

Racial Bias in Law Enforcement

Fact or Fiction?

A *Lewinski Lecture* presentation by Dr. Lois James

November 5, 2018

9am – noon; Ostrander Auditorium, Centennial Student Union

Minnesota State University, Mankato and the Force Science Institute are proud to announce that Dr. Lois James, assistant professor at the Washington State University College of Nursing who studies bias, stress, sleep, and performance in law enforcement and military personnel, has been chosen as the headline speaker at this year's annual "Lewinski Lecture," a series launched in honor of long-time law enforcement department faculty member and administrator Dr. Bill Lewinski, executive director of the Institute.

In her timely three-hour presentation, Dr. James, one of the nation's leading law enforcement researchers, will share what science has to say about the contentious subject of racial bias among police. Among the pressing questions she will approach are:

- **Are law enforcement officers influenced by racial bias but don't know it?**
- **Do they have it but successfully suppress it on the job?**
- **Do they deliberately exploit it to skew justice in minority communities?**
- **Or on the whole, are claims that police are racially biased completely unfounded?**

Dr. James, a research advisor to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, is internationally recognized for her award-winning and ground-breaking work on how suspect race and ethnicity influence officer decision-making during critical encounters.

"Much of the intense scrutiny police have experienced in recent years and the national debate on policing legitimacy have been largely driven by racial tensions," she says.

"The widespread allegations of racially motivated policing, particularly regarding use of force, are hotly contested. Officers feel misunderstood and defensive, minority community members often feel targeted and victimized, and the general public falls somewhere in between. Unfortunately, research studies have been mixed and sometimes contradictory, adding to the confusion and controversy."

In her presentation, which includes a question and answer period, Dr. James plans to offer "an objective overview of the research on racial bias in policing, from field studies to laboratory experiments." She'll examine six decades of experiments in an effort to draw valid conclusions on "whether and how officers are influenced by racial bias" and the implications from these findings for training and policy.

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