



Fall 2023 Office of DEI Newsletter, Issue 3

Message from the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Dear EMU community and friends,

I am grateful to all of the staff at EMU who worked hard over the summer to ensure we have a great start to the semester. It is exciting to have our students, faculty, and staff back on campus. We have had days full of events and activities as we welcome new and returning students to campus, onboard new faculty, and our returning faculty get back into the rhythm of teaching.

Amidst the celebratory mood on campus, we also recognize that DEI programs throughout the nation are under political pressure to curtail initiatives that move us towards equity and inclusion. We continue to see in the news how many state legislatures are advancing bills that target transgender individuals and discriminate against them. You may also have read the latest US Supreme Court decision on affirmative action—Students for Fair Admissions, Inc., v. President and Fellows of Harvard College—curtailing the practice of considering the race of student applicants as part of the admission process.

At EMU, as I shared in an email this summer in [response to the US Supreme Court ruling](#), we stand together in solidarity with ALL members of our community. Our mission, vision, and values are guided by Micah 6:8—“What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?” Our values demand that we uphold principles of love, compassion, and justice for all individuals. We have the moral responsibility to create an environment where everyone can flourish, feel safe, and be true to their authentic selves. As EMU’s alumna Leyman Gbowee ‘07—2011 Nobel Peace Prize awardee—has stated:

“We must continue to unite in sisterhood to turn our tears into triumph. There is no time to rest until our world achieves wholeness and balance, where all men and women are considered equal and free.”

Inspired by Micah 6:8 and our alumna Leymah Gbowee ‘07, we started our fall semester full of hope, energy, and aspirations. The work you all do matters! And as you can read below, some great things happened last semester, and some extraordinary initiatives are coming next.

In solidarity,

Jacqueline (Jackie) N. Font-Guzmán, MHA,JD, PhD

Get ready to unwrap a delightful surprise hidden within the pages of our newsletter! As you read through the inspiring stories and updates, keep an eye out for a **special treat** waiting just for you. We won't spill the beans just yet, but we promise it's worth the read.

Happy exploring!

Fostering an inclusive learning environment: A message from our Provost

I am honored to serve as EMU's Provost at such an inspiring time for us. Since joining EMU, I have witnessed the excitement and passion from students, faculty, and staff for achieving our aspirational goal of becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive institution. The work of making EMU a more justice-oriented institution requires all of us to participate. The Office of the Provost includes the academic schools, our instructional site in Lancaster, the Washington Community Scholars' Center, Intercultural Programs, Career Services, Academic Advising, and three other centers to name a few. As we engage together the hallmark of significant progress requires us to take on and enact the University's DEIJ priorities.

The Office of the Provost and the Office of DEI are working together to foster an inclusive learning and work environment that promote an understanding of, and appreciation for, as we engage in initiatives, programs, services and training. We celebrate the wealth of diversity that exists in our community and engage together. It is a journey that, in partnership with our students, staff, faculty, and administrators, we pursue to find and promote as many sides of humanity as possible so we can best

deliver on EMU's mission, "to prepare students to learn and serve in a global context."

Tynisha Willingham, PhD



What is coming up in the Fall 2023?

VIEWPOINT
— WITH DENNIS QUAID —

**Get ready to roar together: A
groundbreaking opportunity with Viewpoint!**

Excitement is in the air as we announce a remarkable event coming to EMU on October 24, 2023! Picture this: our very own campus serving as the backdrop for Viewpoint, an esteemed short form educational series hosted by none other than renowned actor and director Dennis Quaid. This isn't just any filming—it's an opportunity to shine a spotlight on EMU's commitment to education, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid, a show broadcasted on Public Television Stations, has handpicked our university to feature in their upcoming season. They recognize the work we do to maintain an inclusive academic

environment and want to showcase our DEI story to a nationwide audience. How amazing is that? They even mentioned that our perspective as a faith-informed, peace and justice university is a perfect fit for their series.

This isn't just about filming—it's about us coming together as a community to share our journey towards social justice, racial justice, and queer justice. In a 5-8 minute segment, EMU's DEI commitment will be highlighted, reaching households in all 50 states through Public Television Stations. But that's not all! A 30-second educational snippet will also air nationally on major networks during prime time, reaching over 85 million homes.

Imagine the impact of our collective voices echoing across the nation, a true embodiment of our mascot Herm the lion's mighty roar. Together, let's make our Roar heard around the world and ignite a wave of curiosity and excitement for this monumental event! Stay tuned, to know when the show will air and how we will celebrate it. The best is yet to come!





