DIVERSITY MATTERS

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THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC
A MESSAGE FROM
THE VICE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

As the Office of Diversity & Inclusion reflects on its second anniversary as a unit at the George Washington University, the nation commemorates the 60th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education and the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights and Economic Opportunity Acts of 1964.

As we “sit on the bench by the road” to reflect on these important milestones, we ponder the current and urgent conversations about access and success in higher education, the plight of men of color, and campus sexual assault. These ongoing challenges confirm for me that the work and individuals highlighted in this issue are essential if GW is to achieve the lofty goal of creating an educational and work environment that is open and inviting to individuals from diverse backgrounds with diverse perspectives and that enables all students, faculty, and staff to thrive.

In this issue of Diversity Matters, we highlight the collective efforts of the GW community to hold ourselves accountable for transforming our culture and aligning our choices—individual and departmental—and priorities to the GW values. We welcome our newest partners in these efforts, with a special shout out to the SJT Scholars, and offer a glimpse of the landscape shaping our work going forward.

We hope you enjoy our special edition of Diversity Matters!

Dr. Terri Harris Reed
Vice Provost for Diversity & Inclusion

ON THE COVER

Students pose with George during the sixth annual Freshman Day of Service and Convocation.

MATTER OF THE MONTH

In this edition we celebrate the anniversaries of the 1954 Supreme Court case Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We also spotlight alumna Sally Nuamah for her work and advocacy related to race, education, and public policy. Her efforts are exemplary, contemporary illustrations of education networking with legislation and policy to make our nation the most diverse and inclusive in the world. We feature her as evidence of our country’s progress over the last fifty years following the landmark Civil Rights Act and as an alum who “Matters” (see page 8 for more).

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.”

– Maya Angelou

DIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

Terri Harris Reed
ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUMMER 2014

IN MAY
- Linda Livingstone was announced as the new dean of the GW School of Business.
- Cameron Smither received his master’s degree in Public Policy, and completed his fellowship as a Presidential Administrative Fellow in the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI). During his tenure with ODI, Cameron worked with university colleagues to establish and administer the Innovation in Diversity and Inclusion grants program, and provided an active role in the strategic activities of the President’s Council on Diversity & Inclusion and the unit overall.

IN JUNE
- The Board of Trustees elected three new members: Kyle Farmbry, B.A. ’92, M.P.A. ’94, Ph.D. ’99; Sally Nuamah, B.A. ’11; and Art B. Wong, M.D. ’67.
- Trustee Emeritus the Honorable B.J. Penn was announced as the inaugural chair of the Making History campaign.
- Blake D. Morant was announced as the new GW Law School dean and Robert Kramer Research Professor of Law.

IN JULY
- The latest cohort of Innovation in Diversity and Inclusion grant recipients were announced, including The Power of Storytelling, the GW International Awareness Project, Examining Online Master’s Students’ Resources, Strategies and Practices for Success, Images of Race in the Era of Emancipation, and the University Archives Diversity Research Fellowship.

IN AUGUST
- The Office of Diversity & Inclusion welcomed Ashlynn Profit as the Center for Civic Engagement’s new Presidential Administrative Fellow!

ODI NEWCOMERS

LUCYROSE MOLLER

Bringing years of experience working with students from kindergarteners and up, LucyRose Moller joins the Center for Civic Engagement & Public Service (CCEPS) this year as an AmeriCorps VISTA.

After graduating from Stonehill College in 2011, Moller spent a year in India as part of a post-graduate service program, taught at an urban community farm, and had students get their hands dirty during interactive science lessons in an after school program. She now looks forward to working with CCEPS to utilize the skills she’s acquired in her service-based background.

“Students at every age have so much to teach us as we witness and guide their exploration of the world. I am thrilled to join GW’s Center for Civic Engagement & Public Service precisely because I see this as an opportunity to combine my interests in education and community engagement,” Moller said.

New to DC, LucyRose vowed to take advantage of all things free and exciting when she got here. So far she cites seeing Talib Kweli, John Legend and Lauryn Hill at the Kennedy Center; hiking in and enjoying Rock Creek Park and the National Arboretum; and listening to words of wisdom from politicians, artists, poets and ordinary citizens working to improve their communities as some of her favorite experiences.

“Oh, and sampling DC’s food trucks hasn’t been so bad either.”

And when posed the question what diversity means to her, Moller had this to say:

“Diversity means representation, presence and voice of all at the proverbial table. It means engaging with intersecting identities-your own and those of others. A diverse community acknowledges and upholds the value and lived experiences of people across race, socio-economic status, culture, sexuality, gender, impairments, generations, and skillsets. With that as a defining and guiding principle, a diverse community must actively challenge all parts of the status-quo that obstruct equity.”

