



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATES

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In 2019, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion began and joined with the University community [to advance inclusive excellence](#). We made a commitment to ensure that diversity was realized, inclusion was not only understood, but practiced, and equity was assessed and deliberately addressed. These actions together fostered full participation and access, and we remain on this quest. This work was further invigorated as inclusive excellence became a priority in the UNL [N2025 Strategic Plan](#). As the institution’s vision for a bolder Nebraska, N2025 called for us to minimize barriers and enhance and create new programs in support of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The events of last year reminds us of the complexities and preciousness of life and society. One of the most significant life altering occurrences last year was COVID-19. Its ravishing through Indigenous communities and communities of color shined a brighter light on the compounding health disparities across demographic groups and exposed both the beauty of how people can rally together to care for others as well as the ugliness of how there still remains distrust and a disregard for the common public good. Additionally, our country faced the harsh realities of what happens to Black and Brown bodies when confronted by the misuse and application of power fueled by racism and bias. We witnessed how misinformation, fear, and xenophobia could translate into violence, as experienced by members of our Asian and Asian American communities. To date, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, and those with other minoritized gender and sexual identities (LGBTQA+) continue to fight for equity and protections in education and employment systems. Across the country, we have seen conversations on policing—its origins, effectiveness, and reform. Organizations, from corporations to schools, found themselves discussing what it meant for Black, Native, Latinx/Hispanic, and Trans Lives to matter if all lives truly mattered. The fight for the removal of Indigenous and Native mascots continued, resulting in the Washington football team dropping the Redskin name and mascot. However, there are more mascots and representations we have yet to address. There were and are countless more conversations and calls to action where inclusion is put to the question, ‘for whom?’

Certainly, last year left us re-evaluating how our efforts, initiatives, programs, and resources elevated equity, especially racial equity, and how our policies and practices were not only inclusive, but also anti-racist. We have continued to build out our educational resources and centralize those resources and other information on ODI’s own commitment to change. You can see evidence of this work as shown on our Commitment to Change website at <https://diversity.unl.edu/commitment-to-change>. Additionally, our [Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services](#) or OASIS sustained its [Dish It Up](#) series to provide our University and broader community members an opportunity to engage in conversations on difficult and contemporary issues impacting peoples’ sense of safety, belonging, and mattering.

Chancellor Green announced last year that now must be different. He expressed the importance of UNL embarking on its own [Journey Towards Anti-Racism and Racial Equity](#). He recognized that our ability to address race would present an opportunity for us to address many other intersecting forms of oppression. We have taken this year to engage as a leadership team and with the Journey Co-Leaders on what this means for our institution, and I look forward to how UNL will begin this journey across our institution, bravely, together. ■

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In the face of a difficult year, I cannot be more inspired by the work occurring across the institution. We have been in a pandemic, and we should offer the grace and patience that comes with this reality. There are UNL faculty who continue to support student learning and explore new scholarly endeavors and conversations that further our understanding of cultural histories, artistry, and experiences; they also find ways to show-up for students who need them—this is especially true for our minoritized faculty¹. Like our faculty, our UNL staff are actively engaged in conversations and discussions on inclusive excellence and are creating programs and support mechanisms that bring colleagues and communities together to innovate, create, and solve problems. Our students have been determined and persistent during these times in their ability to maintain their academic pursuits while also advocating for rights and protections of minoritized and placed at-risk populations. Within our University community, I feel a combination of drive and curiosity towards making our institution better and more inclusive.

With our [152-year history](#), we have a moment to honestly reflect on our past—which is not only one of building and growth but also one of being the benefactor of what Lee and Ahtone² calls [violence-based land cessions](#). I appreciate part of what makes UNL great: being able to recognize how histories of exclusion and systemic oppression shape our institution and being willing to learn from this history to make the institution better. This history does not mean we like our University less, but it means there are opportunities for the next 150 years to bring with it, a more inclusive, accessible, and strong Nebraska. This work must begin with acknowledging what was and what is. [Recognizing and respecting the land](#), its connection to Indigenous and Native American lives and ways of being, and engagement centered from a decolonization perspective are only beginnings to healing our world and humanity.

