Message Topics from the Chief Diversity Officer:

Diversity in the United States has become a more complex reality.

For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the question “What race are you?” can be answered with 57 possible combinations of racial identity.

At universities nationwide, our society’s rich diversity is mirrored in students, faculty and staff who can also be underrepresented minorities, first-generation college students, adult learners, international students and scholars, veterans, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgendered. Diversity also comes from the religious, socioeconomic and political differences of all humanity.

The University of Akron has more than 28,000 students representing 46 U.S. states and 80 foreign countries. All of our students bring to campus the full and rich spectrum of our world’s diversity. Along with that diversity, students arrive with their unique talents, needs and circumstances.

Statistics show that nationwide almost half of all students who begin college at a two- or four-year institution fail to earn a degree within six years. UA is committed to improving these statistics. The Office of Inclusion and Equity’s mission is to cultivate a campus culture where the diversity of each person is valued in ways that help our students graduate.

There are challenges in our goal of achieving every student’s success, which we are addressing:

• Although The University of Akron achieved a 7.1% increase in the graduation rate of our African American students from 2011 to 2012, UA reflects the U.S. statistics on the sizeable achievement gaps between African American, Hispanic and White students’ graduation rates.

• Following this summer’s Supreme Court decision on Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, universities nationwide are processing the impact of requiring “strict scrutiny” – proving empirically the benefits of diversity – when they include race as a component in admissions decisions.

• In this diversity report, and throughout the coming year, you’ll learn more about how UA is addressing challenges and is on track towards achieving our Vision 2020 goals of “Academic and Inclusive Excellence” and “Globally Relevant and Distinctive Programs,” including:
  - Continuation of proven strategies to increase graduation rates.
  - Reorganization of UA’s Diversity Council by sharing accountability across many groups.
  - The Akron Experience, Multicultural Center and Student Success Center’s increased efforts to support students from acceptance to graduation.
  - Innovative K-12 collaborations to raise expectations and optimize success for Akron’s young minds and 21st-century workforce.

With our all-hands-on-deck approach we look forward to the challenges of the future, as we strategically embrace a no-student-left-behind approach.

Lee A. Gill, J.D.
Associate Vice President for Inclusion & Equity/Chief Diversity Officer
The University of Akron

“Diversity is not about counting heads, it’s about making heads count.”
-Lee Gill
The President’s Annual Forum on Inclusive Excellence: OSU President Gee discusses tolerant, diverse Millennials

“Building awareness for diversity, not as an isolated initiative, but as a catalyst for educational excellence”

E. Gordon Gee knows a thing or two about the Millennial Generation. As the former president of The Ohio State University, Gee oversaw a student body of more than 65,000, many of whom were born between 1982 and 2000, the generally agreed upon range for Millennials.

Gee brought his expertise to The University of Akron on Tuesday, April 24, 2013 to talk about “The Unique Qualities of the Millennial Generation” at the President’s Annual Forum on Inclusive Excellence. His presentation provided insight into moving us forward to embrace and value all the multiplicities of our diverse society—just as the UA model of Inclusive Excellence acknowledges the differences of every individual.

Today, there are approximately 80 million Millennials. Although the generation is best known for being technologically savvy, Millennials also are the most tolerant and diverse generation in U.S. history, according to a Pew Research Center study.

Gee’s talk was sponsored by UA’s Office of the President; Senior Vice President, Provost and Chief Operating Officer; and the Office of Inclusion and Equity/Chief Diversity Officer.

Save the date for the 2013 President’s Annual Forum on Inclusive Excellence. Jonathan R. Alger, President of James Madison University, will speak at the September 9 forum.

“Unlike others, we shall be measured by how much value we add in enabling the success of our students, not by how many students we exclude. We shall be measured by the collaborative impact that we create for each other and for our common future, not by the barriers we erect between our communities and ourselves. And we shall be measured by the integration of our disciplines as applied in solving the problems of today, not by their isolation.”

– Luis Proenza
New Diversity Council Reorganization: Expanding Council Collaborations

Inclusive Excellence at The University of Akron is defined as a framework for excellence that incorporates diversity at its core while linking the quality of the educational experience. The University of Akron’s Diversity Council is committed to helping our university reach its highest potential for all students. Since its reorganization in 2008, its seven sub-committees have been developing recommendations to enhance our inclusive excellence goals and incorporate them across the university.

At the end of 2012, Provost Mike Sherman and Diversity Council Co-chairs Lee Gill and Martin H. Belsky (former Law School Dean and currently Professor of Law) presented plans to Diversity Council members and deans, outlining a process to implement recommendations made by the Council’s subcommittees in a newly defined Diversity Council. Changes include representation by each of the 13 colleges on the Diversity Council and the subsequent implementation of inclusive excellence recommendations by the deans and colleges.

