

### **4:35-5:20: Concurrent Session 3 – Civic Engagement on the South Side**

Facilitator: Adam Hammond (faculty)

Panelists: DJ Speed (graduate student), Paul Sereno (faculty), Tamica Collins (postdoc), Juan Apiz (graduate student), Shaz Rasul (staff)

The theme of the panel was the recognition of engagement as an activity that benefits both sides. We were encouraged to get involved in our neighborhoods in order to expand our own comprehension.

DJ Speed spoke about the “protestor packs” that he was part of organizing to help protestors stay safe during the mass protests following the murder of George Floyd. He also shared rich resource of organizations.

Paul Sereno talked about his struggles with education and the importance of science in catching imaginations. He introduced the Chicago Science Works project, a large scale effort to create a community engaged science hub in Washington Park.

Tamica Collins introduced the BSD Postdoctoral Association’s efforts. She and Britney Helling have developed Strive for Science, getting volunteers into local schools and bringing 6-12 grade students onto to campus to imagine being scientists. Tamica also spoke about the importance of developing specialized communication skills for engaging audience in science.

Juan Apiz shared is feelings of being an outsider when he arrived and how that informed his work with the EYES on Cancer program. He also discussed his collaboration with Elaine Kouame in launching a South Side vaccination drive with Howard Brown Health.

Shaz Rasul shared his experience of being at the UChicago as an undergrad in the 90s, and the importance of connecting with a faculty member who encouraged him to engage. He highlighted serious weaknesses in the public schools and his vision for partnerships to help turn things around. He specifically mentioned the Neighborhood Schools Program run out of the Office of Civic Engagement.

In response to a question, panelists discussed the value of matching skills to community groups, and that scientists may have skills that the community doesn’t realize. Listening to the community about what they need is the first step.

Asked about the biggest hurdles to engagement, time came up several times. Panelists stressed that we can leverage our university affiliations for help with other resources.