Our 2021 report provides a snapshot of ODI’s progress on its priorities, highlights efforts across the institution, and provides a sample of data points on the status of diversity at the University. Again, we understand the longstanding impact history has on institutions, and we can do our part to make our institution more inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist. There are issues we have to reconcile, discuss, and then, take action. It cannot be done in a day, a month, or a year, but I believe that if we continue to stretch our strengths, leverage our talents, and build our capacity for learning, we can set the example of how we do BIG things at Nebraska.

Marco Barker, PhD
Vice Chancellor
& Associate Professor of Practice

¹ Jessica L. Malisch, Breanna N. Harris, Shanen M. Sherrer, Kristy A. Lewis, Stephanie L. Shepherd, Pumtiwitt C. McCarthy, Jessica L. Spott, Elizabeth P. Karam, Naima Moustaid-Moussa, Jessica McCrory Calarco, Latha Ramalingam, Amelia E. Talley, Jaclyn E. Cañas-Carrell, Karin Ardon-Dryer, Dana A. Weiser, Ximena E. Bernal, Jennifer Deitloff, (2020), “Opinion: In the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117, no. 27 (2020): 15378-15381.

² Robert Lee, Tristan Ahtone, Margaret Pearce, Kalen Goodluck, Geoff McGhee, Cody Leff, Katherine Lanpher and Taryn Salinas, “Land Grab Universities,” *High Country News*, <https://www.landgrab.org/>

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) provides vision, leadership, and advocacy in fostering an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming campus central to the land-grant mission of UNL; leads and facilitates the development of institutional policies, protocols, and practices intended to create a more equitable, and inclusive campus culture; and utilizes an inclusive excellence framework to foster an engaged, creative, and innovative learning environment for all. The vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion reports to the chancellor.

Figure 1:
Areas of Operation



Nebraska Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Impact Awards

Launched during the 2020-2021 academic year, the Nebraska Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Impact Awards are annual inclusive excellence awards presented by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

The Nebraska DEI Impact Awards recognize individuals and groups who actively advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in transformative and sustainable ways at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Nominations are open to any student, instructor, staff or group demonstrating a significant contribution toward creating a diverse and inclusive campus community through the implementation of policies, research, procedures, initiatives or programs that reflect the university’s core values and beliefs.

Presented on April 20, 2021, the inaugural winners and categories for 2020-2021 academic year are:

Diversity Leadership Faculty Award

Dr. Stephanie Bondi

Diversity Leadership Staff Award

Marianna Burks

Promising Leader Award

Undergraduate – Batool Ibrahim

Graduate – Brooke Wells

Collective Impact Award

Bureau of Sociological Research

Chosen Name and Gender Identity Policy

The University of Nebraska system launched a Chosen Name and Gender Identity Policy. Also known as Executive Memorandum No. 40, the policy allows students, faculty and staff at all NU campuses—including the University of Nebraska–Lincoln—to select their chosen name, gender identity and pronouns.

The option is available to students via MyRED and to faculty/staff in Firefly. Chosen names will be available on class rosters, in Canvas, the campus directory and Zoom. It will also soon be available in other university systems where a legal name is not required.

Per federal regulations and NU Board of Regents policies, legal sex, gender identity and pronouns are not public directory information for students, faculty or staff. This information will not be disclosed to individuals outside of the university system.

Milestone for Multicultural Center

Opened on April 16, 2010, the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center (JGMC) celebrated its 10-year anniversary during the 2020-2021 academic year. The event was celebrated through a releasing of a commemorative video.

The Gaughan Multicultural Center continues the tradition of past UNL culture centers, providing a home away from home for underrepresented students, while welcoming all UNL students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests.

At 30,000 square feet, the Gaughan Multicultural Center was built as the nation’s largest multicultural center attached to a student union.

The Gaughan (pronounced GONE) Center houses several student programs and resources, including the Office of Academic Success and Intercultural Services, William H. Thompson Scholars, and the Kawasaki Reading Room. Offices for various student groups, including the Mexican American Student Association and multicultural Greek organizations, are on the third floor.

Global Strategy

Building on the bold vision outlined in the N2025 Strategic Plan, “Forward Together: A Global Strategy for UNL” serves as a comprehensive road map to strengthen and expand global education, engagement and impact at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in the years to come.

