Pandemic Has Surprising Effects on College Admissions

As top-ranked colleges eliminated entrance exams due to COVID-19, their popularity — and diversity — increased.
Committed to Equity and Inclusion.
Focused on Student Success.

JOIN THE UNF COMMUNITY
AN EQUAL ACCESS / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY

Uniquely UNF
UNIVERSITY of NORTH FLORIDA.

WWW.UNFJOBS.ORG
AN EQUAL ACCESS / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY
IN THIS ISSUE
June 2021

Special Report: Schools of Social and Behavioral Sciences

18 Advancing LGBTQ Rights and Celebrating Triumphs
   By INSIGHT Staff

22 Indian Students in the U.S. Grapple with COVID-19 Crisis from Half a World Away
   By Mariah Stewart and Erik Cliburn

32: COVER STORY
Pandemic Has Surprising Effects on Diversity in Elite College Admissions
By Lisa O’Malley and Mariah Bohanon
On the cover: Students on the campus of Cornell University

44 In Brief: Schools of Social and Behavioral Sciences

46 WashU Creates Diverse Sociology Department from the Ground Up
   By Lisa O’Malley

48 Unique Social and Behavioral Research Centers Investigate Society’s Most Pressing Issues
   By INSIGHT Staff

38 The Equity Debate in College Sports Goes Beyond Financial Compensation
   By Erik Cliburn
The University of Kentucky is proud to rank among the top 25 campuses in the nation for LGBTQ* inclusion and safety.

UK received five out of five stars for overall campus climate from Campus Pride Index, a national benchmarking tool for colleges and universities which self-assesses LGBTQ*-friendly policies, programs and practices, conducted by and for LGBTQ* experts in the field of higher education.

“We are incredibly proud of the five-star rating and very aware of the host of campus partners and student leaders who contributed to us receiving this distinction by putting diversity and inclusivity as a major focus in all that they do each day,” said Assistant Vice President for Student Success Lance Poston.

“We continue our work to make sure that anyone who engages with our campus can do so as their authentic selves and find a true sense of belonging,” Poston said. “This recognition sends a strong signal to prospective students and employees that UK is a place that values everyone and the unique contributions they make to our special place.”

View UK’s Campus Pride Index report card at go.uky.edu/campuspride.

Learn more about UK’s Office of LGBTQ* Resources at www.uky.edu/lgbtq/.
 ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

In Brief

Diversity and Inclusion News Roundup

New Directions

Leaders on the Move

Monthly Observance

A Pandemic Can’t Stop Pride: Celebrating LGBTQ Pride Month Safely During COVID-19

Diversity Champion Spotlight

Virginia Commonwealth University Innovates from Within to Fulfill Goal of “Diversity Driving Excellence”

By Mariah Bohanon

Closing INSIGHT

Drive-Through Commencement Ceremonies Offer Hope for 2021 Grads
New Analysis Finds College Students Could Accumulate $37,200 in Loans

Personal finance company NerdWallet recently released an analysis showing that students currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree could graduate with approximately $37,200 in debt.

An undergraduate enrolled in a four-year public university will borrow an estimated $7,321 to help pay for tuition and other expenses in the 2021-2022 academic year, according to the analysis. Since the average bachelor’s degree takes five years to complete, NerdWallet estimates that students will accumulate nearly $37,200 in debt throughout the course of their undergraduate career if the rate remains the same. A steady rate, however, is unlikely. NerdWallet predicts that students will begin borrowing an additional $350 annually by 2024-2025.

The analysis tracks the annual amount borrowed by undergraduates starting with the 2000-2001 academic year. At that time, the average student took out approximately $3,212 in loans annually, totaling an estimated $16,060 for their entire undergraduate career.

“What college will look like in the fall and beyond is uncertain, but one thing is clear: Students will still need to take out loans to pay for higher education,” says Anna Helhoski, NerdWallet’s student loan expert.

Federal student loan interest rates are expected to fall below 3 percent for the first time in 15 years, but this drop will likely have only a marginal effect on monthly payments, according to Helhoski. She suggests that students consider their potential earnings after graduation and how much debt they can reasonably manage before determining whether they need to borrow to complete a degree and, if so, how much.

READ, WATCH, LISTEN

READ: When Colleges Close: Leading in a Time of Crisis
Declining enrollment and a series of mounting financial hurdles have forced many small colleges to permanently shutter their doors in recent years. In When Colleges Close, authors Mary L. Churchill and David J. Chard, the former leaders of Wheelock College, explain how they began preparing early for a future in which their institution of 1,100 students would no longer be financially viable. Through intense teamwork and strategic planning, the college’s administration was able to merge with Boston University in 2018. While the historic Wheelock is no longer a stand-alone institution, its story reveals how the leaders of small colleges can — and likely must — learn to adapt to the changing higher education landscape or cease to exist entirely. Published by Princeton University Press

WATCH: Homeroom
Homeroom is a documentary that captures a microcosm of the American high school in 2020. An official Sundance Film Festival selection, it follows the diverse senior class of Oakland High School in California as they navigate classes and adolescence during a global pandemic. At the same time, the students confront growing racial tensions and community efforts to eliminate their school district’s police department. Emmy Award-winning director and cinematographer Peter Nicks incorporates the students’ perspectives through self-recorded social media videos and testimonies, offering viewers a glimpse into the struggles and hopes of those coming of age in a revolutionary year. Streaming on Hulu

LISTEN: Throughline: James Baldwin’s Shadow
Eddie Glaude, chair of the Center for African American Studies at Princeton University, guides listeners on a 45-minute journey exploring the impact and philosophy of writer James Baldwin. Glaude shares excerpts from some of Baldwin’s most influential essays and dissects his societal criticisms to show how they can help us understand contemporary race relations. The episode begins with Baldwin’s account of seeing a Black man violently arrested by police officers in front of a crowd of onlookers at a train station, thus preparing listeners for a somber reflection on how history repeats itself. Available at npr.org/podcasts®
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

Consistently rated as a top university for supporting the LGBTQ+ community, including regularly being named “Best of the Best” by Campus Pride Index, UofL and its LGBT Center are committed to building a welcoming, LGBTQ+ friendly environment where students, faculty and staff are encouraged to be themselves and discover their path to success.

Take Shades, a student organization devoted to empowering LGBTQ+ students of color by providing support and public advocacy for members and allies in a world where race and sexuality intersect. Shades is just one of several groups and programs at the LGBT Center committed to celebrating and supporting Cardinal Family members of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. By striving for inclusion, UofL is creating a dynamic Community of Care.

louisville.edu/lgbt
**IN BRIEF**

**Idaho Governor Passes Bill Banning Critical Race Theory in Public Schools, Universities**

On April 28, Idaho Gov. Brad Little (R) signed a bill banning critical race theory (CRT) from being taught in public schools, including higher education institutions.

The bill, HB 377, prohibits educators from teaching that any race, sex, religion, ethnicity, or national origin is superior or inferior to others. The legislation also bans any lessons that promote the idea that individuals are “inherently responsible for actions committed in the past by other members of the same sex, race, ethnicity, religion, color, or national origin.”

Republican State Sen. Carl Crabtree, who co-sponsored the bill, stated it was a “preventative measure” and “does not intend to prohibit discussion in an open and free way.”

However, critics say that banning CRT in schools could have a disastrous effect on teachers who want to address controversial topics in the classroom.

The ACLU of Idaho called the bill a “fundamental misunderstanding” of CRT and stated that its unclear wording only works to censor discourse about racism and sexism in public schools.

First developed in legal academies in the 1970s, CRT examines the role of race and racism in society. The term has since spread to other areas of academia and rose to further prominence following *The New York Times*’ release of the 1619 Project, which explores the history of slavery in the U.S.

While many educators have been eager to adopt race theory and similar philosophies in their curricula, conservative lawmakers have been pushing back — including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. In late April, McConnell wrote a letter to Education Secretary Miguel Cardona condemning the 1619 Project and other teachings related to race theory as “divisive nonsense.”

Idaho joins Utah, Arkansas, and Tennessee in passing bills limiting CRT and diversity training in public schools and institutions. Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, and several other states also have similar bills in the works. ✠

---

**The University of Tulsa** is a small, private institution in a culturally vibrant city located in a state that is home to 39 federally recognized Native American tribes. At the heart of our mission and values is a promise to educate people of diverse backgrounds and identities in an environment of equity, inclusion and respect.

[utulsa.edu/diversity](http://utulsa.edu/diversity)

TU is an EEO/AA institution, including Disability/Veteran. TU
A 2020 HEED Award recipient and a four-time Diversity Champion, Oklahoma State University continues to build on its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Over the past decade, OSU has seen a 90% increase in enrollment of students of color, a 99% increase in this population earning an OSU bachelor’s degree, and a nearly 90% increase in faculty of color.

OSU is one of eight institutions to have earned the award nine consecutive years — and the only one in Oklahoma — to receive the HEED Award nine years running.

These distinctions recognize progress, even as we recognize the call to do more.

We are proud of this university, the mission it represents, and all that’s to come. At OSU, we cultivate Bright Minds for a Bright Future and the Brightest World for All!