Under this new structure, representatives to the Council also include:

- Administration representation through the Vice President of Student Engagement, Vice President and Chief of Staff, Vice President of Information Technology, and the Associate Provost of Talent Development.
- Student representation through Presidents of Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government, and Student African American Brotherhood.
- Community representation continued through the subcommittee on Community Outreach (Co-chairs Ms. Judi Hill and Akron 4th Ward Councilman Russ Neal).
- The President/CEO of the Akron Urban League and the Superintendent of Akron Public Schools will continue their service to the Council.

This realignment and accountability to each college will provide a seamless platform for the implementation of recommendations and an ability to further refine and prioritize the strategies to achieve our inclusive excellence goals related to Vision 2020.

"Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another’s uniqueness.”
- Ola Joseph
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Activities
Fair & Concert

The 2013 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Activities Fair, hosted by our new Multicultural Center, combined fun and learning for the greater University of Akron community. The annual event featured more than 25 student and community organizations that provided activities for area students in grades K-12 that encouraged nonviolence, civic responsibility, respect for differences and the importance of education.

Black Male Summit

The sixth annual Black Male Summit, held April 12 and 13, 2013, on the university campus, again attracted more than 1,300 registrants from across the country.

We continue the tradition of providing comprehensive analysis and solutions to one of the most significant achievement gaps facing higher education. From pre-college preparation to retention and graduation rates, America’s four-year colleges continue to see African American males disproportionately represented among the numbers of students who leave our academic institutions without completing their college degrees.

This year we added a new strategy that focuses on establishing an earlier pipeline into our public high schools. Working with the Akron Public Schools and its Superintendent David James, close to two hundred 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students with GPAs of 2.5 or better were personally invited to attend a new high school component of our Black Male Summit.

Special thanks to the many campus partners and community sponsors that helped make this year’s event possible. Community sponsors include: Founding Sponsor - Summa Health System, Summit County Children Services and Akron Urban League.
Summit Education Initiative (SEI)

On November 29, 2012, SEI and The University of Akron sponsored a community-wide forum hosted at the Akron Urban League focusing on student success and “Cradle to Career” initiatives. Student success is a community issue.

College graduation is only one component of a journey that must begin in early childhood. Churches, daycare centers, community-based organizations, businesses and civic groups all play a vital role in the journey to success that we, at The University of Akron, refer to as The Akron Experience.

During the community forum, attendees were asked important questions about doing their part to help foster student success:

• What role can you play in preparing youngsters for success?
• How can we help families prepare for a successful journey?
• What do our students really need to succeed?
• How can we better align education with job opportunities?
• Can we align community resources to support students, from cradle to career?
• Can we keep our best and brightest in Akron?

By answering these important questions, we as a community will be well on our way to ensuring that all students have a clearer pathway to a lifetime of achievement.

The Akron Color Line Project

The Akron Color Line Project faculty are compiling and editing a publication with The University of Akron Press titled “The Akron Story Circle Project.” This upcoming volume chronicles UA’s efforts to collect and archive student stories and use them as primary source material for student scholarly work ranging from:

• Producing and performing plays based on the stories
• Producing ceramic art
• Comparing story circles to more traditional focus groups
• Analyzing the relationship between race and crime

Overall, we’ve collected, transcribed, archived and analyzed – with the help of students and community partners – at least 500 stories about race and racial conflict in Akron for this insightful publication.
Rethinking Race: Black, White and Beyond

Each February, The University of Akron provides a forum in which race and related issues are discussed, examined, and hopefully, better understood. The “Rethinking Race” series offers both the University community and residents of Northeast Ohio the opportunity to hear, share and explore a wide variety of viewpoints.

Held this year from February 1 - 15, 2013, Rethinking Race engaged the public with important topics such as diversity in the workplace and awareness of issues and culture through films, performances, Face-to-Face Conversations and keynote speakers. The “Rethinking Race” series can be traced back to 1997, when President Bill Clinton chose UA as the location for his first Town Hall Meeting on Race. Today, students, faculty and staff work together to plan programs for the series that continue to advance the understanding of race relations begun at that town hall meeting.

The Race Experience Kiosk

New this year, and receiving national recognition, was The Race Experience Kiosk. During “Rethinking Race,” students had the opportunity to see themselves in a different skin. Designed to help us consider race, racism and identity in a new light, participants could change their race to Black, White, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and Indian, then share favorite pictures via email. This museum-quality exhibit has software that provides a personal, one-of-a-kind race-morphing experience. The kiosk created an environment that explored and encouraged discussions about race and our deep-rooted beliefs, misconceptions and biases.

China Week
October 6 - 11, 2013

The University of Akron’s annual China Week, sponsored by the Confucius Institute, is an invitation to explore China’s culture, politics, economics, history, philosophy, language, martial arts, cuisine and more!

Join us for China Week 2013! Visit uakron.edu/ci/china-week for more details.

