Diversity Report 2014-15
Office of Inclusion and Equity/Chief Diversity Office

The University of Akron
Ohio's Polytechnic University
Message from the Chief Diversity Officer: Lee A. Gill, J.D.

The demographic composition of our nation is changing significantly, and our higher education institutions need to reflect this diversity. More than half of all U.S. babies today are people of color, and by 2050 our nation will have no clear racial or ethnic majority. Communities of color will provide tomorrow’s leaders and workforce, so we must better prepare our youth to ensure a prosperous future.

President Scott Scarborough’s Statement on Diversity

A GREAT PUBLIC UNIVERSITY is also a diverse university. We serve our communities best when we reflect their composition, and offer all industrious and capable individuals the means to pursue the American Dream. We also prepare our students to compete in a global economy by introducing them to new cultures, customs and people.

The University of Akron has enjoyed great success and growth in community-outreach programs like Rethinking Race and the Black Male Summit. Now we must do likewise to attract, guide, retain and graduate more diverse students. It will take all of us to achieve that goal, but through creative, committed teamwork, we will make our great public university even stronger through greater diversity.

2014-15 GOALS OF THE DIVERSITY COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEES ON INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

1. Focus on Improving Student Recruitment, Retention, and Graduation
2. Focus on Faculty/Staff Diverse Hiring
3. Diversity and Internationalization
4. Focus on Staff Diverse Hiring
5. Focus on Business Outreach and Supplier Diversity
6. Focus on Community Outreach

Inclusion and Equity Team
Office of Inclusion and Equity

Shanna K. Girtor, Administrative Assistant Senior
Rosa M. Githora, Ph.D., Associate Director, Multicultural Programs
Elisha Swanson, M.A., Associate Director, Multicultural Center
John Alvarez-Turner, M.A. Ed, Associate Director, Multicultural Center
Phoebe Reid, Secretary

We have the opportunity and the obligation to all students – many of whom come from very homogeneous cultures and backgrounds – to facilitate their engagement and interaction with people of different races, gender, ethnicities, physical capabilities, life experiences and more. In addition, as the world we live and work in grows increasingly global in focus, so too, must the preparation of our students include global competencies that create an outstanding academic education.

We are proud of the many ways our students, staff and faculty across campus have created the scaffolding that puts our value of Inclusive Excellence into action. It comprises the entire UA community of students, staff, and faculty working together in support of student development through intercultural and global perspectives.

Together we have accomplished much, as was recognized by Insight Into Diversity Magazine. In 2014-15, we received our fourth consecutive HEED Award from that publication, which identified the following as evidence of our excellence: the Ohio Latino Education Summit; Rethinking Race: Black, White & Beyond; The Women Trailblazers; the nationally acclaimed Black Male Summit that last year drew over 1,500 participants; Veterans Services Programs; TRIO programs; China Week; Confucius Institute; International Education Week; Diversity Week; Women’s Wellness Fair; MLK Day events; African American Male Learning Community; Study Abroad and National Coming Out Day. These will continue and more will be added under the expansion of The Office of Inclusion & Equity.

Diversity is a journey, not a destination. All organizations are at varying levels of maturity in their diversity development, and the work is ongoing. At The University of Akron we must continue efforts to diversify our faculty and staff; improve retention and graduation rates among demographic groups; continue efforts to create a welcoming and affirming environment; increase Hispanic/Latino/a outreach efforts; increase Women’s and LGBT outreach efforts; and promote programming between international and domestic student populations. And above all else, work to eliminate environmental and institutional barriers to student success.

There can be no respite in the work to create an environment where all students, faculty and staff are afforded the opportunity to maximize their potential for success. Good can be made better. Better can be made excellent. Excellent can be made exceptional. I am grateful for the many who are dedicated to this on-going process, and look forward to our continued success.
"Institutional Culture Change: Leadership and Academic Innovation" was the title of President Hrabowski’s talk. He had just been named by President Barack Obama to chair the newly created President’s Advisor Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

"The goal has to be to get that solid foundation, so they can build on that… We don’t give them the theories… we get them to discover the theories using technology, using problems out of the research part… and we use our Learning Management System to give them a chance to see how their performance compares to others based on how much time they spend working in groups and how much time they work individually… People don’t realize that there’s a connection between hard work and working with other people and their performance.