That’s the Cowboy way.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>New Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEW MEXICO</td>
<td>Teresa Maria Linda Scholz, PhD, will serve as the inaugural vice president for equity, inclusion, and diversity at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Scholz was associate vice chancellor and chief diversity officer for the University of California, Santa Cruz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHIO</td>
<td>Amoaba Gooden, PhD, has been appointed vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Kent State University. Gooden was an associate professor and the chair of the university’s department of Pan-African Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLORADO</td>
<td>Lolita Buckner Inniss, JD, PhD, is the first African American to be named dean of the University of Colorado Law School in Boulder. Inniss was senior associate dean for academic affairs and a professor at the Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIANA</td>
<td>Pamela Whitten, PhD, is the first woman to be appointed president of Indiana University Bloomington. Whitten was president of Kennesaw State University in Georgia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOWA</td>
<td>Barbara Wilson, PhD, has been selected as president of the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Wilson previously served as the executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Illinois System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY</td>
<td>Antonio D. Tillis, PhD, has been selected as chancellor of Rutgers University-Camden. Tillis previously served as interim president of the University of Houston-Downtown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>Juliet M. Brodie, JD, has been appointed the Peter E. Haas Faculty Director of Stanford University’s Haas Center for Public Service. Brodie was director of the Stanford Community Law Clinic and a professor at Stanford Law School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASSACHUSETTS</td>
<td>Victor Clay has been selected as chief of the Harvard University Police Department in Cambridge. Clay previously served as chief of campus security and parking services at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHIGAN</td>
<td>Damon Brown will serve as the inaugural chief diversity officer of Alma College. Brown will continue in his current position as vice president for student affairs at the institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINNESOTA</td>
<td>Karen Diver will serve as the inaugural senior adviser to the president for Native American Affairs at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Diver previously served as the business development director for the Native American Advancement Initiative at the University of Arizona in Tucson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WISCONSIN</td>
<td>Seandra Mitchell has been appointed vice president for student affairs and campus inclusion at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Mitchell was an adviser for the National Society of Black Engineers at the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY</td>
<td>Vojislava Pophristic, PhD, has been appointed dean of Rowan University’s College of Science and Mathematics in Glassboro. Pophristic was interim dean and a professor of chemistry at the Misher College of Arts and Sciences at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHIGAN</td>
<td>DeVon Wilson will serve as the inaugural associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Letters and Science. Wilson previously served as the assistant dean, diversity coordinator, and director for the college’s Center for Academic Excellence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to publish your news. Please email editor@insightintodiversity.com.
Virginia Tech Graduate School’s Diversity Scholars are selected based on their work with inclusion and diversity efforts at the university. A Diversity Scholar’s role is to promote dialogue, provide advocacy, and implement change to support a more diverse and inclusive experience for students, faculty, staff, and administrators across the university.

VAISHAKHI SURESH
College of Engineering
Industrial and Systems Engineering
Graduate Alumna
Conversations and Cookies: Supporting Women in STEM and Male-Dominated Industries

JOHNNY WOODS JR.
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Higher Education
Doctoral Candidate
African Graduate International Students Experiences: A Panel Discussion

VENICE ADAMS
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Higher Education
Doctoral Candidate
“I Ask” for Consent Campaign

We all have a role. Claim yours... vt.edu
While the COVID-19 pandemic caused numerous academic, emotional, and financial challenges for college students, a study released in May by the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law shows that the pandemic was particularly detrimental for LGBTQ students. Conducted in collaboration with the LGBTQ scholarship organization the Point Foundation, the study drew from data collected in January and February 2021 from a nationally representative sample of Americans ages 18 to 40. According to the results, one-third of LGBTQ respondents attending college reported losing student housing due to the pandemic. Furthermore, LGBTQ students were more than twice as likely to have faced housing insecurities, which researchers say is likely due to many not living at home with family before the pandemic. Nearly half of those who did return home when campuses shut down said they were not out to their families about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The study also showed COVID-19’s disproportionate educational impact on LGBTQ students. Nearly 65 percent of transgender students said their ability to pursue their studies was impeded by the pandemic, compared to 39 percent of all other students. Additionally, 31 percent of transgender students — versus 5 percent of cisgender students — reported they did not have reliable internet access or a quiet space to study for their remote classes. LGBTQ students were also twice as likely to have lost financial aid. Nearly 15 percent reported losing an internship, fellowship, or job compared with only 6 percent of other students.

“The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted people of color and LGBTQ people,” stated the study’s author, Kathryn O’Neill, a policy analyst at the Williams Institute. “It could have a long-term effect on the ability of marginalized populations to pursue higher education.”

Seventeen professional psychological associations recently issued a joint letter to the U.S. Department of Education demanding greater federal protections for LGBTQ students at federally funded religious colleges and universities. The letter calls on the Education Department to investigate allegations of harm detailed in a March 2021 class action lawsuit by 33 current and former LGBTQ students at 25 various Christian colleges. The suit, filed by the nonprofit Religious Exemption Accountability Project, claims the plaintiffs faced a wide range of discrimination and harassment, including forced conversion therapy and denial of on-campus housing.

“The letter is aimed at colleges that say being LGBTQ is a sin and that take a non-affirming theological position on [sexual] identities and relational statuses,” Joshua Wolff, a clinical psychologist and professor at Adler University told Religion News Service. Although the letter acknowledges the importance of religious freedom and expression, the groups denounce the use of religious beliefs to justify prejudice and discrimination.

“Too many in the LGBTQ+ community are painfully aware of the ways in which they have been excluded from religious participation, condemned for their identities, and watched religion be used to oppose equity and civil rights for LGBTQ+ people all over the world – which have caused many harms to the community,” the statement reads.

All 17 organizations that signed the letter are divisions of the American Psychological Association; however, the association itself has not endorsed the statement. Organizations represented in the letter include the Society for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, and the Society for Pediatric Psychology.
At Ohio University, our vision for diversity and inclusion is to celebrate all members of our University community and to broaden our collective understanding by uplifting diverse identities, cultures, experiences and perspectives. We recognize that this requires a willingness to have hard conversations, to recognize and call out prejudice, to hear and respect vastly different points of view, and to do all this with humanity and grace.

The work of building a diverse and inclusive community is far more than a set of boxes to check or a series of events to attend. It happens in small steps and in big leaps, in private one-on-one conversations and in public demonstrations. To succeed we must be both relentlessly intentional and open to the spontaneous opportunities for positive change.

Recognizing our University’s commitment to being a leader in diversity and inclusion, we recently launched a new campaign that we are simply calling VISIBLE. VISIBLE is about shining a light on all of it – the good work, the hard truths, the differences we easily embrace and those that make us uncomfortable, the barriers, the opportunities, and most of all the people who are or strive to be a part of our Bobcat community.

LEARN MORE

ohio.edu/diversity
A Pandemic Can’t Stop Pride:
Celebrating LGBTQ Pride Month Safely During COVID-19
June 28, 2020, marked the 50th anniversary of New York City’s Pride March, the first official LGBTQ Pride celebration to be held in the U.S. Despite the importance of this anniversary, many cities and organizations were forced to cancel, postpone, or alter their 2020 Pride Month events due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, however, organizers across the country have devised unique ways for people to pay tribute to LGBTQ pioneers, enjoy community, and advocate for equal rights while reducing the chance of infection. Amid a year of social upheaval, including increasing attempts by state legislatures to restrict transgender rights in schools and athletics, LGBTQ people and their allies have many options for promoting equality in June and beyond.

**Ways to celebrate LGBTQ Pride in 2021:**

**Attend a virtual Pride Month event**
Some cities and organizations have opted to reschedule their annual Pride parades and traditions for later in the year, while others have designed June events that allow for social distancing. For those people who would like to stay home, there are a plethora of online options for participating from afar.

NYC Pride, the nonprofit organization that runs the city’s annual Pride traditions, is hosting a virtual rally on June 25 to honor victims of anti-LGBTQ violence and to mark the fifth anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando that took the lives of 49 innocent people. Attendees will learn how to advocate for Black Trans Lives and more. Indy Pride, which promotes LGBTQ equality in Indiana, will hold a virtual festival on June 12 that will include options for interactive education, celebration, and shopping as well as an online film festival. More information about these and other Pride events held by groups across the U.S. can be found at Eventbrite.com/online/pride.

**Decorate and display**
As anti-LGBTQ sentiment and violence continue to be prevalent in communities across the nation and the world, displaying LGBTQ pride and support can send a powerful message. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken recently overturned the Trump administration’s ban on Pride flags at U.S. embassies and consulates overseas. A growing number of corporations and nonprofits now exhibit their support of the LGBTQ community through advertising and merchandise. Similarly, many religious groups, government entities, and schools have heeded the call to issue statements in support of LGBTQ equality.

For LGBTQ individuals and allies, there are multiple options for publicly exhibiting pride and support. Individuals can display Pride flags, signage, and decorations at home and in the workplace. During the month of June, many clothing brands offer special Pride gear, often with a portion of their proceeds going to LGBTQ nonprofits. And of course, these and other LGBTQ associations sell clothing and merchandise for those who want to display solidarity while supporting their cause year-round.

**Advocate and volunteer**
Everyone has something to offer when it comes to fighting for LGBTQ equality. Local groups and associations require the dedication of hundreds of volunteers to successfully organize Pride events each year. National LGBTQ nonprofits such as GLAAD match individuals with volunteer opportunities that suit their abilities and interests, while organizations such as the Trevor Project train volunteers to directly support LGBTQ people in need by operating suicide hotlines and more. The Human Rights Campaign and many other advocacy groups empower individuals to campaign for LGBTQ protections. For those who are short on time, donating to LGBTQ organizations and supporting pro-LGBTQ legislation and policies are great options for making a difference. Visit glaad.org/resourceclist today to find diverse LGBTQ nonprofits in need of assistance.
SIUE Celebrates the LGBTQIA+ Community

SIUE is committed to creating an inclusive environment and welcoming community for LGBTQIA+ students, faculty and staff.

