

The Office of Inclusion & Equity/Chief Diversity Office

The University of Akron seeks to increase the impact of its inclusive excellence commitment, programs and resources while simultaneously increasing efficiencies. Units and programs representing a wide spectrum of diversity have been consolidated into a larger, more interconnected Office of Inclusion & Equity/Chief Diversity Office, which reports directly to the president. This step will include the formation of a new President's Diversity Council that was previously designated the Diversity Council.

The programs, events and services of the Office of Inclusion & Equity directly contribute to matriculation, persistence, and graduation from the University, and bring distinction as Ohio's Polytechnic University.

Details about this office are available at www.uakron.edu/ie

FAQs

1. *What does this office include:*

- Office of Multicultural Development
- African American Male Initiative (Learning Community)
- Shirla R. McClain Gallery of Akron Black History and Culture
- Pan African Center for Community Development
- TRIO Programs
- Women's & Gender Resource Center
- LGBTU Outreach and Engagement
- Hispanic Outreach and Engagement
- Office of International Programs
- Confucius Institute
- Office of Accessibility

2. *What programs and offices are under this area?*

TRIO Programs

- Educational Talent Search (ETS) is a federally funded TRiO program which prepares 6th - 12th grade students in Akron area schools and adults for postsecondary education. ETS Fact Sheet
- Strive Toward Excellence Program (STEP) is an endowed college-preparatory program for 7th - 8th grade Akron area school students. Students meeting criteria are eligible for a scholarship to The University of Akron. STEP Fact Sheet
- Upward Bound Classic (UB) is a federally funded TRiO program which prepares 9th - 12th grade students in targeted Akron Public Schools for postsecondary education. UB Fact Sheet

- Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS) is a federally funded TRiO program which prepares 9th - 12th grade students in targeted Akron Public Schools for postsecondary education. Participants should have a strong interest in math, science or engineering.
- Pre-Engineering Program (PREP) provides students from Educational Talent Search, Strive Toward Excellence Program, Upward Bound Classic, and Upward Bound Math and Science with hands-on experiences and activities to prepare them for careers in engineering.

Office of International Programs

- Global and Multicultural Programming
- Confucius Institute
- Cultural Partner Programs

Office of Multicultural Development

- Peer Mentoring Services
- Scholarship Programs
- Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Programming
- African American Male Initiatives
- Hispanic Outreach and Engagement

Office of Accessibility

3. *What events will continue under this reorganization?*

- Diversity Week (September 2015)
- International Student Orientation (Fall and Spring)
- Latino American Symposium on Education and Research (October 2015)
- MLK Day (January 2016)
- Vagina Monologues (February 2016)
- Rethinking Race (Feb 2016)
- Black History Month (February 2016)
- Women's History Month (March 2016)
- International Women's Day (March 2016)
- Women's Trailblazers (March 2016)
- 2016 Black Male Summit (April 2016)
- China Week
- President's Annual Forum on Inclusive Excellence

4. *Why make these changes now?*

Two primary reasons: increased efficiency and expansion of message.

Increased Efficiency: In a large institution like ours, duplication of services can occur particularly when similar units operate independently from each other. The move of the Office of Multicultural Development into the Office of Inclusion & Equity allows us to eliminate some of those redundancies, increase efficiency of operation, develop increased synergy among programs and encourage greater collaboration among our staff.

Expansion of Message: By gathering many elements into the Office of Inclusive Excellence, we can expand the meaning of the word “diversity” beyond what at times has been a very narrow interpretation. We have the opportunity to demonstrate to students – many of whom come from very homogenous cultures and backgrounds – what it means to engage with people of different races, genders, ethnicities, physical capabilities, life experiences and more. Our goal is to build an environment that is inclusive of diversity and excellent in its outcomes.

5. *How can you accomplish this with fewer employees?*

We will use project teams to replace the traditional model of individual assignments. This new approach will be more efficient, will encourage cross-collaboration across administrative units, and will introduce workers to a broader University experience.

For example, major events such as the Black Male Summit and Rethinking Race will be organized and managed by committees of experienced administrators, who also will oversee the implementation of these events.

The Office of Multicultural Development will work with Campus Programming in the Office of Student Life to assure there are appropriate aspects of inclusive excellence and multicultural development incorporated into programs. Including: Black History Month; Homecoming; Diversity Week; Life Awards; Alcohol Awareness Week; National Constitution Day Women’s History Month, World AIDS Day and Greek Programming.

By eliminating duplication of effort, increasing efficiency in our operations, and encouraging staff to replace “silo-mentality” with collaboration and cooperation, we are confident that we can meet current and future needs of our students and campus community.

6. *Has this been tried elsewhere?*

The broader interpretation of inclusive excellence is becoming increasingly common on college campuses. For example, [Ohio State University](#) has a similar arrangement to our Office of Inclusive Excellence. And, in a [June 1, 2015 article](#) titled “Making Diversity Not the Work of One Office, but a Campuswide Priority,” Lee Gardner of the Chronicle of Higher Education wrote, “*And diversity work encompasses a vast array of questions and challenges for a broad population of students, including racial and ethnic minority groups, the LGBTQ community, and the disabled.*” We anticipate this more encompassing model of inclusive excellence to become the norm in higher education.

7. *What’s next for diversity and inclusive excellence at The University of Akron?*

We will continue to promote learning, critical thinking and personal enrichment through great programs that create an inclusive environment that recognizes and appreciates the talents, skills and perspectives of all individuals and contributes to their full potential achievement.