If you’ve not been accustomed to it, you just don’t know it. And so I want you as… an entire campus to focus on the specificity, the analytics, understanding who’s making it and who’s not making it …and most important on building trust among the people in this room so that everyone believes we want to see our students, our faculty, and our staff succeeding.

Any environment that focuses on inclusive excellence is encouraging the good questions. And the question you must ask yourself, The University of Akron and the community: ‘What are the questions that you’re still not asking?’

Students, these faculty and staff are saying to you they believe in you, and you will be their legacy. That is the point of inclusive excellence, that we want to pass it forward to the next generation.”

Hrabowski was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by TIME Magazine in 2012 and one of America’s Best Leaders by U.S. News & World Report in 2008. In 2011, Hrabowski received both TIAA-CREF’s Theodore M. Hesburgh Award for Leadership Excellence and the Carnegie Corporation’s Academic Leadership Award. In 2012, he received the Heinz Award for his contributions to improving the “Human Condition.”

Hrabowski’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.

CAMPUS FOCUS ON DIVERSITY

As a university, we embrace a no-student-left-behind approach and strategically we all play a role in creating an inclusive environment. Our many campus departments incorporate diversity initiatives and programs into the educational experiences of our students, providing for a robust and rich Akron Experience. A number of campus departments are focused specifically on meeting the needs of diverse learners to help them succeed in every aspect of university life.

OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY
Disabilities Awareness Week – Nov. 2014
A week of educational programs and activities to raise awareness and create and foster an inclusive environment on campus and to honor and support students, staff and faculty with disabilities and their advocates.

OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Inaugural Multicultural Convocation – May 2015
62 graduates and over 350 guests participated in The University’s first Multicultural Convocation.

STUDENT LIFE DIVERSITY WEEK
More than 2,000 students participated in Diversity Week 2014, the collaborative effort of 21 departments and student organizations that provided 24 programs and events to bring awareness to and celebrate the visible and non-visible differences within the UA community.

"At The University Akron, we strive to create a welcoming environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors.”

– Lee A. Gill, J.D.

MULTICULTURAL CENTER
The Multicultural Center’s mission is to intentionally connect students of all races, genders, cultures, sexual orientation, etc., in a holistic, inclusive, and supportive learning environment with a focus on extensive and inclusive programming across the campus.

2014-2015 programs include:
• Caribbana Day Festival
• The Nile Project
• Women’s Wellness Fair
• Holocaust Remembrance Week
• Summit County Sexual Assault Coalition Symposium
• The Vagina Monologues

Two sold-out Vagina Monologues shows helped raise public consciousness about violence against women while celebrating women, their bodies, and their experiences. The diverse cast was composed entirely of community members, including UA students, with proceeds benefitting the V-Day Organisation and the Rape Crisis Center of Summit and Medina counties.

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The President’s Annual Forum on Inclusive Excellence
University of Maryland, Baltimore County President Freeman Hrabowski III discusses retention and graduation of minority students
Emmer Martin Lancaster, Class of 1921

Mr. Lancaster was the first African-American to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1921 from The University of Akron, and was one of the co-founders of UA’s Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity (Alpha Tau chapter).

After graduating from The University of Akron, he attended Harvard University Law School and received his law degree from Western Reserve University. He worked as an attorney in Akron, OH, and from 1927-1935 he served as President of Akron’s chapter of the NAACP and chairman of the statewide Finance Committee.

For 28 years, Mr. Lancaster served as special assistant to the U.S. Commerce Secretary in Washington, D.C., focusing on the “problems of the Negro small businessman.”

Harry G. Holcombe, Class of 1959

The first African-American graduate of The University of Akron College of Engineering

Mr. Holcombe graduated in 1959 from the College of Engineering and also served as a member of Tau Beta Pi (engineering honor society). He had a distinguished career with General Motors serving as a project engineer and worked on several corporate staffs, including engineering, transportation systems and economics.

