
Office of Equity and Inclusion

THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020



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About Us

by Stephanie Brown

The Office of Equity and Inclusion serves as a space for inclusivity, diversity, and equity through outreach, programming, training, and development for all campus members. Our goal is to ensure that Lynchburg's commitment to diversity is apparent through a campus community climate where all faculty, staff, and students feel welcomed and are treated with respect.

Words of Encouragement

"In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."— Albert Einstein

With the recent spread and effects of COVID-19, we as a University decided to put the safety of students as first priority. During this period, we encourage all to take this time as an opportunity to spend time with family, practice self care, and stay safe!



Meet the New Diversity and Inclusion Officer

"Greetings and welcome to the Office of Equity and Inclusion's (OEI) newsletter. I am honored and privileged to serve as your Diversity and Inclusion Officer, and while serving in this capacity, it will be OEI's main priority to create an inviting, inclusive, respectful and diverse environment for all. This newsletter will act as one of many opportunities to keep our university communities informed and connected. OEI believes that diversity should be seen as a tool that impacts every aspect of one's life. The OEI team (Multicultural Services, Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Title IX) strives to promote and sustain a cohesive and inclusive environment among the university and a local community that truly values and embraces diversity, groups, cultures, differences, and perspectives within the framework of the academic environment. We would like to remind you that we are available to assist you in your diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Visit OEI's website at <https://www.lynchburg.edu/about/office-of-equity-and-inclusion/> for upcoming news, events, services, past newsletters, etc. I look forward to connecting with you. Feel free to contact me at canida_rl@lynchburg.edu, 434.544.8540, or stop by. **Together We Are Lynchburg!**"

Sincerely and speak your truth, Robert L. Canida, II, Ph.D.



OEI's Nine Affinity Groups



Alpha Psi Lambda

Gay- straight alliance (SAGA)

Latino Student Association

Asian Paific Islander Student Association

International Society

Woman2Woman

Black Student Association

Native American Student Association

Man2Man

Student Walk Out

On November 20, 2019, University of Lynchburg students held a walk out on campus to stand up against hatred and discrimination on campus. This event was sparked by a fiesta themed party thrown on campus by a group of students. Seniors, Datian Geddis, Laura Arriaza, Keaira Reese, Morgan Smith, and Autumn Desroches, organized the walk out. This gave students the opportunity to explain the difference and importance between culture appreciation versus culture appropriation. At the beginning of the protest, a small group of students walked from Drysdale Student Center, held up signs and then stood on the steps of the Hall Campus Center. Several students were given the opportunity to share their experiences of when they may have felt excluded, uncomfortable, or mistreated during their tenure here at the institution. The walk out ended with the reading of a list of demands for the institution, holding hands in friendship circle, and a pledge to continue and be a part of the mission of diversity and inclusion.



"The walk out was necessary. It started a long needed conversation about the importance of diversity and inclusion; but I wonder if it will remain a priority among the institution to ensure that students of color and underrepresented students feel accepted, welcomed, and included on campus." -Darian Geddis '20

Presidential Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

During the fall 2019 semester, our beloved campus community encountered a culturally unawareness incident (Fiesta Party), which resulted in members of our campus community feeling hurt and questioning the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion. As a result, President Garren met with a group of concerned students and promised to create a task force, which would reaffirm the University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging. President Garren created three specific areas/committees for the task force to address; Diversity Initiatives, Policies, and Orientation/Onboarding. In January 2020, Dr. Canida, the University's Diversity and Inclusion Officer was charged with leading the task force, which consists of students, staff, faculty, alumni and community. As of March, each committee has worked diligently on drafting preliminary proposals related to the task force's overall purpose. Later on this semester, each committee will submit their proposed plan of action to Dr. Canida.

BE THE CHANGE : DIVERSITY 101

ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2020, THERE WERE THREE WORKSHOPS, TWO FOR STUDENTS AND ONE FOR STAFF AND FACULTY, HELD THAT DISCUSSED THE TOPICS OF HAVING RESPECT FOR OTHERS, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION. THE EVENT WAS FOCUSED ON MICROAGGRESSIONS AND WAS HOSTED BY TWO MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES. STUDENTS EITHER ATTENDED THE 4 PM OR 7 PM SESSION, AND A FEW STUDENTS GAVE US THEIR FEEDBACK.

Israël Lockamy

Third - Year, Men's basketball
Guard, Student Diversity Liaison

"It was pretty talkative and i am not sure if everybody got the full affect of what was said. But as a university we should have monthly meetings for all students addressing diversity and inclusion issues. The workshop itself was good and informative.