The SIUE Safe Zone encourages a safe environment that is welcoming to all students, staff, faculty and LGBTQIA+ community members.

SIUE’s Campus Pride Index is 4/5 stars
- Sexual Orientation Score: 4.5/5 stars
- Gender Identity/Expression Score: 4/5 stars
- LGBTQ Support and Institutional Commitment: 5/5 stars

siue.edu
It seemed obvious we would be facing a mental health tsunami

Rochester Institute of Technology: Keeping LGBTQ+ Students Connected

We all had to find ways to adjust during the COVID-19 pandemic and RIT’s Chris Hinesley didn’t miss a beat. He is the Assistant Director for Campus Life-The Q Center which is a safe space and resource center for LGBTQ+ students, faculty and staff.

When the pandemic forced the campus to close this past spring, Hinesley opened an avenue to keep students in the LGBTQ+ community connected. He created a virtual hangout and support space because he was concerned about their mental health. Hinesley says early data out of the University of Maryland Prevention Center, combined with individual student experiences were alarming.

“LGBTQ+ students reported increased rates of having to go back into the closet as a result of moving back in with parents, increased rates of hate speech and racial slurs, and of course, the isolation of being queer or trans was exacerbated by the lockdown. There were also new challenges tied to online learning, such as mismatches between name-in-use and name now visible on the screen or “in the system”, and added difficulty in building relationships with faculty or other students, which usually help during gender transition and the coming out process. It seemed obvious we would be facing a mental health tsunami.”

The new virtual weekly sessions replaced the formal, structured in-person support groups at the Q Center, co-led with RIT mental health counselors. Feedback from students was positive and the virtual sessions opened new possibilities to serve students who had never had access to Q Center sessions before.

Hinesley says the largest number of attendees came from RIT’s Dubai campus. He says for many, the online meetings were their very first opportunities to openly express their identities.

“Before we thought about “zoom bombers”, we posted our program link to social media and our students in Dubai saw it. They joined the support space even though it was late at night for them. It was just amazing to work with them and learn about the reasons that coming out is really not an option for them. It really taught us a lot about serving students who may never be on the main RIT campus but whom we can still support. This is something that we plan to carry forward after the pandemic is over.”

The RIT Q Center—“Creating Safe Spaces, Building Allies, Educating the RIT Community.”

To learn more about the RIT Q Center, visit: rit.edu/studentaffairs/qcenter/
ADVANCING LGBTQ RIGHTS AND CELEBRATING TRIUMPHS

By INSIGHT Staff

While the fight for LGBTQ rights is far from over, there have been many victories in ensuring protections and equal rights for this population in recent months. Despite the continued pushback against LGBTQ rights, especially the rights of transgender youth, the advancements of LGBTQ leaders, the growing support of allies, and the passage of equal rights legislation give hope for a better tomorrow. Included here are just a few of the advancements for LGBTQ equality that have occurred in recent months.
Federal Advancement of LGBTQ Rights

In his short tenure in office, President Joe Biden has taken several steps to advance LGBTQ rights. The first of these steps came when Biden overturned a former President Donald Trump policy prohibiting transgender individuals from serving in the military. In May, Biden reinstated an Obama-era policy that ensures LGBTQ people are protected against discrimination in the U.S. health care system. A month prior, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced it had withdrawn a Trump-era proposal intended to diminish the Equal Access Rule, which protects the rights of LGBTQ individuals in HUD-funded programs and housing. Also in April, the White House reversed a Trump administration policy that banned U.S. embassies, the Pentagon, and military bases from displaying the Pride flag. “America is stronger, at home and around the world, when it is inclusive,” a Biden administration spokesperson said of the decision.

Standing Up for LGBTQ Rights at Religious Colleges

This year, faculty, students, and alumni at multiple religious colleges and universities stood up against alleged discriminatory practices perpetuated by their schools. In April 2021, several recent alumni of Yeshiva University (YU), a Jewish institution in New York City, filed a lawsuit against the school for its refusal to recognize the YU Pride Alliance — an LGBTQ club — as a legitimate student organization. The suit claims that YU’s actions violate state anti-discrimination laws. A month prior, the nonprofit Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP) filed a class action lawsuit representing 33 LGBTQ students against the U.S. Department of Education. REAP aims to remove a Title IX exemption that allows religious colleges and universities that receive federal funding to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, according to NBC News. At least 25 faith-based schools have been named in the lawsuit, including Baylor University, Liberty University, and Seattle Pacific University (SPU). SPU, a private Christian institution, also faced LGBTQ-related controversy after 72 percent of the school’s faculty approved a vote of “no confidence” in the Board of Trustees in late April. The vote came after the board refused to revise or repeal a policy prohibiting the hiring of LGBTQ employees.

Eliminating Conversion Therapy

Over the past year, a handful of states, counties, and municipalities have passed legislation banning the harmful and discredited practice of conversion therapy. Numerous psychology-based organization across the country, including the American Counseling Association, the American...
Psychiatric Association, and the American Psychological Association, have denounced conversion therapy, or “reparative therapy,” as abusive. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), conversion therapy can lead to depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness, and suicide, especially among minors.

In July 2020, Virginia became the most recent state to ban the practice. Earlier that year, Utah Governor Gary Herbert signed an executive order banning conversion therapy for minors after legislation failed to pass through the state senate. At the time of publication, 20 states and Washington D.C. have outlawed this form of abuse for minors (and adults in Washington D.C.). North Carolina has banned the use of taxpayer money for conversion therapy, and Michigan lawmakers are considering several bills aimed at banning the practice.

Many local governments have made strides in recent months to eliminate this harmful practice. In May 2021, Lexington, Kentucky and the encompassing Fayette County passed a ban; two other Kentucky cities, Covington and Louisville, passed bans in January 2020. In February 2021, Lincoln, Nebraska became the first community in its state to outlaw conversion therapy. As of this year, eight cities in Minnesota have enacted similar ordinances. To date, at least 70 municipalities and counties across the U.S. have banned conversion therapy, including those in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Leadership at Every Level
LGBTQ politicians made amazing strides in 2020 and 2021. Notably, former presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg became the first openly gay Cabinet member to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate in February of this year. In March, Rachel Levine, assistant secretary for health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, became the highest-ranking transgender person to be confirmed by the Senate. They join a slew of LGBTQ leaders and lawmakers who took office in recent months. Levine has said that one of her priorities as secretary will be to advocate for the health of transgender youth, especially at a time when many conservative lawmakers are seeking to deny their rights. “I recognize that I may be the first,” she told The New York Times about her ascension to government, “but I am heartened by the knowledge that I will not be the last.”

At the Isenberg School of Management, allyship means prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in:

- Curriculum advancement such as our new Diversity in Business and Women in Business courses
- Student-Run Organizations
- Faculty Research
- Scholarships
- Events and Conferences
- Continuing education opportunities for faculty and staff that build DEI awareness

isenberg.umass.edu/diversity
Did you know that young people who identify as LGBTQ are 40 percent less likely to commit suicide if they have at least one accepting adult in their lives? At Texas A&M University our students, faculty and staff are a family. And that family includes every. single. one of us. That’s why we work to ensure LGBTQ Aggies feel welcomed and supported with our Aggie Allies program. The most outstanding Allies are given the Rainbow Award and this year’s recipient – Professor of Law Brian Larson – is beyond deserving. He supports networking events for LGBTQ law students, serves on the board of directors of the Dallas LGBT Bar Association, and created a continuing legal education session for lawyers focused on the use of gender pronouns. Texas A&M is fortunate to have Professor Larson and all the Aggie Allies on our team because they understand the true meaning of family.
Indian Students in the U.S. Grapple with COVID-19 Crisis from Half a World Away

By Mariah Stewart and Erik Cliburn

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches into its second summer, many in the U.S. are enjoying a partial return to normalcy thanks to widespread vaccine access.

For students of Indian descent studying at American colleges, however, any sense of relief at the pandemic’s decline here has been replaced with anxiety and grief for family and friends facing the unrelenting coronavirus surge in India. As of mid-May, the country was reporting nearly 400,000 new infections daily, and the virus had become its leading cause of death.

Tanvi Parikh, an Indian American student at the University of Houston (UH), counts her grandfather and an uncle among the nation’s 250,000 COVID-19 death toll. She says the magnitude of the crisis there is nearly indescribable.

“It just brings tears in my eyes because some children are losing both their mother and father, leaving them all alone. The most difficult part is [seeing] ads of children who need to be adopted because they lost both of their parents to COVID,” says Parikh.

Travel restrictions also mean that some Indian students who had been planning to attend college in the U.S. now have to defer or cancel their plans. “I feel the travel ban was something that had to go into effect because we want to be as safe as possible, but I also understand that a lot of [students] are suffering,” she says. “They have to give up on a full year or semester because of the ban.”

Rukaiya Batliwala is another UH senior who is spending her final days as an undergraduate worrying about the catastrophe in India. Originally from Surat, a large city in the western state of Gujarat, Batliwala has a friend back home who has been in the hospital with COVID-19 for more than two weeks.

“She still hasn’t recovered,” Batliwala says. “I haven’t heard from her recently, but the last time I heard, she was still hospitalized, still fighting.”

Batliwala says she is fortunate that she was already planning to spend the summer in the U.S. rather than returning to Surat after her upcoming graduation. Many other Indian students are not so lucky.

“I have had a lot of friends who are also graduating and just planned to go back home, but now they can’t. They will be staying in the U.S. because of the ban.”

