

October 4, 2022

Dear Scranton Community:

Now that everyone has settled into the academic year, we want to communicate some exciting progress that the university has made to create a more inclusive campus for our students, faculty, and staff. It is with great pride that we welcomed our most diverse class in the history of the University this Fall semester, with our largest percentage of historically underrepresented students.

Since May, the commitment of administrators, faculty, staff, and students to diversity, equity and inclusion work was demonstrated through many programs, presentations, workshops, activities, and communications implemented throughout campus and in our community. Instead of creating a long list of our activity, below are some highlights of some important progress:

### **Multicultural Center Expansion**

Construction started on the new Multicultural Center to be located on first floor of the DeNaples Center. The Center's expansion will assist with the increased need for space for underrepresented students to gather and host events. The new Center will feature lounge space, a small study room, a flexible mediated conference/meeting room, and some staff offices. We look forward to its opening later this year.

### **DEI Strategic Plan**

Over the summer, several members of Cabinet met to discuss the status and the implementation of the DEI Strategic plan. The Office of Equity and Diversity, charged with overseeing and tracking the DEI Plan's progress, is working on a website to ensure that the University community is apprised of the work as it occurs. Interim Provost Michelle Maldonado and Elizabeth Garcia continue to meet with University constituencies to assist and to advance the Plan's implementation. Information obtained to date is very promising, as several administrative and academic departments are planning or have already begun to implement programs and initiatives related to the plan.

### **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Co-Education at the University**

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year since women were first accepted into the University for an undergraduate education. A year-long celebration of this milestone is being planned by a work group co-chaired by Elizabeth Garcia, J.D. and Lauren Rivera, M.Ed, J.D, and comprised of the following members: Interim Provost Michelle Maldonado, Gerianne Barber, NCC, LPN, Dr. Marzia Caporale, Samantha Gurn, Dr. Sarah Kanehan, Mackenzie Longo, Frani Mancuso, Dr. Susan Poulson, Brandice Ricciardi, Mary Jane Rooney, and Gerald Zaboloski, M.S. A kickoff event is scheduled for October 13, 2022 at 4:30pm in front of the Gateway, with many more events to come. Look for activities related to the Anniversary of Co-Education throughout the year.

## **Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month**

The University is actively engaged in the nation's celebration of Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month, with special programs and events scheduled throughout campus. Faculty, staff, and students are all encouraged to attend. For more information, please visit the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion [Events Calendar](#).

## **Academic Programs**

Many academic departments include DEI-related classes, modules and learning programs to their agendas. Some highlights follow. The Education Department offers a series of courses that address work with students with disabilities, English language learners, and people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The STEM and the Education Department are teaming up to support future science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) high school teachers in high-need school districts. Dr. Gerard Dumancas, Associate Professor of Chemistry, received a \$1,158 million National Science Foundation-funded Noyce Scholars grant to assist with this effort.

Neuroscience added a module on Neuroscience of racism/bias in NEUR111 Reading Science Literature, which is a required seminar taken in the spring semester of first year, and added historical data from various neuroscientists into their neuroscience courses. Biology's faculty include course topics such as the genetic control of skin color and the chromosomal bases for gender and gender identity into classes.

Criminal Justice and Sociology offer courses for students to better understand diversity. The *Race and Ethnic Relations* course recently added more online educational resources from underrepresented scholars, including women and people of color, and the intersections between the marginalized social groups. The Department also reviewed its curriculum for its coverage of racial justice issues.

If we did not include your department's work, we strongly encourage you to share your information with us to be added to the next update.

## **Black Studies Concentration**

The Black Studies Concentration is poised to be added to the Fall 2023 catalog. Drs. Melissa Anyiwo, Anthony Betancourt and Nicole Hoskins are in the process of finalizing courses to propose to the curriculum committee.

## **Slattery Center for the Ignatian Humanities**

The Slattery Center for the Ignatian Humanities will be hosting Dr. Elizabeth Hinton as our 2022 Myers Distinguished Fellow in the Humanities and Civic Engagement. Dr. Hinton is Associate Professor of History and African American Studies, with a secondary appointment as Professor of Law at Yale University. Dr. Hinton will be giving a public lecture at the University on the evening of Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The Slattery Center also shared their resources on Hispanic Heritage Month with the chairs of the Humanities department that focused on people, contributions, creative work, and histories.

