RALLYING CAMPUS ALLIES

Advocates Urge Colleges to Intensify Support for LGBTQ+ Communities
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 redefine their own success.

**PROUD TO BE A NINE-YEAR HEED AWARD WINNER AND 2022 DIVERSITY CHAMPION**

louisville.edu/diversity
Preserving History
South Carolina colleges preserve local, underrepresented history through community partnership projects.

Enhancing Boyer’s Model
Universities incorporate Boyer’s Model of Scholarship to formally acknowledge the invisible labor of diverse faculty.

Reproductive Health Survey
Researchers study the reproductive health experiences of Deaf and hard of hearing women.

Disability Cultural Center
UT Austin launches the Disability Cultural Center as space for connection, advocacy, and conversation.

Global Education Goes Virtual
U.S. colleges utilize virtual and online tools to partner with international institutions and governments.

Wokini Initiative Shows Success
South Dakota State University increases Indigenous student enrollment through innovative program.

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Rural Education Growth
Community colleges connect through the Rural Guided Pathways Project to address economic and educational inequities.

Diversity Champion
San Diego State University, a 2022 INSIGHT Into Diversity Diversity Champion, shares anti-racism and best practice initiatives.

On the cover
Students participate in the LGBTQ+ Pride March at Pennsylvania State University on April 12, 2023. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Mansell/Penn State)
University of Kentucky alumnus Reginald Smith Jr. is an accomplished international opera star who has traveled around the world for his craft.

Smith, who earned his bachelor’s degrees in choral music education in 2012 and vocal performance in 2013, and his master’s degree in 2021, came to the UK School of Music’s Opera Theatre program on a university scholarship where he studied under Director Everett McCorvey. While at UK, Smith compiled several performance and competition credits, and was one of five national winners of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2015.

Following graduation, Smith has made his name in the world of professional opera in performances around the nation and the world. He performed with the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra in Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Concert Hall and Mozart’s Requiem in Paris, and he made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera as Jim in “Porgy and Bess;” the production recording won a Grammy Award.

Throughout his burgeoning professional success, Smith has kept UK close to his heart.

“I find that it’s so important to support the people that have supported me and to give back and to help the next generation of upcoming artists and world changers, really,” Smith said. “I particularly wanted to start a scholarship to help students that are African American, people of color, brown, Black all of the above, because I know exactly what that was like being a young Black kid from Atlanta.”

“As we continue to build a pipeline of more diverse teachers and more diverse teaching it’s important to support them at the beginning of that process so we can recruit and retain more students of diversity,” Smith said.

The UK College of Fine Arts offers Kentucky’s most comprehensive array of educational programs devoted to the visual and performing arts. The UK School of Music is internationally recognized for excellence in performance, music education and research.

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Top Colleges for Diversity 2022

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Learn more at finearts.uky.edu.
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. To succeed, we must be both relentlessly intentional and open to the spontaneous opportunities for positive change.

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Georgetown University reached a historic milestone with the official unveiling of the Yarrow Mamout Masjid — the first mosque on a U.S. college campus to feature ablution stations, a spirituality and formation hall, and a halal kitchen.

During a ceremony held in March, Georgetown dedicated the masjid to Yarrow Mamout, a formerly enslaved man who practiced Islam throughout his life and settled in the Georgetown neighborhood in Washington, D.C., after buying his freedom in 1796.

“The naming of the masjid reminds us American Muslims that we are a part of the fabric of the United States of America,” Imam Yahya Hendi, the university’s full-time Muslim chaplain, said at the event. “We have always been here. We are not newcomers to this country. We continue to contribute to it, and we will continue to engage it in the best of ways. And we American Muslims have to be an integral part of the national fight against slavery and against racism.”

The masjid, opened in fall 2019 and completed this year, offers a space for prayer, reflection, community, and interfaith dialogue for both Muslim and non-Muslim students. It is one of seven sacred spaces on Georgetown’s main campus and one of three designated prayer spaces for Muslim students.

Georgetown University students, alumni, and faculty, along with local Muslim leaders and international diplomats, gather to celebrate the school’s Yarrow Mamout Masjid. (Photo courtesy of Leslie Kossoff/Georgetown University)

Dept. of Education Urges Schools to Remove Criminal Background Questions from College Applications

As part of a recent report on how to support formerly incarcerated students, the U.S. Department of Education advises colleges to cease asking applicants about their criminal histories, citing a lack of evidence linking campus crimes to students with such records.

If colleges do include criminal background questions in their applications, the department suggests they should only ask about felony convictions for crimes committed after the age of 20 and within the past five years.

The report, titled “Beyond the Box 2023,” also recommends that schools share information on educational programs with incarcerated individuals prior to their release and provide training to admissions staff on the disproportionate imprisonment of people of color.

“The use of criminal justice information is very different from the traditional information reviewed in a college application,” the report states. “Properly trained admissions staff are key to ensuring that a criminal record does not unfairly bias the admission decision and that formerly incarcerated applicants are treated with dignity.”

The department also notes that studies have shown that education can lower recidivism by 48 percent, leading to decreased incarceration costs and increased public safety, with some projections suggesting that every dollar invested in prison education saves four to five dollars in taxpayer funds.

White Men Continue to Dominate College Presidencies

The student population is not adequately represented among current college presidents, according to a report by the American Council on Education. The study, “The American College President: 2023 Edition,” shows that male presidents outnumber women two-to-one, and just a quarter of all presidents belong to racially underrepresented groups.

Presidents of color accounted for about one in four presidents, and just over one in 10 were women of color.

Source: acenet.edu
Anti-DEI Legislation Becomes Reality in Florida, North Dakota

With over 30 anti-DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) bills proposed across the country threatening initiatives, support offices, and curriculum in higher education, the results are mixed: most received pushback from campus DEI advocates, some have been tabled or failed to garner enough support, and one has been vetoed — however, others have become dangerously real.

These attacks are now a reality in Florida and North Dakota, where bills have been signed into law, and Tennessee, where an approved bill sits on the desk of the respective state governor awaiting signature.

Expanding goals of the Stop WOKE Act, or HB 7, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) signed Senate Bill 266/House Bill 999, banning the state’s public colleges and universities from spending state or federal funds for DEI programs and activities that support or engage in political or social activism, unless required by an accrediting body. It also eliminates general education course requirements that delve into theories that teach systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the country’s institutions and gives boards of trustees more power in personnel hiring and firing decisions. DeSantis also signed House Bill 931, prohibiting required diversity statements.

DeSantis’ Don’t Say Gay bill is in the process of being expanded with House Bill 1069, which bans K-12 schools from incorporating lessons on gender identity and sexual orientation and prevents them from requiring staff to refer to students with pronouns that “don’t correspond” with their sex.

In Tennessee, Senate Bill 102 will ban implicit bias training requirements for employees of the state’s public schools and universities and department of education.

In North Dakota, Senate Bill 2247, which blocks DEI hiring statements and mandatory diversity training at state public universities, was signed into law and will go into effect August 1. Among a variety of actions, the bill also prohibits disciplinary action against students or faculty for refusing to endorse specified concepts, including those that assert the U.S. is inherently racist or sexist and that all Americans are not created equal and endowed inalienable rights.

Similar measures were halted in Kansas on April 6, where a budget bill prohibiting — among other anti-DEI proposals — public university DEI funding and required diversity statements from students, employees, and job applicants were line-item vetoed by the state’s Democratic governor Laura Kelly.

Penn State Launches Digital Collection on Black History

Penn State University has launched Black History and Visual Culture, a permanent digital collection that celebrates Black life. The collection features posters, poetry, and other visual materials related to the diversity of Black experiences. The collection includes student publications from the 1960s and 1970s that capture a period of social change and political unrest both at the university and around the country.

Employees of Color Underrepresented in College Admissions Workforce

In a survey of more than 12,000 college admissions employees at 940 institutions, the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources found that White women make up half of all chief admissions officers, admissions heads, and counselors.

Source: cupahr.org
WASHINGTON

Butch de Castro,
PhD, has been
appointed dean
of the College of
Nursing at Seattle
University. De Castro
previously served
as associate dean for diversity,
equity, and inclusion in the School
of Nursing at the University of
Washington in Seattle.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ben Vinson III,
PhD, has been
named president of
Howard University.
Vinson was provost
at Case Western
Reserve University in
Cleveland, Ohio.

WISCONSIN

Tammy K.
Evetovich, PhD,
has been
appointed dean of
the College of Arts
and Sciences at
Emory University in
Atlanta. Krauthamer
previously served as dean of the
College of Humanities and Fine Arts
at the University of Massachusetts
Amherst.

TEXAS

Anita Thomas, PhD,
is the first woman and
person of color to be
appointed president of
North Central
College in Naperville.
Thomas previously
served as executive vice president
and provost at St. Catherine
University in St. Paul, Minn.

CALIFORNIA

Martha Garcia, EdD,
has been appointed
president of Mt. San
Antonio College
in Walnut. Garcia
previously served
as president and
superintendent of the College of the
Desert in Palm Desert.

GEORGIA

Barbara Krauthamer,
PhD, has been
appointed dean of the
College of Arts
and Sciences at
Emory University in
Atlanta. Krauthamer
previously served as dean of the
College of Humanities and Fine Arts
at the University of Massachusetts
Amherst.

MASSACHUSETTS

George Timmons,
PhD, has been
named president of
Holyoke Community
College. Timmons
was provost and
senior vice president
of academic and student affairs
at Columbia-Greene Community
College in Hudson, N.Y.

MISSOURI

Balaji Rajagopalan,
PhD, has been
appointed dean of the Robert J.
Trulaske Sr. College
of Business at
the University of
Missouri-Columbia. Rajagopalan
previously served as dean of the
College of Business at Northern
Illinois University in DeKalb.

ILLINOIS

Candice Dowd
Maxwell, EdD, has
been named the
inaugural associate
vice president of
diversity, equity,
belonging, and
inclusion at McHenry County
College in Crystal Lake. Maxwell
was the Distinguished Education
Equity Fellow at the University of
Central Arkansas in Conway.

PENNSYLVANIA

John L. Jackson,
Jr, PhD, has been
named provost of the University
of Pennsylvania
in Philadelphia.
Jackson was dean
of the Annenberg School for
Communications at the university.

TEXAS

Anna Ortiz, PhD,
has been named
dean of the College
of Education at
California State
University, Long
Beach. Ortiz was
interim dean of the college.

TEXAS

Charles Lee Isbell
Jr, PhD, has been
named provost of the University of
Wisconsin–Madison. Isbell was the John P.
Imlay Jr. Dean of the
College of Computing at the Georgia
Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

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California State University San Marcos
California State University Stanislaus
Central Michigan University
College of the Mainland
Colorado School of Mines
Comming Community College
Cowley College
Davenport University
Friends University
Gateway Technical College
Gwynedd Mercy University
Henry Ford Community College
High Point University
Hilbert College
Hudson County Community College
Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai
Illinois State University
Indiana Tech University
Indiana Wesleyan University
Iona College
Kansas State University
Louisiana State University Shreveport
Metropolitan Community College, Kansas City
Metropolitan State University Denver
Miami University
Midland College
Missouri Southern State University
Morgan State University
Northeast Ohio College of Medicine
Northeastern University School of Law
Northern Illinois University
Northern Virginia Community College
Ocean County College
Ohio University
Pacific School of Religion
Palmer College of Chiropractic
Pasadena City College
Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
Pittsburgh State University
Portland Community College

Portland State University
Quinnipiac University
Regis College
Robert Morris University
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
Rowan University
Salus University
San Houston State University
Santa Fe College
Santa Rosa Community College
Seattle Colleges
Sonoma State University
Southern Illinois University System
Southern Nazarene University
Springfield College
St. Petersbug College
Stony Brook University
Tarrant County Community College
Texas A&M University Texarkana
The College of St. Scholastica
Towson University
Transylvania University
Trinity Valley Community College
Tulsa Community College
United Theological Seminary
University of Missouri St. Louis
University of Alabama Huntsville
University of Central Florida
University of Georgia
University of Louisiana Lafayette
University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Massachusetts Lowell
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
University of North Texas
University of South Alabama
University of Texas Health Science Center
University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio
University of Texas Permian Basin
University of Texas Tyler
University of West Florida
Utah State University
Utah Valley University
Virginia Community College System
Virginia Tech College of Engineering
Weber State University
Western Governors University
Western Michigan University
Western Oregon University
William & Mary
Xavier University

For more information, contact Lenore Pearlstein at lpearlstein@insightintodiversity.com.

