Reflections About an Uncommon Season

By Belinda Higgs Hyppolite, Ed.D.
Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer

As we enter into the Thanksgiving season, there are many things to reflect upon this past year. If I am honest, life has been extremely hard for many of us. I hear people say, “We must learn to live in our new normal.” I refuse to believe that many of the things we have experienced are normal. I choose to refer to this time as a difficult season, and just like the ever-changing weather patterns, so too are the seasons of life.

As we continue to navigate and grappling with this season, I hope you will find many things for which you are thankful. As my family and I continue our transition to the state and
"Enter this season knowing that things will not remain the same, that this season in our lives will change. It does not mean that every day will be filled with sunshine and butterflies, but just as the weather changes, so will the season in our lives."

I am grateful to be a part of the OU community and extremely blessed to build a new community of support and care on and off-campus. Thankfulness and Thanksgiving should not happen just during November, but work to find thankful moments daily.

Nov. 2020

Training and Development

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: A Virtual Seminar

“The commitment to realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is not only a matter of justice; it is an investment in a common future.” With this statement the United Nations invited nations around the world to build a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-pandemic world.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has responded to the call by organizing a series of virtual panels on Dec. 3, from noon to 4 p.m. culminating in the evening, with a presentation by Alice Wong, the founder of the Disability Visibility Project.

Plan ahead to attend and register now!

Register Here
Ally or Co-Conspirator: Being or Acting as One?

Rodney Bates, Ph.D., and C. Aujean Lee, Ph.D., facilitated the third workshop of the faculty and staff learning series and discussed differences and implications of ally vs. co-conspirator figures. Starting from an inventory of their own identities and the ways in which they intersect, Bates and Lee invited the audience to reflect on their identities and the privileges that they warrant.

Starting from the spaces of privilege accessed thanks to those identities, each person can decide to act as an ally or a co-conspirator. However, the facilitators warned the audience to act as an ally or as a co-conspirator rather than self-proclaiming to be one.

The faculty and staff learning series will resume in January with Derrick Dixon, Ed.D., and Patience Bryant, Ph.D., facilitating a workshop on restorative justice. Mark your calendar!

Common Read Book Club


Meeting Calendar:
Oct. 26, 2020: Chapters: 1 – 4, Interlude
Nov. 30, 2020: Chapters: 5 – 8
Jan. 25, 2021: Chapters: 9, Interlude, 10 – 12
Feb. 22, 2021: Chapters: 13 - 17

Meetings Schedule:
Noon - 1 p.m.

Registration Form
Reproductive Health Symposium

Save the date for the Reproductive Health Symposium. This virtual conference hinging on reproductive health topics is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 5.

The conference is co-hosted by Medical Students for Choice, Lumina, Student National Medical Association, Building Understanding of Maternity and Pregnancy, the OU Health Sciences Center, and OU-Tulsa Medical Students for Choice chapter. Small-group will sessions address various topics, to include contraception in LGBTQ+ adolescents, disparities in breastfeeding, and faith and reproductive choice. One of the panels will be held by providers from underrepresented minorities in medicine.

DEI Fall 2020 Calendar of Events

At OU, diversity, equity, and inclusion is everyone’s job. That is why our calendar has an event for everyone. Plan your attendance ahead by visiting the calendar.

News and Involvement Opportunities

Celebrating the American Indian Heritage Month in ...April

November is the National American Indian Heritage Month. Yet, at OU several voices suggested to postpone that celebration to April, the month of harvest, for two reasons: first, traditional re-telling of the first Thanksgiving is a distorted narrative narrative that furthers the
misrepresentation of Native American culture and people; second, in higher education, holidays shorten the month.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion listened to those voices and honored their advice to move the celebration of the American Indian Heritage Month to April. In November, ODEI joins the nation in recognizing and valuing the unique cultures and contributions of Native American faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members throughout their millennial-long history.

Looking for Covid-Friendly Connection... Try an Audio Book

By Teara Flagg Lander, Ed.D.

Many of you are gearing up for the winter break and may wonder what that could look like for you and your family. I want to make the case for audio books. I know, reading a physical book is satisfying, nostalgia inducing and therapeutic. But I would argue you can receive the same and in many cases an enhanced experience with an audio book.

During the quarantine I loaded up on audio books from the city library. I downloaded *The Boys aren’t Blue* by George M. Johnson, a memoir ...

Keeping the Spotlight on George Floyd’s Case

By Danielle Pullen

On May 25, George Floyd dies while in the custody of the Minneapolis police. On May 26, the police officers involved in Floyd’s death—Derek Chauvin, Tou Thao, J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane—are discharged after a video from a bystander of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd’s neck for more than eight minutes goes viral. On these premises, George
Floyd's case sparked and is continuing to fuel a movement for justice for Black people in the United States.

On Nov. 5, Hennepin County Judge, Peter Cahill, rules for the trial of the former police officers at the same time for charges stemming from Floyd’s death. Cahill declined to move the trial but said he would reconsider a move if needed. He ruled that holding a single proceeding for the four officers would ensure that jurors understand “all of the evidence and the complete picture of Floyd's death. (...) And it would allow this community, this State, and the nation to absorb the verdicts for the four Defendants at once."

Reed More...

All Things Being Equal

Ceteris paribus, all things being equal, is a common expression that social scientists use to describe controlled experiments. But in everyday life, it is not possible to control all significant variables when we take action.

To explore the intricacies of intentions, decisions, and actions, art comes to help. In his exhibition, *All Things Being Equal*, Hanks Willis uses photography and other media to narrate the history of Black people, a history filled with brutality, exploitation, complicity, resistance, and hope.

Read More...

National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020

Mental Health America's advocates are rock stars. And here’s why. On Oct. 17, the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 was signed into law. The bill, which formally establishes 988 as the three-digit code for emergency mental health services, will allow people in emotional or mental distress to speak with a trained professional quickly. The three-digit code will replace 1-800-873-8255, a number more difficult to remember during a crisis.
The House and Senate scheduled votes thanks to pressure from advocates who called, sent emails, and posted on social media. MHA is so grateful to everyone who reached out to members of Congress and filed comments with the Federal Communications Commission to activate 988 and to allocate funding for its operation.

Thousands Strong: International Student Pandemic Fund

COVID-19 has impacted the lives of many people. OU international students are among them as they continue to face significant stress, hardship and uncertainty.

OU responds to their needs with a campaign to replenish emergency funds. Thank you for your gift: at OU, we change lives one person at the time.

Give Now

OU Employee Resource Groups

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

These groups were created as an open forum for individuals with a shared identity to build community and sense of belongingness. 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.
If you are interested in learning more about an Employee Resource Group or recommend other ERGs you would like to see at OU, please complete this survey.

For any questions about the Employee Resource Groups please email diversity.inclusion@ou.edu.

**Save the Date:**
Employee Resource Group Virtual Mixer on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021
Come and learn more about how to get involved in an ERG!

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**Care**
about diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Oklahoma?

**Want**
to contribute to making OU a better experience for all?

**Want**
to be a catalyst and an active change agent by making sure our campus is open and welcoming to all?

**Help**
create the home away from home experience for others.

**DOV Sign-Up Form**

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**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!

Donate Here