The 2014 Diversity Awards Ceremony celebrated and showcased community, staff, faculty, and student efforts in maintaining a commitment to the mission of diversity. The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement (ODCE) marked its 5th anniversary while celebrating being ranked for the first time among the top 25 most ethnically diverse student populations in the country, according to U.S. News and World Report. This year, the Diversity Awards brought over 250 guests together in the UT Dallas Alexander Clark Center to celebrate the culmination of ODCEs many programs and initiatives throughout the year. The ceremony included:

- A special performance by the winners of UT Dallas Slam Poetry Competition.
- A testimonial by a UT Dallas Diversity Retention Scholarship Recipient.
- Recognition of the 2014 UT Dallas Champions of Diversity. The awards recognized faculty, staff, students, community and corporate awardees.
- Special guest speaker Ms. Cheryl Brown Henderson – from the historic Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education landmark case – spoke on the topic: “Why Diversity Matters”

The mission of the office is to embrace, enhance and celebrate diversity at all levels of the University and the community through the efforts of faculty, staff, students, the executive leadership and community partnerships.
Faculty Diversity
Faculty Mentoring Program

Faculty mentoring programs are a significant way of starting one's time as a fledgling faculty member at a university. UT Dallas's Faculty Mentoring Program not only ensures faculty productivity, but truly highlights UTD's commitment to a balanced faculty development. The program is sponsored by four core partners: the Office of the Provost, the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement, the Galerstein Women's Center, and the Office of Educational Enhancement.

According to Carlos Busso, the program further's skills that include time management, teaching practice, and tips for writing research. Busso adds to the diversity of UTD by offering undergraduates as well as graduate researchers a place in his lab. Currently, he has two undergraduate researchers, one of whom is Hispanic. He hopes that by allowing undergraduates in his lab and spending time with mentoring and teaching, he can encourage their learning. Busso says he feels the program holds value he shares with incoming faculty and he hopes the program is continued.

Nadine Connell states that the program is an example of UT Dallas's commitment to balanced faculty development. It offered her the opportunity to meet senior faculty, network with various departments, and learn strategies on a beginning faculty experience. Connell has designed orientations in previous positions, and feels that the UT Dallas program is highly feedback oriented. It was especially important, she says, in terms of grant writing, since grant structures differ by university. She feels that it is also important for new faculty for developing soft skills such as responding to reviewers, and dealing with graduate issues.

As an offshoot of the UT Dallas Faculty Mentoring Program, Connell has started another program, called Agraphia, as a writing accountability and support group for faculty in their first three years at UTD. It continues where the mentoring program leaves off, offering peer support and writing focus.

ODCE Welcomes New Vice President

Public education advocate Dr. George Fair, who has served as dean of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies since 1994, has been appointed to the position of vice president for diversity and community engagement at The University of Texas at Dallas.

Fair began his education career as a mathematics teacher in Pittsburgh Public Schools in 1966, before he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army, Artillery Branch, in June of that year. Fair served on active duty from March 1967 to January 1969, including one year in Vietnam.

In 1970, he returned to teaching and earned a master's degree in special education. Fair went on to teach special education and returned to the University of Pittsburgh in 1971.

Fair joined the UT Dallas faculty as an assistant professor in the special education program in 1975 after earning his PhD in special education and educational research from the University of Pittsburgh. He has taught in the School of Interdisciplinary Studies since 1989.

In addition to continuing his role as dean, Fair will oversee The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement, which includes Faculty Diversity, Institutional Diversity Initiatives, Community Engagement, the Multicultural Center and the Galerstein Women's Center. The mission of the office is to embrace, enhance and celebrate diversity at all levels of the University and the community through the efforts of faculty, staff, students, the executive leadership and community partnerships.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Young Wise Investigators

Bright students attending two area schools in the Dallas Independent School District, Irma Rangel Young Women’s Leadership School and Hillcrest High School, have the opportunity to develop skills that advance them towards STEM field careers. While competing in a project which awards to the top nine participants a scholarship to the University of Texas at Dallas.

Young Wise Investigators (YWISEI) is a program in its second year, offering 30 girls an opportunity to design a year-long STEM project in ten teams of three, while being mentored by UTD STEM students and professors, as well as professionals from Texas Instruments. A TI information blog is available to the girls, as well as their UTD mentor support system. YWISEI began in the 2012-2013 school year, and is sponsored by the Texas Instruments Foundation and the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement (ODCE). This program gives girls the needed emphasis on STEM topics to be competitive with male counterparts, as well as enhancing collaborative efforts: something essential in many STEM fields. These future leaders are just girls in our community advancing by being involved in a program designed to close the gender gap in STEM fields.

