OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

JULY 2020

VISION

To ensure equal access to employment and educational opportunities in support of the university’s commitment to equal opportunity, affirmative action, and diversity.

MISSION

Iowa State University’s Office of Equal Opportunity is committed to promoting a working and learning environment free of discrimination or harassment by complying with all federal, state and local laws pertaining to anti-discrimination, the American with Disabilities Act, and Title IX. To that end, we work toward a campus climate that is supportive of equity through complaint resolution, advice, education, outreach, and intervention.

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DISCUSSING THE 4TH OF JULY IN CLASSROOMS

The Fourth of July is a momentous occasion marking the genesis of the Colonies' independence from authoritarian rule. That said, though the 4th of July is a national holiday, it does not mark the beginning of independence or freedom for African slaves. As a member of ISU’s faculty or staff you can be cognizant of two facts to make your classroom more inclusive for African and Black students when discussing this holiday in your classrooms.
Frederick Douglass was an abolitionist leader, writer, and intellectual that orated the famous speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July.” To an audience of white men, Douglass exposed the hypocrisy of the holiday reminding his listeners of the thousands of African slaves being mistreated on American soil. He was quoted saying, “the [July 4th] is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license, your national greatness, swelling vanity….a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages.” Like Frederick Douglass, many Black American students can struggle with the celebration of a day not designated for their ancestors. By incorporating Douglass and his famous speech into classroom discussions, staff and faculty can create environments that encourage historical accuracy and foster environments where students of color can express their opinions and feelings about the holiday without scrutiny.

Juneteenth

On June 19th, two and half years after the Emancipation Proclamation, a group of Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger, informed enslaved people in Texas that the Civil War had effectively ended slavery and all those enslaved were now free. Today, this is known as Juneteenth. One source found that in modern settings “Juneteenth [celebrations are] enjoying a phenomenal growth rate within communities and organizations throughout the country.” Similarly, many organizations celebrate Juneteenth to empower African Americans, their history, culture, and freedom. We encourage faculty and staff to commemorate July 4th as well as Juneteenth in order to make ISU’s campus more inclusive for African American students who want to celebrate their ancestor’s liberation within a safe, educational environment.
In response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murder, Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc, was founded creating global recognition of the demands for Black liberation and justice. It is seven years later, and COVID-19’s disproportionate impact on the Black community, as well as the murders of Ahmaud Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many others at the hands of local police have set a new spark in the movement’s agenda.

The Black Lives Matter movement calls for the eradication of white supremacy as well as the imagination of ‘power’. The movement demands the transition away from institutionalized power and giving that power to the communities these institutions are meant to serve. Support for these demands come in many forms: council votes to defund police entities; statements and donations from across the globe; protests and vigils for lives impacted; and crowd-sourcing for individuals and families. Additional support is seen through the growing number of equity and inclusion work that incorporates book readings and discussions, as well as policy changes and holiday recognition.

This growing support, unfortunately, has not protected the community from tragedy. This year has seen a growing number of violent acts toward Black Queer and Trans Lives. The Black Lives Matter website states, “We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women and all Black lives along the gender spectrum.” Since the beginning of 2020, we’ve seen numerous transgender or gender non-conforming persons fatally shot or killed. The recent assault of Iyanna Dior, and the murders of Riah Milton and Dominique Rem’mie Fells, all Black trans women, led to the “Brooklyn Liberation,” when 15,000 protesters in Brooklyn, NY, gathered to demand action and justice for Black transgender lives (The New York Times, 2020).

It is important that you incorporate the disproportionately impacted, and most often left out, voices of Black queer, transgender, and gender-nonconforming individuals when addressing anti-Blackness. Conversations related to nationality, citizenship, disability, social class, and other social-cultural experiences and identities also include Blackness. As Audrey Lorde stated, “There is no thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.” Therefore, Black Lives Matter means all Black Lives matter.
HIGHLIGHTING A HERO:
SHARICE DAVIDS

Sharice Davids is an enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin Tribe. The Ho-Chunk Nation has traditional territory located across five states in the United States. It was formerly known as the Wisconsin Winnebago Tribe, it is one of two federally recognized tribes that were once a single tribe formerly known as Winnebago.

Representative Davids was raised by a single mother, who served in the Army for 20 years. After graduating from Leavenworth High School, she worked her way through Johnson County Community College and the University of Missouri-Kansas City before earning a law degree from Cornell Law School. As a first generation college student who worked the entire time she was in college, Rep. Davids understands the importance of quality public schools and affordable higher education. It is that foundation that allowed her to go on to a successful career, focused on economic and community development, which included time as a White House Fellow under President Barack Obama. When she was sworn into the 116th Congress, Rep. Davids became one of the first two Native American women to serve in Congress as well at the first openly gay Native American elected into Congress. Davids is an influential hero and continues to be an inspirational leader to the Native American Community as well as the LGBTQIA+ Community.

