The Battle Over Title IX

Colleges and universities contend with controversial new guidelines for handling sexual misconduct cases

Also in this issue
Law schools prepare students to lead the fight for equality and criminal justice reform
The INSIGHT Into Diversity Inspiring Affinity Group Awards
Power struggles and protests, along with the role they play in social equality, put Amber Baylor on her career path to Associate Professor and Criminal Defense Clinic Director at Texas A&M University School of Law. An early interest in political activism also shaped her decision to help make a difference as a public defender at non-profits in California and New York. Today, it’s her role as educator – guiding students in developing critical perspectives on law – that brings her joy. She knows she’s not just challenging and changing their thinking, she’s shaping tomorrow’s defenders of social equality.
Dear INSIGHT Into Diversity Readers,

The entire staff at INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to express our sincere and unending support for all of those who dedicate themselves to creating more diverse, inclusive, and equitable environments on college campuses. We join so many in being grief-stricken and dismayed over the recent horrific racist events that have occurred throughout our country.

As our nation grapples with this moment of reckoning after four centuries of devaluing Black lives, we have heard from many of you who work in higher education about the stress, fear, and pain you are experiencing both personally and professionally. Working to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion is extremely difficult, and knowing how to best promote and instill these values in the face of opposition requires communal endurance, intense strategy, and continued innovation. We at INSIGHT remain steadfast in our commitment to assist and shine a spotlight on the people engaged in this work at college campuses across the U.S.

INSIGHT Into Diversity recently held a series of online roundtable discussions for chief diversity officers to share ideas and brainstorm solutions for confronting the uncertainties of the coronavirus pandemic. We called an emergency roundtable following the May 25 murder of George Floyd and the ensuing social unrest in cities around the world. Participants were offered a safe space for frank and, at times, emotional conversations to share their fears, anger, tears, hopes for the future and, most importantly, to provide one another with camaraderie and support.

Many of you have organized similar opportunities for your campus communities to engage in difficult conversations and developed other ways to facilitate dialogue. Of utmost concern is protecting the mental health and wellbeing of Black students and employees and, as many of your institutions prepare to reopen for the fall semester, we know that ensuring a safe and supportive campus environment is more crucial now than ever. INSIGHT Into Diversity is dedicated to serving you in this mission and in all of the work that lies ahead.

We thank you for allowing us to stand alongside you in creating a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Sincerely,

Lenore Pearlstein and Holly Mendelson
INSIGHT Into Diversity Co-publishers
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Law Schools Have Started a Criminal Justice Reform Movement
By Mariah Stewart

Improving the Legal Profession’s Mental Health Crisis Begins in Law School
By Mariah Stewart
As one of just eight schools in the nation — and the only institution in Oklahoma — to be recognized as an eight-year recipient of the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, Oklahoma State University continues to strengthen its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

OSU’s Women’s Faculty Council is representative of this commitment and continues to elevate OSU after four decades of service. Recently, it was recognized with the magazine’s 2020 Inspiring Affinity Award — one of just 38 campus groups nationally.

The council’s efforts to support, motivate and inspire the scholarship of women faculty members continue to have a broad impact. Together, OSU’s eight affinity faculty and staff associations play a vital role in supporting, promoting and advancing OSU’s culture of inclusion.

OSU also continues to be the most successful university system in the nation for American Indians earning a college degree.

OSU is focused on bright minds, building brighter futures and the brightest world for all.

diversity.okstate.edu
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By Mariah Bohanon

The views expressed in the content of the articles and advertisements published in INSIGHT Into Diversity are those of the authors and are not to be considered the views expressed by Potomac Publishing, Inc.
INSIGHT Into Diversity recently hosted a series of online roundtable discussions for chief diversity officers (CDOs) to share their experiences and ideas regarding the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in higher education.

The first round of discussions was divided into three sessions throughout the month of May, with each focused on a specific topic: the current role of the CDO during the COVID-19 pandemic; caring for yourself, your students, and employees during the pandemic; and challenges specific to health professions schools during the pandemic.

Each forum gave participants the opportunity to brainstorm ideas, learn about challenges and solutions taking place on other campuses, and provide mutual support for others engaged in DEI work. Given the unprecedented events of the spring semester as well as the uncertainties of the upcoming academic year, such opportunities are vital for fostering connections and ensuring that DEI values are upheld on college campuses.

The first session examined the importance of recruiting and retaining underrepresented students and faculty virtually, preparing for possible budget cuts, planning for virtual diversity workshops and trainings, ensuring equity for essential campus workers, and more.

The second roundtable focused on ensuring that underserved students continue to receive support services, tracking student mental health, addressing online racism and anti-Semitism, and maintaining self-care and personal wellness.

In the third session, participants specifically concentrated on issues relevant to health and medical education.

INSIGHT recognized that providing this type of virtual safe space could help diversity leaders process recent instances of racial violence and the social unrest following the May 25 murder of George Floyd. CDOs were invited to an emergency roundtable session.

Erika Henderson, EdD, associate provost for faculty recruitment, retention, equity, and diversity at the University of Houston, says these conversations have been “a lifeline personally and professionally.” Houston was Floyd’s hometown, and Henderson’s brother played football with him in high school, so she and her community have been especially affected by his murder and its aftermath. Furthermore, being a CDO sometimes feels very isolating, so having the chance to connect with other professionals during this crisis is vital, Henderson says.

“(The sessions) have been a lifeline because nobody else really understands your role and the pressure that you’re under. I’m extremely grateful for those forums because not only did they provide renewal for my spirit, but also allowed me to reach out and talk to people who do similar work.”

The forums enabled her to “develop relationships that are going to continue to carry me on during this crisis,” she says. “When we aren’t able to meet together and convene in person, having something like this is so important.”

INSIGHT would like to thank everyone who joined in these important conversations. Many participants reported that they found these discussions rewarding and, as such, INSIGHT will be holding more sessions throughout the year.
Ahmaud Arbery and Georgia.

George Floyd and Minneapolis.

Steven Taylor and San Leandro, California.

Breonna Taylor and Louisville.

Names that comprise a legacy of loss and grief. Places that have become, for too many, a map of mistrust and fear.

For the University of Kentucky, one name entails a particularly deep sense of sorrow. Breonna Taylor was a student at UK in 2011.

She went on to serve as a health care provider, caring for those who needed it most. We mourn her loss. We grieve with her family.

How do we ensure that her tragic death is not forgotten? How do we do better tomorrow than we have in the past? How do we do better than we are doing today?

I don’t have answers or absolution for America’s original sin. But we must acknowledge that the seeds of racism and hate, division and despair, continue to grow and thrive in our midst.

Systemic and systematic racism – deeply rooted in our society – has imprisoned and killed people of color in disproportionate numbers for too long.

Even as we seek a reinvented and safe normal this fall... we cannot conceptualize safety on our campus strictly as freedom from illness.

Safety also must mean freedom from fear.

As we return to our campus this fall, we must do our part to bridge divides that exist. We have experts throughout our campus on health issues, but also regarding race, inequality, disparities and justice. They too will be called upon to help. Dialogue is not enough. We have to do what we can, now, to find these solutions.

We can’t immediately eliminate seeds of hate, planted in gardens near and far.

But in reinventing our campus, we have a chance to reinvent and reimagine our community. We must take it.

We must ensure we are a university for everyone.

Eli Capilouto
President
Face Masks Increase Likelihood of Racial Profiling for Students of Color

As many colleges and universities take steps to reopen their campuses for the fall semester, some are planning to require that students and employees wear face masks while on campus to reduce the possibility of exposure to COVID-19. For people of color, however, wearing a facial covering comes with its own safety risks.

For Black men, concealing portions of the face may “intensify racist perceptions of criminality, especially to police,” according to an article on Vox.com. Since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first recommended that the general public use cloth coverings for the nose and mouth in early April, there have been multiple reports of racial profiling of African Americans who abide by this public health guideline.

Xavier Yardley Adams, a Black graduate student at Duke University, explained his feelings concerning face masks in a May interview with The News & Observer. “I am concerned that some White people will further dehumanize and vilify people of color in their minds because face masks hide so many of the expressive features of human faces,” Adams stated, adding that he feared this villainization could lead to acts of violence against African Americans.

Some Black men have reported that they won’t wear bandanas or other homemade masks in public, opting instead to only use disposable masks that reduce the chances they will be viewed as intentionally trying to conceal their features, according to The New York Times.

Concerns over racial profiling have intensified as protests over police brutality and systemic racism spread worldwide following the police killing of George Floyd on May 25. Students at many colleges and universities have begun urging administrators to discontinue or lessen the use of law enforcement on campus, and some institutions — including the University of Minnesota — have cut ties with local police departments. At certain institutions, student activists are pushing for campus security to be required to take anti-bias training; in some cities, police departments have begun requiring anti-bias training specifically related to the use of face masks.

LISTEN

Ten Percent Happier podcast, Episode #253: “An Uncomfortable (But Meaningful) Conversation About Race”

“Black heartbreak is rooted within the experience of a deep disappointment.”
– Lama Rod Owens

Journalist Dan Harris’ popular podcast focuses on integrating meditation and mindfulness into the daily lives of busy Americans. In this episode, Harris, who is White, speaks with Lama Rod Owens, a Buddhist meditation teacher, activist, and “Black, queer male, born and raised in the South,” about White reactions to the murder of George Floyd and police brutality. Their frank discussion on race in America touches on personal experiences and requires each to acknowledge when the conversation makes them feel anxious or uncomfortable. Through honesty and intention, Harris and Owens explore the ways that White Americans can use the teachings of mindfulness — rather than relying solely on intellectual analysis or Black emotional labor — to open themselves up to painful realities that racial privilege normally allows them to avoid. Original air date June 3, 2020. Available at tenpercent.com or on major podcast apps.

Register now for Fall 2020

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Valerie Smith, President of Swarthmore College

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Learn more at inclusive.vcu.edu/vcu-universe
Fort Lewis College Works To Close the Digital Divide for Indigenous Students

By Lee Bitsóí, EdD

For Indigenous students, the struggles of campus closure and online learning are exacerbated by a severe digital divide. At Fort Lewis College — where four in 10 students are Native American or Alaska Native — administrators, faculty, and staff created a system of personal connections to meet individual technology needs.

Like other colleges and universities throughout the country, Fort Lewis College (FLC) in Durango, Colorado, transitioned rapidly to online classes in mid-spring. The exodus of students from campus refocused a light on the undeniable deficiency in access to education due to the digital divide — a big gap that resurfaced for many Indigenous students as they had to leave campus.

To fulfill our institutional mission of serving this student population, FLC created an individualized outreach campaign involving a team from our Native American Center and our faculty to personally contact every Indigenous student (via cell phone, text, and email) to support the successful completion of their courses remotely by understanding their specific needs and devising individualized solutions.

