I am excited to introduce the first issue of the Office of Equity & Inclusion newsletter, “The Diversity Digest”. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide the university community updates on current events related to diversity and inclusion, recognize diversity and inclusion efforts campus wide and share meaningful information to help educate and advance social justice issues. I would also like to take this time to remind everyone of the University’s Diversity & Inclusion Statement which affirms; “Sam Houston State University is committed to promoting a campus culture that embraces diversity and inclusion. This is accomplished through proactive assessment of policies and operational strategies, as well as program implementation that strives to remove institutional barriers to recruit and retain a diverse university community with intersectional perspectives. Furthermore, the University acknowledges and values our responsibility to cultivate an equitable and inclusive environment where students, faculty, staff, and community recognize the benefits of collaboration and mutual respect through diverse identities and experiences.”
The SHSU non-discrimination policy includes protections for sex and gender identities. And, while many may not understand the critical nature behind the use of pronouns, correct use serves as a key component to create a safe space for all sexes and gender identities. Appropriate use of pronouns is a subtle yet powerful way to demonstrate respect for everyone on campus.

Keep in mind that you can’t always know someone’s gender identity by sight alone. Therefore, it’s always best to ask for the preferred pronoun. Use of the wrong pronoun may not be intentional. However, the impact of improper use could make someone feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or hurt.

Pronouns are used in every day speech and we frequently use them without thinking. So, it is imperative that we encourage our campus community to explore resources and expand our knowledge on gender pronouns. Together, we can make progressive steps toward a more inclusive environment at SHSU.

For more information on pronouns please view the following resources:

Pronouns Matter
https://www.mypronouns.org/

LGBT+ Resource Center
https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/support/gender-pronouns/

Human Rights Campaign
https://www.hrc.org/resources/talking-about-pronouns-in-the-workplace
CREED WEEK 2020

CREED WEEK 2020

Increasing awareness of campus prejudice, stereotyping, power, privilege, and social identities (race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, spirituality/religion, ability, etc.)

Creating spaces to foster intellectual group dialogue on critical and challenging topics that inspire genuine understanding, goodwill, and collaboration at Sam Houston State University.

Developing and promoting programs, trainings, workshops, lectures, and events that engage the entire campus community in best inclusive practices.

The Office of Equity & Inclusion, alongside campus partners, hosted a week-long series of events, community building programs and service opportunities to promote inclusive behaviors at Sam Houston State University. Events held January 27th - 30th underscored the 2020 theme, "Respect, Courtesy, Kindness", and included an awards recognition ceremony, a twenty eight foot long interactive kindness wall, a conflict management workshop, and an interactive mixer to promote belonging.

The goals associated with Creed Week at Sam Houston State University include:

- Increasing awareness of campus prejudice, stereotyping, power, privilege, and social identities (race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, spirituality/religion, ability, etc.)
- Creating spaces to foster intellectual group dialogue on critical and challenging topics that inspire genuine understanding, goodwill, and collaboration at Sam Houston State University.
- Developing and promoting programs, trainings, workshops, lectures, and events that engage the entire campus community in best inclusive practices.

To view the Bearkats Belong Creed and to learn more about campus inclusion Initiatives, visit shsu.edu/inclusion or contact NuNicka Epps, Assistant Director for Inclusion Initiatives and Assessment at nepps@shsu.edu.

2020 CREED WEEK INCLUSION CAMPAIGN PROMOTES KINDNESS, RESPECT & COURTESY

"Creating a campus where differences are recognized, accepted, and valued is our mission."
The Inclusive Excellence Award was established by the Office of Equity & Inclusion in 2020 to recognize individuals and departmental units at Sam Houston State University that demonstrate passion for diversity and inclusion.

Recipients are outstanding individuals or teams who have championed inclusive behaviors identified by the following criteria:
- Promotion or Demonstration of the Core Values and Behaviors Outlined in the Bearkats Belong Creed;
- Added Value Above and Beyond Expected SHSU Duties;
- Collaborative & Diverse Partnerships;
- Innovative Approach to Inclusion & Diversity;
- Measurable Benefits in Services or Programs;
- Positive Campus Impact;
- Sustainable Processes.

The Inclusive Excellence Awards Reception was held on January 27th in the Lowman Student Center as part of the 2020 Creed Week Program Series.

Following a dynamic keynote address by Graduate School Dean, Dr. Ken Hendrickson, Inclusive Excellence Awards were presented to The College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Disability Services, and the Newton Gresham Library.
In concert with Sam Houston State University’s (SHSU) mission to foster educational excellence and community engagement, as well as with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences’ (CHSS) mission to foster understanding among human beings in their diversity, the CHSS Diversity and Inclusion Committee is dedicated to facilitating the recruitment, retention, and support of diverse students, faculty, and staff, as well as to broader action towards increasing diversity across our university community.

