A MOVEMENT NOT A MOMENT

Sustaining inclusive efforts are just as important as creating them. To become a movement and not a moment, we must jointly agree that inclusion cannot be a checklist of behaviors. Rather, inclusive action must be ongoing and focused on processes that better serve our communities.

Below are tips to sustaining inclusion efforts:

1. **Embed inclusion into existing work**: Embed inclusion into your existing work by looking for areas where you can build space for underrepresented groups and perspectives.

2. **Build revolutionary relationships**: Reach out to organizations that serve the same communities you serve, even if they are in a different department or division. Think about how your work can complement and leverage one another’s.

3. **Model inclusive behaviors in your organization**: Sustainability is more than just ensuring people are included. Think about your organization’s mission statement or vision. Is inclusion deliberately mentioned or implied? How inclusive is your organization daily?
Women have been members of the United States Congress for more than 100 years. The first woman elected to the US House of representatives was Republican, Jeannette Rankin of Montana, in 1916. This election came only 2 years after her state gave women the right to vote. While women have had a political presence for a century, it's only been in the past few decades that women have served in great numbers. (Learn more about Jeannette Rankin Here.)

This election year was historic in numerous ways. In 2020, the United States elected a woman for Vice President, Kamala Harris and saw the highest number of women listed on the election ballot. Counting both the House of Representatives and the Senate, 144 of 539 seats – or 27% – are held by women, which represents a 50% increase from the 96 women who were serving in the 112th Congress a decade ago according to the Pew Research Center.

Of the 27 newly elected women, two-thirds (18) are Republicans. Between the 115th and 116th Congresses, the number of GOP women in the House fell from 25 to 15. That number doubled this year to 30, the highest total ever. While this is a vivid example of progress, it is also a clear reminder of the need to sustain and promote gender equity in politics. The Pew Research Center also reports that 232 of 352, including the newest members of the 117th Congress, were not elected until 1992 or later.

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

- Alice Walker
It is important to find a place where you feel trust, you feel belonging and stability.

- Bojan Krkic

CREED WEEK FOSTERS BELONGING AND RECOGNIZES INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AT SAM

The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion successfully hosted the 2nd Annual Creed Week program series in celebration of National Inclusion Week from January 25th - 28th. Creed Week provides opportunities for engagement in thought-provoking and community building activities to promote the values of the Bearkats Belong Creed which states:

- I will do my part to discourage conscious and unconscious discrimination.
- I will do my part to respect an individual’s right to self identify.
- I will do my part to promote and maintain a campus community of respect and compassion.
- I will do my part to ensure that all Bearkats have access to equal opportunities.
- I am a Bearkat.
- I Belong.

The Inclusive Excellence Award ceremony is a signature program of the week celebrating the efforts of campus community members who embody the creed values. The Inclusive Excellence Award recognizes individuals and teams at Sam Houston State University that demonstrate a passion for diversity and inclusion.

Award nominees (staff, student, faculty, program, organization, or department) must demonstrate a significant contribution toward creating a diverse and inclusive campus community. The 2021 award recipients met award criteria by demonstrating an ability to foster equality of opportunity and encouraging diverse perspectives at SHSU.

To learn more about Creed Week and the Inclusive Excellence Award criteria, visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/diversity-inclusion/creedweek.html
Heather Gooch, 
Department of Residence Life

Heather-Renee does an amazing job helping to mediate with the residents and RA’s in an inclusive way. Heather includes inclusivity statements in staff expectations and reminds teams how much of the land is Native American. She educates on cultural holidays and encourages respectful dialogue to be inclusive to all.

Dr. Craig Henderson, 
Department of Psychology

Dr. Henderson has been actively engaged in numerous organizations, playing an important role in the promotion of diversity, inclusion, and multicultural awareness. Dr. Henderson is devoted to sustaining programs and initiatives targeting inclusivity both at SHSU and within the general community.

