Spring has sprung, but there is still a slight chill in the air as the season continues transitioning. The month of April is packed with many creative things to celebrate and numerous awareness campaigns to acknowledge. As we near the end of this academic school year and begin to resume a bit of normalcy, I encourage each of you to look for a cause you care about or support, an organization in need.

I want to share a personal journey that my family and I have endured for some time. On March 30, my oldest...
sister was the recipient of a new kidney. Four years prior, she learned that she was in stage four of kidney failure. A young woman with a life full of promise, my sister is the mother of three amazing young adults. When the family learned of this news, we were all concerned but chose to lean on our faith and trust that the outcome would be positive.

My sister's new beginning also meant that a family was now experiencing pain and loss. This was a tough reality to grapple with, but it was also the exact position we found ourselves navigating. I am sharing this story because we are all a part of a larger community, and none of us really know what an individual or a family might be managing in their personal or private lives. Take the time to reconnect with family, colleagues, and friends. Ask them how they are doing and mean it! See if they need anything and offer a helping hand if you can.

Many people in your circle have been suffering in silence; they smile and move through the campus, but they are not OK. To cultivate a true community of care, we need to make time and spend time supporting each other. The care concept simply means… being intentional about our everyday interactions with each other. Spring has sprung; yes, there is still a slight chill in the air. Be the reason someone has a great day!

Community Events

Six–Week Challenge: Explore, Learn, and Reflect

Mark your calendar!
The challenge starts in May.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in partnership with LiveWell OU are challenging you to explore your identities and the identities of others, to learn about the -isms, and to reflect on how you can influence systems of oppression and even disrupt them!

Visit our webpage to stay informed.

“Be the reason someone has a great day!”
What does it take to build a community?
It takes commitment—commitment to inclusion. Following that lead, DEI week opened and closed by breaking bread. In fact, one way to build community is by inviting others at the table, a place where we share food.

In times of pandemic, webinars have also become communal places of inclusion. The ones scheduled during DEI week connected alumni with current students around career trajectories, researches with students around social justice, and LGBTQ+ students with their peers, faculty, and staff around their future in higher education.

Commitment needs nourishment. Austin Channing Brown re-energized the audience by sharing what happened to her and the reaction of potential employers when she decided to show up as a Black woman in the workplace, rather than pretending that “race was not in the room.” She invited the audience to be “fully human.” Xavier Avila presented with a light note his way to subvert stereotyping with poetry that allows generations to converse.

Finally, committed to inclusion means also to be accountable. Pathway to Belonging, the DEI Office annual report, encapsulated OU struggles and successes in the context of 2020 national and international events. In her final remarks, vice president Hyppolite acknowledged that the path to an inclusive community that fosters a sense of belonging and emotional growth for all unfolds over time. It relies on a steady commitment “to serve constituents and build intentional partnerships.”

One person at the time.
Nurturing an Inclusive Environment in Division 1 Athletics Programs

By Erin Simpson, Director of the Gender + Equality Center

In the past year, the Athletics Department subcommittee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has committed to nurture affirming and safe environments for LGBTQ+ student-athletes, fans, and community members. They have hosted trainings and book clubs, launched working groups aimed at inclusion, and developed a fan code of conduct that makes the values of OU Athletics explicit.

Their work was acknowledged by (continue reading)

Time to Work. Time to Celebrate: Lifting the Voices of Inclusion

Sometimes, to understand the impact of our daily work we need to see it through the eyes of those around us. Indeed, many faculty and staff members saw the commitment and contributions of colleagues and students who they nominated for the inaugural diversity, equity, and inclusion award, Lifting the Voices of Inclusion.

Developed after the recommendations of a group of DEI liaisons, the award is a recognition to individual students, faculty and staff, but also to innovative programming across the Norman, Health Sciences Center, and OU-Tulsa campuses. With their original ways of thinking and consistent actions, 2021 award recipients demonstrated how to create a community of inclusion, where people can manifest their humanity.
Faculty Excellence Award
Undergraduate Student Advocacy Award
Graduate Students Advocacy Award
Champion Award for Outstanding Staff
Innovative Programming Award

Culminating in the virtual award ceremony on April 14, Lifting the Voices of Inclusion was a team effort of which everyone wanted to be part. And to everyone, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion extends its gratitude.

DEI Progress Report Update

The 2020 strategic plan ushered a high standard of accountability and rigor in tracking the effectiveness of university policies and practices. To fulfill that standard, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has launched the DEI annual progress report.

To guide colleges, divisions, and administrative offices throughout the submission process, the Office has developed a webpage with FAQ and a summary of the report questions.

If additional questions arise, please contact us at diversity.inclusion@ou.edu.

OU Employee Resource Groups

At OU, the Employee Resource Groups are an open forum for individuals with a shared identity to build community and a place of belonging.

ERGs are available at all three campuses and include Black faculty and staff/ African American faculty and staff (OUHealth), Latinx Coalition, Indigenous faculty and staff Circle, LGBTQ+ faculty and staff, Middle Eastern North African faculty and staff, and Asian Pacific Islander Desi Indian faculty and staff.

For any questions about ERG please send an email at diversity.inclusion@ou.edu.

Training and Development

Rooted in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Change Starts With Me

The Faculty and Staff Learning series continues in April with a workshop focused on how conflicting identities can be managed.

Duality
Facilitator: Jamie Washington, Ph.D.

Noon - 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, April 21
Virtual Workshop

Register Here
Health Equity and Social Justice Conference

This virtual conference equips participants with some ways to recognize and address health disparities and the racial pandemic emerged among marginalized communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Session 1 - Monday, April 26
A walk in my shoes: Understanding health disparities in marginalized communities

Session 2 - Tuesday, April 27
LGBTQ+ Health Care

Session 3 - Wednesday, April 28
Bumps and bundles exploring disparities and inequity in maternal health for women of color

Session 4 - Thursday, April 29
Anti-Asian racism and racialized violence amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

Register here

The Women's and Gender Studies Center for Social Justice is hosting a series of events about

Teach Out on Race: Creating Disruptive Spaces

10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Friday, April 23
Virtual Event

Register Here
Apply to Aspiring Health Professions Summer Academy

AHPSA is a week-long academy hosted by the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. It is geared toward high school incoming freshmen through graduating seniors who are interested in pursuing a career in health care or research.

Participants will interact with professionals from the Health Sciences Center colleges through hands-on activities, discussions, and simulations.

July 12 - 16
Virtual Academy

Application Deadline: Friday, June 4
Apply Here
Please direct your questions to: Danielle-pullen@ouhsc.edu

This Month We Honor...

April Awareness
Celebrate Diversity Month
Autism Awareness Month
National Minority Health Month
Indigenous / Native Awareness & History Observation
Arab American Heritage Month
National Deaf History Month
Black Maternal Health Week

April Observance
1 – Holy Thursday
2 – Good Friday
4 – Easter
8 – Yom Hashoah
13 – Ramadan Begins
14 – Vaisakhi
20 – Festival of Ridvan
21 – Rama Navami
24 – Armenian Martyrs’ Day
27 – Theravada New Year
30 – Lag B’Omer

The Importance of Giving
The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion uses donations from people like you to fund grants, sponsorships and scholarships, as well as events and lectures to make the OU community more diverse, equitable and inclusive.

These contributions have helped many in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. For that, and for all types of support,

we thank you!

Donate Here