DEI Comes to College Sports

Athletic departments are hiring diversity, equity, and inclusion leaders to support their students and staff

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:
Urban planning and public policy schools tackle environmental justice
Lawmakers threaten to eradicate academic tenure
Growing Diversity
at Rochester Institute of Technology
How the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment helps diversify faculty ranks

While tending to corn crops in a small plot of land on the campus of Rochester Institute and Technology, Assistant Professor Eli Borrego is pushing RIT into new territory.

Borrego is an expert in the genetics and biochemistry of plant–microbe and plant–insect communication and ecology. RIT recruited him from Texas A&M University to help expand into new areas of research related to genomics and agriculture. But Borrego might not have come to RIT without the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program.

The Future Faculty Career Exploration Program helps RIT grow diversity among its faculty ranks. It is a competitive program hosted by RIT’s Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment. It is designed for African American, Latino American, and Native American (AALANA) scholars and artists to learn from and network with RIT administration, faculty and students over a four day period. More than 100 applicants apply each year and 15 to 20 are selected to present their research, practice interviewing skills and get a glimpse of life as a faculty member at RIT.

Donathan Brown, assistant provost and assistant vice president for faculty diversity and recruitment in the Office of Faculty Diversity and Recruitment, says he and his team work hard to prepare program participants for their next step—whether it is at RIT or elsewhere.

“In my mind, it’s not enough to engage you about RIT if I’m not providing at least some guidance about how to apply to RIT and beyond,” said Brown. “Our conversation is not only about RIT, who we are, what we do, and our current faculty and fellowship opportunities. We also talk about creating competitive faculty applications.”

Since Brown assumed his role in 2019, his office has built a Scholars Network of more than 800 women and AALANA faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and MFA and Ph.D. students from more than 140 universities across the country. When a faculty opening at RIT is posted, his office engages with search committees to identify AALANA and woman scholars for referral by querying the Scholars Network, as well as other resources of diverse scholars offered by organizations such as the Southern Regional Education Board and The Ph.D. Project.

The Future Faculty Career Exploration Program began in 2003. Twenty three participants have joined the faculty ranks at RIT.

The next Future Faculty Career Exploration Program will be held September 21-24, 2022. Applications are now being accepted through March 14, 2022.

For more information visit www.rit.edu/diversity/ofdr
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By Mariah Stewart and Mariah Bohanon

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**On the cover:** Richard Newton, a junior at the University of Washington (UW) and running back for the UW Huskies football team. Photo courtesy UW Athletics **Above:** University of Miami (UM) football coaches, players, and campus security officers on campus in October 2020. Photo courtesy UM Athletics
Evolving Our Response to HIV

Join us for the Indiana University National HIV Conference, Stepping Into the 5th Decade—Evolving Our Response to HIV. The four-day conference will host 1,000+ participants and features four nationally recognized keynote speakers, 200 workshops, 100 poster sessions within five key tracks with several expanded areas for dialogue. Most importantly, the gathering will provide a platform for conversation and knowledge sharing about the current state of HIV in this country, how to reach at-risk populations (especially college students), prevention resources, and treatment and care.
Learn more at: iunhc.indiana.edu

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Researchers at Brown University have launched an innovative project in partnership with Moi University in Kenya to improve treatment and health outcomes for the nearly 1.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS in that country.

The work will be supported by two grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) totaling $4.6 million over five years. Joseph Hogan, a professor of public health and biostatistics at Brown, and Ann Mwangi, a professor of biostatistics at Moi, will lead the project. They intend to use a health records database to develop machine learning tools that can predict care patterns for HIV/AIDS patients.

“With this project, we hope to bring the promise of artificial intelligence and machine learning to the patient and clinic level and evaluate the development tools that are going to have a measurable impact on patient outcomes,” Hogan stated in a news release.

The predictive modeling system will alert physicians to deficiencies and gaps in patient treatment plans. This knowledge will help health care providers engage in preventative care rather than responding to negative outcomes, Hogan said in the release.

Only 75 percent of adults and 63 percent of children living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya receive antiviral treatment, according to 2020 United Nations data. This treatment is key to ensuring that those who have the disease can lead relatively healthy lives and avoid the spread of HIV. Hogan and Mwangi’s project could predict when and why patients drop out of care if they have high-risk viral levels.

“If the system works as designed, then we have confidence that we’ll improve the health outcomes of people with HIV,” Hogan stated.

The grant project is part of the larger Academic Model Providing Access to Healthcare, a consortium of 14 North American universities that work alongside Moi to further HIV/AIDS research, care, and training.
Dartmouth Expands Need-Blind Admissions Policy to Include International Students

On January 12, Dartmouth College announced it would be transitioning to a need-blind admissions policy for international undergraduate students, thanks to a $40 million gift from an anonymous donor. The college joins the ranks of Amherst College, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard, Princeton, and Yale Universities in offering need-blind admissions to all students regardless of their citizenship.

“In a time when many of humankind’s most difficult challenges know no borders, we are proud to be a magnet for undergraduate talent regardless of citizenship and regardless of a student’s ability to pay,” Dartmouth President Philip J. Hanlon said in a news release.

Going forward, the college plans to use the same procedures for evaluating applications from U.S. citizens and residents as it does for international applicants, according to the release. The policy will have no bearing on whether a student is eligible for financial aid or the amount that they receive.

Over the last five years, Dartmouth has seen its pool of international applicants expand 79 percent. International students also represent 14 percent of the school's current first-year class, which includes students from 85 countries who are receiving financial aid.

“The students who are enrolling today will have lives and careers that stretch to the 2070s and beyond,” said Lee Coffin, Dartmouth’s vice provost for enrollment and dean of admissions and financial aid. “We are living in the most international moment in human history, and we’re announcing to the world through this new policy that international citizens are full and equal members of our applicant pool and ultimately of our student body.”

The universal need-blind policy is part of the college’s plan to establish itself as a global leader in providing educational opportunities for low- and middle-income students. As part of this campaign, Dartmouth has also eliminated student loans and waived family contributions for those in certain income brackets. In total, the college awarded more than $102 million in financial aid last year.

ADEA President’s Symposium on Men of Color in the Health Professions

March 20, 2022 | 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Pennsylvania Convention Center
Philadelphia, PA

The ADEA President’s Symposium on Men of Color in the Health Professions focuses primarily on men of color entering dentistry and medicine with the goal of expanding future conversations to additional health professions. Discussion topics and strategies for improvement are applicable across health professions education.

Register today for this free event!

adea.org/2022/MOC
University of Alabama Adds Name of its First Black Student to Building Originally Named After KKK Leader

The University of Alabama (UA) Board of Trustees announced a controversial change to the name of a historic building on campus on February 3. Graves Hall, named after former Alabama Gov. Bibb Graves, will now be known as Lucy-Graves Hall. The change is in honor of Autherine Lucy Foster, the first Black student to enroll in UA.

Foster attended classes for three days in 1956 before the university suspended her for alleged concerns over her own safety after segregationist protesters descended on the campus. She went on to earn a master’s degree in education from the university in 1992 and was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2019.

While some praised the building’s renaming as a step toward promoting a more inclusive campus, others criticized the board for combining Foster’s name with Graves due to his position as a former leader of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The board defended its decision by noting historical arguments that Graves only maintained his membership with the KKK for political purposes before leaving the hate group in 1928.

“On the one hand, Gov. Graves is regarded by historians as one of, if not the most, progressive and effective governors in the history of the state of Alabama,” Trustee Emeritus Judge John England Jr. told the board of trustees during a meeting on February 4. “Some say he did more to directly benefit African American Alabamians than any other governor through his many reforms.”

“Unfortunately, that same Gov. Graves was associated with the Ku Klux Klan,” England said. “Not just associated with the Ku Klux Klan, but a Grand Cyclops. It’s hard for me to even say those words.”

Some took to social media to criticize the board’s decision to combine the names of Foster and Graves rather than simply removing Graves from the building. The Crimson-White, UA’s student-run newspaper, denounced the renaming in an op-ed titled “Autherine Lucy Foster’s Name Does Not Belong Beside a Klansman.”

Foster released a statement on February 3 saying she was “grateful to all who think that this naming opportunity has the potential to motivate and encourage others to embrace the importance of education and to have the courage to commit to things that seek to make a difference in the lives of others.”