We discovered that many indigenous students faced similar difficulties when it came to the digital divide, including the following:

- Lack of regular access to personal computers because they are shared with other family members — siblings taking classes or parents working remotely, sometimes at conflicting times — or because of outdated technology
- Lack of smartphones or phones in general because of budget constraints
- Lack of space or time for classes
- Familial responsibilities such as assisting with child care or elder care
- A return to uncertain home environments
- Newly imposed conditions in home environment — shelter at home orders, economic effects, and need for home schooling
- Decision not to return home but to live with urban relatives to have internet access
- Minimal to no support or encouragement to complete course work
- Combined impact of these issues on emotional, physical, and mental health

Our individual approach allowed us to provide targeted solutions by connecting students with specific services to address their technology needs and, when applicable, other services (e.g., advising, counseling, TRIO, information technology, and financial aid) that would support their success.

Most students we spoke with were appreciative and optimistic after we touched base with them. Addressing the fundamental issue of access to technological resources reduced or eliminated many other issues resulting from that deficiency. Many of these

The Digital Divide refers to the socioeconomic and educational disparities between those who have access to digital resources and technology — especially the internet — and those who do not.
students were able to finish the semester successfully despite these new and challenging circumstances where there is a heavy requirement of connectivity and technology.

As a result of this unprecedented situation and our personal discussions with students, we learned several key concepts.

• Not all students (Native American/Alaska Native and other groups) have access to reliable internet connectivity and computer technology, so we are exploring how we can require all students to invest in a laptop and a means to connect.

• Thus, exploring how to include a technology bundle in the cost of attendance to ensure that this expense will be covered by financial aid — grants and scholarships or loans — is warranted.

• Students appreciated being contacted individually and directly, as it adds a personal touch and gives them a sense of importance and visibility. Hence, in an online environment, scheduling regular touch points so that students are even more aware that we are invested in their success is powerful.

• Given that we were able to strategize and create an outreach plan — in a short amount of time in collaboration and coordination with various offices and programs — we are exploring opportunities to use our collegiality and leverage resources to collaborate in the future for ongoing outreach to all students, especially students who are first generation or low socio-economic status, to work toward increasing retention and graduation rates.

• We were able to identify effective and powerful services and referrals that can continue into the future and align with our strategic core values as an institution – with “students at the center.” Examples include ensuring technology and internet access when possible, assisting in connecting with faculty, and providing information based on individualized needs of available resources, such as our Skyhawk Emergency Fund for financial hardship.

Accordingly, in planning to return to campus this fall, we are sharing this information with faculty to contemplate, discuss, and discover solutions for how to develop richer and more robust course offerings online; we may be considering hybrid formats and approaches for delivering our degree programs. We are also reimagining tactics for how to provide future advising, mentoring, coaching, and communication by including the emergent themes that we discovered in our conversations with students, and we welcome and value their input. We are proud of our collective efforts and believe that they will bode well for our Indigenous students during these trying times as well as into the future.

Lee Bitsóí, EdD, is the director of the Diversity Collaborative and the Special Advisor to the President for Native American Affairs at Fort Lewis College. He is also a member of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Editorial Board.
Employee resource groups at Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) promote the College’s commitment to diversity and inclusion by fostering inclusive ideas and solutions and creating opportunities for mentoring and career development.

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Indigenous Students and the Digital Divide

In 2018, the news website Politico dubbed Native American and Alaska Native populations the “least connected people in America” after the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a report showing the severity of the digital divide for rural Native American communities.

The report found that just over half — or 53 percent — of Native Americans who live on tribal lands and own a computer had access to high-speed internet. Nearly 30 percent of Native American and Alaska Natives overall did not have an internet subscription service, regardless of where they lived.

And while the FCC and other organizations have worked to improve the digital divide for Indigenous populations, less than one percent of federal funding to promote rural internet access went to tribal lands or service providers from 2010 to 2017.

More recently, a March 2020 survey conducted by the American Indian College Fund found that one in five students lacked a computer or reliable internet access at home. Experts have predicted that the struggles of online learning across the digital divide, in addition to the coronavirus pandemic’s disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities, could lead to a decrease in Native American and Alaska Native student enrollment, according to University Business magazine.
INNOVATIVE CAMPUS RESOURCES AND OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS OFFER UNIQUE FORMS OF LGBTQ SUPPORT

On June 16, 2020, in a historic decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act upholds the protection of LGBTQ people from discrimination in employment. The 6-3 vote was considered a victory for the estimated 11.3 million LGBTQ people who live in the U.S. today, according to the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law.

By Mariah Stewart

QueenEarth is a singer/songwriter and creative professional who works to create courses, programs, and events that promote equity, inclusion, and arts education. In 2019, Campus Pride invited QueenEarth to perform at its annual summer program, Camp Pride. The camp serves as one of the country’s longest-running LGBTQ summer leadership programs for youth and the only one of its kind for college students. (Photo courtesy of Campus Pride, by Katie Simmons-Barth)
Now more than ever, higher education institutions have an opportunity to show their support for the LGBTQ community by establishing safe spaces on campus, enacting policies for equality, and celebrating LGBTQ identities and traditions in order to promote a sense of pride and inclusion for a group who has long been marginalized.

Many schools have engaged in this work in recent decades by establishing campus resource centers and hosting lavender graduation ceremonies, which honor LGBTQ students. Between 1996 and 2006, over 60 institutions created LGBTQ centers, according to research by the University of California, San Diego. Today, more than 100 such centers exist on college campuses across the nation, many of which are staffed by paid employees, according to the Postsecondary National Policy Institute (PNPI).

In addition, other programs and organizations have been created in recent years that serve as innovative resources to meet the unique needs of LGBTQ students and employees as well as the broader community. Here, INSIGHT highlights several colleges, universities, and organizations that exemplify the spirit of LGBTQ inclusion in higher education.

**COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY-RELATED PROGRAMS**

**DGALA at Dartmouth University**

DGALA, formerly known as the Dartmouth Gay and Lesbian Alumni/ae Association, has a membership of more than 700 LGBTQ graduates of Dartmouth University across the U.S. In addition to fostering the social and intellectual well-being of its members, the group’s goals include supporting the experiences of LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff at the university. Among DGALA’s accomplishments is the creation of the Speak Out project, which trains students to collect and record the oral histories of LGBTQ members of the Dartmouth campus community.

**LGBTQIA Living-Learning Community at Kent State University**

Many schools have made the leap to gender-inclusive housing; however, Kent State has gone a step further by combining LGBTQ education with a living-learning program. Through the LGBTQIA Living-Learning Community, undergraduate students have the opportunity to be truly immersed in intellectual exchange outside of the classroom through exclusive lectures, academic advising, and more. Members live in the same residence hall on campus, and the community is open to anyone who is curious about and shares a passion for social justice related to issues of LGBTQ equality. All members take one course per semester in LGBTQ studies and have the option of participating in career exploration, faculty-led research, leadership development, and other unique opportunities.

**The Q Center at the University of Washington (UW)**

With an average of 500 monthly visitors, the Q Center has been a vital resource for the LGBTQ community at UW for 15 years. It offers a confidential gender discussion group, queer mentoring program, a name/gender change option in the student database, and a virtual “Q tour” that educates users about local LGBTQ history. The Q Center also hosts a discussion group called Color Mode, which offers people of color the opportunity to connect with others and share their experiences of being queer, trans, bi, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming people of color (QTBIPOC), according to the UW website. The center’s comprehensive approach to LGBTQ support helped earn UW the top spot on Campus Pride’s index of LGBTQ-friendly colleges and universities.

**OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS**

**Athlete Ally**

Hudson Taylor, a former NCAA All-American wrestler at the University of Maryland, was inspired to found Athlete Ally in 2011 after witnessing frequent homophobic and sexist attitudes in the world of college sports. The organization’s mission is to end homophobia and transphobia among...
Athlete Ally’s mission is to eliminate homophobia and transphobia in college and professional athletics. The organization has successfully collaborated with the International Olympic Committee, the NBA, and the NCAA.

Athlete Ally's major accomplishments include successfully lobbying the International Olympic Committee to include a policy in the Olympic Charter prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation; co-authoring the NCAA’s first-ever policy and resource guide on LGBTQ issues; and creating a first-of-its-kind Athletic Equality Index, which ranks collegiate athletic departments by LGBTQ inclusiveness. The organization also worked with the NCAA in moving championship games out of North Carolina after the state passed a law in 2016 making it easier to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals.

Campus Pride
Founded in 2001, Campus Pride is a national nonprofit dedicated to building future leaders and safer campus communities by developing vital resources, programs, and services to support LGBTQ and ally students on college campuses. The organization currently supports more than 1,400 higher education institutions by partnering to host LGBTQ-friendly college fairs, ally trainings, and other events. Its educational resources include the Campus Pride Index, which analyzes and ranks LGBTQ-friendly schools, as well as a database of LGBTQ-focused scholarships and fellowships. Among its unique initiatives is the Lambda 10 Project, a national clearinghouse of information working to highlight the visibility of LGBTQ members of sororities and fraternities.

The Trevor Project
For more than two decades the Trevor Project has worked toward LGBTQ youth suicide prevention. Its many free resources include “LGBTQ on Campus for Students,” an online, interactive training designed to assist higher education institutions in spreading awareness and empathy for the challenges faced by LGBTQ students. The Trevor Project also allows LGBTQ youth who may be struggling with mental health or thoughts of suicide to speak with trained specialists via phone, text, or instant messaging service. In June 2020, the organization released a guide for supporting Black LGBTQ youth in crisis.

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity. Kent State University is a 2013-2019 INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award winner and a 2016-2017 Diversity Champion.
Founded in Manhattan, Kansas, and affectionately known as “The Little Apple,” Kansas State University has always provided access for all. Through our commitment to our Principles of Community and the many support services available, K-State, in partnership with its encompassing municipalities, has earned numerous top rankings for being a supportive community for our LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff.

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- Five-star Premiere Campus designation by Campus Pride Index.
- Dedicated LGBTQ+ Faculty-Staff Alliance Group advocating for students.
- Multiple LGBTQ+ student organizations enriching campus culture.
- Mental health care access through the LGBTQ Excellence Fund.
- 2018 recipient of the Sports Diversity Award from Compete Magazine.

Faculty, students, staff and the community share a collective responsibility of nurturing a welcoming environment that promotes equity, respect and social justice. At K-State you are encouraged to openly express yourself, are valued for your perspective and are encouraged to become the best version of you in a diverse and changing world.

Come see for yourself.

k-state.edu/lgbt
Student Q&A: The Effects of COVID-19 and Campus Closure
By Mariah Stewart

Though the coronavirus pandemic upended life as usual for billions worldwide, college students — especially those living away from home — were especially affected by the upheaval. Millions of students across the U.S. and Canada evacuated campuses throughout the month of March, with many returning home to live with parents and family members. Adjusting to the “new normal” of stay-at-home orders, online classes, and separation from one’s campus community was difficult for many, but those who are underrepresented and underserved faced special challenges. Students with disabilities faced the difficulties of remote learning without the support and accommodations normally available on campus. Many LGBTQ students reported having to hide their sexual or gender identities from family members, facing judgment and disapproval, and experiencing isolation upon returning home.

For Rudra Maharaj, an undergraduate at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, Canada, having to leave campus came with plenty of challenges. Maharaj, who is non-binary, suffers from a physical disability that affects note-taking and requires breaks during class. Maharaj shared some of their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic with INSIGHT.

