The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement strives to accomplish the fulfillment of the UT Dallas commitment to embrace, enhance, and celebrate diversity at all levels of the University and our community through the efforts of faculty, staff, students, the executive leadership, and community partnerships. UT Dallas aspires to be a leader in promoting diversity to reach the highest levels of excellence.

Our vision of diversity involves removing false barriers, so that every person with desire and promise who is willing to work hard can have the opportunity to reach his or her goals in a challenging global and diverse community. This vision includes increasing the number of women who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as mentoring and supporting talented students who may not have the funds for college. Our vision involves providing the inspiration, the resources and the environment in which to embrace, enhance and celebrate diversity everywhere at UT Dallas, from the classroom to the facility offices to the incoming class.

I invite you to share that vision, to understand that there is much more to be done, and to take an active role in making this vision a reality. It is only with your generosity and participation that we can have tools, talents and resources required to embrace the power of diversity at this University, and reap the benefits it brings.

As we continue our progress to the top tier of research institutions, the following channels for your commitment and generosity will have a profound impact that will span generations.
HOW WE BEGAN
BY THE GALERTSTEIN’S WOMEN CENTER

Two rooms, a desk and a chair. With these scant resources, the Galerstein Women Center (GWC) began in the Student Life Suite of the Student Union. It was the fall of 1996.

The idea of a campus organization for women began with discussions of faculty women who were meeting regularly as the Association for Professional Women (APW), primarily established to address issues such as recruitment of women, harassment, tenure, equity, support, maternity leave and networking. Work towards intentional change was begging to be continued, as the original seeds were already planted through the efforts of Dr. Carolyn Galerstein, the first female dean at UT Dallas. Although feminist ideology was dormant, no protests of sexism or gender discrimination, no petitions, no climate of activism, still, there were issues that women noticed, and noticed, and noticed.

For the last 14 years, the GWC has answered the call for support and representation in harassment and equity cases, provided training on sexual assault prevention and addressed safety issues on campus. We provide a safe haven for those needing counseling and resources and bring women of distinction and motivation to speak of their accomplishments, while honoring women at UT Dallas who shine in their academic and professional careers. We advise and mentor several women organizations that have expressed a passion for activism and service, and nurtured the beginning steps of feminism and activism. The UT Dallas LGBTQ community has grown and prospered, and the GWC has been the guiding force in developing Safe Zone Ally Training to support an environment of inclusiveness.

Students are welcome to drop by the GWC on the 4th floor of the Student Services Building to find out what’s new or check out our website at http://www.utdallas.edu/womenscenter/ and Facebook page
Today’s social environment has become a wonderful world full of diversity; however, with this comes the challenge of finding ways to understand, interact, work and live with each other while respecting our cultural differences. The Diversity Dinner Dialogues was created for just that purpose. The program is designed to provide participants the opportunity to hear and share diverse perspectives on a variety of cultural topics. Each dinner activity focuses on a different diversity topic. The program is held in a safe, comfortable environment and is structured to enhance positive communication while allowing for the expression of cultural differences. The topics from previous dinners are ethnicity, politics, traditions, religion, generations, access ability and gender. The topics for the upcoming dinners are in the process of being developed.

The Diversity dinner Dialogues has become a signature event hosted by the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement and the Multicultural Center. This year the program added a second part to the dinners for participants who would like take the conversation to an even higher level.

Here is what past participants said about the dialogues:
“Excellent platform to discuss a very important topic in a safe environment.”
“I had to get out of my comfort zone, but it was worth it.”

The first event was held in the spring of 2008. Since then, over 400 participants have taken part in this activity. The event is open to all students, staff, faculty and community members. The next events are scheduled for November 2011 and March 2012.

The basic premise underlying this activity is based on psychology principles. When you learn something new about another person, you tend to treat them a little differently based on this new information. When you learn about individuals from other cultures, you will begin to see things in a different way, dispelling misperceptions and stereotypes. As a result, your interactions with others will become more positive and void of cultural mistakes. This will, in turn, increase your level of cultural competency, a highly valued leadership skill in today’s multicultural corporate environment or more simply put by the motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, “You treat people like you see them.”

For more information on the Diversity Dinner Dialogues and other cultural events hosted by the Multicultural center, visit the Multicultural Center website, www.utdallas.edu/multicultural or join us at facebook.com/UTD.MC.
The second annual Diversity Scholarship recipients were selected this summer. The goal of this program is to increase the diversity of students enrolling at UT Dallas. These 20 freshmen and transfer students will be arriving at UT Dallas in fall 2011. The students were selected for this $2,500 renewable scholarship because they demonstrated academic excellence and financial need. The Diversity Scholarship recipients also receive academic and personal support from staff in the Department of Community Engagement and the Multicultural Center.

“This scholarship is much more than money for tuition,” said Raul Hinojosa Jr., UT Dallas director of community engagement. “The award comes with a commitment from the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement to help the students throughout their undergraduate careers through regular academic check-ups and other social networking opportunities.”

The scholarship recipients join the 20 students selected in the 2010 inaugural class for the Diversity Scholarship. The students receiving the scholarship this year are listed below. For more information about the program or to support the Diversity Scholarship, please contact Raul Hinojosa Jr. at raul.hinojosa@utdallas.edu.

Diana Alatalo, Lunenburg, MA, electrical engineering
Hassan Allahrakha, Allen, TX biology
Mito Are, Muntinlupa City, Manila, Philippines, computer science
Karen Carrasco, Dallas, TX, psychology neuroscience
Yisacor Daniel, Plano, TX, business
Cristina Garcia, Dallas, TX, political science and public policy
Judit Guzman, Dallas, TX, mathematics and computer science
Peter-Huy Tran, Garden Grove, CA, biology
Ali G. Kocan, Ankara, Turkey, accounting and finance
Anna Morales, Houston, TX, biology

For more information on the Diversity Scholarship and other scholarships sponsored by the Department of Community Engagement, visit their website, www.utdallas.edu/diversity/departments/community-engagement.