Join us for Homecoming and Family Weekend 2023

This October 13-16 our campus community will be rocking with activities. Check out the [schedule](#) and come join the fun! The DEI team will be giving leadership to two events during Homecoming:

- **Belonging Together with Alumni and Families:** Participatory dialogue with Jackie Font-Guzmán, VP for DEI at **University Commons 201 - President's reception room, 10-11:15 a.m. on Saturday, October 14** - Alumni and parents are invited to attend a conversation to promote a deeper community understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion at EMU. The goal is to share some updates, take questions, and receive feedback that helps guide our next steps toward creating a campus where everyone feels they belong. [REGISTER](#)
- **LGBTQ+ Advisory Board:** An initial conversation at **University Commons 177 (Previous Common Grounds), 6 - 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 14.** The EMU DEI and alumni are hoping to convene an advisory board of LGBTQ+ Alum and allies to examine LGBTQ+ issues and to provide guidance for EMU moving forward. If this sounds exciting, join us for a facilitated conversation at the 2023 Homecoming. The Office of DEI will provide refreshments and appetizers. [REGISTER](#)

New Office of DEI Logo and T-Shirt

During Homecoming, be on the lookout for the first EMU Belong Together t-shirt with our new logo. Our tagline, **BELONG TOGETHER**, encapsulates the heart of our mission. Through our threefold approach—Disrupting, Connecting, and Vibing—we're forging a path toward a more inclusive and equitable campus experience.

The selected colors of this t-shirt symbolize the unity within our campus community. Royal blue has

represented EMU for decades, serving as a unifying brand element across departments and programs. Purple is the official color of EMU’s Seminary, while green represents the Center of Justice and Peacebuilding. All three colors come together to represent every facet of EMU, serving as a reminder that genuine change happens when we are Connecting and building relationships with one another.



The light yellow hue is a secondary color at EMU and we have chosen it to remind us that those who have historically been ‘secondary’ are also part of our community. It reminds us of our responsibility as an Anabaptist Mennonite university to embrace all members of our community, especially those who have been disproportionately marginalized. The lively light yellow color also reminds us that as challenging as advancing DEI is, we must find time for Vibing together by celebrating our milestones.

The intersecting wavy lines serve as a powerful visual reminder. They evoke the very landscape of our campus—nestled in the valley, surrounded by

mountains—a metaphor for our journey toward equity and inclusion, which is anything but straightforward. These lines also stand for the diverse identities that intersect within our community, and the crossroads of power dynamics we navigate daily. Disrupting these power dynamics can lead to a transformational ripple effect in our community.



Discover the Inclusivity in Science Mural

For those of you attending Homecoming or who visit campus, be sure to visit EMU's Inclusivity in Science Mural located at the entrance of the Suter Science Center. This mural portrays individuals who exist beyond the confines of the presumed dominant culture of what a scientist is or can be. To determine the scientists to be featured, student project leaders conducted a survey last semester that involved EMU's faculty, staff, and students. This mural stands as a testament to our community's dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We extend our appreciation to the following students who have generously shared their talent and passion, bringing this mural to life: Veronica Horst '23, Asha Beck '22, Jake Myers '22, Grace Harder '22, Molly Piwonka '23, Afton Rhodes-Lehman '24

This mural was funded through the Office of DEI Inclusive Excellence Grants, thanks to the generosity of Jose Koshy '76 and Jean Koshy-Hertzler '79.

Save the Date for DEI related events coming up!

This Fall is buzzing with activity. As if Homecoming and Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid were not enough, we are also hosting a Accessibility Discussion Panel, and celebrating during the month of October the Latinx Heritage Month, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Queer History Month.

Accessibility Discussion Panel

Mark your calendars for Convocation on **September 13, 2023, from 10:10 to 11:00 a.m. EST at Student Union Common Ground. 2 Engage Point.**

Special Treat: The first 25 students who scan in at this event will get a free small drink from Common Grounds courtesy of the Office of DEI.

Join us for an inclusive conversation about disability, diverse abilities, and accessibility. Our panelists will share their experiences of living with disabilities, explore strategies for fostering greater acceptance of individuals with diverse abilities, and discuss how to create the most welcoming and accessible environments. Panelists will cover essential topics like addressing disability-related issues and proper etiquette when interacting with service animals on campus and in public spaces. Bring an open mind and engage in thoughtful dialogue as we delve into these significant matters.

Panelists: Heike Peckruhn, Milee White, Jada Schutt, Lindy Backues, Trina Nussbaum, Quinn Kimble, Cassidy Walker

Latinx Heritage Month Events

All faculty, staff, and students are invited to join a series of events that the Latino Student Alliance (LSA) has put together under the theme:

¡Unidos jamás seremos vencidos, with love, family, and culture we will prosper!

- Kick off day is **Friday, September 15, 2023, starting at 6:00 p.m. at Thomas Plaza.** Join the fun, music, and dancing!
- Movie nights on **September 21 & 22, 2023, from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. at Old Common Grounds.** Movies: TBD
- Peña Folklórica (in collaboration with the Spanish Department) on **September 25, 2023, between 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. at Thomas Plaza.** We will be serving tamales!

For more information check out the LSA instagram account @emu_isa.