What is your disability? I have osteoarthritis in my knees, and I have an unknown disability in my hands that causes joint pain, deformities in my fingers, and weight-bearing issues.

How had your experience with school been with your disability prior to the pandemic? Fairly awful, because there is a lack of accessibility legislation where I live, along with a lack of visibility of disability issues in general in Canada, particularly in British Columbia. I’ve often had to educate my professors about my disability and how to include me in the classroom and how to make their classrooms more accessible to me. I’ve also had a significant amount of issues with different aspects of my university such as the sustainability department and the disability office.

How has the COVID-19 crisis affected you? How has the transition to online classes been? The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected me as well as my future. I was planning on getting an internship over the summer, but this pandemic has caused many of those positions to be terminated. This is unfortunate for me in particular since I was planning to work in order to save money to move out and start transitioning once I finished university.

I am unable to be out as nonbinary and as queer right now because my parents are incredibly transphobic and homophobic, so it would genuinely put my life into jeopardy if I were to come out right now. I’ve also been unable to receive any sort of medical care for my disabilities because the clinics that I go to are now closed.

The transition to online classes has been difficult because my accommodations have basically been thrown out the window. My main accommodations are a note taker and up to two breaks during classes if I need to. I’ve been unable to receive any notes for my classes since my school went fully online. While some of my classes have been shorter because they are online (mainly via BlackBoard) I have not been able to take breaks as I usually do because of the expectation that I remain logged in as long as the class is running.

Have instructors been accommodating? Have you made your disability aware to your instructors? My professors have been accommodating if I’ve brought up an issue with them, but this is mainly with professors with whom I’ve had a good working relationship. I have made my instructors aware of my disability because it’s very visible, as I can’t exactly hide my cane. There’s also very few visibly disabled students in my department and I’ve frequently had to educate my professors about my disability and how to include me in the classroom. It’s often on me to educate my professors because otherwise the barriers in the classroom would not come down an inch for me.

What does the higher education community need to know about students with disabilities during the pandemic and in general? The higher education community needs to acknowledge that disabled students are getting left behind during this pandemic. Many of us are struggling with getting medical care and treatment during this time and the ways we need to be accommodated for online classes are different compared to an in-person class.

There also needs to be more acknowledgement that not everyone’s home situation is good and that the closing of university campuses means that a lot of the resources that were previously available to us are gone now with nothing to replace them.

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Clemson University has been ranked among the top public universities in the nation for the past 12 years, according to U.S. News & World Report. The University promotes a diverse campus environment and innovative programs to foster inclusive excellence in education, business and employment.

- The Clemson University Men of Color National Summit works to close the opportunity gap for African American and Hispanic males. clemson.edu/menofcolor

- Tiger Alliance is a program that mentors and prepares high school men of color and other underrepresented young men for college entrance and success. clemson.edu/inclusion_summit/tiger-alliance.html

- The Call Me MISTER® program increases the pool of available teachers from broader, more diverse backgrounds. clemson.edu/education/callmemister

- The Emerging Scholars program helps establish a college-going culture among students in school districts along the state's I-95 corridor. clemson.edu/academics/programs/emerging-scholars

- The Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center supports and advocates for all Clemson students' needs while providing diverse and experiential learning opportunities. clemson.edu/centers-institutes/gantt

- The Charles H. Houston Center for the Study of the Black Experience in Education conducts research and assesses programs that impact the educational experiences of African Americans. clemson.edu/houston

- The Clemson Career Workshop summer program supports college readiness of high-achieving students from diverse populations. clemson.edu/centers-institutes/houston/clemsoncareerworkshop

- Creative Inquiry combines engaged learning and undergraduate research experiences that are unique to Clemson University. clemson.edu/centers-institutes/watt/creative-inquiry

- PEER (Programs for Educational Enrichment and Retention) provides collaborative experiences for underrepresented students in science and engineering. clemson.edu/cecas/departments/peer-wise

Creating a framework for excellence that incorporates diversity at its core while linking the quality of the educational experience.

clemson.edu/inclusion
Apprenticeships Help Students Earn College Degrees Without Debt

By Ginger O’Donnell

The issue of college affordability permeates national news and has been a prominent talking point during the 2020 Democratic primaries. The issue has become even more pressing amid the economic downturn resulting from COVID-19. However, a potential solution to the problem of unmanageable student debt exists — albeit one that has received much less airtime.

The apprenticeship model, widely used in countries like Switzerland and Germany, allows students to receive on-the-job training and to take college courses that build their skills while earning a paycheck.

Apprenticeships are made possible through partnerships between higher education institutions and employers and outside organizations that help these two groups develop customized programs. Registered apprenticeships — those filed with state or federal governments — are required to pay participants. Employers also typically pay for apprentices to take relevant courses or even complete entire degree programs at partner institutions.

“Apprenticeship is not an alternative to higher education. It’s an alternative way through higher education,” says Brent Parton, deputy director of the Center on Education and Skills with the Education Policy program at New America, a public policy think tank.

The apprenticeship model addresses educational inequities in several ways. For one, it offers participants “a debt-free pathway” to future careers. This component alone makes apprenticeships the most viable educational strategy for the many students who have financial and family responsibilities, according to Parton.

“We have to see apprenticeship as an education strategy that better fits the needs of today’s working learners — students who are first generation or who really have a lot of pressures on them to persist to get to college,” Parton explains.

The apprenticeship model can also increase student engagement with course content, as apprentices take classes that relate directly to what they are doing on the job and to their future career goals. Approximately 50 percent of today’s students are already “working learners,” Parton adds, but they’re often in jobs that are disconnected from what they are studying in school. The apprenticeship model, however, builds a direct connection between field work and coursework.

Many employers find they have to train entry-level workers with college degrees anyway, he notes, so it makes sense for them to connect with students prior to graduation.

New America’s Partnership to Advance Youth Apprenticeship (PAYA) assists employers and higher education institutions in building these programs.

Youth apprenticeships are designed for high school students. They provide opportunities for teenagers to take college courses, gain job experience, and complete associate or bachelor’s degree programs paid for by a business in their area of study.

Apprenticeship 502

One such program, Apprenticeship 502, offers professional training and college credit in a range of career fields to high school students in Louisville, Kentucky.

Bipartisan Support for the Apprenticeship Model

There has been a steady increase in bipartisan efforts in Congress to invest in apprenticeship programs. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor received $90 million in the first-ever congressional appropriation targeted specifically at apprenticeship expansion, an amount that has climbed steadily to $175 million in 2020.

These funds are awarded to states and organizations to expand existing programs, introduce the apprenticeship model to a wider range of industries, and diversify the apprenticeship workforce.

President Donald Trump and former President Barack Obama have also supported the expansion of apprenticeships.

The Obama administration, for example, hosted a first-ever White House Summit on American Apprenticeships in 2014. They also awarded $100 million to increase programs in high-growth fields.

In 2017, Trump created the Task Force on Apprenticeship Expansion to promote apprenticeships in new sectors. One outcome of this group was the promotion of a concept known as Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAPs), which provide high-quality education and training for participants. New America, however, later issued a report saying the legal definition of an IRAP is unclear, as is guidance on how to build one.
**Wolfe urges colleges and universities that want to develop apprenticeship programs by partnering with local employers to “be willing to admit what you don’t know, be flexible and willing to change your models, and identify community-based organizations to work with.”**

During their freshman year, students get to try out tech education classes in multiple areas of study. In their sophomore year, the students embark on a sequence of courses within the area of their choice.

Options include white-collar industries like healthcare, information technology, accounting, and graphic design, in addition to the blue-collar careers traditionally associated with apprenticeships, such as welding and plumbing.

“If you can think of a [career] pathway, we have it in one of our schools,” says Brandy Scott, Instructional Lead in Family and Consumer Science, who leads the program with Joe Simon, Instructional Lead in Career Pathways.

While in high school, Apprenticeship 502 participants earn between nine and 15 hours of dual college credit; some even complete associate degrees. Upon graduation, many employers take these students on as paid apprentices and help them continue their education, according to Scott.

The impact of such opportunities on low-income students in particular can be profound. For one young man, Ibrahim Magano, who is the sole provider for his family, an apprenticeship in information technology at KFC Corporation “changed his whole world,” Scott says. Magano is currently a high school junior; during the coronavirus pandemic, he has been able to fulfill his apprenticeship duties from home while continuing to earn dual credit.

“Now he knows he has a job, he’s got a future, and he’s got a means to help support his family,” Scott says.

**Early Care and Education Pathways to Success**

Another program supported by PAYA is Early Care and Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS). Founded in May 2019 in Oakland, California, ECEPTS facilitates youth apprenticeships — which are designed for high school students — as well as unique apprenticeship programs for older workers.

Unlike many PAYA grant recipients, all ECEPTS programs focus on developing skilled workers in just one sector: early childcare education (ECE).

California’s ECE workforce consists almost exclusively of women, most of whom are people of color, as well as large numbers of immigrants, first-generation college students, and working mothers, according to Randi Wolfe, PhD, executive director of ECEPTS. They tend to be significantly underpaid, and recent changes to federal regulations mean many must meet new academic requirements in order to keep their jobs.

ECEPTS’s goal is to improve competencies as well as working conditions for ECE providers while also addressing a shortage of these workers in California. Its flagship program for those who are older helps Head Start employees earn everything from workplace credentials to four-year degrees. Additional programs give licensed home daycare workers specialized training in areas like small business administration and help unemployed parents become professional community-based home visitors.

ECEPTS works closely with colleges to meet this workforce’s unique needs. Accommodations include offering classes at community-based sites that are more accessible for participants than traveling to a college campus. During evening classes, ECEPTS provides experienced childcare workers to babysit for participants’ children.

The organization’s two youth apprenticeship programs offer high school students the opportunity to earn a California Associate Teacher Permit or continue on to an associate degree in ECE. The latter opportunity includes on-the-job training in special education, human services, and public health.

Academic support for ECEPTS participants features coaching services and assigned tutors as well as help with accessing technology.

Wolfe urges colleges and universities that want to develop apprenticeship programs by partnering with local employers to “be willing to admit what you don’t know, be flexible and willing to change your models, and identify community-based organizations to work with.”

PAYA offers similar advice. The organization intentionally offers small grants to support pilot programs that can be scaled up if proven successful.

“We’ve learned that it pays to start small, to learn and then grow,” Parton says.

“These are complex programs, but really powerful in terms of outcomes.”

Ginger O’Donnell is a contributing writer for *INSIGHT Into Diversity.*
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Black Faculty and Staff Association

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Adams School of Dentistry Dental and Oral Health Community Scholars

Marquette University Brunch and Bubbly Crew
Introducing *INSIGHT Into Diversity*’s First Annual Inspiring Affinity Group Award

At *INSIGHT Into Diversity*, we know that cultivating a sense of belonging and a welcoming environment for employees is critical to creating an inclusive campus community. Anyone seeking a career at an institution of higher education benefits from campus organizations that offer employees opportunities for social and professional networking, peer mentoring, and more. These organizations are typically referred to as employee resource groups (ERGs) or affinity groups.

