WELCOME BACK BEARKATS

It is safe to say that we all are excited to be back on campus for another fall semester. However, our new normal is likely to be with us for the foreseeable future. As a campus, many have demonstrated flexibility, creativity and remarkable commitment to keeping the University on course during these trying times. The health of the campus community is extremely important and commitment to new “rules of the road” will be essential to maintain the health of our entire campus. We applaud faculty and staff that model the behaviors we desire of our students. We also offer up gratitude and sincerest thanks to the behind the scenes teams that have worked diligently to keep our campus doors open since the pandemic became critical. Together, let’s keep our SHSU environment both healthy and productive.

CONTENTS

02 ADAPTING TO THE NEW NORMAL
03 INCLUSIVE LEARNING IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT
04 CAMPUS ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES
05 ENHANCING SHSU DEI EDUCATIONAL TRAINING EFFORTS
06 CAMPUS DEI PROGRAMS
07 TRENDING TOPICS IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION
08 DIVERSITY CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT
09 EDITOR’S CORNER
ADAPTING TO A NEW NORMAL IN THE ERA
SOCIAL DISTANCING

The return to campus during a global pandemic is absolutely a challenge for everyone and we all share the responsibility of reducing exposure and trauma related to COVID-19. Many areas should be considered as we adapt to the new normal and support peers along the way. There have been a variety of personal experiences that may have affected Bearkats since March. Some community members may have contracted the virus. Others may be immune deficient and/or may have lost a loved one affected by the virus. Coupled with this notion is also a heightened level of anxiety. Regardless of status, age, gender, background, position or department, many share very specific types of concerns about protecting themselves and their loved ones at such an unprecedented time in history.

According to a recent New York Times Article and College Campus Case Tracker “Thousands of new coronavirus cases continue to emerge on college campuses. A New York Times survey of more than 1,600 American colleges and universities — including every four-year public institution, every private college that competes in N.C.A.A. sports and others that identified cases — has revealed at least 88,000 cases and at least 60 deaths since the pandemic began.”

Therefore, it’s important to continue to take precautions despite the varying perspectives about the state of public health in America and the effectiveness of face coverings. Hopefully, Bearkats can mutually agree that there is no harm in playing it safe to provide a meaningful campus experience this semester. By way of sanitizing shared spaces, opting for virtual meetings and class instruction, washing hands frequently, and maintaining a distance of 6 feet apart, we can share the civic and global responsibility of reducing the spread of the virus.

To learn more about the University’s COVID-19 response and available resources for Bearkats, visit https://www.shsu.edu/katsafe/restart2020/.

"Citizenship is a sense of belonging to a community for which one bears some responsibility."

- Walter Berns
"Believing in your potential and calling upon your courage to change will fuel your professional growth and help you accomplish goals."

- John Manning

INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

A key aspect of equitable and inclusive teaching, in general, is recognizing and working with the diversity of our students. Stay open to trying new things. You may discover new ways of teaching that are both better for your students and more enjoyable for you! More importantly, if we remember that inclusive teaching and learning doesn't have to be overcomplicated, we can absolutely enhance our efforts with simple actions. Outlined below are a few techniques to try:

- **Be Proactive** - Make a plan and operationalize what it looks like.
- **Be Accessible** - Create virtual office hours for support.
- **Be Flexible** - People are impacted differently by the virtual learning modality.
- **Be Relational** - Establish supportive interpersonal relationships and connection.
- **Be Identity Conscious** - Consider incorporating culturally relevant content.

Additionally, equity-minded teaching according to an [American Association of Colleges and Universities article](https://www.aacu.org/publications真爱文章) is the "acknowledgment that our students are NOT all the same and come to us with sometimes vastly different experiences. And those experiences are often tied to their social identities (i.e., race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, first-gen status, etc.). Therefore, in a virtual environment and at this particular moment, we must acknowledge and accommodate all types of learning styles, disabilities, cultural experiences while remaining sensitive to all of the stressors present as a result of economic strain, political/social divide and the global COVID-19 crisis."
INCLUSION EFFORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT ADVOCACY AT SHSU

The Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Internship Program provides SHSU students internships that work closely with administrators and curriculum managers of diversity and inclusion initiatives at SHSU. The opportunity focuses on specific key point initiatives that build transferable leadership skills for the future. Each semester, four SHSU students are selected to become AdvoKATs and certified peer educators.

