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Equity & Inclusion Matters - Issue 1

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EQUITY & INCLUSION MATTERS

Otterbein's Office of Diversity: Making the Invisible Visible



Scores of students rally in front of Towers after an ugly incident of racism that occurred in a residence hall. Administrators promise action.

OTTERBEIN RESPONDS WITH ZERO TOLERANCE

After an ugly incident of racial slurs in a residence hall last winter, and a student rally to bring attention to the slurs, Otterbein administrators promised to act. Student expectations were high and Otterbein is taking action.

Diversity training for faculty and administrators was scheduled through spring and fall faculty conferences,

each with a diversity, inclusion and equity focus. Kimberly Brazwell facilitated an interactive workshop, "Engaging Dynamic Tension in the Classroom" in fall, while professor Suzanne Ashworth gave a presentation on gender and inclusivity at Otterbein.

On Oct. 11, Otterbein will host an all-administrators and staff conference on diversity and inclusion. All campus offices will be closed for the day so that all employees may attend.

In addition, a new landing page on the Otterbein web page will include a more visible and user-friendly portal to show diversity, inclusion and equity efforts underway on campus.



Rowda Moallin, Claudia Owusu, Ladan Barnes, and Taren Boone discuss issues of equity and inclusion at spring faculty conference.

CALENDAR

Oct. 4

Vice Presidential Debate Screening
8:30-11 p.m.

Oct. 9 (Campus Center Lounge) &

Oct. 19 (Clements Lounge)

Presidential Debate Screenings
In collaboration with the Center for
Community Engagement
8:30-11 p.m.

Oct. 15

Salsa and Bachata Night (HOLA)
House of Black Culture (HBC)
Come learn the Salsa and Bachata
9 p.m.

Oct. 26

Town Hall: Creating an Inclusive
Environment
In collaboration with the Center for
Community Engagement
4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

November

National American Indian
Heritage Month



Otterbein representatives attended NCORE in San Francisco to learn best practices regarding issues of race and ethnicity.

OTTERBEIN FACULTY, STUDENTS, STAFF LEARN BEST PRACTICES AT NCORE

Otterbein faculty, staff and students attended the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE) in San Francisco, a place for building skills, alliances and knowledge about issues of race and ethnicity in higher education.

Otterbein attendees included director James Prysock of Otterbein's office of diversity, education professor Erica Womack, modern languages professor Kristina Escondo, residency assistant director Nino Bradley and students Keith Pace, Damarris Murphy and Brandon Bruner.

"THE CONFERENCE HELPED ENCOURAGE ME TO REDEFINE OUR MISSION AND MAKE OUR EFFORTS TO CREATE A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY MORE INTENTIONAL."

— JAMES PRYSOCK

Among the favorite sessions Otterbein pros enjoyed were topics of freshman diversity experiences, the role of diversity officers in college leadership, international perspectives on race, and responding to systematic racism on campus.

"NCORE was a very eye-opening experience," said Prysock. "I learned so much about different cultures and subcultures outside of my own. The conference helped encourage me to redefine our mission and make our efforts to create a diverse and inclusive community more intentional. At many conferences, you are mainly exposed to the theories that impact campus culture. However, at NCORE we were exposed to the direct applications of those theories that will help us generate new ideas and tailor best practices to Otterbein."

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings!

Last year, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee wanted to identify a way to inform our campus community on our ongoing efforts to develop a more inclusive campus culture. Diversity and inclusion is one of our institutional values and is most efficient when all levels of our community participate.

As a result, the committee will release a newsletter each semester that outlines some of the amazing work that is being done on campus as well as identify some areas of growth. Our hope is that you capitalize on the wonderful opportunities that are available to you and most importantly discover your role within this work.

This directly reflects the mission of our Diversity office. The mission of our office is to foster intellectual excellence and true integration of a diverse university population into all aspects of academic and co-curricular life. Our goal is to support the facilitation of your collegiate/professional success as we navigate this shared community. We believe that in order to do so, creating a community that is accepting and inclusive with respect to class, culture, ethnicity, religion, gender, race and life experiences is critical in the educational process.

I challenge each member of the Otterbein community to step outside of their comfort zone to become more knowledgeable, multi-literate, engaged, responsible and inquisitive individuals. By accepting this challenge, you will learn invaluable lessons about yourself as well as others.

Sincerely,

James E. Prysock III



In a recent Otterbein residential student survey,

19%

said they have cut the size of a meal or skipped a meal because they didn't have enough money for food in the last six months.

STUDENTS KEEP PROMISE TO EACH OTHER

By Erica Meier '17

The majority of college students admit that money causes stress in their everyday lives. This stress ranges from mild discomfort in relying on parents to pay, to not having enough money to buy the next meal.

A group of students at Otterbein is taking action by creating a safe environment for their peers who struggle with food insecurities. The Promise House, located in the Commons apartment complex, was created, breaking socio-economic barriers on campus since November 2015.

"Promise House is a place to hang out and get to know new people," says sophomore and co-founder Haylie Schmol. "It is a support system put in place by our fellow peers to ensure that no student on campus feels unsupported, unwelcomed or alone."

The Promise House is a student-led center that provides a Community Café, emergency meal swipes, free food and toiletries, financial literacy information, volunteer opportunities and referrals to community resources. Any member of the Otterbein community can receive these items free.

So, what's the catch? In exchange, students are asked to give back to the community in some small way to support their fellow peers: that's the Promise House Promise.

The pantry is fueled by donations from faculty, staff, and organizations inside and outside Otterbein.

"The Otterbein community has always been one of the most generous and outgoing, especially for those in need," says senior and co-founder David Parkison.

At the 2016 Columbus Pride Parade, from left to right: Amy Parsons (Library), German Vargas (Center for Teaching and Learning), James Prysock (Office of Diversity) and Bill Stoddard (Library).





The Muslim prayer space was created as a place for worship and prayer.

NEW MUSLIM PRAYER SPACE OPENS ON CAMPUS

A Muslim prayer space, or masjid, is now part of Clements Hall, providing Muslims on campus a place to practice their religious services in a quiet and contemplative environment. New drywall, carpet and other amenities were installed to turn the unused room into a new place of worship.

“Otterbein is very serious about inclusion, and this is inclusion,”

said university chaplain Judy Guion-Utsler. “This is a place not just for students, but for Muslim faculty and staff as well. Creating this space actively demonstrates the institution’s commitment to welcoming all who want to learn.”

Otterbein University is home to 24 self-identified Muslim students and a few faculty and staff. Beginning with the formation of the Muslim

Student Association (MSA) during the 2013-14 school year, a need was put forth by MSA for a prayer space to be established on campus.

Muslims conduct ritual prayers five times a day, so a convenient and accessible space to fit into busy university schedules was much needed.

BY THE NUMBERS

18: Number of gender neutral restrooms across campus

135 of 709: Number of students of color who confirmed their intention to enroll in the current freshman class, including a 114 percent increase in Hispanic students and 44 percent increase in African-American students

2015: When Garst Hall “open space” began, a place to congregate for students of all genders and sexualities interested in living in a safe, supportive environment

First: Tau Delta sorority, the university’s first official gender-neutral Greek Life organization and house