Data from a 2013 White House release on girls and women in STEM, states that in 2009 only 24% of STEM careers were held by women, and that the wage gap between genders is narrower in these fields than other fields. By providing girls with opportunity, we give them a chance to be as successful as their male counterparts. According to President Obama, “One of the things that I really strongly believe in is that we need to have more girls interested in math, science, and engineering. We’ve got half the population that is way underrepresented in those fields and that means that we’ve got a whole bunch of talent ... that is not being encouraged...” This program is one way to encourage this talent.
DIVERSITY AWARDS AND SOIRÉE

On Friday April 25, the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement held the annual Diversity Awards Ceremony. The 2014 Diversity Awards Ceremony celebrated and showcased community, staff, faculty, and student efforts in maintaining a commitment to the mission of diversity. This year, the Diversity Awards brought over 250 guests together in the UT Dallas Alexander Clark Center to celebrate the culmination of ODCE’s many programs and initiatives throughout the year.

Ramona Logan served as Mistress of Ceremonies, guiding the keynote speaker, presenters, and awardees through the afternoon. The national anthem was performed by Dhunki, a South Asian a cappella group founded at UT Dallas. Cheryl Brown-Henderson, daughter of Reverend Brown of Brown v. the Board of Education, former educator, leader, and equal rights activist, gave the keynote address, entitled “Why Diversity Matters.”

Ms. Brown-Henderson reminded the audience of both the distance that we have come as a country, as well as how far we have to go, using both historical events experienced as a nation, and personal vignettes in keeping her listeners involved.

During the events, LaToya Mitchell, recipient of the Diversity Scholarship took a few minutes to address the audience with her testimonial, and the winners of this year’s Diversity Poetry Competition gave a performance of their winning poem. The competition was based on attendance and participation in four different poetry workshops held on campus this year.

Awards were presented to, as well as recipients of this year’s Student Diversity Award, Inclusive Excellence and Intercultural Engagement Award, Staff Diversity Award, the Student Organization Diversity Award, Community Champion of Diversity Award, and Corporate Diversity Awards.

George Fair, Ph.D., interim Vice President of the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement gave the closing remarks following the presentation of awards. A reception followed in the lobby outside of the auditorium, with Latin, Asian, Mediterranean cuisine, as well as jazz music, and a raffle of prizes for donations benefitting the ODCE.
Ky “Jacky” Lam
Student Diversity Award

Dr. Thomas Linehan
Inclusive Excellence and Intercultural Engagement Teaching Award

Dr. Robert Ackerman
Inclusive Excellence and Intercultural Engagement Teaching Award

Kevin Mondy
Community Champion of Diversity Award

UT Dallas Career Center
Staff Diversity Award

Lennox International
Corporate Diversity Award

Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority Inc.
Student Organization Diversity Award
Across the country, women have begun to Lean In, connect with one another, take leadership roles, face fears and conquer them, and rejoice in each other’s achievements and accomplishments. These phenomena result from Sheryl Sandberg’s book: Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead. Since its publication, a website has been established, http://www.leanin.org, which offers success stories of risk taking, overcoming adversity, speaking up, as well as guidelines for developing Lean In Circles, and other suggestions for the leadership and goals of women. The Lean In concept is an undercurrent in the movement to change women’s place in the workplace, society, and their personal lives. The Galerstein Women’s Center (GWC) has linked into Lean In as well.

Mission Possible, the theme for the spring semester Lean In, occurred on March 24, 2014. Dinner dialogues sparked by a filming of how the word “bossy” can impact an intelligent young girl by discouraging her from speaking up, possibly deterring achievement. Terry Howard, an employee of Texas Instruments, gave the keynote address. He focused on his grand-daughter Nadia, stating that the way to get men past the fear of equality in the workplace was to focus on their daughters, sisters, and others they would want to be able to work in a dignified workplace. He referred to conversations with anxious mainstream male workers, who were willing to giggle and objectify a scantily clad waitress when out of town attending a conference, yet afraid to ask a female co-worker to coffee for discussion of ideas, to travel with an attractive co-worker, and crying. When he suggested they think of their daughters working in place of the waitresses, their attitudes changed. Howard focused on women’s abilities, and his desires for Nadia and others impacting the future to work in a safe, respectful environment where they are capable of achieving their dreams.

The dessert panel included male advocates of gender change, both in corporate positions, and those who supported the advancement of a spouse by becoming a stay at home parent. Additionally, it included female executives. Much like the keynote and dinner dialogues, there was a focus on how labels can impede advancement. Nadine Connell, and Matthew Polze, members of UTD faculty moderated the panel, who discussed the labels they needed to overcome in order to achieve. The panel concluded with labels it would like to leave the future generation, including their children, for achievement and empowerment.