Let’s welcome LucyRose!
A YEAR IN REVIEW

BY HELEN CANNADAY
ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

As we look to the new academic year, we reflect on 2013-2014 as a year of excitement, filled with many great accomplishments and new challenges for the Office of Diversity & Inclusion.

The extraordinary cross-divisional collaboration and partnerships offered several opportunities to advance GW’s values, priorities, and work in diversity and inclusion. We continue to identify and build important relationships with students, faculty, staff, administrators, trustees, and community partners, who recognize the benefits of leveraging diversity and inclusion to achieve institutional and academic excellence.

We opened the academic year with a series of events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, a continuation of our Pro[Claiming] Freedom series—a year-long celebration recognizing the said anniversary plus the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the re-election of the first black president of the United States of America. The various activities and programs explored the intersections of civic engagement, human rights, and diversity through academic lectures and symposiums on social justice and political movements, a march on the Mall, volunteer service, exhibitions, and dramatic and musical performances. The series benefitted from GW’s strength in teaching, scholarship, and service to accomplish the primary goal of enhancing student learning about the history of race in America.

In September, the office launched an important campaign on preventing sexual harassment and assault. This campaign included but was not limited to providing programs, seminars, discussions, and training sessions to students, faculty, and staff on the definitions, regulations, policies and procedures, behaviors, and effects of sexual harassment, including sexual violence. There were several initiatives to promote use of the HAVEN website—a site designed to inform both victims and accusers of sexual assault about the support services at and around GW—and the work of the Sexual Assault Response Consultative Team (SARC).

In November, we awarded six new projects funding, totaling over $40K, through the Innovations in Diversity and Inclusion grants program. This third cohort of award recipients joined the 11 previously funded projects (see page 5).

In January 2014, the President’s Council on Diversity & Inclusion welcomed 23 new members. It was restructured to include a Leadership Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (LCDI), and an Implementation Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (ICDI). The LCDI brings together members of the GW senior leadership corps to strategize and monitor diversity efforts. The ICDI represents individuals whose official duties or expertise directly impact, or influence the university’s diversity agenda.

We covered a lot of ground this year, and have counted many colleagues and partners in this important work. We thank you for your support and contributions. We are excited with the journey ahead and what we will achieve together in advancing the strategic goals of diversity and inclusion at the university.

On April 3 and 4, the biennial conference, Composing Diversity, sponsored by the Office of Disability Support Services in partnership with the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, English Department, and University Writing Program was held in the School of Media and Public Affairs Jack Morton Auditorium. This year’s panel presentations, keynote speeches, and performances examined the fraught relationship between the diagnostic work of the medical industry and the embodied lives of disabled people by focusing on the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (published May 2013).

The MLK Day of Service on January 12 deployed over 600 students, faculty, and staff to 12 different sites around the city to tackle 15 projects. The King Celebration: “Three Dimensions of a Complete Life” was the theme for this year’s annual event, held on January 16, honoring the legacy and life of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

President Knapp was a participant at the White House College Opportunity Summit hosted by the President and First Lady Obama. In support of the goals of this important initiative, President Knapp created a university-wide Task Force on Access and Success, chaired by Provost Reed. The task force will consider and recommend new pathways for college readiness, planning, attendance, and affordability. To learn more about the task force and its work, you can visit gwtoday.gwu.edu/president-knapp-announces-task-force-access-and-success.
INITIATIVES

INNOVATION IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GRANT RECIPIENTS COMPLETE SIX SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Over a dozen students, faculty, and staff implemented six successful projects during the 2013–2014 academic year as part of the Innovation in Diversity and Inclusion (IDI) grants program. IDI supports innovative ideas that advance GW’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

This most recent cohort of IDI grantees included recipients from the Office of Study Abroad, University Writing Program, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Nursing, Gelman Library, the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, and faculty from the Physics, Chemistry, Biology departments of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. The projects were awarded a total of almost $40,000 and are titled as follows: Broadening Opportunities and Stimulating Excitement in STEM, Global Initiatives & Diversity Outreach, Inclusive Spaces: Breaking Down Invisible Walls, Mentored Experience to Expand Opportunities in Research, Promoting English for Academic Purposes Online, and the University Archives Diversity Research Fellowships.

The IDI grants program was founded in 2012 as part of the university’s efforts to create an educational and work environment that is inclusive, supportive, and rich in diversity. This internal grant program—the first of its kind at GW—is an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and units to apply for funding to support capacity-building ideas that have the greatest potential to advance and sustain GW’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. Since its inception, the program has funded 18 projects and awarded over $92K in financial support. The inaugural cohort included a broad array of individuals and units, including the Division of Student Affairs and Development and Alumni Relations.

