On Feb. 9, the City of Norman proclaimed February 2021 as Black History Month, and Breea Clark, the city mayor, invited Norman citizens to celebrate the diversity and character of the Norman community. I was honored to accept the Black History Month proclamation on behalf of the university and as a new resident of the city of Norman. I was also reminded of all that the university and the city had gone through in 2020 and now in 2021. Black History
Month celebrations remind us of past struggles and inspire us to celebrate today and future possibilities. Black history has helped to shape the fabric and core of the United States and the world. We must never forget those who were the 'first' to help break the barriers, and we must continue to celebrate those trailblazers. There is a cost that has been paid for every step forward in history.

To speak to this moment in our society and history, OU, the City of Norman, and the country are all at a crossroads. As a new member of this community, only arriving in January of 2020, I had the opportunity to observe all of the challenges that 2020 presented to our university community and the City of Norman. As time continues moving forward and the seasons change, we will have to decide who we want to be and what we want the legacy of this moment to be for our individual selves, our collective community, our university, our city, and our state. A community that is divided can never thrive but is merely in survival mode. I hope as a new member of the state of Oklahoma, a resident of the City of Norman, and a leader at OU, that we will find a way and create opportunities for we, the people, to unite, come together, and work together.

So much of Black history is centered on the family, the church, and specifically the community. I want to leave you with these words: "If there is no struggle, there is no progress" - Frederick Douglass. We have struggled together; let's be intentional about now growing together.  

February 2021
Meet the Assistant Dean for Equity and Community Engagement for the School of Community Medicine at OU-Tulsa

Syeachia Dennis, M.D., M.P.H., FAAFP, has been named assistant dean for equity and community engagement at the School of Community Medicine, OU-Tulsa. In her role, she will work with faculty members, residents, students, and staff to advance social and structural issues affecting patients’ health.

She is planning to support the DEI efforts within graduate medical education, to develop an anti-bias curriculum track for medical students, and to increase community collaborations with organizations committed to advancing health equity in Tulsa and Oklahoma at large. Her plans reflect the SCM goal of eliminating structural racism while fostering well-being for individuals and community health.

Congratulations to Dr. Dennis!

Read More

Training and Development

Save the Date - Noon Wednesday, 24 March

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion invites you to the 2021 state of diversity virtual presentation, scheduled from noon to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 24. Visit our website and follow us on social media @DiversityOU to stay updated.
Sometimes talking about the weather is not small talk. At DEI, we learned it last week, when we decided to postpone the workshop titled Power and Privilege after compelling communications about exceptional snow accumulations and wind chills, unseen in Oklahoma since 1899.

We have plans to reschedule the workshop with Becky Martinez, Ph.D. In the meantime, we invite you to listen to a podcast where she discusses power.

Visit our calendar to stay update!

Reparations and the Tulsa Race Massacre

The College of Law is hosting a panel discussion centered on the Tulsa race massacre.

Moderated by Karlos K. Hill, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Clara Luper Department of African and African American Studies, the panel features:

- **Bruce Fisher**, Historian
- **Dreisen Heath**, Researcher/advocate, Human Rights Watch
- **Ife Williams**, Ph.D., President, African Heritage Studies Association

RSVP

Historical Medical Trauma and Uncovering Cultural Mistrust

Some factors contributing to our physical and psychological health come from generational experiences. In the Black and historically marginalized communities, the result of those experiences is historical medical trauma.
Syeachia Dennis, M.D., recently appointed as the assistant dean for equity and community engagement at the School of Community Medicine, OU-Tulsa, will address that topic by contributing her medical perspective.

Click on the button below and register to the webinar.

**Register Here**

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**Take Root Oklahoma: Symposium on Reproductive Justice**

The Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Center for Social Justice, in the College of Arts and Sciences, is hosting a symposium on reproductive justice.

Expert panels include:

- **Elyse Singer**, Ph.D.
  OU Department of Anthropology
- **Julie Burkhart**, Founder and CEO of Trust Women
- **Danielle Williams**, Chair, Oklahoma Call for Reproductive Justice
  Communications
- **Jennifer Holland**, Ph.D.
  OU Department of History

[**Register at csj.ou.edu**](#)
**Black Men in White Coats: A Documentary and Panel Discussion**

There are questions to be answered:

What if we had a medical workforce that actually reflected our patient population? What challenges do our Black boys face? Who are their role models? Why is it easier to visualize a Black man in an orange jumpsuit than it is in a white coat? What’s happening in society that more Black women are becoming doctors while Black men are stagnant?

The documentary *Black Men in White Coats* sheds a light on a complex problem that affects all of us as community members.

- [View Documentary](#)
- [Register for Discussion](#)

**We See You: Honor and Recognition Awards**

The Black Faculty and Staff Association invites you to *We See You*, annual honor and recognition awards ceremony that will take place at 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25.

The ceremony will take place virtually.

- **Meeting ID:** 947 3161 4202
- **Passcode:** 79712658
- **Link:** [tinyurl.com/4xres5yl](tinyurl.com/4xres5yl)
The webinar series #WeAre has recently received the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Excellence Award, bronze designation. The award attests to the intentional and widespread actions that the OU community continues to take in building a place of belonging for all.

The 12 webinars, led by subject-matter experts, resulted from the collaboration with International Student Services, Gender and Equality Center, Veterans Services, DACA and Undocumented Services, Multicultural Programs and Services, Accessibility and Disability Resource Center, Mental Health Services, and the OU Police Department.

Overall, the webinars reached over 3,000 faculty, staff, students and OU community members across the world to include Arezzo, Italy. In their feedback, participants shared how they felt validated as an individual in the safe spaces of the #WeAre webinars, where they could label their emotions, share current experiences, and grapple with the pandemic, injustices and the ensuing social and personal struggles.

A heartfelt thank to the students, faculty, and staff who actively contributed to the #WeAre series and to those who attended the webinars.

Let's continue working together to build a pathway to belonging for all.

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6 Ways to Engage With Your Family Around Cultural Heritage Months

Teara Lander, Ed.D.

As we adjust to our new normal, be it working remotely, Zoom schooling, and most recently a snowstorm, many of us are looking for ways to continue learning about various topics that relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion. One
“You won’t know all there is to know about a culture in one month. But you can create a foundation for knowledge and interest.”

way is by educating yourself on the many cultural heritage months celebrated throughout the year.

Since we are in February, I will start with Black History Month. The list below can help you engage individually or with your family.

Continue Reading

OU Employee Resource Groups

At OU, the Employee Resource Groups are here and ready to serve.

These groups were created as 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.

This Month We Honor...
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!