Among the many challenges facing India is a slow vaccine rollout and a national shortage of vital medical supplies, including medical oxygen and hospital beds. Now, students from India and those of Indian descent are ramping up efforts to send crucial aid from afar. The North American Association of Indian Students (NAAIS), a newly formed nonprofit organization representing more than 800,000 members across the U.S. and Canada, recently partnered with the Indian Embassy and the Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin to launch the Students Against COVIDIndia campaign. The large-scale crowdfunding effort raises money for medical supplies.

Lavanya Agarwal, a student...
Assistant Professor Positions in RNA Biosciences at the University of Michigan

Application deadline: September 15, 2021

The University of Michigan (U-M) Center for RNA Biomedicine (rna.umich.edu) welcomes applications from outstanding scientists in any area of RNA research, with particular emphasis on RNA drug targeting or as medicine, structural biology of RNA nanomachines, RNA structural in vivo profiling, RNA protein interaction profiling, and in-vivo analysis of long non-coding RNA function. The positions are for faculty assistant professors (tenure track).

Women and underrepresented minorities are strongly encouraged to apply. The U-M is supportive of dual careers and is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Information: rna.lsa.umich.edu/facRecruiting/

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY IS ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE STATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

We are a proud and diverse community of students and scholars. Learn about our community at salemstate.edu/salem-state-difference. We look forward to meeting you!

Mariah Stewart and Erik Cliburn are senior staff writers for INSIGHT Into Diversity. To donate to the Students Against COVIDIndia campaign or learn about other ways to help, visit covid.giveindia.com.
Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), a renowned research institution that is home to nearly 30,000 students, has become a national leader in campus diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through hard work and innovation.

The VCU community understands that their DEI mission must go beyond “diversity for the sake of diversity,” says Aashir Nasim, PhD, vice president of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness, and Success. “We believe in diversity driving excellence,” Nasim explains. “We’re committed to equity-based principles in policy development and implementation, and we’re intentional in how we leverage diversity and inclusion in our everyday practices, programs, and procedures. We collaborate in the generation of inclusive frameworks employed by our academic professionals engaged in high-impact pedagogies, scholarship and practices. We’re committed because we want to ultimately advance the university’s mission and goals.”

Many of VCU’s DEI efforts are the result of cross-campus teamwork among dedicated faculty and researchers, staff, and students. Its Office of Institutional Equity, Effectiveness, and Success and the Division for Inclusive Excellence have prioritized educational opportunities that develop DEI principles and social awareness for the entire VCU community. They are also proactive in engaging with faculty, staff, and students and ensuring that every person has their voice heard.

IExcel Education
IExcel Education provides a range of free DEI courses, workshops, seminars, and training for faculty, staff, students, and community partners. The program was...
designed to help VCU community members advance far beyond typical compliance training or simply learning best practices.

“IExcel Education helps faculty, employees, and students understand the nuances of diversity and provides actual skills and competencies that help create not just a diverse environment, but a truly inclusive one,” says Nasim. “We have courses related to topics such as neurodiversity, gender beyond the binary, or implicit bias in health care. We offer seminars and workshops about how to engage in inclusive faculty recruitment practices, how to give constructive feedback, and much more.”

The program offers more than 30 educational opportunities in a variety of formats and timeframes. Students can attend specialized pop-up courses that consist of three 90-minute sessions across consecutive weeks. Each course takes a unique approach when it comes to engaging students in dynamic learning experiences — whether that means learning about disability access at a local restaurant or creating digital stories at sites tied to the history of slavery. The courses are based on highly relevant topics, including the role of protest music in bringing about social change, visibility in the LGBTQ community, women’s participation in the Black Lives Matter movement, and more.

IExcel Education’s signature offering is the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Certificate program, which is targeted toward senior administrators on campus, according to Nasim. Participants must complete five courses, each consisting of eight contact hours across a four-week period, to earn certification. The program includes four core classes focused on leadership and DEI and one specialty elective. These electives provide pertinent training for leaders across multiple offices and units, ranging from health care to pedagogy to corporate culture and beyond.

Specific courses for the certificate program include Fundamentals of Diversity and Inclusion, Advancing Diversity and Equity in Corporate Settings, and Bias and Microaggressions. The certificate program also offers seminars, training, and workshops that cover a variety
of DEI-related issues. Participants can select from such unique options as Combating Health Inequities, Creating an Age Inclusive Academic Workplace, and Inclusive Recruitment Practices.

Each of these educational offerings shares the common goal of advancing VCU’s mission of “diversity driving excellence,” says Nasim. The Inclusive Recruitment Practices seminar, for example, teaches participants about the university’s unique approach to the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty. This approach includes looking at onboarding as a two- to three-year process. “We create these very highly specialized onboarding packages for faculty that last at least one year and include professional development opportunities,” Nasim explains.

“The Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Certificate program provides insights on how leaders can cultivate a culture of inclusion and effectively manage employees and students’ perceptual and psychological processes about difference and diversity. It also provides leaders with illustrative examples and strategies to facilitate meaningful and productive interactions, especially in collaborative and team environments.” — VCU.edu

Climatext and Ramalogues
Among VCU’s DEI innovations is the Climatext program, which allows university officials to check in with students and employees regarding campus climate on an ongoing basis. VCU’s Office of Equity, Effectiveness, and Success texts those who enroll in the program with specific questions about how they feel regarding current issues such as feeling safe on campus during the pandemic.

Individuals sign up voluntarily for the program, and all answers are anonymous. Recipients can respond using text or emojis, which the university then processes using the “sentiment analysis software” that it created for the Climatext program, Nasim says.

The university is able to maintain user privacy while still sorting responses by demographics and characteristics, such as first-generation status, age, race and ethnicity, and more, according to VCU webmaster Sam Yerkes. “The reply is anonymized, so we can’t tell exactly who the person is but we can match demographic information to say, for example, that a senior student studying in this specific program and who lives in this specific residence hall feels very poorly today about whatever topic,” he explains. As soon as the replies start coming in, VCU is able to begin aggregating the data and make correlations about responses. The information is then stored in a database that Nasim and others can use to better understand campus climate, inform their decision-making, and more.

The technology has been important for staying attuned to students during the pandemic and for receiving regular feedback from campus community members.

“We collect this real time data and share it with senior leaders who make policy decisions or make decisions about reopening the university, for instance. So this is a quick way for us to collect data, get a
sense of what students are feeling, and then be able to incorporate that information into our policy reforms or decisions about things like reopening campus or expanding remote instruction,” explains Nasim.

Another, more personal method of engaging with students and employees regarding DEI issues is RAMalogues, an IExcel program that brings campus community members together to discuss difficult topics related to social identities and lived experiences. The discussions typically consist of 12 to 25 participants plus a faculty or staff facilitator. Student and employee sessions are held separately, and they allow participants to share how they have been personally affected by pressing issues. Recent sessions have included the following:

• Living and Learning Amid Racism and a Pandemic
• Me and My People: Ethnicity and Stigma at VCU During a Pandemic
• How Coronavirus Affects Me

Over the course of the pandemic, many of these discussions were held online and were a crucial way for students to maintain connections with the campus community from afar. The sessions serve as an outlet to share one’s own thoughts and feelings while developing a collective understanding of others’ experiences, Nasim says. “The feedback has been tremendously positive, and students feel a greater sense of community,” he states.

The Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry and Innovation
Another innovative way that VCU facilitates connections to improve community is through the Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry and Innovation (iCubed). The institute links university experts and students with the local community to apply their knowledge and passion to solving real-world issues and improving quality of life for the residents of Richmond. It focuses on several core areas, including:

• Oral Health Equity
• Intersections in the Lives of LGBTQIA+ Communities
• Sustainable Food Access
• Urban Education and Family
• Disrupting Criminalization in Education
• Health and Wellness in Aging Populations
• Racial Equity, Arts, and Culture
• Culture, Race, and Health

Faika Zanjani, PhD, is the associate director of academic programs and research training for iCubed as well as an associate professor of gerontology in the VCU College of Health Professions. She focuses on research development and community programming for iCubed’s Health and Wellness in Aging Populations core and, in her associate director role, mentors students in iCubed’s Commonwealth Scholars Program (CSP). The research mentorship program matches undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate
“Excellence is impossible without equity.”

Organizations and communities cannot thrive until everyone has access to the essentials of a healthy life. Rodríguez and his team lead University of Utah Health’s efforts to promote equity within itself and in the community. In part, this means achieving health equity and eliminating systemic racism and sexism.

Rodríguez believes that by listening to and learning from patients and others who model allyship we can create positive change and bring about a more equitable world.

José E. Rodríguez, MD, FAAFP
Associate Vice President for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
financial need and have a passion for equity and inclusion with iCubed faculty and researchers in their areas of interest.

“We are really interested in supporting students of high caliber and high need, and that makes our program unique,” Zanjani says. Rather than requiring students to submit reference letters or applications that contain past research experience, CSP selects students based on GPA and their passion for equity and inclusion. These requirements are strategic, as low-income students often do not have the professional networks to provide references or have access to research opportunities, Zanjani explains.

By matching CSP students with iCubed faculty in their area of interest, the program provides them with a combination of mentorship, research experience, and the type of productivity that looks impressive on future applications. Students conduct community research and service alongside their faculty mentors during the one-year program and deliver at least one presentation on their research at VCU conferences or symposia.