READ, WATCH, LISTEN

READ: No Study Without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education
Through an examination of campus social justice movements, Leigh Patel reveals how the after-effects of settler colonialism have resulted in a higher education system that prioritizes White culture and history over that of Black, Indigenous, and other oppressed communities. Using interviews with activists and organizers from groups like Black Lives Matter, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Combahee River Collective, Patel shows how student protests have been an important force in influencing institutions to recognize and challenge settler colonialist attitudes and the race, class, and gender inequalities that they help to perpetuate. Published by Beacon Press

WATCH: Everything’s Going to Be All White
This three-part documentary series explores the history of race in the U.S. through insights from notable historians, scholars, and activists of color — including Ibram X. Kendi, Favianna Rodriguez, and Margaret Cho. The interviewees used examples such as Indigenous people’s fight for land and the racial disparities in the enforcement of gun laws to show how laws and other systems including housing, education, and health care have been designed to benefit White people. They also discussed their personal experiences with racism. Streaming on Showtime

LISTEN: UnTextbooked: When will Asian Americans stop being seen as “perpetual foreigners”?
In this episode of the UnTextbooked podcast — which features teenagers interviewing noted historians — scholar Erika Lee, author of The Making of Asian America: A History, explains why stereotypes about Asian Americans have persisted for hundreds of years in U.S. culture. Using the recent rise in anti-Asian hate as an example, Lee deconstructs how White Americans have traditionally held Asian Americans to conflicting standards as both “model minorities” and perpetual foreigners. Available on all major podcast apps
Public administration -- in many ways, it is the art and practice of making things work.

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At the University of Kentucky, the Martin School of Public Policy and Administration is consistently ranked among the best in the country for graduate programs.

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The Martin School makes its goals clear:

“Both historical and current policies may create or perpetuate inequity through institutional and structural racism, income inequality, gender bias, and more,” the school’s diversity statement says. “The Martin School can help our students and alumni confront inequity as we train them in their coursework and as we support them in their careers.”

It’s an understanding that the art and practice of making things work only happens when the door is open wide for everyone to participate and benefit.

It’s the same commitment that exists throughout the University of Kentucky - an INSIGHT into Diversity Champion for four years running.
Enhancing Institutional Excellence by Elevating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Nancy S. Kaplan, EdD, has been selected as chair of the Big East Conference’s working group on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Kaplan will continue to serve as the associate provost for academic support services and external academic partnerships at St. John’s University in New York City.

Robin Coger, PhD, has been appointed provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs and a professor of engineering at East Carolina University in Greenville. Coger was dean of the College of Engineering and a professor of mechanical engineering at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro.

PENNSYLVANIA
M. Elizabeth Magill, JD, has been selected as president of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Magill previously served as the executive vice president and provost of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

RHODE ISLAND
Crystal Williams is the first Black person to be appointed president of the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence. Williams was vice president and associate provost for community and inclusion at Boston University in Massachusetts.

NEW YORK
Daniel Pascoe Aguilar, PhD, will serve as the inaugural director of the Center for Social Justice and chief diversity officer at Excelsior College in Albany. Pascoe Aguilar was associate provost for Immersive Learning and Career Design at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey.

Has your campus recently hired a new administrator? INSIGHT Into Diversity would like to publish your news. Please email editor@insightintodiversity.com.
Enhancing Institutional Excellence by Elevating Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Dean Eboni S. Nelson

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Women’s History Month 2022: Celebrating 50 Years of Title IX

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, a landmark piece of legislation for gender equity. “Title IX is probably the most important law passed for women and girls in Congress since women obtained the right to vote in 1920,” explains Bernice Sandler, a staunch women’s rights activist known as the “Godmother of Title IX” for her role in creating the legislation.

The law ensures that all education programs and activities receiving federal funding must protect students and employees from sex-based discrimination and bans many aspects of gender inequality that had previously been tolerated or overlooked in education. Despite consistent attempts through legislation, executive actions, and lawsuits to diminish its effectiveness, Title IX continues to provide these protections today.

In celebration of Women’s History Month 2022, INSIGHT honors the advocates who have led Title IX’s evolution over the last five decades and the continued fight for equal education for all.

May 1979
The Supreme Court rules in favor of Geraldine Cannon, a woman who was denied admission to the University of Chicago, in the case of Cannon v. University of Chicago. The decision grants individuals the right to sue educational institutions for Title IX violations.

June 1972
Congress passes Title IX. Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI), the first Asian American woman to serve in Congress and the first woman of color to be elected to the House of Representatives, is its lead author and sponsor.

December 1979
The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare introduces a three-pronged test for determining an athletic program’s compliance with Title IX. It assesses participation, benefits and treatment, and financial assistance for athletes of different genders.

September 1980
Women students at Yale University file Alexander v. Yale, the first case to allege that sexual harassment constitutes gender discrimination and is therefore illegal under Title IX. The university establishes a grievance procedure for students who allege harassment, leading many other higher education institutions to do the same.

February 1984
In a blow to Title IX protections, the Supreme Court declares that the statute only applies to programs specifically receiving federal funding, rather than across an entire institution. The decision supports Grove City College, a religious institution that did not accept government financial support, in its assertion that it was not required to comply with Title IX even though its students received federal grants.

March 1988
Congress passes the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, commonly referred to as the Grove City Bill, effectively reversing the high court’s 1984 ruling. Substantial support in the House and the Senate overrides President Ronald Reagan’s attempted veto of the bill.

February 1992
The Supreme Court rules that Title IX complainants can seek monetary damages in the case of Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools. Previously, victims of gender discrimination could only seek injunctive relief from the courts.
The Obama administration issues a Dear Colleague letter urging colleges and universities to be more proactive in fighting campus sexual assault.

October 1994
Congress passes the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, which requires colleges and universities to submit annual reports on opportunities and resources allocated to women and men students. The reports must include gender-specific data on enrollment and participation, operating expenses for athletics programs, coaching salaries, and more.

March 1997
The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights issues guidance on sexual harassment by students and employees, requiring institutions to be held more accountable for preventing and punishing such behavior.

October 2002
Title IX is renamed the “Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act” to honor Mink after her death.

March 2005
The Education Department under President George W. Bush declares that educational institutions can use email surveys to determine students’ interests in sports by gender and provide athletic programs based on responses. The decision is criticized for making it easier for schools to deny funding and opportunities for women’s sports.

April 2010
The Department of Education under President Barack Obama reverses the aforementioned Bush-era policy.

April 2011
The Obama administration issues a Dear Colleague letter urging colleges and universities to be more proactive in fighting campus sexual assault.

April 2015
The department releases a follow-up letter with additional guidelines for Title IX investigators. The new policies require institutions to use preponderance of evidence, or the lowest standard of proof, to determine whether a person accused of sexual assault is guilty.

May 2016
The Education Department and the U.S. Department of Justice under Barack Obama issues a Dear Colleague letter affirming Title IX protections for transgender students. Its guidelines include allowing students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that align with their gender identity.

February 2017
Education Secretary Betsy DeVos repeals the Obama administration’s 2016 guidance on the treatment of transgender students shortly after taking office.

September 2017
The Education Department under President Donald Trump rescinds the Obama administration’s guidance on campus sexual misconduct.

May 2020
The Education Department releases new regulations for handling incidents of sexual harassment and assault after a contentious review process. The controversial rules face fierce criticism from women’s rights advocates for lessening institutional responsibility and survivors’ rights.

April 2021
A group of current and former LGBTQ students at Christian colleges and universities file a lawsuit arguing that religious exemptions to Title IX are unconstitutional. The plaintiffs claim that the Education Department has an obligation to protect students from forced conversion therapy, bans on LGBTQ housing, and other discriminatory campus policies.

June 2021
The Education Department under President Joe Biden issues a federal notice reaffirming that Title IX protects transgender and nonbinary students from discrimination. The announcement comes in the wake of 31 states taking action to ban transgender athletes from participating in school sports programs that correspond with their gender.

December 2021
The department announces plans to release proposed changes to Title IX regulations for handling allegations of sexual misconduct in April 2022.
The MGH Institute of Health Professions, located in the historic Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston.
We work at the intersection of two industries central to the national conversation on structural racism: higher education and health care. Both are reckoning with historical legacies of exclusion at odds with their stated missions to improve society. Both have collected evidence that their institutions produce disparate outcomes based on race and are sites where people of color experience racism.

At MGH Institute of Health Professions (the MGH Institute), we have recognized the importance of identifying patterns of racism within the institution, naming them, and recommending policies and practices to mitigate them. Our commitment is evidenced by a required orientation activity to ground our community in a common vocabulary about what racism is and how it plays out in students’ and patients’ daily lives. In addition, search committees for faculty positions must include a trained equity advocate whose role in the process is to disrupt bias and recruit the widest possible candidate pool. Furthermore, self-identified faculty of color receive reduced teaching assignments in recognition of the invisible labor they engage in through mentoring and service.

We recognize that even anodyne efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in higher education can produce opposition from members of the dominant group. When higher education institutions attempt structural reforms to level the playing field for those who are marginalized and minoritized in our society, resistance grows. Too often, a realignment of resources can be construed as a loss for people who previously enjoyed a monopoly on advantage. We have learned that while some resistance to anti-racism initiatives is inevitable, higher education leaders can anticipate negative reactions and incorporate strategies to minimize their effects.