Introduced by Chancellor Ronnie Green during the 2021 State of Our University address, Forward Together was created through an intensive, year-long process that gathered feedback from across campus. The effort was led by a Global Strategy Committee of faculty and staff from colleges and key service units. The document serves as the university’s first institutional global strategy and draws from the rich history of international engagement present since Nebraska U’s founding in 1869.

In the fall of 2019, Nebraska joined the 17th cohort of the American Council on Education Internationalization Laboratory, a program that helped guide the Global Strategy Committee’s planning process through site visits and a team of advisors.

NCLUDE

The Nebraska Community of Learners–Understanding Diversity through Education (NCLUDE) is a community of learners dedicated to understanding diversity through education. With over 300 members within its community, the series of virtual conversations are intended to help students, faculty, staff, alum and the greater community understand and embrace the opportunities we have to create a greater sense of inclusion for all.

During its inaugural year (2020-2021), the community group hosted topics by thought leaders that ranged from trans collaborations to a mini symposium that boasted topics of neurodiversity on campus to the impact of Indian boarding schools on family relationships.

Husker Dialogues

Incoming first-year students participate in Husker Dialogues, a diversity and inclusion event designed to introduce first-year students to tools they can use to engage in meaningful conversations to help create an inclusive Husker community.

Husker Dialogues is led by students, faculty, and staff who have the great responsibility of serving as conversation guides to facilitate the discussion between students.

Boasting over 1,300 student participants, the 2020-2021 academic year sessions featured the first fully-virtual experience, providing an immersive and accessible experience for students, highlighting the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and resources for impacted first-year students.

Multicultural Homecoming

To increase connections between multicultural alumni, academic faculty and the current student body, the Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of People of Color (along with key-partnering areas such as the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center and the Nebraska Alumni Association) extended annual invitations to all alumni to participate in a few special events during Homecoming Weekend.

Each year, the Multicultural Homecoming features events such as college visits, meet and greet mixers, Hall of Fame, panel discussions, and other group gatherings.

Alumni of Color Town Hall

The Nebraska Alumni Association hosted an online Alumni of Color Town Hall during the 2020-2021 academic year for Nebraska alumni and friends. The event, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, provided an opportunity for alumni and friends to connect with the alumni association and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

The town hall highlighted the university’s priority to launch a new Alumni of Color Network and engage alumni through structured feedback. Additionally, the event showcased the mission and aims of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and provided context on the state of diversity on campus.

DIGS

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s College of Business is offering a space dedicated to furthering diversity and inclusivity.

The college’s Diversity and Inclusion Gathering Space — nicknamed DIGS — serves as a hub for conversation, inclusive programs and gatherings to help Huskers feel they belong in the Nebraska Business community. The grand opening of the space was held this fall.

Early adopters of the space include students who served as pilot members of the Inclusive Business Leaders, a first-year scholarship program that supports underrepresented students’ academic, social and career goals to cultivate a more inclusive environment.

Faculty of Color Symposium

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion hosted its first-ever Faculty of Color Symposium during the 2020-2021 academic year.

The symposium recognized the perspectives and unique experiences of faculty of color, observed their scholarly contributions and successes, and determined paths forward in fostering a campus community that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and equity in teaching, research, and outreach.

Event organizers include Gwendolyn M. Combs, director for faculty diversity and inclusion and associate professor of management; Francisco Munoz-Arriola, associate professor of biological systems engineering; Jeannette Eileen Jones, associate professor of history and ethnic studies; Cynthia Willis-Esqueda, associate professor of psychology and ethnic studies; and Dai Shizuka, assistant professor of biological sciences.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion has previously outlined greater faculty diversity as one of its top priorities.

Journey for Anti-Racism and Racial Equity

UNL’s institutional commitment to anti-racism and racial equity is an extension of the University’s to emphasize inclusive excellence, enhance the student experience, increase our research, creative activity and engagement, and provide professional development and learning experiences for faculty, staff, and students. The Journey, appointed during the (summer) 2020-2021 academic year, build on the work already occurring across our University, while advancing new knowledge and practice.

Chancellor Ronnie Green leads the Journey with guidance from Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Marco Barker and six co-leaders whose research, creative activity, and engagement explores addressing anti-racism and racial equity.