While at GM, he managed the team ultimately responsible for a line of cars fitted with GM’s first experimental airbags. In addition, he led GM’s corporate personal staff in recruiting students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

UA’S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN GRADUATES

“Nothing is given; everything is earned.”

Elmer Martin Lancaster  A.B.

“He had a tongue to persuade.”

—EXEQUIEL


Hobby: Whistling

Emmer does love to talk—and4attle. And we want that with the best of words at his command and the ideals he has to express it would be right to be silent. He is not satisfied with the

“...if Emmer ever gets on the

wrong side of our case—well—we’ve done our best. That’s all...

The cinder path is one of Emmer’s favorite haunts. When he starts in a race he thinks of all

and braced and then asks, “What’s the matter, big boy? First to stretch your muscles?“ Then, at

the end of the stretch, he smoothes hair and pre

Emmer will be heard whistling. And when Emmer starts his race, he keeps on his

Even the kind sit up and take notice.

Emmer’s name was misspelled on the original yearbook page.
The Women’s Trailblazers event highlighted the accomplishments of distinguished, diverse female leaders from around the country who have achieved remarkable success in their respective fields.

2014 Trailblazer Honorees
• Ms. Tracy L. Carter, MHSA System Director, Government Affairs and Health Policy Summa Health System.
• Mrs. Vanita Oelschlager, Author and founder of VanitaBooks, LLC; former teacher, philanthropist and caregiver.
• Reverend Dr. Diana L. Swoope, Senior Pastor, Arlington Church of God.
• Dr. Adis Maria Vila, Senior Fellow, Institute for Cross Cultural Management, Florida Institute of Technology and former Chief Diversity Officer, U.S. Air Force Academy.
• Dr. Julie Zhao, Director, Increasing Diversity in Engineering Academics (IDEAs) Program and Assistant to the Dean for Diversity, College of Engineering, The University of Akron.

Rising Trailblazers
• Margo Sommerville, Councilwoman, Ward-3 Akron City Council.
• Jasmine Simmons, 2013 Sofia Deaflympian, USA Deaf Sports Federation and UA outstanding Speech Language Pathology scholar.

Sponsored by the Women’s & Gender Resource Center and Women’s Studies Program.

Rethinking Gender Series, 2014-15
The Rethinking Gender series brought together faculty and administrators from throughout the university to enlarge the conversation on gender and its intersection with other disciplines.
• Understanding the Development of Nineteenth-Century Divorce Law Through Gender, Tracy Thomas, Aileen McMurray Trusler Professor of Law, The University of Akron, Oct. 15, 2014.
• “Telling It Like it Is”: Women and Welfare Rights Struggles, Dr. Mary Triece, School of Communication, Nov. 6, 2014.
• Issues of Gender and Race in Standardized Student Evaluation of Teaching: What are the Alternatives?, Dr. Susan Ramlo, Departments of Engineering and Science Technology and Physics, Nov. 24, 2014.
• Workplace Conflict: Gender Matters, Dr. Becky Hoover, Jan. 21, 2015.
• Dance, Gender, and Bodies on Stage, Robin Prichard, School of Dance, Feb. 18, 2015.
• Masculinity in Superhero Films, Dr. Kara Koerner, Women’s Studies Department, March 18, 2015.
• Understanding Hillary: Deconstructing Gender and Power in Men’s and Women’s Reactions to a Powerful Woman, Dr. Jan Yoder, Psychology Department, April 8, 2015.
• Take Back the Canon: Feministe Poets Writing about Women’s Lives, Dr. Mary Biddinger and Sarah Dravec, English Department, April 29, 2015.

Sponsored by the Women’s Studies Program, the Institute for Teaching and Learning, and the Women’s Resource Center.
OHIO DIVERSITY OFFICERS’ CONFERENCE
SHIFTING DIVERSITY GEARS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The University of Akron was well represented at the statewide 7th Annual Diversity Conference, hosted by the Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) on July 24, 2015. As President of the Ohio Chief Diversity Officers Collaboration (ODOC) from 2012 to 2015, Lee Gill, J.D., Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, passed the gavel to the newly elected President Shanda Gore, the Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Vice President for Equity, Diversity, and Community Engagement of the University of Toledo.