Forms of Resistance
We know that introducing conversations about race and racism into academic settings can make White students uncomfortable. They may personalize learning about Whiteness as destabilizing their self-image, rather than seeing flaws racism puts into question the false notion of meritocracy. Psychological studies have demonstrated that when White respondents are primed with information about demographic gains of racial minoritized groups, they are less likely to support diversity initiatives. This zero-sum mentality treats gains for one group as necessarily depriving another group of benefits. Recently, conservative politicians have leveraged the concept of reverse racism to oppose any educational activity based on critical race theory. Legislation in

Higher education leaders should anticipate having ongoing conversations about justice and equity issues with members of their community. One workshop or broadcast email will not be sufficient to secure wide buy-in.

in the system. Before publishing her mass market book *White Fragility*, Robin DiAngelo and a colleague wrote about the challenge of teaching race to White undergraduates. They point out that White students may perceive the discussion of racism as an “attack” and people of color with grievances as perpetrators of violence. This defensive posture reinforces the status quo. Other educators have documented that even when White students support the goals of diversity, they object to frequent classroom conversations about racism. In all cases, the end result is to perpetuate the centering of White students’ perspectives.

Resistance also appears in critiques of “reverse racism” as learning about several states forbids teaching that structural racism is embedded in U.S. history. Supporters of these bans consider teaching about racism divisive because it supposedly denigrates one race in favor of another.

Anticipating Pushback
At the MGH Institute, rather than avoiding conflict when we anticipate pushback, we account for this resistance and build it into the conversation. The notion of a “safe space” might sound supportive of negotiating different points of view, but it is clear that, when it comes to talking about racism, one person’s safety can mean silencing others. Consequently, we have moved away from the concept of
“safe spaces” in favor of “brave spaces” to model the importance of engaging in conversations about social justice no matter how uncomfortable they are. This modeling begins with the development of a common vocabulary. At the start of every semester since 2018, we have welcomed newly matriculated students to the MGH Institute with a program titled “Power, Privilege, and Positionality” to define key anti-racist concepts. The readings, speakers, and reflection sessions emphasize that racism exists on multiple levels and that in higher education we will focus on how we can dismantle structural inequities. Clarifying that racism is not merely about individual prejudice helps minimize charges that any benefit offered to people of color constitutes reverse racism.

Another way to anticipate resistance is to align initiatives with the MGH Institute’s mission. When it comes to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) issues, we emphasize how they are valuable not simply for their own sake, but because they will enable students to become more effective health care professionals. For example, workshop facilitators devote time to asking participants how the particular topic will help them achieve their professional goals. When a group of faculty of color raised the possibility of reducing teaching assignments to account for the uncredited work they do, we sought approval by appealing to the strategic priority to grow faculty research. A literature review showed that faculty of color tend to take on the burden of advising students of color and serving on committees to the detriment of their scholarship. Senior leaders signed on to the proposal when they saw how it could advance the larger goal of increasing scholarly publications.

Ongoing Response
Higher education leaders should anticipate having ongoing conversations about justice and equity issues with members of their community. One workshop or broadcast email will not be sufficient to secure wide buy-in. We think of anti-racism work as akin to information technology. Universities don’t assume that constituents will need help only in setting up their computers and then never again. They also do not make concessions for people who refuse to use technology. Similarly, a commitment to anti-racism requires continual support and guidance from experts.

For leaders who may wish to explore how to engage in race conversations and promote equity practices on their campuses, we offer the following suggestions, many of which are free or low-cost:

- Join a consortium or professional association that has working groups or guidance on this topic, such as the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. The Racial Equity and Justice Institute is a consortium in Massachusetts that connects colleges to provide technical support and coordinate efforts. This consortium will soon expand to the national level.

- Form groups on your campus to disaggregate and analyze institutional data for the disparate impact of policies. Use the book From Equity Talk to Equity Walk to guide your conversations.

- Create affinity and caucus groups for faculty, staff, and students of color. Use their perspectives to identify areas of inequity to redress.

- Involve everyone, including White members of the community. While marginalized and minoritized populations should receive targeted support, White-identifying people can also benefit from explicit conversations.
about Whiteness, engagement in justice and equity education, and participation in implementing equitable policies and practices. All members of the community must play an active role and take ownership of equity efforts.

• Go beyond climate surveys to develop and support an equity plan. A plan with dedicated resources signals seriousness of purpose and provides accountability.

Conclusion
Sometimes when higher education leaders anticipate resistance to an anti-racism initiative, they either water down the project or implement it without broaching a difficult conversation. As a result, initiatives that are focused on supporting marginalized and minoritized communities may be halted so that the status quo is maintained, and White people can continue to feel comfortable. At our institution, we have made it clear that we lead with justice and equity. We use our limited resources to provide ongoing support to the community members most impacted by the pernicious effects of structural racism. At the same time, we focus on capacity building so that there is collective ownership of JEDI initiatives across the organization. We have learned from our affiliated health care institutions that when lives are at stake, the care team must work together to hear opposing points of view and then adopt a single course of action. Higher education may not operate under the same urgency, but advancing equity is no less crucial for fulfilling its mission.

Kimberly A. Truong, PhD, is chief equity officer at MGH Institute of Health Professions and an adjunct lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She also partners with organizations interested in engaging in JEDI work as part of XEM Consulting Services LLC.

Peter S. Cahn, PhD, is Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Professor of Health Professions Education at MGH Institute of Health Professions. MGH Institute of Health Professions is a 2017-2021 Health Professions Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award recipient.

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TENURE UNDER ATTACK

As conservative lawmakers across the U.S. fight for anti-tenure legislation, faculty worry about the future of academic expression.

By Mariah Stewart

In recent months, concerns over academic expression have led conservative lawmakers and state officials to propose policies that would decrease the already dwindling number of U.S. academics who receive tenure. Many of these proposed changes stem from right-wing policymakers who have expressed opposition to professors who teach about race, social justice, and other diversity-related topics.

Most recently, nearly two dozen Republican state lawmakers in South Carolina filed a bill in November titled the “Cancelling Professor Tenure Act” that would prohibit public colleges and universities from granting tenure to employees hired after December 31, 2022. If passed, the bill would only allow for higher education institutions to grant five-year employment contracts and mandate that current tenured faculty teach additional courses during the spring and fall terms.

The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has denounced such legislation, saying the longstanding practice of tenure is essential to higher education because it serves as a safeguard for academic freedom. The practice allows faculty who specialize in controversial topics such as critical race theory, gender studies, and political science to conduct research and educate students without the fear of retaliation from people or entities with opposing political agendas.

In one of the most notorious examples of the new movement against academic tenure, the University System of Georgia (USG) Board of Regents unanimously approved a policy in October that permits the termination of tenured professors without faculty oversight. The controversial policy is the first-of-its-kind to be implemented in the U.S. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) condemned the move, calling it an “attack” and saying the board of regents “deliberately unhinged due process from post-tenure review and placed academic freedom in grave peril.”

The USG Board of Regents declined to comment for this story, citing a previously released statement on its decision. In October, a spokesperson for the board announced that “[t]he goal of the changes they recommended is to support career development for all faculty as well as ensure accountability and continued strong performance from faculty members after they have achieved tenure.”

Augusta University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the University of Georgia also declined to comment for this story. Georgia Southern University and the Georgia College and State University did not respond to INSIGHT’s requests for comment.

South Carolina and USG are, however, far from alone. Republican lawmakers in Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin have unsuccessfully proposed laws to eliminate academic tenure, claiming that the practice does not protect students’ free speech. Individual faculty members have become targets for these legislators. In 2021, Iowa Republican Rep. Steven Holt used Chloe Clark, a professor at the University of Iowa, as an example in his campaign to eliminate tenure. Clark had instructed students in a course syllabus to not argue against “basic human rights” on topics such as abortion, gay marriage, or Black Lives Matter. After a public outcry about the directive, Clark apologized and revised her syllabus.

Although Clark is not tenured, Holt declared that she and other academics use the protection of tenure to violate students’ right to free speech when he pushed for a bill that would have eradicated the practice at Iowa’s public colleges and universities.

Despite these claims, most academics do not have the security of tenure. Only one in five professors earns this status, according to AAUP. Such positions have been on the decline for decades as colleges rely more heavily on cost-effective instructors and graduate assistants to teach courses. Underrepresented professors are even less likely to be granted tenure and are often assumed to specialize in the very subjects — race, class, and gender — that face the greatest opposition from conservative policymakers. This assumption leads to underrepresented academics being put under even more of a microscope than their White colleagues, says James Thomas, PhD, a tenured associate professor of sociology at the University of
Mississippi (U of M) who teaches on race, ethnicity, and social stratification.

Thomas became the subject of public scrutiny in 2018 for a tweet that encouraged interrupting lawmakers while they were dining in public to protest Brett Kavanaugh’s nomination to the Supreme Court. The post was condemned by public officials, including Republican Gov. Phil Bryant, with some calling for Thomas’ termination.

Despite the criticism, U of M nominated Thomas for tenure in 2019, and the board of trustees stated that the university’s support of academic freedom was a factor in its decision to approve the controversial nomination.

The Mississippi Institution of Higher Learning (IHL) issued a statement saying that Thomas’ tenure was granted “with dissent,” a move unprecedented in the state’s history. “They wanted people to know that it was contentious, and that some people felt that I shouldn’t get it,” he explains.