*To view sample reports and pricing, visit viewfindersurveys.com.
5 Tips for Organizing Successful DEI Events on Campus

Assemble an inclusive event coordination team.

✔ Establish the purpose and goals for the program.
✔ Ensure the team is comprised of diverse people from different populations.
✔ Include diverse perspectives in the planning process.

When creating an event agenda, consider a variety of DEI topics.

✔ Examples include ability, disability, and ableism; faith and secular identity; gender identity; social justice issues; communication across identities; work-life balance; and leading with empathy.

Invite a diverse group of moderators and speakers.

✔ Within speaker invitations, clearly state the DEI topic to be covered.
✔ Consider speaker recommendations from institution thought leaders and a variety of program managers.
✔ Ensure moderators are prepared (provide topic background and speaker bio).
✔ Request (but not require) speaker demographics to ensure inclusivity (such as gender pronouns, race or ethnicity, education level).

Incorporate inclusive promotion and registration practices.

✔ Use inclusive language in promotion materials.
✔ Send event information to a representative range of prospective attendees.
✔ Allow entry of gender pronouns and name phonetics on registration form for name tags and other uses.

Consider a variety of inclusive practices.

✔ Select a venue that accommodates accessibility needs (consider wheelchair accessibility; gender-inclusive bathrooms; and prayer, lactation, and quiet rooms).
✔ Consider all accessibility needs, including sign language and closed-caption services.
✔ Avoid scheduling an event on religious and cultural days of observance.
✔ Offer kosher, halal, vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, etc. food options.
✔ Allow designated reserved seating for guests who need it.
✔ Source catering and other necessary materials or services from diverse local businesses when possible.

Information excerpted from Columbia Business School’s 2022 guide “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Event Planning Checklist.”
Pride Student Veterinary Medical Community at Virginia Tech

Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine students have created a place for LGBTQ+ connection and camaraderie at Virginia Tech through a Pride Student Veterinary Medical Community. The social space provides a welcoming place for all to connect, learn, and advocate together.
**RESEARCH ROUNDUP**

**DEI Research News**

**Effects of Parental Support on LGBTQ+ Youth**

Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin recently studied the effects of perceived parental social support and psychological control on the mental health of more than 500 LGBTQ+ youth.

Participants represented a wide range of sexual orientations, gender identities, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and geographic locations. The study found that perceived parental social support of LGBTQ+ youth was associated with a reduction in depression symptoms, and that perceived attempts by parents to psychologically control youth — such as invalidating feelings, inducing guilt, and conditional expression of affection — were linked to an increase in such symptoms. Researchers say the study findings can be used to develop parenting literature to support the positive mental health development of LGBTQ+ adolescents.

**More Training Needed for Disability Health Care**

Additional medical training and education are critically needed to ensure that postgraduate students and residents provide proper care for patients with disabilities, according to a new research brief from Kari Rezac, DO, at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine.

Rezac measured the knowledge of health care and societal inequities of people with disabilities among physical medicine and rehabilitation residents and their confidence level in treating such patients on a four-point scale (with four being very knowledgeable or confident and one having zero knowledge or confidence). Prior to participating in a series of disability-focused lectures, the residents averaged between 2.2 and 2.3 in all three categories. After the lecture series, confidence and knowledge grew to between 3.1 and 3.4 across the questions.

**Racial Bias in Drug Testing of Pregnant Women**

A recent study analyzing data from nearly 38,000 pregnant hospital patients in Pennsylvania found that Black women were more likely to be tested for drug use than any other racial group.

Conducted by researchers from the University of Pittsburgh; the University of California, San Francisco; the Friends Research Institute; and the Magee-Womens Research Institute, the study found that despite these higher test rates, Black women were less likely to test positive for alcohol, cannabis, opioids, or stimulants during pregnancy. Of those included in the analysis, 11 percent of women overall had histories of substance abuse. Among that group, 76 percent of Black patients were drug tested compared to 69 percent of White patients, despite the former group having a lower percentage of positive results. Based on the findings, researchers suggest that health care systems examine their drug testing policies and adhere to evidence-based practices to address racial biases.

**Peer Reviews Show Bias Against Underrepresented Scientists**

Biology scientists from historically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to receive negative peer review outcomes in their research, according to a new study from Michigan State University.

An analysis of more than 300,000 biology manuscripts found that peer-reviewed literature is still largely dominated by White males from the United States and the United Kingdom. Research by women and non-native-English-speaking scientists is disproportionately rejected. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that more scientific journals implement a double-blind review process and create guidelines that explicitly mention social justice issues. Among ecology and evolutionary biology journals, for example, only 16 percent use a double-blind model and just 2 percent mentioned social justice in their peer-review guidelines.
Together, we advance health care for everyone.

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Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D.
President
UT Southwestern Medical Center

“The success of our missions for research, patient care, and educating the physicians, scientists, and health care professionals of tomorrow is ultimately fueled by expanding and appreciating diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

Shawna Nesbitt, M.D.
Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
UT Southwestern Medical Center
Expanding Boyer’s Model to Better Recognize Diverse Faculty Roles

By Nikki Brahm

Although introduced over 30 years ago, Boyer’s model of scholarship is still used by some higher education institutions to better recognize faculty during promotion and review processes for the wide range of work they perform beyond their formal responsibilities.

In Ernest Boyer’s report “Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate,” he proposed that scholarship should include four main categories that can be executed in a variety of forms — through discovery, such as research and publication; integration, or bringing together findings across disciplines; application or engagement, such as addressing or solving an issue in a community; and teaching.

Higher education leaders inspired by Boyer’s model say it can be used to recognize engagement that is not traditionally acknowledged in tenure and promotion processes. That work is often the most meaningful to faculty and can lean into the categories of service and engagement: mentoring and tutoring students, the development of a new community activity or program — including those with impact beyond the institution — and the production of books, films, plays, and artwork. The model can also be used to recognize invisible labor, or workloads that are disproportionately assigned to underrepresented employees, especially women and faculty of color.

The College of Arts & Letters at Michigan State University (MSU) has developed a new program to ensure these types of faculty contributions are valued. Known as Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership (CPIL), the initiative modified department bylaws, statements, promotion and review guidelines, annual review rubrics, and peer review processes.

At Boise State University (BSU), Boyer’s model was incorporated into the university’s tenure and promotion policy for consideration nearly 10 years ago, and institutional leaders are rallying for support across the university — in administration, departments, colleges, and schools — to expand its use.

Experts say that with more equitable systems of recognition and credit awarded by managers, faculty gain a renewed sense of purpose and motivation.

Michigan State University
Sonja Fritzsche, PhD, associate dean of academic personnel and administration at MSU, says change was inspired by an imbalance between the work that counted positively toward professional advancement and the roles faculty wanted to assume that were undervalued. Under the CPIL model, faculty are asked during performance review processes about both their traditional responsibilities of teaching, research, and service as well as new categories for consideration — shared knowledge, expanded opportunities, and mentorship and stewardship.

The CPIL program is described in the 2022 study "Charting Pathways of
Intellectual Leadership: An Initiative for Transformative Personal and Institutional Change," which Fritzsche co-authored. It expands on how valuable university work is defined and provides a structure for conversations that empower colleagues to imagine and enact meaningful contributions in their work.

The project aligns with Boyer's model for recognizing community-engaged scholarship, says Fritzsche, with an added emphasis on ensuring the result is equitable, inclusive, and restorative. Ultimately, she feels Boyer would have supported CPIL today.

“Excellent scholarship is diverse scholarship,” she says. “If you don’t have diverse scholarship, you’re only looking at a very narrow band of knowledge.”

CPIL is also used to value the invisible labor disproportionately given to women and underrepresented faculty, says Fritzsche.

“Women and faculty of color ... their work tends to be interdisciplinary; it tends to be that public-facing work — activist scholars, people doing community-engaged scholarship. The [CPIL] model [is] there to see that work, to recognize the importance of that work,” she says.

Aspects of CPIL are also used to acknowledge the work done by support staff, including graduate secretaries, administrative assistants, undergraduate advisers, and others. Since CPIL was instituted five years ago, positive results have been reported across the college.

“I’ve seen people who had ... sort of checked out and just really felt beaten down, I’ve seen them really come to life again and even flourish,” reports Fritzsche.

Boise State University

At BSU, Boyer’s model — which has been in place for a decade — is being reinvigorated across the university, and its application customized for different departments, colleges, and schools.

Michelle Payne, PhD, vice provost for academic leadership and faculty affairs, and Donna Llewellyn, PhD, executive director of the Institute for Inclusive and Transformative Scholarship (IFITS) at BSU, have worked to spark renewed conversation around the topic.

Payne is assembling a group aimed at transforming promotion and tenure processes using Boyer’s model as a foundation. The concepts have also been incorporated within university award criteria to allow for a wider range of faculty contributions.

“I chair an honors and awards committee, and we took an equity lens to our Distinguished Professor Award and [our Foundation Excellence Award] to look at [who it excludes and includes], who does it support or not support, how do we revise it,” says Payne. “One element of that revision was to expand the definitions of what we value. The Boyer model is now embedded in the awards.”

An effort known as Aligning Stakeholders and Structures to Enable Research Transformation within IFITS has brought over 80 campus educators together to discuss Boyer’s four scholarship areas and to better identify what is most important to them. Like with MSU, this work is often community-engaged and service scholarship, such as projects with community organizations, research on local policy impacts, stakeholder engagement, or curriculum development, says Llewellyn.

“I help] faculty [use] the language of Boyer to be able to articulate and tie Boyer in with the strategic plan [to show] what they’re doing is of value to the university, and therefore, it should be valued by whoever is looking at their portfolio,” she says.
Since Roe v. Wade was overturned in 2022, keeping up with new abortion laws and restrictions is difficult, and it’s especially challenging for women in the Deaf and hard of hearing (DHOH) community who face language barriers when seeking reproductive health care services.

To better understand the challenges and identify accessibility solutions for this population, the first national survey on the reproductive health care experiences of DHOH women is underway. The survey is led by Tiffany Panko, MD, associate research professor and executive director of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and Corrine Occhino, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at Syracuse University.

The project is funded by a grant from the Society of Family Planning, an international nonprofit that focuses on abortion access and contraceptive science.

One part of the research involves a national survey of women between the ages of 18 and 44, regardless of hearing status. Examples of survey questions include asking where a respondent goes for health care, how comfortable they are in medical settings, and their use of contraception. In the second segment of the project, semi-structured interviews are conducted with DHOH women who have had an abortion or who have sought contraceptives. These conversations are then annotated to find common trends.

Results will be shared with the public periodically, and further work with providers will focus on developing solutions to eliminate health care inequities for the DHOH community.

