

Jennifer Richeson Named Guggenheim Fellow

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Credit: John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Jennifer Richeson, an APS Fellow and former APS board member, has been selected as a 2015 Guggenheim fellow. Awarded by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the prestigious fellowships are appointed on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise.

Richeson is the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Professor of Psychology at Northwestern University, where she is also a Faculty Fellow at the Institute for Policy Research and professor of African American Studies. Her compelling research largely focuses on the social psychological phenomena of cultural diversity and social group membership, particularly the ways race and gender impact the way people think, feel and behave.

By utilizing a broad range of empirical methods, her work has uniquely examined the potential cognitive “costs” and mutual misperceptions associated with intergroup interactions. A key finding of her work is that interactions between minority and majority group members require heightened self-control to combat expressions of prejudice. The demand on increased cognitive effort makes interracial interactions stressful and cognitively costly for many individuals, even to the point of undermining their cognitive performance after the interaction.

Additionally, she has conducted research on the wide-ranging implications of membership in a stigmatized group, studying the physiological and mental health effects of contending with both subtle and blatant forms of bias.

She is currently working on three primary lines of research: the dynamics and consequences of interracial contact; detecting, confronting, and managing the threats associated with diversity and experiencing prejudice; and social identity management in the face of intergroup wrongdoing. During her fellowship, Richeson will be integrating these lines of inquiry into a book project on the paradox of

diversity that addresses key questions on how actual and perceived increases in racial/ethnic diversity can yield both more egalitarian and more exclusionary racial attitudes, leading to mixed outcomes in important life domains (e.g., social isolation, creativity, task performance).

In 2006 Richeson was named a MacArthur “Genius” Fellow for her work as a leader in “highlighting and analyzing major challenges facing all races in America and in the continuing role played by prejudice and stereotyping in our lives.”