In 2020, Thomas’ tenure status again came under attack when Republican State Auditor Shad White accused him of violating the state’s no-strike law for participating in #ScholarStrike, a national demonstration by educators and students against racial violence. In addition to pushing for U of M to revoke his tenure status, White has called for an investigation into Thomas and a $2,000 fine. The Mississippi Center for Justice, a nonprofit law firm, has filed an anti-defamation lawsuit against White on Thomas’ behalf.

Thomas says schools that enact anti-tenure policies or weaken guidelines will experience an exodus of faculty. They will also have difficulty hiring qualified educators, because job candidates will avoid schools that evaluate performance based on personal politics rather than scholarly expertise, he warns. “There’s a direct link to strong tenure systems and the quality of higher education,” Thomas says. “When you see the erosion of tenure and the protections around academic freedom, increasingly what that’s going to mean is people are going to feel less confident about teaching certain things in the classroom for fear of repercussions.”

To better assist and retain senior faculty members in this time of uncertainty, Thomas says institutions should be outspoken in their support for the tenure system and raise awareness of why the system exists. “[Eradicating tenure] is in violation of all of our core principles,” he explains. “We need to educate the public about the importance of shared governance and the importance of academic freedom.”

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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UNIVERSITIES GO BEYOND DEI TO BECOME ANTI-RACIST INSTITUTIONS

By Lisa O’Malley
In the spring and summer of 2020, amid the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, many activists pushed for companies and organizations to adopt Kendi’s message as an imperative. As colleges and universities across the U.S. issued statements affirming their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), some higher education institutions took the almost unprecedented step of pledging themselves to the cause of anti-racism. These pledges took many forms, from implementing new policies and programs to revising institutional missions.

For the Southern Illinois University (SIU) system, taking on this work meant going beyond making DEI changes to undertake the broader goal of “dismantling institutional racism and raising a new level of understanding through training and accountability,” stated Daniel Mahony, SIU president, in an October 2021 speech that officially declared the system an anti-racist organization. The SIU Board of Trustees had approved a values statement affirming their commitment to anti-racism in December 2020, and in April 2021 hired Sheila Caldwell, EdD, to serve as the system’s inaugural Vice President for Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).

Caldwell, working with SIU system leaders, provided goals and procedures for a strategic plan that includes educating students, faculty, and staff on the principles and practices of anti-racism. Starting in fall 2022, students can enroll in ADEI certificate programs that address issues such as understanding the difference between free speech and hate speech and helping students of color avoid “racial battle fatigue” by engaging in self-care. Meanwhile, all SIU faculty and staff are required to complete anti-racist training that involves case studies, simulations, and more.

Ensuring that the campus community has this level of awareness is fundamental for moving the system’s larger anti-racist mission forward, according to Caldwell. “These strategies cannot be implemented without people,” she says. “I think relationships are the primary pathway to communicate these tactics to make sure that we’re all on the same page.”

“I’m not enough to just be opposed to racism. We need to announce publicly, which we are doing today, that as a university system, we are anti-racist, and we are actively working towards developing and maintaining policies, behaviors, and systems that enhance racial equity and promote positive and sustainable change for faculty, staff and students on our SIU campuses.”

Daniel Mahony, president of Southern Illinois University, in an October 2021 address

While Caldwell is excited about the progress made so far, she notes that the system “hasn’t arrived yet” and that undertaking any anti-racist efforts should be looked at as a continuous journey rather than an attempt to reach a destination. Despite the challenges and commitment necessary, she says higher education institutions must realize their responsibility in taking on this work.

“One challenge that many colleges face when engaging in DEI and anti-racism work is obtaining buy-in from all campus community members — even those who may not personally see the value in such initiatives. For Tufts University, setting clear expectations was key to overcoming this barrier.”

In the groundbreaking 2019 book *How to Be An Antiracist*, activist and scholar Ibram X. Kendi explains that it is not enough for a person or institution to simply proclaim themselves not racist; rather, fighting racial inequality requires a proactive form of advocacy known as anti-racism. To Kendi, there is no in-between: one is either racist or anti-racist.
“Simply by choosing to be a member of [the Tufts] community, the expectation is that you will play an active and engaged role in [anti-racist] work,” says Rob Mack, EdD, associate provost and chief diversity officer. “What this looks like for all of us is a commitment to learning and deepening our understanding.”

The “Tufts as an Anti-Racist Institution” initiative, launched in July 2020, involved more than 100 students, faculty, and staff reviewing policies and offering suggestions on how to eliminate racism on campus. In total, the university received more than 180 recommendations on how to make the campus more inclusive for people of color. Many of the proposals were concerned with increasing diversity and providing equitable access to resources and support, but the audit also raised concerns about less apparent forms of racism, such as the lack of diversity in campus art.

After reviewing 196 public artworks, Tufts discovered that 100 percent of the portraits of historic university figures were White, 98 percent were of men, and all were created by men. To bridge these gaps, Tufts is working to launch an exhibition series featuring images and objects from its archives that convey the experience of underrepresented campus members.

Tufts also took a hard look at its campus safety and policing standards and found there were concerns about bias as well as a “lack of transparency in policies, procedures, training programs, budgets, staffing, and other key operational data.” To improve well-being and safety for people of color on and around campus, university leaders are working to enact recommendations that include increasing the use of non-sworn personnel and mental health professionals for situations that do not require police officers.

Tufts is still working to determine timelines and obtain resources to fulfill more recommendations identified in its audit. The goal right now is to “reimagine and reshape internal modes of operation that wield race-based harm,” says Mack, and eventually assist campus members in getting to a place where they can “recognize, name, and then effectively respond to racism as it arises and presents itself.”

“We will never rid the community of racism,” he explains, “but we can learn how to disrupt it, dislodge it, and divorce ourselves from its snares over and over again.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
We are honoring the change makers and heroes. We are fighting health disparities through research. We are influencing the future of health care. We are educating innovators and leaders. We are changing what’s possible. Celebrating Black History Month

MUSC celebrates #makingblackhistory, #bhm2022, #blackhealthandwellness.
The NCAA Board of Governors has announced controversial changes to its policies for transgender student-athletes, sparking criticism from some LGBTQ rights advocates.

In January, the board released a statement saying that it is adopting a “sport-by-sport approach” for determining if transgender students are allowed to join athletic teams that correspond to their gender identity. Under the new policy, the national governing bodies for individual sports — rather than the NCAA — have the authority to decide if and how these students compete.

This approach follows the current U.S. and International Olympic Committee (IOC) guidelines for transgender athletes. If a particular sport does not have a national governing body, the NCAA has granted authority to that sport’s international federation or to the IOC to determine if transgender students should be allowed to participate.

The new mandate also requires that these athletes submit to testosterone testing four weeks before and six months after the start of their sport’s annual season. Additionally, they will need to provide proof of testosterone levels four weeks before championship selections.

The NCAA’s previous policy, which was established in 2010, required transgender athletes to undergo testosterone suppression and was considered the “standard for transgender inclusion” by serving as “a blueprint for state high school associations and some national governing bodies,” according to ESPN.

The new guidelines will go into effect starting with the 2022 winter championships and will be fully implemented by the following academic year.

Some transgender rights advocates have called the new rules too abrupt. Others say they are needlessly complex and discriminatory, and some say the NCAA is caving to external condemnation of transgender girls and women participating in female sports.

Dorian Rhea Debussy, a NCAA volunteer facilitator and associate director for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Kenyon College in Ohio, withdrew from their role with the NCAA shortly after the association announced the new policy. Debussy called the rule “anti-trans” and “devolving” in a letter to NCAA president Mark Emmert.

“As a non-binary, trans-feminine person, I can no longer, in good conscience, maintain my affiliation with the NCAA,” they wrote.

The new guidelines may prevent Lia Thomas, a transgender student at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), from competing. Her success in competitive swimming since transitioning to a woman has been a focal point in the contentious debate around transgender participation in girl’s and women’s athletics.

On February 1, Penn released a statement from the women’s swimming and diving team affirming its support for Thomas. She has also received support from LGBTQ advocacy groups and other higher education institutions.

On February 4, 16 of her teammates anonymously spoke against Thomas’ participation in the sport, claiming she holds an unfair advantage because of her sex at birth.

Nancy Hogshead-Makar, a former Olympic swimmer and founder of Champion Women, an athletics equality and access organization, wrote a letter on behalf of those teammates in which they expressed their full support for “Lia Thomas in her decision to affirm her gender identity and to transition from a man to a woman,” the letter obtained by CNN states. “However, we also recognize that when it comes to sports competition, that the biology of sex is a separate issue from someone’s gender identity. Biologically, Lia holds an unfair advantage over competition in the women’s category, as evidenced by her rankings that have bounced from #462 as a male to #1 as a female.”
IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

We do not merely wait for diversity to happen and tolerate it, we actively promote and pursue it - building relationships and fostering belonging for people from every racial and ethnic background, gender and gender identity, religious and political affiliation, and above all for diversity of thought and experience...Each of us can use our voice, our talents, and our ingenuity to connect to one another and to our neighbors across the street and around the world.