The students who come into the program may not have a specific project or research focus in mind, but iCubed helps them connect with potential interests through data collection, analysis, development of projects, and community outreach. Zanjani helped mentor a CSP student who had a vague idea that she wanted to promote senior health and ultimately decided that health interventions and messaging were far from inclusive. The student noticed that much of this messaging is directed at young people, and what messaging is actually aimed at senior citizens tends to only target those who are White. Zanjani’s mentee surveyed local Black senior citizens about the activities they liked to participate in as well as some of their health concerns. The student then used that real-world data to create an informative poster of healthy activities such as gardening for local diverse communities.

“A lot of the students who come into the program have never been exposed to research work before, and they say they feel like their world has changed because now they understand the process behind facts and knowledge,” Zanjani explains.

Other universities could learn to emulate programs such as iCubed and CSP that connect researchers, students, and the community to create a more equitable society, she says. “I think [other institutions] may be looking at our model because we’re not just embedding diversity, inclusion, and equality within our programs to check a box,” she says. “Our projects are embedded in diversity and inclusion to actually address health disparities and [other issues], and others may see this is really a different approach.”

Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. Virginia Commonwealth University is a 2018-2020 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award and a 2019 and 2020 Diversity Champion.
Human Connection

Our priority, now more than ever.

The past year highlighted our shared desire for connection, candid conversation and a welcoming community that values all members. Even at a distance, Lehigh University’s focus on building an inclusive environment persisted, through thoughtful programming and meaningful discussions. The need for connection won’t change when we’re all together again. Neither does the need for this work.
Pandemic Has Surprising Effects on Diversity in Elite College Admissions

By Lisa O’Malley and Mariah Bohanon
After more than a year of declining enrollment at U.S. colleges and universities, some higher education institutions are seeing an admissions boom.

Common App, which operates an online application portal for more than 900 institutions, reported in March that the number of students applying to start college in fall 2021 had increased 2 percent from the previous year. While such growth may seem miniscule, a breakdown of the data reveals that the COVID-19 pandemic has had some surprising — and possibly long-lasting — effects on higher education admissions.

Notably, students are submitting applications to a greater number of schools than in the past. Colleges and universities using the Common App portal have reported an increase of 11 percent in application volume, with more selective institutions experiencing the greatest growth in student interest, especially from underrepresented groups. Large, highly selective, private institutions experienced a 20 percent rise in applications from first-generation students and a 24 percent increase from racially and ethnically underrepresented students. By comparison, less selective private institutions of similar size experienced a decrease of 4 percent in first-generation applicants and only a 2 percent increase in racially or ethnically underrepresented students, according to a March report.

Experts attribute this trend in part to the fact that nearly 600 colleges and universities eliminated ACT and SAT requirements during the pandemic. Test-optional admissions policies have become more popular in recent years, and many schools chose to go this route in 2020-2021 due to the difficulty of scheduling in-person exams. Consequently, more students set their sights on schools that would normally only accept applicants from the highest tiers of ACT and SAT scorers. Less than half — or 46 percent — of applications submitted through the Common App portal included entrance exam results this year compared with 77 percent last year. First-generation, low-income, and racially and ethnically underrepresented students were more likely than other applicants to omit these scores.

Ivy League institutions that have test-optional policies as well as the financial capacity to support low- and middle-income students have seen some of the most significant rise in applications. Brown University, which did not require entrance exams this year and provides full funding for students with demonstrated need, experienced a 27 percent spike in applications for the 2021-2022 academic year.

“We’ve seen a generally upward trend in applications for the undergraduate class in recent years, but the marked increase this year is largely a result of the pandemic’s effect on high school students and the admission process,” says Brian E. Clark, a spokesman for the university.

The surge in student interest means that Brown, one of the nation’s most selective institutions, accepted only 5.04 percent of applicants for the incoming class of 2025 — a nearly 3 percent decline from the previous year. Yet having a larger, more diverse applicant pool has allowed the university to increase its student diversity. More than half, or 55 percent, of the class of 2025 are students of color compared with 36 percent for the class of 2024. Nearly 20 percent are first generation, and 69 percent intend to apply for financial aid, according to Clark.

“In a year when the pandemic has impacted the finances of students and families across the globe, the potential for financial aid that meets full demonstrated need may have been a prominent factor for many in considering where to apply,” he says.

Clark also credits the rise in applications to Brown’s pivot to virtual recruiting strategies during the pandemic, which allowed the school to reach more students and to increase geographic diversity. Online recruitment efforts included virtual information sessions and live tours guided by current students.

Cornell University, a fellow Ivy League institution that adopted test-optional admissions during the pandemic, has experienced an even greater spike in applications. Nearly 67,400 students applied for fall 2021 — a 31 percent increase from fall 2020 and a 37 percent increase from fall 2019. Shawn Felton, executive director of undergraduate admissions, attributes such drastic growth in part to the university’s support for low- and middle-income students. Cornell is one of the largest U.S. institutions to conduct need-blind admissions and to meet 100 percent of students’ financial needs. “Many staff members have worked additional time and overtime [this year] to make sure we could
thoughtfully and thoroughly review all applications and provide need-based financial aid awards to our newly admitted students,” Felton explains.

In lieu of entrance exam scores, the university gave greater consideration to other areas of student success. According to Felton, Cornell admissions staff focused on transcripts, letters of recommendation from high school counselors and teachers, and student essays.

The university does not yet have demographic information for the class of 2025, but according to Felton, it is evident that the applicant pool this year was more diverse than in the past. First-year students of color and those from foreign countries were two groups that saw notable increases.

“Although we will be looking into exactly how the application pool changed this year, per our change in admissions test policy and our expanded online and virtual engagement opportunities, we do already know that the applicant pool for fall 2021 was more diverse in any number of ways,” says Felton. Cornell will continue its test optional policy during next year’s admissions cycle for fall 2022 first-year applicants, but the university has not yet made any definitive plans regarding entrance exam requirements for fall 2023 applicants and beyond.

“I think we are hoping to look at all the data we will have collected over these last two years and also consider the broader admissions landscape while thinking critically about the information we want and need in order to select the first-year class,” Felton explains.

Ivy Leagues are not the only elite institutions to see a rise in popularity. Top-ranking institutions ranging from small liberal arts colleges to large public universities have also seen an increase in the overall number and the diversity of applicants.

Grinnell College, a private liberal arts institution with an enrollment of 1,700 students, received 10,040 applications this year compared with 8,000 the year prior. The rural Iowa school eliminated entrance exam requirements during the pandemic and introduced a new diversity recruitment effort, the Laurel Scholarship and Mentorship program, that offers college preparation and full-tuition funding for Black students from the Chicago area. Grinnell’s incoming class of 2025 is projected to be 30 percent students of color — a significant increase for the predominantly White institution. Only 23 percent of students admitted in 2019 were from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), a top-ranked public university with an enrollment size of 31,500, saw several historic gains in diverse admissions this year. UCLA received nearly 30 percent more applications for fall 2021 compared with the year prior, with increases of 48 percent in Black applicants and 33 percent in Chicano and Latinx applicants. In addition, Pacific Islander first year applicants grew 34 percent, and Native American applicants increased by 16 percent.

UCLA instituted a test-optional admissions policy during the pandemic that it plans to maintain until 2024. Without ACT or SAT scores, the university now conducts a comprehensive review of 13 factors, including GPA, academic performance in light of a student’s life circumstances, unique talents such as athletic or artistic skills, and achievements in special projects.

The school has received national recognition for its economic diversity and for growing socioeconomic mobility, and spokesman Ricardo Vasquez attributes this continued success to the university’s approach to diverse recruitment.

“The significant increases in applications from underrepresented students are partly the result of our robust outreach efforts and our
The LGBTQ Faculty & Staff Association welcomes and affirms all members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer communities. Through shared governance at UC, we strive to advocate for the visibility and voice for all who identify within the LGBTQ spectrum.

Our goal is to create an inclusive environment that values LGBTQ faculty and staff as an essential component of UC’s diverse community.


Learn more at UC.EDU.
partnerships with high schools and community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, particularly in underserved communities,” Vasquez says.

In addition, UCLA oversees the Center for Community College Partnerships, which works to establish academic partnerships with local community colleges that serve large populations of disadvantaged students. By fostering relationships with administrators and helping to diversify curricula at these colleges, UCLA has been able to bolster the diversity of its transfer applicant pool — which saw a 10 percent increase this year.

The university may see even greater diversity in the near future due to upcoming changes in its entrance exam policies. The University of California system, including UCLA, announced in May it will develop its own standardized test to replace the ACT and SAT by 2025.

As of April 28, more than 1,400 colleges and universities have stated they will not require ACT or SAT scores in 2022, according to FairTest: the National Center for Fair & Open Testing.

For critics of standardized tests, the transition is long overdue. Research from as early as the 1990s has shown that a student’s high school GPA is a more accurate predictor of college success than SAT or ACT test scores. In fact, each incremental increase in GPA is associated with an increase in the odds of graduating from college, according to a 2020 study in the journal *Educational Researcher*.

Furthermore, the study found that colleges that have test-optional policies have experienced up to a 4 percent increase in Pell Grant recipients, a 12 percent increase in first-time underrepresented students, and an 8 percent increase in first-generation students.

However, while test-optional policies and targeted recruitment have increased diversity at some of the nation’s most prominent colleges, there is still a long way to go in ensuring that higher education admissions are equitable. Though the increase in applications this year has helped create more diversity at elite institutions, it has also made admissions more competitive. Nearly one in five high school seniors who applied to college for fall 2021 say they have been waitlisted by at least one institution; 29 percent of waitlisted seniors are students of color.

