Inclusive Excellence in 2013

A student from a UNH writing course asked us why UNH has an Office of Inclusive Excellence. Our answer may be found in the words of Dr. Melissa Harris-Perry who said, “In a democracy, recognition matters. Everyone wants to be seen as who they are. If they are not, then it’s impossible for them to enjoy the experience of being full citizens.” The Office of Faculty Development and Inclusive Excellence works within the institutional structure and campus community to recognize people from a diversity of experiences. We work to eliminate barriers and invite all to add their individual talent to become active participants in the community. The IE Office hosts Mentoring programs on research, writing and service toward promotion and tenure while ensuring that the campus offers an equitable and welcoming environment.

The President’s Commissions advocate for access through programs, employment and education.
Our Interim Vice Provost

Christine Shea is the Interim Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Inclusive Excellence. She coordinates the programs that ensure a diverse and thriving faculty, staff and student body that prepares students to be open minded, constructive and productive citizens of the world.

At UNH, we define diversity as “any underrepresented group”, and we engage in a broad range of initiatives that seek
(1) to increase the percentage of first-generation, low income participants in college and university education,
(2) continue the work with GLBTQ advocates of ensuring safety and equity for all individuals regardless of sexual orientation and gender expression,
(3) attract an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse population to our campus,
(4) support women in underrepresented disciplines.

Dr. Shea is co-Principal Investigator and member of the team that has received a $3.5 million Institutional Transformation cooperative agreement from the National Science Foundation to develop policies and practices to advance women faculty in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines. Her role is to institutionalize those practices to apply to all UNH faculty.

Dr. Shea has taught courses in operations management, technology and innovation management, and project and program management, and her research has focused on leadership and innovation performance. As associate dean of graduate programs and research from 2008-12, Shea oversaw the school’s MBA, MS in Accounting, MS in Management Technology, MA and Ph.D. in Economics, and supported faculty in their research. She was instrumental in expanding the school’s international partnerships, building substantive relationships leading to university-level agreements and school-level implementation plans, including dual degrees and faculty exchanges. Shea led the development and implementation of the online MBA program, UNH’s first online degree program.

Since 2007, she has worked with UNH colleagues to support women faculty in the STEM disciplines. The new grant received from the NSF has a goal to build an institution free of bias in its recruiting, retention and promotion policies & practices towards underrepresented minorities, improving campus climate for all.
UNH celebrated the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the 23rd annual program of events including inter-faith and multi-faith services, a keynote honoring the dream of a more inclusive, compassionate community, and a forum with Rob Dixon and Professor Winston Thompson that addressed both benefits and disparities in public and private schools.

Rob Dixon delivered the Commemorative Address, “Are You Making Your Mark?” in which he advocated for students to search for new insights in their communities in order to become leaders in a world of challenging and changing realities. Participants enjoyed stunning presentations by Anna Argeropolous in her interpretive dance performance accompanied by Cellist Cameron Sawzin, vocalist Tricia Whitlock in “My Country Tis of Thee” accompanied by Drummer Julie Corey. Noha Elmohands delivered her thought-provoking poem and the final call to action.
This year marks the 150th anniversary of President Lincoln’s *Emancipation Proclamation* and the 50th anniversary of Dr. King’s *I Have A Dream* speech. The 23rd Annual UNH Celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. remembered him as a driving force in the push for racial equality in the 1950’s and the 1960’s. A Baptist minister and intellectual, Dr. King invoked the Declaration of Independence as the standard to which we must aspire in order to create freedom and equality for all people. The fourth celebration program honored UNH students who support the dream of more inclusive, compassionate communities. We asked six student leaders, “What inspired you and what sustains you in your work for justice?”

UNH student activists facilitated roundtable discussions asking “What motivates or has motivated you to take a stand?” How you will make your mark to gain human rights and freedom for all?

_Visiting the MUB Wall display on the 3rd floor lobby during March, meant seeing images of UNH student leadership for social change and learning how organizations and offices are making a difference. Students posted their actions: “I speak out against hate.” “I attended Leadership Camp.” “I’m a DXP Multicultural Sorority member.” “I’m a SHARPP Community Educator.” “I saved people from a fire.” “I start conversations that need to be had.” “I listen.” “I organize sustainable international aid projects.” “I promote love and compassion.”

Panelists Kenna Smith, Alex Loughran Lamothe, Catherine Lee, Ben Trollo, Emily Dickman, Merhawi Wells-Bogue, and Megan Brabec shared how they make a difference.
In February, The UNH President’s Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities co-hosted the Students with Disabilities Panel Discussion.