The inaugural *INSIGHT Into Diversity* Inspiring Affinity Group Award recognizes 38 member groups that have made a significant impact on their members, campuses, and communities.

**Why recognize affinity groups?**

ERGs are considered by diversity and inclusion professionals to be a best practice and an imperative for institutions that believe a diverse and inclusive campus is key to their success.

These groups can also have a tremendous impact on recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, staff, and administrators. People with similar backgrounds, academic and personal interests, and especially those from underrepresented groups often find these organizations can have a great deal of influence on their workplace experience.

The concept of workplace affinity groups originated with the racial tensions and workplace segregation of the civil rights era, according to the Boston College Center for Work and Family. The first documented ERG, the National Black Employee Caucus, was founded at Xerox in 1970. This group and the many others created during the post-civil rights era were intended to provide employees of the same race with social networking opportunities and a safe space to discuss their shared challenges and experiences.

**Today, 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have at least one employee affinity group.**

ERGs have expanded from being based solely on racial identity to include groups whose members share a variety of sociocultural identities and professional backgrounds — from LGBTQ veterans to working mothers in STEM, and many more.

Regardless of the structure and membership of these groups, however, their core purpose remains the same: to create communities of peers and mentors who can support one another socially and professionally.

In addition to the positive career and personal outcomes for employees, many employers consider ERGs as adding significant value to their organization through talent development and retention. In many corporations, affinity groups serve as consultants and decisionmakers regarding everything from product development to community relations.

Moreover, they provide a collective voice when it comes to addressing workplace and campus leadership regarding common concerns. In recent weeks, for instance, many ERGs have demanded that their employers commit to addressing systemic racism in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the ensuing civil unrest in the U.S. and abroad.

Many members say that these groups are integral to their career success and satisfaction. Research shows that the popularity of ERGs has only grown over the last decade at companies that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Furthermore, research also shows that younger workers are more interested in joining ERGs than their predecessors, with some experts predicting that affinity groups provide the values and support needed to engage and retain millennial and Gen Z employees. Their increase in popularity also aligns with the increasingly diverse demographics of the U.S. workforce as the country advances toward becoming a majority-minority nation.

For new employees, these organizations can especially be an asset. They provide senior and peer mentors who assist with the onboarding process, which is crucial according to multiple studies that show the first 60 to 90 days of employment are a critical time for building community and a trajectory for success. In relatively siloed workplace environments such as college campuses, ERGSs help new faculty and staff create connections across disciplines that wouldn’t otherwise be possible. They also provide formal and informal mentors, training opportunities, and other guidance for junior employees to advance through the often complex and competitive system of higher education careers.

As colleges and universities move forward through the unprecedented difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest due to systemic racism and police brutality, knowing how to listen and respond to the needs of diverse employees is more imperative than ever. The following have been selected as recipients of the inaugural *INSIGHT Into Diversity* Inspiring Affinity Group Award.

### The five most popular focus areas for employee affinity groups are the following:

1. **Women**
2. **Race/Ethnicity**
3. **LGBTQ**
4. **Disabilities**
5. **Age Range/Generational**

### The five business areas most affected by employee affinity groups are as follows:

1. **Recruitment and Retention**
2. **Community Outreach**
3. **Professional Development**
4. **Human Resources Policy**
5. **Marketing to Employees**

Sources: **BoldBusiness.com; CTR Factor, Inc**
Adelphi University
Faculty of Color Network
The Faculty of Color Network was established by Adelphi University’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion as a retention program to support the university’s significant increase in the number of faculty members who are ethnically and racially underrepresented. The group is designed to bring new, underrepresented faculty members fully into the academic life of the university while addressing their professional, social, and emotional needs. Perhaps most important, the network provides new faculty members with access to role models who can serve as mentors, talk about leadership, give honest and direct feedback, and encourage research and publication.

Azusa Pacific University Black Faculty and Staff and Administrators Association
The mission of BFSA is to be a visible and viable agency dedicated to promoting and enhancing identity, sense of community, professional welfare, and development among Black employees. Among other efforts, the association focuses on developing meaningful engagement with Black students and strategically placing Black faculty and staff on influential campus committees. It is the inaugural ethnic affinity group at Azusa Pacific University.

California State University, Fullerton
Undocumented and Ally Faculty and Staff Association (UAFSA)
Founded in spring 2019, UAFSA is the first employee organization of its kind in the California State University system. Its purpose is to support faculty and staff who are undocumented or members of mixed-status families and their allies. Future goals include developing emergency funding for faculty and staff to aid in immigration status support and to support changes in university policies and procedures that can hinder the success of undocumented employees and students.

Chabot College
Chicano Latino Education Association (CLEA)
CLEA has supported Chicano Latino students, faculty, and staff for more than 30 years. Its advocacy efforts include helping the university secure federal funding as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. In addition, the association awards more than $10,000 in scholarships to Latinx students annually.

Colgate University
Colgate Women’s Leadership Forum (WoLF)
With approximately 200 members, WoLF has a significant reach and impact on the personal and professional growth of women at Colgate University. The forum’s mission is to provide an opportunity for women to empower each other by sharing their interests, ambitions, and talents both on- and off-campus. Its bi-monthly events have included book discussions, Ted Talks, self-defense seminars, storytelling sessions, and much more.

Indiana University School of Medicine
Preventing Imposters Club (PIC)
PIC’s mission is to break the silence on Imposter Phenomenon for women in medicine. The program’s novel approach combines group mentorship for medical residents and faculty with monthly sessions focused on reframing their perceptions about their accomplishments as their careers move forward.

Grand Valley State University
Positive Black Women
The Positive Black Women affinity group began as informal lunch meetings between African American women employees on campus in 1994. Today, it consists of multiple annual programs for connecting and honoring Black women at the school as well as a scholarship endowment that has awarded more than $25,000 to Black female students.

Harper College
Diverse Relationships Engaged in Affirming Multiculturalism (DREAM)
DREAM’s mentoring program for newly hired underrepresented employees includes an orientation event, professional development trainings, and an end of year celebration. The program has had more than 100 participants over the course of 10 years.

Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
African/Black Affinity Group and LGBTQ+ Affinity Group
Both of these unique groups provide an atmosphere that fosters growth and development for members and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. Each organization assists in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented employees as well as provides opportunities for community engagement and outreach.
The Medical University of South Carolina joins the LGBTQ+ communities across the nation in celebrating the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. At times like these, it is imperative that we uphold our values and demonstrate sensitivity and respect as shared community members.

We celebrate Pride Month and reflect upon and remember the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan that ignited a movement founded on the shoulders of LGBTQ+ people of color who have always been leaders in the crusade.

INCLUSION TO INNOVATION SUMMIT 2020

Learn more or register for this virtual event!
education.musc.edu/diversitysummit
iChange Collaborative  
Race Conscious White Educators Resource Group  
Race Conscious White Educators Resource Group is a consortium of White, anti-racist educators from a variety of schools who meet online to support each other in becoming more race-conscious, educating other white colleagues and students, and supporting colleagues and students of color in their schools. Group members are intentional about self-education and self-exploration and explore topics such as the meaning of Whiteness.

Kansas State University  
Indigenous Faculty and Staff Alliance (IFSA)  
IFSA is a mixture of Indigenous faculty, staff, students, and allies who foster growth and promote greater visibility of Native American people, nations, and perspectives on campus, in the state, and beyond through incorporating Indigenous knowledges and methodologies into both the academy and campus life. In addition to weekly meetings, the group hosts annual events such as the Indigenous Peoples Day Conference.

Lawrence University  
Low Income, First-Generation Talent Unpacking Privilege (LIFT-UP)  
LIFT-UP has approximately 42 members of faculty and staff who meet often to address the experiences and issues of employees who were low-income or first-generation students. The group also works to dismantle silence and stereotypes surrounding these issues so that students and others find strong, positive models of resilience and success. LIFT-UP enables members of this affinity to have their voices heard in conversations around policy decisions.

Marquette University  
Brunch and Bubbly Crew  
Once a month, women of color lead, laugh, and fully love themselves while drinking and enjoying brunch with fellow members. There are White women in the group who are allies and great listeners. Together, this group has explored the diverse city of Milwaukee through its multicultural restaurants and food.

Maryville University  
Mocha T.E.A.  
Mocha T.E.A. strives to promote professional development opportunities around various topics affecting women of color in higher education settings. Through programmatic efforts, the committee provides spaces for students, faculty, and staff to gain holistic support, mentoring, and identity development at a predominantly White institution. Mocha T.E.A. also serves as a recruitment and retention initiative for students, faculty, and staff.

New York University  
Mothers of Color  
This affinity group stems from the New York University Working Mothers organization, which is under the Administrative Management Council. The group was formed after identifying a need for mothers of color to gather and connect based on their unique challenges in the workplace. The purpose of the group is to provide a space and resources for members to thrive professionally and be in community with each other.

Oklahoma State University  
Women’s Faculty Council (WFC)  
For more than 40 years, the WFC has worked to improve the status of women at the university through advocacy and educational programming, award funding, research, and career support. The group serves in an advisory capacity to the administration and university community and provides space for those on campus interested in raising awareness and developing action to share resources and spark movement.
Purdue University Faculty of Color Network
Since the fall of 2014, this network has been an important addition to the Black Caucus of Faculty and Staff and the Latinx Faculty and Staff Association by focusing specifically on social support and professional development for faculty members. The group typically meets socially at least once a month, which reduces the sense of isolation for faculty of color and facilitates informal networking. The network also enhances research productivity, fosters professional development, and invigorates culturally rich events.

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Alliance for Women in Medicine and Science (AWIMS)
AWIMS provides a supportive forum for honest discussion and positive change in the realms of gender equity, career advancement, work-life balance, community service, and to champion professional development and promotion of women in medicine and science. The group has monthly journal clubs and book clubs where they discuss topics important to women in medicine and science. In addition, members have published a book chapter on the story of AWIMS and have an ongoing IRB-approved protocol on assessing academic culture related to women’s success.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA)
The BFSA was organized to create better opportunities, ensure equity and inclusion, provide an engaging network, and create a welcoming environment for Black faculty and staff. Its mission is to provide support while advancing the interests and promoting the welfare of this community on campus. BFSA has increased equity of African American representation on key university search committees and raised more than $4,000 at its first gala to go toward student scholarships.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Adams School of Dentistry Dental and Oral (DOC) Health Community Scholars (DOC Scholars)
DOC Scholars was formed in 2018 as a community of dental students and faculty to help inculcate the practice of civility, community, and cultural competence in the dental school environment. It hosts regular meetings where members hear from an expert and then break out in small groups while sharing a meal. Each session features content experts — from across the university, state, and nation — and invigorates the way that members communicate, teach, learn, and navigate the intersection of culturally sensitive topics and healthcare delivery.

The Mount Sinai Health System Caregivers Employee Resource Group
The Caregivers ERG is one of 11 identified ERGs at the Mount Sinai Health System and currently caters to approximately 40 members. The group serves as a resource to employees by supporting a healthy work-life balance. It identifies and addresses issues related to the responsibilities of being a caregiver and serves as the voice of working caregivers. This ERG takes into consideration the dual role of employees within a health system, many of whom are caregivers in both their professional roles as clinicians and in their personal lives, caring for family members and significant others.

