



RISING STARS SPOTLIGHT

Shanesha Brooks-Tatum, PhD

Founder, Life Balance & Wellness Institute

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Institute for Successful Leadership

The International Journal of Ethnic College Health is pleased to salute Dr. Shanesha Brooks-Tatum as the 2016 Rising Stars recipient for her tireless work to improve the health and wellness of women of color, especially college-attending women and across the lifespan. Brooks-Tatum is proof-positive of the old adage: be careful of the company you keep.

Six years ago, Shanesha Brooks-Tatum had completed her dissertation to earn a doctorate in American Studies with a focus on Diasporic Music, Culture, and Religion; and Gender Studies from the University of Michigan. Following her stupendous accomplishment, she indulged in conversations with family and friends about women's accomplishments and life challenges. She noticed that she and her sister circle were proficient in talking about the things that they needed to do to improve their quality of life, but the end results were common: all talk, but little action. She reasoned that the lack of action was largely due to the lack of strategies or systems to support accomplishing goals.

"What would really help is a space where we dedicate a day or two to talk about the challenges that we have, but not stop there, but to talk about what works for me," she said. "I thought it was important for women to explore what wellness and life balance means to them. Create a space where we could have honest dialogue and introspection, self-understanding, so that we can create the reality that we always talk about with our girlfriends."

Perhaps with a different sister circle, Brooks-Tatum may not have ever had the conversations and ultimately the breakthrough idea to provide a vehicle to improve women's wellness. To the benefit of all, they had those life-affirming talks. Brooks-Tatum used them as a catalyst along with the same work ethic utilized to complete her doctorate to found the National Annual Black Women's Life Balance and Wellness Conference.

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