Six students described their positive outcomes with UNH’s Disability Services for Students (DSS). They sought accommodations that would provide them opportunities to participate fully in UNH learning communities.

Introducing themselves as panelists first, the students then shared their experiences and a spectrum of disabilities including dyslexia, attention deficit, head injury and Becker’s muscular dystrophy. Their descriptions of life on campus brought awareness to the community about DSS for all students at UNH and the idea of universal access as a human right.

We’re not all the same...We should work together. Different minds complement each other.

-Dr. Temple Grandin, Colorado State University
Forty-one years ago, Wayne April requested a meeting space in the MUB for the first gay student organization at UNH. He wanted a place for the group to meet and give voice to both issues and progress in the campus community.

Governor Meldrin Thompson threatened to pull all university funding if the gays were granted access to funding for their proposed student organization. That was 1972.

Fast forward: It’s April 9, 2013, and nearly 300 people gather in the MUB Granite State Room to hear NH State Governor Maggie Hassan as the keynote speaker at the Annual Pancake Breakfast. She traces NH’s progress from not recognizing gay couples’ rights to passing civil union in 2007 to equal marriage in 2009, which she said serves to strengthen families and the state’s economy. She adds, “Inclusiveness is part of our history, starting with the immigrant populations, with women entering into the political process and with more accessibility for people with disabilities. Hassan told community members, “You should be proud of yourselves. You’re part of the American story and the American mission. The strong resolve to succeed over 41 years has brought much progress. Like most battles in equality, it has taken a long time,” Hassan said of the challenges met for civil rights for couples of all sexual orientations. “Equal inclusion is the key to a thriving nation. Every time we bring more people in from the margins into the heart and soul of democracy, we get stronger.” She concluded: “You have a lot of work to do, and we need you. Keep working.”

The breakfast tradition continues to recognize community members for their outstanding efforts in fostering understanding and advancing opportunities for the GLBTQI+ community. Kidder Awardees were Barbara Jago, Professor of Communications at UNH-M, Tamsin Whitehead, staff and graduate student in Women’s Studies, and Alexander Loughran Lamothe UNH senior.

Pink Triangle Awards to honor leaders and heroes were presented to those who made outstanding contributions to efforts for equity and visibility for the GLBTQI community: Sara Dillingham, Professor Paul McNamara and Seacoast Outright, for its twentieth year of support and advocacy to change the climate of GLBTQQ youth.

The mission of the President’s Commission on the Status of GLBT Issues is to facilitate the development of a university community that understands and appreciates the value of inclusive excellence of people of all sexual orientations and gender expressions.
On March 27, the President’s Commission on the Status of Women presented awards to those who have promoted equal educational opportunities for women by increasing the status of women, serving as role models for women on campus, and/or making a difference with programs and policies. Provost Aber opened the program, praising the commission’s work.

Courtney D. Marshall, English and Women’s Studies Professor, was presented the Women’s Commission Faculty Award; Faina Bukher, Women’s Studies, Assistant to the Coordinator, was presented the Stephanie Thomas Staff Award; Suzanne Sonneborn, Health Education Counselor at Health Education and Promotion, The Stephanie Thomas Staff Award; Emily Klein, Graduate Student Award; Lauren Banker, Undergraduate Student Award; and WildActs Social Justice Theater Troupe, The Joyce Gibbs Award.

Keynote speaker Jessica Valenti, founder of Feministing.com told UNH audiences, “This is why I’m a feminist this month,” and she cited from a list of facts and news stories concerned with women’s health, reproductive rights, and the wage gap. The icon of the Fourth Wave Feminist Movement reminded us that feminism isn’t just about women’s rights; it’s about rights and the equality of all people, no matter their gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, class, or age. She called on UNH to speak up when oppression takes place, “whatever that may mean to you.”

Christine Shea, Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Inclusive Excellence, encouraged people to help change campus culture. She announced plans for the NSF Advance Grant, which invites inclusivity for all.

Dr. Shea congratulated the award winners and thanked supporters of the Women’s Commission.

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Who Needs Feminism?

. . . Anyone who cares about rights and the equality of all people of all genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, religions, economic classes, and age groups. Women's Commission keynote Jessica Valenti urged us to join a march - in the street or on-line. Join a kitchen table conversation - or join a blog discussion. People who go on Twitter find blogs that interest them. It's a great start, says Valenti. “Just add your experience and find out how feminism is fun, cool, and edgy!”