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine Dr. J.H. Bias Black Affinity Group
The Dr. J.H. Bias Black Affinity Group is an all-inclusive organization formed to support Black students during their veterinary studies and to honor the legacy of Dr. Bias, the veterinary school’s first African American male graduate. This group is open to all interested students, faculty, and staff of any background within the College of Veterinary Medicine.
It aims to strengthen and empower the Black community through hosting social events that involve networking, mentorship, studying, and more.

**The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)**
**Pride Faculty & Staff Association (Pride FSA)**
Pride FSA is an inclusive professional organization that serves as a resource and advocacy group for LGBTQ employees and their families. It offers special sessions and socials throughout the year for the campus community and has partnered with the university’s equivalent LGBTQ student organization. Most recently, Pride FSA was the driving force behind an addition to the university’s branding guidelines for the UTSA mascot. “Pride Rowdy” is now a permanent part of the branding guidelines and can be used for LGBTQ-related events and initiatives, making UTSA the first institution in the University of Texas System to permanently adopt this type of branding for a mascot.

**Union College**
**Women of Color at Union (WOC@Union)**
WOC@Union is a two-tier group. One tier provides a safe space for employees to discuss issues that challenge them as women of color. The other tier is a mentorship program between the employees and student members. WOC@Union brings members together for social gatherings and purposeful conversations and serves as a networking space.

**University of Arizona College of Medicine**
**Faculty Diversity Advisory Committee (FDAC)**
FDAC strives to support the university’s tradition of education, training, and employment of a diverse faculty and staff. One of its overarching goals is to increase diversity through promoting all groups traditionally underrepresented in medicine, placing a specific focus on Latino/Hispanic and Native American groups. One of FDAC’s most recent accomplishments was the creation of a hiring toolkit, which identifies best practices for promoting diversity and inclusion during the faculty search and hiring process.

**University of California, Davis Health (UCDH)**
**African American Faculty and Staff Association (AAFSA)**
AAFSA helps raise awareness of career development opportunities and resources available to African American employees. For more than 25 years, AAFSA has been part of the planning for strategic initiatives to ensure the voices of African Americans at UCDH have a place at the table where decisions are being made.

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Grand Valley State University is proud to be recognized for the important work our Positive Black Women group has done since its founding in 1995. Our continued commitment to supporting and empowering our employees is one reason Grand Valley has become a preferred employer in Michigan. That’s the Laker Effect.

**Other GVSU Employee Resource Groups (Year Formed)**
- Women’s Commission (1996)
- International Faculty & Friends (2007)
- LGBT Faculty & Staff Association (2007)
- Native American Advisory Council (2009)
- Latino/a Faculty & Staff Association (2013)
- Asian Faculty & Staff Association (2014)
- Black Faculty & Staff Association (2014)

Find current employment info and opportunities at gvsu.edu/hro
Mount Sinai Celebrates Our Caregivers Employee Resource Group for their 2020 Inspiring Affinity Group Award

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion recognizes and appreciates the outstanding efforts of all those who join together in our Caregivers Employee Resource Group. We thank you for providing a safe space to support our dedicated caregivers and for your achievements throughout the years.

Mount Sinai Office for Diversity and Inclusion
University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) 
UCSF Chicanx/Latinx Campus Association (CLCA) 
CLCA creates a growing, volunteer coalition of Chicanx/Latinx faculty and staff who are passionate about identifying and addressing gaps in advancement opportunities. The group works with others across campus and the university system to improve the overall climate by promoting opportunities for networking, professional development, and advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at UCSF.

University of Dayton 
Dayton Athletics Women Leaders 
Members of the Dayton Athletics Women Leaders meet to participate in social gatherings such as yoga, meditation, and wine tasting several times per month. The group provides faculty, staff, administrators, and students with development and networking opportunities alongside university athletics staff and coaches.

University of Hartford 
International Scholarship Education and Engagement (I-SEE) Affinity Group 
Since its inception in 2019, the I-SEE Group has worked diligently to create valuable networking and information-sharing opportunities to bring people with diverse backgrounds and interests together so as to contribute to a more connected and inclusive campus. The group has hosted panel discussions on topics such as cultural conflict and international education and engagement. It also celebrates international events and holidays both on campus and in the community.

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University of Lynchburg
Lynchburg Q
Lynchburg Q’s mission is to provide a safe space for LGBTQ faculty and staff to celebrate their identities while simultaneously finding ways to uplift LGBTQ students on campus. Providing this safe space to gather together and support each other from across campus has helped to decrease silos and to increase belonging. The group hosts off-campus social gatherings and engages with opportunities to influence campus infrastructure and programs.

University of Maryland School of Nursing
‘Booked for Lunch’ Diversified Thinkers Book Club
Since its first meeting in May 2017, the club has read 15 books that explore important topics such as systemic racism, politics, history, mental health, and more. It currently has more than 100 members who meet every other month for dialogue, awareness, and collaborative thinking through review of a variety of diverse reading and media materials. Lunch is provided and sponsored by local women and underrepresented vendors from West Baltimore, as is the reading material. The group includes faculty, staff, and students from across the entire University of Maryland, Baltimore campus.

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Women in Academic Medicine (WIAM)
For 11 years, the WIAM group has supported the career development of women faculty by promoting clinical, scientific, and teaching excellence. There are nearly 665 women faculty members involved with the group who help increase representation and participation of women on campus. WIAM hosts leadership skills training seminars, offers strategies to enhance recruitment and retention, and encourages advocacy and strategic alliances for the benefit of women in medicine.

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Asian American Pacific Islander Desi Faculty & Staff Association (AAPID FSA)
AAPID FSA strives to support university employees by sustaining a visible and dynamic AAPID community on campus, engaging in professional networking and leadership development, and promoting the overall retention and advancement of this community. With a current membership of 384 faculty and staff members, AAPID FSA hosts regular social events and an annual town hall meeting that serves as a cornerstone for this community.

University of Montana
American Indian Support and Development Council (AISDC)
Since the mid-1990s, AISDC has been an informal group of faculty, staff, and students — including non-Native Americans — who meet monthly to share information about programs that serve Native American interests and provide a support network for members. The council serves as a place for Indigenous staff and faculty to come for support and to connect their students with other campus programs. It brings programs together to work collaboratively and to break outside the silos.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln
First Generation Nebraska
The First Generation Nebraska (FGN) initiative helps first-generation students connect with faculty and staff advocates in order to establish a sense of community on campus and to provide students with the support they need to persist to graduation. FGN offers opportunities for social engagement between first-generation faculty, staff, and students. Knowing there is a community of advocates on campus who “were first, but not alone” is a powerful motivator for students. Over 300 faculty and staff are involved.
Turkey Day/Turkey HeartbyGreen Plastics

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University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Carolina Black Caucus
Since 1974, the Carolina Black Caucus (CBC) consistently fosters, supports, and celebrates the achievement of Black employees at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The CBC maintains an equitable campus community by engaging, empowering, and advocating for the retention of Black faculty, staff, and graduate students through monthly inclusive events and experiences — such as a Juneteenth celebration — that create opportunities for its more than 200 members to feel the love and support of their peers.

University of North Carolina (UNC) at Greensboro Alianza
Alianza, which is the Spanish word for alliance, is UNC Greensboro’s grassroots organization for Latinx and Hispanic faculty, staff, and students. Since its inception in 2013, Alianza has created initiatives that improve campus activities related to Hispanic/Latinx cultures and communities such as UNCG CHANCE, which stands for Campamento Hispano Abriendo Nuestro Camino a la Educación (UNCG Hispanic Camp Opening Our Way to Education). Through the camp, high school students are given the opportunity to simulate the college experience through mock classes and leadership activities. The association supports additional student success through its Latino Initiative organization, which provides a strategic framework to ensure Latinx student access, retention, and graduation and to support Latinx-focused scholarship.

University of Wyoming (UW) Asian and Pacific Islander E-Net
In fall 2019, after receiving campus climate survey feedback from diverse faculty and staff and realizing the need for employee resource groups, UW launched the Asian American and Pacific Islander Employee Network (E-Net), which promotes a sense of identity, builds community, and encourages professional development for Asian American and Pacific Islanders across the institution. E-Nets are open to all faculty and staff and have a goal of meeting three times per semester to bring together employees with various years of experience and teaching backgrounds while providing a sense of belonging. Many employees share their stories at meetings and discover they have worked at the same institution for years yet have never had a chance to meet others in a social and community setting.

Congratulations to the UMSON Booked for Lunch Book Club on its recognition from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine!
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Our Viewfinder® Campus Climate Surveys are the most comprehensive and affordable tools for creating real change through the use of reliable data on all aspects of campus diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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Innovative Corporate ERGs Foster Inclusion and Contribute to the Bottom Line  By Holly Mendelson

The concept of employee resource groups (ERGs) was first developed in the 1960s in response to the civil rights movement and racial segregation in the workplace, with the first official ERG being founded at Xerox in 1970. ERGs, also known as affinity groups, have since become a best practice for supporting underrepresented employees and promoting multiculturalism in the corporate world and beyond.

Typically led by employees, ERGs help foster a more inclusive workplace and can offer tremendous value by identifying challenges and developing solutions, providing feedback on new concepts, and helping employers learn more about their customers. The following are some examples of innovative corporate ERGs that have succeeded in each of these areas and more.

**Accenture**

**U.S. Disability ERG**

Accenture is a multinational professional services company specializing in technology, strategy and consulting, and more across 40 industries. The Accenture U.S. Disability ERG drives the firm’s inclusion and diversity efforts by empowering and educating individuals with visible and invisible disabilities, as well as their caregivers, colleagues, and associates.

The ERG has launched a number of specialized initiatives and programs, including Walk in My Shoes, a monthly “lunch and learn” series where Accenture employees at all levels share insights and personal stories of colleagues or family members who have disabilities. Walk in My Shoes has increased awareness on disability inclusion, autism, autoimmune diseases, mental health, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, how to care for others and oneself, and more.

The ERG also created the Mental Health Allies program. Allies are Accenture employees who volunteer to serve as non-judgmental ambassadors and provide support and resources for colleagues on mental health. They are not psychologists or therapists but are trained in mental health topics and often have experienced a mental health condition themselves.

Another initiative is the Autism Empowerment & Support Group (AE&SG), which offers insights, resources, and support for parents and caretakers of children with autism. Members speak monthly about new innovations in therapies and engage in the “Pulling My Hair Out” series, where they can vent, share stories, and get support from one another.

**Boston Scientific**

**South Asians in Leadership**

Boston Scientific is an international medical technology manufacturer. Its South Asians in Leadership (SAIL) employee network improves access to healthcare for underprivileged communities in India, where the company has a strong base of operations. In 2016, the Massachusetts chapter of SAIL worked with VT Seva, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization, to plan for and assist in the launch of two health camps in the communities surrounding the company’s operations in India. These camps allow those living in impoverished areas to gain access to basic health services previously unavailable to them.

