Congratulations Graduates
Class of 2020

The world presented a challenge.

You responded in the OU spirit.
Welcome to the Weekly Newsletter: May 2020, Volume 1

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

- Uncertainty as a Path to Bias Awareness
- What We Can Do
- Resources Highlights
- Norman Campus
- Health Sciences Center
- Tulsa Campus
- Events & Training Calendar
“I have not experienced something like this before” is a sentence that we hear in reference to the coronavirus pandemic. The uncommon level of uncertainty collectively experienced may lead to a sense of confusion and bewilderment. But even in these uncertain circumstances, we are still making decisions when we collaborate with our classmates or with our team members, in the classroom, in the workplace, or in academia.

To compensate for the uncertainty in our environments, we may rely on our usual ways of thinking and acting. These shortcuts save us time since they rely on well-established thinking patterns. But if the decision requires deep thinking, those shortcuts need to be kept in check. And awareness is the first step.

Social scientists have identified different types of shortcuts or biases, as they call them. Some of them reference the way we think about the world. For example, when we look for information about COVID-19, we tend to favor information that confirms what we already know (confirmation bias). The less we know about the virus, the more we may see it as a simple matter. The more we know about it, the less confident in our response we may be (Dunning-Kruger effect).

Biases that influence how we see the world are not the only ones. There are others related to how we see people. Like stereotyping. We may categorize a person based on hidden biases about gender, race, ethnicity and nationality as we learned in our social groups (Banaji, M. R. et Greenwald, A. G., 2013). The recent association of people of Asian descent with the spreading of Covid-19 may be explained with implicit bias. As is perceiving women to be less productive or less reliable than men because of their dual role of employees and caregivers when they work from home.

To escape the trap of habits, Benaji et Greenwald (2013) vouch for bias awareness. Bazerman (2002) highlights the importance of auditing one’s decision-making process to identify the most recurrent biases. NASA has developed several tools to limit biases in their processes to include diversity in teams whose members are capable of re-examining their choices and their assumptions.

As we struggle to make decisions in uncertain times, we may decide to re-learn our thought process by increasing awareness of our biases. The result may be two-fold: an improved thought process and a renewed self-esteem.
May 2020

What We Can Do

#WashTheHate

With the COVID-19 virus declared a national emergency in the United States, uncertainty and fear are breeding acts of discrimination and violence against individuals of Asian descent.

To help combat the rising tide of hatred toward the Asian Pacific American community, the #WashTheHate campaign has been created. This national social media campaign invites individuals to record a 20-second video of themselves washing their hands, as they a story of how COVID-19 has affected their life.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is working with our university community to participate in the campaign, and would like YOUR help!

If you are interested in participating in the campaign, send your video and/or questions to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at diversity.inclusion@ou.edu.

Not comfortable sharing your story in a video? Craft a message to be shared anonymously on your behalf.

For more information on the campaign, visit the Wash the Hate website.

OU Medicine Million Mask Challenge

OU Medicine kicked off their Million Mask Challenge in April to prepare for an expected surge in COVID-19 cases. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is one of the keys to keeping health care professionals safe in the battle against COVID-19 — and face masks are the first line of defense.

OU Medicine is asking everyone — from people with needle and thread to large manufacturers — to join the Million Mask Challenge.

For more details on how you can help, visit the OU Medicine webpage about the mask challenge.
In a recent article, Best Colleges reported that every year 3,250 to 6,500 students who enroll in college are undocumented. Some of them are OU students who might struggle with fear of being exposed and deported or with limited access to financial resources. Therefore, becoming familiar with the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) may help them identify reliable sources of information on their status, but it may also help administrators and staff to better serve those students.

To address those students' needs, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has recently developed a web-based hub as the starting point of an articulated project that will include an extensive network of resources for students and a training program for administrators.

Visit the OU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion webpage for resources available to students and to administrators and staff.

The Moton Fellowship program has extended the application for the 2020 edition to May 4th. Undergraduate students interested in being mentored by leading practitioners in business, government and nonprofits may visit the program webpage, where they can also find the link to apply.
'Native people are communal people' remarked Dr. Natalie Youngbull during the faculty research symposium on April 23. A sense of community is often achieved through events such as the Annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. Therefore, it is easy to understand the disappointment of the over 1,000 participants who registered to the 18th edition when they learned that the event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 shelter in place order.

