

Women, minority writers still face obstacles in Hollywood

May 19 2011, By Letisia Marquez

A new report prepared by a UCLA sociology professor for the Writers Guild of America–West reveals that diverse writers continue to face significant obstacles to employment in Hollywood, particularly in light of the recession.

Darnell Hunt, who is also director of UCLA's Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, writes that "the current recession has clearly done little to help women, minority and older [writers](#) move ahead in the Hollywood industry, relative to their male, white and younger counterparts."

The report's [executive summary](#) was issued May 18, and the full report will be available in late summer.

Highlights of Hunt's research include:

- Women writers' overall share of industry employment declined by one percentage point to 24 percent and decreased in the film industry from 18 percent in 2007 to 17 percent in 2009. Their share of employment in the television sector remained at 28 percent.
- While the minorities' share of television employment rebounded to 2005 levels, their share of film employment declined to 5 percent, the lowest level in a decade.

- Despite the 1 percent gain in television [employment](#), the television earnings gap for [minorities](#) widened to the largest level in a decade. The [television](#) earnings gap for minorities has more than doubled since a similar 2009 report.
- White male writers continue to dominate in overall earnings. Median [earnings](#) in 2009 were \$87,225 for minorities, \$100,000 for women and \$117,343 for white male writers in 2009.

"From the initial project pitch to project completion, each phase of the production pipeline has the potential to serve as a barrier to or facilitator of increased diversity among industry writers," said Hunt, a noted expert on diversity in the entertainment industry. "Diversity is not a luxury, not even in tough times.

"The Hollywood [industry](#), in the final analysis, depends on increasingly diverse audiences and on the stories to which they can relate," he said.

Provided by University of California Los Angeles

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