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UNO News Maverick Daily: 11/11/2015, Message from Chancellor Christensen on Inclusivity

UNO News University of Nebraska at Omaha

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Message from Chancellor Christensen on Inclusivity

2015/11/11

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Below is a message conveyed to University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) students, faculty, and staff, regarding UNO's dedication to maintaining a safe, inclusive campus.

Dear Maverick Family,

I want to take a moment to briefly address the significant events surrounding inclusivity that have taken place recently at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and other campuses around the country, and what it means for our campus as we continue the important work of fostering and growing an inclusive and equitable community here at UNO.

First and foremost, I want you all to know that our campus faculty and staff are dedicated to maintaining a safe and supportive campus community that welcomes and includes individuals from all backgrounds and beliefs. Please know it is my expectation, that together, we will not tolerate hateful or biased activities on campus. Period. The power of being a Maverick is the value of being an independent thinker. Above all, that must be protected and celebrated. I want all students to be included and heard.

It is a point of pride to me that our campus is recognized as being the most diverse university in the State of Nebraska. I continue to believe our commitment to both recognizing and welcoming our differences is what makes UNO such a special place to learn and work.

As we consider our shared responsibility to growing and strengthening our inclusive community, I want to make you aware of several important initiatives currently underway at UNO.



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currently underway at UNO.

These are highlights to make sure all community members know the work being done and the resources available to all of you:

Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team

Earlier this semester, the Senior Vice Chancellor, BJ Reed, and Vice Chancellor, Dan Shipp, charged a campus leadership team comprised of key faculty and staff to begin the process of creating a strategic plan for equity and inclusion at UNO. The creation of this strategic plan will involve the entire campus community in a critical conversation about how we can better pursue our goal of strengthening a more inclusive campus community for all faculty, staff, and students.

The member of this leadership team include:

- Dr. Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado
- Dr. Theresa Barron-McKeagney
- James Freeman
- Cecil Hicks
- James McCarty

Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART)

Over the course of the past semester, representatives of our campus community began meeting to discuss an appropriate response to reports of hate and/or bias. This led to the creation of UNO's Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART). The purpose of the group is to gather information about hate and/or bias incidents and support those who have become, or witnessed someone become, a target of hate or bias at UNO.

It is the group's intention to increase opportunities for communication and help facilitate restorative justice-based resolutions for students, staff, and faculty whenever possible; collect data demonstrating how student, staff, and faculty experiences affect overall campus climate; and address incidents and issues as they are identified through trainings or other means that will improve the campus climate.

To report concerns or to find out more about BART, please go to <http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/student-safety/help-myself/bias-hate-support.php>.

If you would like a representative of the team to come speak to your department or organization, contact Jeff Knapp at jwknapp@unomaha.edu.

The team is happy to serve as a resource in helping to strengthen the inclusive and accepting community for all Mavericks.

Office of Equity, Access and Diversity

Established to streamline diversity efforts at UNO, the Office of Equity, Access and Diversity (EAD) leads the campus-wide effort to develop and sustain an

inclusive and supportive campus climate by ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to reach their career and learning goals.

Located on the second floor of the Eppley Administration Building, EAD is available to all members of the UNO community. EAD investigates allegations of illegal discrimination and harassment and generates campus affirmative action plans for women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

For training and other resources provided by EAD, visit <http://www.unomaha.edu/office-of-equity-access-and-diversity/resources/index.php>.

If you ever feel like you are being discriminated against or harassed or if you would like to learn more about EAD, contact Charlotte Russell at crussell@unomaha.edu.

Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

In Fall 2015, UNO opened the doors of the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC). <http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/inclusion/gender-sexuality-resource-center.php>

The mission of the GSRC is to foster and promote equity, access, and inclusion for all genders and sexualities through education, resources, advocacy, and activism. This office provides specific programs and services for women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, intersex, asexual, non-straight, gender non-conforming, queer and/or trans* spectrum (LGBTQIA+) peoples, and survivors of interpersonal violence. Gender and sexuality based needs this office addresses include LGBTQ+ inclusivity and activism, bystander intervention, pay equity, and sexual and reproductive justice, just to name a few.

Due to construction at the MBSC, the GSRC is currently at its temporary location inside the Welcome Center. Please note the Gender and Sexual Orientation and Women's Resource Center student government agencies will remain in the MBSC through construction.

If you would like more information about the GSRC or if you are interested in becoming an active ally, contact Jessi Hitchins at jhitchins@unomaha.edu.

These highlights are just a few examples of our collective work to make sure that the UNO campus is welcoming to all people.

If you have any questions or if you are interested in being a part of this work, please email unoInclusivity@unomaha.edu and we will connect you with the appropriate resource/s on campus.

Our thoughts are with the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Missouri as they grapple with these very real and serious issues.

John Christensen
Chancellor

Contact Us

If you have a story idea, news tip or inquiry please contact:

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