SHSU College of Education

The SHSU College of Education supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized as sources of strength and enrichment. They value human diversity in all its visible and invisible dimensions. They commit to practicing cultural responsiveness.
RECOGNIZING VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

STUDENT, ORGANIZATION & PROGRAM RECIPIENTS 2021

David Gomez Jr. Student
David has served with integrity to all students on campus by representing Accepted Students & Bearkat Orientation. He is looking forward to his second year as an orientation leader and continues to exemplify Sam Houston’s, “The measure of a Life, is its Service.”

Black Women Empowered,
Student Organization
Black Women Empowered uses their platform to uplift and educate people on life as black women in today’s society, and welcomes people from all walks of life to join meetings where they unpack difficult and often glossed over issues in the black community.

weTHRIVE Lab, Program
The weTHRIVE lab in the department of psychology is devoted to inclusivity and building a strong community of students with like-minded research endeavors. Students of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply to the lab and the selection process focuses on inclusivity and diversity.

“What greater bliss than to look back on days spent in usefulness, in doing good to those around us.”
-Dorothea Dix

Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
The Center for Diversity & Intercultural Affairs hosted the 17th Annual Diversity Leadership Conference (DLC) Friday, February 26th – Saturday, February 27th. The conference was held in a hybrid format with workshop sessions and 2 keynotes hosted via Zoom and the Whova platform. Exhibits including the Blind Spot and Music through a Social Justice Lens were created and hosted in the Lowman Student Center. 235 registered including delegates from South Louisiana Community College, San Jacinto College and the University of Houston. Conference attendees were treated to intimate conversations and discussions with this year’s keynote speakers: Samantha Ramirez-Herrera and Kendrick Sampson. For more information and recordings contact diversity@shsu.edu.

During the Spring 2021 semester, faculty, staff, departments, and program committees provided a potpourri of programs charged with exploring and enhancing the rich diversity of interest on campus. Highlighted below area few events that honor the immediate and global community represented at SHSU:

**Latinx Focus**
Virtual Screening of “The Silence of Others”, April 16th

**Black History Month Focus**
Hagar's Daughter Book signing, Feb 10th
To Enter Africa from America Project, Feb 22nd
"Understanding Mental Illness Within the Black Community." Feb 26th

**Women's History Month Focus**
100 Years of Women's History and Politics, March 8th

**Arab/Muslim Heritage and Culture Week Focus**
"The Myth of Clash of Civilizations, " March 8th
Islamic Arts Exhibition at the Newton Gresham Library, March 10th
Arab World Culture in posters, March 11th
"Islam in Spanish" The growth of Islamic faith among the Latinx community panel, March 23rd

**Asian-American and Asian Heritage Month Focus**
“Redefining the Immigrant South: Indian and Pakistani Immigration to Houston during the Cold War”, Booksigning, April 26th

For more events and event recordings contact Dr. Bernadette Pruitt or Dr. April Shemak.
Throughout this past year, we saw the emergence of new diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges. Internal factors, external influences, and sociopolitical perspective took center stage and framed our societal landscape. Requests for fairness, equity, and trust are driving an awakening. Outlined below are two most pressing diversity, equity and inclusion trends emerging in education and the workplace.

1. Remote workforce inequities
The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the global workforce and many have had to adapt to new remote working environments. While some will eventually return to office environments, experts predict a permanent shift toward remote workforces. From a DEI perspective, businesses will need to take equitable steps with this paradigm shift. Everyone and every job type are not able to work from home. Everyone will not have the same access to the workspace, time, and technology. The challenge will be daunting and global teams will be tasked with finding solutions quickly to manage remote teams and maintain a positive culture in inclusive and equitable ways.

2. The lasting impact of COVID-19
Medical experts predict that it will take close to a year to vaccinate enough people to return to normal ways of work and life. As it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion, schools, and business organizations are instituting new attendance and benefits policies for people who have been affected by, or have to care for loved ones suffering from COVID-19. However, the dilemma will be addressing all of the equity issues that may arise. For example, how will employees be accommodated for additional work in the absence of others impacted by the virus? How will productivity levels be impacted due to quarantine? What about people who choose to vaccinate, and those who don’t? Because these considerations impact various communities, people, and families differently, there will undoubtedly be difficulty surrounding workplace equity.