Student-Based Programs
Ohio University Lancaster Campus, Lancaster, OH. Keynote Speaker: “Build Today for a Better Tomorrow: Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.”

College Art Association, New York, NY. Keynote Speaker: “Hiring Diverse Faculty: Are We There Yet?”

Association of Diversity Councils. Webinar Co-Host with the Executive Director: “How does Marketplace and the Business Case for Diversity Apply for Not for Profits and Public Organization?”

Aultman Hospital, Canton, OH. Keynote Speaker: “Developing a New Diversity Council.”

The West Michigan Presidents’ Compact Committee. Davenport University, Grand Rapids, MI. Keynote Speaker: “Promoting Diversity and Cultural Competencies.”


Northeast Ohio Housing Officers Conference, Akron, OH. Keynote Speaker: “Educating the Internal Workforce.”

Ohio Black Women’s Leadership Caucus, Akron, OH. Keynote Speaker: “The Journey is Not So Long.”

Leadership Akron Class 29 Opening Retreat, Akron, OH. Keynote Speaker: “Inclusive Excellence at the Core of Diversity.”


Stark State College Men of Honor, North Canton, OH. Panel Discussion Moderator: “College Access and Success.”


The Women’s Committee of The University of Akron, Akron, OH. Keynote Speaker: “The Role of a Chief Diversity Officer.”

Project GRAD’s 7th Annual Scholarship Awards Program, Akron, OH. Keynote Speaker: “Being Excellent.”

Webster University, St. Louis, MO. Keynote Speaker: “How Globalization Impacts Diversity and Inclusion Efforts.”

University of Michigan School of Engineering, Ann Arbor, MI. Keynote Speaker: “The Diversity of Learning Styles.”

The CDO Takes Diversity on the Road: 2012-13

Diversity Report 2013
COMING ATTRACTIONS: UA CAMPUS


Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Education, Columbia University “Microaggressions in Every Day Life” on September 18, 2013, 10 a.m. to noon. Student Union Ballroom. www.tc.columbia.edu/academics/index.htm?facid=dw2020

MLK Activities Fair. January 20, 2014, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Student Union Ballrooms.

The Vagina Monologues. February 1, 2014, 8 p.m. and Feb. 2, 2014, 3 p.m. E.J. Thomas Hall, Stage Door.

Rethinking Race: Black, White and Beyond. February 2014. www.uakron.edu/race


Women’s History Month. March 2014.

Women’s Trailblazers. March 2014.

Women’s Wellness Fair. March 13, 2014, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Student Union Concourse.

Black Male Summit. April 11 and April 12, 2014. Opening Luncheon speaker: Mr. Steve Harvey. www.uakron.edu/e/bms
Recognition For Progress

2012 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award

Demonstrating an “outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion,” The University of Akron was among only 48 institutions of higher education nationwide to receive the first-ever Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from INSIGHT into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

UA Ranked in the Nation’s Top 25

For the second consecutive year in July 2012, UA’s Diversity Council was selected as one of the top 25 diversity councils in the nation. The honor comes from the Association of Diversity Councils, a resource for diversity and inclusion council professionals.

2012 Commission 50 Recognition

Members of the Commission 50 are recognized annually for progress in creating, enhancing and sustaining their diversity and inclusion strategies on the basis of four metrics:

- Board Diversity
- Senior Management Diversity
- Workforce Diversity
- Supplier Diversity

For 2012, The University of Akron was one of only 25 for-profit and 25 nonprofit/government organizations of Commission 50 to be honored.

"Without Inclusion, There Is No True Excellence."
- AAC&U Board of Directors
In the 2012-13 academic year, total enrollment at The University of Akron stood at 28,771 students for the fall semester. Full-time students accounted for 20,547 of those enrolled, with 8,224 enrolled part time. Fifty percent of the student population is female, fifty percent male.

Our Commitment To Diversity

At The University of Akron, we strive to create a warm and welcoming environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors. We respect and celebrate our differences and invite you to join us in creating an environment in which we can all excel.

Making excellence inclusive means attending both to the demographic diversity of the student body and also to the need for nurturing climates and cultures so that all students have a chance to succeed.

Inclusive excellence is a key component of a comprehensive strategy for achieving institutional excellence. This includes the academic excellence of all students in attendance, and concerted efforts to educate and equip them to succeed in a diverse society with sophisticated intercultural skills.

Visit Us Online www.uakron.edu/ie

• Programs and services
• Who We Are
• Diversity Defined
• Diversity Council
• News & Events
• UA Resources and Links
• Diversity Opportunities and Resources
• And More!

“Be the catalyst of change.”

UA Student Population at a Glance

- White 76.4%
- African American 13.2%
- Native American 0.3%
- Asian American 2.1%
- Hispanic American 1.8%
- Native Hawaiian 0.1%
- Non-Resident Intl. 4.0%
- Two or More Races 2.1%