

Empowering Change Task Force announces 2026 Writers' Conference Lineup

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From left to right: Carol Bebelle, Dr. Kathy Levy-Oquelí, and Dr. Nubian OmiSayade Sun.

The Empowering Change Task Force has unveiled a lineup of social work thought leaders for [the second annual Tulane School of Social Work Writers' Conference](#).

The Writers' Conference will take place March 11 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tulane's downtown campus and offer six free social work CEUs. Attendees are also encouraged to visit [the fifth annual New Orleans Book Festival at Tulane University](#), which will begin the following day.

Three plenary speakers—Carol Bebelle, Dr. Kathy Levy-Oquelí, and Dr. Nubian OmiSayade Sun—will delve deep into their areas of expertise with presentations on resilience, technology, and social work.

Carol Bebelle is a constant voice and advocate for the primal role of culture in establishing equity, justice and compassion in American society. The co-founder and former Executive Director of the Ashé Cultural Arts Center, her day-to-day life has been informed by the intersection of culture, community, and art for more than 21 years. She will discuss her anthology *Counting Our Blessings*—a journey through the lives of forty-one New Orleanians in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Dr. Levy-Oquelí is a dedicated social work educator and practitioner with extensive experience in clinical practice, public health, and higher education. She specializes in behavioral health, evidence-based interventions, and the integration of technology in mental health and healthcare, including the use of artificial intelligence. She focuses on ethical, strategic, and innovative leadership in social work, public health, and business, with an emphasis on educational administration and accreditation. She will discuss the evolving roll of artificial intelligence in mental healthcare.

Dr. Sun is a visionary healing-centered leader and educator dedicated to dismantling systemic inequities and cultivating transformative, healing-centered learning environments. Their scholarship centers the lived experiences of marginalized communities across community and institutional settings and promotes critical dialogue, reflective practice, and collective action. They will present on the state of social work in the United States.

In addition to the plenaries, the conference will feature three breakout sessions, allowing attendees to ask questions and hear from a diverse panel of authors: Dr. Shontell Buffington, Charles Monlezun, Simone Muschett, and Dr. Manuel Ocasio will discuss Family Systems; Dr. Lisa M. Wineburg, Angela Wood, Kaytee Gillis, and Dr. Rachel Melvald will explore Trauma, Clinical Practice & Healing; and Bill Knecht, Ebony Allen, Byanka Ramos, and Dr. Carey Yazeed will speak about Professional Resilience.

The Writers' Conference is free and open to the public, but [registration is required to attend](#).