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The task of the leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.

- Henry Kissinger
Detroit, Michigan, native Bernadette Pruitt is associate professor of history and has been a member of the Department of History since 1996. She teaches classes on race and ethnicity, internal migrations, slavery, Recent United States history, and the African Diaspora. The first Black woman to earn a PhD in History from the University of Houston, she obtained her undergraduate and master's degrees from HBCU Texas Southern University. The teacher-mentor is also an accomplished scholar. Her monograph, The Other Great Migration: The Movement of Rural African Americans to Houston, 1900–1941 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), examines Black internal migration and community building in what ultimately becomes the fourth largest city in the United States. Pruitt’s book is one of the first scholarly attempts to address the Great Migrations within the South. The scholar has won several awards, including the 2014 Ottis Lock Superb Book Award with the East Texas Historical Association (ETHA).

Dr. Pruitt is also the past recipient of other awards and fellowships including the University of Illinois at Chicago African American Studies Department postdoctoral fellowship, Huggins-Quarles Award with the Organization of American Historians (OAH), the University of Houston African American Studies Dissertation Fellowship, the Ima Hogg Scholarship with the Dolph-Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, and the Fred White Jr. and Mary M. Hughes Research Fellowships in Texas History with the Texas State Historical Association. An engaged activist scholar, the historian currently serves as a member for the OAH Committee on the Status of Women in the Historical Profession and is past chair of the 2015 Darlene Clark Hine Book Prize Committee, also with the OAH. She also serves on the Ottis Locke Prize Committee with the ETHA as well as a past ETHA board member. The co-advisor of the Sigma Phi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society, Pruitt has also served on the National Advisory Board and National Council of the honor society.
**NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**

- June 2021
- September 2021
- December 2021

To submit content for the Diversity Digest Newsletter contact nepps@shsu.edu.

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**EDITOR’S CORNER**

**NUNICKA EPPS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, INCLUSION INITIATIVES & ASSESSMENT**

**Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion**

Change is inevitable. Change is hard. Change is necessary. And yet, these universal truths do not alter the important factor in preparing for change. Most people fear it. I know I do. So, I had to look deep to examine why. For me, change is difficult because I have been the way I am for a long time and my habits (good and bad) are deeply ingrained. Though, what I discovered to be most challenging is the ability to find and maintain my motivation for meaningful and long-lasting change. After some soul searching and introspection, I think that change is not the problem after all. It’s discipline. I now know that discipline will ultimately determine whether I can break long-standing habits and patterns. For every person, there is a different motivation that drives them toward their change goals. All else being equal, I believe that what is put into change efforts is what is produced out of them. How far have we traveled out of our comfort zones this year? Did we stay there? Did we grow or did we create new sustainable behaviors? We can do great things if we commit. This issue, let’s hold dear one of my favorite quotes - “Be the change that you want to see in the world.” - Mahatma Gandhi

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**DIVERSITY RESOURCES**

**for Higher Education Faculty & Staff**

**The Geena Davis Institute**

The Geena Davis Institute is a research-based organization working within the media and entertainment industry to improve gender balance, reduce stereotypes, and create diverse female characters in entertainment. Website includes lesson plans for addressing images of gender equality in schools, a video learning series designed to help students challenge gender stereotypes, and research studies on gender in the media.

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**RECOMMENDED READING**

**by Cordelia Fine**

Drawing on the latest research in neuroscience and psychology, Cordelia Fine debunks the myth of hardwired differences between men’s and women’s brains, unraveling the evidence behind such claims as men’s brains aren’t wired for empathy and women’s brains aren’t made to fix cars. She then goes one step further, offering a very different explanation of the dissimilarities between men’s and women’s behavior. Instead of a “male brain” and a “female brain,” Fine gives us a glimpse of plastic, mutable minds that are continuously influenced by cultural assumptions about gender.