Many education experts say that the current admissions cycle reveals how eliminating standardized testing during the pandemic could have positive effects when it comes to creating a more equitable and effective higher education system. Jenny Rickard, Common App’s president and chief executive, recently told *The Boston Globe* that now is the time “for the more selective institutions to impact social mobility in the way that they have been striving to do. This is the year.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor and Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of *INSIGHT Into Diversity.*
The world is changing before our very eyes. This reality requires us to continually reevaluate how we live up to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For decades, Indiana University has been at the forefront of this work, striving for a learning environment to benefit people from all backgrounds.

Protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black Americans have renewed critical conversations about structural inequities in this country. It also serves as a powerful reminder of why colleges and universities must condemn intolerance and racism and do everything possible to ensure campuses remain places where differences are respected, valued, and protected.

Indiana University adamantly believes that the opportunity to live and work in a world that builds upon the contributions of everyone is not just a privilege but a right of life. This belief is why we are leading the way on anti-racist work in higher education, putting words into action by creating and funding initiatives that support racial justice research, explore issues of racial equity, and raise awareness about equality for all.

On this front, IU has taken significant steps to address social injustice and promote an anti-racist agenda. This work includes:

- **Racial Justice Research Fund.** Jointly supported by the offices of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Multicultural Affairs James Wimbush and the Vice President for Research Fred Cate, this fund provides grants for IU faculty, connects researchers, hosts an ongoing “Racial Justice Research Workshop” series, and much more.

- **Pandemic Health Disparities Fund.** With an investment of $1 million from the Office of the President, the fund focuses on a broad range of wellness needs for students on all IU campuses, especially COVID-19’s impact on African American and Hispanic communities.

- **HRSA grant to IU School of Medicine.** The IU School of Medicine was recently awarded a $7 million grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration to help the school educate medical students to better care for underserved populations. This grant is aimed directly at making the IU School of Medicine a leader in eliminating health care disparities.

- **Renaming of building.** Indiana University has renamed a Bloomington campus gymnasium named after a former trustee, Ora Wildermuth, who was against racial integration. The building is renamed for legendary IU basketball player Bill Garrett, honoring his contributions to the integration of athletics and the university.

- **Police Chief Community Advisory Board.** Designed to serve as a resource and connection between an Indiana University Police Department campus division and the students, faculty, staff and the communities the division serves, the Police Chief Community Advisory Board has four strategic objectives: awareness, communications, monitoring, and reporting.

- **University diversity programs and policies.** This work involves a thorough assessment of all diversity, inclusion, and inclusive excellence efforts and programs via diversity mappings across all campuses.

“Now is the time to stand up for what is good and right. Higher education, in particular, has a special obligation to do so. We believe Indiana University’s anti-racist agenda will be a key driver of our institution’s success against racism. It is a way of thinking about Indiana University’s approach to addressing racism—and one that describes how we do business, how we educate, and how we advance IU’s culture of belonging,” says IU’s James Wimbush.

Visit antiracist.iu.edu to learn more.
sports, according to a 2020 NCAA report. For women's basketball, the odds are less than 1 in 100, with only 0.8 percent of players turning pro. Men's basketball players fare slightly better, with 1.2 percent of college athletes moving up to the professional ranks. College football, in which 1.6 percent of players make it to the NFL, offers some of the best odds for achieving the dream of a post-college sports career.

Unfortunately, many student-athletes have aspirations that far from reflect this reality. According to a 2019 NCAA survey of more than 22,000 student-athletes, a significant number of Division I (DI) players responded that they are at least “somewhat likely” to play professionally or compete in the Olympics. The largest disparity between reality and expectations existed among men's basketball and hockey players, with three out of four reporting that they are at least somewhat likely to play professionally. Approximately seven in 10 players surveyed within the DI Football Bowl Subdivision responded that they are at least somewhat likely to go pro. Despite efforts by the NCAA and colleges to curb students' expectations in recent years, this figure is actually 12 percent higher than the number of DI football players in a 2011 survey.
Aspirations of having a career in sports are largely shaped by the media and can be extremely detrimental to those who do not make it into professional leagues, according to a 2018 study by Shaun Harper, a leading scholar on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business.

Media influence and pressure to play professionally are especially strong for Black men, who are vastly overrepresented in college sports, Harper writes in the study. Across 65 universities, this demographic totaled 55 percent of players on football teams and 56 percent of men’s basketball teams while representing only 2.4 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment.

“Perhaps nowhere in higher education is the disenfranchisement of Black male students more insidious than in college athletics,” Harper writes. While it may appear that athletics is offering this underserved demographic a much-needed path to college degrees, Black male athletes were actually less likely to graduate than Black men who did not play sports at 60 percent of the universities in Harper’s study. Overall, African American student-athletes graduated at a rate 5 percent lower than other Black students and 21 percent lower than all students.

“I advise Black male student-athletes and their families to resist the seductive lure of choosing a university because it appears to be a promising gateway to careers in professional sports. It can be for a very small number of student-athletes, but not for the overwhelming majority,” the study states.

A 2016 Gallup-Purdue Index Report commissioned by the NCAA, however, counters the notion that student-athletes are at a disadvantage when it comes to post-graduation prospects. A survey of 1,671 former college players who graduated between 1970 and 2014 found that 65 percent have full-time jobs compared with 63 percent of non-athletes who graduated from the same institutions. The report also found that former student-athletes were between 8 and 9 percent more likely to thrive in several areas of well-being, including social and physical wellness. They were 1 percent more likely to thrive in financial well-being compared with non-student-athletes. The report does not account for race or ethnicity.

Karen Weaver, EdD, is an adjunct associate professor in Higher Education Management at the University of Pennsylvania and host of the Trustees and Presidents - Opportunities and Challenges in Intercollegiate Athletics podcast, which focuses on the oversight of college sports. In a recent article in Forbes magazine, she states that much of the NCAA’s assumptions about college graduates “are crafted through the lens of White privilege.”

“Living the American dream of earning a college degree is pitched to promising high school [B]lack athletes. First-generation players come to campus with the expectations that coaches and support staff would take care of them; in return, a degree all but guarantees them immediate employment in a stable workplace,” she writes.

Furthermore, coaches have lobbied the NCAA for the right to greater demands on student-athletes’ time, which often leaves few windows available for jobs, service learning, and other real-world experiences that are increasingly important in competitive job markets.

“Unless there is a real understanding that it’s okay for an athlete to step away from their program for, let’s say, an entire semester to go work somewhere and miss out on all the training opportunities, then the athlete can experience something we call ‘role conflict,’ where they feel torn,” Weaver says.
LIFE AFTER SPORTS

A lackluster undergraduate education combined with the realization that they won’t play professionally can cause a state of shock for many student-athletes, says Karen Weaver, EdD, an adjunct associate professor in Higher Education Management at the University of Pennsylvania and host of the Trustees and Presidents - Opportunities and Challenges in Intercollegiate Athletics podcast. That moment of realization often comes during the athletes’ senior year when they notice that their team is focusing more on younger players, she says.

“They look at you and say, ‘Okay, what’s next? I’ve spent all my energies in this process for the last five years. My family has hoped that I would go pro [and] now this isn’t necessarily going to come true. So what’s next?’ That is a hard question to answer,” says Weaver.

Explains, “They think ‘What am I supposed to do here, miss my allegiance to my team or my future?’

Due to overscheduling, student-athletes are less likely to pursue internships, especially paid internships, which are highly sought after by employers, explains Weaver.

Recent research from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) shows that women student-athletes were 6 percent less likely and men student-athletes were 17 percent less likely to work as interns compared with college students overall. One in five student-athletes reported that their athletic obligations prevented them from pursuing such opportunities. Yet NACE data shows that individuals who complete paid internships are more likely to work as interns during their junior year and hold high-level internships during their senior year.

Williams agrees with Weaver that these time constraints rob student-athletes of the opportunity to forge potential connections and develop “navigational skills” such as networking and drafting résumés, he says. When it comes to entering the job market, former players have expressed resentment when they realize they were underprepared for life outside of professional sports.

“I’ve had Black student-athletes tell me that there was deception and that they felt lied to, or they will turn it on themselves and say, ‘I wish I would have known,’ because now they don’t have those navigational tools,” Williams explains.

It is important for institutions to present student-athletes with pathways to careers without crushing their dreams of playing professionally, he says. Ultimately, the NCAA and universities must reinforce that academic performance is far more important than athletic performance for the vast majority of players. This guidance is in the students’ best interest financially and emotionally when it comes time to graduate.

“The end of a sports career can be a pretty traumatic experience,” Williams says. “You’re essentially losing a part of your identity, and it can cause anxiety, stress, and even depression. There is a lot of uncertainty and questions surrounding your own self-worth.”

College graduation can often result in an identity crisis for those student-athletes who have devoted much of their life to a sport, says Williams. This issue is significantly compounded for those who were banking on playing professionally and were hoping that sports could lift them out of poverty.

In his book The Miseducation of the Student Athlete: How to Fix College Sports, Williams and co-author Kenneth Shropshire present a number of potential solutions to improve overall outcomes for college players. They suggest that the NCAA and colleges take steps to actually enforce limits on the amount of time that students can spend each week on team-related activities. Student-athletes should also receive adequate career guidance so that they can select a meaningful degree that interests them and will help them succeed.

Colleges should consider, for example, that their sports teams offer a great opportunity to establish pipelines of diverse professionals who work in the sports industry in roles other than as a professional sports.

Addressing the problem of student-athlete success head-on is necessary to fulfill the promise of providing these individuals with an equitable education, Williams says.

“We have to think more creatively,” he says, “and view this through a solutions-oriented lens.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.

