



Jan. 10, 2021

Dear Scranton Community:

Happy New Year! We hope everyone enjoyed the holiday break! Before we gear up for another full semester, we wanted to communicate some strides we have taken in our continued commitment to creating an inclusive campus for all.

**Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:**

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Team, under the leadership of Kathryn Yerkes, Assistant Provost for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, and Elizabeth M. Garcia, Esq., Special Assistant to the President and Executive Director for the Office of Equity and Diversity, is putting the final touches on the Plan after receiving feedback from the President's Cabinet, the Faculty, Staff and Student senates, open fora and a campus feedback survey. The Plan will be finalized over Intersession and shared with the University community early in the Spring Semester.

**HEDS Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment:**

In case you missed the announcement, the HEDS Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment results are out, and were shared by Jeff Gingerich and the Provost's Council for Diversity and Inclusion on December 16, 2021. For more information, you can find the announcement [here](#). It contains a link to the survey report and complete results.

**Intersession Faculty Book Club:** Amy Simolo, M.S., Ed.D., Faculty Development Specialist in the Center for Teaching and Learning is leading a book club during intersession. The book, *Implicit Bias: An Educator's Guide to the Language for Microaggressions* by Theresa Bouley and Anni Reinking, defines implicit bias and microaggressions, identifies ways students of varying identities such as race, gender/LGBTQ+, religion, socioeconomic, ability, linguistic and family dynamics, experience microaggressions in schools, and offers an educator's guide to using culturally responsive teaching as an antidote to microaggressions. Specific ways to interrupt microaggressions in schools are also provided.

**Institutional Black History Project:** The Institutional Black History Group (a subcommittee of the Provost's Council for Diversity and Inclusion) is making progress on better understanding the Black history of the University. During the Fall semester, archival research was conducted by students in a history course taught by Dr. Aiala Levy. The students presented their findings to campus constituents. Some of their work can be found [here](#). The goal is to continue work on this project into 2022 and beyond to offer a fuller picture of the University's Black history for ongoing campus reference, reflection, and action, including to inform ongoing work to create a Black Studies program. Members of the subcommittee include: Peter Andersen, Julie

Schumacher Cohen (chair), Ravenne Cooper, Koebe Diaz, David Dzurec, Colleen Farry, Elizabeth Garcia, Nicole Hoskins, Aiala Levy, Ian O'Hara, Michelle Maldonado.

**Land Acknowledgement Statement:** On November 1, 2021, Father Marina announced that the University officially adopted a Land Acknowledgment Statement to recognize and honor the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Lenape, the Munsee, the Shawnee and the Susquehannocks in Northeastern Pennsylvania. A copy of the announcement can be found [here](#) and the Statement can be found [here](#). We continue to encourage its use.

**Dialogue Series:** The Cross-Cultural Centers offered dialogue series focused on education, awareness, and how to engage in advocacy. The sessions focused on Racial Healing and Identity (topics included Latinx terminology and the Latino community, ableism, tokenism, land acknowledgements and how to promote justice, and code switching) and other sessions focuses on Race, Racism, and Privilege (topics included understanding racism and anti-racism, domestic violence and immigration, and missing and murdered indigenous women).

**Counseling for Student of Color:** Since mid-October, in collaboration with the Counseling Center, the Cross-Cultural Centers sponsored a weekly Student of Color Support and Empowerment Group co-facilitated by an alum of color and a counselor from the Counseling Center.

**ROCK Reunion:** Student Life held a reunion for the members of Royals of Color Kickoff (ROCK). The reunion was attended by participants, mentors, and their friends as a means of social connection as well as to gather feedback on ongoing needs and wants for the program.

**National Coming Out Week Events:** The Cross-Cultural Centers, along with Scranton Alliance for Equity and the University of Scranton Programming Board, hosted National Coming Out Week Events, including a coffeehouse, a video screening and discussion on the differences between drag performances and trans identity, and a facilitated cookie decorating event.

**Diversity Hiring Toolkit:** On December 13, 2021, Father Marina announced the completion of "A Strategy Toolkit to Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Faculty". The Toolkit project was developed by a Diversity Hire Workgroup consisting of Jeff Gingerich, George Aulisio, Lori Bruch, Elizabeth Garcia, Christie Karpiak, Michelle Maldonado, Nabil Tamimi and Patricia Tetreault. A copy of the announcement can be found [here](#) and link to the Toolkit can be found [here](#).

**Hispanic Heritage Month:** The Multicultural Center hosted and co-hosted cultural celebratory events, including the Hispanic Heritage Month Dance Night, a screening of *In the Heights* with the University of Scranton Programming Board, Asia Clubs' Navratri/Diwali event, UCO's International Fashion Show, and a Dia de los Muertos celebration. Also as part of this month's celebrations, the University ran its first-ever South Side Restaurant Tour, offering students an opportunity to explore the revitalized Cedar Iron District and dine at different Mexican or El Salvadorian restaurants. This event was co-sponsored by Latin American Studies Program, Cross Cultural Centers, Spanish Cultural Society, Office of Community Relations, and United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern PA.

**Native American Heritage Month:** The Office of Equity and Diversity continued its Lunch and Learn Series by presenting Curtis Zunigha, the co-founder and co-director of The Lenape Center, NYC to campus. Mr. Zunigha discuss the history of the Lenape people and making our Land Acknowledgement Statement a sustainable commitment. The Lunch and Learn was co-sponsored with the Multi-Cultural Center.

**DISABILITY Conference:** The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on DISABILITY was held virtually on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and was titled *Exploring Autism across the Spectrum: Building Inclusive Communities – Year III*. The event included four live keynotes, and several pre-recorded sessions.

We wish everyone a very happy and successful 2022!

Sincerely,

Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D.  
Provost & Sr. Vice-President for Academic Affairs

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