Dear Reader,

Welcome to the March issue of Diversity on Campus.

Join us for a special edition issue of Diversity on Campus! We'll be giving you a rundown and preview of our DEI Week 2022: Creating a Community of Care events. This week will be jam-packed of life-changing, educational, and community building experiences! Get ready!

Sincerely,

DEI Team
From the VP Desk

Celebrating Women Everywhere

Women's History Month is a time to celebrate women's accomplishments, reflect on our progress, and continue advocating for the visible and invisible barriers still faced. Women's History Month was first celebrated as a week in 1982. The U.S. Congress designated Women's History Month in 1987. Knowing this history is essential to consider how long it took women to receive the recognition they deserve.

There are a few dates to keep in mind as we celebrate this month. International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8, and this date was established in 1911. The first march on Washington by women suffragists occurred on March 3, 1913. In March of 1917, the National Woman's Party, whose focus was helping women gain the right to vote was formed. In March of 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment was passed by Congress, and several states ratified the amendment. As you can read, progress was not made overnight. We continue to fight to close many gaps, including the wage gap, access to the c-suite and boardrooms. Today, women earn 82% of every dollar a man earns on an average wage, according to the U.S. Department of Labor that also acknowledges that women who work in the home are, in fact, working.

As we travel through March, take the time to celebrate the women in your life. Work to acknowledge the value they bring in every space occupied. When you witness inequity, work to eliminate the barrier, take a moment to acknowledge, celebrate, and elevate women's voices, presence, and impact! WHY….

“I am a woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman. That's me.” - Maya Angelou

Warmly,
Belinda Higgs Hyppolite, Ed.D.

Community Events
DEI Week 2022: Creating a Community of Care

DEI is excited to bring you a breakdown of the DEI Week 2022 events. We have planned them alongside our partners and sponsors to strengthen our community, to provide exciting learning opportunities, and to give you a chance to have fun!

DEI Week Care Campaign Giveaway

DEI Week 2022 closes on Friday, March 11, with a self-care campaign that will get you ready for spring break! Stop by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in your campus to receive your self-care kit.

Locations:
- Norman- Office of DEI, Copeland Hall RM 130 (All day)
- HSC- Office of DEI (All day)
- Tulsa- Schusterman Learning Center Founders Hall (noon-1 p.m.)

News and Involvement Opportunities
ADRC Spotlight:
An Interview With Ellie Pochyly

Master of social work student and Accessibility and Disability Resource Center Graduate Assistant, Ellie Pochyly shares the lessons she's learned throughout her time with the ADRC and ways we can be better allies to the disability community.

**How did your journey with the ADRC begin? How does somebody get involved in helping efforts for persons with disabilities?**

**EP:** My journey with the ADRC began when I started to explore potential opportunities for a graduate assistantship on campus. My past personal and professional experiences working with people in the disability community was a great way for me to lean into this new role. Getting involved requires communication, knowledge building and creating awareness in our communities. Speaking to and learning from people in the disability community allows someone to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers they face every day to gain equal access and opportunities. It is okay to not know it all but being willing to do the work and research to have a knowledge base of various disabilities and how people in this community have historically been ostracized is important. Familiarizing yourself with the policies surrounding disability in our country is also a great way to learn more. There are also many wonderful campaigns and initiatives that you can support to get involved!

**Solidarity and allyship is important when supporting underrepresented groups. What ways can we be intentional, effective, and empathetic allies to the disabilities community?**

**EP:** Understanding that a person with a disability has an entirely unique experience of navigating the world around them is key to becoming an ally. Fighting assumptions and actively listening to your
peers with disabilities allows the person to feel heard and valued. Too often, the needs of the disability community have been ignored, and it is up to everyone to work against perpetuating an ableist mindset. It is engrained in our culture and the media. If you can stand up and fight with those in the disability community to challenge stigma and stereotypes, then you are being a great ally!

**During your time at the ADRC, what is one (or multiple) experience(s) that has had an impact on your life?**

EP: Working with students one on one has had a lasting impact on me. The students in the disability community at OU are so resilient. I have the privilege of watching them graduate and succeed, despite all the barriers that the system tries to place in their path. I have learned that no one can make it alone, and it takes consistent support to help our students reach their potential. I value each student I work with because they are unique and incredible individuals with their own story to tell. They have taught me more about acceptance and compassion than many others have in my life.

**Where would you like ADRC and overall efforts to aid the Persons with Disabilities community to go in the future?**

EP: I think that the ADRC will continue to support its students in every aspect of their time at OU. Advocacy is a huge tenet of the ADRC, and our students need to know that they are supported throughout their academic career. Sharing education on inclusion and Universal Design so that all students feel supported is certainly a current and future goal! We will continue to do our part and use the skills we have learned to lift up and empower our students, collaborate with our OU partners and use the policies in place at the ADRC as a steppingstone to success!

**To read more about the ADRC or for assistance...**

---

**DEI Speaks**
Kid's Corner: Women's History Month Books by Saasha Reese

Happy Women’s History Month to you and your littles!

Women are so often described and defined by their physical traits, so we have chosen three special books to help you teach the littles in your lives to value and celebrate the diversity of size, shapes, colors and characteristics of their own and other peoples’ bodies.

*Her Body Can* is full of poetic, empowering and affirming declarations to teach self-love and body positivity. With messages like: “Her body is beautiful- strong, kind and wise. All bodies are lovely no matter their size,” readers from all ages can find joy in the pages.

The second book that we are highlighting is *Laxmi's Mooch*. In this playful story, Laxmi becomes aware of her body hair. Through the guidance of her parents and play with friends, she learns to celebrate her body and body hair wherever it grows!

Our final recommendation is *Sulwe*, which is a beautifully illustrated, whimsical story about young Sulwe learning to see the beauty of her own melanin. The story shares “how brightness is not in your skin, but in who you are!” Sulwe's mother also imparts an important lesson about how real beauty comes from how you see yourself. The story illustrates the realities of colorism while also encouraging us to celebrate the brightness and beauty of every shade of skin.
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.

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.

DEI Team
Training Request Form

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

Final Thoughts
Monthly Observance:
March is Women's History month. But it also houses many other celebrations and observances! Follow the link to check out the weekly, daily, and monthly observances!
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!