The co-leaders of this effort include: Lory J. Dance, associate professor of sociology and ethnic studies; Kwame Dawes, Chancellor’s Professor of English, Glenna Luschei Editor of Prairie Schooner; Anna W. Shavers, Cline Williams Professor of Citizenship Law, associate dean for diversity and inclusion; Kara Mitchell Viesca, associate professor of political science and ethnic studies; Sergio C. Walls, associate professor of political science and ethnic studies; and Colette Yellow Robe, member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, academic retention specialist for TRIO Programs.

Grand Challenges

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln leaders have committed \$40 million to fund grand challenges research efforts during the next four years.

Organized by Chancellor Ronnie Green and Bob Wilhelm, vice chancellor for research and economic development, the funding is part of a partnership between the Chancellor’s Office and ORED. The partnership uses existing facilities and administrative carryover funds reserved for major research infrastructure projects with future annual allocations provided from funds designated for strategic institutional investments.

The funds will be leveraged to initiate goal-driven, sustainable projects or programs that lead to measurable impacts and innovative solutions toward grand challenge opportunities. The announcement follows Green’s 2020 charge for the university to identify a series of challenges that Nebraska is uniquely positioned to solve, as called for in the N2025 Strategic Plan. Grand challenges are large societal problems whose solutions require a combination of transformative, interdisciplinary approaches.

More than 500 faculty, staff, students and emeriti helped identify the challenge themes: anti-racism and racial equity; climate resilience; early childhood education and development; health equity; quantum science and engineering; science and technology literacy for society; and sustainable food and water security.

Research Breaking Barriers

Deirdre Cooper Owens, the Charles and Linda Wilson Professor in the History of Medicine and director of the Humanities in Medicine program, recently released her book laying groundwork for understanding how structural racism was seeded in health care and how it continues to play a role in the health outcomes of minorities to this day, including in the COVID-19 pandemic that is disproportionately affecting Black and Hispanic communities.

The Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project is a new effort to tell the story of these children through record digitization, oral histories, community narratives and artifacts. The project is a collaboration between the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (at Nebraska, the project co-directors are Margaret Jacobs, professor of history, and Elizabeth Lorang, associate professor in University Libraries); Genoa U.S. Indian School Foundation; community advisers from the Omaha, Pawnee, Ponca, Santee Sioux and Winnebago tribes of Nebraska; and descendants of those who attended the school. It aims to bring greater awareness of the schools and their legacies while returning the histories of Native children from government repositories back to their families and tribes.

Jeannette Jones, associate professor in the Department of History, the Institute for Ethnic Studies, and the Women’s and Gender Studies program, was selected for the Distinguished Visiting Scholars program at the University at Buffalo’s (UB) Center for Diversity Innovation (CDI). As part of the second cohort of eight scholars, she will spend the 2021-22 academic year at UB working on a project while mentoring students, sharing research, and attending events—all connected to impacting the campus community.

Alice Kang, associate professor of political science and ethnic studies, teamed up with researchers from Texas A&M University and Arizona State University to research and build a database of judicial appointments of women to courts equivalent to the U.S. Supreme Court in both developing and stable democracies. The scholars also looked at the political factors that preceded the first appointments of these female judges. ■

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Kwame Dawes, professor of English and Lorna Dawes, associate professor of University Libraries. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a \$750,000 grant to an international team led by Kwame Dawes and Lorna Dawes, to expand an online portal for African poetry.

The three-year Mellon Foundation grant provides support for the portal's next phases: expanding research and scholarship relating to African poetry and joining with other institutions to create a digital collections hub that will give access to materials held by institutions worldwide.

The portal is closely associated with the African Poetry Book Fund, an ambitious publishing enterprise that has produced numerous volumes of the best poetry composed by African poets. In partnership with the University of Nebraska Press and Akashic Books, the fund has published almost 100 African poets in six years. The fund also has established poetry prizes that are changing the poetry landscape.

The Mellon Foundation grant will enable the support of six doctoral research graduate assistantships, three digital humanities research grants, and 78 research stipends to students and researchers. It also will fund a four-person technology team from Nebraska's Center for Digital Research in the Humanities to develop the new portal prototype and will support 11 undergraduate research stipends at collaborating institutions.

Kwame and Lorna Dawes worked closely with personnel from the University of Nebraska Foundation, with assistance from the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities and the Office of Research and Economic Development in preparing the final grant application.