**BRIDGE**

Boston Scientific’s African American employee resource group, BRIDGE, provides members with opportunities to enhance their skills and expand their experiences by participating in a wide range of professional development activities, including taking on leadership roles, engaging in
recruiting activities, and volunteering in local communities. Its annual signature event, The Global BRIDGE Leadership Conference, gives members high visibility and opportunities for interacting with and learning from company leaders. It also engages Human Resources (HR) leaders in the conference to provide members guidance in areas such as managing a career, leveraging resources, and taking advantage of available mentoring programs.

**Capgemini Millennial Innovation Council**

Capgemini is a multinational corporation specializing in consulting, technology services, and digital transformation. Its Millennial Innovation Council (MIC) is the firm’s first ERG to operate with a startup-inspired structure. Roles are clearly established, but members take on evolving responsibilities as the enterprise grows. To incentivize engagement, the ERG offers a member loyalty program that rewards participation and leadership with items such as company swag or luncheons with senior executives.

Over the last two years, MIC has used hackathons to ideate and crowdsource innovative ideas. These events bring together Capgemini employees, partners, clients, students, and business professionals from different companies, industries, and regions of the world to generate ideas and solutions around a problem or opportunity.

The hackathons have had a significant impact on Capgemini’s business. As a direct result of the events, the firm leveraged six global alliance partnerships, sold two global client hackathons, actively engaged with a wide range of industries and sectors, and built stronger relationships with clients, who participate as mentors, judges, hackers, and more. The hackathons also provide an additional revenue source when generated ideas are developed into full-scale applications.

MIC’s unique organizational structure provides employees numerous routes to develop leadership skills and experience. Hackathons have included areas such as social good, “Millennial Disrupt,” and global open banking.

**GuideWell Employee Community Groups**

GuideWell is a not-for-profit mutual holding company that is the parent to a family of forward-thinking companies focused on transforming healthcare. In 2016, GuideWell rolled out an initiative to focus on three core principles of their culture — Be Well, Work Well, Guide Well — in an effort to create a healthy, inclusive, respectful, and collaborative workplace. In 2017, some employees shared personal stories of racism in their cities, sparking GuideWell’s leadership to recognize the need for a safe space where employees could impart perspectives and talk openly. A series of discussion forums were planned to facilitate these courageous conversations around sensitive topics.

All GuideWell Communities lead the planning, organizing, and convening of the sessions, which are held about once per quarter. GuideWell’s executives, including the CEO, are very involved and serve as sponsors, facilitators, and panelists; however, the Communities themselves gather input from employees regarding topics, run the discussions, and act as panelists.

The first forum was co-led by GuideWell’s interfaith and South Asian Communities around religion and safety, opening with a message from the CEO, and followed by a panel of senior leaders and Community members facilitating the conversation and answering questions from attendees. Employee feedback was positive, reflecting that people felt heard and that their concerns were validated.

The Communities have since convened additional forums on politics and civility, gender identity and expression, stigma of mental health, lessons from the Holocaust, caregiving, opioid recovery, and more. Sessions are recorded and posted on the company intranet.

**RWJBarnabas Health PROUD**

RWJBarnabas Health is the largest, most comprehensive health system in New Jersey and the state’s largest private employer. The PROUD (Promoting Respect, Outreach, Understanding and Dignity) business resource group chapters at RWJ University Hospital New Brunswick and RWJ University Hospital Somerset have been in operation five years, but have already had a significant impact on the business of the health system and scope of services and support available to the LGBTQ+ community in the state of New Jersey.

PROUD advocated for and helped launch the Babs Siperstein PROUD Center, the first and only program of its kind in New Jersey to offer specialized primary healthcare services for the LGBTQ+ community in a safe, supportive environment. This business resource group understood firsthand that the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals were not being met in the state, or at RWJBarnabas Health, and that a transgender patient, in particular, faced higher levels of discrimination and disparities in care.

The PROUD chapters were also instrumental in launching a Transgender Family Support Group at the Somerset campus; establishing PROUDLY Me!, a Transgender Support Group at the New Brunswick campus focused on learning, sharing resources, and peer support for transgender and non-binary conforming community members; and creating an LGBTQ+Community Advisory Panel that partners with the community and PROUD members to provide input to the hospital and identify needed resources.

Holly Mendelson is the co-publisher of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
THE BATTLE OVER
TITLE IX

Colleges and Universities Contend with Divisive Sexual Misconduct Protocols
When it comes to preparing for the fall 2020 semester, America's colleges and universities face some extreme challenges.

In addition to the uncertainty and financial strain caused by a global pandemic, the nation’s institutions of higher education were told on May 6 that they would have to restructure their processes for handling campus sexual misconduct. While not wholly unexpected, this mandate from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights gave colleges only 90 days to complete a drastic shift in their approach to reporting and investigating allegations of sexual harassment and assault.

The announcement of these controversial changes came just days before the May 25 murder of George Floyd and the ensuing push for institutions — including colleges and universities — to take swift, significant action against systemic racism.

For campus diversity and Title IX personnel, the trick is “not to drop one to balance out the other,” says Richard Baker, JD, PhD, president of the American Association for Access, Equity, and Diversity (AAAED).

Baker, who is also the executive director for Institutional Equity, EEO/AA and Title IX coordinator for Rice University, says that while he appreciates the difficulties that diversity, equity, and inclusion professionals currently face, this historic moment is an opportunity that colleges can’t afford to ignore. Campuses must determine how to provide supportive measures for students and employees in the face of severe racial strife while also crafting new sexual misconduct policies that are as equitable as possible under the law.

“[Both issues] include safety. They both include equal opportunity. They both include investments and reaffirming to the campus community that all are welcome,” Baker says. And while most campus administrators would certainly prefer more time to create these policies — and to be able to do so with colleagues and stakeholders in person, rather than during a time of social distancing — the Education Department's August 14 deadline appears to be definite, he says.

The changes to Title IX have been a significant point of contention between advocates for survivors of sexual assault and those who say the previous guidelines violated due process rights for the accused. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other organizations have filed suit to stop the new rules from going forward. Nearly 20 states issued a joint lawsuit that accuses the Education Department of reversing “decades of effort to end the corrosive effects of sexual harassment on equal access to education.” Included among their objections is the department’s requirement for colleges and universities to “completely overhaul” their proceedings for addressing sexual misconduct allegations within the span of three months — and during a global pandemic.

The ACLU did not respond to requests for comment.

The trick is figuring out how to responsibly comply with and enforce Title IX guidelines that veer drastically from the systems currently in place. Among the department's many changes is a provision for schools to hold live hearings in cases of alleged sexual abuse and to provide students who have been accused of misconduct with an adviser to guide them through proceedings. One of the main considerations for institutions is determining the costs of these changes, especially when it comes to affording personnel and training expenses. Providing students with advisers who are effective at cross-examination, for instance, could mean hiring attorneys or paying for current university staff to be trained in this area, says Baker. Holding in-person hearings will require choosing between an outside consultant — such as a retired judge — who can perform as a hearing officer or a panel of volunteers who will require training.

“Even if a complaint is filed and the person doesn’t want to go into the hearing process but rather the restorative justice process or some mediation, there could be a cost associated with that,” Baker says. “So cost is quite a big factor that universities and colleges are going to have to consider while they’re coming up with a process that they feel is fair, equitable, and provides the parties options outside of the formal adjudication of the complaint.”

Colleges are taking steps to ensure a broad range of stakeholders provide input on how these decisions are made. However, coordinating teams of faculty, staff, and student representatives while quarantining or social distancing can be difficult, says Baker. Schools also face the challenge of ensuring that the process is as transparent and inclusive as possible and that the entire campus community can access up-to-date, accurate information regarding any rule changes. Administrators must also allot time for the community to provide feedback before finalizing the policies by the approaching deadline, which creates added pressure, he says.

Cynthia P. Garrett, JD, says these changes are nevertheless long overdue. As co-president of the nonprofit Families Advocating for Campus Equality (FACE), which represents students falsely accused of sexual

By Mariah Bohanon
For more than 100 years, Stetson has proudly recruited and educated lawyers and leaders who have paved the way for equality in the community and profession.

In 2020, U.S. News ranked Stetson Law No. 1 in Trial Advocacy and No. 3 in Legal Writing, both essential tools for advocating for inclusion and social change in the local and global communities.

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Cynthia P. Garrett

misconduct, she says the Title IX guidelines regarding campus sexual abuse that were put in place by the Obama administration violated students’ rights to due process.

“When I first heard about [the process], I thought ‘You can’t do that. This is America,’” says Garrett. Under Obama-era guidelines, students accused of sexual harassment or assault were largely kept in the dark regarding the charges against them, and schools were under pressure to find defendants guilty when the evidence was uncertain, she says.

Garrett maintains that the process was traumatizing for the young men — and some women — that FACE represents and that many ended up dropping out of school even after being cleared of charges. The organization pushed for Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to consider these consequences when her department was developing the new Title IX requirements.

Survivors rights advocates, however, say the newly mandated investigation process will be traumatic for individuals who have already endured sexual harassment or assault and will likely deter many survivors from coming forward. The American Psychological Association (APA) was just one of many organizations to speak out against the Education Department’s new requirements, stating that it is concerned “provisions in the final rule could lead to underreporting of sexual misconduct, revictimization and/or traumatization of all parties involved.” According to the APA, a major concern is that the new rules create “an adversarial system of resolving complaints similar to legal proceedings, with an option of a formal hearing or mediation.”

Requiring survivors to attend live hearings and be cross-examined by a representative of the accused is an especially controversial aspect of the updated guidelines. Garrett says this is one of many sections of the new law that is misunderstood by opponents or misrepresented by the media, as it grants accusers the option to participate in hearings via video rather than directly face their alleged perpetrators.

Regardless, opponents maintain that the Education Department’s mandate will be detrimental in terms of creating safe, inclusive college campuses. The National Women’s Law Center, which filed suit against the department on June 10, issued a statement claiming that the new rule is “yet another attempt to deliberately silence survivors based on the sexist myth that they are liars. At a time when students are also feeling the impact of the health pandemic and police violence on their education, when will Betsy DeVos choose to support them instead of encouraging schools to turn against them?”

Yet the new policy’s approaching deadline means that colleges must now focus on how, rather than if, they should adhere to its requirements, Baker says.

The difficulty for a college administration is determining not so much the specifics of what the Education Department is requiring of them — the preamble to the document explaining the new requirements is more than 2,000 pages long — so much as determining how they can meet those requirements based on their institution’s unique needs and resources. A community college with 100,000 students is likely going to have more complaints and far different capabilities for investigating and holding hearings than a residential university of 3,000 students, Baker explains.

“Each institution has to decide for itself, based on what they can afford, what process they can provide,” he says.

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Demonstrated Diversity and Inclusion

Currently, about 10 percent of our students represent racial minority groups. Ten percent are first generation college students. About one-third are lower income (SES), distance-traveled students.

The school’s senior administrative group is 65% female, 35% male with 6% African American and 3% Hispanic/Latino.
LSAT Moves Online Due to COVID-19

While some higher education institutions have made the decision to waive ACT and SAT test requirements for the incoming class of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many law schools required applicants to take their traditional entrance exam, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), remotely.