The overarching goal of the Advokat internship is to introduce students to best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through a semester long mentored learning project, interns will engage with multiple facets of DEI education, from administration to programming to student engagement. Interns will have opportunities to connect with one another, and learn from mentors within their degree of study. The program also offers independent research opportunities and unique public service initiatives. Selected program participants will support the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion’s mission to inspire the campus community to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement in diversity and inclusion work.

Program Eligibility
- Sam Houston State University undergraduate or graduate student
- Must be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours
- Minimum Cumulative GPA of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale
- Letter of interest and 3 Letters of Recommendation

* $250 scholarship awarded each semester to candidates selected for the program

To learn more, visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/diversity-inclusion/advokat.html

"The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves."

- Helen Keller
Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion Announces Enhanced Training Curriculum & Resources

Training offered by the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion seeks to create and sustain a community of inclusive excellence, whereby diverse perspectives, research and educational opportunities are cultivated, enhanced and continually re-evaluated.

Fall 2020 debuted the IDEA Institute - a comprehensive DEI certification program for faculty and staff at SHSU. The institute offers a multifaceted approach to diversity, equity and inclusion training and is a collaborative initiative between the College of Education and the Office of Diversity & Inclusion. Faculty and staff may elect a preferred level of participation to include both self-paced and cohort style training options for certificate completion. For more information and registration details contact Jeanine Bias Nelson, Director Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion at jbias@shsu.edu or 936.294.3026 or visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/diversity-inclusion/dei.html

The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion will also curate safe spaces for dialogue and learning that provide a thought-provoking outlet for tough topics as part of the Safe Zone Program Series. The Safe Zone program series addresses ways to reduce discrimination to create an institution that is inclusive of all members. The program series will offer Safe Zone Chats - a monthly discussion forum on relevant diversity and inclusion subject matter, followed by a monthly Safe Zone Workshop to promote skill development in the topic of interest. For more information contact NuNica Epps, Assistant Director for Inclusion Initiatives & Assessment at nepps@shsu.edu or 936.294-2680. To view the complete series calendar and register to participate visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/diversity-inclusion/safezone.html.

“The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
“You will enrich your life immeasurably if you approach it with a sense of wonder and discovery, and always challenge yourself to try new things.”

- Nate Berkus

**CAMPAIGN INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

In celebration of National Diversity Day, the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion will host the 3rd annual Longest Table Luncheon for the SHSU campus community on Friday, October 2nd from 11am-12:30 PM. This free event models the example of an inclusive environment where peers, thought leaders, and subject matter experts build community with each other at 1 continuous table for rich dialogue across diverse perspectives. For more info contact NuNicka Epps at nepps@shsu.edu or visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/diversity-inclusion/thelongesttable.html.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences Diversity & Inclusion Committee is proud to highlight the 2020 Diversity Reader program featuring New York Times best selling author, Ibram X. Kendi’s “How to Be an Anti-Racist”. The book is available for pick-up in the Newton Gresham Library and is free for anyone with a confirmed commitment to participate in the Diversity Reader Event November 12th. For more information and registration details contact Dr. Bernadette Pruitt, at his_bxp@shsu.edu or 936.294.1491.

This year’s SHSU Common Reader curriculum supports faculty, staff, and students with a robust framework of inclusive options to bring the book “American Like Me - Reflections on Life Between Cultures” by America Ferrera to life. This year's programming features student, faculty, and staff experiences on topics of American culture and includes an educational training partnership between the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion to promote diversity and belonging. For more information contact the program administrators at commonreader@shsu.edu, or visit https://www.shsu.edu/dept/fye/common-reading-program/index.html

Be sure to tune in to "The Pulse" the Student Affairs Center for Diversity & Intercultural Affairs’ Bi-Weekly Instagram TV Show where they talk with students about what is going on campus, in current events and about different diversity topics! Follow them on social media @SHSUDiversity to watch the IGTV show!
“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

-Walt Disney

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TRENDS WE CAN EXPECT IN 2020

Today’s college students are some of the most diverse in USA’s history. Therefore, the definition of “diversity” is expanding upon quantifiable demographic traits like race, ethnicity, and gender. Simultaneously, the nation is also recognizing the importance of the intersection of identities of the human experience. Yet, while there is a clear evidence and supporting research to demonstrate the that diverse organizations do better business and generate new, innovative ideas; leaders are having to focus more intentionally on the campus culture, equitable campus engagement and overall satisfaction with the campus experience. This is true for both students and employees here at SHSU, but also across the nation.

