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DIVERSITY AT A GLANCE

On June 23, 1972, President Nixon signed Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 into law. It states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” Today, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Title IX is enforced in approximately 16,500 local school districts, 7,000 postsecondary institutions, as well as charter schools, for-profit schools, libraries, and museums. (See page 5 for more)

QUOTES OF THE MATTER

“When we think about equality and freedom and justice, we know we’ve got more work to do, and we’re going to do that work. We want to do that work, and we hope that our song is inspiration for those who want to do that work as well.”

— John Legend on his Academy Award–winning song “Glory” from the film Selma

ODI NEWCOMERS

There were several staffing changes and additions in the units comprising the Office of Diversity & Inclusion this past year. Our team has been busy in providing the high-quality support services to our internal and external constituents.

JOVANNIE MAHONZIE became the new immersion service coordinator in the Center for Civic Engagement & Public Service. In this role, Jovannie advises the GW-Latinos in Black America program, coordinating the signature service events, and working to support on-going student leadership initiatives.

SETH BRAVIN joined Disability Support Services (DSS) as the new associate director of technology access. In this role, he plays a primary and leadership role in ensuring our students have equitable access to technology-based educational integrals and oversees the delivery of the technological services integral to providing individuals with eligible academic accommodations. He works in close collaboration with stakeholders across the university—meeting with administrators to discuss accessibility initiatives, consulting and providing training on accessibility best practices, and identifying vendors who provide accessibility solutions, such as captioning.

We also welcomed Director and Title IX Coordinator RORY MUHAMMAD. Rory previously served as the Title IX coordinator at George Mason University and spent nine years at Mason’s Office of Equity and Diversity Services. At GW, he has oversight of Title IX compliance—policies, procedures, and programs—to facilitate GW’s commitment to conducting prompt investigations of complaints, adequately supporting survivors, and identifying and implementing strategies for preventing sexual assault.

CHRISTINA FENTON joined the Office of Diversity & Inclusion as our executive assistant for the central office. In addition to her administrative duties, Christina coordinates the GW Tutoring Initiative and utilizes her strong organizational and planning skills to arrange high-profile events. A graduate of Tulane University, Christina previously held positions at the University of Texas at Austin, including in their Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.

Our newest team member, Assistant Director for Sexual Assault Prevention & Response CARRIE ROSS joined the Office of Diversity & Inclusion in March. Carrie comes to GW from the University of Michigan, where she was a senior counselor and program specialist at the Center for Education of Women. As the prevention and response coordinator, she provides expertise in the development and maintenance of trauma-informed intake and adjudication processes and coordinates and delivers a wide array of training activities and outreach programming.

On the Cover

Trans Actress and Advocate Laverne Cox encourages students to “embrace their complex identities” while speaking to a packed audience in GW’s Lerner Auditorium, sponsored by GW’s student-run organizations Allied in Pride, Pride and Peace, and other student organizations and departments.
GW’S DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES RECOGNIZES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

BY JOSEPH FISHER LEARNING SPECIALIST OFFICE OF DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

MAJA ČAVLOVIĆ

As a graduate intern at GW’s Office of Disability Support Services (DSS), Matthew Mueller works directly with graduate and undergraduate students who have disabilities, as they prepare for internships and careers. By design, Matthew’s position sits at the intersection of the GW campus and the world that surrounds it.

Matthew’s role is to work one-on-one with students who are preparing for interviews and creating their professional dossiers, which will hopefully lead to meaningful employment. His expertise is wide-ranging, from holding facilitated discussions about resume construction and advice about professional dress and comportment.

For Matthew, no need is insignificant. On one occasion, he taught an undergraduate his starting point on how to tie a tie. It was an adorable moment, as the studenthow to tie a tie. It was an adorable moment, as the student

In her daily duties, Maja is tasked with organizing and responding to an endless array of emails, note-taking requests, and various administrative assignments. Without Maja, these students would not consistently have ready, open access to the GW curriculum. Maja’s work on behalf of these students shows her dedication to the GW student community. She will be difficult to replace after graduating this spring, and we know that the students will miss her.

“THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS, INCLUDING SEXUAL VIOLENCE, INTERFERES WITH STUDENTS’ RIGHT TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND, IN THE CASE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, IS A CRIME”

In 2003, an Associated Press story used the GW cross country team as an example of how the amendment has changed college life. In reference to athletics, universities have three ways to prove they are complying with the law: show that the number of female athletes is proportionate to the total number of female students enrolled; have a history of increasing sports for women; or prove that the school meets the athletics interests and abilities of women on campus. The George Washington University uses the proportion-based option.

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CELEBRATING LGBTQ COLONIALS

BY ADAM MIDDLETON
COMMUNICATIONS CONTENT SPECIALIST
OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

With a number of highlighted events and initiatives ranging from small group discussions to a sit-in protest in Lisner Auditorium, the 2014-15 academic year affirmed and celebrated lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students at GW in numerous and diverse ways.

In the spring semester, the Student Association demonstrated their support by passing a number of pro-LGBTQ resolutions and the LGBT Resource Center launched the Gender Inclusive Bathroom Initiative to enhance access to safe and appropriate bathrooms for all students, faculty, staff, and visiting guests. Perhaps most notably, however, was International Trans Day of Visibility when the student organization in Allied in Pride hosted jointly with other university partners the actress, writer, producer, and trans advocate Laverne Cox who spoke to an audience in a packed Lisner Auditorium on the topic, “Am I a Woman? My Journey to Womanhood.”

Rob Todaro, a senior majoring in political communication and president of GW Allied in Pride, said the event was a part of a new wave of programming for LGBTQ students that looks to diversify and increase the size of the audiences attracted to their events.

“We can have a million discussions on queer identities in the Multicultural Student Services Center in a small group setting, but the students who are coming to those aren’t the people who need to hear it the most,” Todaro said. “Finding ways to have major programming to bring people together and expose them to new ideas and insight is important. That’s what we’re trying to do.”

Affiliated with the large queer community at GW, we don’t know how many LGBTQ students are here without a reporting mechanism,” he said, adding that these leads to the misallocation of important resources for this community.

“We don’t need to have specialized programming,” Todaro said. “We need to engage them in meaningful ways, and expose them to new ideas and insight.”

As GW works toward its vision of inclusive excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and service, student organizations like Allied and AQWA lead the way for students to engage in conversations about queer identities and diversity.

"Our commitment to diversity and inclusion offers a platform, for constructive dialogue by creating safe spaces for students, staff, and faculty to engage one another across and at the intersection of identities," said Timothy Kane, associate director for inclusion initiatives in the Multicultural Student Services Center and director of the LGBT Resource Center. “By getting to know one another, members of the GW community build relationships in support of the campus common good. That common good continues to be defined around GW’s embrace of inclusive excellence.”

That’s not to say the work at the university is done. Though Todaro calls the current campus climate “supportive and accepting,” he says that policy changes will be the next step in making GW a trailblazer for equity and inclusion. Among those changes are working with the university to update documents and forms to reflect less gender binary language, to seek more funding for the gender inclusive bathroom initiative, and to explore ways to formalize record keeping for the LGBTQ population at the university.

“Despite the large queer community at GW, we don’t know how many LGBTQ students are here without a reporting mechanism,” he said, adding that these leads to the misallocation of important resources for this community.

Without diverse groups and memberships, the Queer community has a number of initiatives that support the growth of students and their families.

“As GW works toward its vision of inclusive excellence in teaching, learning, scholarship, and service, student organizations like Allied and AQWA lead the way for students to engage in conversations about queer identities and diversity,” Todaro said.

“In instances where relevant policies were not followed, rather than interrupt student protests, Darrell and the police department worked with students to make adjustments for allowing the demonstrations to continue."

“There have been impromptu unplanned protests that we found out about at the last minute, as students didn’t apply for a permit,” he said. “Technically, because they didn’t apply for a permit to protest on campus, we could’ve said, ‘No, you can’t do it.’ But that would’ve escalated the situation, not really solving the issue at hand.”

This year, and in the past, Darrell has met with student leaders to explore the ways the university can create and maintain an atmosphere where everyone feels safe and secure. In this current climate, however, he says it’s equally important to distinguish the violent situations making national and international headlines from what’s taking place on campus.