ODOC’s mission is to “promote Ohio’s diversity agenda in higher education, provide quality support to all our members, and strengthen the bonds that are the foundation of the ODOC community.”

Speakers included:
• Lonny Rivera, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent of the Ohio Department of Education
• Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Education at Teachers College of Columbia University
• Ms. Lenore Pearlstein, the Publisher of INSIGHT into Diversity and the Owner and President of Potomac Publishing Inc.
• David Gordon, M.D., Dean of the College of Health Professions at The University of Akron

At UA, in addition to Lee Gill the ODOC team included Rosa Githiora, Ph.D., Sheldon Wrice, Ph.D., Elise Seamon, John Alvarez Turner, Sharon Gorton, and Phoebe Reid.

CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

CHINA WEEK
Sponsored by the Confucius Institute, The University of Akron’s annual China Week is a weeklong series of Chinese cultural entertainment and lectures hosted on the UA campus to educate UA students and community members about Chinese language, culture, politics, economy, arts, cuisine, and leisure time activities. More than 2,000 attendees enjoyed these events.

CHINESE NEW YEAR
In conjunction with the Chinese Student and Scholar Association, the Confucius Institute also hosted Chinese New Year festivities, with a traditional Chinese dinner followed by show-stopping performances by students and community members. More than 600 members of the University and Akron community enjoyed dinner and entertainment at the Akron Art Museum and Akron Public Library.

Sponsored by the Confucius Institute
Diversity Report 2014-15

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

The University of Akron’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Activities Fair enables the community to mark the King’s holiday as a “day on” rather than a “day off,” and serves as an opportunity for community outreach to provide awareness of the University community to children in grades K-12 and their families. The activities focused on nonviolence, civic responsibility, respect for differences and the importance of education.

Activities included:
• Biographic displays about Martin Luther King, Jr.
• Historical information about the Civil Rights Movement.
• A variety of children’s activities.
• Performances.
• Martin Luther King Jr. gallery and other visual displays.
• Meet and greet tables sponsored by many student organizations.

In 1997, United States President William J. Clinton chose UA as the location for his first Town Hall Meeting on Race. Each February, The University of Akron provides a forum to the University and the Northeast Ohio community in which race and race-related issues can be discussed, examined, and hopefully, better understood.

The Jan. 30 – Feb. 13, 2015 event, in its eighth year, showcased films, performances, Face-2-Face Conversations and educational sessions related to racial climate and injustice, leadership, health, spirituality, and power and privilege. Several keynote local and national speakers, including Melissa Harris-Perry, writer, professor, MSNBC television host and political commentator, shared thoughts and educational information throughout the event.

Sponsored by Inclusion and Equity, Rethinking Race, Culture Quest, the Northeast Ohio Medical University and E. J. Thomas Hall

Sponsored by the Multicultural Center, the Women’s & Gender Resource Center and the Office of Inclusion & Equity

RETHINKING RACE

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In its 8th year, the Black Male Summit is The University of Akron’s national platform for best practices and innovative strategies. Its goal is to focus on educating and engaging the higher education community, including faculty and administration, students, K-12 faculty and administration, nonprofit organizations, the faith-based community and parents. Our event mission is to improve and increase retention and graduation of African-American males in higher education.

The two-day event brought together keynote leaders, educators, policy makers from around the nation, civic organizations, and a myriad of academic disciplines to address educational and social disparity among our African American male population. More than 1,600 participants from 25 states attended.

2015 introduced two new partnerships:
1. An AT&T sponsorship to support the Black Male Summit High School Component, which includes 9th, 10th and 11th grade students from the Akron and Canton Public Schools.
2. A partnership with GOJO Industries, Inc. “Path to Excel!” to help prepare African-American male high school students for the workplace, providing students with summer jobs and a $1,000 tuition scholarship to attend The University of Akron.