Learn more about the lives of former college athletes in the next issue of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
A career at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) means more. We teach our students to treat the whole person, looking beyond just symptoms. PCOM students engage with the community and learn to collaborate as part of a healthcare team to give the best care.

PCOM recognizes the need for recruiting diverse faculty and staff we dedicate efforts to close the health disparity gap. The PCOM community cultivates an environment of inquiry, inclusiveness and respect; one that promotes discovery and celebration of our differences, and fosters an appreciation of the rich social fabric that binds us together.

ONE COLLEGE, THREE LOCATIONS

PHILADELPHIA:
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)
- Physician Assistant Studies (MS)
- Forensic Medicine (Pathway/MS)
- Clinical Psychology (PsyD)
- Educational Psychology (PhD)
- Mental Health Counseling (MS)
- Counseling and Clinical Health Psychology (MS)
- School Psychology (PsyD, EdS, MS)
- Organizational Development & Leadership (MS)
- Applied Behavior Analysis (Cert.)
- Public Health Management and Administration (MS)
- Non Profit Leadership and Population Health Management (MS)

GEORGIA:
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Pharmacy (PharmD)
- Physical Therapy (DPT)
- Physician Assistant Studies (MS)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)
- Medical Simulation (Cert.)

SOUTH GEORGIA:
- Osteopathic Medicine (DO)
- Biomedical Sciences (MS)

For employment opportunities please visit our career opportunities page or contact Talent Acquisition at pcomhiring@pcom.edu
BLACK BROWN & COLLEGE BOUND
BLACK AND BROWN MEN MATTER: EDUCATION, SUCCESS AND JUSTICE
HILLSBOROUGH Community College
SAVE THE DATE
MARCH 2-5, 2022
TAMPA CONVENTION CENTER
HCCFL.EDU/BBCB
HCC SUBSCRIBES TO EQUITY, ACCESS, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.
MUSC welcomes Chase Glenn as the inaugural director of LGBTQ+ Health Services & Enterprise Resources. Reporting to MUSC’s chief equity officer, Willette Burnham-Williams, Ph.D. Glenn will focus on eliminating care disparities and elevating services and resources for LGBTQ+ patients and their families. Through our new strategic plan, OneMUSC, we aim to become the preeminent model for comprehensive inclusion and equity.

Burnham-Williams and Glenn are committed to the equitable integration of services and resources that enhance LGBTQ+ health care, education and awareness across MUSC’s missions.

www.musc.edu/dei
AIR Partnership Program Seeks to Increase Diversity in Behavioral and Social Science Research Fields

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) announced it will be ramping up its Pipeline Partnership Program this summer after the initiative was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Created in 2020, the program is aimed at increasing diversity in the behavioral and social science research (BSSR) fields by engaging with graduate students from Minority-Serving Institutions, according to a news release.

Through the pipeline program, students from three partner institutions — Georgia State University, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and Howard University — are provided training, internships, and mentoring opportunities with AIR’s leaders and internal experts. Topics covered in the initiative include research methodology and design, education policy, workforce development, and more.

Although the program’s initial launch last year was hindered by the pandemic, AIR was able to transition several events into virtual seminars and workshops that introduced students to preeminent scholars and provided information about future opportunities in the field. AIR will also host more events this summer, including a virtual seminar on cultural and linguistic competency in survey design methodology. In addition, AIR will expand its P3 Engage mentoring program that pairs students with world renowned experts in the BSSR fields.

“This signature initiative is an extension of our ongoing efforts to build cultural competence within AIR and the [BSSR] field,” said AIR President and CEO David Myers in a news release. “Our collaboration with these institutions offers students the opportunity to explore careers in research and practice. We are excited to co-create opportunities for students to apply their learning through internships and mentorships, further empowering them to be the researchers of tomorrow.”

Psychology Professor’s Research Could Change the Way We Understand Bias in Children

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently awarded funding to a University of California, Santa Barbara psychologist whose research could help prevent the development of bias and stereotyping in children.

Zoe Liberman, an associate professor of developmental, evolutionary, and social psychology, won an Early CAREER Award from the NSF to support an upcoming research project on how being exposed to diverse communities affects the way that children perceive people whose sociocultural identities are different from their own.

Social categorization, or the process of distinguishing other people based on characteristics such as gender or race, begins early in a child’s life, Liberman told UC Santa Barbara’s news website The Current. Learning to distinguish differences between people is important for the development of the brain from infancy, but it is this same type of categorical thinking that can lead children to believe that all members of a certain group “are presumed to have the same unfavorable characteristics,” she stated.

Liberman’s new research will test whether exposing children to a broad array of diversity prevents or diminishes the development of such beliefs. Her work will involve creating a measure of diversity exposure to be used when assessing U.S. census data about the demographic makeup of neighborhoods. She will also use this measure when assessing the diversity of a child’s social network, based on information from parental surveys.

The ultimate goal is to see if babies and young children “use group cues of race and language to categorize people, and whether that usage changes with the differences in diversity in their communities,” according to The Current. Liberman’s research may be able to answer the question, for instance, of whether babies living in multilingual communities develop a bias against speakers of other languages — a bias which can begin to develop extremely early in life.

If her research does reveal that exposure to greater diversity reduces the development of bias, Liberman says next steps would be to “figure out ways to give kids these kinds of experiences, and if that would have long lasting effects on the development of bias,” according to The Current.
Opportunity brings outcomes
Clemson University Men of Color National Summit

November 4-5, 2021
Greenville Convention Center
Greenville, S.C.

For five years, Clemson University and the Men of Color National Summit have made it their mission to show young African American and Hispanic men that graduation from high school and college is closer than they think.

The summit offers these young men a chance to learn — from business owners, community leaders, accomplished athletes and academic mentors — that education is the key to success at every level and that the opportunity gap will shrink as their goals grow.

Registration for the Men of Color National Summit is now open. Visit clemson.edu/menofcolor for registration information, hotel accommodations, speaker lineup and more.

clemson.edu/menofcolor
However, the department’s ascent to eminence hit a blockade when conflicts between faculty and university administrators arose in the late 1960s, eventually leading to a number of professors taking their leave. It eventually fell into decline and was disbanded in 1991.

It was not until 2014 that WashU announced it would rebuild with a new focus on diversity to reflect the demographics of St. Louis, which at the time had a population that was more than 50 percent people of color. In addition, the area had just been the site of massive Black Lives Matter protests following the police shooting of Black teenager Michael Brown in the nearby city of Ferguson. The outcry in response to Brown’s murder was still fresh on the minds of university leaders.

“I think that underscored for the university that it was really a critical lack to not have a sociology department of people who could think about the societal implications of what happened,” Wingfield, who is Black, says of the shooting and its aftermath.

WashU brought on Wingfield and two other founding faculty members, both of whom were White men, to oversee the department’s formation. During her first year, Wingfield set out to ensure future appointments would include more people of color. Fortunately, she says, her colleagues were just as eager about meeting this goal as she was.

This support from White colleagues was critical to the success of the department’s diversification efforts, according to Wingfield, who published a book in 2019 titled Flatlining: Race, Work, and Health Care in the New Economy that examined “racial outsourcing,” or the practice of organizations placing the sole burden of DEI efforts on racially

As a field dedicated to understanding human differences — and how we treat others based on those differences — sociology is a crucial academic discipline for comprehending the history of racism. As in all disciplines, however, cultivating diversity in sociology faculty is imperative if the field is to accurately represent the societies that it studies.

The Department of Sociology at Washington University in St. Louis (WashU) is one example of diverse faculty coming together to implement real, visible change. Formed in 2015, it is one of the most racially diverse in the country, with nearly half of its full-time faculty members identifying as people of color. This level of diversity is due to the intentional and collaborative efforts of departmental and university leadership, especially that of Adia Harvey Wingfield, PhD, the department’s associate dean for faculty development and the Mary Tileston Hemenway Professor of Arts & Sciences.

To understand how WashU was able to establish a DEI-centered department from the ground up, it is important to understand the history of sociology at the university. Noted professor Roger Baldwin, who later founded the American Civil Liberties Union, began teaching the first sociology classes at WashU in 1906. The department developed a prestigious reputation in the early twentieth century as it appointed more preeminent scholars in the field, including two professors who went on to serve as presidents for the American Sociological Association.

However, the department’s ascent to eminence hit a blockade when conflicts between faculty and university administrators arose in the late 1960s, eventually leading to a number of professors taking their leave. It eventually fell into decline and was disbanded in 1991.

It was not until 2014 that WashU announced it would rebuild with a new focus on diversity to reflect the demographics of St. Louis, which at the time had a population that was more than 50 percent people of color. In addition, the area had just been the site of massive Black Lives Matter protests following the police shooting of Black teenager Michael Brown in the nearby city of Ferguson. The outcry in response to Brown’s murder was still fresh on the minds of university leaders.

“I think that underscored for the university that it was really a critical lack to not have a sociology department of people who could think about the societal implications of what happened,” Wingfield, who is Black, says of the shooting and its aftermath.

WashU brought on Wingfield and two other founding faculty members, both of whom were White men, to oversee the department’s formation. During her first year, Wingfield set out to ensure future appointments would include more people of color. Fortunately, she says, her colleagues were just as eager about meeting this goal as she was.

This support from White colleagues was critical to the success of the department’s diversification efforts, according to Wingfield, who published a book in 2019 titled Flatlining: Race, Work, and Health Care in the New Economy that examined “racial outsourcing,” or the practice of organizations placing the sole burden of DEI efforts on racially
underrepresented employees.

