Dear Reader,

Welcome to the February issue of Diversity on Campus.

Despite the cold, OU has started the spring semester with a fiery start! It looks to be a semester packed with new experiences, learning, and dedication to continue making OU the best university it can be.

We can't wait to see all the upcoming events throughout the spring semester! Thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

DEI Team
From the VP Desk
February: A Month to Remember

February is the month where we bring attention to women’s heart health, celebrate love, and celebrate Black History. As we move through this month, please do it with intentionality. February is a short month, but a month packed with many great causes and History that must be remembered. First, on February 4th, the American Heart Association continues to lead the cause of “Going Red” for women’s heart health. According to the American Heart Association, most heart disease and stroke deaths are preventable. However, cardiovascular disease and poor heart health continue to be a leading causes of death for women. Please don’t ignore your health and make your heart health a priority! Being informed is a way of saving a life, and it could be yours! To learn more, please visit goredforwomen.org/.

As we focus on heart health, that leads to my second point, February, celebrate love. Love comes in many forms and can be expressed in many ways. I encourage you to tell your loved ones daily that you love them. You do not need to wait for a specific date on the calendar but learn to give and receive love freely and daily. Love without judgment, love through pain, love to add joy, love because it cost you nothing! I also want to stress the importance of self-love. It isn’t easy to give and receive love if you do not love yourself. If you are struggling to love yourself, it is okay to seek help or find support in others. A few campus resources are the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for faculty and staff, hr.ou.edu/EAP, Goddard Heath Services offers Counseling Services ou.edu/ucc. Don’t suffer in silence; seek the support you need to learn how to love yourself!

Finally, I want to acknowledge Black History Month. As we continue to grapple with the polarized political culture across the state of Oklahoma and the country, I encourage everyone to learn how Black History is, in fact, American History. We should not stop learning about History because it makes us uncomfortable. We must acknowledge the truth about the past and ensure that painful History is not repeated. We cannot undo what has occurred, but we all have a responsibility to do better once we know better! According to Fredrick Douglass, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” We are certainly at a point of struggle and at a crossroads. Will we continue to struggle, or will we lean into the progress we must make together? To learn more about Black History as American History, please visit frc.org/op-eds/black-history-as-american-history

Warmly,

Belinda Higgs Hyppolite, Ed.D.
DEI Welcomes New Members to the Team!

DEI is excited to introduce the newest additions to our division! Each of these individuals will bring a new perspective and focus to our work, that allow us to further build and strengthen our efforts. Read below to find out more about the new team members!

**Adisha Waghmarae, M.HR, B.SW**

*Director for DEI: Outreach and Engagement*

Adisha Waghmarae serves as the new program director for DEI: outreach and engagement. She is originally from Johannesburg, South Africa, where she was born during apartheid.

Adisha played as a DII tennis athlete at East Central University where she completed her bachelor’s degree in medical social work and minored in biology. She then received a master’s degree in human relations with a focus on human trafficking awareness at The University of Oklahoma.

At OU, she has developed her career as a student affairs professional through her former position as a residence life coordinator in the residence life department. She has participated in projects with nonprofit organizations, such as ABC Nepal, to raise the overall status of marginalized communities with special focus on women and youth.

She currently serves as a board member for the American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma.

Her research interests include women’s issues, human rights issues, cultural awareness, diversity, equity, and inclusion. In her spare time, she takes pleasure in traveling, meeting new people, and playing tennis.
Marina Rodriguez, M.Ed

Program Director for TRIO Programs: Upward Bound

Marina Rodriguez serves as the new program director for TRIO Upward Bound. After receiving a bachelor’s degree with a focus on global affairs, she went on to earn a master’s degree in adult & higher education administration from the University of Oklahoma.

Throughout her time at OU, Marina’s main goal has been to increase both the access and success of students from low-income, first-generation homes, and those with diverse cultural backgrounds.

She has a passion for working with high school students and loves helping them meet their personal and professional goals. In her spare time, Marina enjoys traveling, cooking, working out, and spending time with family and friends.

Melissa McBride, M.HR, B.A.

TRIO Administrative Coordinator

Melissa McBride serves as the new TRIO administrative coordinator. Melissa graduated Summa Cum Laude with two degrees from the University of Oklahoma: a bachelor of arts in psychology with a minor in sociology-(criminology) and a master’s degree in human relations.

While obtaining her undergraduate degree, Melissa worked for the OU I.T. Learning Spaces team, where she helped enhance the technological experience of professors, faculty, and students across campus. After graduation, Melissa worked with at-risk youth at a nonprofit organization in Norman.

During this time, Melissa ran the volunteer and community relations program for the agency. Additionally, she taught psychoeducational
classes to the children residing in the emergency youth shelter, before moving into the human resources department.

In her spare time, Melissa loves to spend time with her family, read, listen to music, and play with her two dogs.