"The workshop was a positive step in the right direction, but this is only the beginning. I feel as though everyone didn't take away what they were supposed to nor were they all taking it serious. I feel this is one of many things that need to be done in order to push the agenda of equity and inclusion on our campus.

Donzailya Berg

Second - Year, Track & Field, Student
Diversity Council Member



STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

by Stephanie Brown



BEATRICE KELLY-RUSSO '21

"The student diversity and leadership was a great opportunity for me to meet a wide variety of people from diversity and inclusion programs from colleges around the country. I got to experience interactive seminars about how I can be a more inclusive leader within my community, and I got to experience hands-on diversity and inclusion facilities."



LAURA ARRIAZA '20

" We attended the Student Leadership and Diversity Conference at the University of South Carolina a couple weeks ago. We as Student Diversity Liaisons facilitated a program called "Concentric Circles" twice during the lunch sessions. I enjoyed presenting at this conference because we were able to interact with students and staff from different schools all over the South. We were able to facilitate meaningful conversations covering identity and diversity in a safe space. My favorite part about presenting is the discussion at the end where everyone shares what they learned or enjoyed. Everyone seemed to have liked the activity and took something away from it! "



Student Spotlight : Shadaya Cooper

by Stephanie Brown



Q : What year are you and what is your major?

A : I am a third year Nursing Major, Psychology and Communications Double Minor

Q : What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

A : Diversity and Inclusion means not only having a spot for everyone to sit at the table but also giving them the chance to customize the menu. In its core, it is acknowledging our differences and the beauty that they bring to every day experiences.

Q : Tell me about your upcoming presentation for the NODA Region VIII conference at Stockton University

A : Myself and my co-presenter, Tiernan Harcourt-Brooke, will be presenting at the NODA Region VIII conference at Stockton University in Stockton, New Jersey. Our presentation is titled “The Push for Inclusion: Diversifying Their Home for Four Years.” This presentation focuses on the use of inclusive language

and initiatives centered around the Diversity Pedagogy. Theory for Educators to increase retention at 4-year universities. We hope to present this to returning orientation leaders, graduate assistants in first year programs, and faculty and staff as a call to action to accept the challenge to use every day to ‘become diverse’.

Q : How has your involvement on campus contributed to the university’s concept of diversity and inclusion?

A : I believe my close involvement with initiatives, programs, and organizations in OEI, my involvement in First Year Programs through the Academic Achievement Center, the President’s Task Force for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and my positions in Greek Life have offered me the platform to continue my education in diversity, equity, and inclusion and has given me the ability to collaborate with others who share my dream for a more diverse Lynchburg Community to educate students, faculty, and staff on this campus in informal and formal settings.

Student Spotlight Cont.

Q : Tell us a few interesting facts about yourself or things you like to do in your free time.

I currently work 3 jobs, have many volunteer commitments, and enjoy spending time with friends and family. While my free time is limited, I enjoy watching Netflix, reading, and spending time with my better half, Max.



Staff Highlight : Annette Stadtherr



I am responsible for making sure services are provided for all students from all cultures - various races, religions, socio-economic status, age, ability, sexual identity/orientation, ethnicity, etc. - so that they feel welcome, appreciated, accommodated, and free from bias at the University of Lynchburg."

Could you tell a little bit about yourself?

"I was born in Lynchburg, VA and raised in Rustburg, VA. I received my Bachelor of Science degree from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA and began my Master of Education degree here at Lynchburg after I began working here in January 1990. I never completed my Masters because I became a mom instead. I have two sons, Michael Ryan, 29, and Tyler, 26, who both live in Charleston, SC. My hobbies include reading and RVing to Charleston! A couple fun facts

about me are: I have a 22 month old chocolate lab named Levi, my baby boy, a horse and donkey whose names are Thunder (donkey) and Lightning (horse). I am an avid fan of VT Hokie and LSU Tiger football (another fun fact is that Tyler attended LSU at the same time Odell Beckham Jr. attended!); and I am fascinated with Amish culture."

What does diversity mean to you?

"Diversity means an array of dimensions, and perspectives, and ideas, and thoughts. I see diversity as a kaleidoscope - an ever changing and evolving (because I am constantly learning) pattern of elements."

What do you do here at the university? How long have you been a part of the Lynchburg community?

"I am the director of Multicultural Services and have been in some capacity, although the title, both mine and the office's, has changed multiple times in the 30 years I have been here

Staff Highlight Cont.

How have you been able to carry out and implement the university's concept of diversity?

