Greetings all, and welcome to 2021! As we embark on a new year and a new season, we have an opportunity to start anew and to re-center and re-focus our energy. Yes, our nation and the world continue to grapple with many pandemics; but how we choose to operate in uncertain times is up to us. Many individuals use the new year to make a health or weight loss goal, and many spend time working on new vision boards; others declutter their offices or
"I am challenging each of us to think BIG and to act BOLDLY to impact our areas of influence with meaning and positive intent."

homes to help create new space for ideas to blossom.

I encourage each of you to use this new season to renew a relationship that lacked attention in 2020, to create new meaningful relationships and friendships, or to find a cause that can impact our campus community or the surrounding communities. Our campus, state, and country are at a crossroads, and it will take each of us working individually and collectively to chart our new course together.

I am not peddling hope or striving for unobtainable outcomes. I am asking each of you to make a plan to connect with someone who looks different than you, who thinks differently than you, but who has original insight and lived experiences that, just by spending time together, could spark new learning and a new relationship.

So, as we jump into the spring semester, I am challenging each of us to think Big and to act Boldly to impact our areas of influence with meaning and positive intent. Happy New Year, All.

Jan. 2021
Meet Danielle Pullen, DEI Program Coordinator at the Health Sciences Center

Differences define the obstacles we encounter. So, what can be done to remove those obstacles? Danielle Pullen has embarked in a journey with the OU Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to find answers to her question. Although a member of the office for almost two years as a temporary employee, Danielle has been selected as the DEI program coordinator at the Health Sciences Center in December 2020.

Originally from Edmond, Oklahoma, Danielle earned a bachelor of science in human development and family science from Oklahoma State University and has worked in nonprofit organizations before deciding to focus on higher education and continue her work in diversity and inclusion. In her words: “DEI has always been a part of my professional career. In my previous work experiences, I have been the only person of color. I have always tried to practice inclusion, learn from others, and be an ally to folks who are from communities different than mine.”

Continue reading

Training and Development

Save the Date - 24 March at Noon
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.

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**Mark Your Calendar**

With the February Session of the Series

*Rooted in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Change Starts With Me*

Forging a place of belonging involves the integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all processes and decisions. But that is not a straightforward process. Power and privilege may slow down and even block that integration. The results are high turnover for faculty and staff, and decline in students’ graduation rate, to name a few.

So, how can we disrupt the detrimental dynamics of power and privilege?

Change agents are part of the answer. As you become more involved with the 2020 strategic plan, your role will entail understanding and implementing strategies to disrupt oppressive practices in your area of influence to create an inclusive space.

To learn how power and privilege reproduce oppressive practices and how to overcome them, please plan to attend the workshop on Feb. 17 facilitated by Becky Martinez, Ph.D.

An administrator, organization development consultant, and trainer, with a focus on social justice, leadership and organizational change, Martinez works with organizations seeking to meet shifting demands and resources. For her,
creating an inclusive environment is our responsibility as community members.

Series Calendar

2021 Financial Wellness Week

Students, start this year off right and join the Student Financial Center for the OU’s very first Financial Wellness Week!

This week-long event will cover everyday financial topics and resources that are relevant to you. Each day, OU’s Students Financial Services will present two 45-minute workshops starting at noon and 6 p.m.

The Student Financial Center will share financial tips and will answer all of your money-related questions, including how to create a financial plan to pay for college, how to qualify for federal work study, and so much more.

Follow SFC on Instagram @oufoklahoma_sfc for the latest updates!

Zoom links are listed at ou.edu/moneycoach.fww

If you have questions, please contact Denae Smith, Denae.E.Smith-1@ou.edu, or Mari Ann Stumblingbear, Mari-ann@ou.edu

DEI February 2021 Calendar of Events

February is a month rich of events. We have listed a few in the calendar available below, but we invite you to visit our website regularly for our latest initiatives. Register early and invite another person to attend.

Schedule

Feb. 8-11

Presentations at noon and 6 p.m.

Mon - 9 Things You Should Know About Money

Tue - Investing and Saving + Mind Over Money

Wed - Work Study Programs + How They Work

Thu - The SFC's Top 5 Tips
Common Read Book Club

“What’s in a name?” No, it wasn't Juliet flirting with Romeo, but the members of the Common Read Book Club who pondered how first names play a part in people's lives. Retracing the steps of Austin Channing Brown, the author of *I'm Still Here. Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*, the 30 club members met every month since September to discuss how people of color experience life in American society. Their conversations also touched on the challenges of fitting in at the expenses of minimizing and discounting their ways of being.

The reflections that the book inspired, especially on racism, made the dialogue challenging at times. Yet, the club members found ways to continue the discussion by suspending judgment and blame. In fact, the overarching goal of the book club is to provide an environment where people can learn from one another and identify differences and commonalities in their experiences via civil dialogue.

The book club will pause during the winter break, but it will reconvene in spring. If you plan to attend, registration is still open.