According to an article provided by the Campus Prevention Network and Everfi Inc., the following themes within the DEI spectrum highlight the need to focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in order to truly encapsulate the fast approaching evolution of our campus working and learning environment:

- Multigenerational Workforce
- Unconscious Bias
- Gender Identity and Expression
- Transition from Diversity to Inclusion & Equity
- Diversity of Political Thought

Additionally, with a nation that is polarized by political lines, and an intense election season emerging amidst a global pandemic; campuses can focus on a proactive plan to maintain an inclusive community of respect and acceptance of varying viewpoints by re-emphasizing the campus policy for free speech, increasing opportunities for unconscious bias trainings, and offering more educational opportunities that strengthen communication and conflict management skills.
STEVEN D. KOETHER, M.S. - COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTOR, PROGRAM COORDINATOR & LAB SUPERVISOR

Steven has a background in K-12 science education, as well K-12 campus and district administration and uses this experience to train graduates/undergraduates and promote the SHSU Secondary Science Education degree. Steven is currently working towards a doctorate in adult education at Texas A&M University, with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Steven leads several campus initiatives and is a member of various committees. He is chair of the SHSU American Democracy Project (ADP), charged with supporting student voting and registration initiatives, leading deliberative dialogues, and supporting various projects with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). The SHSU ADP committee pairs with the First Year Experience Common Reader program once per semester to host a Critical Thinking through Deliberative Dialogue scholarship event, with 80 to 120+ participants, each semester. At this event, participants with a diverse array of world views, backgrounds, and political affiliations work with each other to find common ground and deliberate over (not debate) wicked problems.

Steven recently co-chaired and completed the SHSU/AASCU initiative to Assess & Improve Political Learning & Engagement on Campus. A major portion of this work included diversity, representation, and transparency evaluation of SHSU operations and systems. Steven is also the chair of the Graduate/Undergraduate Instructor Academy (GUIA) Planning Committee. This endeavor is a grassroots initiative to prepare grads/undergrads hired to tutor, mentor, assist in instruction, and lead classes on campus. An important goal for GUIA leadership is to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and training on campus. GUIA leadership includes grad/undergrad fellows each semester as full members of the planning committee, to honor students and better realize diversity, equity, inclusion goals.

On a national level, Steven worked with the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning to plan and implement the 6th National CIRTL Forum: Preparing Future Faculty as Change Leaders toward Inclusive STEM Higher Education. He is also a member of the National AASCU ADP Steering Committee, seeking to engage state universities and students in civic education (from voting, campus leadership and representation, to community outreach).
There is so much happening in 2020 that we cannot control right now, but how we talk to ourselves during these challenging times matters. Our own thoughts can either provide a powerful buffer to these difficult circumstances as we remember the normal things we used to do and enjoy, or amplify our distress. The frequent moments of feeling overwhelmed and afraid often come with alarming thoughts, like “I can’t do this,” or “this will be too hard”. It is my hope that as we start the semester, we remember to be compassionate and patient to ourselves and our fellow Bearkats who may be experiencing high levels of stress during this time. Everyone deserves a little grace and mercy as we navigate uncharted territory. It is okay to admit that while we may try, we cannot be our best selves all of the time. Acknowledging and considering this in our daily interactions with others will help us deepen connections and create an inclusive community together.

**DIVERSITY RESOURCES for Higher Education Faculty & Staff**

**SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Seminars**

S.E.E.D. is a national project on inclusive curriculum coordinated by Peggy McIntosh and Emily Style. This seminar provides a unique opportunity for participants to meet in a safe and respectful environment to discuss and develop strategies for building inclusive curricula and classrooms. Using readings, videos, reflective writing and group work, the seminars discuss the impact of race, class, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation and other defining aspects of identity on teaching and learning. Contact: Dr. Seema Kapani, Learning Communities for Institutional Change and Excellence (LCICE), Div. of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement. (262-6284). lcice.wisc.edu.

**RECOMMENDED READING by Claude M. Steele**

Dean of the School of Education at Stanford and social psychologist Claude Steele examines how cultural stereotypes impinge upon identity and self-confidence resulting in underperformance of talented students of color. Steele presents his life’s research on what it’s like to be stereotyped by gender, age, race, class, etc. and how “stereotype threat” can affect our performance in the classroom and on the job, especially by those who are intellectually gifted.

Source: https://wwnorton.com/books/Whistling-Vivaldi/