WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance March
Dedication of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Dedication of the Gender + Equality Center
Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: An Evening with Abigail Echo-Hawk
A cheerful crowd met in front of Evans Hall and proceeded to the South Oval where Sadie Littlecreek, Miss Indian OU, and a freshman majoring in business management, started the event with the acknowledgment of land.

The land we stand on has been home to Indigenous people and continues to be home to them and to all.

Michaela Doris warmed the audience enduring a windy and wintry day by singing “We shall overcome.”

In his remarks, Interim President Harroz also referenced Dr. King, iterating that: “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it blends toward justice.”

He then emphasized that what President Boyd saw when he arrived in Norman was not a barren land. What he saw was the land of Indigenous People.
In addition to the contribution of the Indigenous People, OU was enriched by the contributions of Ada Lois Fisher, Dr. Henderson, Sylvia A. Lewis, and Stanley L. Evans among others.

But now, what is our charge? For the president, it involves making a personal decision about who we want to be. As racist incidents may occur, the question is how we address them; how we call them out; and eventually, how we can be our best selves.

As Justin Norris stepped on the podium, he encouraged the audience to listen deeper to people’s words of longing, sorrow and hope. The SGA President also remarked that at OU we still have work to do. That work starts with listening to people’s thoughts, feelings and hopes impressed in songs such as “We shall overcome.”

In fact, not everyone has a voice. But living the truth means giving a voice to those who do not have one.
“Now is the time to make justice a reality.” With this exhortation Miles Francisco, a member of BERT, addressed the audience. This call to action also reminded the audience that people’s destinies are tied together and together they move ahead.

After these electrifying words, Dr. Higgs Hyppolite was introduced as the VP for Diversity & Inclusion and the Chief Diversity Officer.

Dr. Hyppolite acknowledged a turbulent past, before ushering a new era of transparency where everyone works together to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion based on three pillars.

- **Awareness**: we need a baseline of shared understanding across campuses.
- **Education**: as life-long learners, we are at OU to transform students’ life.
- **Advocacy**: while social justice warriors bring attention to injustice, advocates engage in the work. We need them both to foster a community of care and belonging.
On Wednesday, the cold weather and the rain did not stop members of the OU community from coming together to celebrate and attend the dedication ceremony for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

As Interim President Harroz began his remarks, members' cheerfulness turned into attentiveness. Connecting the OU history with the history of the country, he observed that equality was not enforced with the 1866 Civil Rights Act, leaving an unattained promise to be fulfilled now.

During the ceremony, the president acknowledged Dr. Irungu, former Interim VP for Diversity and Inclusion, as the forerunner of today's celebration.

Then Dr., Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer, took the podium to reflect about "New Beginnings" she exhorted it will take the whole OU community to move the agenda of diversity, equity, and inclusion forward. This marks the beginning of a new time to clear out the old and move forward strategically. So, in her words: “Take a deep breath and let's get started!”
The ribbon cutting was performed by (starting from the left) Dr. Surratt, Vice President and Dean of Students; Dr. Irungu, Former Interim VP for Diversity and Inclusion; Interim President Harroz; Dr. Hyppolite, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer; and Justin Norris, SGA President.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is a place where students, faculty and staff come together to innovate and disseminate a mindset of growth across OU. Let's make it home away from home.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion is located at 860 Van Vleet Oval, on the Norman campus in Copeland Hall.

The Student Lounge is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm.
Since January 23, the Gender + Equality Center has a new home: the Beaird Lounge in the Oklahoma Memorial Union. Remodeled with the contribution of several donors, the Center continues its mission of fostering social justice by advocating for the rights of women and LGBTQ students.

The ribbon cutting was a choral act. As is the advancement of equity across campus. The central location of the Center and the support it continues to provide to OU students are what students deserve. With these words Erin Simpson, the Director of the Center for Gender + Equality, expressed her longtime commitment to the Center's mission and values.
During a vibrant evening where artists were painting and OU members were socializing, Abigail Echo-Hawk presented her research findings. The evening started with a memorial song delivered by Warren Queton, OU Tribal Liaison, followed by the acknowledgment of the land to recognize the history of the Indigenous People. Then it was the turn of Dr. Hyppolite whose office sponsored the event.

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN: AN EVENING WITH ABIGAIL ECHO-HAWK

After referencing awareness, education and advocacy as the pillars of the Diversity and Inclusion agenda, Dr. Hyppolite asserted the individual responsibility to nurture a community of care. Like Abigail Echo-Hawk. A member of the Pawnee tribe and the Director of the Urban Indian Health Institute, Echo-Hawk devoted her life to increase awareness of violence against Indian women in the United States and abroad.

Since stories that are gifted are not meant to be shared via social media, she invited everyone to absorb her words. She embarked in a journey to give a voice to each murdered or missing woman and used statistics to demonstrate the magnitude of violence against Indigenous women. Their names were written on the skirt that she purposely wore that evening. And for those whose names she did not know, she drew a dot. Echo-Hawk work requires resilience, but for Native People resilience is not a noun. It is an action. And for her, that action entails generating answers for her community.

Photos courtesy of SPTHB Creative Services Department
Multicultural Children’s Book Day
January 28, 2-4pm
College of Education, Collings Hall

This event aims at raising awareness about books that can help teachers discuss diversity with children.

Keynote speech delivered by Dr. Bernice King

January 29
Doors open at 11.30am. Presentation begins at noon
Nicholson Conference Center, 940 NE 13th St., corner of Stonewall and NE 13th Street, Oklahoma City

The even will be simulcast to the OU-Norman campus in Beaird Lounge and to the OU-Tulsa campus in Learning Center room 231.

The African-American Student Association at the OU Health Sciences Center sponsored the event with the intent of bringing together the campus and the community to discuss how the ideas of Dr. King's father apply in today's society and healthcare practice.

Dr. Bernice A. King
HOW TO CONTACT US

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Quote of the Week
"A lie cannot live."
Martin Luther King, Jr.

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
The University of Oklahoma

United We Stand