"As a woman and a Native American, I know how to stand up and fight for equity."

Information taken from https://davids.house.gov/about
Native Americans have made innumerable contributions to America’s history that often go unacknowledged in curriculum at universities nationwide. Despite this oversight, multiple indigenous people played integral roles in establishing the United States we celebrate today. While education alone cannot give Native Americans what has been taken from their ancestors, Iowa State’s staff and faculty can commemorate the heroes that sacrificed and worked to help not only Native populations, but Americans as well. For example, Squanto, after returning to the United States from years as a captured slave and learning English, helped Pilgrims to survive in New England. He, as well as a plethora of other Native people have set a foundation in American history, without which, the United States would not be what it is presently.

Historical depictions of Native communities and culture remains largely inaccurate and reductive. From the first recorded meetings of Columbus and the Native populations, the explorer falsely described Native people as savage and pagan. Thus forth many interpretations of Native culture, communities, and contributions have been incorrect and Eurocentric. Providing factual historical events to students can tell the largely untold story of the Native Americans and demonstrate their rich history and traditions. Similarly, incorporating factual information can potentially open posterity’s eyes to previous American mistakes and improve our understanding of the past.

Although largely unspoken of, Native Americans still live on reservations today. Similarly, their community must live with the loss and theft of the Native people in the name of American progress. Incorporating Native American history into your classrooms and discussions can remind other American populations of this loss, broaden our understandings, and show respect for the Indigenous community’s history.
DACA Ruling: In 2012 President Barack Obama created a program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Obama’s program permits children of immigrants who reside in the United States illegally to not only remain in the U.S, but also work. Though DACA has been challenged by the current administration and titled unlawful, recently in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of DACA recipients and extended the life of Obama’s program. In an npr article, many celebrated the courts ruling and experience a sigh of relief. While there is still work to be done to create a permanent solution of protection for DACA Recipients, the Office of Equal Opportunity will continue to advocate for diversity and inclusion at Iowa State University. OEO echoes President Wendy Wintersteen when she affirms the Supreme Court ruling on the DACA program. We understand that many students at Iowa State are beneficiaries of DACA and the Office of Equal Opportunity remains committed to providing a safe, tolerant, and inclusive campus for all Cyclones.

Title VII Ruling: The 1964 Civil Rights Act has protected members of marginalized communities from discrimination in the workplace, in schools, and other institutions. In a historic moment, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of extending the Civil Rights Act to include the LGBTQIA+ population after numerous instances of employers firing workers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Gerald Bostak, one of two men who sued after being fired for being gay, shared his devastating story of losing his livelihood, job, and medical insurance when he needed it most during his fight against prostate cancer. In the 6-3 decision, Gorsuch and other Supreme Court Justices understood such discrimination to be unlawful due to the 1964 act’s prohibition of discriminatory behavior based on sex; "It is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating ... based on sex," Gorsuch wrote. Biden applauded the Supreme Court Ruling, calling it a confirmation of “the simple but profoundly American idea that every human being should be treated with respect and dignity." The Office of Equal Opportunity recognizes the integral role members of the LGBTQIA+ community have played in making Iowa State the great university it is today. Additionally, we are committed to protecting all LGBTQIA+ Cyclones from discrimination at ISU. OEO is aligned with the recent Supreme Court rulings and we support initiatives that provide tolerant and discrimination free spaces for all members of our community.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Face coverings/face shields are required on campus starting July 1
- Fall Semester starts August 17th and ends November 25th
- OEO Staff will return to campus August 3rd
- Email eooffice@iastate.edu with future newsletter ideas
- For in person training and consulting services visit eoc.iastate.edu
- OEO Staff may only be able to provide "in person" training virtually via Webex
- Title IX Summit Planning is underway, if you are interested in helping, email our office

The Office of Equal Opportunity
Iowa State University

THE OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY WORKS CONSISTENTLY TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND RESOURCES TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATION AND WORK HARD TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY. OEO PROVIDES CONSULTATIONS, FACILITATED CONVERSATIONS, TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS ON BIAS AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY TO DO OUR PART IN ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR AND INTOLERANCE. WE AIM TO MAKE OUR CAMPUS AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. USE THE LINKS BELOW TO RECEIVE THE SERVICES WE PROVIDE.

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