In February, the CHSS Diversity & Inclusion Committee invited faculty, staff and students to celebrate Black History Month 2020 by supporting the expansive offerings of lectures, panels, movie screenings and book signings. The events commencing February 4th - February 24th focused on current and relevant topics as well as historically significant movements impacting the black community. All events hosted on campus were free of charge and open to the campus community.

To learn more about the CHSS Diversity & Inclusion Committee or to explore opportunities with Black History Month at SHSU, contact Dr. Bernadette Pruitt, his_bxp@shsu.edu, or Dr. April Shemak, aas004@shsu.edu.
The Diversity Leadership Conference is an outstanding student-led event designed to address diversity and leadership issues and their application in student development, higher education, and the global society. The 16th annual Diversity Leadership Conference at Sam Houston State University took place on Friday, February 21st and Saturday, February 22, 2020.

The two-day conference saw 575 registered attendees from institutions including Sam Houston State University, Angelina College, Prairie View A&M University, San Jacinto College, South Louisiana Community College, Lone Star College-Tomball, and Texas A&M University – College of Medicine.

Conference attendees were treated to an eye-opening keynote, and moderated Q&A session with Ms. Tarana Burke, founder of the ‘me too’ movement, and an engaging yet powerful keynote from Ms. Aisha Fukushima. In addition to the two (2) keynote addresses, the conference provided 31 workshops from a total of 70 presenters near and far which sparked conversations from Affirmative Action to Disability Etiquette.

Other conference highlights included the Blind Spot exhibit, developed and constructed by the Diversity Council and DLC Committee. Attendees that visited the exhibit were able to fully immerse themselves in eight (8) social issues – civic engagement, college stress levels, criminal justice reform, gentrification, gun control, health within minority populations, the ‘me too’ movement, and transgender rights. Attendees were encouraged to participate in the various interactive activities within the exhibit.

For more information or to learn more, please contact the Center for Diversity & Intercultural Affairs in the Lowman Student Center (LSC) Room 315 or visit ww.shsu.edu/dlc.
Jordan Chang is the Assistant Director of the Center for Diversity & Intercultural Affairs and has been with Sam Houston State University (SHSU) since March 2015. Jordan’s Journey to Sam has been an interesting one that truly reflects on his diverse upbringing. Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, Jordan moved to South Florida when he was 14 years old. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and his Masters of Education in Higher Education from Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, FL. While at FAU, it was his campus involvement in a variety of student organizations and working within Student Affairs that garnered his interest in student development and higher education. While in the Higher Education program, his graduate assistantship was in the Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs, which allowed him to share his experiences as a Chinese Jamaican man with others. It has also allowed him to develop skills in student advising, multicultural education and presentations.

Currently, Jordan leads diversity efforts in heritage/history month programming as well as other cultural programming. He also conducts diversity trainings for classes, student organizations, and professional conferences. Jordan also serves as the student organization advisor for a myriad of cultural organizations including Diversity Council, African Student Association, NAACP, African Student Association and the Exceptional Men of The Talented Tenth, Inc. Throughout his time at Sam, he enjoys daily conversations with students across campus the most - it is through daily interactions and conversations that we truly learn the most about each other and humanity.
EDITOR'S CORNER

NUNICKA EPPS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, INCLUSION INITIATIVES & ASSESSMENT
Office of Equity & Inclusion | Title IX

I believe that Sam Houston State University is a community committed to sharing values of diversity and inclusion in order to achieve and sustain excellence. So, as the editor and custodian of "The Diversity Digest Newsletter" I feel a responsibility to highlight the many efforts that promote diversity and excellence. I also believe that embracing and valuing diversity helps to retain a diverse group of students, faculty and staff. Additionally, we must as a campus, create a climate of respect that is supportive of diverse success.

I further recognize that the responsibility for excellence, diversity and inclusion lies with all of us at the institution. Therefore, I welcome you to contribute to the newsletter by providing articles, resources, program outcomes and more. Together, we can set the standard and move beyond diversity to belonging for all.

DIVERSITY RESOURCES
for Higher Education Faculty & Staff

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
AAUW advances equity and promotes education for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Since its founding in 1881, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day -- educational, social, economic, and political.

Association for Black Culture Centers
The national Association for Black Culture Centers offers professional development opportunities to learn best practices on strengthening African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American and multicultural centers. Best practices focus on developing synergy among centers while teaching the historical and contemporary connections Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans have with Africana people.

RECOMMENDED READING
by Tiffany Jana & Matthew Freeman

Everybody's biased. The truth is, we all harbor unconscious assumptions that can get in the way of our good intentions and keep us from building authentic relationships with people different from ourselves. Tiffany Jana and Matthew Freeman use vivid stories and fun exercises and activities to help us reflect on our personal experiences and uncover how our hidden biases are formed. By becoming more self-aware, we can control knee-jerk reactions, conquer fears of the unknown, and prevail over closed-mindedness. In the end, Jana and Freeman's central message is that you are not the problem — but you can be the solution.

NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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