“I think it’s affected GW in ways similar to how it’s affected most American citizens: We see what’s happening around the country,” he said. “We’re concerned about what’s going on campus, we’re concerned if we have the right policies and are doing enough as a university, but as a country,” Darrell said.

“From what I’ve seen from our students, they’ve organized and encouraged participation in peaceful protests to acknowledge their relevance at what is happening. After the grand jury decisions in the Ferguson case and the Eric Garner case, we had a number of protests on campus, and they were all peaceful, with students exercising their First Amendment rights.”

Darrell says his office has processes in place that allow students to exercise their rights in a way that doesn’t disrupt university functions.

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Addressing Local and Global Challenges

State of GW Upstart Social Innovation Lab

Commitments to Action, which are problems from different angles, leaders benefit from diversity. The “GW is a place where young and visiting professionals are appalled in solving them—now and in the future,” said sophomore Max Grossman, one of 36 students from GW selected as 2015 Commitment Makers by Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) University. Every year since 2007, thousands of students propose Commitments to Action, which are new, specific, and measurable plans to address pressing local and global challenges. This year GW sent one of the nation’s highest numbers of students to CGI U’s annual gathering, which was hosted in June in Miami, Fl.

This large cohort, which is working over the 2015-16 academic year to complete their commitments, includes undergraduates of all levels and both on-campus and online graduate students.

“The cohort is a diverse group from nearly all schools at GW, and its members are working on projects that range from improving public health in India to supporting students right here in the D.C. area,” said freshman Yashwant Chilkurru. Chilkurru is creating a mapping app for runners that will, with every mile logged, raise funds for mentor programs for at-risk students.

“This diversity allows us to learn about issues that may not be immediately obvious when working in an isolated way, and it expands our scope for potential impact,” he said.

Accepted students applied for travel and seed grants from the $15,000 Commitment Maker Challenge, which is run by the GWUpstart Social Innovation Lab housed within the Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service.

The annual gathering, which GW hosted in 2012, included networking, skill-building sessions, and panels designed to help students launch their commitments into action. One thousand students, representing more than 300 schools and more than 75 countries, were hosted by President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Chelsea Clinton. Notable leaders including Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and Vivek Murthy, U.S. Surgeon General, shared their stories in a relatable way, which beckoned students to find their own paths to make an impact.

Mamid Adil, a graduate student, represented her team’s commitment, Gaming Revolution for International Development, on stage in the opening plenary hosted by President Clinton. Inspiring as that moment was, Adil felt the same way in GW’s cohort, including graduate student Nicole Miller.

“The kindness and obvious zeal each student had for creating a better world was infectious,” Miller said. She is currently working to create disability inclusiveness, which will work to stamp out the use of derogatory terms in casual speech, among other goals. At CGI U, she met Mirsad Jacevic of the Institute for Inclusive Security, who shared the message, “We create culture! Inclusion creates a new culture!”

“This is such a simple statement, but it holds such a strong presence in many aspects of my life,” Miller said. “I am a living example of inclusion, being an African-American woman in search of social change.”

At the gathering, Miller felt momentarily overwhelmed by her plan, but the feeling dissipated when she started chatting with a student from another university. The student had no visible disabilities, but shared that she was affected daily by a learning disability.

Through GWUpstart, the university supports students who step forward to create meaningful change. These students come from every corner of GW and their diversity cuts across education level, age, nationality, ethnicity, and specialization. We are excited to support these 36 Commitment Makers in the coming year and invite students interested in the opportunity to reach out to Melanie Fedri, GWUpstart Coordinator, by emailing upstart@gwu.edu and visiting go.gwu.edu/upstart.

Spotlight on More of GW’s Commitment Makers

Sophia Lin
GWUpstart Coordinator, Center for Civic Engagement and Public Life

“I am a living example of inclusion, being an African-American woman in search of social change.”

Commitment: Colonials Compost

Having grown up between an underprivileged urban area and an affluent suburb in Massachussetts, Sophia Lin has personally experienced the impact of one’s natural and built environment on quality of life. She is passionate about creating optimal surroundings for people to thrive in. Now a graduating senior, she is immensely curious about the world’s human and natural systems.