One key preliminary finding is that among individuals who reported difficulty in acquiring contraceptives, a greater proportion of DHOH participants reported they did not understand why they had no access to birth control, and they were unable to identify the barriers.

Occhino and Panko attribute this issue to the communication challenges between hearing and DHOH communities in health care settings. For example, DHOH women are often unable to develop a strong personal relationship with their provider, and there is a lack of in-person and reliable health care interpreters, Panko says.

It’s challenging to find women willing to share their stories of abortion for the study, says Panko, in part because of the new anti-abortion laws. Little information is available overall on the topic of abortion in American Sign Language (ASL), and no reliable ASL resource on abortion access has been created since Roe v. Wade was overturned, she says.

“A lot of people have misconceptions or beliefs that are not true within our community, or people become pregnant and want to get an abortion and then find out they can’t,” says Panko. “They don’t have the full picture because there’s no language access.”

Gaps in women’s health care research are especially prevalent when there’s an intersection of identities, such as communities of color and people with disabilities, says Occhino. Because of the communication barrier for DHOH patients in health care settings, a lack of trust in the medical system is common, says Panko, so more representation in services and in research is critical.

“We need to think of health care as a right,” says Occhino. “It’s a social justice issue that we should all be concerned about, not just the Deaf community, but everyone should care about it.”
The University of Texas at Austin’s (UT Austin) new Disability Cultural Center (DCC) builds community and connections for students with disabilities and pushes forward important cultural conversations as they relate to disability on campus and in society.

The DCC mirrors the work being done at other cultural centers on campus, such as the Multicultural Engagement Center and the Gender and Sexuality Center, by making disability and accessibility a larger part of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

While UT Austin’s Disability and Access office focuses more on logistics, accommodations, and legal compliances, the DCC emphasizes strengthening relationships among individuals with disabilities and encouraging thought-provoking discussions focused on accessibility, civil rights, and identity. The center’s more informal approach is designed to help members of the campus community connect with each other.

“The DCC is a place where disability is normalized and celebrated on campus,” says Emily Shryock, director. “This is where students can find their community and be celebrated for who they are.”

Since its launch in January, the DCC has served as a nexus for virtual and in-person events and programming related to disability. These include monthly gatherings for students, faculty, and staff; study sessions with accessible seating and technology options; weekly advocacy sessions with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; and dialogues on disability identity and its impact on and role in society. The center also holds information sessions about other UT Austin programs, such as the critical disability studies minor, which focuses on social, cultural, and political contexts.

A recent key event was Disability Graduation, held on May 4, for students with disabilities and those graduating with a minor in critical disability studies. The ceremony featured a slideshow and speeches from graduates and faculty to honor those in attendance.

With a three-year funding commitment from UT Austin, the DCC’s next steps are to establish a physical space within the Student Services Building. Once that process is complete, the hope is that the center will serve as a social hub for campus community members with disabilities, says Shryock.

“[DCC] does provide that space for just the recognition of disability as more than a diagnosis or a legal status and really moves it into that realm of being recognized as an identity, recognized as a culture, and recognized as part of the diversity of the campus community,” she says.
South Carolina Colleges Engage with Community to Honor Local History

By Erik Cliburn
Two new projects at higher education institutions in South Carolina will collect, preserve, and highlight the histories of underrepresented communities in both the upland and lowcountry regions of the state.

Clemson University will highlight Black history in northwestern South Carolina with the Black Heritage Trail, featuring three separate yet interconnected paths with artwork and interactive signage on campus and in the nearby cities of Clemson and Seneca.

The College of Charleston (CofC) Libraries will run The Lowcountry Oral History Initiative (LOHI), which will focus on oral histories of those from marginalized communities in the southern portion of the state.

Clemson University Partners on Black Heritage Trail

Clemson University’s portion of the Black Heritage Trail will mostly wind through the Woodland Cemetery and African American Burial Ground, which contains the unmarked graves of more than 500 African American enslaved persons, sharecroppers, domestic workers, tenant farmers, convicted laborers, and wage workers and their families who contributed to the construction of or worked at the university.

“It’s American history,” says Rhondda Thomas, PhD, Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature. “It’s a part of South Carolina history that has been largely overlooked, undervalued, and erased. This is our opportunity to restore, affirm, and honor a very important part of history that has not been made accessible to the public.”

Thomas, who is spearheading the university’s section of the trail, has researched and collected the stories of Black people in the region for more than 15 years through the Call My Name (CMN) project. The idea for the Black Heritage Trail was largely inspired by the work of the CMN coalition, which involves Clemson University researchers and several local partners who have helped organize and share the stories of African Americans in the area through social media, university publications, and in-person events and programs.

The Black Heritage Trail is funded by a $3.4 million grant as part of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s Monuments Project. In Seneca, the trail will wind through a historically Black neighborhood near the Blue Ridge Community Center and former Blue Ridge High School, where African American students were taught during segregation. The city of Clemson will tie its section into the Clemson Area African American Museum and other public land related to Black history in the city.

The project will feature a robust website that allows for virtual tours of the sites and associated archives comprised of documents, images, oral histories, and videos.

“The trail will provide an opportunity for the neighboring communities to collaborate in efforts to forge paths of connection both literally and figuratively,” says Angela Agard, executive director of the Clemson Area African American Museum, who leads the trail project in the city of Clemson. “It will become not only a recreational, public health, and economic

Left: The former Blue Ridge High School, which taught Black students during segregation, will serve as the site of the Black Heritage Trail in the city of Seneca. Right: The African American Burial Ground at Woodland Cemetery, which contains the unmarked graves of more than 500 African Americans, will comprise a large portion of Clemson University’s portion of the trail.
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development resource but also solidify a culturally significant legacy that will impact community members and visitors for generations."

The project will involve scholars from the university’s art, architecture, English, history, humanities, and tourism departments, says Thomas. Although the university plays a large role in the project, especially regarding the Woodland Cemetery trail, it is imperative that local community members and organizations contribute to the design and content on display, says Thomas.

While it is still in the early phases of development, Thomas envisions it will be an educational tool for students and learners of all ages.

“We have thousands of people who visit this area for athletic events and recreational activities. It’s important to have this history where you can go to a trail and see it,” says Thomas. “You don’t need a tour guide, you don’t need to pay admission fees, it’s literally there on the landscape for you to engage with.”

College of Charleston’s Lowcountry Digital Library

Unlike the physical space of the Black Heritage Trail, LOHI at CoC Libraries is a digital effort to research and preserve oral stories centered on working-class narratives, communities of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals in the region. The project is funded by a $150,000 grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation as part of its Broadening Narratives initiative. As of early May, CoC was in the search process for an oral historian and project director to oversee the LOHI project.
The primary objective of the initiative is to commission a large group of students, faculty, library staff, and community members to interview people who fit the project’s criteria within the region. To achieve this, CofC Libraries will host community workshops and consultations to teach non-historians the best practices of oral history research, including how to operate audio equipment and the ethical guidelines of such work, says John White, PhD, dean of libraries.

“The goal is that there will be a really diverse, widespread group of contributors from community organizations to students, faculty, library personnel, and archivists at the college,” says White. “If we’re able to build an entire community of people who really see it as a responsibility to collect the stories of the communities we live in, we can become a major research archive and provide a voice to people who may not have ever had that voice.”

Once the oral histories have been collected, recordings and transcriptions will be available to the public and for research use through the Lowcountry Digital Library. A unique aspect of LOHI, and the Lowcountry Digital Library in general, is that partner organizations and communities can digitally host historical materials, such as interviews and transcripts, without giving up ownership, unlike many college archives, says White. This ensures that researchers can access a robust historical archive while still respecting the marginalized communities in which the stories originate.

“This is rooted in the idea of allowing communities, particularly underrepresented communities, to keep their own materials, where they don’t have to give up ownership but can provide access,” he says. “You don’t want to play the role of a meddlesome outsider coming into a community, taking their stories, history, and culture, and essentially selling it to someone else without them really understanding what you’re doing there. That’s why this project is community based, because we know that trust building is going to be the biggest challenge.”

John White, PhD
Colleges Build Partnerships to Create Opportunities for Students Globally

By Erik Cliburn

Using tools popularized during the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities are expanding their international reach through partnerships that feature virtual exchange programs and online courses. Such initiatives benefit U.S. students and faculty as well as spur education, research, and economic development worldwide.

These partnerships primarily involve government agencies, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations, which cooperate to advance opportunity across borders, culture, and language.

International collaborative education was the focus of the recent Future of Global Higher Education conference organized by the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) Graduate School of Business, and Penn Global, the office that oversees the university’s worldwide engagement efforts. The event featured a keynote address from L. Rafael Reif, PhD, president emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Venezuelan native, who discussed the importance of U.S. higher education institutions building and maintaining relationships with schools in other nations, even during heightened periods of international tension.

“On this small planet of ours we cannot do and shouldn’t do without the open-mindedness, patience, and understanding generated by joint academic research and problem-solving,” Reif said at the UPenn conference. “We should welcome mutually beneficial collaborations with our colleagues in other nations.”

A recent example of an effort to build educational relationships between countries is the Norwegian Panorama Virtual Exchange/ Collaborative Online International Learning (VE/COIL) Partnerships Initiative, a cooperative agreement involving 19 higher education institutions throughout Japan, Norway, and the U.S. All eight U.S. schools involved will pair with a Norwegian university while three will also collaborate with a Japanese institution.

U.S. and global education leaders meet during the 10th annual Future of Global Higher Education conference hosted by UPenn.

U.S. college and university participants include: Babson College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, Michigan State University, Penn State, St. John’s University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Texas at Dallas.

Through VE/COIL, international institutions can affordably provide multicultural online courses to students around the world and encourage faculty and staff to collaborate in virtual teaching, research, and service learning. The U.S. institutions will work closely with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) through December to help establish connections between their Japanese and Norwegian counterparts.
“The initiative provides professional development and resources to support the development of sustained international partnerships for global learning for today’s learners through the powerful practice of [collaborative online learning].” Dawn Michele Whitehead, vice president of the AAC&U Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers, said in a press release. “This is a wonderful opportunity to develop and model equitable global learning practices for colleges and universities.”

Though Ivy League institutions and large, flagship universities often have more money to support robust international education programs, partnerships allow even small institutions to implement meaningful initiatives that promote global collaboration.

For example, Madison College, a technical and community college in Wisconsin, recently launched its Africa Initiative, a four-year plan that encompasses efforts to expand its outreach to learners across several western African nations.

The initiative includes a partnership agreement between Madison College and The Gambian Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology, and by extension all higher education institutions within the country. The agreement involves offering online courses to Gambian students, creating transferable course credits, exchanges of faculty and students, grant development, and training on how to build research capacity. Through the overarching initiative, Madison College also partnered with Yam Education Inc., founded by alum and Burkina Faso native Ousmane Kabré, to offer six certificate-granting entrepreneurship and business courses to students in Africa.

“We want to create opportunities for all students at Madison College to understand the world, and Africa is a big part of that,” says Geoffrey Bradshaw, PhD, associate vice president of international education at Madison College. “Almost 20 percent of the world’s population lives in Africa in more than 50 different countries, but few of our students can learn from and interact with people from the continent. Hopefully, through these partnerships, we can help create opportunities for cross-cultural learning, dialogue, and exchange that makes our whole campus and community richer.”

Experts agree that global collaborative efforts like these are critical in advancing educational attainment, developing solutions to societal issues, and building a sense of mutual understanding across cultural boundaries.

