

MESSAGE FROM ESTHER L. JONES

Dean of the Faculty



As we kick off the start of another academic year, I want to extend words of welcome to all members of our university community, new and continuing. There are lots of changes to highlight since the last issue of the Office of Diversity & Inclusion newsletter, and exciting work ongoing in the office to which I want to quickly draw your attention.

First, we wish to congratulate Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion (CODI) Sheree Ohen, who is now the proud mother of a baby girl, Amari Adesuwa Ohen, born on July 30, 2019. While Ohen is on maternity leave, I have agreed to provide general managerial oversight of the office and on-boarding of the office's two new team members. Please note that I will not be performing substantive duties of the CODI during this time. I will be available, however, to route inquiries to appropriate staff and administrators for response or resolution as necessary. Bias Incident Report Team (BIRT) management will be led by Dean of Students, Franci Magee. Clark's Demonstrations and Protests Operations Team (DPOT) will be led by Vice President Jack Foley.

We welcome two new members to the ODI team. Brandyn Bascones has recently joined us as the new administrative coordinator for the office, and Michael Vidal joins us as the Director for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. We are excited to have them aboard, and they look forward to connecting with the campus community.

We are pleased to share that the Diversity & Inclusion Certificate Program continues this year with enrollment opening later this month, as well as the diversity and inclusion book club hosted by Professor Alena Esposito. Details for how to participate in each of these programs are contained within this edition. We welcome your involvement. Finally, we invite you to read our spotlight feature on the recent work of Professor Robert Deam Tobin, whose work on queer Clark and queer Worcester exemplifies diversity and inclusive excellence in the classroom and the community. Thank you, Professor Tobin, for your ongoing commitment to advancing these vital causes at Clark and within the Worcester community.

Esther L. Jones, Ph.D.

What's New?

Meet the New ODI Staff



Brandyn Bascones (She/Her/Hers) currently serves as the ODI Coordinator and Assistant to the Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion. As the office manager, she provides executive support to CODI Ohen, and administrative/logistical support for the ODI team. A graduate of Smith College in 1999, Brandyn has dedicated her time and effort to bringing people together for the purpose of community building, through supportive administrative work and in volunteerism. She has volunteered in the PTO at the local elementary school her children attended, and plans to get involved at University Park Campus School, where her twin daughters now attend. She is passionate about the Clark University neighborhood, having lived here for several years. She is known for connecting with neighbors and loves helping create a culture of diversity and inclusion through community building. She is excited about the collaboration between Clark and the Main South Area. To live where she works and to support the mission of the ODI is a dream come true!



Michael Vidal (He/Him/His) joins the Office of Diversity & Inclusion as the new Director for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence. A first-generation college student, Michael earned his B.A. in Psychology and International Affairs from the University of New Hampshire, and his M.Ed. in Student Development (Social Justice Education) from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Prior to joining Clark, Michael worked as an educator, facilitator, and trainer for identity-based dialogues, programs, and initiatives across difference for schools, non-profit organizations, corporations, and state agencies at the National Conference for Community & Justice. Prior to that, he worked in a range of higher education institutions in the Northeast. In close collaboration with the Chief Officer of Diversity & Inclusion, Michael will work with internal and external community partners to advance Clark's diversity, inclusion, and equity related goals. This includes managing the Diversity & Inclusion Certificate Program, Bias Incident Response Program, and institutional ODI initiatives that support campus wide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.



SPOTLIGHT

Robert Deam Tobin, Ph.D.



In this issue, we are pleased to highlight Professor Robert Deam Tobin, Henry J. Leir Chair in Language, Literature, and Culture. Since joining the department in 2008, Tobin has been actively involved in the academic and social life of Clark through his research, teaching, and community engagement that bring awareness to the areas of gay and lesbian studies, queer theory, gender studies, human rights, and German and European cultural studies.

Tobin's research, teaching, and community engagement recently converged in the launch of a constellation of projects on Queer Clark and Queer Worcester in the spring semester of 2019. The multi-modal project included an on-campus exhibit in the Abrams Gallery on the first floor of the Higgins University Center as well as an exhibition at the Worcester Historical Museum titled *LGBTQ+ Worcester – For the Record*. These exhibits, accompanied by scholarly lectures and talks, chronicle the history of local LGBTQ+ life and activism, showcasing the

ways in which Clark University and the city of Worcester were leaders in the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights in the United States.

Students enrolled in Tobin's "Sexuality and Textuality" and "Sexuality and Human Rights" courses contributed significantly to the development of the project. "Part of how I teach involves helping students to connect literature with our understanding of social issues" says Tobin, discussing the role of social identities in the classroom. When asked if his identities informed his work, Tobin shared his experience coming out as an emerging scholar in the '80s at the height of the AIDS epidemic. "Both are inextricably linked," he says. "I recall people waving Foucault and Judith Butler texts at demonstrations. It gave us the ability to see and name power structures, specifically in our government, that were unresponsive to the epidemic taking place in our communities."