The conference proved a fruitful one for GWC, with women connecting and exchanging phone numbers, with Leaning In as the buzzing energy of the evening. UT Dallas staff and students are encouraged to attend the designated Lean In Circles.

*Thanks to Viviana Cruz for her perspective on the Fall Lean In, paraphrased here.
The Multicultural Center, Student Union and Activity Board (SUAAB), Black Student Alliance (BSA), and African Student Union (ASU) cosponsored the events for a celebration of culture, triumph and empowerment in Black History Month events at UT Dallas.

Additionally, the Underground Poetry Circus featured the current Individual World Poetry Slam champions, Xero Skidmore and Ed Mabrey. They have been recipients of numerous awards and put a great deal of energy into their performance.

Also included in the celebration of Black History Month were the screenings of three films which chronicle the racial movement towards equality.

- Invictus is a film that portrays post-Apartheid South Africa with Nelson Mandela at its head four years following his release from prison.
- The Butler is a purely American story that spans much of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States from the perspective of a single family.
- The acclaimed Twelve Years a Slave depicts the true story of a free African American man in 1841 New York, working as a skilled carpenter and fiddle player, who is kidnapped and sold into slavery.

Events included Africa Night featuring African culture, food and fashion, a showcase performance of comedian Donnell Rawlings who starred on MTV and the Chappelle Show, a Soul Food Café, catered by Sweet Georgia Brown’s Bar-B-Que, and a Spotlight Music Series at the Pub.

And, to wrap up Black History Month were the Big Dinner, and a drama put on by students entitled “The Production.” The Big Dinner, UT Dallas’ annual African American Heritage Celebration Dinner featured guest speaker Irma P. Hall, Texas native and actress best known for her work in The Ladykillers, and films which featured her in a matriarch role.

**Student leader gives moving and inspirational speech at the 2014 Annual Hispanic Leadership Banquet.**

The following are excerpts from an amazing speech given by Cintia Guerrero.

“My mother taught me to look past the rain because even the rain helped things grow…to have the tenacity and bravery to conquer everything and fight back.”

“It is important to be humble and remember that humility is not a synonym for being poor; it’s for the quality of person you should aspire to be.”

“Every moment that you go through makes you the person you are today and shows you just what you’re capable of. We are the sum of our experiences. It’s up to you to follow your own dreams and aspirations because you never know where you’ll end up. The only way to find out is to take that first step into adventure and believe in yourself, have faith in your abilities, and work hard in achieving whatever it is...
Members of the Student Diversity Advisory Council, the brothers of Omega Delta Phi proposed a public screening of the documentary “The Dream is Now.” The film highlights four case stories of undocumented college students who would benefit from the dream act.

The Dream Act has been a part of legislative discussion since 2001. Opposition began to sway as individual stories raged across internet media, and resistance such as the unconstitutional policies of Arizona’s Arpaio caused a political motivation in the population. On August 15, 2012 President Obama initiated Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) which protects undocumented children from deportation for a temporary allotment of time. DACA itself doesn’t allow for legalization, but does allow these childhood arrivals a method for work permits, economic stability, and temporary deferral of deportation.

The Dream Act offers a way for individuals who arrived in the United States under the age of 16 and meet requirements outlined by its policy to undergo a conditional status that leads to legal residency and citizenship possibility. The Dream Act would enhance the United States economy, and reduce the deficit, increase the strategic defense of the nation, and utilize some of the brightest and most determined minds towards the growth of the United States – individuals whom have already been living here and are willing to offer what they have to a nation they wish to call their own.

Following the screening of the documentary, discussion regarding immigration reform ensued. Edwin Romero spoke about his personal story on being an undocumented immigrant as a child, and how he was locked in immigration facilities during a Student Government trip to Corpus Christi. He is now under the protection of DACA. An increasing number of Americans are beginning to see the fiscal, defense, and innovative thinking advantages of allowing youth raised as Americans, and doing their best to benefit its growth, to take the steps towards citizenship. ODCE supports these efforts, in the name of diversity building a nation. Join us in supporting comprehensive immigration reforms.

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**Save the Date**

04.23.15

**6th Annual Diversity Awards Ceremony and Soirée**

**The Office of Diversity and Community Engagement**

**Reception:**
Doors open at: 3:00 p.m.  
Program: 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Dinner: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Attire: Dressy Business

**Location:**
800 W. Campbell Rd  
Richardson, Texas 75080  
Clark Center CN 1.112

For additional information, contact Rossie Peterson at rpeterso@utdallas.edu or call 972-883-4560