- University of Miami President Julio Frenk
Universities Implement Initiatives to Advance Student-Athlete Financial Literacy, Navigate NCAA Name, Image, and Likeness Policies

By Erik Cliburn

Following a June 2021 U.S. Supreme Court ruling against the NCAA, the association enacted a series of ad-hoc rules that now allow student-athletes to capitalize on their own name, image, and likeness (NIL). While the new policies are a win for college players, they do not address the longstanding need to improve financial literacy among college and professional athletes, who have been shown to have less economic expertise than their peers. A 2021 Kansas State University study found that only 9 percent of professional athletes had ever met with a financial advisor, and nearly 65 percent had received no financial education in high school or college.

Many experts in the college sports industry agree that colleges should be responsible for helping their student-athletes navigate the complexities of NIL contracts and money management to prevent organizations from taking advantage of them. To address this issue, some colleges and universities have developed strategies to help their players benefit from these new earning opportunities while also learning valuable life skills.

In 2020, in anticipation of potential NIL rule changes, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) partnered with Opendorse, an athlete endorsement technology and marketing firm, and launched an app that provides players with lessons on financial literacy, networking, and other life skills. In June 2021, the university introduced the #NILbraska initiative for its 650 student-athletes. UNL players are matched with peer mentors from the UNL law and business schools to help them navigate NIL contracts and manage their finances. UNL has also committed to making the program’s resources available to student-athletes after they leave school.

“It’s really a win-win between [the] campus and athletics because it’s allowing the students in those schools to be able to work in real-life business scenarios, and it gives our student-athletes the support they need to help monetize their [NIL],” Garrett Klassy, UNL senior deputy athletic director, recently told Sports Illustrated.

Some institutions are partnering with companies to provide sponsorship and endorsement deals to players. Brigham Young University signed a contract in September 2021 with SmartyStreets, an address verification site that provides more than 300 women student-athletes with a NIL package worth $6,000 per year.

Other schools have created new positions within their athletic departments to guide students through the NIL process. Ahead of the Supreme Court ruling, in March 2021, Duquesne University hired a personal brand coach for its men’s basketball program. The coach meets with players individually and as a group to guide them on establishing their personal brands, entrepreneurship, and self-promotion.

These lessons help the athletes prepare for life after college by teaching them the value of professional networking and other skills important for the job market, Dave Harper, Duquesne vice president of athletics, stated in a news release. He also noted that it is the university’s responsibility, as an educational institution, to support its players in these endeavors.

“We are educators,” Harper said, “and teaching our students to be successful personal brand builders is complementary to the outstanding education they will receive at Duquesne.”

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

K-State Athletics is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that embraces and celebrates diversity, while intentionally promoting and practicing inclusion. The Diversity & Inclusion Committee aims to help the department create and maintain an environment where all people are valued and respected members of the FAMILY. This will be done through Training and Education, Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Development.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PROGRAMS

- Staff Lunch & Learns
- Voter Registration
- PAALS
- Global Cats
- Women Leaders
- Promotional Nights at Sporting Events

kstatesports.com/sports/diversityandinclusion
Members of Athlete Ally participate in the 2017 Women’s March in Washington, D.C. The organization’s mission is to promote equal rights in athletics and eliminate homophobia and transphobia in college and professional sports.
DEI-Focused Organizations Offer Unique Support for Diverse Athletes and Staff

By Mariah Stewart

As the world of college athletics grows ever more diverse, underrepresented players and employees have banded together to form organizations focused on supporting their sociocultural identities. National groups dedicated to student-athletes, coaches, and staff from unique backgrounds help these individuals connect, raise awareness, develop leadership skills, and more.

Here, INSIGHT highlights just a few of the innovative, identity-based organizations working to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in college sports and higher education at large.

**Asian Coaches Association (ACA)**
The ACA was launched in 2012 by the University of California, Riverside’s Mike Mappayo, the first Asian American to coach a NCAA Division I men’s basketball team. The association hosts annual meetings for men and women coaches of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage during the NCAA Final Four conferences. It also offers ongoing virtual events for coaching staff at all levels to connect, share their experiences, and participate in professional development. The ACA accepts members and attendees who are supporters of AAPI coaches, regardless of race and ethnicity, as part of its mission to network and grow. [asiancoachesassociation.com](http://asiancoachesassociation.com)

**Athlete Ally**
Athlete Ally was founded in 2011 by Hudson Taylor, a former NCAA All-American wrestler at the University of Maryland, to end anti-LGBTQ prejudice in sports through advocacy, education, and more. Past achievements include successfully lobbying the International Olympic Committee to adopt a policy prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and working with the NCAA to move championship games out of North Carolina after the state passed a law in 2016 making it easier to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals. Athlete Ally co-authored the NCAA’s first policy and resource guide on LGBTQ issues and has created its own metric for ranking athletic department inclusiveness, the Athletic Equality Index. [athleteally.org](http://athleteally.org)

**Black AD Alliance**
Several NCAA Division I athletic directors (ADs) established the Black AD Alliance in 2020 in response to racial injustice and profiling within the college sports community. Today, the group includes more than 50 members who are dedicated to “promoting the growth, development, and elevation” of African American ADs at the Division I level. The alliance’s strategic plan includes providing a forum for Black ADs to communicate and partner with leaders from other sports organizations, such as the NCAA and National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, to combat social and racial inequity. [twitter.com/blckadalliance](http://twitter.com/blckadalliance)

**The Latinx Association for Collegiate Athletics Administrators and Student-Athletes (LA CAASA)**
LA CAASA was launched in summer 2021 to address the need for better Latinx representation in college sports. Its goals include improving college awareness and outreach with Latinx high school student-athletes as well as providing opportunities for college players from Latinx backgrounds to share their experiences. Founder Ben Rodriguez, associate director of major gifts in the athletic foundation at Georgia Southern University, was inspired to create LA CAASA after attending the Black Student-Athlete Summit — which promotes professional development and career preparation — and told the NCAA he hopes to provide a similar event for Latinx college players as early as summer 2022. [twitter.com/LA_CAASA](http://twitter.com/LA_CAASA)

**Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF)**
WSF was established two years after the passing of Title IX in 1974. The foundation provides funding to support research, aspiring athletes, and more. It also offers initiatives such as the Athlete Ambassador Program, which connects professional, Olympic, amateur, and collegiate women athletes who want to serve as mentors with organizations throughout the country. Additionally, the foundation helps college players transition to careers by connecting them with professionals through networking opportunities, such as its annual Athlete Leadership Connection event. [womenssportsfoundation.org](http://womenssportsfoundation.org)

Mariah Stewart is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
March 2022

Athletic Departments Bring Diversity and Equity Officers Aboard to Improve the Culture of College Sports

By Mariah Stewart and Mariah Bohanon

Members of the University of Miami (UM) men’s and women’s basketball teams participate in a voter registration event supported by the athletic department in September 2021. Photo courtesy UM Athletics
“Redressing racial equity and racial injustice in college sports must be an ongoing priority and area for investment, not only for the NCAA but for every institution, every college president, every athletic director, every coach, every athletic program staff member, every faculty athletic representative, and every university diversity and inclusion officer,” the commission wrote.

The report echoes the sentiments of many in the world of college athletics who have advocated for better treatment and compensation for student-athletes, more equitable hiring and advancement practices for coaching staff, enhanced protection against sexual harassment and abuse, and more. As these issues have gained more public attention in recent years, there has been a growing push for athletic departments to hire DEI experts to lead the charge.

These new professionals, often known as athletic diversity and inclusion officers (ADIOs), are tasked with addressing the distinct equality and inclusion challenges facing college sports.

“Being in the infancy of these roles, we have the unique ability to create a foundation for what it means to do DEI within an athletic department,” says Sheridan Blanford, the inaugural associate athletic director for DEI at the University of Washington (UW). “We are quite literally building the plane as we are flying it.”

As in higher education and society more broadly, the world of postsecondary athletics is deeply entrenched with ideologies and traditions rooted in systemic oppression, and it is the ADIO’s responsibility to uncover and eradicate those systems, Blanford explains. She tries to combine DEI best practices from the corporate, education, and nonprofit sectors to suit the unique needs of college sports.

“Through feedback from our stakeholders it was clear that adding a senior-level administrator to focus on this work within our department was critically important,” Jennifer Cohen, UW’s director of athletics, said in a press release about the creation of Blanford’s position. The role was originally funded by the university’s head football and basketball coaches; having the athletic department’s “most visible and influential leaders” commit to this work shows that DEI is truly essential, Blanford says. Today, she reports to Cohen and UW’s vice president for minority affairs and diversity.

Colleges and universities can best support DEI sports professionals by integrating them into all elements of athletic departments, offering them adequate resources and staff, and providing them with access to athletic and university leadership, she says.

“[ADIOs] need to not only be invited into the room, but they need to have a seat at the table and have the respect to provide that perspective, so it’s
**NCAA Announces Diversity Liaison Requirement**

In August 2020, the NCAA announced that colleges and athletic conferences must designate an Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designee (ADID). This individual serves as “the point of communication between the NCAA national office, athletics department, conference office, and campus when information around inclusive programs, emerging diversity issues and other related equity initiatives needs to be shared,” according to the NCAA. The ADID “represents the [NCAA’s] recognition of inclusion as a core value” and “participates in training and development to increase and enhance competencies associated with leading and facilitating inclusion initiatives.” The association will host training for ADIDs for summer 2022.