“We have been thrilled with the enthusiastic response to the IDI grants program,” said Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion Helen Cannaday, who oversees the program. “The caliber of the projects reflects the importance of harnessing the efforts and passion of our students and colleagues to address universal challenges by developing replicable strategies and generating new knowledge for fostering inclusive and welcoming environments. This includes eliminating inequities and reducing barriers that prevent all members of our community from thriving.”

IDI is a key strategy in assisting the Office of Diversity & Inclusion in establishing itself as a resource for diversity expertise and helping GW become internationally renowned for inclusive excellence. Previously funded projects focused on developing employment-related resources to enhance the representation of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, using theater to promote multicultural education dialogue and teaching strategies for faculty in the School of Medicine, understanding graduate student perceptions regarding diversity and inclusion, and assessing the role of race in the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign to supplement curricular and research activities in the School of Media and Public Affairs.

In Spring 2014, the University Archives Diversity Research Fellowships project invited undergraduate students to propose a significant research project examining the history and experiences of diverse groups at GW. The students then used a host of University Archives collections to examine the “stories” of GW veterans, women, international students, and service workers. The source materials included annals of the GW Hatchet, Office of the President records, Board of Trustees minutes, Office of the Provost records, and other supplementary resources outside of GW. The project culminated in an April presentation at the Gelman Library where students reported their findings.

“We wanted students to find diversity stories in GW’s history, interpret that history and share it with the university community and our project could not have been possible without an IDI grant,” said former University Archivist Bergis Jules. “The IDI grant program offers an opportunity to uniquely tie diversity to all aspects of academic and campus life through innovative projects.”

The students, faculty, and staff of the fourth cohort of IDI grant recipients are preparing to implement their grants for the 2014–2015 academic year. The Office of Diversity & Inclusion will be accepting applications for the fifth cohort through October 15, 2014.
The Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC) Graduation Celebration was inspired by a dialogue between MSSC staff and a group of African-American seniors in the spring of 2007. The more we talked, the more we realized the potential impact and unique opportunity we were considering. The MSSC staff was looking for an opportunity to build unity within the black student community and some seniors wanted a meaningful vehicle for expressing their satisfaction with their GW experience, so the celebration seemed to be a win-win. Andrea Williford became our primary committee partner as we talked through the vision, mission, and impact of the event. It was important to ground the event in a philosophy that was inclusive, open, and added value to the student experience.

Today the concept of a graduation celebration, among those of us who work in multicultural student centers, is not uncommon, although it has been and continues to be a topic of debate among cultural center, academic and student life leaders.

One of my goals as director of the MSSC is to encourage students to maintain a strong lifelong connection to GW, and to the MSSC. My vision for the graduation celebration was to leave students with one long, lasting, joyful, memory as the capstone to this stage of their GW experience. We wanted an experience that surrounds them with friends, classmates, faculty, staff, and parents as well. We wanted an experience that shouted out to the students in a very public manner; that “you matter, you are important, and we are thankful that you are a part of this GW family, forever.”

Only forty years before the development of the graduation celebration, more than 200 of our black and white students were protesting in front of Rice Hall over the treatment of African-American students on campus and black culture in the curriculum.
This was fourteen years after the Brown v. Board of Education decision and four years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Today, we use the graduation celebration as one of many indicators of GW’s advancement since that time.

When the university administration sanctioned the event, it sent a clear, powerful, and very public message to the GW community that all of our communities are important, and have value. More importantly, the message was that we are willing to be creative and nudge people towards conversations about diversity, even if they are a little uncomfortable. Since the initial implementation of the program in 2008, we have found creative ways to invite, encourage, and welcome the broadest range of the diversity in the GW community to participate, because everyone is diverse in some way.

One of the big heroes of this event was Jason Wilson, the Assistant Athletics Director for Facilities at the time. His support and advocacy helped to secure the Charles E. Smith Center, which has served as the home for this program since 2008. Wilson assisted us in securing the Smith Center and provided technical guidance to ensure we executed a first-rate event. Maybe more importantly, he was a true believer in the celebration’s potential to persuade these graduates to see themselves as lifelong Colonials.

In terms of structure and planning, MSSC staff and students look at best practices in the area, and among peer institutions. Everything that we do is designed to strengthen the relationship between each individual student and the institution we all love. We recognize each student’s academic, student life, and leadership accomplishments, and affirm their value and contribution to the GW community.

