

June 18, 2021

Dear CSD Students, Alumni and Friends,

As we celebrate Juneteenth, this is a good opportunity to update you on our continuing efforts to better understand racism in America, our program and engage in dialogue that results in meaningful action, and work for transformational change here in CSD. Over the past year, the CSD faculty have implemented many of our plans to encourage diversity, inclusivity and equity for all.

Our goal remains two-pronged: First, creating an environment in which our students, faculty and staff feel welcome and supported before, during and after their time in our program. Second, strengthening our training programs so that entry-level professionals have developed the appropriate knowledge and skills related to cultural humility as well as implementing culturally and linguistically responsive practices.

The following describes some updates of activity in this area.

- CSD faculty completed additional opportunities to engage in training about anti-racism, implicit bias, unconscious bias, and cultural humility.
 - CSD faculty participated in a semester long group discussion based on the book “*So You Want to Talk About Race*”, by Ijeoma Oluo. This has helped increase our own awareness about systemic racism not only in our communities but also within the systems where we work.
 - We have all participated in some type of additional training offered by the university related to anti-racism in general or in CSD (ASHA, UK Center for Equality and Social Justice, or other offering).
 - In February, Dr. Anne Olson supported a college initiative spearheaded by the CHS DEI committee where she along with other CHS faculty spoke with students from Kentucky State University (KSU) who are considering health care professions and were all from URM backgrounds.
 - Mikailyn Maddox is serving on a newly created UK Diversity Access Team which is composed of various campus partners and diversity recruiters to support newly recruited students from underrepresented students.
 - Dr. Janine Schmedding Bartley serves on the College Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and supports college wide initiatives.
 - We currently have an open faculty position for which we are actively, and intentionally recruiting individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- We held CSD student and alumni focus groups for those from diverse backgrounds in the of Spring 2021. The purpose of these focus groups was to obtain perspectives about approaches

for creating supportive environments for persons from diverse backgrounds, strategies for networking with students during their program, and strategies to promote anti-racist policies within our program. External facilitators led the focus groups. Results are being reviewed over the summer.

- The CSD admissions policy for both the undergraduate and graduate program was revised. The purpose of this was to increase opportunity and reduce barriers to admission to our programs for persons from diverse backgrounds.
 - For the graduate program, this included waiving of GRE tests for 3 academic years, moving to the CSDCAS portal admissions system, and including a virtual interview component to determine non-academic qualities.
 - For the undergraduate program, the changes included waiving of ACT/SAT test scores for 3 academic years.
- We expanded our participation in the College Diversity Pipeline initiative, a program that has led to some early positive results including this story about a new undergraduate student in CSD. Here is a link to a news article describing this person.
<https://www.uky.edu/chs/about/news/diversity-pipeline-has-already-started-bringing-talented-students>

- Finally, we were able to start a mentoring program by matching our current students from diverse backgrounds with local and regional professionals and alumni:
 - Mariah Morton - UK alum and doctoral student at Auburn University
 - Sharrell Barnes – UK alum and SLP at Child Development Center of the Bluegrass (Lexington)
 - Kinya Embry - WKU alum and SLP at Heuser Hearing Institute (Louisville) and current doc student in the UK Rehabilitation and Health Sciences PhD program
 - Kimberly Taylor – UK alum and SLP in Bourbon County.

Our sincere thanks to Mariah, Sharrell, Kinya and Kimberly for your support of our students. Your mentorship matters!

If anyone else is interested in serving as a mentor for a student from an underrepresented background, please contact Anne Olson (aolso2@uky.edu)

We recognize that our work in diversity, equity and inclusion must be ongoing, intentional, and meaningful. To this we are sincerely committed.

We will keep working on our goals, and continue to keep you informed of our progress. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out and share your thoughts.

Warmly and Respectfully,
ADO