ADID responsibilities may be appointed to athletic diversity and inclusion officers or assigned to another staff member within the college or university — such as the institutional chief diversity officer — or to someone else within the athletic department. The NCAA recommends that the person assigned to this role be involved in discussions about policy changes and the hiring process within athletics.

more than just a DEI update at the senior leadership meeting,” explains Blanford.

Ajhanai “AJ” Keaton, PhD, an assistant professor of health and sports science at the University of Louisville, has studied DEI in college athletics extensively and is responsible for coining the term ADIO. She agrees that these positions need to be considered senior level administrators and granted the same authority and adequate funding available to many university CDOs.

One of the challenges for ADIOs, however, is the lack of familiarity of what role DEI leaders should play within the realm of college sports. Institutions that create these positions should have clear expectations of what the ADIO is expected to do because “DEI has different interpretations to individuals with different power,” Keaton says.

“These positions are new, and changing culture takes time. We need to have realistic expectations of these leaders,” she explains.
Keaton's research has pointed to the lack of diversity among leadership as one of the overarching issues plaguing college sports. Women and people of color are consistently underrepresented in top positions such as head coach, athletic director, and conference commissioner. Among the 65 wealthiest athletic departments in the NCAA, only five are led by women — three of whom are White and two Black. Such statistics are the result of institutional racism and gender biases that have long pervaded college athletics, according to a 2021 article by Keaton.

Renae Myles Payne, EdD, the senior associate athletic director/administrator and chief diversity officer for University of Miami (UM) Athletics, says introducing DEI efforts to college sports leadership and staff often means starting with the basics. She has worked with or counseled more than two dozen athletic departments on how to introduce these roles because, for many of them, fundamental DEI concepts “were things they had never talked or thought about before,” she says.

At UM, Myles Payne implemented a nine-week training program for more than 200 athletic department employees that focused on racial literacy. Staff members watched a docuseries that addressed the origins and consequences of race as a social construct. They were divided into teams that participated in weekly virtual discussions on the topic.

Myles Payne says she recommends that new ADIOs join one of the several organizations that have been founded to support DEI sports officers, such as the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics and the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Council of Excellence. Then, she says, ADIOs must discover what the immediate needs of their department are — as no two schools or athletic departments will be the same.

She is optimistic about the future of this field now that more schools are joining the effort to integrate DEI into sports and attributes much of this success to the athletes who advocated to change the status quo.

“Student-athletes changed the game,” she says. “They told administrators, ‘We need more [leaders] who look like us and can speak our language. What are you going to do about it?’”

In March 2021, Venessa A. Brown, PhD, became the inaugural associate athletic director for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and athletic chief diversity officer at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). Brown is a 27-year SIUE employee who was on the verge of retiring from her previous position as the institution’s chief diversity officer when she decided to merge her love of athletics and DEI by creating her current position, which she says contributes to the university’s shift toward being an anti-racist institution.

“[Athletics] is about winning and being competitive, but we can win in the DEI space by having an attitude change and recognizing our own individual role in the work of equity, diversity, and inclusion,” she says.

Prior to Brown’s transition, no one person was solely responsible for DEI resources and initiatives in SIUE athletics. Now, she has established strategic, overarching goals for the department, created DEI tools and resources, and begun implementing trainings and other programs for athletes and employees.

Her top priority is cultivating inclusion and support for student-athletes. “If I do nothing else, one of the main goals for me is that people come to understand that every athlete who steps on this campus leaves with a sense of belonging,” Brown explains.

At the core of her strategy, Brown provides DEI training by asking each student-athlete, coach, and staff member to “understand their own story” as it relates to the broader story of American history. She also trains coaches on issues related to recruiting underrepresented student-athletes from backgrounds different from their own.

Brown says the SIUE athletic department has always been relatively inclusive, so the most important task for her new position has been helping coaches and staff understand the value in having a DEI strategy for player recruitment. She has created virtual resource centers focused on recruitment as it relates to DEI issues, including support for LGBTQ players, women of color, those from underrepresented religious backgrounds, and more. Additionally, the resource centers offer information about the current state of specific demographics, religious holiday observances and practices, diverse dining options, and more.

“When [coaches] come to a recruit, the [recruit] knows that we’re going to provide them a safe space and allow opportunities for them to develop a sense of belonging,” Brown says.

A major difference between her current role and her previous position as an institutional CDO is that she gets to work more closely with students. “I now have more of a student and staff perspective, rather than just an institutional perspective,” she says. Campus-wide CDOs are looking at policies at a broad level and hoping that departments are embracing and implementing those guidelines, but athletic CDOs “have an opportunity to actually do it themselves and be student-centered.”

Dr. Venessa A. Brown

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Marah Stewart is a senior staff writer and Mariah Bohanon is the senior editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. Venessa A. Brown is a member of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Editorial Board. Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is a 2014-2021 recipient of the INSIGHT Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.
Despite President Joe Biden’s progress in reversing some of the Trump administration’s discriminatory policies since taking office, renewed attacks on voting and reproductive rights indicate that civil rights are still under threat for many. Furthermore, the events of January 6, 2021, only served to worsen the already fraught political divisions in the U.S., making the possibility of policy makers finding common ground even less likely.

For public policy schools and programs, discovering ways to bridge differences plays a key role in educating the next generation of experts and scholars. Through research and advocacy, these schools are leading the charge in solving pressing societal issues — including those that disproportionately impact marginalized communities — and ensuring civil rights remain protected for all. At the same time, they are also teaching students the importance of civic engagement and activism and the ways these tools can be used to unite rather than divide.

In this issue, INSIGHT looks at how public policy and administration schools are confronting climate change through urban planning, working to diversify the nation’s think tanks, and more as they strive to support a more tolerant and just society.

Howard University’s Public Policy Center Publishes Research on Police-Community Relations

In December 2021, the Ronald W. Walters Leadership and Public Policy Center at Howard University published its final report on a five-year study of the relationship between law enforcement and Black communities as seen through the lens of students at four historically Black colleges and universities across the U.S. The policy center conducted the research in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) as part of a Community Policing Development grant.

The report, titled “Engaging College Students in 21st Century Law Enforcement,” focuses on ways that policing agencies can improve their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts via community outreach, recruitment efforts, and weeding out racism within their ranks. Researchers organized student focus groups at Howard, Dillard University, Chicago State University, and Merritt University in which the participants discussed their experiences with and perceptions of law enforcement. Nearly half of the participants reported having negative experiences with the police, and there was a general concern expressed that law enforcement agencies need to root out racist officers and recruits, the report states.

“Recent years have seen a diminution of trust between many African American communities and law enforcement officers charged with protecting them,” Rob Chapman, acting director of COPS, wrote in the report. “This lack of trust in turn could discourage members of those communities from seeking law enforcement careers, and the resulting underrepresentation widens the gulf of understanding between them.”

Since the COPS grant was awarded in 2016, Howard University has also hosted three assemblies between police officials and students that focused on gender diversity and finding common ground. Recommendations from the meetings included instituting cultural competency training for all officers, placing Black women officers in more prominent positions as role models, and increasing professional development sessions regarding sexual harassment.

“[Think tanks] need to reflect diverse views and the complexities and nuances within their societies, such as cultural, religious, ethnic background, color, and socioeconomic background.”

Laura Messner, a political science and economics student at Columbia University and chief of staff and executive board co-lead of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, in “Higher Education Plays a Key Role in the Diversification of Think Tanks and Public Policy Research,” on page 38
Tufts University recently received a two-year, $325,000 grant that will establish a Racial Equity in Policy and Planning (REPP) Fellows program to help promote racial justice in public policy and urban planning.

The program is housed in Tufts’ Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) and is developed in partnership with the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS).

“The goal of the REPP Fellows program is to attract and train the next, much more diverse, generation of leaders in policy and planning,” interim UEP Chair Julian Agyeman told the blog Practical Visionaries. “There’s been a lot of talk about racial equity this past year, but we want to put our money where our mouth is. Nurturing more leaders of color in policy and planning is only a first step towards racial justice.”

The grant is provided by the Barr Foundation, which is dedicated to supporting public policy, education reform, and the arts.

The funding will provide full tuition scholarships, opportunities for paid internships, and $15,000 stipends to each of the five diverse REPP fellows studying urban planning and policy. To qualify, participants must be from an underrepresented background, have demonstrated a commitment to advancing racial justice, and exhibit the potential to be a change agent in the public policy and urban planning fields.

The program will offer student workshops in anti-racist practices and outcomes in policy and planning, with the ultimate goal of establishing a community of racial equity practice in the department and the policy and planning fields, according to a university press release.

The urban planner discipline is overwhelmingly homogeneous, with 73 percent of professionals being White, according to data from Zippia.com, a job recruitment website. In comparison, nearly 10 percent of planners are Hispanic or Latinx, 7.6 percent are Asian, 5.6 percent are Black, and 0.3 percent are American Indian and Alaska Native.

