



INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ACCESS

THE SEED OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

By: TaQuilla Kusero | Photo by: Rena Laverty

Organizational change is similar to planting a seed; it requires careful cultivation, strategic planning and sustained attention to encourage development. Just as a seed needs the proper soil, sunlight, and water, the success of change requires a supportive environment, effective communication, and unwavering focus.

Over the past several months, we have sown numerous seeds in our pursuit of integrating IDEA into our campus culture. We are excited to announce the upcoming opening of two Reflection Spaces within the Biomedical Technology Center, designed to foster moments of meditation, prayer, or deep contemplation. Furthermore, we are making substantial progress in crafting comprehensive policies, procedures, and practices aimed at tackling areas highlighted in the recent campus climate survey. Concurrently, we are working to dismantle structural barriers to equity and

accessibility through initiatives such as SEM, D3C3, and the IDEA Leadership Council, among others.

The progress achieved thus far is a testament to the collaborative efforts and input from across the entire campus community. Much like the time it takes for a seed to undergo its growth phase, the dedication invested in this transformative work will be truly rewarding when our persistent efforts bear fruit.



TaQuilla Kusero, Director of Equity and Engagement

CULTIVATING INCLUSIVE PRACTICES YEAR ROUND

By: Catreese Qualls

One of the best ways to cultivate inclusive practices is to ensure that we're creating space for people to be themselves.

Cultivating strong, healthy relationships among our diverse communities, helps us to understand how to better serve, communicate, uplift, celebrate and highlight all of our unique communities members.

As we prepare to celebrate and recognize the rich culture and unique aspects

of all the members, our diverse higher learning institutions, we can utilize "best practices for cultivating holiday inclusivity in the workplace, by creating a shared holiday calendar. This will help to encourage members of your team, group or community to use this calendar by adding the holidays they will be celebrating. Making sure to set calendar reminder notifications so that everyone on the team is aware of

the upcoming special day." Similarly to birthday calendars which you may already be utilizing to celebrate, include and recognize your fellow team members.

Ways We Can Practice Inclusivity

- Practice more mindfulness
- Use food to celebrate other cultures
- Look for commonalities when celebrating other cultures

CHANGE AGENTS

By: Catreese Qualls | Photo by: Catreese Qualls

Our IDEA Fellows are more than emerging scholars! They are the change agents of a new era of socially responsible activists, whose aim is to promote a more progressive, inclusive, and innovative approach to addressing issues surrounding Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Accessibility!

Meet Matthew Morrow

We recently sat down with emerging scholar and social activist, Matt Morrow, a Schoolcraft College Nursing student. Here's what he shared on the topic of IDEA:

“One of nursing’s key elements is patient advocacy and social justice. As such, I strive every day to live up to our core tenants of IDEA: inclusion, diversity, equity and access. Whether at work or school, I actively seek and raise voices from people with differing viewpoints to promote engagement or inclusion. I encourage diversity through my programs by focusing on groups I’m not a part of and often being the one who listens or moderates rather than who is talking; raising up the marginalized on the platform I’ve been given. And equity and access, I promote them through policy changes at the college, local, state and federal level.

I do this in the name of servant leadership and as an act of love for our community. This work is important to me because people are important to me. At my events, I have seen pain and joy when talking about difficult issues and I can see that what I’m doing is creating a place where they can feel safe sharing their opinions, ideas, and this acts as a catharsis. At the end of the day, I wake up, go to school/work and perform acts of healing because that is my nature as a human being and by profession. A quote which resonates now more than ever is: ‘Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.’ – Martin Luther King Jr.”

Meet Akisha Ellington

As a second year student at Schoolcraft College, Akeisha is awaiting acceptance into the RN program while completing an Associate’s degree in Business and General Studies. In addition to her studies, Akisha has been an IDEA Fellow with the Office of Equity and for the past year, investing not only in herself but the community to which she belongs, all the while interacting as a Change Agent for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility. Akisha promotes this in her personal life and professional life by ensuring all voices are heard and included throughout every facet of life.

As a direct result of her Fellowship, this mother of three wonderful children, has been inspired to make great changes in



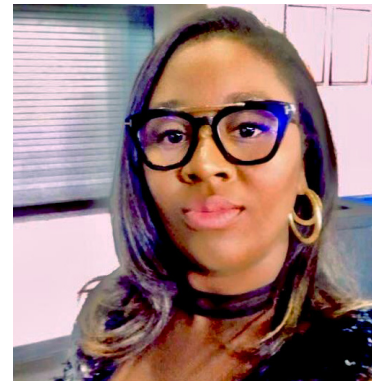
Akisha Ellington, Glenn R. Cerny, Ed.D., Schoolcraft College President, Matthew Morrow

her parenting approach and how she cares for others:

“I activate IDEA into my personal life, work, and academics by making a conscious choice to treat everyone the way I want to be treated and by choosing to show compassion for everyone that I interact with. Almost every person you encounter is going through something, and a little compassion and understanding goes a long way. Servant leadership is important to me because it allows people to grow and feel empowered in an inclusive environment.”

Meet our newest IDEA Fellow, Ashlee Jackson

A first-year student at Schoolcraft College, Ashlee is currently in the Nursing Program with hopes of completing her associate degree and becoming a Registered Nurse. Given Ashlee’s favorite pastime is writing, she hopes to use her skills, experience, and talents to help improve patient care outcomes.



Ashlee Jackson

Specifically, Jackson is interested in helping bridge the health care inequalities gap among African American fetal/maternal care during pregnancy and childbirth.

