WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

OU Welcomes Dr. Belinda Higg Hyppolite

75th Anniversary of the Holocaust

Love and Power to Achieve Justice

A New Start: The Chinese New Year

Events: January 3 to 7
The Boyd House was packed with OU students, faculty, and staff who shared their excitement for the VP of Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer.

After a kaleidoscope of events highlighting diversity, equity, and inclusion, last week ended with a reception to welcome Dr. Belinda Higgs Hyppolite. Earlier in the week, she had already met several members of the OU community, but the reception afforded a relaxed atmosphere for relationship building.

As community members were coming, the room bustled with energy and enthusiasm.
Last week, Dr. Hyppolite presented the three pillars for the diversity and inclusion agenda: increasing awareness, educating one another, and advocating for the voiceless. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Week aimed at enhancing awareness by providing venues for stories that are otherwise invisible.

For Dr. Hyppolite, everyone should "take things not to the same level but to the next level."

It also contributed to bring the OU community together and celebrate without forgetting that more work to advance diversity and inclusion must be done.

So, she challenged the OU community members to move forward.
If words count, how do we learn to use them? During the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Holocaust, UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay referenced education as an answer to that question. In fact, education provides a forum to discuss the past and an opportunity to cultivate knowledge, skills, and values for civic engagement.

Critical and honest dialogues based on mutual respect nurture an environment of intellectual growth where the risks of discrimination and hate are minimized. In the words of Primo Levi:

"Many individuals or peoples may think, consciously or not, that every foreigner is an enemy. This conviction lingers at the bottom of people's minds as a latent infection that surfaces only sporadically: it is not part of a systematic way of thinking. But, if it turns into a mindset, if it becomes the major premise of a syllogism, then the conclusion is the Lager."

Along with awareness and advocacy, education is one of the three pillars on which the vision of the OU Office of Diversity and Inclusion stands. But the solidity of those pillars lies in the hands and minds of each of us.
After the audience joined the choir in singing the Negro National Anthem, everyone was ready to listen to Dr. Bernice King. As she entered the auditorium at the OU Children’s Nicholson Tower, she was welcomed with a standing ovation. Her direct and compelling words reverberated in the audience's responses as she described her father’s ideal to fight the war on poverty in America rather than to fight wars abroad. And yet, today we are still contending with poverty and the ways to distribute wealth.

So, how does Dr. King envision the achievement of social justice?

She directed the audience’s attention to a philosophy and a methodology of change. The methodology of non-violence that his father developed and her mother institutionalized. And now, Dr. Bernice King’s goal is to expose, educate, and train people in non-violent change to achieve social justice.

Her methodology involves power and love. In fact, justice requires the combination of love and power to correct systemic mechanisms that perpetuate disparities. Those corrections will eventually generate a beloved community where people are treated with dignity and valued as human beings. But all this, she emphasized, is achievable through love and power.
On Thursday, we celebrated the Asian New Year at the Jim Thorpe Multicultural Center with food and cultural events from eleven Asian and Middle Eastern OU organizations. Although food is a great way to bring people together, there is more.

There is a bridge that connects present and past, people and their ancestors, as Chunqian Dai and the other instructors at the OU Confucius Institute illustrated in an interview where they shared some of their family traditions.

Originally from different provinces on the Chinese east coast, instructors acknowledged the similarities and highlighted the differences in the way they celebrated the Spring Festival. Many of them discussed family trees, burning incenses, and home decorations.

Luyu explained that preparation is key. After a deep house cleaning, the family tree is displayed and the house is decorated with lanterns, door couplets, paper cuttings and the fu character, all in vivid red color to bring good luck.

Once the house is ready, it is time to focus on relationships with ancestors and living family members, all invited to celebrate the New Year.