“As everyone considers the particular risks involved in each international nation, we also ask the important question, ‘What do we risk by not engaging?’” Reif said at the conference. “We risk understanding much less about where the rest of the world stands and not just in terms of technology development but in terms of other people’s goals and aspirations.”
Native Americans make up nearly 9 percent of South Dakota’s population but account for only 2.8 percent of students at the state’s public universities. Since 2017, South Dakota State University (SDSU) has worked to address that disparity through its Wokini Initiative, a name that derives from the Lakota word for “new life” or “a new beginning.”

Working with the holistic framework of Wokini, SDSU has demonstrated success in recruitment, retention, and support for Native American students. For example, of the six institutions under the South Dakota Board of Regents, SDSU was the only university to see an increase in enrollment among Indigenous students from 2017 to 2021, from 252 to 271 — even with the downward enrollment trend during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Probably the most glaring societal challenge in our state has its roots in our history — the long and tortured history between the White settlement that came with colonization and the Indigenous people of our state,” says Barry Dunn, PhD, president of SDSU.

Two major components of the Wokini Initiative are the scholarship program and the American Indian Student Center on campus. Eligible scholarship students can receive up to $5,000 per year for five years, which is designed as gap funding between government and non-university scholarships. This aspect of the initiative is critical, given that high costs of college are cited as a major barrier for enrollment and completion among Native American students. For example, 72 percent of respondents in the National Study on College Affordability for Indigenous Students said they had run out of money at least once within the past six months, and 65 percent reported a household income of less than $35,000 annually.

The American Indian Student Center serves as a hub for Indigenous students and offers resources to support and retain them. Services include financial aid guidance, community and professional referrals, peer mentoring and tutoring, and a variety of social, cultural, and academic programming.

In addition to the scholarship program and student center, the Wokini Initiative has funded the construction of the Oyate Yuwitaya Tipi living–learning community for first-year Indigenous students.

“When a public university accepts federal resources and says it provides access to all, I take that responsibility seriously. We’re going to figure out a way to get access to all — and that means to the largest minority in our state,” Dunn says. “This is a way to attack our state’s challenge regarding the Indigenous people of our state and the poverty that exists on the reservations and in urban communities in South Dakota.”

In conjunction with SDSU’s Wokini Initiative, the university has intensified its collaboration with tribal colleges and universities and Native American tribes directly to better understand the needs of students. The initiative also supports research projects and adult leadership development programs designed to improve economic opportunity in tribal communities.
A coalition of nationwide rural community colleges is working to address inequities, improve educational outcomes, and grow economic opportunity through the Rural Guided Pathways Project.

The project, which launched in 2022 and will run through 2024, is spearheaded by the National Center for Inquiry & Improvement (NCII). The first of its kind to specifically serve rural institutions, the initiative is based on the Guided Pathway reform concept developed at Columbia University’s Community College Research Center, which is built on four pillars: clarifying pathways to end goals, helping students choose and enter pathways, helping students stay on path, and ensuring students are learning.

Using this framework, the objective of the rural-focused project is to ultimately create a better student experience, build a network of cross-sector community partners to increase financial and social mobility, and implement evidence-based reforms to address education and workforce inequities.

The 16 participating schools include rural community colleges, technical colleges, and other two-year institutions. Each school is required to select five or six community partners to help build a cohesive pathway for students. These partners often include local and regional employers, economic development organizations, and K-12 schools.

“Every community college should be the engine of economic opportunity in its region, but colleges cannot do this work alone,” writes Brian Shonk, EdD, chancellor of the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville, a participating school. “Community college leaders must play a more active role in bringing stakeholders together with the explicit goal of improving economic mobility. The demand for rural college leaders’ time is greater than ever, but we cannot neglect this part of our jobs. The best way to serve our students is to act not only as college leaders, but also as community leaders.”

Strategies to advance project goals include hiring more diverse faculty members; organizing regular conversations with faculty, staff, and students regarding race; building relationships with Minority-Serving Institutions; and bolstering campus advising and support services to help meet students’ basic needs. In addition to working with community partners in their region, participating colleges learn from each other by developing frameworks that can be applied to other rural, two-year institutions.

“Because rural institutions have fewer resources — faculty and staff, technology, and actual dollars — they can benefit from developing a shared responsibility framework,” writes Vicky Wood, president of Washington State Community College, one of the participating institutions.

Over the course of the two-year project, college representatives attend six two-and-a-half day institutes focused on creating an infrastructure of opportunity, integrating student financial stability structures, and cross-disciplinary learning. Each college is also assigned a Rural Pathways coach who helps in the implementation of campus reforms through in-person and virtual visits. The institutions also have access to subject matter experts that can assist with such functions as community engagement, workforce development, and building K-12 partnerships.

Institutions participating in the Rural Guided Pathways Project:

- Big Sandy Community & Technical College in Kentucky
- Colorado Mountain College
- Kilgore College in Texas
- Linn-Benton Community College in Oregon
- Marion Technical College in Ohio
- Missoula College in Montana
- Northeast Community College in Nebraska
- Patrick & Henry Community College in Virginia
- Reedley College in California
- San Juan College in New Mexico
- Southwestern Oregon Community College in Oregon
- Temple College in Texas
- University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville
- Washington State Community College in Ohio
- West Virginia Northern Community College
- White Mountain Community College in New Hampshire
San Diego State’s Anti-Racism and Equity Programs Result in Greater Diversity of Students, Lower Achievement Gaps

Written by San Diego State University Staff

San Diego State University is a 2022 INSIGHT Into Diversity Diversity Champion, one of a select group of higher education institutions that rank in the top tier of our Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award recipients. We invite Diversity Champions to share their success strategies and best practices as a way to inspire other colleges and universities to set a new standard for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within their own campus environments.

In the wake of the racial justice protests
of summer 2020, following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others, institutions across the country have increased their focus on anti-racism and dismantling systemic racism. San Diego State University (SDSU) is no exception. Our commitment to education and equity goes back decades, beginning with work in ethnic studies, and includes the first women’s studies program in the nation. That work has accelerated since the arrival of SDSU President Adela de la Torre in 2018. Led by the Division of Student Affairs & Campus Diversity, over 40 new initiatives and programs have been implemented since her arrival to advance social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion for all members of our community.

San Diego State University is a multicampus, Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) located on the lands of the Kumeyaay Nations and part of the U.S.-Mexico transborder region. At the heart of our commitment to social justice is an understanding that addressing imbalances of power, accessibility, equity, and privilege requires change not only in individual behavior and attitudes but also in institutional systems, structures, and policies. Through professional learning, community building, advocacy, policy, and organizational structures, we work proactively to address systemic inequities, while facilitating an integrated vision and shared responsibility for prioritizing and advancing institutional goals. This work is shared by colleagues across the campus via an integrated infrastructure that emphasizes shared governance and capacity building.

Sharing the Work
One of the keys to integrating equity and inclusion in everything we do is ensuring that individual campus units are engaged in work that is meaningful to them. To that end, every division, college, and auxiliary organization has a unit-specific diversity plan that establishes goals and strategies to improve representation, climate and success for the faculty and staff working within those units. In addition, every academic department has a unit-specific diversity plan with strategies to support the college-level goals, to improve faculty and staff competencies with equity-minded practices, and to integrate anti-racism and social justice across the curriculum. Examples of these strategies:

• Having an inclusion representative (equity advocate) on each tenure-track faculty search committee;

• Requiring implicit bias training for all faculty and staff involved in hiring and evaluation;

• Encouraging participation in professional learning about inclusive communication, anti-racism, and equity-minded pedagogy;
• Developing an explicit program and course learning outcomes related to social justice;

• Expanding onboarding and mentoring programs for faculty and staff.

These plans were developed by the faculty and staff within those units after analyzing relevant data and discussing local needs; they were then reviewed by the University Senate’s Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to ensure that every plan meets criteria requiring meaningful analysis, alignment of goals and interventions, and clear articulation of assessment measures.

**Sharing Governance**

The majority of SDSU’s advances around social justice have come from campus processes that have invited input from the entire community. Many have been initiated by the University Senate, such as the abovementioned unit-level diversity plans, which originated in a 2018 Senate resolution. Initiatives such as a formal Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgement, requiring all tenure-track faculty hires to meet criteria around supporting underrepresented populations, and establishing local diversity councils in every college and division have been adopted by the Senate into the official Policy File of the institution. Other programs, such as professional learning around bias for all those involved in
hiring and evaluation, an organized campus structure for increasing visibility of heritage months, and integrating our campus identity as an HSI and our connection with the Kumeyaay into campus onboarding for all students, faculty, and staff, came out of the SDSU strategic plan, We Rise We Defy: Transcending Borders, Transforming Lives. The Strategic Plan also serves as the campus diversity plan in that equity and inclusion are integrated throughout rather than being separately siloed, and it was developed over several months of engagement with thousands of students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

Building Capacity
To ensure that our faculty and staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and support to effectively implement our shared commitment to equity and inclusion, SDSU has put in place a number of organizational structures. The Center for Inclusive Excellence (CIE) serves as the campus hub for professional learning around equity and inclusion topics. Each year, the CIE facilitates workshops and learning communities on topics such as foundations of inclusive teaching and inclusive workplaces, responding to microaggressions, equity-minded hiring and evaluation, and supporting specific student and community populations. The CIE also provides the training and orientation for inclusion representatives, the equity advocates who sit on tenure-track search committees. CIE programming is augmented by support from divisional and college diversity councils. Each division and college also has a diversity liaison; the liaisons meet regularly to facilitate communication and collaboration across units.

Realizing Our Mission
Fighting systemic racism at SDSU starts with creating equitable opportunity for students from underrepresented groups to pursue higher education. Then, the focus shifts to creating the plans, accountability, and support structures to enable and empower those students with equitable paths to success. The university is succeeding on both fronts. SDSU’s student body is larger and more diverse than ever in its 125-year history, while achievement gaps in graduation rates for underrepresented populations are in the low single digits and trending toward zero. While the work is not done, SDSU’s commitment to continuous improvement is demonstrating tangible progress and results.
Since achieving HSI status in 2019, Texas Tech University has continued to search for ways to better serve our first-generation, rural, Pell-eligible, and underrepresented students. As part of those efforts, we enthusiastically welcome Dr. Jarett Lujan as Texas Tech's inaugural HSI Director and look forward to his efforts to promote and coordinate HSI efforts across the Texas Tech campus.
In this issue we recognize and honor LGBTQ+ Pride Month, which celebrates and affirms the positive impact of LGBTQ+ individuals on societies around the world. In U.S. state and national politics, however, the LGBTQ+ community continues to face wide-ranging and intense legislative resistance, actions that reverberate across college campuses and threaten the safety and mental health of students as well as employees. We asked advocacy experts to weigh in on these legal challenges as well as highlight opportunities for support and allyship. We also focus on innovative university initiatives that lean into inclusive best practices, such as an LGBTQ+ Scholarship in Residence program at UPenn, a national foundation that generously meets increasing demand for educational financial assistance for LGBTQ+ students, and a first-of-its kind online, worldwide resource hub. To illuminate the struggle and remind us why the colorful festivals, parades, and marches are so vital to the cause, Rodney Wilson, the founder of LGBTQ+ History Month, shares his thoughts about “Pride” and how that “essential ingredient” will continue to move the rights of the LGBTQ+ community forward.

How to Be a Better Ally

Studies show that being a good ally to the LGBTQ+ community involves three central components:

Be Accepting
You want equal rights for everyone and care that people are treated fairly.

Take Action
You speak out against LGBTQ+ discrimination and seek out opportunities to learn about LGBTQ+ issues.