## **Jesuit Center**

In collaboration with the President and the Offices of the Provost, the Jesuit Center will be hosting Drs. Natalia Imperatori-Lee and Michael Lee in November. Dr. Imperatori-Lee will be giving a public lecture on the evening of November 10<sup>th</sup> entitled, "Latinx Catholicism and the Future of the Church in the United States." Dr. Lee will be speaking at a faculty and staff Lunch and Learn on Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup> that focuses on the life and work of Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J.

## **Thrive**

As a result of the commitment to improve the collegiate experiences and outcomes of first-generation students demonstrated through The University of Scranton's THR1VE program, led by Shannon Murphy-Fennie, Scranton was selected to join the national 2022-23 First-gen Forward cohort. The cohort is sponsored by The Center for First-Generation Student Success, which is an initiative of the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and The Suder Foundation.

Colleges selected to the First-gen Forward program receive professional development, community-building experiences, and have access to the research and other resources of the Center to further improve programming for first-generation college students.

## **Faculty and Staff Recruitment Efforts**

This year, the University welcomed several new members faculty from around the world. In addition to receiving hiring-for-diversity training from the Office of Equity and Diversity, several faculty hiring committees worked to expand their pool of candidates through intentional faculty trainings, and also by reaching out to specific organizations and websites for job postings.

The Office for Human Resources continues its efforts to connect with the Scranton community by attending job fairs and meeting with different community organization for hiring purposes. The Office, with the assistance of Dr. Yamile Silva, Dr. Michelle Maldonado and Liz Garcia, recently translated recruit materials into Spanish for upcoming job fairs.

## **Council for Diversity and Inclusion**

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion will be working to assist the University with two DEI Strategic Plan objectives, specifically:

“Develop a statement of shared principles for diversity, equity, and inclusion for all members of our University community. As part of a planned review of University mission and institutional learning outcomes, consider how this commitment may be realized in these foundational statements.”

“Review the number, charges, and status of campus committees engaged in diversity, equity and inclusion work, identifying potential synergies and connection points. Invite each committee to share an annual report on its activities to appropriate constituents and leadership.”

The Council also continues to work with the Office of Equity and Diversity to research best practices for providing resources and support to address bias incidents.

## **Faculty Development Subcommittee of CDI**

An inaugural day-long faculty development program entitled “Creating a Welcoming and Inclusive Classroom” took place on September 23, 2022. The Faculty Development Subcommittee of the Council for Diversity and Inclusion, the Provost's office, and the Office of Equity and Diversity worked collaboratively to plan and present this day. The Keynote speaker, Dr. Khristina Gonzalez from Princeton University, spoke on the theme, “From Access to Success: Supporting and Empowering First Generation, Lower-Income Students in Diversifying Institutions.”

Several faculty, administrators, staff, and students also presented on various topics including, but not limited to: The Pillar Program, “Isms”, Student Mental Health Awareness: Recognition and Response, Building DEI Partnerships for Student Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom, Navigating DEI in the Classroom, Faculty Insights, Race and Ethnicity Awareness Training and Safe Zoon Training.

### **Orientation**

The Cultural Center's staff again facilitated sessions for all incoming students that focused on community, belonging, University expectations, and diversity and inclusion. They educated the students on microaggressions in every Summer Orientation session.

### **ROCK**

The Cultural Centers sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Royals of Color Kickoff, an early arrival program for new students of color. ROCK provides an opportunity for students to come to campus the Thursday prior to first-year move in to connect with peers, upper-division mentors, and campus and local resources. This provided a foundation to support social network development, community-building, and campus and local-area connections. Twenty new students—up from nine last year—and eighteen upper-division students participated in the program and built lasting connections over the two-day event.

### **Donning of the Stole Ceremony**

In May, the Multicultural Center sponsored the Donning of the Stole Ceremony that honored the personal and academic achievements of 71 graduates of color as part of Commencement Weekend. Each graduate was invited to choose one of five cultural stoles aligned with their identity to wear with their Commencement regalia, and were celebrated by family, friends, faculty, staff, and administrators.