Ancestors are honored by burning fake money or by offering meal. Parents and grandparents are honored with the bowing down. In turn, they hand a red envelope with some money to their youngsters. Nowadays, the paper envelope has an electronic version, especially useful when family members are far away. Hongxiao still enjoys receiving red envelopes from her parents. As she explains, she will always be a child for them. But, as an adult, it is now her turn to continue the tradition and send envelopes to her friends' children.
But the latest trend with red envelopes comes from Alibaba, as Yulu Chen explained. The Chinese analog of Amazon rewards its customers with a red envelope once they upload via an app a few New Year characters. Memories of house decorations and rites triggered memories about firecrackers among instructors. Yulu Chen remembered that on the New Year eve she needed to plan her sleep ahead, because firecrackers would continue until morning in her family village.

When the crackling noise of the fires welcomes the first day of the year, it is time to think about meals. Wuwen Feng remembered that the table was literally covered in food for dinner. Such abundance was meant to ensure that spring would return the following year. The proximity with the ocean made fish a key ingredient for Qingyang's meal thanks to its symbolic meaning. In fact, the word ‘fish’ and the word ‘plenty’ have a similar sound in Mandarin. The first day of the year is so special that everyone should be content. Especially children. So, if they accidentally break something valuable, their parents will not scold them, said Xin Zhang.

Sijia Wang added that to prolong the benefits of a good start, people should be debt-free. Therefore, they should pay their debts on the first day of the year. In their excitement to share their family traditions, instructors did not forget to mention that China encompasses 55 minority groups, each preserving their own traditions. But the common theme is one: A new beginning to a prosperous and healthy year.
Monday, February 3
The Iran-US Conflict: What is Next for the Region?
5:30p.m.-7:30p.m.
Sam Noble Museum of Natural History
A discussion with Trita Parsi, Samir Shehata, and Joshua Landis, presented by the OU Center for Middle East studies.

Tuesday, February 4
Words that Get Around: Excavating Informal Methods of Literary Transmission in Premodern Societies
11:30a.m.-1 p.m.
Bizzell Memorial Library, Seminar Room 339
Dr. Joshua Frydman examines inscriptions of poetry on objects and building elements from early Japan and compares them against other premodern Eurasian societies.

Wednesday, February 5
Under Quarantine: Immigrants and Disease at Israel's Gate
12 p.m.
Oklahoma Memorial Union, Scholars Room
Bring your lunch. Snacks will be provided.
JuSt lunch lecture with Rhona Seidelman. The event is hosted by the OU Judaic and Israel Studies department.

Thursday, February 6
Tribal Liaison Office: Student Advisory Board
3p.m.-4p.m.
Copeland Hall
Office of Diversity and Inclusion Conference Room

Friday, February 7
Indigenous Resources Circle
11:30a.m.-1 p.m.
Copeland Hall, Room 224
Five friends venture into the unknown wilds of the Texas borderlands to document the Rio Grande before a wall is built. As they leave the wilderness behind, they enter uncharted emotional waters.

6 p.m.  
Wednesday,   
Feb. 5, 2020

Robert S. Kerr Auditorium  
Sam Noble Museum  
2401 Chautauqua Avenue  
Norman, OK 73072

Featuring welcome remarks by Provost Kyle Harper

and

Q&A Skype Session with Director and Character, Ben Masters

Please respond by contacting the Office of Special Events at specialevents@ou.edu or (405) 325-1701.

For additional information or for accommodations, please contact specialevents@ou.edu or (405) 325-1701.
HOW TO CONTACT US

OU - NORMAN
Click here to visit our webpage at the Norman Campus
Email: diversity.inclusion@ou.edu

OU - TULSA
Click here to visit our webpage at OU-Tulsa

OU - HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
Click here to visit our webpage at the HSC
Email: diversityandinclusion@ouhsc.edu

Quote of the Week
"When the whole world is silent even one voice becomes powerful." Malala Yousafzai

FOLLOW US!
Facebook: DiversityOU
Instagram: @DiversityOU  @FacesOfOU
Twitter: @DiversityOU

United We Stand