Have Humility
You try to learn about LGBTQ+ issues from the community and listen more than speak on such issues.

Information courtesy of Harvard Business Review’s article: “Research: How to Be a Better Ally to the LGBTQ+ Community”

AMA Names First LGBTQ+ President

Jesse Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, has been named the first LGBTQ+ president of the American Medical Association (AMA), the national organization and lobbying group representing physicians and medical students.

Ehrenfeld, a clinical anesthesiologist and U.S. Navy combat veteran from Wisconsin, has been active with the association since medical school and was elected to the AMA Board of Trustees in 2014. He is nationally recognized for his research contributions and advocacy for LGBTQ+ individuals.

In a recent interview with the Associated Press, Ehrenfeld addressed the difficulties that have come with anti-LGBTQ+ bias in the health care field and the impact he hopes to make while serving as president.

“I’ve experienced the health care system as a gay person, as a gay parent, as in many ways wonderful positive experiences and other ways, some deeply harmful experiences,” he said. “And I know that we can do better as a nation. We can do better as a system that can lift up health. And I expect that there will be opportunities to shine a light on that during my year as president.”

Binghamton Unveils New LGBTQ+ Living Community

A new LGBTQ+ Living Community will be available to freshmen students in fall 2023 at Binghamton University in New York. The residence hall features corridor-style rooms with 22 beds. The move is part of a wider effort to provide inclusive housing options to students across campus.
Resource Hub Sees Spike in Demand as Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation Grows

By Nikki Brahm

Because of an intensified anti-LGBTQ+ political climate, the nonprofit organization and website platform InReach, which connects LGBTQ+ individuals to safe, verified resources such as housing, food, and medical care, is increasingly in demand.

The project, originally branded as AsylumConnect, was founded in 2016 by two University of Pennsylvania students. Jamie Sgarro, the organization’s executive director, developed the idea with Sy, an LGBTQ+ individual who was then seeking asylum in the U.S. and struggling to find resources.

“We’re the world’s first tech platform matching LGBTQ+ people facing persecution and discrimination with safe, verified resources,” says Sgarro. “It basically functions as a digital one-stop shop for the entire diverse LGBTQ+ community.”

The nonprofit helps LGBTQ+ individuals ranging from asylum seekers, refugees, and other immigrants to Indigenous people and people of color, and youth and their caregivers. They offer services including legal and medical assistance, meals, mental health support, housing, and abortion resources. All providers listed on the website undergo a unique vetting process at least once every six months to ensure they are active and legitimate, LGBTQ+ affirming, and meet InReach’s intersectionality definitions.

An application redesign set to be released in May is intended to make it easier to navigate InReach and search for resources specific to one’s needs in a particular city.

Sgarro’s work is personal. He first came out as a lesbian at the age of 21 and later as a transgender man at 26.

“I actually ended up using what we had built at InReach to help me in my own transition, [to] find legal, medical, [and] mental health services,” he says.

With a passion for transgender justice and because of his experiences building InReach, Sgarro was inspired to pursue a law degree. He is currently a student at Northeastern University School of Law.

The United States has represented hope for people living in countries where it’s illegal to be LGBTQ+ — where they even sometimes face the death penalty, says Sgarro. Now the idea of seeking asylum and forced migration extends to LGBTQ+ individuals born in the U.S. who consider moving to other states due to targeted anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. More than 500 anti-transgender rights bills have been introduced in 2023 — with 379 bills that are active, 47 that have passed, and 99 that have failed — according to the Trans Legislation Tracker.

“InReach is] the world’s first tech platform matching LGBTQ+ people facing persecution and discrimination with safe, verified resources.”

Jamie Sgarro

For more information visit inreach.org
Alok Vaid-Menon, a renowned gender-nonconforming, transfeminine writer and multimedia artist, will serve as the inaugural Scholar in Residence at the University of Pennsylvania’s (UPenn) Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center (LGBT Center).

Vaid-Menon performs under the moniker ALOK, and is known for their work in poetry, comedy, and fashion that touches on topics such as gender, race, trauma, and belonging.

Through the Scholar in Residence program, UPenn will bring a diverse group of LGBTQ+ voices to campus. The initiative launched in April and is funded by a $2 million anonymous donation.

“It's a profound honor to be the inaugural LGBTQ+ Scholar in Residence at [UPenn],” says ALOK. “In the face of escalating malalignment, we see a widening chasm between the reality of LGBTQ+ lives and the misrepresentation of our communities in media and society. As LGBTQ+ scholars and artists, we must continue to debunk anti-LGBTQ+ misinformation while also harnessing the power of LGBTQ+ storytelling to create a more inclusive and magnificent world. I’m looking forward to connecting with UPenn students, faculty, and staff to celebrate the living poetry of our existence in these turbulent times.”

UPenn Scholars in Residence are selected by an advisory board of students with support from faculty and staff. The particular role of visiting scholars depends on their areas of expertise. For example, a well-known LGBTQ+ activist may be on campus for brief events such as lectures or workshops while a queer theory scholar may conduct research and teach a semester-long course.

“The scholars will not only be role models, but they will also highlight UPenn’s commitment to diversity while promoting greater understanding on campus and in the wider community,” says Erin Cross, director of UPenn’s LGBT Center. “ALOK has already been an inspiration to our students from afar, and their impact will be even greater working with young people here on campus.”

During their residency, ALOK will perform, share meals with students, lead workshops, and guest teach in graduate and undergraduate classes.

“I'm really excited to see more South Asian nonbinary academics on campus, especially someone that is unapologetically themselves,” Haydr Dutta, a first-year UPenn student and member of the LGBT Center's transgender and nonbinary committee, told The Daily Pennsylvanian. “It is really inspiring to see the work they do, and I look forward to welcoming them to UPenn. I'm personally looking forward to the workshops they will be doing with students.”

More information about the University of Pennsylvania’s Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Center can be found at lgbtcenter.universitylife.upenn.edu
Support of our LGBTQIA+ students, faculty and staff mirrors our institutional values and commitment to inclusive excellence. Our welcoming and supportive environment develops professionals, scholars and leaders who shape a changing world.
UAB’s SafeZone celebrates 20 years of providing LGBTQ+ education and training

More than 20 years ago, faculty members across campus, including Glenda Elliott, Ph.D., associate professor emerita in the UAB School of Education, began coordinating efforts to develop services dedicated to LGBTQ+ students on campus. In 2001, the organizing committee appointed Virginia Gauld, Ph.D., then vice president for Student Affairs, to develop a proposal for services. The committee, chaired by Elliott, proposed the Safe Zone program, and a pilot training session for the program was held.

“When we developed the Safe Zone program, the goals were to raise awareness, increase understanding of issues and concerns LGBTQ+ individuals face, and identify resources available to any member of the UAB community,” said Elliott.

Positive feedback from attendees of the pilot training resulted in the approval of the Safe Zone program, and the first campuswide training was held in February 2002. Later that year, in the fall semester, a second campuswide training was held, marking the first year of the UAB Safe Zone program.

Now designated as SafeZone, the program offers in-person and online training sessions to faculty and staff on LGBTQ+ issues they may encounter while working with students.

Today UAB offers services not only to faculty and staff, but also to students. Under the Student Multicultural and Diversity Programs in the Division of Student Affairs, a SafeZone program was founded in 2015 for undergraduate and graduate students.

“SafeZone provides a space where students learn and ask questions about LGBTQ+ identities and social justice issues, which empowers those students to champion inclusion both on and off campus,” said Daniel Blackwood, UAB Student Affairs LGBTQ+ Programs graduate assistant. “However, SafeZone does more than equip students with knowledge; it also serves to make UAB’s commitment to diversity and inclusion visible for all LGBTQ+ individuals who come to our campus.”
I was four years old in June 1969 when young queers, drag queens, and transgender activists stood up to a cultural infrastructure deeply rooted in absolutist heteronormativity and fearful obedience to gender customs; and my mother was buying my kindergarten clothes when those events at the Stonewall Inn were commemorated a year later with gay liberation gatherings in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and LA.

The June 1970 anniversary event in New York, called Christopher Street Liberation Day, was sort of a micro-evolution of the Annual Reminder pickets at Philadelphia’s Independence Hall every July 4 dating back to my birth year, 1965. (Thank you, Frank Kameny, Barbara Gittings, Kay Tobin Lahusen, et al.) The early 1970s Stonewall reminders didn’t yet have a Pride Flag (Gilbert Baker would gift that to the community in 1978); and they weren’t quite the joyful, free-spirited celebrations they are today.

What to name those June festivities would evolve as well, to one powerful five-letter word: Pride. Pride marches. Pride rallies. Pride parades. Gay pride. That powerful word — “pride” — became indelibly stamped on these (daylong, weeklong, and now monthlong) festivals of colorful people celebrating a colorful community. Even the mainstream eventually joined the party when Pride Month was first officially recognized by presidential proclamation in 1999, on the thirtieth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion.

For just about forever prior to that seventh decade of the twentieth century, LGBTQ+ persons (with some notable exceptions) were forced to be ashamed of themselves. Most preachers, politicians, and community pillars labeled LGBTQ+ persons an offense to religion and state. Queer psyches were washed in hurtful epithets and social shame. That these same labeled people grabbed hold of the word “pride” to name their movement was an act of civil disobedience against both history and language. Early organizers exchanged secret shame for public pride — self-worth, self-dignity, and self-respect. Choosing the word “pride” was brave. And defiant. (We owe much to these 1960s and 1970s radicals!)

As we enter Pride Month 2023, I would love to write that everything is settled and made right. Unfortunately, this isn’t the case. We are in the middle of a fierce backlash against our community — particularly against transgender, gender nonconforming, and nonbinary persons.

Pride Month is about where we live in the present, even when the present isn’t quite what we want it to be. LGBTQ+ History Month (October in the U.S.) is about how we lived and advocated in the past. History, of course, is a source of pride. Speaking of Stonewall, exploring the lives of civil rights genius Bayard Rustin or brave astronaut Sally Ride, remembering everyone who ever contributed to our human rights movement fills us with gratitude and with pride. History, after all, gifts us a prideful narrative in which we ourselves can walk and unfolds a story in which we ourselves write our own happy chapters.

Pride Month, the most global (and most fun) of all queer community events, is observed all over the world. While not as universal (yet), History Month is celebrated in 19 locations around the globe, with four added in 2022: Italy, Cuba, France, and Uganda. Our International Committee on LGBTQ+ History Months, organized in the fall of 2021, brings together academics, archivists, teachers, and activists from all over the world who believe that recovering, preserving, and publicizing history is vital work in all human rights movements, including our own.

Pride Month and History Month stand together as resolute assertions that every human being has a right to their history, their stories, and their pride. Every hindrance that denies these possibilities, especially to our young people, must be opposed. Every action that causes our community to stumble must be countered. Every prejudice that makes it less likely that we attain our life potential must be overcome.

Our work, every month of the year, is about creating an ever-expanding safe place for everyone to be proud of themselves and to be brave and wise citizens who don’t back down to bullies on the street or bullies in state legislatures.

Pride is an essential ingredient. History is another. History nourishes pride. Pride energizes history. Pride. History. Partners — this month and well into the future.

By Rodney Wilson

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By Rodney Wilson, the first openly gay public schoolteacher in Missouri, is the founder of LGBTQ+ History Month USA. He is co-founder of the International Committee on LGBTQ+ History Months, a collaborative body of representatives for the world’s 19 LGBTQ+ History Months. He is the subject of the docu-short “Taboo Teaching.”
Point Foundation Increases Support as LGBTQ+ Scholarship Applications Continue to Rise

By Nikki Brahm

Since its inception 21 years ago, the Point Foundation has become the largest scholarship-granting organization for LGBTQ+ college students in the country. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the organization awarded scholarships to 98 students. This year, that number has risen to 552 and is expected to exceed 570 in 2023-2024.