We are excited to have a program that highlights one of the most important periods in our students’ lives. Graduation is one of the most critical milestones in a young person’s life; we want to make it as meaningful, satisfying, and heartwarming as possible.
GRADUATE TRAVELS THE WORLD; RETURNS TO GW TO JOIN BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BY ADAM MIDDLETON
CCAS ’15

SINCE graduating from the George Washington University three years ago, Sally Nuamah has pursued her interests as researcher, consultant, world traveler, filmmaker, and public speaker—all the while illustrating that individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds around the world can achieve.

Nuamah received her bachelor’s degree in Political Science with a focus in public policy from the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences in 2011. Moving back to Chicago and entering a doctoral program, Nuamah’s research focuses on issues of race, education, and public policy. Outside of academia, Sally works as a consultant for the United Nations Foundation (UNF) and is currently in South Africa as a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Research and Innovation Fellow.

Describing herself as “mission-oriented,” Nuamah is active domestically and abroad to improve the lives of underprivileged children around the world. She cites the lack of educational access for underprivileged children and conditions in her hometown of Chicago and other inner-city communities such as New York and Philadelphia as the impetus behind her career.

“I found that I was fundamentally motivated by this idea that kids do not choose to be born poor. The way a kid comes into this world should not affect their ability to be successful,” said Nuamah, reflecting on the anniversaries of Board v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Sally has worked heavily in schools throughout her career and even before graduating from GW. In 2009, she began to produce a short documentary that became HerStory: Girls & Education in Ghana. The film sought to examine the academic success of female students in Ghana as they completed their last year in secondary school. The film and its associated research led to a TEDx Talk at the University of Illinois at Chicago and will soon reach the community festival circuit around the country. You can learn more about Sally’s research and film project at www.herstorythefilm.com.

“I actually started off with an interest in higher education policy,” Nuamah said, “but became...
really saddened by how many people don’t end up there in the first place, and became more interested in lower levels of education.”

Her catalogue of distinctions recently expanded to include an appointment to the GW Board of Trustees. Landing back at the university during a time where so much promise and energy is around diversity and inclusion is one of the most exciting parts of returning for Nuamah. She remembers the dialogue about a chief diversity officer and the months leading up to the creation of the position.

“I was a student at GW when Dr. Reed was hired and to see how the diversity effort has evolved into the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity & Inclusion is amazing,” she said.

This fall, Ms. Nuamah will continue to look at the intersection of education and policy in a pre-doctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania, conducting more research on the educational access of underprivileged youth in minority communities around the country.

“Education is the most probable mechanism for getting kids who come into this world at a particular disadvantage to leave this world with a better outcome.”

With endless possibilities for the future, Nuamah can only confirm that her passion to advocate for educational access for underprivileged children will guide her future.

“I know what I care about. All of my work is trying to find the way to get at those interests and those questions and hopefully contribute to the effort.”
This year, the George Washington University marks twenty-five years since the inception of the Stephen Joel Trachtenberg (SJT) Scholars program. The scholarship is one of the university’s most prestigious awards for incoming freshmen, and proudly celebrates the legacy of more than 150 scholars and over 16 million dollars awarded throughout the life of the program.

Created in 1989 as the GW 21st Century D.C. Scholars, the program was designed to attract talented students from the District of Columbia high schools to George Washington University. It was renamed in 1999 by the Board of Trustees to honor President Emeritus Stephen Joel Trachtenberg’s decade of service to the university.

The SJT Scholars program covers tuition, room, board, books, and university fees for exceptional students in the District of Columbia for four years. Each year high school counselors, who take into account the student’s performance on college entrance exams, overall academic profile, community service involvement, leadership ability, and extracurricular activities, nominate potential scholars. A representative from the Office of Undergraduate Admissions interviews the nominees and a committee of university administrators reviews their applications.

“The Stephen Joel Trachtenberg Scholars family prides itself on academic excellence, cultural awareness, spiritual growth, leadership, accountability, integrity, and community service,” said Associate Director of the Multicultural Student Services Center George Rice. “Through our programmatic efforts, discussions, academic support meetings, and social events, the scholars cultivate strong and productive relationships with each other and the staff who support them. Our staff consistently challenge and encourage the scholars so they can discover their passion and purpose.”

Rice works directly with each scholar, leading their monthly general body meetings and advising the freshman scholars weekly. Along with Rice and his staff, a variety of University faculty and staff members also contribute to the overall execution and success of the program.

Once on campus, scholarship recipients are expected to continue their commitment to academic scholarship, civic involvement, and leadership activities. The scholars complete yearly community service projects and are frequently represented on student organization executive boards and the Dean’s List, in addition to successfully competing for other positions of distinction on and off campus.