"Wow! Good question. I think I am constantly trying to figure this one out. As I mentioned earlier, my job title/role and even the office title has changed several times in my years here. When I came in 1990, our focus in the Office of Institutional Change was to recruit and retain Black students and thus our programming was such (Black Awareness Weekends, Black History Month). In 1994, I was given the added responsibility of servicing international students and then Access and commuter students were added in 1995 and the office was moved under the Dean of Students and we became "Multicultural, Access and Commuter Services"; or MACS as we were more commonly known and remained for most of my career here. At that point, we were responsible for meeting the needs of basically any non-traditional age, white American residential students. Around 2009 Access and commuter services moved to academic affairs partnering with



transfer services and we became Multicultural and International Services. In 2012, a consultant determined that multicultural and international services needed to be separate as we grew these populations and Multicultural Services became its own office. The Office of Equity and Inclusion was established in December 2016 and Multicultural Services is one of three parts of that office. OEI, and Multicultural Services, feels that it is our role to meet the needs of all of our community - students, faculty, staff, alumni. Multicultural Services simply has more of a student-centered focus. We aim to seek what the needs of our students are and meet those needs in order to both attract and retain a diversity population. We are excited that we now have nine (9) affinity groups under our office. We also work with Fraternity and Sorority

Life, and support Sigma Pi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Omicron Sigma Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and advise Alpha Psi Lambda National co-ed Latino fraternity. We also host multicultural educational programs throughout the year."

What have you enjoyed during your time here on campus?

"I get my energy and motivation through student and alumni success. It is when the notifications of weddings, births, or invitations to promotions that come in that make me smile or shed a tear (I am getting more emotional in my older years). It is knowing that Laura Arriaza '20 (Peace Corps), Darian Geddis '20 (Grassroots Campaign), Kendrick Goldman '20 (VCU), Claudio Otero '20 (XPLOR), Janet Dixon '20 (XPLOR), Adrienne Nelson '20 (UNCG) and others of our student leaders already have their careers or graduate schools plans laid out for them after graduation that make me feel that we have made a difference. It is seeing Dr. Chris Boyd, once a STP student, now a Trustee. The realization that I first knew Dr. Aaron Smith as a student in the summer transition program, then as a colleague in OEI, and now as my supervisor that I measure the success of what we are doing. That is what I have enjoyed most about my time here."

Recent Events

Alpha Week February 10-14

- Monday Alpha Game Night
- Tuesday Alpha Social
- Wednesday Fundraising Dinner
- Thursday When They see Us Panel Discussion
- Friday Women's Appreciation Day

Jaguar Week February 10-14

- Game Night
- Wellness Night
- Informational
- Founder's Day Celebration
- Jaguar Dinner

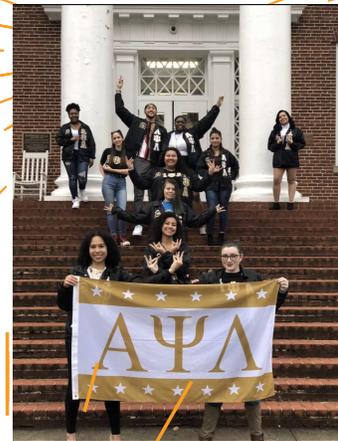


Upcoming Events

Donning of the Kente ~ TBD

Lavender Ceremony ~ TBD

Class of 2020 Commencement ~
TBD



Meet the OEI Team



Dr. Robert L. Canida II
Diversity and Inclusion
Officer



Annette B. Stadtherr
Director of Multicultural Services



Amanda McGovern
Title IX Coordinator



Sarah Grace McCormick
Project Coordinator



Angelo Colon
Staff Liaison for an
Inclusive Community



Olayinka Basorun
Graduate Assistant - OEI



Zuri Greene
Graduate Assistant -
Multicultural Services



Stephanie Brown
OEI Intern



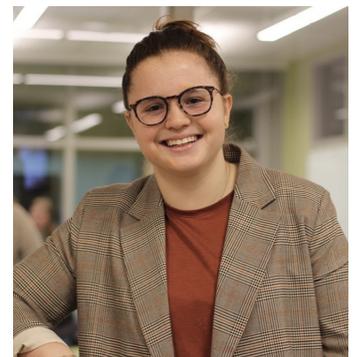
Laura Arriaza '20
Student Diversity Liaison



Israël Lockamy '21
Student Diversity Liaison



Darian Geddis '20
Student Diversity Liaison



Beatrice Kelly-Russo '21
Student Diversity Liaison

Connect With Us

Phone : 434.544.8330

Email : OEI@Lynchburg.edu