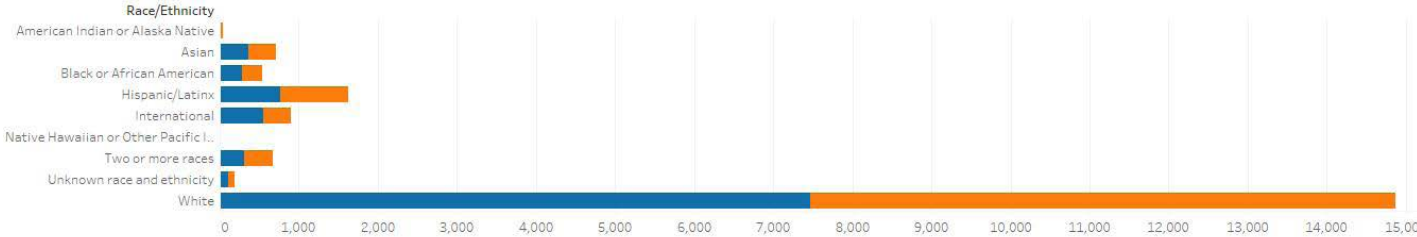
First Generation Nebraska

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is among 12 First-gen Forward Institutions that have been elevated to Advisory Institution designation for their continued commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students.

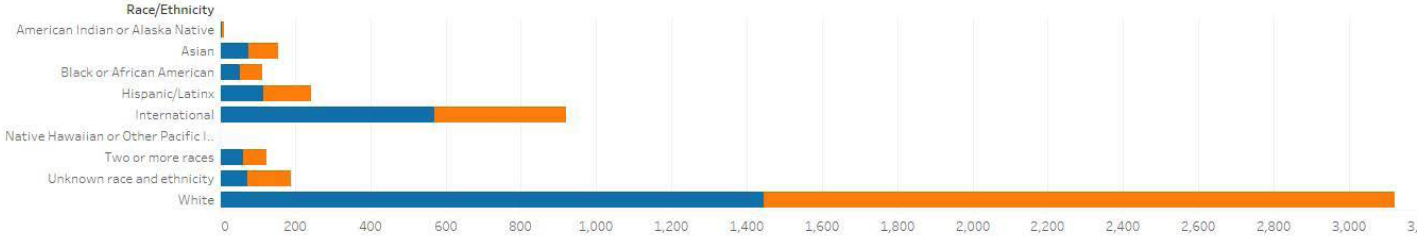
The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the Suder Foundation, announced Nebraska's membership in its inaugural cohort of First Forward Institutions in 2019.

With this new Advisory Institution designation, the university will become a regional community leader and work in a co-advisory role with the University of Memphis to offer leadership support to a new Midwest cohort of First Forward institutions, which will include the universities of Creighton, Governors State, Marquette, Eastern Illinois, Wisconsin Green-Bay, Independence Community College, and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

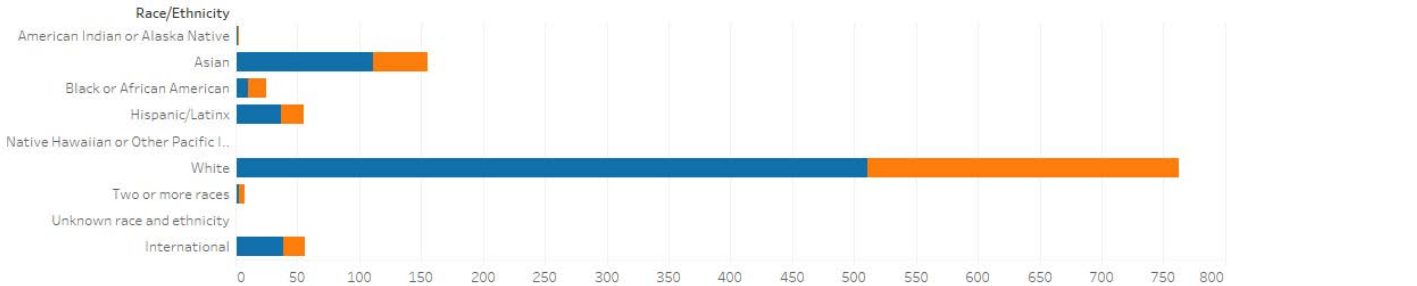
All Undergraduate Students (Fall 2021)



All Graduate & Professional Students (Fall 2021)