Registration Form
News and Involvement Opportunities

Nurturing Togetherness Across Times and Spaces

By Carrie McClain

Every year we celebrate the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This year, we did, too. We continued, as a community, to celebrate, reflect and participate in acts of service in memory of Dr. King, even among the challenges of a pandemic.

During adversities, community members stay together. An event that captured the importance of togetherness as envisioned by Dr. King was the Norman Philharmonic celebration concert. Even in the less-than-ideal venue of a virtual platform, the Norman Philharmonic succeeded in fostering a sense of community via collaborations with the Richard Zielinski Singers and OU community partners. The concert program included civil rights songs and special appearances by Norman Mayor Brea Clark, OU professor Carlos Hill, Ph.D., OU emeritus professor George Henderson, Ph.D., and by music composer Libby Larson.

The OU Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion was also part of that collaboration. Belinda Higgs Hyppolite, Ed.D, vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and Carrie McClain, assistant vice president for the HSC and OU-Tulsa campuses, with other members of the team engaged in storytelling, a way to pass on a community experience across generations. Taking turns, they read to Norman Public School students a children’s book about Dr. King’s experiences, ideals, and accomplishments.

That story and the rest of the program are available to you. Enjoy!

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” MLK
Standards are valuable ways to help us decide how reliable a service is. Indeed, an independent party evaluating and rating the quality of a service increases the sense of trust in those who are going to benefit from that service.

Many of us rely on a CPA to file income taxes correctly. But what if an independent agency certifies compliance with standards that may make the difference between life or death?

In December 2020, the Oklahoma Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission, a reputable and independent accrediting body, has certified that the OU Police Department across campuses is compliant with standards of safe policing.

The certification attests that the OUPD force policies adhere to federal, state, and local laws and that they prohibit choke holds, except in situations where the use of deadly force is allowed by law. Those practices are embedded in safe policing principles whose goal is to ensure transparent, safe, and accountable delivery of services to communities.

Please join the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in congratulating Chief Tarver, associate vice president and chief of police for the University of Oklahoma; Chief Evans, OU-Tulsa campus; Deputy Chief Schofield, HSC campus; Interim Chief Kent, Norman campus and all the police officers for their commitment to serve OU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community.
**Fostering Co-Worker Connections in Virtual Spaces**

The coronavirus pandemic has forced many organizations to promote telecommuting to preserve employees’ health. Working from home, however, requires employees to spend many hours on Zoom meetings, resulting in Zoom fatigue, disengagement, and low satisfaction.

Past research has indicated that a sense of belonging, usually developed via face-to-face relationships in the workplace, is a need also connected to the wellbeing of employees. If telecommuting and Zoom meetings decrease employees’ connectedness, how can belongingness be preserved in a virtual environment?

Brenda Lloyd-Jones, Ph.D., professor in the OU Department of Human Relations, and Jasmine Willis-Wallace, Ed.D., program director at the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the OU-Tulsa campus, have identified three ways to increase employees’ sense of belongingness:

1. Create ways to increase social bonds
2. Be intentional about inclusion efforts
3. Recognize employees for adjustments to a new work environment

Continue reading...

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**The Three Questions That Guide Stacey Abram’s Actions**

By Danielle Pullen

Stacey Abrams, the epitome of resiliency, has demonstrated how a person can move forward to achieve an idea. She was the first Black woman and first Georgian to deliver a response to the State of the Union; the first Black woman
to become the gubernatorial nominee for a major party in the United States; and the one who won more votes than any other Democrat in the state of Georgia.

Yet, with any project, setbacks are inevitable. Although she lost the Georgia gubernatorial race in 2018, Abrams accepted defeat in the election, but not defeat in making an impactful change. She started by launching the Fair Fight to ensure every American had a voice in the election system. In 2019, she also launched Fair Count to ensure accuracy in the 2020 Census.

Those accomplishments are the result of thoughtful reflection. In a Ted Talk, Abrams explains that every time she begins a project, she asks three questions:

What do I want?  
Why do I want it?  
How do I get it?

She clarifies to herself the project outcome. Then she investigates her motives. And finally she designs a path to achieve the outcome. Motivation is key, she explains. In her words: “Make sure you want it not because is something that you should do, but something that you must do.”

She planned to increase the number of Black, Latinx, and Asian voters in the state of Georgia because voting is a way to say “I belong.” Indeed, the votes of those constituents flipped Georgia in both the 202 presidential election and the Democrats’ performance in the Senate race.

And all started with three questions.
OU International Student Pandemic Scholarship

The OU International Student Pandemic Scholarship is designed to provide relief to international students who have been financially impacted by COVID-19 or COVID-related closures. Up to $1,000 will be given to students who can demonstrate their need and its relation to the current global pandemic.

This scholarship, available to students on all OU campuses, will be awarded on a rolling basis. A committee will determine eligibility and the amount of the award.

To review eligibility criteria visit the scholarship webpage.

Apply Here

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!

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

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!