To alleviate some of that disappointment and to provide an opportunity to share a common experience, the OU Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion collaborated to provide an online venue for the inter-tribal hymn singing, one of the many events usually hosted during the fair.

The virtual event provided much-needed community engagement and fellowship for the OU community. In fact, words and music have the power to comfort and heal during times of hardship and stress.
The coronavirus pandemic had a domino effect on normalcy across the world. Functions involving crowds have been canceled, classrooms have been closed, and many people were urged to work from home. The world has evolved into a "new normal" due to COVID-19. The virus adversely affected marginalized communities and those from lower socio-economic classes for a variety of reasons. Some included lack of resources such as access to the health care system or to the internet. Others included the potential loss of employment, or an increase in domestic violence or abuse. All may feed into institutionalized discrimination and mistrust.

When trust is low, social distancing may not be a commitment that everyone can afford. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention strongly suggests that patrons use Personal Protective Equipment when entering an establishment or interacting with a group.

Yet many people of color feel nervous to wear a mask covering their face, because they may be perceived as a threat. Even working from home is a privilege reserved to some people. In fact, building a house or constructing a highway cannot be done from home.
April brought plenty of knowledge and awareness to us. Not only did it bring the Black Maternal Health Week from April 11 to 17. But it also brought the National Minority Health month to advance health equity across the country for all racial and ethnic minorities.

This year’s theme, “Active & Healthy” addressed the importance that an active lifestyle plays in keeping people and communities healthy.

Black Maternal Health Week brought awareness to issues related to the maternal health disparities in the Black community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Black, American Indian and Alaska Native women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. This disparity increases with age.

Pregnancy-related deaths for Black and AI/AN women older than 30 are four to five times higher than for white women. The Black Mamas Matter Alliance has worked to change policy, to cultivate research, and to advance care for Black mamas through the annual Black Maternal Health Week campaign.

To learn more or to help increase awareness, visit their website at blackmamasmatter.org.
By working in telework modality, the OU Tulsa Student Affairs office continues to assist students and to facilitate conversations across campuses. On April 22, Student Affairs co-hosted the OU-Tulsa Student Government Association meeting, during which Higgs Hyppolite, vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, reported on diversity and inclusion training and educational opportunities available to students, faculty, and staff.

The online meeting attested to the collaboration and mutual support between the OU-Tulsa Student Affairs Office and the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
## EVENTS

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<th>May 13</th>
<th>May 20</th>
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<td>#WeAre - Webinar  &lt;br&gt; 4-5 p.m., Online</td>
<td>Social Justice &amp; Equity in Health Series  &lt;br&gt; noon-1 p.m., Online registration</td>
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Please [visit our calendar](#) for updates on the town hall events.  
Learn about the health disparities affecting underrepresented populations across the US. Panelists include professors, physicians, and clinicians from HSC.

## TRAINING

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<th>Unlearning Classism  &lt;br&gt; May 5, 9-12p.m., Online</th>
<th>Unlearning Racism  &lt;br&gt; May 20, 9-noon, Online</th>
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<td>At the end of the workshop you will:  &lt;br&gt;  • Define terms  &lt;br&gt;  • Understand wealth distribution  &lt;br&gt;  • Recognize classist myths  &lt;br&gt;  • Identify intersections of our class identities with our other identities  &lt;br&gt;  • Develop strategies to combat classism</td>
<td>At the end of the workshop you will:  &lt;br&gt;  • Develop understanding of racism  &lt;br&gt;  • Learn from and challenge each other  &lt;br&gt;  • Discuss examples of race related to OU specific situations  &lt;br&gt;  • Develop strategies to improve university climate</td>
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## HOW TO CONTACT US

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

### HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER
Click [here](#) to visit our webpage  
Email: diversityandinclusion@ouhsc.edu

### OU-TULSA
Click [here](#) to visit our webpage

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Instagram: @DiversityOU  
@FacesOfOU

United We Stand

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