

A sociologist with a national best-selling book detailing the rise of for-profit colleges, growing debts from student loans and their impact on social inequality will give a public talk at UNC Charlotte on Thursday, Oct. 18.

Tressie McMillan Cottom, an award-winning author and assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, will speak on her book, *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profit Colleges in the New Economy*. The talk, at 7 p.m. in Cone University Center's After Hours Room, is open free of charge to the campus and broader community.

Cottom frames the discussion about for-profit institutions as part of a larger set of educational reforms, and political and economic trends that public education faces. Cottom's work has been featured by *The Washington Post*, on NPR's *Fresh Air*, *The Daily Show*, *The New York Times*, *Slate*, and *The Atlantic*, among others. A former Charlotte resident, she was part of a panel discussion on the topic of for-profit colleges on *Charlotte Talks* on WFAE in August.

<http://www.wfae.org/post/charlotte-talks-more-profit-colleges-close-their-doors-do-students-get-what-they-pay#stream/0>

Her book considers the intersection of the rise of for-profit higher education, the student debt crisis, the new economy, and the role of these factors in the reproduction of race/class/gender inequality. A book review in *The New York Times* called it "...the best book yet on the complex lives and choices of for-profit students."

Other reviews also have praised the book. "*Lower ed* is also a clear prompt for readers to dig deeper into the question of the notorious "skills gap" or the notion that students graduate without the necessary skills for a digital economy," Karen Gregory commented in the *Journal of Cultural Economy*.

Cottom is co-editor of two volumes on technological change, inequality and institutions, "Digital Sociologies" (2016, UK Bristol Policy Press) and "For-Profit Universities: The Shifting Landscape of Marketized Higher Education" (2017, Palgrave MacMillan). Cottom serves on dozens of academic and philanthropic boards and publishes widely on issues of inequality, work, higher education and technology, as found on her website.

<https://tressiemc.com/>

The event is co-sponsored by UNC Charlotte Office of Academic Affairs/Office of the Provost, Cato College of Education, University College, the Department of Sociology, the Public Policy Program, and the Organizational Science Program.

People who need parking can find information here.

<https://pats.uncc.edu/>