The organization has positively impacted the lives of LGBTQ+ youth across the country, including Jo Lew, who grew up in Coppell, Texas, and came out as bisexual the same day the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage — June 26, 2015.

With limited resources and parents who worked at low-paying jobs in the service industry, the COVID-19 pandemic led to their family experiencing homelessness in 2021. Lew persevered with scholarship funds from the Point Foundation to continue their postsecondary education at Southern Methodist University, where they are now a senior.

Lew received the organization’s Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Scholarship — which provides financial assistance, coaching, and community support. They also received the Flagship Scholarship, which supports LGBTQ+ students as they pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.

“Knowing that there are so many high-achieving, queer individuals that want to help and see other queer individuals succeed is something that means a lot,” Lew says. “I know for me that if I [hadn’t received] Point’s help, I really don’t know how I would have made it through college.”

The need in the community has always been present, says Jorge Valencia, the nonprofit’s executive director and CEO. He attributes the spike in award opportunities to new methods of fundraising during the COVID-19 pandemic. At one time, the organization received over 1,500 applications for only 20 scholarships. This year approximately 1,000 more applications were submitted compared to last year.

These awards can be life changing for LGBTQ+ students, Valencia says, as higher education opportunities provide hope for a new beginning among those who are not accepted at home or bullied at school. Yet LGBTQ+ youth with a lack of financial support and instability face greater hurdles.

LGBTQ+ adults are more likely (35.4 percent) to have federal student loans than non-LGBTQ+ adults (23.2 percent), with especially high rates of debt among transgender students (51 percent), according to 2021 survey results outlined in the report “Federal Student Loan Debt Among LGBTQ People,” conducted by the Williams Institute and the Point Foundation.

“Many people and companies haven’t always seen education as something that is in a crisis,” says Valencia. “When you look at the cost of higher education to begin with, and the fact that it’s gone up by almost 200 percent since the ’80s, it becomes very inaccessible to some individuals, especially those in our community who might not have the support that others do.”

In addition to the Flagship and BIPOC scholarships, Point Foundation offers the Community College Scholarship, which provides financial aid and coaching to community college students. Research by the foundation finds that nearly one-third of LGBTQ+ people attend community college, and approximately 75 percent of those surveyed reported they were not out to the campus community.

Recently, the organization also announced a $1 million commitment to fight against LGBTQ+ oppression in response to the rise in anti-LGBTQ+ legislative bills under consideration and those already passed across the country. These funds increased the number of scholarship recipients pursuing degrees in the fields of law, political science, filmmaking, writing, education, and journalism.

“As a member of a community that has seen so much hate come at those [who] in many ways aren’t able to defend themselves because they’re young, we wanted to do our part in this fight,” Valencia says.

The Point Foundation has just begun partnering with educational institutions to launch scholarship pilot programs. More details will be announced this summer.

For more information about the Point Foundation’s LGBTQ+ College Scholarships, visit pointfoundation.org.
Fostering a campus environment where all individuals feel a sense of belonging is essential to creating a diverse, inclusive community. At Lehigh, ongoing initiatives include forums that enable honest dialogue, robust support systems and resources, and an engaged community of allies. This important work continues to be a priority to which Lehigh remains fully dedicated.
Amid Relentless Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislative Resistance, Universities Must Do More to Support Their Campus Communities

By Nikki Brahm
State lawmakers are introducing and passing a multitude of harmful legislative initiatives targeting LGBTQ+ civil rights, and those actions are impacting the mental health and safety of high school and college students. Amid the frenzy of political and legal battles, higher education is being called upon to accelerate support services and policies to protect the rights of its LGBTQ+ students and employees.

Along with civil rights, conservatives are assailing issues involving free speech and expression, education, health care, and gender-neutral bathrooms as well as gender identification processes.

“Many bills focus on K-12 education and youth populations under the guise of ‘protecting the children,’ although more frequently we are seeing bills introduced that impact the work of public colleges and universities as well as restrictions on access to gender-affirming health care for adults,” says Eli Kean, PhD, assistant professor in gender and sexuality studies at Northwestern University.

The transgender community, especially, faces serious threats in 2023, which marks the fourth consecutive record-breaking year in the number of proposed bills impacting their rights, according to the Trans Legislation Tracker. Health care, sports participation, curriculum, drag, and forced outing are all under attack.

Anti-trans template bills produced by conservative Christian groups such as Alliance Defending Freedom and Family Research Council propel many of these efforts, Kean says.

Higher education traditionally serves as a beacon of hope for LGBTQ+ people but too often the reality is different, finds the Williams Institute, an LGBTQ+ think tank at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), School of Law. In a 2022 survey of LGBTQ+ four-year college and graduate students, 22 percent said they selected an institution away from home to find a more welcoming environment. However, 33 percent of those surveyed reported they were bullied, harassed, or assaulted on campus.

“I used to think if people can get to college, they’re going to make it; they’re in a pretty good place,” says Kerith Conron, ScD, research director at the Williams Institute. “But we found a lot of college students were experiencing food insecurity. Graduate students were also not getting the mentoring that they’d like to get or not having the experiences that you’d expect.”

Amid the current political climate and concern for the safety of the LGBTQ+ community, experts are calling on colleges and universities to intensify their student services and fortify equity policies. INSIGHT Into Diversity asked thought leaders and advocates to share their observations on current legislation and best practices in support of LGBTQ+ campus communities. They cite a wide range of strategies to help ensure the well-being of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff.

Q&A Panel

Margaux Cowden, PhD, is chief program officer with the Point Foundation, the largest scholarship-granting nonprofit for LGBTQ+ students.

Maxx Fenning is founder and president of PRISM Florida, which works to expand access to LGBTQ+-inclusive education and sexual health resources for youth in South Florida. He is also a business administration student at the University of Florida.

Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD, is an assistant professor of nursing at the University of Pennsylvania and a faculty expert with the Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative, an academic social entrepreneurship lab.

Richard Helldobler, PhD, is board president of LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education, which advances effective leadership in the realm of postsecondary education, supports the professional development of LGBTQ+ leaders, and provides education and advocacy on current issues. He is also the president of William Paterson University.

Casey Pick, JD, is director of law and policy at The Trevor Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending suicide among LGBTQ+ youth.

Shane Windmeyer is founder and executive director of Campus Pride, a nonprofit organization committed to making colleges safer for LGBTQ+ students.

Opposite: The Progress Pride Flag is held up at the LGBTQ+ Pride March at Pennsylvania State University on April 12, 2023. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Mansell/Penn State)
What current anti-LGBTQ+ legislation stands out to you as most egregious?

Cowden: What’s happening right now is alarming because more of these bills are starting to actually pass into law. In addition to reducing and eliminating formal policies and programs that support the rights and freedom of LGBTQ+ people, the passage of anti-LGBTQ+ laws that affect schools and young people has a dampening effect on even informal, individual types of support for LGBTQ+ students. For example, a teacher who would otherwise be affirming of their students’ identities now questions whether they can be supportive of LGBTQ+ students and still keep their job.

Fenning: What stands out to us most is the sheer volume of anti-LGBT legislation moving through the Florida legislature this session. In particular, our focus is LGBT-inclusive education, something specifically impacted by bills such as [Florida’s] HB 1069 and [Florida’s] HB 999.

Flores: As an assistant professor of nursing, legislation that curtails trans-affirming medical and nursing practice rises to the top. Central to a health care provider’s work is the provision of the best possible care available. Given the preponderance of evidence-based practice guidelines from experts worldwide, withholding such lifesaving care is unconscionable. The fact that state legislatures are being used to inhibit affirming care is outside the bounds of acceptable behavior.

Helldobler: Frankly, all the anti-LGBTQ+ legislation stands out as an infringement on the fundamental freedoms of expression and the ability of all Americans to live their lives as they choose. At LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education, we are most concerned about those laws (proposed and passed) that impede the foundational tenets of academic freedom and/or attempt to erase the histories of LGBTQ+ or other marginalized populations. Additionally, those efforts to subvert diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in academic institutions are a systemic attempt to prevent access and stifle creation of a more enlightened society, which is a fundamental purpose of education.

Pick: We are witnessing another historic wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in states all across the country. Lawmakers are considering a range of harmful bills that target LGBTQ+ young people — and trans and nonbinary youth in particular. Many of these bills are similar to Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay/Trans” bill that aims to silence discussions of LGBTQ+ people in schools, others are being proposed to restrict access to best-practice transgender medical care for young people who need it. Some bills we are tracking would force teachers and school officials to out students to their parents — regardless of whether their families are supportive; and others call to ban students from playing on sports teams that match their gender identity. While there are many different types of bills being considered, they all share the same goal: politicians are using LGBTQ+ young people to score political points.

Windmeyer: More than any one piece of legislation, Campus Pride is alarmed at the unprecedented number of anti-LGBTQ+ laws and policies that have been proposed. The ACLU is currently tracking 469 anti-LGBTQ+ bills in 46 states, some of which have already passed. College students are impacted by many of them, from those limiting health care to those limiting free

“Nearly one in three LGBTQ+ young people said their mental health was poor most of the time or always due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation.”

Casey Pick, JD
speech and expression. We’re especially concerned about bills like Florida’s HB 999 and SB 266 which would prohibit colleges and universities from spending money on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

What is the most innovative program, policy, or project at your organization or institution in support of LGBTQ+ campus community members?

Cowden: Point Foundation’s BIPOC Scholarship is designed to support LGBTQ+ students of color at every level of higher education [who are] enrolled in any number of credits at any accredited college or university in the United States. It’s a merit-based, need-informed scholarship that requires no minimum GPA — only proof of enrollment and a demonstrated commitment to education. The goal is to provide funding to overcome immediate financial barriers and thereby increase enrollment and persistence for LGBTQ+ BIPOC students, who navigate more and more complex obstacles to education as a result of the intersecting impact of racism and homophobia.

Fenning: The PRISM Student Ambassador Program (P-SAP) gives students the opportunity to actively connect with other LGBTQ+ student leaders through monthly meetings, group activities, and a hub for communication through Discord. PRISM assists in coordinating LGBTQ+-related observances on campus, navigating discussions on hard-hitting topics in club or group meetings, providing information about students’ rights, and more.

Flores: The Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative is one of the University of Pennsylvania’s latest programs that stands to benefit LGBTQ+ folks both on campus and beyond. It has a wide mandate to explore solutions to long-term health inequalities and to anticipate emergent issues germane for community members. By design, there is nimbleness in its capacity to leverage our campus assets for the advancement of LGBTQ+-centered care.

Helldobler: LGBTQ Leaders in Higher Education has partnered with The Virtual Care Group to give member organizations a discounted rate to provide virtual mental health care for our students. We are excited about this value-added opportunity for member organizations and, of course, for the critical care it will provide to our students.

Pick: The Trevor Project’s 2023 National Survey provides a glimpse into how the recent wave of anti-LGBTQ+ policies in the U.S. — and the harmful rhetoric surrounding these policies — have taken a toll on the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people. Nearly one in three LGBTQ+ young people said their mental health was poor most of the

Students participate in Alternative Breaks hosted by Campus Pride to learn the basics of LGBTQ+ activism and outreach and generate change on their campus. (Photo courtesy of Campus Pride)

Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD, (left) assistant professor of nursing at the University of Pennsylvania and faculty expert with the Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative, chats at an Eidos campus event in April 2023. (Photo courtesy of Eidos LGBTQ+ Health Initiative)
time or always due to anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation, and nearly two in three said hearing about potential state or local laws banning people from discussing LGBTQ+ people at school made their mental health a lot worse.