---

**International Mother Language Day**

Do you speak a language other than English as your first language? Are you learning a heritage language? Is multilingualism important to you? The DEI Office will be celebrating **International Mother Language Day** on Monday, Feb. 21, and we’d like to share your language story! If you are interested in recording a very short (30-second to 1.5-minute) video about why your mother language is important to you, email diversity.inclusion@ou.edu or visit [https://bit.ly/IMLDvideos](https://bit.ly/IMLDvideos) to share your story. All OU students, faculty, staff, and alumni are welcome to participate. Videos can be in English or the language of your choice!
Black History Month Signature Event: Soul Food Junkies with Byron Hurt

Get ready to get your Soul Food on with Byron Hurt as he discusses his film Soul Food Junkies for our BHM Tri-Campus Signature Event! Learn more about the history and significance of soul food with a film screening and a webinar!

P.S. There will also be a sampling of soul food from local Black-owned businesses!

Watch the film on Kanopy or our website and sign up for the Zoom!

News and Involvement Opportunities

For additional information or accommodations please contact: diversity.inclusion@ou.edu
TRIO Program Spotlight: An Interview With Sophia Bolin-Dils

Despite her busy schedule, DEI was able to set up an interview with McNair Scholars Program director, Sophia Bolin-Dils, who shared her experience with the program, its impact on OU and her personal life, and where she believes the program is heading.

**What does McNair mean to you? What inspires your efforts and goals within the program?**

SB: On the micro-level, working in McNair means helping outstanding students achieve their dreams. The macro-level result and focus of McNair is helping diversify the professoriate. I am continually inspired by our scholars who overcome challenges to produce knowledge through research and earn graduate degrees. My goal is lofty – helping reach a critical mass of McNair Scholars serving as academic leaders to ensure a more just higher education environment.

**How would you describe your students and their work to the world?**

SB: McNair Scholars are among the most intelligent, insightful, and motivated students on campus. The research they produce helps us better understand the world, solve problems, and improve lives. Despite full schedules, our scholars are also wonderful about being available to encourage each other and serve as role models for students from similar backgrounds.

**What’s the biggest lesson you’ve learned throughout your time with the McNair Scholars?**

SB: Perfection isn’t necessary for excellence and can be toxic. Academia fosters perfectionism and imposter syndrome, hampering progress and causing unnecessary stress.

**What are your dreams and ambitions for the McNair program?**

SB: My dream is that every McNair Scholar and TRIO-eligible student recognizes their value and feels empowered to achieve their goals. I am driven to do everything in my power to provide our
scholars the experiences, support, and encouragement they deserve on the path to earning doctoral degrees.

"Thank you!"

To read more about The McNair Scholars...

---

DEI Week Call for Programs

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion would like to invite you to submit an event proposal for our 2022 DEI Week! Our theme this year is "Creating a Community of Care."

This year's week will be held March 6-11.

Submissions are due at 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21
We will provide our approval or declination of your proposal by 5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 25

Use the link below to submit your proposal!

If you're interested in taking part in our DEI Week: Creating a Community of Care, please read below on submitting a proposal! We can't wait to hear your ideas!

Submit Your Proposal
During our DEI Week 2022, we are hosting an art walk and want to feature YOUR WORK!
If you want to share your art and creativity with the world and build new connections, sign up below! We know you're talented and can't wait to see what you have in store!

Submit Your Art!
Welcome back to Lander Recommends! It's Black History Month and I wanted to share Black-owned businesses I frequently use! While some companies featured are larger brands, it's important that we also think about supporting our local communities of historically underrepresented groups.

**Tote and Carry:** Look cute and flawless wearing a piece from Tote and Carry, a company founded by two men of color! The team uses unique patterns, textures, with a bold and vibrant aesthetic. Get a cute luggage set, tote, or purse for date night and look good while doing it!

**Mama Z's African Supermarket and Restaurant:** Mama Z's is full of so many options, there's spices, snacks, a bakery, and drinks to stock the fridge! If you're not feeling like cooking, they also have a restaurant which also features authentic and delicious African meals!

**Grace Eleyae:** It's important to take care of yourself and your hair. For all of those on a hair journey or for protection, Grace Eleyae has you covered. The company offers fashionable and well-designed satin and silk lined caps, turbans, pillowcases, and other products to ensure you stay at your best!

**Fulton Street Books and Coffee:** You already know I love books, and having a spot to get a drink while reading is such a relaxing experience. Fulton makes itself a safe space and has a mission to uplift and empower BIPOC and other marginalized groups. 70% of the books are from these populations, which is amazing and rarely seen in bookstores!

**Eastside Pizza House:** Disclaimer... I haven't been to Eastside Pizza House because yesterday was its grand opening! Nevertheless, looking at the menu makes my mouth water. I have plans to go this weekend...
February 2022 | Saasha Reese

February marks Black History Month in the United States. There are a variety of great children’s books that feature different aspects of Black history and stories of Black Americans to help the littles in our lives learn more!