Join us in honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day during Convocation

Katerina Gea from the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery will be EMU's guest speaker for EMU's Indigenous Peoples' Day **Tuesday, Oct. 9 from 10:10-11:00 a.m. EST at EMU, Lehman Auditorium**. This event will also be livestreamed on [Facebook Live from EMU's Facebook](#) page. 2 Engage points.



Join us for EMU's Second Annual LGBTQ+ History Month Keynote Address!

Eastern Mennonite University will host “Rules of Engagement for the Trans Community” **Tuesday, Oct. 17 from 7-9:00 p.m. EST at EMU, University Common, Common Grounds**.

Witness Ms. Tori Copper (she, her, hers) as she ignites the room with her Keynote Address and guides us into an engaging Fireside chat. Ms. Tori Cooper, BA, MPH, SGE (she, her, hers) is the Human Rights Campaign's Director of Community Engagement for the Transgender Justice Initiative and a Health and Equity Consultant. She is the second highest ranking transgender woman in the US government as a member of the President's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS (PACHA). Ms. Cooper is a health and equity advocate, community organizer, educator, published author, and leader in the transgender and HIV communities.

This event will not be livestreamed. The event is free, but [registration](#) is required. 1 Engage point.



Belonging and Becoming Together (BBT) New Faculty Orientation Program

The office of DEI continues to strengthen EMU's new faculty onboarding program in collaboration with the Provost's Office. The program has been branded as 'Belonging and Becoming Together (BBT): New Faculty Orientation.' After its successful pilot last year, the program has expanded into a two-day experience intentionally grounded in EMU's mission and vision. It aspires to create a safe space, build community, provide emotional support, foster relationships, share insights about EMU, and offer support in accessing networks for collaboration.

Introducing New DEI Sustainability Coordinator:

Andrea Troyer '22 started on August 14, 2023, as a part-time Sustainability Coordinator. Andrea graduated with her BS in Environmental Sustainability and minors in Chemistry and Environmental Justice from EMU in May 2022.

"I'm excited to engage with students about sustainability and see how their voices and initiatives can be amplified across campus. In the Office of DEI, my hopes are to be an advocate, resource, and bridge connector to where DEI and sustainability efforts intersect. I believe advocating for environmental and climate justice is crucial in order to live into our vision of belonging together."

Andrea formerly worked at Watershed Management Group as the River Run Network Program Coordinator in Tucson, Arizona.

Andrea can be found digging in a garden, admiring insects, biking, and watercoloring on the EMU Hill. Andrea played collegiate volleyball at EMU, so you will likely see her supporting the Royals at the Yoder Arena this fall. Andrea's been listening to Taylor Swift too much recently but also enjoys Noah Kahan, Quinn XCII, and other folk-

pop artists. After a day of work, she often starts a crossword puzzle but never finishes and enjoys watching TV shows, including Abbott Elementary, Schitt's Creek, and The Bachelor franchise. Andrea enjoys reading various books, but some of her favorites are from authors such as Robin Wall Kimmerer and Glennon Doyle.



What were we up to in Spring and early Fall 2023?



EMU Joins Campus Pride Index (CPI)

CPI is an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusive policy, program and practice. As the inaugural Mennonite Institution in the USA to join CPI, EMU boldly leads the way towards inclusivity, belonging, and equity. Our initial score of 3 out of 5 fuels our ambition to elevate this metric in the coming years. [EMU's commitment](#) to progress remains resolute as we advance our efforts to create an increasingly inclusive campus environment. We stand by our students, faculty, and staff, fostering an atmosphere where authenticity thrives.



EMU DEI Grants

DEI grants continue to thrive thanks to the creativity and passion of our students, faculty, and staff. Information about the upcoming cycles is provided below.

Spring 2023 Inclusive Excellence DEI Grant awardees

The Inclusive Excellence Grants encourage collaboration among students, faculty, and staff to enhance DEI on campus. In spring 2023, [five Inclusive Excellence Grants were awarded](#).

We encourage our EMU community to [apply](#) to the next cycle for the Inclusive Excellence Grants that opened on **September 4th, 2023**.

Spring 2023 Hertzler-Koshy Faculty Fellowship Grant

We also invite faculty to [apply](#) for the next cycle of the Hertzler-Koshy Faculty Fellowship Grant that will open in **September/October 2023**.

Office of DEI Team

Jacqueline N. Font-Guzmán, MHA, JD, PhD, VP for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Adesola Johnson, a Biology major, will graduate in May 2025

Desmone Logan, a Graduate Student in the MS in Biomedicine program, will graduate in May 2024.

Dawn Neil, MA '22, DEI Coordinator

Support DEI

Join us on our transformative journey, where every donation, big or small, becomes a catalyst for positive impact in shaping our future of belonging.

Visit DEI's Resource and Communication pages.

Share Your DEI Story

Would you like to share DEI stories with our EMU community? Do you have a DEI-oriented event, announcement, article or recognition you would like us to promote through our DEI communication channels? Contact dei@emu.edu.

Jacqueline N. Font-Guzmán, MHA, JD, PhD

Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion &
Professor at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding



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