Sophia’s commitment, Colonials Compost, aims to increase composting on GW’s campus. The aim is to create a shift in the culture and behaviors of students. Her commitment was featured in GW Today: go.gwu.edu/ColonialsCompost

Vivian Berni
Distance Graduate Student, Milken Institute SPH, M.P.H. ’16

Commitment: Stay Safe Pharma

Vivian describes herself as a science and technology explorer who is connecting the dots within health care. She serves RX-360, a non-profit consortium, with volunteers from the pharmaceutical and biotech industry, whose mission is to enhance the security of the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Vivian’s commitment, Stay Safe Pharma, educates patients about the dangers of buying medicine online. There is no guarantee that medicinal products bought online are effective, affordable, or even safe. Low and middle income patients shopping online are especially susceptible to purchasing their prescription drugs from generic, questionable sources in their hope of saving money while meeting their health needs. To take on this large-scale challenge, Stay Safe Pharma will focus on assisting low and middle income patients, including college students, residing in South Florida to become aware of the dangers of counterfeit drugs and the risks associated with online medicine purchases.

Ibrahima Kane
Distance Graduate Student, Milken Institute SPH, M.P.H. ’15

Commitment: No Woman Left Behind

Ibrahima Kane is a board certified physician in Senegal and Morocco and is completing a Master of Public Health at GW. He is one of 12 children, and witnessed first-hand the dangers of a condition called postpartum hemorrhage (PPH). His commitment, No Woman Left Behind, will teach traditional midwives in Senegal, where more than 40% of women give birth at home, to use a World Health Organization-recommended medicine to reduce maternal mortality caused by PPH. Ibrahima will pilot an education and medicine distribution program aimed at reducing the maternal mortality rate in Senegal (372 for 10,000 births), since PPH constitutes the first cause of maternal mortality (27%). This commitment was highlighted in CGI U’s opening plenary. More on Ibrahima’s experience: go.gwu.edu/NoWomanLeftBehind
A YEAR IN REVIEW

BY HELEN CANNADAY
ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) spent the year elevating the university’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. The “Planting Seeds and Cultivating Justice” theme for the 2014 Freshman Day of Service and Convocation in retrospect, set the tone for the entire year. We were honored to have keynote speaker Mayor Anthony A. Williams, an internationally renowned urban revitalization strategy consultant and MacArthur Genius Award winner, emphasize social enterprise, environmental justice, and urban revitalization, as well as champion the belief that transforming communities will transform lives. Our students then fanned out to all eight wards of the city, providing services and activities to assist vulnerable populations and empower community residents. This kickoff was the bookend to a year where GW recorded a record high of 58,700 hours of community service in the Washington metropolitan area.

For the second time, we hosted the Annual President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge, sponsored by the White House. We welcomed more than 400 visitors to campus including U.S. Secretaries Lew and Duncan, and more than 50 college and university presidents. The gathering offered an opportunity for students, staff, and administrators from all over the country to share experiences and learn from others who embrace a commitment to community service and social justice, with an interfaith component.

TITLE IX COMPLIANCE in higher education continues to garner national attention as colleges tackle the myriad issues associated with preventing and addressing sexual misconduct and sexual assault. Early in the school year, GW President Steven Knapp and former Student Association President Nick Gumas joined President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden for the launch of the sexual assault public awareness campaign, “It’s On Us.” And in our ongoing efforts to provide a safe and respectful community, we were pleased to establish a new committee on sexual assault and response to include a cross-functional team of students, faculty, and staff. We also concluded two successful staff searches with the hires of Rory Muhammad, director and Title IX coordinator, and Carine Ross, assistant director of sexual assault prevention and response. In January, we released the results of a survey conducted to learn more about the climate surrounding unwanted sexual behavior on our campus. Most recently, we’ve secured an online tool—Think About It by Campus Clarity—that will allow us to implement sexual assault prevention training for incoming freshmen, transfers, and graduate students beginning this summer 2015. These activities coupled with GW policies for complaint resolution are just a few examples of the university’s effort to raise awareness and give students tools to help prevent sexual assault, as well as to provide resources for survivors.

