



*Tabitha Grier-Reed, 2015–16 Distinguished Teacher  
Morse-Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Award*

Creating an intellectual place for disadvantaged students on a campus full of the advantaged has eluded many, but not Tabitha Grier-Reed.

She confronted racial disparities head-on by co-founding the African American Student Network (AFAM), now in its 10th year of mentoring and supporting students dealing with personal and academic problems, as well as racially charged incidents. Her peer-reviewed research documents AFAM's effects on students in the program, who have outperformed more academically prepared peers.

Besides illuminating the experience of students from culturally different or disadvantaged backgrounds, Grier-Reed's research has identified co-curricular interventions to break down barriers to college success. She also lowers barriers between students.

"I cannot think of one day where I wasn't interacting with my peers and actively thinking about answers to questions and discussion prompts," says a former student.

As a mentor and adviser in the TRIO program for low-income first-generation students and the TRIO McNair Scholars program, Grier-Reed has helped students markedly improve their study and reasoning skills.

Former students also remember her vibrant lecture style. "There was nothing about Tabitha's teaching that resembled a lecture," says one about her introductory psychology class. "For example, in the lesson on Broca's and Wernicke's aphasias, she showed videos of patients with these conditions. This put a face to the conditions, and as a medical student years later, I still remember that lesson." ❧

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*"Addressing social challenges through education is not limited to the classroom. For example, racial disparities in education is a grand challenge for the nation, the state, and the University."*