Windmeyer: Since 2007, Camp Pride has offered a safe space for LGBTQ+ students to find community and learn valuable leadership skills. Students come together for five days in the summer, share challenges and strategies, then leave empowered to make change on their campuses. At the same time, our Advisor Academy provides faculty, staff, graduate students, and administrators with training in best practices, advising skills, and other ways to actively support students. This summer, Camp Pride will be held in person in Charlotte, N.C., for the first time in three years.

What is the best way to support the LGBTQ+ community as a campus ally or DEI leader?

Cowden: Recent research suggests that as many as 27 percent of undergraduates identify as LGBTQ+. This means a significant proportion of [the] student body is trying to succeed while navigating an increasingly hostile climate. [Campuses should] make sure [they] have gender-inclusive housing and bathrooms. Increase the staffing in LGBTQ+ centers (yes, they definitely need more staff). Find ways for students’ pronouns and preferred names to be mirrored across the student information system and learning management system. If state law limits the power of university leaders to provide affirming LGBTQ+ campus programs and spaces, it is more important than ever for university leaders to be prepared to listen to and engage directly with LGBTQ+ students on their campus.

Fenning: Every campus has unique needs, so one of the most important things [to] do as an ally to LGBTQ+ students is to listen. Understanding the needs of students on campus and how [to] best meet those needs requires intentionally engaging and learning from [them].

Flores: A whisper of an effort can be as loud as a thousand virtuous people marching in the streets. As long as we’re sincere and consistent in our allyship, we’re making a difference. This can be a conversation with someone who’s never had an interaction with an LGBTQ+ person or standing against unacceptable behavior when we witness it. As long as we use our social capital to serve as a platform for marginalized people, we’re doing important work.

At the heart of The University of Tulsa’s mission and values is a commitment to educate people of diverse backgrounds and identities in an environment of equity, inclusion and respect.
At The College of the Holy Cross equity and belonging are woven into the fabric of our campus and curriculum. As a Jesuit liberal arts institution, everyone — from students to faculty and staff — learns about and seeks to embody the Ignatian tradition of people for and with others. We are a community of compassion, understanding and openness. We strive for an atmosphere where each person is celebrated as their true self. Those ideals are baked into our identity, but we understand the pursuit of an equitable and inclusive community requires action and dedication. It’s through an infinite number of lived experiences that we grow and the College becomes the best version of itself, one that includes all races, sexual orientations and gender identities.

“A whisper of an effort can be as loud as a thousand virtuous people marching in the streets. As long as we’re sincere and consistent in our allyship, we’re making a difference.”

Dalmacio Dennis Flores, PhD

The best way to support the LGBTQ+ campus community is by making inclusion a pillar of the institution. When every decision — from admissions policies to course offerings to facilities management to faculty support — is viewed through a lens of inclusion, it promotes an atmosphere where all students, staff, and faculty can thrive. Not every person on campus has the power to determine the institutional climate, but every person on campus contributes to it. Staying aware of the anti-LGBTQ+ climate and how it is impacting students is a good place to start.

What message do you share with LGBTQ+ individuals who are struggling with their mental health, a lack of support or acceptance, or in meeting their basic needs?

Cowden: Connecting with an LGBTQ+ community can make a big difference. We exist everywhere, and I strongly encourage searching online for local LGBTQ+ organizations or resources. If it does not feel safe to seek
community in person, consider an online community through Discord or another social platform. Finally: You are amazing and loved. Any room you are in is lucky to have you. Your experiences as an LGBTQ+ person have made you strong, and a global community of other LGBTQ+ people and elders has your back. Know that we are fighting with you and for you.

Fenning: Remember that you are not alone. There are thousands of people facing the same struggles as you and thousands working to support you. Connect with local organizations and support networks in your community and lean on that community where it makes sense for you.

Flores: If you struggle with lack of support or acceptance, know that you’re not alone going through that ordeal. We can never pick the families or communities we’re born into. However, it may be just a matter of time before those in our circle come around to recognizing and supporting us. That or we find our own set of people who eagerly await us and will instantaneously “get” us when we finally meet.

Helldobler: Seek out resources, lean on your tribe, and while we know it is difficult right now, it will get better. More LGBTQ+ legislators are being elected to office every year and corporate America is becoming more accepting and engaging in advocacy. These are important gains. The more we live proudly as our authentic selves, the more that pride becomes a way of life and not just a celebration in June.

Pick: To LGBTQ+ young people who might be having a difficult time with increased anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric across the nation, The Trevor Project wants to remind you that you’re not alone. We will never stop fighting to protect you. If you or someone you know needs help or support, The Trevor Project’s trained crisis counselors are available 24/7 at 1-866-488-7386, via chat at TheTrevorProject.org/Get-Help, or by texting START to 678678.

Windmeyer: LGBTQ+ students may feel isolated on their campuses and often lack the resources and experience to find the support they need. That’s one reason it’s so important for campuses to provide support services and opportunities for LGBTQ+ people to see themselves in the curriculum and to connect with each other. LGBTQ+ students need to know that they aren’t alone and that they are part of a large, beautiful community with a rich history, full of people who care deeply about them and who are working tirelessly every day to make the world safer for them.
A Center of Welcome

The Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center at East Carolina University provides a network of support and a sense of community for students, faculty, staff and alumni of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions.

The largest center of its kind in North Carolina, the Peel Center hosts more than 7,000 student visits each year. Programs, services and events – including campus and community collaborations such as ally-training workshops and interfaith symposia – create opportunities for conversation and learning.

Championing the belief that all are welcome, ECU works tirelessly in advancing our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
Schools of Arts and Communications Prioritize Programs that Celebrate Cultural Diversity

“By any measure ... education without the arts — a fundamental mode of human expression — is incomplete. But the value of arts education is deeper. The arts are a rich source of history and cultural identity. Learning from the voices of different cultures and histories provides the opportunity to reflect on the complexity of human experience across time and place.”

That sentiment comes from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences’ 2021 report, “Art for Life’s Sake.” Performing and fine arts schools and schools of communication in higher education are drawing on these very same ideas to build more inclusive programs that embrace wider cultural horizons.

Examples of their efforts fill the pages of this special section. Schools in Arkansas and New York are moving beyond studies in Eurocentric, classical music to more inclusive genres such as gospel, jazz, and hip-hop as well as expanding the diversity of their student populations. At California State University, students are workshopping a musical production focused on the intersection of the Latino-LGBTQ+ experience. The Advancing Latinx Art in Museums initiative allows for new curatorial positions in Latino art at several university museums, addressing a broad gap in artistic representation. And at American University, students spearhead a campus DEI campaign, casting light on the school’s advocacy initiatives and creating more meaningful dialogue.
The Florida State University College of Fine Arts is a place where learning and creativity are nurtured through instruction, research, and practice. The College is a close-knit community of faculty, students, and professionals that functions as an arts conservatory within a major university. It is home to a unique combination of visual and performing arts studios, classrooms, performance spaces, and museums. The College strives to instill the strength, skill, and character essential for lifelong learning, personal responsibility, and sustained achievement within a community that fosters free inquiry and embraces diversity. Our students are some of tomorrow’s most promising artists, researchers, and professionals in their fields. The College’s recent recognition include:

- FSU School of Theatre ranked No. 19 in The Hollywood Reporter’s 2022 Top 25 Drama Schools, and the Theatre Graduate Acting Program was also recognized by the publication as being one of the Top 25 Best College Drama Programs globally, in their annual list of best schools for an acting degree.

- The MS Art Therapy program had a 100% GRADUATE JOB PLACEMENT RATE in 2021 and a faculty member was recognized by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) with an Honorary Lifetime Membership, the highest honor awarded by the organization.

- The Department of Interior Architecture & Design ranked among the top 10 “Most Admired” interior design graduate schools in the country by Design Intelligence for 2019–2020 and was named one of “16 Interior Design Schools Worth Applying to” by Architectural Digest.
A pilot project known as the District of Inclusivity (DOI) puts American University (AU) students at the forefront of campus diversity communications and conversations.

The initiative is embodied by a student-run Instagram feed that highlights a variety of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts led by students, faculty, and staff as well as relevant events and discussion. The social media account is just the first phase of the project with expanded offerings such as podcasts and campus forums to come later.

Though DOI is student led, the early concept of the project was pioneered by its three current faculty advisers: Priya Doshi, senior professorial lecturer in the School of Communications; Amanda Taylor, EdD, assistant vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion for the School of International Service; and Stacy Merida, PhD, assistant dean for diversity and inclusion for the Kogod School of Business Department of Management.

Believing that there was a disconnect between AU’s DEI efforts and students’ perceptions of the institution’s commitment, the advisers suspected that the school’s communications methods, such as email announcements, were not resonating with recipients. They commissioned graduate students in the school of communications to research student sentiment toward the university’s DEI-centric messaging, including a Twitter content analysis, one-on-one interviews, and questionnaires. Findings indicated that despite a strong commitment to DEI on campus and students’ perceived value in the work, they primarily viewed institutional DEI initiatives as reactive or performative, says Doshi.

“In general, AU students, like many of their counterparts in the Gen Z space, are really concerned with DEI, and it’s a huge priority area for them,” she says. “They really want organizations to put it front and center, but they often feel like organizations are just checking the box. They see [DEI work] as an ongoing journey and they want more of a dialogue.”

These findings laid the foundation for DOI and made it clear that student involvement was imperative. AU hired four students of color to serve as inclusive excellence ambassadors. They manage, design, curate, and maintain DOI’s Instagram page, which currently serves as the project’s primary means of connecting students to the university’s DEI initiatives.

“When we center our work around creating space and support for students to lift their own voices, that’s when we’re really doing the meaningful DEI work,” says Taylor. “That’s when we see the efforts blossom and get taken up by our students.”

One of the key components of DOI is that it is led by students for students, which will ultimately result in more engagement in DEI initiatives throughout the campus community, says Vikram Lakshmanan, a recent AU international studies and business graduate and outgoing inclusive excellence ambassador.

“We noticed a gap in communication between campus planning and students,” says Lakshmanan. “We wanted to bridge...
that gap by creating a platform that could help amplify the voices from our campus and our local community. Our comprehensive aim has been to show organizations, students, and faculty that have all contributed to [DEI] practices that are happening on campus.”

Like everything DOI does, its name was created through a democratic process between the student ambassadors. Though currently only serving the AU campus, the “District of Inclusivity” name indicates the initiative’s eventual goal of serving as a hub for DEI conversations in higher education throughout the Washington, D.C., area, says Lakshmanan. In addition to being a collaboration between students, faculty, and staff, DOI is designed to incorporate perspectives across various academic disciplines, including marketing and public relations, communication, business, and international relations.

“It’s not just for the students, but for faculty and administrators as well,” says Merida. “We’re learning so much from each other and that collaborative effort really catapults and makes this process more connected.”

During AU’s Inclusive Excellence Week in April, DOI had its first experience with in-person dialogue through a campus-wide “Reel Belonging” pop-up event. Through that event, one of DOI’s ambassadors took over the AU campus Instagram feed and communicated live with students regarding what makes them feel welcome on campus, how they define DEI, and what they do to make AU campus more inclusive. It was entirely student run, with both the marketing and DEI departments agreeing to relinquish control during that time period.

As DOI continues to grow, the hope is that other colleges and universities will replicate its student-driven approach on their campuses, says Merida.

