Roundtable III: Tomika Ferguson, James Madison University
“*How Black Female Student-Athletes Contend with Race, Gender, and Stereotypes*”

The responsibility of negative images of Black women within society cannot be assigned to a particular entity, be it the media, education or sport. Rather, the complex and often contradictory images of Black female athletes are the results of lingering histories of racism and oppression faced by Black women at various social institutions. College athletics is a microcosm of society and provides an environment to examine how racism and oppression, which have bred harmful stereotypes, influence the daily lives and athletic experiences of Black female student-athletes. This paper investigates the ways in which stereotypes influence the college experiences of Black female student-athletes through a Black feminist lens. Derived from interviews with Black female student-athletes in NCAA Division I track and field, volleyball, and women’s basketball, this paper’s findings argues that athletics is a platform to enhance the college experiences and voices of Black female student-athletes. Coach-player relationships, academic experiences, and physical appearance are pivotal to the engagement with and relationship of Black female student-athletes and their institutions. This paper looks at intersections of race, gender, and athletics within a college environment to identify areas where higher education institutions can take more responsibility in their commitment to Black female student-athletes.

Roundtable III: Akilah Francique, Prairie View A&M University
“*Sings of Freedom*”

In 1983, the late Dr. Maya Angelou spoke of the “Caged Bird” and the recognition of a life beyond her captured self that “sings of freedom.” Similar to the “Caged Bird,” Black women are caught in the “matrix of domination” and caged within its oppressive racial, gender, and class constructs which can limit their voice and experiences (Collins, 2000). Despite these limits and interlocking oppressions, scholars work to illuminate the societal realities of Black women and women of color in the sporting contexts. The goal of this session is to: (a) understand theories and methods employed to explain Black women’s sporting experiences; (b) unveil the barriers when capturing Black women’s sporting experiences; and, (c) elucidate the representational benefits of voice for Black women in sport. Hence, this session welcomes presentations that promote scholarly efforts on- and acknowledge the significance of- “freedom” for Black women and women of color in sport.