When it comes to the future and reaching her goals, Ashlee believes, “When the time is right, I the Lord will make it happen!” (Isaiah 60:22). As a result, she consciously recognizes her main source of inspiration and motivation which lives in those closest to her:

“My immediate goal is to spend as much quality time with my loved ones, as this is a form of self-care for me. Being around people I love and that truly love me energizes my spirit!”

LIFTING THE VEIL

By: Catreese Qualls

2024 | African Americans and the Arts

The theme for Black History Month 2024 focuses on “African Americans and the Arts.” This year we will lift the veil and uncover some of the most captivating moments and stories of our time!

Through our original Heritage Based Event Series and unique learning opportunities, designed exclusively with our diverse community of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and stakeholders in mind. These events will provide educational insights, thought provoking ideas and a deeper perspective into how and why African American people have become some of the world’s most powerful and influential voices of our times.

We’d furthermore like to extend a personal invitation for you to join us through the month of February as we celebrate “Black History Month. It will include exclusive curated Smithsonian events, resources, exhibitions, and podcasts that will help us showcase the 2024 theme “African Americans and the Arts” spanning the many impacts Black Americans have had on visual arts, music, cultural movements, and more.” – Smithsonian

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

By: Madison Ling

In this new era of emerging equitable practices, there’s an emphasis on ‘dismantling’ any given social justice issue into its finest components. This is a key part of the process and yet, its lesser known counterpart ‘restoration’ is often overlooked. To restore anything means to identify where the damage has been done, the extent of its depth, how it was inflicted and constructing a plan of into a new and improved state.

This is the crux of restorative justice. Instead of punishment, the model presented by the University of Wisconsin-Madison focused on three questions to “address the dehumanization frequently experienced by people...” and “...what can be done to both repair the harm and address reasons for the offense, while reducing the likelihood of re-offense.” These inquiries involve identifying who was involved, their needs, and the obligations of each in resolution.

Restorative justice practices are essential to mending violations that cause mistrust and further miscommunication. Research collected and conducted by the Bureau of Justice Assistance reveals that victims indicate a desire to know the opposing party demonstrated comprehension, remorse, and the initiative to change. Likewise, when facilitators asked the perpetrator about their needs, the primary response involved themes of forgiveness and retribution and reassurance the violation would not definite, nor compromise, their character going forward with an emphasis on reconciliatory conversation to the person wronged. This facilitated exercise revealed to the individuals utilized and the facilitators that there are common needs demonstrated in the wake of any perceived crime - safety, understanding, validation, information, apology and repair.

Through the practice of restorative justice, these needs were able to be met in a manner that was humanizing and without assignment of guilt or punishment. The key factor to success was a willingness by both parties to participate and the availability of trained facilitators. In the context of higher education, restorative justice practices and the Office of Equity and Engagement’s commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and access have the potential to investigate best practices to create a restored campus community with a stronger sense of empathy, understanding and bonding than ever before.

EVENT RECAP

NOVEMBER, 2023

Indigenous Roundtable Discussion

The Indigenous Leaders Roundtable Discussion event provided our campus community to learn more about the importance of indigenous communities, their challenges, the impact of invisibility spanning across decades of generations and more importantly, how indigenous leaders are using lessons from the past to help improve their communities and the environments in which they live and thrive.

DECEMBER, 2023

Pride Team Sip & Chat

Pride Team wrapped up their first full semester with a final gathering to bring the year to a close with a great discussion on ideas that will help to bring about the necessary changes needed for LGBTQIA+ members of our campus community to truly feel a sense of belonging. Joining us was special guest Alexa Williamson, Alexa is the Black Organizing Program (BOP) program organizer, who uses her platform to amplify the voices of our most marginalized populations, with a focus on helping to bridge the gap in health and education disparities with the Black and LGBTQIA+ communities. For more information about the Black Organizing Program or to get involved, reach out to our program organizer Alexa Williamson at alexa.williamson@ppmi.org.

IDEA Fellows Health & Wellness Workshop

The Office of Equity & Engagements IDEA Fellow, Akisha Ellington, was inspired by the idea of providing a way for members of our campus community to decompress during this stressful time of the semester, and to participate in an activity centered around aligning one’s passion with purpose to help achieve a state of greater self-awareness and a reimagined sense of purpose. The workshop was presented by Culture Catalyst, Nada Musleh, who took participants on a journey to discover the art of wellness through self-reflection using meditation, vision board exercise using a technique known as the ‘Wheel of Life,’ and alas, and the opportunity to create a new vision and mission statement using the results from the interactive experience.



EVENT PHOTOS FROM FALL 2023

1. December Sip & Chat -Special guest Alexa Williamson, Black Organizing Program Coordinator and LGBTQ Community Liason
2. November indigenous Roundtable. Presenters: Phefelia & Jonathan Nez, Indigenous Ambassadors, Community Leaders & Human Rights Advocates; Rachel Yazzie, Indigenous Ambassador, Phi Theta Kappa Alumni, TRIO Alumni & Disability Advocate; Stormie Jacobs Wakemup, Division Director of Residential and Family Healing & Vice Chair on a Tribal College Board of Regents; Cordero Holmes, Indigenous Leader, Phi Theta Kappa Alumni & Jack Kent Cooke Scholar
3. IDEA Fellows Health & Wellness: Schoolcraft College student, TaQuilla Kusero, Neal Maheshwari
4. IDEA Fellows Health & Wellness: Catreese Qualls, Matthew Morrow, Akisha Ellington

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