“Other institutions would really learn so much from having the voices of students, not only to connect with other students, but as a great learning opportunity for faculty and administration,” she says. “This is something that could be duplicated.”
Schools of Music Move Toward More Inclusive Studies

By Erik Cliburn

Traditionally, the academic study of music has largely focused on Eurocentric, classical music, which perpetuates historical inequities. To ensure music students gain a more inclusive education, universities are beginning to expand their areas of study.

Two prominent efforts to diversify music in academia are the new University of Arkansas’ (UA) Arkansas Center for Black Music and the creation of the George Walker Center for Equity and Inclusion in Music at the University of Rochester’s (UR) Eastman School of Music (Eastman).

Arkansas Center for Black Music
Founded earlier this year, the Arkansas Center for Black Music is a collaboration between the UA Department of Music and the African and African American Studies program. The focus is on eliminating systemic racism in music education by promoting research, development, and dissemination of Black music, including gospel, jazz, and hip-hop. Faculty and staff will help to advance such studies in the field by teaching scholars about the music's impact and significance. The center will also host events tied to Black music, such as the Black Music Symposium and the UARK Jazz Festival.

As part of its mission, the center will explore the history of Black and African diaspora music, particularly gospel, and its widespread influence on modern music genres. Despite this undeniable stature, most music originating from Black communities has been sidelined in the academic space, says Jeffrey Murdock, PhD, founding director of the Arkansas Center for Black Music and director of choral studies at UA.

“Black sacred music has influenced the lives of Black Arkansans for centuries,” he says. “But historically, the performance of most music of African origin hasn't been deemed eligible for quality academic study.”

In conjunction with the center’s creation, UA also launched a three-year, summers-only master’s degree in Black sacred music. Focusing primarily on gospel music, the program will prepare students and working professionals for numerous career paths in the music industry, such as music educators, film composers, and church worship directors. Both the center and master’s degree program were funded by a $848,000 donation from the Alice L. Walton Foundation.
George Walker Center for Equity and Inclusion in Music

The George Walker Center for Equity and Inclusion in Music at UR, launched in the spring of 2022, is a driving force behind efforts to make music more inclusive and diverse on campus and throughout the broader music education community. The center will primarily serve as a space for students to connect through affinity groups and discuss important issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, says Crystal Sellers Battle, DMA, director of the center and the inaugural associate dean of equity and inclusion at Eastman.

“There’s a belief here that ‘eat, sleep, music’ is how you operate — and students tend to skip the sleep part,” says Sellers Battle. “I have a rule [that] we’re not going to practice in this space; we’re going to use it to unwind and rejuvenate. It’s also going to address the needs of affinity groups. There may be nights when we’re really focused on LGBTQ+ energies, or when our Black Students’ Union is reserving the space for an affinity moment. But I’m also trying to convey that the George Walker Center is a space for all. And in being a space for all, it’s going to bring some people together who wouldn’t necessarily have been together otherwise.”

As it continues to grow, the center will also host events focused on equity in music education, such as the upcoming Context Conference: Contextualizing Equity and Inclusion in November, which will feature conversations on classroom innovation, curriculum shifts, community engagement, and recruitment and retention.

The center supports UR’s goals to expand musical offerings, facilitate conversations regarding diversity, and support equitable change through the Inclusion at Eastman Committee. These efforts will help dispel the notion that only one form of music is considered “correct” to study within academia, says Sellers Battle.

“What is really challenging in the very nature of the study of music and a higher education process is that it was built on the idea that one form of music, and one which makes up a very small portion of the world’s music, is superior to any other,” she says.

Through its new master’s program in Black sacred music, UA will train students to work in careers linked to gospel music.
Latino artworks are increasingly displayed on gallery walls and Latino curators are growing in representation thanks in part to a new program known as Advancing Latinx Art in Museums (ALAM), spearheaded by the Mellon, Ford, Getty, and Terra foundations. The national initiative is funding the creation and formalization of 10 permanent early- and mid-career curatorial positions in Latino art. Among the ALAM 2022 recipients, three university museums each received a $500,000 grant as part of the $5 million project. The grants will support the positions over five years, or until 2027.

Vincent Price Art Museum at ELAC

At VPAM, Joseph Valencia fills the newly created role of curator of exhibitions, and Steven Wong serves as director. Given that the museum has been understaffed and many employees have had to take on multiple roles, a full-time curator will have a positive impact, Wong says. East LA’s estimated population is over 95 percent Latino, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and the college’s Latino and Hispanic student population is approximately 80 percent. Additionally, many VPAM staff members are former and current ELAC students, Wong says.

Valencia and Wong plan to expand the museum’s collection to better reflect local demographics, which often has a greater positive impact on the public than viewing works by European-based artists, Wong says. They have begun reviewing the museum’s collections policy and are exploring the acquisition of new...
artwork. ELAC also offers a museum studies certificate program.

**UT Austin Blanton Museum of Art**

In Texas, the Blanton Museum of Art hired Claudia Zapata, PhD, a scholar, museum professional, and artist, as associate curator of Latino art. The move ensures the recently acquired Gilberto Cárdenas and Dolores García Collection — which has a strong focus on printmaking and Latino art in general — will receive the research and focus it deserves, says Simone Wicha, museum director. The first exhibit from that collection, titled “Cara a Cara/Face to Face,” features a selection of portraits.

In other initiatives, UT Austin, a Hispanic-Serving Institution, partners with the Mellon Foundation to offer graduate fellowships in contemporary art, prints, and drawings; Latin American art; and museum education, Wicha says.

“This is personally very important to me as a Latina leader,” she says. “I was born in El Paso, Texas, and grew up in Mexico City. My mother is an immigrant from Mexico. Celebrating Latino and Latin American culture across our continent and understanding the contributions of Latino artists, leaders, and thinkers has been a big part of what I’ve cared about and been committed to throughout my career.”

**ASU Art Museum**

At the ASU Art Museum, the grant funding provides for Alana Hernandez’s position as the CALA alliance curator of Latinx art. She also serves as the executive director and curator at CALA.

The two organizations have worked together for well over a decade, and this project formalizes the partnership and supports their goals, says Hernandez. A current exhibition displays works by four CALA artist-residents.

“I think this is a really important moment, a profound moment of change,” Hernandez says. “We say this all the time — curators and art historians — [that] Latinx art is American art. We cannot tell a holistic, cohesive story of this country without including Latinx art history in our history.”

ALAM is the second phase of the U.S. Latinx Art Visibility Fund. The first was the Latinx Artist Fellowship, a program that supported 15 visual artists over five years. The third phase, yet to be announced, will focus on nurturing the study of Latinx art in academic spaces, according to the Mellon Foundation.

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**Pediatric Hospital Medicine:** Full-time tenure track position in an academic setting with the rank of Assistant Professor of Pediatrics. Duties will include the management and diagnosis of a variety of ill pediatric patients. Duties include serving as attending physician in the Pediatric floor service; providing resident and student medical education as well as didactic teaching; and initiating and/or participating in specific research or other scholarly activities which are consistent with the educational background, training expertise, and interests of the physician.

**Required Qualifications:**

- Requires medical degree or foreign equivalent.
- Completion of pediatric residency and pediatric hospital medicine fellowship.
- Must be board certified/board eligible in Pediatrics and Pediatric Hospital Medicine.
- Able to obtain a full and unrestricted WV medical license.

**Search Committee Members:**

Susan Flesher, MD; Eduardo Pino, MD; Audra Pritt, MD; Bob Miller, MD; Brandon Smith, Lisa Watt (chair)

**Contact person:** Lisa Watts, lwatts@marshall.edu
Latino-LGBTQ+ Experiences Take Center Stage in Music Workshop

By Nikki Brahm

**Theater professionals**, students, and faculty from several organizations are working behind the scenes to bring the intersection of Latino and LGBTQ+ experiences into the limelight with the development of the new musical “The Boys and the Nuns.”

Leyna Camacho is an actress and fourth-year musical theater student at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). As a Mexican American, she finds the show to be an inspiring Latino story.

“I would love to see more stories like this being told in the future because it’s touching on two subjects to me that have been very relevant in the past couple of years, as far as my ethnic identity, and of course, gay rights and sexuality,” she says. “I’m really happy that this [production] is coming to fruition.”

The Department of Theatre and Dance at CSUF and the Latiné Musical Theatre Lab, a New York City-based organization that develops and advocates for Latiné-written works of musical theater, partnered on the project. Support comes from CSU Hispanic Serving Institution Community Grants awarded by the Global Hispanic Serving Institution Equity Innovation Hub at CSU, Northridge, and Apple.

Although there is no set timeline, musicals can take 10 years to develop, says Josh Grisetti, assistant professor and head of musical theatre at CSUF. “The cool thing from a student perspective is that they get to see [the development process] in a way that usually students don’t,” he says.

The story of “The Boys and The Nuns” is one of unexpected allyship. Based on true events set in the Boystown neighborhood of Chicago in 1986, a group of LGBTQ+ activists fight to pass the Gay Rights Ordinance. They band together with a group of Catholic nuns embroiled in their own fight for equal rights in the church. The story centers around a musician named Pablo and is inspired by writer Sandra Delgado’s own Colombian heritage and experience growing up in the same Chicago neighborhood.

Characters play the music using a variety of instruments. Compositions include ’80s pop, a Spanish power ballad, choral music numbers, and Latin freestyle, with music and lyrics by Michael McBride.

The selection of the cast is a mix of CSUF students and those from nearby colleges as well as professional actors. The reading of the script took place during the spring semester. Writers will make revisions over the summer before the production undergoes a workshop in the fall. If approved for a second year of grant funding, the department hopes to fully produce and perform the musical, says Grisetti.

The play would help broaden representation in the industry. In 2021, approximately 29 percent of the 6,000-plus contracts across all job categories reported to the Actors’ Equity Association, a trade union representing American actors and stage managers in theater, were awarded to people of color.

“[I want] theaters to stop seeing our work as risky and to be allowed to fail,” says Delgado. “It sometimes feels like you get one chance as an artist of color, a marginalized artist, and if you don’t knock it out of the park, you don’t get another chance.”
The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University proudly welcomes its Inaugural Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Dr. China L. Wilson

Our work is never done.

Dr. Wilson’s appointment underscores Peabody’s commitment to creating a diverse community wherein all members promote equity and inclusion. With this appointment, Peabody distinguishes itself as one of the few music and dance conservatories in the United States to have a DEI position on its executive leadership team.

“I know through first-hand experience the challenges faced by many underrepresented students in higher education, and I am excited to play a pivotal role in continuing to strengthen Peabody’s position as a leader in the conservatory space for diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

–Dr. China L. Wilson, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for The Peabody Institute
Wynton Marsalis Urges Graduates to Inspire Change Amid Social Turmoil

“May you never become numb to the deprivation and poverty, the misery and lack of opportunity that besets so many of your less fortunate and less aware fellow citizens. May you never lose the sense that a collective will can create unimagined change to better the lives of more and more citizens. You are needed out here. Hello! We desperately need you and your creativity, your conscience, and your consciousness.”

Wynton Marsalis, world-renowned jazz trumpeter and artistic director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, delivered the 2023 commencement speech at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A Grammy and Pulitzer Prize-winning musician, he was presented with an honorary doctor of music degree. In his address, Marsalis called on graduates to bridge societal divides and fight against oppression and discrimination.
INCLUSION LIVES HERE
INNOVATION LIVES HERE
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Celebrating Diverse Visions

FEATURING diverse identities, experiences and perspectives, in and through the arts.