Racial outsourcing usually occurs when organizations claim they want to diversify but do not commit the resources to make that a reality, Wingfield explains. WashU, however, supported the sociology department’s DEI goals by providing tenure funding, competitive retention packages, and other financial resources to attract highly qualified faculty of color.

In addition, the department chose to post open positions outside of typical advertisement avenues that would most likely result in predominantly White applicants. Instead, Wingfield and her colleagues took a proactive approach and contacted candidates of color directly to encourage them to apply. They also reached out to professional associations and organizations that have large numbers of racially and ethnically underrepresented members.

Although these methods resulted in plenty of candidates, convincing people to join such a young department was a challenge. “We have done a lot of work to highlight for people how not having a long history is actually an opportunity in a lot of ways to not be bound by many of the constraints that a long historical precedent can offer,” Wingfield says. She also emphasized to new hires that each of them would have an integral role in shaping the new department. Establishing this culture of collaboration has proven crucial to not only bringing on new faculty but retaining them as well.

“One of the things that we’ve also been really intentional about is making sure that we are a department that’s collegial, where everyone’s voice is welcome, and where everybody has an opportunity to be part of department functions and decisions,” says Wingfield.

When every person is able to weigh in when it comes to decision making, faculty of color are more likely to feel seen and represented, she explains.

The department has also prioritized inclusive course content, research, seminars, and other events that focus on the experiences of people of color and further amplify their voices. In addition, it offers a variety of classes dedicated to social justice issues, such as “The Roots of Ferguson,” which examines the relationship between race and the criminal justice system in the U.S. Wingfield and her colleagues work to ensure that the work of notable sociologists of color, such as W.E.B. DuBois and Anna Julia Cooper, are included in the curricula.

Through these various efforts, WashU’s sociology department has been able to hire a new faculty member of color every year since it began rebuilding six years ago.

Sociologists at other schools, including the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and the University of Toronto, have taken notice. Employees at these institutions have contacted Wingfield and her colleagues to learn more about their success.

When responding to such inquiries, Wingfield emphasizes how crucial it is to have the support of university leaders and one’s own colleagues. She also highlights the importance of institutional culture and the DEI messages that are conveyed in classes, research, and extracurricular activities.

By deliberately including content that touches on important racial issues in all facets of a department’s curricula, leaders can promote being “color-conscious” as opposed to being colorblind.

Wingfield says she hopes to see more universities and colleges prioritize racial issues and diversity in their sociology departments.

“If we don’t have departments, universities, organizations, and workspaces that reflect [diversity],” she says, “then we aren’t really equipped to serve the communities that we engage very effectively.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
Unique Social and Behavioral Research Centers Investigate Society’s Most Pressing Issues

By INSIGHT Staff

Research in the fields of social and behavioral science can have tremendous influence on legislation, spark meaningful conversations, and ultimately lead to a more inclusive and equitable society. At colleges and universities across the country, diverse scholars from a multitude of disciplines work with colleagues to explore society’s most pressing issues through the support of specialized research centers.

These centers focus on crucial topics such as the recent rise in racial violence toward Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), producing research that has gone on to shape public discourse and policies related to AAPI hate crimes. Others are devoted to better understanding innovative subjects such as spatial justice and communitarianism.

Included here are some unique social and behavioral research centers in operation today that are working toward the common goal of changing society for the better.

Bedari Kindness Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles

In 2019, the University of California, Los Angeles College of Social Sciences opened the world’s first research center dedicated to the study of kindness. The Bedari Kindness Institute (BKI) has a multipronged approach; scholars examine the science of kindness while also promoting its practical applications to promote a more humane society.

Since its founding, the center has supported 11 faculty research projects that touch on such diverse topics as treating mental illness, reducing weight-based stigma, promoting compassionate care in long-term care facilities, and training physicians to handle challenging patient interactions. BKI also participates in and hosts multiple events to educate the public about treating themselves and others with kindness. It recently co-sponsored an event titled “We Are the Leaders: Transforming Self and Society with Compassion,” which focused on embracing personal and social transformation amidst the hardships of a global pandemic and racial tensions.

Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University

The Antiracist Research and Policy Center (ARPC) in the College of Arts and Sciences at American University (AU) in Washington, D.C., is dedicated to “multidisciplinary initiatives for fostering racial justice, decolonial politics, and intersectional liberation,” according to its website. The center, which was established in 2017, recently formed a coalition of 48 faculty members from across the AU campus who will serve as advisers for furthering the ARPC’s social justice mission. This interdisciplinary team, along with AU’s Department of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies, helps the center develop strong ties with the broader campus.

In 2021, the ARPC has hosted a number of virtual expert discussions. One of its most recent dialogues, titled “On Asian America and Coalitional World-Building,” focused on contextualizing the recent rise in anti-immigrant violence and xenophobia within the broader context of the United States’ growing understanding of racial injustice issues.
Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino

With bigotry and radicalism on the rise in the U.S. and across the world in recent years, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) has served as an excellent resource to understand and advocate against bigotry and radicalism. CSUSB's Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism serves as a nonpartisan research and policy center that examines how hatred, violence, and terrorism serve to oppress civil and human rights on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

One of the center's newest studies analyzed recent data on Anti-Asian hate crimes and found that such attacks had risen by 145 percent in 2020, while hate crimes overall had dropped 6 percent. The study was cited by numerous news outlets when covering the passage of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which is aimed at curbing the rise in Anti-Asian bias and violence.

Center for the Study of Sexual Culture at the University of California, Berkeley

Since 2001, the University of California, Berkeley's Center for the Study of Sexual Culture (CSSC) has been at the forefront of institutional research regarding sexuality. Researchers at CSSC examine how sexuality influences legislation and popular culture as well as the fields of biology, psychology, and sociology. CSSC hosts regular events and programs to discuss issues of sexuality and sexual culture throughout different communities and academic fields.

The center currently has two active working groups, the Queer of Color Working Group and the Disability and Sexuality Studies Working Group. Both are open to the public as well as professional researchers. The Queer of Color Working Group is dedicated to using critical race and sexuality studies as a lens to discuss the recent works of queer people of color in academia. The Disability and Sexuality Studies Working Group explores the intersection of disability studies and queer theory through readings, performances, and more.

Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies at The George Washington University

The Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies (ICPS) in The George Washington University’s Columbian College of Arts and Science is “dedicated to finding constructive solutions to social problems through morally informed policy analysis and moral dialogue,” according to the ICPS website. The center supports research on a wide range of policy issues — such as gun control, moral economics, and building supranational communities — that affect families, schools, communities, and society as a whole. Among its goals are to foster a greater sense of social responsibility among individuals and to encourage reconciliation among different racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

Institute director Amitai Etzioni, a noted sociologist, recently published a paper examining the relationship between the rise in populism within the U.S. and a subsequent increase in xenophobia and violence. The article, titled “Communitarian Antidotes to Populism,” discusses this concerning scenario as well as offers potential solutions.

Spatial Justice Studio at Winston-Salem State University

Winston-Salem State University (WSSU), a historically Black institution, is a leader in promoting the understanding of how space, especially in urban areas, has been used to perpetuate racial and socioeconomic injustice. This research has taken place under the banner of the Spatial Justice Studio (SJS) at the Center for Design Innovation (CDI), a multi-campus research center created by WSSU, the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, and the Forsyth Technical Community College. Though the CDI is a multi-campus venture, WSSU faculty lead the SJS.

Researchers at SJS study topics such as food deserts, electoral redistricting, gentrification, the uneven distribution of resources, and more. In a recent research-based column, SJS Faculty Lead Russ Smith discussed how the formation of distinct municipalities within metropolitan areas often correlates with an increase in racial segregation. According to Smith, the new municipalities are frequently the result of political fragmentation, which can create a disparity among municipal tax bases and ultimately harm residents of lower-income and minority communities.
Drive-Through Commencement Ceremonies Offer Hope for 2021 Grads

Despite the unprecedented difficulties wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, political strife, and a global outcry for social justice, an estimated 4.43 million college students persevered to earn their degrees this year, according to educationdata.org.

To honor these graduates while maintaining social distancing, several schools, including Seminole State College in Florida, Washington State University, Utah Valley University, and Sonoma State University in California, introduced drive-through commencements this spring. These unique graduation ceremonies allowed students to walk across a stage to receive their degrees while guests watched from the safety of their vehicles.

“Graduation is one my favorite times of the year, and I am so incredibly proud of all of our graduates!” Seminole State President Georgia L. Lorenz said in a recent statement. “I am very proud of our staff and faculty, who once again gave our graduates and their families a day to remember as they received their diplomas.”

On May 4 and 5, graduates at Seminole State College in Florida participated in the school’s hybrid drive-through commencement ceremony on the Sanford/Lake Mary campus. Nearly 2,800 degrees, certificates, and diplomas were awarded.
MEASURING CAMPUS CLIMATE IS DIFFICULT. UNTIL NOW.

Having the best available information means being able to make data-driven decisions at times of uncertainty. At VCU, that’s exactly what Climatext does. It’s the platform that brings us near real-time student sentiment on any current event we ask them about. And after an in-depth analysis of the responses, our ability to focus on student needs increase.

Learn more at inclusive.vcu.edu/vcu-universe
At UAB, diversity is more than a buzzword. It’s a practice. Here, everyone counts—every day. Our leadership reflects our community—from local to global—and our mission ensures we treat our patients, faculty, staff, and students with fairness and respect. We’re proud that Insight Into Diversity® has named us a Diversity Champion for the past three years and presented us with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award four times. Now Forbes has named us America’s #4 Best Employer for Diversity.

Be a part of an organization that does more than throw words around.

EXPLORE UAB.