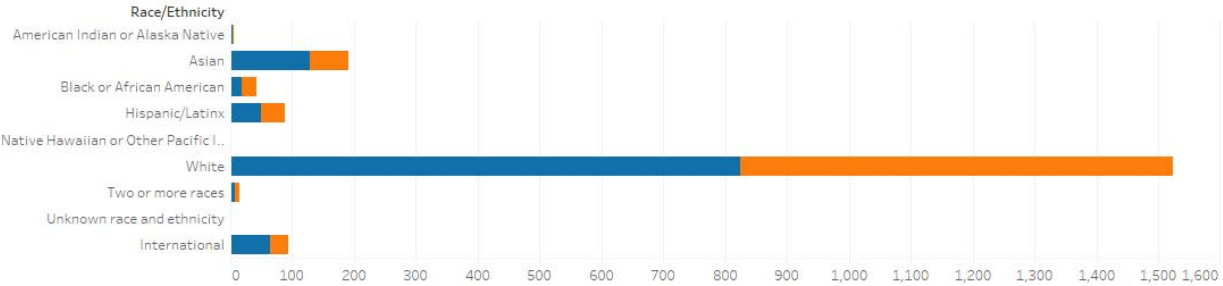


Tenure-Track Faculty (Fall 2020)

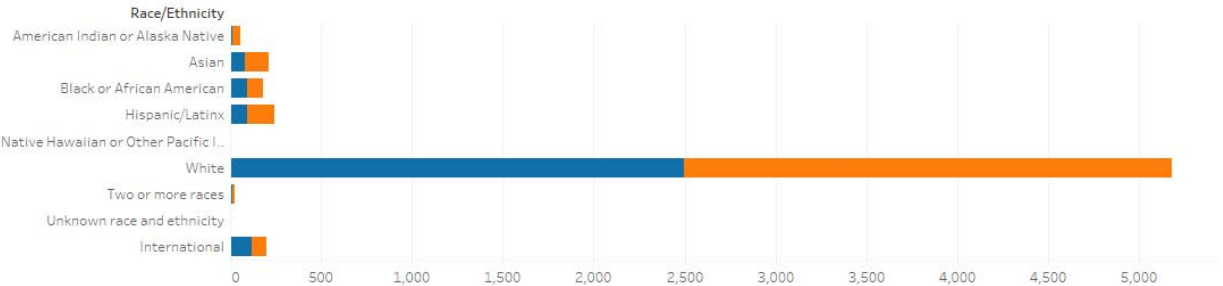


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Non-Tenure-Track Faculty (Fall 2020)



Staff (Fall 2020)



The Office of Diversity and Inclusion continues to shape its mission in response to national best practices and trends and to the needs of the institution and state. ODI is identifying opportunities to develop, leverage, and support efforts that elevate and advance the institution’s capacity to fully activate an inclusive excellence agenda. Several future activities allow the office to accomplish this:

- *Annual Diversity Report.* ODI will establish a university-wide annual diversity report, highlighting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the institution. The report will provide critical updates on institutional progress towards inclusive excellence, data reporting, and ongoing campus diversity efforts.
- *Diversity in STEM. Through the APLU’s, Aspire.* The National Alliance for Inclusive and Diversity STEM Faculty, this joint effort between the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, will continue to advance diversity and inclusive teaching practices, while providing comprehensive support and resources for institutional change.
- *BRIDGE/Search Education.* ODI recently established a university-wide resource tool for faculty and staff search committees to discuss strategies in advance of beginning a search. The effort will be supported and administered through the Diversity Ambassador Program, allowing selected faculty and staff to assist search committees and hiring officials. Primary duties for the ambassadors will include encouraging all involved to follow university procedures and incorporate a focus on diversity and inclusive methods for the recruitment, selection and retention of diverse faculty and staff.

The formation of a new office requires extensive coordination and an adoption of ongoing operational practices to provide the most promising efforts reflective of inclusive excellence. There has been a tremendous amount of support from committed faculty, staff, and students. Transforming institutional culture to an inclusive excellence mindset will take everyone. It is a process where members of the University will need to be open to learning, and being nimble, critical, empathetic, and patient.

There is a great deal of work ahead of us, but we are an institution where we believe in working hard and going BIG.

For more information regarding inclusive excellence at UNL, visit diversity.unl.edu.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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