“When you first arrive on campus as an SJT Scholar, [university faculty and staff] set the expectation early that you’re an ambassador and a representation of the best DC has to offer,” said Sarai Reed, a rising SJT senior majoring in English. Reed, a member of the English department’s combined-degree program, will receive her B.A. in the spring of 2015 and M.A. in 2016.

China Green of Friendship Collegiate Academy, Tai’Lon Jackson of Ballou High School, Minh-Hong Nguyen of Capital City Public Charter School, and Llewellyn Richie of KIPP DC College Preparatory School are enrolling this fall as the newest SJT scholars.

“This scholarship means hope,” said Richie, who graduated as the president of his school’s National Honor Society chapter. “Hope for a better future not only for me, but for my family and other supporters. When you grow up in an unstructured community, you seem to be blind to the numerous opportunities in front of you, especially in D.C. Now that I have a chance to explore a fantastic university, I know that the possibilities are limitless.”

“...The Stephen Joel Trachtenberg Scholars family prides itself on academic excellence, cultural awareness, spiritual growth, leadership, accountability, integrity, and community service,” said Associate Director of the Multicultural Student Services Center George Rice..."
In this edition of Diversity Matters we spotlight alumna Sally Nuamah for her work and advocacy related to race, education, and public policy. We feature her success as evidence of our country’s progress following the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 and as someone who “Matters.” Her efforts are exemplary, contemporary illustrations of the impact of legislation and policy on higher education and our journey towards a more just and equal nation. The year 2014 commemorates important milestones on this journey.

Education has a long, storied past with both the foremost legislative body of this country, the United States Congress, and its preeminent judicial power, the Supreme Court. Throughout the formative 20th Century, cases challenging the nation’s status quo and laws renewing our commitment to the creed “justice for all” reached the Court and Congress at a remarkable pace, changing the course of history despite the formidable strength of bigotry and inequality.

Highlighting the U.S. Supreme Court’s role in affecting changes in national and social policy, the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case—the name given to five separate cases heard by the Court concerning the issue of segregation in public schools in Delaware, Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and the District of Columbia—addressed directly the constitutionality of discrimination in education around the country. On May 14, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the opinion of the Court, stating that,

“We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.’ It was later that year in July 1954 that the George Washington University completely lifted its restrictions on minority student admissions. And this was only the beginning.”

One of the most significant pieces of legislation came a decade later. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, enacted fifty years ago on July 2, outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the United States. It ended the unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace, and other public accommodations.

This was followed by President Lyndon B. Johnson signing into law the cornerstone of his “War on Poverty,” the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. Among the many programs the act created was the first iteration of what is now the Federal Work-Study Program. Its goal, to “stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education who are from low-income families and are in need of the earnings from such employment to pursue courses of study at such institutions,” opened the door for more students than ever before to access higher education. Since then, more than three generations of students from low-income, diverse families have been able to attend college because of the financial assistance Federal Work-Study provides. Many George Washington University students supplement their grants and scholarships with federal work-study funds earned by working part-time jobs in university departments or at government agencies, local nonprofits, and other community service organizations.

2014 also marks fifty years since the Mississippi Summer Project, often referred to as “Freedom Summer,” where prominent civil rights organizations, under the umbrella Council of Federated Organizations (COFO), gained national attention in launching a state-wide campaign to register African-Americans to vote.

Reflecting on these historic moments in time and celebrating the advances of our country towards becoming a more perfect union, we must remember that the work is not over. We profile Ms. Nuamah not only because she has achieved many great accomplishments, but because she also reminds us that, fifty and sixty years later, there is still more to be done. She is a proud GW Colonial who has committed her life and career to doing more of what matters most.
Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity & Inclusion

Haven is GW’s centralized website designed to bring together on-campus and off-campus resources, options, information, and immediate and confidential access to help regarding incidents of power-based harassment and abuse, such as sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking.

September 6
Freshman Day of Service and Convocation

September 15-October 15
2014 Latino Heritage Celebration: ¡Enough! Tal Como Soy

September 22-23
President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge 2014 Kick-Off

DONORS
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“Appeals Panel Upholds Race in Admissions for University” by Tamar Levin – The New York Times


CONVERSATION STARTERS
Online:
“Why Colleges Are on the Hook for Sexual Assault” by Robin Wilson – The Chronicle of Higher Education

“When Being Nice Isn’t Enough” by Charles M. Green – The Chronicle of Higher Education

Reading:
Place, Not Race: A New Vision of Opportunity in America by Sheryll Cashin

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please visit diversity.gwu.edu.