Upon the start of the spring semester and beginning with our annual week-long commemoration of the life and legacy of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., our office hosted a series of events, emphasizing the unfinished business of building a democratic society on the principles of equality and freedom for all citizens. We heard from D.C. Councilwoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and former D.C. Council Member Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis as they provided their vision and message of civil rights, civic engagement, and youth leadership. We then welcomed the new D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine who joined Vice President for Legal Progress at the Center for American Progress Michelle Jawando, J.B. and M.C. Shapiro Professor of Media and Public Affairs Robert Entman, and Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security Darrell Darnell for a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Peggy Lewis entitled “Establishing Justice in an Imperfect Union: Building Safer and Stronger Communities.” The week ended with an inspiring keynote address “Reinvesting in the Dream” by John Hope Bryant, founder and CEO of Operation Hope, and a musical performance by Patrick Lundy and the Ministers of Music.

In addition to fostering learning about local and national issues, ODI units were diligently engaged in efforts to expand access and increase retention of underrepresented populations on our campus. For example, the Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC) supported the 31 D.C. High School/College Internship Program (HS/SCIP) students who concurrently enrolled in GW courses as interns in high school in the fall and spring. Additionally, the MSSC continued its oversight of the SJT Scholars program that boasts a 90 percent graduation rate and the average GPA is 3.2.

The Disability Support Services (DSS) office facilitated the provision of accommodations required to ensure academic, programmatic, and facility access for more than 950 students with documented disabilities this year. Through a host of services and activities offered through their Strategic Skills Services program, including coursework planning, time management, and study skills, DSS supports the academic success and preparedness of students for life after GW, particularly in the workplace. Lastly, the GW Tutoring Initiative offered free one-on-one peer tutoring services to almost 500 students, and online tutoring assistance through Smarthinking to another 100 students in the 2014-15 year.

We were so excited when during GW’S COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, planted seeds and challenged graduates to take seriously their personal role and responsibility to build a more just society. He shared his own personal reflections and perspectives as he encountered the diversity of people, philosophies, and actions—many that were different from his own thinking and values. He told graduates “the process of discovering yourself, of inventing yourself, of reinventing yourself is about to begin in earnest. It’s about finding your values and committing to live by them. And that means choices. Some are easy. Some are hard. And some will make you question everything.” Commencement is always a special time of year and our students and staff wrapped up the year planning and joining in the MSSC graduation celebration, the school celebration ceremonies, the Interfaith Baccalaureate and, of course, the commencement ceremony on the Mall.

Our work in diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence is about creating an environment that enables every student, faculty, and staff member to thrive and meet their potential. In closing, we invite you to learn more about us, and share your ideas on how we can continue to plant seeds, cultivate justice and “make inclusive excellence real”—our theme in the year ahead!
2015 COMMEMORATIONS:
CELEBRATING TRIUMPHS,
HONORING LOSS

70th anniversary:
Liberation of Auschwitz (January 27, 1945)
At least 1.1 million prisoners died at Auschwitz, a Nazi German Concentration camp. Approximately 90 percent of those who died were Jewish. As Soviet troops approached Auschwitz in January 1945, most of its population was evacuated and sent on a death march. The prisoners remaining at the camp were liberated on January 27, 1945, a day now commemorated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

50th anniversary:
Voting Rights Act Signed (August 6, 1965)
Signed by President Johnson on August 6, 1965, the Voting Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination in voting by making it illegal to impose restrictions on federal, state, and local elections that were designed to deny the vote to black people.

95th anniversary:
19th amendment ratified, allowing women the right to vote
(August 18, 1920)
The 19th amendment granted all American women the right to vote. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution.

50th anniversary:
Immigration & Naturalization Act of 1965 (October 3, 1965)
The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, abolished an earlier quota system based on national origin and established a new immigration policy based on reuniting immigrant families and attracting skilled labor to the United States. This policy changed the demographic makeup of the American population, as immigrants entering the United States under the new legislation came increasingly from countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, as opposed to Europe.

150th anniversary:
Ratification of the 13th amendment, abolishing slavery
(December 6, 1865)
The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution formally abolished slavery and involuntary servitude. Though many slaves had been declared free by President Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, their post-war status was uncertain. When the 13th Amendment became operational, the scope of Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation was widened to include the entire nation.

25th anniversary:
Americans with Disabilities Act signed
(July 26, 1990)
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H.W. Bush. The ADA prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life.

For more information, visit: DIVERSITY.GWU.EDU