### **PILLAR Program**

This is the third year the Partners in Learning, Leadership, and Reflection (PILLAR) is being offered at the University. PILLAR is a pedagogical partnership program that pairs students with faculty to create, support, and enhance inclusive learning environments that encourage and value all learners at the University of Scranton. The PILLAR program empowers students to create inclusive classrooms that support diverse student experiences and learning needs by sharing their expertise as students with faculty members. For more information, contact [jennifer.whittaker@scranton.edu](mailto:jennifer.whittaker@scranton.edu).

### **Suggested Faculty, Staff and Students Training Through Vector Solutions**

In September, the Office of Equity and Diversity, in collaboration with the Offices of Student Life, Human Resources, and the Provost, provided a list of suggested on-line trainings, including Clarifying Consent for students, Conflict Management: Staff to Staff, and Student Mental Health: Awareness, Intervention and Referral. The goal of this collaboration is to send out suggested trainings on DEI-related topics once a semester.

### **Scranton's Story, Our Nation's Story**

***“Scranton's Story, Our Nation's Story”*** explores the aspirational journey to fulfill our national ideals through the lens of Scranton, Pennsylvania, an iconic American city that has experienced many of the key elements of our nation's experience: industrial era growth and decline, waves of immigration past and present, and Black and Indigenous experiences. This project is made possible through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Upcoming events can be found on the [Scranton's Story Website](#).

## Web Accessibility

The federal Department of Justice Civil Rights Division issued Guidance on Web Accessibility to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. OED met with administrators from CTLE, Information Technology, Marketing Communications, Student Life, and others to discuss compliance work that needed to be completed as related to accessibility. A committee is in the process of being created to assist with achieving compliance that will be led by Liz Garcia.

## DEI Book Club

The Offices of the Provost, Human Resources, and Equity and Diversity are pleased to initiate a faculty and staff book club called "Scribe." Committed to enhancing an inclusive campus environment, the club book will match the first-year seminar Royal Read, "On Juneteeth," by Pulitzer Prize-winning the New York Times best-selling author, Annette Gordon-Reed is our first book. The book club is designed to create a space for thoughtful dialogue. To attend the luncheon, please Register here. Seating is limited. The book club meeting will be held **Wednesday, Oct. 5 at 12:00p.m. in DeNaples 405.**

## DEI Lunch and Learns

The Office of Equity and Diversity is now in its fourth year of the DEI Lunch and Learn Series. This year, we will have guest speakers discuss such topics as "Inclusive Education for Individuals with Disabilities," "**Student Mental Health Awareness: Recognition and Response**," "Isms," "Psychological Safety in Employment," and "Indigenous History." Check the [OED Events](#) or [EDI website](#) frequently for updates.

## DEI Initiative Grants Awarded

The Office of Equity and Diversity oversees, supports, and sponsors the promotion of inclusivity and the incorporation of the University's Strategic Plan and the DEI Strategic Plan. Faculty, Staff, and Students interested in applying for a Diversity Initiatives Grant should visit the DEI website.

The following grants were awarded in the Spring for the 2022-2023 academic year:

- 1) Dr. Susan Mendez, faculty English department, received a grant of \$2,000 to host Dr. Mariana Ortega, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Penn State University, State College campus, for the Fall 2022 semester. Among several other works, Ortega is the author of *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity and the Self* (SUNY, 2016).
- 2) Julie Schumacher-Cohen, AVP of Government and Community Relations, received a grant of \$1,979.63 in support of the NEH project *Scranton's Story: Our Nation's Story*. This project will focus on the area's indigenous history and will feature a two-day, multi-faceted campus/community visit with Curtis Zunigha, former Chief of the Delaware Indian Tribe (the Lenape).
- 3) Dr. Darlene Miller-Lanning, director of the Hope Horn Gallery, was awarded a grant for the art exhibition, *Mayan Narratives: San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala*, photographs by Byron Maldonado. A native of San Lucas Tolimán, Mr. Maldonado worked as a photographer for Fr. Gregory Schaffer, founder of the town's San Lucas Mission. The University of Scranton is connected to San Lucas Tolimán as it regularly sends students to the San Lucas Mission on International Service Program trips.

We look forward to a successful semester and we encourage continued communication,

understanding and solidarity as we continue to advance the University's efforts to remain accessible and welcoming to everyone.

Sincerely,

Michelle Maldonado, Ph.D.  
Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Elizabeth M. Garcia, J.D.  
Special Assistant to the President,  
Executive Director for the Office of Equity and Diversity, and  
Title IX Coordinator