

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF OFFICER OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Dear Clark community,

I first want to wish you all well as we close out our academic year. We have been navigating this unprecedented time with tremendous strength and compassion – true to our Clark identity!

In reflecting back, we have accomplished a great deal in our efforts to foster a more inclusive campus community. In January 2020, ODI announced the final stage of the Survey on Campus Culture and Community: #ClarkForward - Pathways to Inclusive Excellence. The energy and engagement around this initiative was a true testament to our commitment to make Clark a better place. We set out this effort with a promise to ensure the data did not simply remain on the shelf. It was essential for our community to be involved in shaping our guide around inclusive excellence. We developed a robust outreach and engagement plan to capture as many voices as possible (See #ClarkForward: At-A-Glance). Although the intensity of navigating our current situation is underway, Clark is no less committed to developing our strategic roadmap around inclusive excellence. Our work will continue this summer and into the fall to develop short and long-term recommendations based on the key data findings and the solutions generated during our campus outreach.

We also announced the inaugural President's Achievement Awards for Inclusive Excellence highlighting the outstanding work from individuals and groups across campus. I send my heartfelt congratulations to this year's awardees! (Read our *What's New* section).

Thank you again for your commitment and partnership in fostering a more equitable and inclusive community. Stay safe and healthy, and congratulations to the Class of 2020!

All the best,
Sheree M. Ohen, J.D.

What's New?



Clark is thrilled to announce the recipients of the inaugural President's Achievement Awards for Inclusive Excellence! The awards honor individuals, units and programs that have made exemplary contributions to advancing inclusive excellence at Clark and within the broader Worcester community. Click [here](#) for the full story.

Asha Best, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor – Graduate School of Geography
Distinguished Inclusive Excellence Award Recipient*

Eunice Diama Dollete '21

Undergraduate Student

Hayley A. Haywood '09

Director, Multicultural and First Generation Student Support (MFGSS)

Clark Athletics Inclusion Coalition (CAIC)

Student Organization

*Dani Black '21; MiKayla Dotson '23; Biko Gayman '21;
Inonge Kaloustian '21 (Co-Founder); Josh Podolsky '21;
Ahiela Watson '21 (Co-Founder)*

On behalf of President Angel and the selection committee, we thank you for all of the thoughtful and robust nominations highlighting the tremendous efforts taking place to advance inclusive excellence at Clark.

SPOTLIGHT

Diversity and Inclusion Book Club

In this issue, the ODI is pleased to highlight the Diversity and Inclusion Book Club. Open to university faculty and staff, the program was launched in 2019 by Alena Esposito, Assistant Professor of Psychology, with the intention to utilize stories as a medium for learning. The group meets throughout the academic year and serves as an open space to discuss critical issues around identity, marginalization, and social justice.

“One way that I learn is through listening to others describe their experiences”, says Esposito when asked about the impetus for the book club. “It is an opportunity to better understand the challenges different groups of people face.” Participants of the group can expect a casual and welcoming setting where personal reflections and questions are a part of the process. “If we want to create an environment of inclusion, we need opportunities to learn and grow” says Esposito. One of the foundational aims of the book club is to normalize topics of discussions generally left out in social settings.

Explaining the importance, Esposito says that “our assumptions are formed by messages we received from our society, the status quo, etc.”. Through what she calls “purposeful disruption”, we can begin to challenge our own beliefs, break away from scripted expectations, and gain new perspectives. Perhaps one of the most unique qualities of the book club is how it invites faculty and staff to consider how the stories they read inform their own lives. “We often ask participants to make connections between the book and their own interactions with the world; what it teaches them, and how may it inform their attitude and behavior moving forward”, says Esposito.

When asked for advice on how employees can remain engaged in the area of diversity and inclusion, Esposito believes the book club offers a space for accountability and prioritization. “Knowing that there is a group of people who are also committed to this learning takes away the pressure of having to do it all on your own”.



Examples of books read this academic year include *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and *The Water Dancer*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates

#ClarkForward: At-A-Glance

The ODI team extends our sincerest gratitude to all members of our community during the implementation stage of #ClarkForward. The engagement and excitement across the campus was truly inspiring!

16

Campus Fora + Engagements

346

Community Members

180+

Solutions Generated



Your feedback was essential in our efforts to develop a community and evidence-based road map of inclusive excellence at Clark.

Diversity & Inclusion Certificate Program (DICP)

Congratulations 2020 Graduates!



Join us in congratulating this year's DICP graduates!

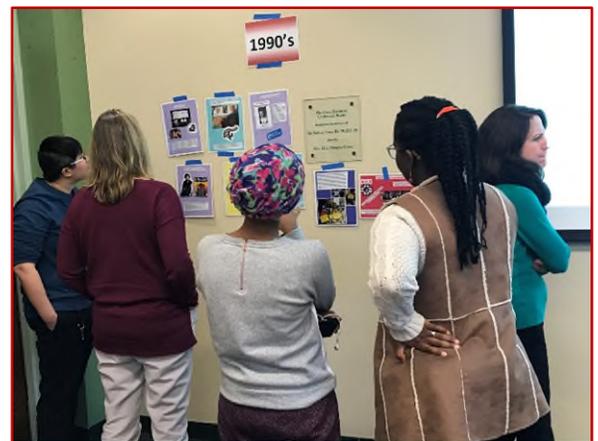
Simran Achpal
Sushant Bajracharya
Julie Bolduc
Elizabeth Bone
Cherilyn Bonin
Michael Cecil
Kaitlynn Chase
Emily Dart
Rosie Gallant
Nicholas Geron
Sharon Hanna
Cindy Ironson
Bernadine Mavhungu
Faith Mbaabu
Helen Rosko
Dan Santos
Kate Sawicki
Willie Swift
Kortni Wroten

We are proud to have been a part of their DICP experience, and wish them well on their journey as community-centered leaders at Clark and beyond.

Interested in Participating During the 2020-2021 Academic Year?

Program Highlights:

- Develop skills to engage in conversations and initiatives across difference.
- Apply knowledge gained from program into your work and learning environments with a Learning into Practice Project
- FREE for faculty, staff, and graduate students



For program details, please click on the following link: **Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program**. If you have any questions, please contact Michael Vidal, Director for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence at mvidal@clarku.edu or 508-793-7312

Special Thanks

DICP is made possible by the dedication and commitment of our remarkable facilitators, faculty, graduate students, staff and external community partners. The program is not a success without you!

ODI RESOURCES

ODI 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.

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

- **2020 Black History Month Speaker's Panel,**
Center for Gender, Race, and Area Studies
- **Cultural Identities in Higher Education,**
Undergraduate Capstone

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](#).

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 Team

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