“Tufts has been building its commitment and resources to recruit and retain more [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] students in our graduate programs,” Robert Cook, Tufts psychology professor and former dean of the GSAS, said in a statement. “REPP is a model for how this investment can serve not only the fellows but our whole Tufts community and beyond.”

REPP will select the inaugural class in March, and they will begin the program in fall 2022.

“Policy that segregated communities decades ago has a long shadow and can really affect how communities are experiencing climate change today.”

Vivek Shandas, PhD, professor at Portland State University College of Urban and Public Affairs, in “Urban Planning and Public Policy Programs Aim to Protect Vulnerable Communities from Climate Change,” on page 40
Higher Education Plays a Key Role in the Diversification of Think Tanks and Public Policy Research

By Erik Cliburn

As of 2019, women comprised only 23 percent of trustees and directors at 71 U.S.-based think tanks and public policy research institutions, according to the Center for Global Development (CGD). Furthermore, women made up only 30 percent of highly compensated employees at those same institutions. Little data is available on the racial diversity of think tanks, but a 2020 letter signed by more than 300 current and former employees at 43 think tanks demanded an industry-wide overhaul to promote and retain people of color. Researchers from underrepresented ethnic and racial backgrounds at these organizations have long been tokenized and have had their ideas and perspectives diminished by a largely White, male leadership class, according to the letter.

This lack of diversity and subversion of ideas is especially detrimental considering the influence that think tanks, many of which are affiliated with or closely tied to universities, have on global and national policies that impact everyone.

“When think tanks’ expertise primarily reflects the viewpoints of a subsection of the population, the ideas and proposals generated risk being divorced from reality — at best, not being fully reflective of the perspectives of those who will be affected by them, and at worst untenable, irrelevant, or even potentially harmful,” the CGD study reads.

Since many think tanks take an academic approach to their research, they often have close relationships with faculty and students, whether through recommendations, internships, or institutional partnerships.

Therefore, higher education must play a significant role in steering this industry in the right direction in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. That is one of the goals of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), which was founded to develop a global network of think tanks to share ideas, develop best practices, and conduct research.

“As think tanks give policy advice, they need to be relevant to the society in which they operate,” says Laura Messner, a political science and economic student at Columbia University and chief of staff and executive board co-lead at TTCSP.

“They need to reflect diverse views and the complexities and nuances within their societies, such as cultural, religious, ethnic background, color, and socioeconomic background.”

TTCSP has long hosted annual global forums for think tank professionals and policy experts. In organizing these events, the program has always been deliberate in curating a diverse panel, regardless of the region or topic, says Zuha Noor, a Penn international relations student and communications lead and executive board co-lead at TTCSP.

Even beyond the social and moral aspects of DEI efforts, it is imperative that think tanks diversify if they ultimately want to develop innovative ideas, she says.

“Diversity is all good for this social responsibility that we have, but even...
moving beyond that, we need to have diversity if we’re talking about these new innovative strategies, because these ideas are not going to come from the same people,” Noor explains.

TTCSP also recently expanded its gender diversity strategies in 2021 with the creation of the Women in Think Tanks Global Network (WITTGN), which represents more than 600 women from 336 think tanks in 85 countries. At a November 2021 conference entitled “Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women, Think Tanks, and Politics Group,” the network established four working groups to advance their goals. These groups will focus on the following:

- Identify resources for and establish a network of women in the industry
- Research the state of women in public policy internationally
- Develop strategies to support women in think tanks
- Create a global mandate for donor support of women in think tanks

Messner and Noor also highlighted several factors that act as barriers for anyone who is not a wealthy, highly educated White man to enter the industry. One factor is that research internships at think tanks are generally unpaid, which excludes first-generation students and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Careers in public policy research are also seldom advertised or promoted to students, meaning internships and full-time positions are often filled based on personal connections.

It falls on the shoulders of higher education institutions to implement strategies that will support and develop underrepresented students who want to enter the world of public policy research, Messner says. This can be done through pipeline programs that better promote opportunities and financial stipends for underpaid college interns.

“This is where higher education should step in, and this is where their support for students becomes crucial,” she adds. “It’s not just the financial support that students seek, but also the advertisement of internships and the moral and social support that should be available through their universities and institutions.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.
URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAMS AIM TO PROTECT VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Underserved populations are the most vulnerable when it comes to extreme weather disasters, but progressive public policies can create a more equitable future for those at risk.

By Lisa O’Malley
Over the course of summer 2021, scorching heat waves blanketed the Pacific Northwest, claiming the lives of hundreds of residents. Although the record-breaking temperatures may have seemed unprecedented, these deadly weather conditions have been striking the U.S. for decades. More than 25 years earlier, a similar crisis unfolded in Chicago when a 1995 heat wave killed more than 700 people. In both of these climate disasters, most of the victims were elderly, low-income, and from underrepresented communities. They were also living in environments that, due to public planning policies, were built in ways that trap heat and drive up temperatures.

As the frequency and severity of these types of extreme weather events continue to increase, experts in the fields of urban planning and public policy are calling attention to the ways in which historical practices such as racial zoning and redlining have made some populations more susceptible to climate change. Planning and public policy schools have also begun reimagining their teaching practices to confront issues of climate justice and prepare students with an education that emphasizes the needs of vulnerable communities.

Highlighting the Need for Climate Action
Although connections between urban planning, public policy, and climate change have long been evident to professionals in these fields, a 2020 study in the journal Climate established the links as undeniable. Across 100 U.S. cities, 94 percent saw higher temperatures today in neighborhoods that were formerly redlined compared with those that were not.

“Policy that segregated communities decades ago has a long shadow and can really affect how communities are experiencing climate change today,” says Vivek Shandas, PhD, co-author of the study and a professor of climate adaptation in Portland State University’s (PSU) College of Urban and Public Affairs.

Urban planning, while considered its own discipline, has significant overlap with public policy. Most planning programs require students to have a strong understanding of public affairs, with a particular focus on environmental, housing, and transportation policy. Many colleges and universities house their planning programs within their public policy schools, and some even offer dual degrees in those fields.

The ACSP, a consortium of more than 100 university departments and programs offering urban planning and related degrees, recently updated its accreditation standards to bring attention to the urgent need for climate action. The new language stresses that environmental protection is a guiding value in planning education and includes an enhanced focus on teaching the causes of climate injustices and determining strategies to remedy them.

Universities can also play an important role in climate justice by researching which strategies actually work, says Shandas, who founded the Sustaining Urban Places Research (SUPR) Lab in 2010 to study the effectiveness of various solutions. One example is the Canopy Continuum project, which evaluated how urban canopy cover can affect maternal health. Lab members looked at public perceptions of urban forestry to determine what residents expect in terms of tree maintenance, conservation efforts, and more.

“With the support of census and remote sensing data, we were able to compare the current percentage of tree canopy and demographic data with the public interactions and expectations with urban forestry ownership, such as satisfaction with the quality of trees, quantity of trees, and ecological values,” says Lorena Alves Carvalho Nascimento, who participated in the project as part of Redlining is an “illegal discriminatory practice in which a mortgage lender denies loans or an insurance provider restricts services to certain areas of a community, often because of the racial characteristics of the applicant’s neighborhood.”

Source: Britannica.com
her doctoral program at PSU. Through this type of research, Shandas and his colleagues at the SUPR lab have been able to make policy recommendations for city, state, and federal governments.

Being involved with this type of research and policy work is satisfying for students, Shandas says, because it provides firsthand experience with a range of potential climate action solutions that they can use later in their careers.

Collecting feedback from these underserved communities also provides students with an important understanding of the cultural differences that can affect whether an individual has access to resources and support during a climate event. Undocumented individuals, for example, may not feel comfortable going to a government-sponsored cooling center during a heat wave. Policymakers must take such factors into account in order to truly make a difference for vulnerable communities, Shandas says.

As climate science, public policy, and planning research continue to coalesce, Shandas hopes to see a climate movement begin to grow across disciplines. He adds that public policy and planning schools can contribute by considering what type of research, policy evaluations, and curricular designs are necessary to ensure communities are better positioned to withstand extreme weather events.

“Climate change is this existential thing, and it is often really hard to identify what’s a solution that would move forward and advance the conversation,” he says. “We’re having to rethink a lot of the way we do our planning, and that takes time, that takes resources, and that takes real creativity.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

The Department of Urban and Public Affairs within the College of Arts and Sciences is a dynamic, interdisciplinary department that highlights ideas and issues faced by urban communities through social science fields including urban studies, public administration, urban planning, sustainability and peace, justice, and conflict transformation. The urban-focused programs position students for success in both public and nonprofit sectors. By including content that focuses on the metropolitan location UofL calls home, the department encourages diversity and inclusiveness in its curriculum and engagement with the greater Louisville community.

louisville.edu/artsandsciences
University of Michigan’s Ford School of Public Policy Addresses Social Inequities through Increased Dialogue and Student Engagement

By Erik Cliburn

Education and community engagement are perhaps the most crucial keys to addressing the issues of systemic racism and social injustice within the world of public policy. Recognizing this, the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy (Ford School) has created numerous programs and initiatives with the goals of teaching its students about the realities of racial injustice, communicating effectively across cultural and ideological differences, and using their voices to affect societal change. Most notably, the school launched the Center for Racial Justice in September 2021, which aims to address inequities through events focusing on activism and racism in public policy and by hosting a fellowship program.