The first book we are highlighting is Born on the Water, which beautifully narrates and illustrates a proud origin story of many Black Americans through the lens of a granddaughter learning the history of her family and heritage. The book explains the history, context, and hope of the phrase “We were born on the water. We come from the people who refused to die.”

The second and third books that will help our littles (and ourselves) know Black History are “Little Leaders; Bold Women in Black History” and “Little Legends; Exceptional Men in Black History” by Vashti Harrison. These books share vignettes of Black leaders and legends and include a brief biography and illustration for each historical figure.

We hope that these books will help you celebrate the diverse histories and current stories of Black Americans with the young people in your life.
Imagine a few scenarios:

A student sits with her advisor to identify courses needed for the upcoming semester. The student has a disability that requires that course materials work with text to speech assistive technology applications. The student is deeply concerned about potential retaliation by instructors if she advocates for these accommodations, which may require extra time and effort on the part of the instructors.

Continue reading...

For any questions or assistance please contact the ADRC at adrc@ou.edu.

Training and Development

Spring Faculty and Staff Series

We're ready to tell you about our first Faculty and Staff Series of the semester! On Monday, March 7 speaker Danny Bogard will lead an insightful session on "Reconciling Vulnerability and Professional Life."

The webinar will take place from noon-1:30 p.m. on Zoom, with the link coming soon!
Get ready for a dynamic and informative session to implement into your professional life!

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 to diversity.inclusion@ou.edu.

Request Customized Training With DEI

In a community of care, members are engaged in continuous education via workshops and training sessions like the ones scheduled by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Those options are listed on the DEI calendar.

Request a customized training session by clicking on the bottom below:
Sometimes, however, training needs to be customized to fit the experiences of a college or administrative department. To request a customized training or to facilitate conversations, we invite you to complete an online form.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion team is looking forward to your requests!

Final Thoughts
THIS MONTH WE HONOR...

FEBRUARY 2022

Month Awareness
Black History Month
American Heart Month

Week Awareness
Congenital Heart Defects Awareness Week
National Eating Disorders Awareness Week

Observance
1 – Lunar New Year
1 – World Hijab Day
2 – National Girl and Women in Sports Day
3 – National Missing Person’s Day
4 – National Wear Red Day/National World Cancer Day
11 – International Day of Girls and Women in Science
12 – National Freedom to Marry Day
14 – Valentine’s Day
15 – Nirvana Day
15 – National Lantern’s Day
17 – Random Act of Kindness Day
20 – World Day of Social Justice
21 – International Mother Language Day
21 – President’s Day
## Spring 2022 Programming Calendar

### February

- **OU Tulsa Lunch and Learn Inclusive Conversations**
  - Thursday, February 17
  - 12:00 pm-1:00 pm

- **Virtual International Mother Language Day Video Compilation Premiere**
  - Monday, February 21

- **#WeAre: Celebrating Black History Month-Soul Food Junkies with Byron Hurt Event**
  - Wednesday, Feb 23
  - 6:30-8:30 pm
  - Norman only

- **#WeAre: Celebrating Black History Month-Soul Food Junkies with Byron Hurt Webinar**
  - Thursday, Feb 24
  - 12:00-1:00 pm

### March

- **Graduate Students Listening Session**
  - Wednesday, March 2
  - 6:00-8:00 pm

- **Virtual Undergraduate Students Listening Session**
  - Thursday, March 3
  - 6:00-8:00 pm

- **DEI Week: Creating a Community of Care**
  - Sunday-Friday, March 6-11

- **Loyola Project Screening in Partnership with Athletics (To Be Determined)**
  - Sunday, March 6
  - (Time To Be Determined)

- **DEI Sunday Funday (Adams Walker Mall, Norman only)**
  - Sunday, March 6
  - 5:00-7:00 pm

- **Faculty and Staff Series With Danny Bogard**
  - Monday, March 7
  - 12:00-1:30 pm

- **DEI Week Speaker Series: John Quinones (Maaham Auditorium)**
  - Monday, March 7
  - 5:00-7:00 pm

- **International Women’s Day: Break the Bias Webinar In partnership with Gender + Equality Center**
  - Tuesday, March 8
  - 12:00-1:00 pm

- **Diversity in Comics Art Walk**
  - Wednesday, March 9
  - 12:00-1:00 pm

- **Pathway to Belonging Care Campaign Giveaway**
  - Wednesday, March 9
  - 3:00-5:00 pm

- **Virtual OU Tulsa Lunch and Learn Inclusive Conversations (OU Tulsa Building 3 Room 316)**
  - Thursday, March 17
  - 12:00-1:00 pm

- **Virtual Staff Listening Session**
  - Thursday, March 23
  - 9:00-10:00 am

- **Faculty Listening Session**
  - Thursday, March 24
  - 12:00-1:00 pm

*Subject to change*
THE IMPORTANCE OF GIVING

Give to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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!