In March, the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) announced that applicants could take the test online through a system known as LSAT-Flex. Nearly 10,000 students completed the virtual exam between May 18 and 22, according to the LSAC.

“While some test-takers experienced technical difficulties with their computers, internet connection, or the proctoring process, 99% of test-takers who started the test successfully completed it,” the LSAC stated.

The council took steps to prevent cheating, including having remote proctors monitor test-takers via webcam and microphone. Video and audio feed of the exam was recorded and further reviewed by proctors and “artificial intelligence techniques,” according to the LSAC.

Some top-ranking law schools — including Georgetown, Northwestern, and Harvard — have already waived the LSAT as an admissions requirement due to criticisms that the exam does not accurately reflect an applicant's academic and professional capabilities and that the test may be biased against underrepresented applicants.

Although many law schools strongly encourage students to take the exam, some high-performing applicants can choose to opt out thanks to an American Bar Association (ABA) 2015 decision. “Applicants admitted must have scored at the 85th percentile nationally or above, on a standardized college or graduate admissions test, specifically the ACT, SAT, GRE, or GMAT, and must have ranked in the top 10 percent of their undergraduate class through six semesters of academic work, or achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above through six semesters of academic work,” the ABA states.

In recent years, the LSAC has made several other accommodations to the LSAT, such as allowing test-takers to see their exam scores before deciding whether to submit them as part of their law school application.

At a time when law school applications are low, partially due to speculation surrounding COVID-19, applicants are performing better on the test than in previous years, with the top scores up 7 percent from last year, the ABA says. It’s possible that law schools will see an uptick in late applications from people who planned to take the in-person LSAT in March and April, according to Law.com.
IU McKinney has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting and increasing awareness of diversity, justice, and inclusivity for LGBTQ students both within the walls of IU McKinney and the Indianapolis legal community. IU McKinney fosters an environment that allows LGBTQ students the opportunity learn, lead, educate, and advocate. IU McKinney’s commitment to the LGBTQ community has improved awareness of LGBTQ issues and, more importantly, created a stronger community for all students at McKinney. IU McKinney truly is one community with unlimited opportunity.”

--Warren Cangany, J.D. Student, President of Lambda Law Society

IU McKinney School of Law, Office of Diversity and Inclusion Outreach Programs:

- Creating Affirmative Spaces: Lunch and Learn Program
- McKinney Conversations: Discussion series for administration, faculty, staff and students
- Third Floor Thursdays: Coffee and conversations (online and virtual)

“The law school’s well-attended lunch-and-learn program on ‘Creating Affirmative Spaces’ was extremely helpful to understanding more about issues our members of the LGBTQ+ community face and providing practical advice for addressing them.”

- Professor Frank Sullivan, Jr., Professor of Practice, Indiana University Bicentennial Professor

“Creating spaces for students, faculty and staff of all identities to feel affirmed and supported on their quest for success is of primary importance to the IU McKinney School of Law.”

- Anthony Murdock, II, J.D. Student, Assistant for the Office of Diversity & Inclusion
Horace E. Anderson Jr., JD, was appointed dean of the Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University in December 2019. Anderson served as the school’s academic dean for seven years before becoming interim dean of the school of law in 2018. Under his leadership, Haub Law expanded its part-time JD program and was recognized as having the top environmental law program in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. Anderson first joined the school as a professor in 2004 after working in private practice and consulting. He specializes in intellectual property law, privacy and data protection, law and technology, and communications law. As the child of Jamaican immigrants, Anderson’s higher education career has included serving as an advocate for underrepresented students and mental health in the legal profession.

Verna L. Williams, JD, is the first African American to serve as dean of the University of Cincinnati College of Law, where she has taught since 2001. She is a co-founder of the UC Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice and a former co-director of UC’s Law and Women’s Studies program. Her other leadership roles include serving as vice president and director of Educational Opportunities for the National Women’s Law Center, where she was lead counsel for a U.S. Supreme Court case that established that educational institutions have an obligation to respond to complaints of student-to-student sexual harassment. Her research looks at the intersection of race, class, and gender in education law and policy.

Angela Onwuachi-Willig, JD, PhD, was appointed dean of the Boston University School of Law in 2018. She has served as a professor for the colleges of law at University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Davis, and the University of Iowa, where she was a finalist for the Iowa Supreme Court. She is a former president and chair of the Association of American Law Schools Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Law Teachers and Students and the founder of the Lutie A. Lytle Black Women Law Faculty Workshop. Her numerous honors include serving as William H. Neukom Fellows Research Chair in Diversity and Law at the American Bar Foundation and being named as one of the “Minority 40 under 40” lawyers to watch by the National Law Journal.

Eduardo M. Peñalver, JD, was named the Allan R. Tessler Dean and Professor of Law at Cornell Law School in 2014, making him the first Latino dean of an Ivy League law school. He previously served as a professor at Cornell Law, University of Chicago Law School, and Fordham University School of Law. Peñalver has also taught as a visiting professor for the colleges of law at Harvard University and Yale University. Having studied philosophy and theology as a Rhodes Scholar, he specializes in religion and law, as well as property law and land use. His other accomplishments include clerking for U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens.

L. Song Richardson, JD, is dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law. She has previously served as a public defender and worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., the National Immigration Law Center, and the Legal Aid Society’s Immigration Unit. Richardson, who is Black and Korean American, is a leading researcher on implicit bias and the law. Among her many accolades are the American Association of Law School’s Derrick Bell Award, which recognizes a faculty member’s extraordinary contributions to legal education through mentoring, teaching, and scholarship.

Vikram D. Amar, JD, is the dean and Iwan Foundation Professor of Law at the University of Illinois College of Law. Prior to assuming his current role in 2015, Amar served as senior associate dean for academic affairs at the University of California, Davis School of Law and taught at various law schools in the UC system. He was also the first person of South Asian descent to clerk at the U.S. Supreme Court. Amar is one of the nation’s leading experts on constitutional law, federal courts, and civil procedure and has written over 60 books and articles. Among his many achievements is serving as a consultant for the U.S. Justice Department, the Center for Civic Education, the ACLU of Southern California, and more.

In each issue, INSIGHT Into Diversity features diverse professionals in higher education. By Lenore Pearlstein
Cornell Law School Makes Innovative Website Accessible to All

By Lenore Pearlstein

The Cornell University Law School’s Legal Information Institute (LII) is a nonprofit that promotes open access to legal documents and research and is based on the belief that “everyone should be able to read and understand the laws that govern them,” according to its website.

Unlike paid and subscription-based research services that law firms typically employ, the LII offers these services for free to users worldwide. The institute publishes and creates materials designed to help all people comprehend the complexities of the legal system, and much of its work includes exploring new technologies that make it easier for those without a law degree to conduct research in this area.

The LII has long been an innovator in promoting public access. It was the first organization to provide online Supreme Court opinions 10 years before the court even had a website; it also offered the first distance-learning courses for the graduate study of law. Among the LII’s many other offerings are an online dictionary and encyclopedia containing over 6,000 legal definitions and internet resource listings for roughly 100 different areas of law.

Recently, LII staff realized that there was a lack of legal research websites available for people with disabilities. They set out to make their website accessible for everyone, including those who use screen readers due to vision impairments.

According to the 2018 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms by the National Association of Law Placement, it’s estimated that less than one percent of law firm partners and associates have a vision disability, which is defined as visual impairment not fixable by usual means such as glasses. A recent article in the American Bar Association Journal notes that because there is a pronounced lack of all aspects of diversity in the legal profession, ADA website compliance is typically not on firms’ radars.

However, as the reliance on technology continues to grow — along with online interactions between lawyers, employees, and clients — website compliance should be a diversity best practice in the legal profession.

While the ADA does not provide definitive rules for website compliance, it does have a set of general guidelines. Firms can also consider making their sites compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines from the nonprofit Web Accessibility Initiative in order to ensure they are accessible to all.

LII was founded in 1992 by co-directors Thomas R. Bruce and Peter W. Martin. It is funded by Cornell Law School, online sponsorship and advertising, projects with partner organizations, and donations from the public.

To learn more, visit law.cornell.edu.
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Source: American Bar Association
Mansfield Rule for Law Firms
Builds on the Rooney Rule

BY LENORE PEARLSTEIN

In 2002, a study regarding underrepresented NFL coaches found that Black head coaches outperformed their White peers by almost every measure. Yet only two of the 21 coaches hired in the previous two years were African American. This revelation about the league’s lack of diversity led to the NFL’s adopting the now-famous Rooney Rule, which requires that at least one diverse candidate from outside an organization be interviewed for every open leadership position. Enforcement of the rule includes fines and other punishments.

In recent years, the legal profession has established its own version of this policy. Diversity Lab, a self-described incubator for innovative ideas and solutions that increase diversity in the legal profession, created the Mansfield Rule in 2017 to address the field’s lack of diverse leadership. Named for Arabella Mansfield, the first woman to practice law in the U.S., the rule requires that firms commit to “considering at least 30% historically underrepresented lawyers — women, lawyers of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities — for a variety of roles, including equity partner promotions, senior lateral hires, client pitches, and leadership positions,” according to Diversity Lab.

Unlike the Rooney Rule, using the Mansfield Rule is voluntary and includes incentives for compliance. Twice each year, Diversity Lab audits firms that agree to comply with the policy; those that follow it and achieve its requirements receive Mansfield Certification.

In its first iteration in 2017, 65 law firms implemented the Mansfield Rule. In September 2019, Diversity Lab announced that 102 law firms had signed on to pilot the Mansfield Rule 3.0.

Results from implementing the policy are impressive. According to the company, outcomes for firms who have used the Mansfield Rule to broaden their pool of diverse candidates include the following:

• 65% promoted a higher percentage of diverse lawyers into the equity partnership.

• 53% reported a higher percentage of lawyers elected or appointed to management or executive committees.

• 57% reported a higher percentage of lawyers elected or appointed to managing partner roles.

• 92% reported a higher percentage of diverse lawyers participating in formal client pitches.
Law Schools Have Started a Criminal Justice Reform Movement

By Mariah Stewart

Above: Howard University School of Law professor and director of the Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center Justin Hansford, JD, pictured top right, and students participate in a recent Black Lives Matter protest. The center sued the city of Washington, D.C., for imposing a 7:00 PM public curfew that interfered with the right of protesters to peacefully assemble.
Criminal justice reform is one of the most pivotal and divisive issues in the U.S. today.

Mass incarceration, overworked public defenders, and a lack of rehabilitation programs are only a few of the many problems plaguing the nation’s criminal justice system. The racial disparities evident in this system, especially when it comes to police brutality, recently became a topic of global concern after the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man killed by Minneapolis police on May 25.

Law schools play a critical role in redressing such wrongs. They can positively intervene in America’s troubled criminal justice system by educating students on its flaws and inequities, as well as equipping students with the practical experience necessary to create real change.

Just as medical schools are the solution for health crises, law schools should be the go-to resource for criminal justice crises, says Justin Hansford, JD, a professor in the Howard University School of Law (HUSL) and the executive director of the school’s newly launched Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center (TMCRC). “The role [law schools] play should be an essential one,” Hansford says.

