Dr. Tarek C. Grantham is Professor of educational psychology at the University of Georgia. He served as Coordinator in the Gifted and Creative Education Graduate Program, teaching primarily in the Diversity and Equity Strand. He Co-Directs the GCE University-School Partnerships for Achievement, Rigor, and Creativity (Project U-SPARC) initiative. Dr. Grantham’s research addresses equity for under-represented groups in advanced programs; gifted Black males; motivation; and creativity policy. He has co-edited three books: Recruiting, Retaining, and Engaging African American Males at Selective Public Research Universities: Challenges and Opportunities in Academics and Sports (2018), Young, Triumphant, and Black: Overcoming the Tyranny of Segregated Minds in Desegregated Schools (2013), and Gifted and Advanced Black Students in School: An Anthology of Critical Works (2011). Dr. Grantham is a Presidential Appointee to the Board of Directors for NAGC. He has served as Chair for the Special Populations Network and is a co-founder of the Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Award Program. He is the 2018 recipient of the Dr. Alexinia Baldwin “Gifted & Special Populations” Award and recipient of the Mary M. Frasier Excellence and Equity Award and the E. Paul Torrance Creativity Award from the Georgia Association for Gifted Children for outstanding achievement in gifted education.

Personal Statement
All children with gifts and talents, including culturally different children, deserve opportunities to develop their strengths. After serving on the NAGC Board of Directors as a Presidential Appointee, I am responding to: 1. a call to serve, and 2. my opportunity and responsibility to offer Board level leadership in the area of equity and excellence. A great success (and challenge) that I experienced as a Board member was to promote courageous conversations and ethical action on diversity issues. I want to continue as a Board member to assist the leadership in continuing the development and promotion of proactive policies and practices against internal and external influences that can undermine the NAGC’s progress on equity. As a Board member, my desire is to encourage and model leadership that can proactively stand against injustices while continuing collaborative and innovative works that positively impact students’ capacity to achieve their full potential.

Please answer the following questions:
How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to increasing the public’s urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children and youth (i.e., Minds)?
My capacity to increase the public’s urgency is informed by my work as professor and scholar, which addresses injustices confronting the education of special populations of students with gifts and talents. As an underachieving creatively gifted Black male, I and other students from under-represented groups, have been adversely impacted by implicit biases (e.g., racism, sexism, classism) that persist in society. Based on my professional and personal work in schools and communities, I have acquired culturally relevant knowledge and skills (e.g., creating university-school partnerships for achievement, rigor, and creativity) that can change minds and increase the public’s urgency to support NAGC.

How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to advocating for the adoption of policies that promote programs and service in which gifted and talented children and youth will thrive (i.e., Policies)?
My research on equity in gifted education informs my capacity to advocate for change in gifted education policies. In addition, I have served with local, state, and national groups that have a direct role in informing how and by whom policies are shaped. Using data complimented by experience as a former middle school teacher, university professor, husband of a gifted Black female valedictorian, father of three Black children identified as gifted, parent in Title I schools, and other roles, I aim to contribute my research and experience to inform policies that promote equity and excellence in gifted education.

How would your knowledge, experience, abilities, and vision contribute to empowering supporters to implement effective practices for all gifted and talented children and youth in homes, schools, and communities (i.e., Practices)?
My empowerment efforts inspire courage to act and model what is morally and ethically best for students with gifts and talents, particularly under-represented groups. One way that I empower supporters is with research and data. Knowledge is power. Another way is by sharing professional wisdom and personal experiences to promote ‘buy-in’ with best practices. Many people become empowered by having a scholarly or personal connection, seeing fruit from one’s labor or by responding to a squeaky wheel. Sustained effectiveness with best practices involves moral and ethical conviction by motivated individuals with diverse strengths in research, school-community advocacy, and the like.