“Path to Excel!” (PTE) is a 10- to 12-week work experience for rising junior and senior African-American male students in Akron Public Schools (APS) that immerses participants in professional and personal mentorship. As a strategic model that utilizes K-12 pipelines, as well as resources of The University of Akron and local businesses, the PTE experience engages Black males in academics, career enrichment and college readiness by sparking each student’s career interest in potential academic and professional paths through a summer employment opportunity. Successful completion of the program also qualifies the student for a $1,000 scholarship, provided by the partnering business, when the student enrolls in The University of Akron.

Developed by Joe Kanfer, CEO of Akron-based GOJO Industries, Path to Excel! debuted in 2015 at The University of Akron’s Black Male Summit. Kanfer’s passion for creating the program underscores his belief in the importance of making connections between learning and experience in order to develop an intelligent, capable, diverse and sought-after workforce in Akron.

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The Office of Inclusion and Equity/Chief Diversity Office includes:
- Office of Multicultural Development
- Multicultural Center
- 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 and Gender Resource Center
- LGBTU Outreach and Engagement
- Hispanic Outreach and Engagement
- Office of International Programs
- Confucius Institute
- Office of Accessibility

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The March 6, 2015, Ohio Latino Education Summit, “Milestones in the Pipeline for Success,” was geared toward equipping educators, counselors, administrators, and community leaders with the tools they require to best serve Ohio’s Latino students. The Summit provided practical training to more than 300 participants through the presentation of best practices as well as keynote presentations from leading national experts in Latino educational achievement.

Dr. Luis Proenza, president emeritus of UA, delivered a short talk and received the 2015 Premio La Cumbre Award in recognition of “his visionary and transformative leadership in the Latino community” of Ohio.
DIVERSITY COUNCIL COLLABORATIONS

Co-Chairs:
- Lee A. Gill, J.D., Associate Vice President for Inclusion & Equity/CEO - Council Co-Chair
- Martin H. Belsky, J.D., Randolph Baxter Professor of Law, Council Co-Chair

College Deans:
- David Gordon, Ph.D., Dean, College of Health Professions
- Chand Midha, Ph.D., Dean, Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences
- Phyllis G. O’Connor, Interim Dean, University Libraries

College Representatives:
- Brant J. Lee, J.D., School of Law
- Amy Shriver Dreussi, Ph.D., College of Applied Science and Technology
- Armee deChambeaux, Ph.D., University Libraries
- William Husser, Ph.D., College of Business Administration
- Gordon Holly, M.S. (UK), Wayne College
- Venkatesh Srinivasan, Ph.D., College of Education
- Shaddrick Stinson, M.Ed., Honors College
- Maslin Targe, Ph.D., College of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering
- Sheldon R. Wise, R.D., Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences
- Julie Zhao, Ph.D., College of Engineering

Student Representatives:
- President, Undergraduate Student Government
- President, Graduate Student Government
- President, Student African American Brotherhood
- President, Hispanics and Latinos Organization
- President, Pan-African Student Organization

Community Representatives:
- David James, Superintendent, Akron Public Schools
- Judi Beshy Hill, President, Akron Chapter, NAACP
- Russel Neal, Jr., Akron 4th Ward Councilman
- Fred Wright, President/CEO, Akron Urban League

Administrative Representatives:
- Becky Hoover, Ph.D., Associate Provost for Talent Development
- Holly Harris-Bene, Associate Vice President, Strategic Initiatives & Engagement
- Kathleen M. Kilduff, Director, Office of Accessibility

Ex-Officio Members:
- Dr. Scott L. Scarborough, President
- Dr. William “Mike” Sherman, Senior Vice President and Provost/CEO

Additional Recognition:
- Dr. Amy Shriver Dreussi, College of Applied Science and Technology, The University of Akron Diversity Award recipient.

As a way to integrate the inclusive excellence mission across all university departments and programs, The University of Akron has adopted a best practices model whereby each college has a representative on the Diversity Council. The Council’s work includes the development of measurable and specific goals, processes, and outcomes to intertwine inclusive excellence with initiatives involving students, research, hiring, and service. Council members represent students, the colleges, the community, and the administration.

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 Report 2014-15
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: uakron.edu/ie

“Diversity is not about counting heads but making heads count.”
– Lee A. Gill, J.D.