print collateral copy for leading unified communications company
- Created a consistent corporate blog identity, creating new copy and content twice-weekly
- Increased site visits by 20% correlated to creating more engaging blog and social media content
- Penned thought leadership pieces about new technology and emerging market verticals including healthcare and finance
- Crafted social media messages for Twitter and email messages for marketing lists and sales clients
- Created solutions guides, case studies, and proofed, revised, and delivered new language for sales solution prompts communicating technical solutions in easy to understand language
- Seamlessly collaborated with graphic design department to concert art direction for all print and web materials

**Independent Communication Professional, Chicago, IL**

April 2004 – Present

Independent consultant and freelance copywriter with specialties in creative communication, event planning, branding, marketing, and project management. Collaborative approach integrates EDI frameworks into every client experience. Diverse clientele includes: Chicago DCASE, Chicago Public Media/NPR, BBC Radio, Girls Rock Chicago, Honey Pot Performance, Loyola University.

Built a diverse clientele as a writer-for-hire and worked closely with account supervisors, creative, and traffic managers to craft and fine-tune content for print and radio for prestigious agencies and brands, including: United Airlines · Verizon · Phillip Morris USA · Bank of America · McDonald's · Spalding/NBA Metromix.com · Chicago Tribune (Tempo/Arts & Entertainment) · Chicago Public Media · National Public Radio · BBC · Chicago Public Library · Chicago Magazine · Schuba's Bar & Grill for WXRT 93.1 FM · Flavorpill.com · Grey Direct · Burrell Communications · Flowers Communications Group · Moderne Communications · Steeplechase, LLC · Chronicality

Experience Includes:

- Community Outreach Strategist and Consultant with Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) in association with Flowers Communication Group
  - Worked with the Programming/Production and Marketing teams, to coordinate community engagement and audience development for specific neighborhood-based cultural events
  - Shaped the event vision and program objectives, articulating ideal audience and crowd-size goals
  - Created event specific Community Engagement Plans with recommended outreach tactics and timelines
  - Developed marketing and communication toolkits for programs including sample social media content, official hashtags, and boilerplate copy
  - Crafted neighborhood-specific strategic outreach plans to collaborate and engage key influencers and community organizations
  - Wrote and recapped program results for final client reports, including analytics, reflections/findings, and future recommendations
- Ability to effectively and consistently meet deadlines and production targets while flexible enough to deal effectively with change
- Strong writing and editing skills with a portfolio of published work
- Experience with Microsoft Office Suite and AP style; knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite, InDesign
- Knowledge of social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube
- Demonstrated ability to learn and create engaging content about our company, industry, products, programs, and services
- Outstanding communication, technical, and writing skills and demonstrated ability to learn and tell effective, compelling stories about products, programs, people, technologies, and accomplishments
- Ability to professionally communicate with individuals at all levels of an organization
- Ability to work both independently and in a team setting; adaptable, creative, and thrives in a fast-paced environment
- Skilled in being a self-motivating, analytical, and proactive team player

---

**RECOGNITION**

Grant Recipient, Columbia College Chicago Department of Academic DEI for Original Devised Program, CODE – Cultural Opportunities and Diversity Expo, 2022, 2023  
Award Recipient, Most Influential List by EDM.com Magazine, 2021  
Award Finalist, Career Leadership Collective Career Service Innovation Award, 2020

---

---

# DARLENE JACKSON

Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) Learning Consultant

312-890-9050  
darlene@msdarlenejackson.com  
www.msdarlenejackson.com

---

## SELECT APPEARANCES

### Interviews

Expert Opinion, Disco Demolition, American Experience (PBS), 2024  
Expert Opinion, The History of House Music, Throughline (NPR), April 2023  
Expert Opinion, The History of The Black Student Union, BestColleges.com, December 2022  
Expert Opinion, Dissecting Beyonce's Latest Album, 'Renaissance', Reset, WBEZ, August 2022  
Feature, Do You Remember House (Salkind; Oxford University Press) January 2019  
Feature, Disco Demolition: The Night Disco Died (Hoekstra, Natkin, Dahl; Curbside Splendor) 2016

### Panelist

Lead Facilitator, "Respect the CODE: Mastering the Art of Relationship Building", CODE Diversity Expo, April 2022  
Lead Facilitator, "We Take Care of Us", Chicago Architecture Biennial for Honey Pot Performance - Chicago Black Social Culture Map in collaboration with Project H.O.O.D (Helping Others Obtain Destiny), September 2021  
Lead Facilitator, "Woman in a Boy's Club", Self Employment in the Arts (SEA) Conference, February 2020  
Panelist, "The House of Blaquer", Havas/The Annex Black at Work Juneteenth/PRIDE Education Initiative, June 2019  
Panelist, "Women Forward", Music Forward All Access Fest, Live Nation/House of Blues Chicago, March 2019  
Panelist, "Gaining More Value from Social Engagements", Social Media Week Chicago, September 2012  
Others include: Chicago History Museum, School of House (NL), After School Matters, True Chicago

### Speaker + Presenter

Presenter, "Connecting to Marginalized Clients", Chicago Creative Professionals Network (CCPN), February 2022  
Presenter, "How I Landed The Most Fun Job In The World", Columbia College TRIO Week, October 2022, 2021  
Keynote Speaker, Self Employment in the Arts (SEA) Conference, February 2020  
Presenter, "Defining Professionalism through Portfolio-based Assignments Using Portfolium and Canvas", CanvasCon, Madison, Wisconsin, August 2019  
Presenter, "A History of Chicago House Music", Alliance Française de Chicago, June 2016  
Presenter, "Diversity in New Media to Support Black and Brown Voices", Millikin University, February 2008

### Guest Teaching Artist

Guest Teaching Artist, "Chicago The Birthplace of House Music", World Chicago & Georgetown University Caribbean Youth Ambassador (YA) Exchange Program, August 2021  
Program Coordinator/Instructor, "How to DJ", Girls Rock Chicago! Summer Camp, June 2006 - August 2018

---

## Board President, Collaboraction Theatre Company, Chicago, IL

March 2020 - Present

March 2019 - March 2020; Vice-President

March 2018 - March 2019; Marketing Committee Lead

- Lead an executive board of 14 members for Chicago's Emmy® winning social justice theatre company
- People operations and evaluation of executives, including the hiring and release of executive positions
- Approve audit reports and annual budget process
- Sign off on bank business loans, government loans, and other financial products
- Contribute to the development of policies and strategic planning of Collaboraction's creative identity shift, expanding the company's capacity for projects outside live performance
- Audit Collaboraction's financial affairs and ensure fiduciary responsibilities are met, including annual production budgets, expenditures, and fundraising goals
- Attended community meetings to promote organizational goals or acquire donations and sponsorships
- Produce high-quality and effective written communication at all stages of the strategic planning process

## MEMBERSHIPS

### **Advisory Board**

Honey Pot Performance  
Chicago Black Social  
Cultural Map Program  
Team/CBSCM  
January 2022 - Present;  
Education Committee;  
June 2019 - Present

### **Voting Member**

National Academy of  
Recording Arts and  
Sciences/NARAS  
April 2004 - Present;  
Grammy U Mentor  
January 2018 - Present

### **Union Member**

United Staff of Columbia  
College/USofCC  
Executive Committee  
Communications Chair;  
May 2019 - Present;  
Illinois Education Assoc.;  
Screen Actors Guild/SAG

### **Member**

Chicago African  
Americans in  
Philanthropy/CAAIP;  
Women in Music (WIM)

---