“We are thinking about social justice more broadly,” Celeste Watkins-Hayes, associate dean for academic affairs at the Ford School and founding director of the center, told The Michigan Daily. “We’re thinking about gender and sexuality and religion and class and immigration status because we know that none of us are one thing, and systems don’t operate on just one dimension of inequity.”

The Center for Racial Justice hopes to attract visiting fellows from various disciplines to produce “catalyst projects” focused on racial justice and equity that influence scholarly research, public debate, and policy. Events hosted by the center have included the Masterclass in Activism series, in which Watkins-Hayes speaks with notable activists and policy influencers, and the Racial Foundations of Public Policy series, which examines the historical impacts of race on social policy.

Student engagement is key to the center, as is evident through the creation of a student advisory board and the racial justice student initiative and policy research funds. The advisory board includes undergraduates and graduates who design racial justice programming for Ford students, including a Race and Public Policy Student Conference planned for fall 2022. The funding initiatives, the latter of which is geared toward advanced master’s and PhD students, provide financial support to student-led racial justice advocacy, policy engagement, and research projects.

In October 2020, the school launched its Public Policy and Institutional Discrimination series, which features in-depth discussion sessions focused on various policy issues tied to institutional racism and discrimination and ways to break down social barriers. Recent sessions include those on economic empowerment of underrepresented communities, immigration reform, environmental justice, prison reform, and more.

Bill Bynum, a visiting faculty member at the Ford School and chief executive officer of the Hope Enterprise Corporation, a nonprofit credit union that serves Black communities, hosted a session in January 2022 on economic empowerment. He highlighted the important role that colleges can play in closing the racial wealth gap by working with minority-owned businesses, investing in local infrastructure, and providing financial advice to economically disadvantaged communities. He emphasized the hope is that students and faculty will internalize the messages from the session and others in the series and work to better incorporate racial equity into public policy, says Stephanie Sanders, PhD, a lecturer and diversity, equity, and inclusion officer at the Ford School.

“This series is designed to foster...
Students and faculty advisers at the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy (UM Ford School) organized Turn Up Turnout (TUT), a non-partisan, student-led organization that works to increase voter registration and participation among students. The organization sets up campus locations dedicated to voter registration drives and education initiatives that inform students about political candidates and voting regulations. TUT also administers workshops on UM campuses and local high schools to stress the importance of voting, especially in local, state, and midterm elections. With students becoming more politically active in recent years, it is vital that they understand the voting process, says TUT President Sophie Greenberg, a junior at the Ford School.

“If you walk up to just about any student on a college campus and ask them to talk about an issue they care about, you will get an immediate and passionate response,” she says. “The environment, racial and economic inequality, immigration, health care, gun control, and endless other topics are on the minds of students who are unhappy with the status quo and want to see changes made. Unfortunately, this abundance of passion is typically not met by an abundance of information about the voting process.”

Since TUT was formed, UM has seen significant increases in voter turnout among students. UM Ann Arbor saw a 17.7 percent increase from 2016 to 2020 among eligible student voters, totaling 78.1 percent. The Flint and Dearborn campuses saw increases of more than 11 percent, totaling 71.7 and 69.4 percent, respectively. All three campuses exceeded the 2020 national average college student voting rate of 66 percent as reported by the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement.

Greenberg says that TUT works closely with several identity-based organizations, such as the Black Student Union, the NAACP, and the Muslim Student Association, to promote voter registration and provide education about the voting process.

For a school dedicated to the study of governments and governance, diversity, equity, and inclusion form the foundation of what we teach and learn. DEI is about representation, participation, and empowerment. We believe that when we support diverse voices, viewpoints, and experiences, we forge more widely representative, more participatory, and more resilient communities. In the process, we also promote respect and human dignity.

dialogue that contributes to a deeper understanding of the ways in which discrimination manifests itself within institutions,” she says.

The school has also established the Conversations Across Differences initiative, which includes an event series, co-curricular programming, and curriculum and leadership development. The series invites notable speakers in the realm of public policy to bridge cultural and political differences through constructive debate on local, national, and global policy issues. The co-curricular programming and leadership development elements of the initiative are meant to build teamwork, critical thinking, and communication skills through debate, trust building, and problem solving across numerous differences through discussions and various exercises. The goal of the series is to ensure that Ford School students, who will go on to be leaders in public policy, can effectively craft inclusive policies and laws with people who come from a wide range of backgrounds and have differing viewpoints, especially during a time of extreme political division.

“We foster a generous sense of belonging among our students in the classroom and in our community more broadly,” the Ford School’s website states, “working to create an inclusive, accepting environment in which students can navigate and learn through issues of disagreement and painful topics.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity
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**Contact person:** Lisa Watts, lwatts@marshall.edu

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The April issue of *INSIGHT Into Diversity* will feature a special report on Schools of Education.

The advertising deadline is March 8. For information, please call 314-200-9955 or email ads@insightintodiversity.com.
OPEN FACULTY POSITIONS

The vision of the College of Engineering and Science at Louisiana Tech University is to be a world leader in integrating engineering and science in education and research. The College is undertaking a faculty recruiting campaign to attract culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber. The College recently completed construction of a new $40M integrated engineering and science education building providing an additional 128,000 square feet of educational and laboratory space. To build a diverse workforce the college encourages applications from individuals with disabilities, minorities, veterans and women.

Multiple faculty positions are anticipated for the 2022-23 academic year in the following degree programs.

- Biomedical Engineering
- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering
- Construction Engineering Technology
- Computer Science
- Cyber Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Instrumentation & Control Systems Engineering Technology
- Industrial & Systems Engineering
- Mathematics & Statistics
- Micro and Nanosystems Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Physics

All professional ranks (Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor) will be considered. Lecturer and Instructor (non-tenure-track) positions are also available for highly qualified teaching faculty. Applicants for professor and lecturer positions must have a doctorate or complete one by their start date in the relevant area or a closely related field, and instructor applicants must have a minimum of a master’s degree. Successful tenure-track candidates are expected to actively participate in multidisciplinary research efforts in the College, initiate, build and sustain an externally funded research program; and supervise masters and doctoral students. Excellent written and oral communication skills, strong teaching skills, and a commitment to high quality professional service and active participation in college responsibilities are expected. The College is especially interested in qualified candidates who can contribute, through their research, teaching and/or service, to the diversity and excellence of the academic community. The University is a doctoral granting public institution that enrolls approximately 11,000 students from 48 states and 69 countries.

Research activity is leveraged through one or more of the College's multidisciplinary centers of excellence in micro and nanotechnology, biotechnology and biomedical applications, cyber security, trenchless technology, STEM education or applied physics research. Additional research opportunities are also available through the Louisiana Tech Research Institute (LTRI). Overarching goals of LTRI are to enable the university to provide the US Air Force with next-door access to a dedicated and applied research centers and support for nuclear defense, cyber and intelligence-related research, and educational activities.

Interested applicants should compile a single PDF that includes a 1) cover letter; 2) curriculum vitae; 3) statement of research interests and goals; 4) description of teaching experience and interests; and 5) the names and contact information for at least three references. The PDF file should be submitted electronically to LaTechCareers. If the link is not clickable, try copying and pasting it into the address bar of your web browser. The job site: https://ulsltu.wd1.myworkdayjobs.com/LATECHCareers. Review of applications is ongoing and will continue until suitable candidates are identified. The anticipated starting date for most positions is September 1, 2022. Louisiana Tech University is an EEO/AA employer.

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Oklahoma State University Honors MLK Day Alongside Local Community

On January 17, 2022, Oklahoma State University (OSU) and Stillwater Community United (SCU), a local diversity organization, hosted a unity march and speech series to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. OSU students and faculty joined SCU members on the march, which made several stops for speeches from city and university leaders such as OSU President Kayse Shrum and Stillwater Mayor Will Joyce. The speakers touched on themes of community, love, and racial justice by echoing famous speeches and written works from Dr. King.

“As we are gathered here today, I encourage and challenge each of us to recognize that the meaning of Dr. King’s dream is what matters, not just the march,” said Jason Kirksey, OSU’s vice president for institutional diversity and chief diversity officer. “Dr. King’s legacy continues to serve as a call to action for all of us every day to engage in the work of justice, equality and love of humanity. Hopefully all of us listen to each other, commit to learn from one another, and aspire to be better today than we were yesterday.”

The celebration ended with a keynote speech from Chideha Kanu, a recent OSU graduate and Nigerian-American, who compared his experiences of living in the country with the largest Black population in the world and attending a predominantly White institution. He urged attendees to “go above and beyond” by internalizing King’s messages and working to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
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