For Tobin, learning this history allows students to consider the set-backs and triumphs of contemporary LGBTQ+ issues in context. "We must celebrate the great strides we have made as a culture, and also remember that we are not far removed from that time. There are still challenges that persist today." Despite these challenges, Tobin finds inspiration in the resilience of people in the margins to galvanize "energy and artistic expression in the face of crisis" and to mobilize for the common good.

Do you know someone who has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing inclusive excellence? To nominate a member of the Clark community, please email Michael Vidal, Director for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence at mvidal@clarku.edu by October 28, 2019 in preparation for our next newsletter edition.

Upcoming Events

Faculty & Staff of Color (FASOC) Welcome Back Reception

Tuesday, September 10th 4:00PM-5:30PM
Dana Commons - Fireside Lounge

FASOC is a group dedicated to connecting faculty, administrators, and staff of color across the Clark community. If you would like to join FASOC, please email Brandyn Bascones at bbascones@clarku.edu to be added to the listserv.

Diversity & Inclusion Book Club

We are actively planning a new year for the Diversity and Inclusion Book Club! Hosted by Professor Alena Esposito of the Psychology Department, this book club is open to any University faculty or staff member who likes to read and is interested in bringing diversity into their selections.

If you are interested, please [click here](#) to complete a 5-question survey regarding interest and timing or contact Prof. Esposito at aesposito@clarku.edu.

Diversity & Inclusion Certificate Program (DICP)

Registration Opens
Monday,
September 23rd!



Program Highlights:

- FREE for faculty, staff, and graduate students
- Sessions taught by Clark faculty and staff, and external partners from higher education, public service, and the non-profit sector
- Participants engage in authentic, critical dialogue, and in-depth examinations of diversity, difference, power, privilege, and beyond to gain knowledge and understanding of the complexities of inclusion in today's society

For program details, please click the following link: [Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program](#). If you have any questions about the program, please contact Michael Vidal, Director for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence at mvidal@clarku.edu or 503-793-7312

If you have thought about participating in the DICP or attending a session, consider what recent participants had to say:

"I took away a great sense of awareness of my role as an instructor and how I interact with my students with different identities than my own."

"I really enjoyed being able to practice how to respond to real situations that may occur at work."

FALL 2019 DICP SESSIONS

October 24, 2019

9:00am – 12:00pm

"Creating an Inclusive Campus: Skills and Practices"

Instructor: Amit Taneja

October 28, 2019

1:00pm – 4:00pm

"Exploring Gender & Sexuality: Gaining Knowledge and Learning Best Practices for Clark University & Beyond"

Instructor: Meghan Norsigian

October 31, 2019

1:00pm – 4:00pm

"Social Construction of Race"

Instructor: Shelly Tenenbaum

November 5, 2019

9:00am – 12:00pm

"Developing Empathy for the Other and Healing from Trauma in the Midst of Oppression"

Instructor: ShaQuan Read

November 20, 2019

9:00am – 12:00pm

"Undocumented Students at Clark and Beyond"

Instructors: Rosalie Torres Stone & Heather Silber Mohamed

November 20, 2019

1:00pm – 4:00pm

"The Beauty of a Kaleidoscope: Diversity, Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity"

Instructor: Sarai Rivera

ODI RESOURCES

Office of Diversity & Inclusion Co-Funding Program

If you have an idea for activities, projects, events, research, and recruitment efforts that advance and support the mission of ODI, we encourage you to apply for funds through our Co-Funding Program.

Past examples of funding include (not a complete list):

- “Identity Dialogue: Building Skills to Promote Sustainable Advocacy”
- “Daring to Dream Today: Education and Hope in Difficult Times”

For more information on the Co-Funding Program and how you can apply to support your ideas, initiatives, and or projects, please visit the [ODI Co-Funding webpage](#).

Fall Semester Deadline

Proposal Deadline: November 8, 2019
Receive response by November 15, 2019

Spring Semester Deadline

Proposal Deadline: February 24, 2020
Receive response by March 2, 2020

NOTE: If your event is before the proposal deadline and/or response date, please include a request for early review in your proposal. Given the number of proposals we can approve per semester, we cannot guarantee that your request will be granted.

Members of the ODI Co-Funding Committee: Wiebke Deimling, Assistant Professor, Philosophy; Nadja Johnson, Senior Associate Dean of the College; Paul E. Phillips, Head Swimming Coach; Sheree Ohen, Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion; Allie Shilling, Director of Campus Life for Student Leadership Programming.

Fireside Lounge

Hosting a program? The Fireside Lounge in Dana Commons is a venue exclusively for Clark University diversity and inclusion focused events. You can request use of the Fireside Lounge by completing the [Fireside Lounge Request Online Form](#).

Reservations will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis.



ODI Snapshot: Diversity in Hiring Training

To keep you informed of the ongoing efforts in the ODI, we highlight some of the work we do to advance institutional equity. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion works in collaboration with the Office of Human Resources to offer workshops for all faculty searches that include a framework on conducting an equitable search, relevant laws and policies, ways to target outreach to help diversify the applicant pool, best practice guidelines on creating an inclusive experience during the search, barriers of implicit bias, and recommendations on valuing candidates' contributions to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Clark.

ODI Team

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