One way for law schools to accomplish this mission is by becoming an ally to students fighting for social justice. “There’s a demand for us to not just issue statements. At Howard’s law school, for example, the students demand for us to be social engineers. They want to know ‘What are you doing? How are you contributing?”’

In June, the TMCRC filed a lawsuit against Washington, D.C., for imposing a 7:00 PM public curfew during a period of Black Lives Matter protests, which interfered with students and protesters exercising their right to peacefully assemble. The center is also currently developing a white paper on policy solutions that address the current social justice movement surrounding Floyd’s death.

Hansford says law schools should use their legal clinics and centers to connect scholars and advocates who can work together to research problems and propose solutions.

“We have the ability to be a convener,” he says. “Law schools can be a point of convergence for lawyers and alumni to come together, meet, and strategize.”

One such resource is the Academy for Justice at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law (ASU Law). A national non-partisan academic alliance, the academy is founded on the belief that “knowledge is the most important tool we have for addressing the array of problems confronting the American criminal justice system,” according to its website. Among the organization’s achievements since its founding in 2016 is the publication of a four-volume report titled Reforming Criminal Justice, which was intended to influence policy reform.

Valena Beety, JD, the academy’s deputy director and a professor at ASU Law, has extensive experience working with legal scholars as well as students in taking concrete action to reduce prison sentences and other measures.

“There really is a decarceration movement within academia,” she says, explaining that law schools are truly trying to educate students about how to decrease the number of people in prisons, find alternatives to criminal prosecutions, and devise other solutions to mitigate crime and violence.

Before coming to ASU, Beety directed West Virginia’s Innocence Project at the West Virginia University College of Law. The program, which was part of the Obama administration’s 2014 Clemency Project, allowed students to assist with clemency petitions for nonviolent drug offenders serving what Beety describes as “horrendous sentences.” The project also gave students the opportunity to work on legislation and to assist with investigating wrongful convictions, reforming eyewitness identification protocols, recording police interrogations, and more.

In 2015, the American Bar Association issued a historic mandate requiring students at accredited law schools to take six credit hours of experiential learning. This has made a huge difference in allowing students to assist and work within diverse communities, Beety says. Legal
clinics are a “prime space” for law schools to address criminal justice reform because students can help people who might otherwise not get representation, she explains.

At many institutions, students who work in misdemeanor representation clinics generally do so during their third year of law school. This work involves taking on court cases that public defenders and court-appointed attorneys likely do not have sufficient time to address.

“With law students, they really are able to spend a lot of time on those cases, and frankly, they often find that a person shouldn’t be going to prison or that a person shouldn’t be pleading guilty,” Beety says. “That’s a really powerful way that law schools can contribute to and can affect criminal justice reform.”

Kami Chavis, JD, is a professor, associate provost for academic initiatives, and director of the criminal justice program at Wake Forest University School of Law. She says that faculty should begin educating students about the need for criminal justice reform from the beginning of their law school experience.

Colleges of law “play a critical role in criminal justice reform and the most important part is educating first-year students on the realities of criminal law,” Chavis says.

Schools must give students accurate information about the disparities evident in the criminal justice system, have them think critically about underlying rules of the system, and train them to be effective advocates and “ethical actors,” she says.

“That’s what law schools are supposed to do,” Chavis explains. “Law schools are on the front lines. We are change, and we are definitely in charge of the next generation.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
In the fight to protect civil rights in America, Drexel University's Kline School of Law is deeply committed to defending constitutional values and the rule of law.

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Let's make a difference together.
Researchers have known for decades that the legal profession is riddled with mental health crises and substance abuse issues. The problem has even been described as a national “depression epidemic” by multiple sources, and, for many attorneys, it begins in law school.

Nearly all law students — 96 percent — experience “significant stress” as compared to 70 percent of medical students and 43 percent of graduate students, according to the Dave Nee Foundation, an organization dedicated to eliminating the stigma associated with depression. Upon entering law school, students have a psychological profile similar to that of the general public; by graduation, 20 to 40 percent will experience a psychological dysfunction, according to the foundation.

William Martinez is a third-year student at Seton Hall University School of Law. Being Cuban and a first-generation student, Martinez felt intimidated and under intense pressure to succeed from the very first day of law school, he says.

“I sat in the class and looked around and I was like, ‘Wow, I am one of a few of us. I stick out,’” says Martinez. “A lot of my peers have parents who are lawyers and judges, so imposter syndrome is huge and something I’ve experienced a lot.”

Today, Martinez serves as vice president of his school’s chapter of the Student Bar Association and has worked hard to end the stigma surrounding emotional and mental wellbeing in law school by advocating for psychological support services and petitioning for questions regarding an applicant’s mental health to be removed from the New Jersey Bar Exam.

Students and advocates across the U.S. have begun pushing their own states to omit bar exam questions that ask applicants if they have ever experienced mental illness or sought psychological treatment. In January, the New York State Bar Association announced that it was removing these types of questions from its exam.

“A lot of people do not want to answer ‘yes’ on the application, because they do not want to seek help,” Martinez says, adding that he doesn’t believe seeking treatment for one’s mental health is a hindrance to one’s ability to practice law.

Certain practices unique to or prevalent in law schools have been identified as contributing to a stressful, and at times hostile, educational environment. For instance, the controversial “cold calling” technique — in which professors randomly call on students during large seminar classes to publicly answer often-complex questions about course content — has been identified as contributing to intense anxiety.

For Mariah Black Bird, a third-year student at Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, the cold-calling technique was traumatizing.

“You do get nightmares about it,” says Black Bird, who is from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. “When you come into law school, there’s this mindset that you’re competing against everybody else.

In 2016, the American Bar Association and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation published a study that revealed that 28 percent of practicing lawyers suffer from depression, 19 percent have symptoms of anxiety, and 21 percent struggle with alcohol abuse.

And it’s just horrible. It’s so easy to get caught up in that and lose yourself.”

After experiencing an intensely stressful first semester, Black Bird decided to prioritize her mental health and well-being. She has since incorporated a healthy diet, exercise routine, and regular journaling and has focused on maintaining an appropriate balance between her rigorous academic responsibilities and her personal life.

Being intentional about managing stress levels and knowing when to take a break is necessary for students in such a high-pressure environment, she says, adding that she’s seen fellow students who don’t prioritize their mental health “completely break down.”

Jennifer Oliva, JD, an associate professor at Seton Hall University School of Law, says law faculty can help by being more mindful of the fact that students may be under extreme stress. One of her colleagues recently sent a teaching self-assessment to fellow professors, encouraging them to analyze their classroom strategies so that they can provide a more supportive and healthy educational experience.

Law schools tend to be especially inattentive to the unique mental health needs of marginalized students, Oliva says. Current events have compounded these needs in multiple ways. Low-income students who must rely on public transportation to get to class, for example, feel extremely vulnerable to being exposed to COVID-19, she explains.

For students of color, the recent social unrest regarding systemic racism and police brutality can
Pre-Law Pipeline Program

The First Step Toward A Legal Career

The award-winning UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Program is designed to increase the diversity of law school applicants. It serves undergraduate students and working professionals who are first-generation, low income, or members of groups underrepresented in the legal profession. The Pipeline Program provides law school preparatory resources such as LSAT preparation, introductory law school classes, internships, and professional development sessions.

To learn more about the University of Houston Law Center Pre-Law Pipeline Program, visit law.uh.edu/pipeline.
Once the site of intense racial unrest, the University of Missouri (MU) campus took on a different air on June 3 when university system President Mun Choi, athletics staff, and campus police joined more than 60 members of the football team in a march to protest the recent murder of George Floyd.

Head football coach Eliah Drinkwitz organized the march from the MU campus to the local county courthouse. Once there, the team knelt for eight minutes and 46 seconds — the approximate length of time that Floyd was suffocated by a Minneapolis police officer.

The protest had a unique ending, with 62 of the players then registering to vote at the courthouse. Drinkwitz later tweeted that demanding justice for Floyd was about human rights, not politics, and that the registration of 62 new voters was indicative that “[c]hange will happen.”

The university gained national attention in 2015-2016 when students held multiple campus protests — including a boycott by the football team — after a string of racist incidents, resulting in the ouster of university leaders and a significant reduction in Black student enrollment.
Sharing Our Stories is Important During Physical Distancing and Protests

By Tina Chapman DaCosta, Director of RIT Diversity Theater

“We all are trying to cope with the times and being able to hear others stories is even more important than ever.” That statement from a Rochester Institute of Technology Diversity Theater participant is an important one. During these times of COVID-19 mitigations and local, national and international protests, individuals and communities are facing unprecedented challenges. Sharing our stories and seeing them played back is one way RIT Diversity Theater is creating opportunities for processing and healing.

“It is harder to work for healing when it’s all in your head. In addition, there’s a tremendous connection between people in the audience who see that story and have a similar experience to share… It’s theater for social justice and understanding.” - Heidi Winters Vogel, co-founder Inside Out

RIT Diversity Theater is a college-wide program, for RIT’s 23,000 faculty, staff and students from across 100 nations. The program presents interactive learning workshops using film and theatre to advance equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives. Playback Theatre (PBT) is an interactive workshop form used by Diversity Theater. An international improvisational theatre form where participants share personal stories around a common theme that are enacted on the spot by PBT actors and musicians, PBT has its roots in psychodrama, social justice, culture change, and diversity & inclusion education. Diversity Theater created a virtual version of their PBT workshops and has partnered with RIT administrative and academic units, such as the College of Science Inclusive Excellence program, to address faculty, staff and student needs during these unprecedented times. Some of the virtual PBT workshops have been, “Community Building During Social Distancing” and “Community Understanding and Healing: Stories of Discrimination and Progress.”

In virtual PBT, participants experience the workshops from their respective locations using the Zoom video conferencing service, and the PBT actors and musicians present the workshops from their individual locations. American Sign Language and interpreting services are also used. Zoom features such as Speaker and Gallery Views are used to create a “stage” and an intimate online community. For example, when a participant volunteers as a “Teller” and shares their story with the “Conductor” or facilitator, only the Teller and Conductor are seen on the screen creating an intimate interview. Once the Conductor says, “let’s watch,” the common PBT phrase that introduces the enactment, only the PBT actors are shown as they playback the Teller’s story using various acting and musical PBT forms. Sometimes, it’s one actor on the screen at a time delivering what may look like a short monologue, other times it’s many actors shown in a mosaic or Gallery View presenting multiple story elements or perspectives. Healing can occur for the Teller by experiencing their story played back and appreciated by the other workshop participants. Community building occurs as other participants experience their colleague’s story. There is usually a “red-thread of commonality,” a reminder of similar experiences that inspires others. Playback Theatre creates a safe space for sharing our stories.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DIVERSITY THEATER
www.rit.edu/diversity

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www.playbacktheatre.org

LEARN MORE ABOUT INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE HERE
www.rit.edu/castle/programs/hhmi/overview
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**To provide a diverse body of students with the opportunity to obtain an exceptional legal education.**

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